A psychosocial approach to the stereotypical perception of road safety instructors to female’s training access to the heavy truck driving

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Abstract:

In the Moroccan workplaces, females are considered as deficient human beings unable to practice a lot of professions which hinder them from having access to professional training. Female’s deficiency is a stereotype developed to exclude women from having jobs in various domains. Among the jobs in which the percentage of female workers is really low in the domain of transportation with heavy vehicles. In this regard, this study aims to explore the perception of female’s access to the truck driving training of heavy vehicles by the Moroccan road safety instructors. As an approach, we adopt a psychosocial approach to analyze the population’s reaction to the subject of female access to professional training to have the driving license of C and the EC types. The method of gathering data is qualitative in that we design semi-directive interview conducted with six driving instructors of heavy vehicles in Rabat, Casablanca and Agadir. To analyze the data, we used content analysis. As a result, we find that there are different psychological reactions toward females' intent to become heavy truck drivers. Those psychological reactions stem from the prejudices developed against females’ capacity to do this work. Hence, we organized those prejudices into different sub-categories that reveal "obstacle-anger-aggression", the "contamination-disgust-rejection" and the "security-fear-escape", against female’s access to the professional training of the heavy truck driving. Finally, we found that the representation of road safety instructors contains stereotypical perceptions about females’ access to the professional training of heavy vehicles driving.

Keywords: Stereotypical perception, prejudices; heavy truck driver; road safety instructors, professional training; gender

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1 INTRODUCTION:

This study has two aims; on the one hand, it encourages females' right in benefiting from access to professional training. On the other hand, it reveals the presence of a female in the road environment as a professional. That is to say, this study shows the presence or the absence of females in the field of transportation with heavy trucks. Generally, the Moroccan professional road environment is almost occupied by males. In spite of females' attempts to be integrated into the professional driving of the long-haul trucks, their access is still low. This paper calls into question the females' absenteeism in the professional driving of heavy trucks in Morocco. We first approach the prejudices that are gender-based in the field of long-haul truck transportation. Then, we analyze the instructors' perception of females who need to obtain the license, which is necessary for the long-haul truck transportation profession. Hence, this study focuses on the implicit interactions that can arise between two social groups where one of them hold a set of prejudices that influence their perceptions while interacting with other groups. Indeed, it is during the interaction that stereotypes and prejudices can appear, therefore they serve or they prevent the collaboration and the development of the community (Fedor, 2014).

Moreover, the access to heavy truck driving training begins with an interaction which takes place either during the administrative reception or the informative reception which is an opportunity for mutual exchange on the part of the desiring female. Life at work is shared by a group of individuals whose social and professional roles emerge, and it is in this life where individuals adapt to different functionalities and spatio-temporal structures (Belhaj 2009). This confirms in some way that human behaviour in the workplace cannot be studied in isolation of the social life where the different adaptations take place. In particular, prejudices are defined as "predispositions" to the adoption of negative behaviour towards a group, based on falsified generalizations without taking into consideration the individual differences (Allport, 1954). Those predispositions are linked to different reactions while interacting with a group of instructors who can unveil a perception defined by a set of erroneous generalizations. However, it seems necessary to understand the nature of these prejudices and their processes to understand the instructors' attitude against females group wishing to be drivers of heavy truck in the future.

