Arts and Social Sciences Journal
ISSN: 2151-6200

Fagbemi, Arts Social Sci J 2018, 9:4
DOI: 10.4172/2151-6200.1000386

Review Article Open Access

Professional Specialization and Gender Differences in Higher Education in Nigeria

Mowaiye Fagbemi*

Department of Counsellor Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria, Nigeria

Abstract

There are gender differences in career-related orientations and choices. These differences are resultants from varied individual, school and societal orientations. These differences are reflected in significant difference as to how far individuals go educationally and choice of career specialization one delves into. Invariably, this affects individual and societal developmental process. This paper explores a survey of gender participation in academic teaching of a Nigerian University. The study was undertaken with the sole purpose of finding out the specialization and field's women in the internet age delve into in Nigeria, to find out if there is a change in career stereotypes among subjects under study.

Keywords: Gender differences; Professional; Specialization; Higher education; Stereotypes; Feminine; Atypical

Introduction

The home, school and the society socialize individuals into acceptable gender roles. Social-learning explanations for the acquisition of gender-appropriate behavior center on the concept of observation or imitative learning. Before imitation, identification takes place. To the social-learning theorists, set-typed behaviors are acquired through selective identification with and imitation of same sex models, in particular, the parents. For women, the attainment of higher levels of ego functioning involves conflict with the prevailing cultural norms. On the other hand, highly socialized women adhere to rigid stereotypic definition of the female role that emphasizes nurturance, submission and conservation [1]. Further, the research by Block et al. [1], found evidence for the following:

1. Sex roles are acquired through identification, modeling, reinforcement and reciprocal-role learning.
2. High Masculine and high socialized men and high feminine and high socialized women come from homes in which sex-role behaviors and attitudes of the parents were clearly differentiated along traditional stereotypic lines.
3. Low masculine and high socialized men, and low feminine and high socialized women were from homes in which parents provided models for their children that cut across traditional sex-role stereotypes. These individuals can be regarded as having identified androgynously (Internalized positive characteristics of both male and female parents).
4. High masculine and low socialized men, and high feminine and low socialized women had not achieved their sex-role definitions through identification with same sex but rather through the reaction of opposite sex parent. The process is termed "reactivity" and fall under two forms.

a. The opposite sex parent behaves in a gender-appropriate fashion, giving the children the opportunity to respond in terms of his/her own gender role.

b. Differential reinforcement of a child's gender-appropriate behavior by the opposite sex parent.

5. Low masculine and low socialized men and low feminine and low socialized women appear to have established their gender identity by emulating the parent of the opposite sex. Maccoby and Jacklin, [2] are of the view that the acquisition of gender role, would involve in most probability, some combination of all mechanisms; identification, modeling, reinforcement, and reciprocal-role learning, mediated by the child's level of cognitive development. Kormah [3] further asserted that individuals with positive self-esteem(SE) will select occupation in which they can implement their self-concepts, while low esteem people will seek out non-satisfying occupations and positions.

Research reports indicate that individuals with low self-esteem (SE) are more likely to suffer from a variety of emotional and behavioral problems like, greater anxiety, less happiness and perform more poorly in achievement setting than high self-esteem individuals.

For high achieving females, there may be guilt of gender incongruent performing roles. If the guilt persist, the individual may limit or shy away from the cause of guilt. In this instance, the individual may limit education and career inspirations or field of specialization to conform to what is acceptable.

An observation made on women and their self-esteem is that women tend to primarily rely on social relationships as a source of determining their self-worth while men may depend on accomplishment [4]. A high level of sex typing, it is believed, may limit behavioral flexibility. Further, high femininity has been associated with high anxiety and poor adjustment. Masculine and androgynous individuals though are believed to be more independent and non-conforming, even under pressure than feminine individuals [5]. Women athletes and Ph. D scientists are said to be more often masculine or androgynous, rather than being feminine or undifferentiated. Furthermore, masculine and androgynous women are more dominant than others several studies have also proved that sex typed individuals usually are more attuned

***Corresponding author:** Fagbemi M, Department of Counsellor Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria; E-mail: julianfagbemi@gmail.com

Received July 04, 2018; **Accepted** July 10, 2018; **Published** July 16, 2018

Citation: Fagbemi M (2018) Professional Specialization and Gender Differences in Higher Education in Nigeria. Arts Social Sci J 9: 386. doi: 10.4172/2151-6200.1000386

to the culture's gender definitions of appropriateness [6]. Women in traditional careers had lower levels of self-esteem compared to those in non-traditional careers. Thus for a sex typed individual, appropriate field of specialization and educational attainment will be paramount on mind. And going too high and far off to what is acceptable may pose a problem to the individual unlike non-typed individuals. This is what Mowaiye Fagbemi [7] reported.

Statement of the Problem

Gender stereotypes in societies is almost a given in any society, Nigeria inclusive. Eyebrows are still raised to a female in a non-feminine field of specialization and educational attainment. This research survey was carried out to seek answers to the question of how far change has occurred and in the specialization the women in the millennium choose and their level of education attainment in comparison to the males in Nigeria society.

Methods

University of Ilorin, which is located in Kwara State, Nigeria, the gateway state, between northern and southern Nigeria was specifically chosen for the research. The state population and characteristics has all the characteristics of the northern and southern Nigeria. Data was collected over a period of time for comparison purposes.

Results

The data collated was in summary table. These are presented as Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 is the summary for the year 2010/2011 session and the second table for the year 2014/2015 to make for a comparison over a four year interval.

A cursory look at Table 1 shows the faculty of Education having the highest number of doctoral degrees conferred on women with 10 out of the total number of (30). The faculty of Science conferred four females (4) with the doctoral out of the total Number (8) showing half of those conferred to be women. Interestingly, a supposed field women shy away from; the Engineering and Technology, had a female doctorate. Some faculties such as Business and Social Sciences, Agriculture and Arts faculties produced no female doctorate for this year, and out of the seventy-two doctorates conferred, nineteen (19) were to women.

A further analysis revealed the same dismal participation of women at the doctorate level in some faculties was also the trend at the master's degree level. This was the case in almost every faculty except Education that produced fifty-eight (58) of the total N: 122.

Engineering faculty had 3 females of the total Number of 19. Amazingly, a faculty where courses such as English language and History are based and supposedly "feminine" had just eighteen (18) females graduating with masters out of over one hundred students (T: 107).

For this year, just 129 female students got the master's degree out of 399 students. Interestingly, out of these, there was no single female student out of the graduating twenty eight (28) students at the Arabic department. More interesting was at the industrial chemistry department, a supposed masculine science department where there were four (4) graduates and all females. Anatomy department graduated twenty four students (24) and just two (2) were women.

Four years later, from Table 2, there were more substantial number of women earning the doctorate with thirty-six earning the doctorate of the eighty-nine doctorates conferred. Faculty of Education again, following the 2010/2011 result trend, had the highest number of female doctorate graduates with twelve (12) out of the thirty-one (31), graduates. Interestingly, a science based otherwise thought male dominated area, the Life Science, had more females with five (5) women earning the doctorate compared to four (4) males. Faculty of Law graduated two (2) females with no male at all. However, at the faculty of Physical Science, of the fifteen doctorates conferred, there was no single woman earning one. Moving to the masters level, Education Faculty still led other Faculties with 84 female (and 94 males