Through the interactions, we could reveal different processes from which we can recognize the prejudices' manifestations on the instructors' behaviour. Also, there is a process of stigmatization that presents the stigma in its relation to other persons who explore the field of stigmatization by its prejudices, and its stereotypical perception, by considering the stigma as a social construct which covers a series of oppositions (Dericquebourg, 2009). Additionally, there are two dimensions of analysis; firstly a social dimension that characterizes the intergroup relations by focusing on the origins of conflicts in the social function of prejudices and its influence on processing the social information, secondly a cognitive dimension focuses on the treatment of social information and the group perception which leads us to study the social perception of individuals (Dijk, 1984). As highlighted before, social perception's studies are not limited to sensorial or mental perception, but it is more about a cognitive process in an environment where individuals live and interact with each other (Belhaj, 2010). A related socio-functional approach is based on three assumptions; firstly, humans have been considered as interdependent socials; Secondly, the groups that function effectively have particular social structures and processes; and thirdly, individuals have psychological mechanisms to benefit from the opportunities provided by the life group and protect themselves from group life threats (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005). On the same light, Aube (2016) organizes five profiles, we get interested in three of them which are based on research done by (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005), stating that, among these profiles there are the "obstacle-anger-aggression" profile where the researchers propose that it is an anger towards the out-group when it hinders the in-group from achieving its goal. In our context, instructors group threaten in an implicit form, through there interaction, the rights of Moroccan females, to having training access to the heavy trucks driving. Also, the out-group represents, in the current study, the instructors' group who could not be neutral while exchanging with the in-group that represents females wishing to have access to the aforementioned training. Then, the social-functional model indicates the "contamination-disgust-rejection" profile where the out-group members are undervalued when they are perceived as a contaminating source; this feeling is manifested through the avoidance behaviour of the out-group (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005) (Aube, 2016). Finally, we approach the "security-fear-escape" profile where the out-groups is perceived as threatening the security of the in-group by triggering fear that is reflected in the escape's aspect of the out-group (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005).
To reiterate, the purpose of this study is to explore the instructors' perception regarding females wishing to have access to the heavy truck driving training by checking a set of hypotheses that are inspired from the socio-functional model of prejudice (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005) that take place in the Moroccan context. Besides, there is a good probability that those different profiles and the behavioural tendencies of perceived threats in the instructors’ group could be evoked during the interaction with the females’ group. The paper is divided into four sections. The first section is methodological in that it presents the research questions, population and research methods. The second section is devoted to analyze the findings. Last but not least, a section is dedicated to discuss the findings of research.

2 Methodology:

2.1 Design

A semi-directive interview was conducted with six instructors working for the benefit of driving schools. These interviews were done by telephone with instructors from Agadir, Casablanca and Rabat, who provide professional training, to obtain a driving license Type C and EC (Moroccan Law No. 52-05 on the road Code). I chose the telephone tool because of the limited number of instructors in Morocco, and the inability to travel to these cities. To collect their phone numbers, I contacted an association of instructors in Rabat. I made a list mentioning the name of the monitor, his number phone, and the city where he works, then I started to contact each one of them. The interview questions were in Darija and the duration of the interviews took an average of 20 min for each one of them. Then, I was selective in choosing the ideas that serve my study because, during the interviews, the participants discuss other issues related to their rights, conditions, and social exclusion.

2.2 Participants

We contacted 9 instructors in road safety specialized on heavy truck driving, but 6 of them who accepted to respond to my questions, the three people resting, one of them is not interested, the second one was in a transportation mission, the third one cannot talk because he was with his family, he asked me to call him later when I found his phone off. Participants are mentioned with their names as I noted their experiences in safety driving training by years and the city where they work, in this way (coded name, experience years, city) (Participant 1, 42 years, Rabat), (Participant 2, 25 years, Agadir), (Participant 3, 21 years, Agadir), (Participant 4, 36 years, Agadir), (Participant 5, 28 years, Rabat), (Participant 6, 40 years, Casablanca). from an ethical perspective, and the few instructors in heavy truck driver, I coded the participants name in order to respect their confidentiality of providing different declarations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Experience Years</th>
<th>City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Rabat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Agadir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Agadir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Agadir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Rabat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Casablanca</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 Data analysis method

After collecting data from truck driving instructors, and selecting their responses, a thematic analysis is used to analyze their responses. Another method of analysis was followed according to the steps mentioned by (Braun & Clarke, 2006), who work through six stages in order to identify the essential categories or themes addressed without losing the qualitative dimension while analyzing the collected data. These steps begin first with getting familiar with the data; in other words, trying to understand the meaning and different concepts that are tackled. For the second step, it sets an initial coding that takes a form of grouping, to have sub-categories or sub-themes. As far as the last step is concerned, it looks for the themes that group a set of sub-themes. Then, it revises the research at the level of the data’s structure and consistency. After that, we define and nominate different themes, and comments on the thematic analysis of the data collected.
3 FINDINGS:

After gathering the data related to each participant, we proceeded in using thematic analysis to find the underlying meaning of each participant’s responses. We adopt a socio-functional model's frame. The second table represents the instructors' answers, with the various elements taken from their answers, while responding to the asked questions. Then, a set of units that can represent a behavioural tendency or a character of reaction or profile, as part of the socio-functional approach is cited in the literature section. Three themes are linked to the three cited profiles of the socio-functional model, as detailed below:

3.1 Theme 1: "obstacle-anger-aggression"

This theme is matched to one of the profiles cited on the socio-functional model, and it was detected through the meaning of handling an angry reaction from the in-group to the out-group. One of the participant states "... men barely have their permits, they are looking for a license as paper, not for long-distance transportation work..." (Participant 6). This response shows that there is a sort of anger expressed against the out-group in the training access, reporting that male found difficulties to get there license let alone to have females wanting it for other reasons. Another respondent claims that "...driving heavy trucks are difficult for the woman, at the level of long-distance journey, ... the poor woman cannot bear the driving at night and long roads, ... it must be accompanied by a strong man...", (Participant 5). According to this response, we get the idea that women’ access to truck driving training was matched to an ‘incapacity’ in that being alone in a truck driving represents for her an obstacle because she must be accompanied by a male as if she is not able to manage herself alone.

Other participants link this profession with the bravery question in that one of the respondent states that "...women must be brave,... the man can live in his vehicle while the woman cannot..." (Participant 1). Hence, the female needs to be brave to have this profession. This means that females are considered as weak human being which is a preconception disseminated in all societies especially Moroccan ones. Asking women to be brave can be considered as a piece of advice, but at the same, it is an excluding remark that can be violent against women’s right to have access to professional training. To be weak is an obstacle provided by the in-group to the out-group.

There are other forms of obstacles provided by respondents that touch women’s biology. In this regards, a respondent states that "...if she wants to work in the heavyweight, she must not leave the city, she must not be married because her brain is going to be scattered..." (Participant 1). This response shows that there is another prejudice that is disseminated against women and which stands for not being able to balance between her private life and professional one.

An aggressive response was provided by an instructor in which he directly reduced women to the private space while relegating the public space to men. He said, "...women for internal work and men for external work..." (Participant 2). From a gender perspective, women can similarly work in public space as men. There is no excluding pattern that stands for contaminating women into houses. Limiting the external work to men is a violent behaviour exercised over women.

Another professional obstacle that is believed to hinder women access to this profession is approved by one of the instructors who mentioned that "...if she succeeds this step, she must integrate with the brokers to find the customer, ...",(Participant 3). This obstacle is professionally based, and it can be overcome if women are given the possibility to be engaged in this profession.

3.2 Theme 2: Contamination-disgust-rejection

This theme is matched to one of the profiles cited on the socio-functional model and it was detected through the meaning found on some of the participants’ responses.

One of the respondents believes that "...women are driving a C or EC license to access firefighters or to be a driving instructor or to go out with a foreigner..." (Participant 1). From his point of view, we find that the female access to training is considered as being not important due to the different reasons provided by women concerning their intention to have a chance in driving heavy truck transportation. One of the reasons provided
is that women are driving for leisure and they do not have professional intention as one of the respondent states...men are doing the driving, not for leisure..." (participant 6).

The gendered based responses continue to flourish in that one of the respondents argues that "...woman is created for the house..." (participant 1). Female's power is contaminated into cleaning and cooking in that the reason behind the presence of women is but to serve in their house. In the same vein, another participant mentions that..."...the woman in her construction prefers to prepare cakes, seam and tidy her house since childhood..." (Participant 2). The female is predisposed from the beginning to simple tasks, especially when talking about the heavy truck driving, female competences are limited. "...when training, men come with a pre-acquired, unlike women..." (Participant 2). The constructed role assigned to females in society does not encourage her to have access to this training and consequently, she faces some complications to pursue that training.

Gender segregation persists in some of the participants' responses in that another participant mentions that "...but the woman cannot share a square meter with another man 24 of 24, 7 days a week..." (Participant 3). That is to say, the female is not able to share the workplace with men, all the days, a choice which could be taken or untaken. "...she must not be a woman, she must be a man..." (Participant 5).

3.3 Theme 3: "Security-fear-escape"

This theme is matched to one of the profiles cited by the socio-functional model, and it was detected through the meaning of lack of security caused by the out-group found on some of the participants' responses.

As far as security matters are concerned, one of the respondents states that "...women are integrating slowly, depending on the brain... I always tell women the problems they are going to face such as mechanical problems, and they do not even manage a car, and they want to drive a truck..." (Participant 6). Using an angry tone, the instructor expresses the failure of women in using simple cars. The instructor speaks about the mechanical obstacle that hinders women' access to this training. Another respondent speaks about the obstacle of driving at night and states that "...the poor woman cannot bear the driving at night and long roads..." (Participant 1). In this respect, the out-group is menaced by the obstacle of working at night in that the majority of instructors work in parallel in transportation and they are aware of the different conditions of transportation workplace. In this regard, the existence of the out-group influences their security on-road environment, and their mission on training.

A promising response is given by another respondent in which he speaks about the possibility of females' work. He states, "...there is no problem, but she must not be anyone. She must be attentive..." (participant 5). Females' lack of confidence is an obstacle toward having access to truck driving. There is another obstacle that is believed to threaten the in-group's work and which that "...in Morocco, it is difficult. It will break down, there is the risk..." (participant 1). In other words, external causes may ensure the risk related to female driving which could affect in a bad way the security of the in-group. In the same way, another respondent claims that "...in Europe, women are well integrated into workplaces. Since we follow Europe in everything so one day we will get used to the access of women to the field of heavy goods..." (participant 2). The female's training mission is menaced by declaring that we cannot have a female truck driver as Europe, especially while speaking about performance, efficiency and vigilance, adding that integration could be guaranteed if we get the same work conditions as Europe. Another respondent mentions that"...women work as school bus driver's..." (Participant 4). The access was permitted but not for truck drivers, it was limited to bus driving in a city.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IP</th>
<th>Extract from participants’ responses</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Profils’ categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant 1</strong></td>
<td>’... she drives, and she will have no problem to drive a truck. Moroccan women are capable ... Driving heavy trucks is difficult for the woman, at the level of long-distance journeys. ... The poor woman cannot bear the driving at night on long roads, ... It must be accompanied by a strong man. ... Women are driving a C or EC license to access firefighters or to be a driving instructor or to go outside ... In Morocco; it is difficult. It will break down. There is a risk. The mechanical control must be every day. ... if the woman wants to be a heavy truck driver, she must be of the strong body... Women must be brave ... The man can live in his vehicle, the woman cannot, ... The woman is created for the house. If she wants to work in the heavyweight, she must not leave the city. ... She must not be married because her brain is going to be scattered.</td>
<td>-Capacity - Incapacity -Paper of license -strong body -The risk -For home -Conduit of a short trip -single -Brain</td>
<td>Obstacle - aggression - contamination - security - rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant 2</strong></td>
<td>” Women and men are equal ... There is no problem ... The woman by nature prefers to prepare cakes, sew and tidy their house since childhood, while men tend to go outside and take the road with their uncles and their parents ... While training, men come with a prerequisite, unlike women ... Women are for internal work and men are for external work ... In Europe, women are well integrated, and we follow Europe so one day we will get used to the access of women to the field of heavy goods, ... ”</td>
<td>-Equality -For home -Internal work -work at home -pre-required European woman - get used to the future</td>
<td>Obstacle - aggression - contamination - security - rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant 3</strong></td>
<td>” There are no obstacles in front of the woman if she wants to be a heavy truck driver ... The truck driver drives alone, and he leaves his vehicle to eat, to buy, something or to recharge his phone ... The vehicles have become automated. Everything has become easy ... but the obstacle in front of the woman is that of breakdown, and insecurity at the road level... She will be harassed and assaulted, ... I will describe to all desiring the work reality of heavy goods long ride, but the picture is not so dark, ... The woman must have just experience after obtaining permits, ... she must fit,... He must accompany other drivers, but the woman cannot share a square meter with another man 24 of 24, 7 days a week ... If she succeeds this step, she must be integrated with the brokers to find the customer, ... ”</td>
<td>-To live alone - automatic dependence - obstacle -insecurity -harassment - aggression -have experience -space sharing accompanied</td>
<td>Obstacle - aggression - contamination - security - rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant 4</strong></td>
<td>”... Women have access to the training of heavyweights to get the card instructor ... Women work as school bus drivers ... Women work seriously, ... They take time to learn... Driving trucks is very tiring, and the majority will not support such work ... We encourage the woman ... If the woman likes to drive the big vehicles, she should drive the coaches to stay protected in the city ... ”</td>
<td>Driving a bus - serious - Tiring - Protected in the city</td>
<td>Obstacle - aggression - contamination - security - rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant 5</strong></td>
<td>”... There is no problem, but she must not be anyone. She must be attentive ... It is the monitor who encourages or prevents the success of the woman in the formation of heavyweights. She must not be a woman, she must be a man ... She must be accompanied always by a strong man ... She must learn how to handle the great material and must not be afraid... She must be trained in a way keep on going”</td>
<td>Not anyone. She must be a man. – accompanied - manage the big material - unafraid - pursuing education</td>
<td>Obstacle - aggression - rejection - security -four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant 6</strong></td>
<td>”... Men barely have their permits. They are looking for a license as paper, not for long-distance transportation work. Men are doing the driving, not for leisure, ... Women are integrating slowly, depending on the brain,... There is a lot of difficulty facing women. In a slope, it must descend with speed and not with the brakes,... I always tell women the problems they are going to face such as mechanical problems. They do not even manage a car, and they want to drive a truck ... ”</td>
<td>-license paper -Leisure -Capacity of brain -Difficulty -Failure in-car driving</td>
<td>Obstacle - aggression - contamination - security -four</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Participants’ extract responses with themes and sub-themes


4 DISCUSSION:

The participants expressed their opinions concerning female’s access to truck driving training, using with different tones, that can be categorized into the following profiles: fear, rejection and anger. Thus, they also speak about the various difficulties and obstacles that women may encounter while driving with heavy trucks to show that the field of work is insecure. Despite the implicit resistance of instructors, they reported various obstacles to females desiring access to long-distance truck driving training. These obstacles are concerned with the driver’s working conditions, reducing women to housework and the need for the presence of males while driving. According to the aforementioned profiles, different behavioural tendencies can be evoked by the instructors, and which are based on the disorientation of females wishing to access the training based on different sides. The cultural side was grappled with over the three profiles that matched to the instructor’s responses. Generally, it is about the female prejudices in the Moroccan society, but our goal is about their training access, and the prejudicial vison of the instructors, knowing that men are more prejudicial than women when it is about workplace stereotypes with the consideration of the cultural differences across nations (Proverbio, Alberio, & De Benedetto, 2018). Among this prejudices linked to the training access, the female is exposed to a spatial exclusion in that they are limited to the private space while the public space is devoted to men. Also, women are reduced to drive only in the city by suggesting for her to be a bus driver. This is a form of a spatial exclusion addressed to female, while a disadvantaged mobility have the highest risk of being socially excluded, this space exclusion is more significant due to the asymmetry between sociocultural needs and mobility (Özkazanç & Özdemir Sönmez, 2017). There are different types of rejection expressed by instructors due to the prejudices that they internalize with regards to female’s access to work. There is diversity in terms of instructors’ attitude and which concerns the degree of rejection toward women (Anglim et al., 2019) Through the findings and the different profiles of the socio functional model where female’s access was matched to her incapacity, work-risks and other prejudices which lead the instructors to indirectly exclude her from having access to training. Women have the same right as men in the road environment and other professionals training in that a gender training is necessary for those who deal with education, in particular, to reflect on the processes of prejudices and on the possibility of changing these (Garro, Novara, & Di Rienzo, 2013).

A stereotyped perception of females’ monitors may reflect a set of prejudices that limit females’ abilities to have access to work. This is well confirmed by the different emotional reactions and disorienting behavior tendencies that the instructors hold towards others. The general relationship between prejudice and the intention of discrimination manifests itself in specific relationships with certain types of prejudice (Tiboulet, Dambrun, Tourret, & Uhlen, 2012). This leads us to study the types of these prejudices that influence females’ access to vocational training. Those prejudices could stay unchangeable as long as the absenteeism of female in truck driving training is still persisted, because the instructors could not be in the situation where they can be aware of the biased phrases or words used with possible chances to identify and avoid it till getting a neutral perspective (Kelly, Young, & Clark, 1993).

5 CONCLUSION:

Finally, the prejudicial instructors’ perspective with regards to female’s access to truck driving training is but stereotypical perceptions. We highly recommend rethinking road safety instructors’ recruitment by designing a psychometric assessment to provide additional insights about a candidate’s attitudes toward gender diversity in the workplace (Anglim, Sojo, Ashford, Newman, & Marty, 2019).
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APPENDIX

Interview guide

Questions

1. Based on your knowledge of the heavy trucks field, what do you think of females’ access to the driving profession of those vehicles and the long-distance journey?

2. Can females be integrated easily into the professional training of long-distance driving?

3. Do you think that the accumulated experience of the heavy truck driving profession will guide your counselling to females wishing to join this profession?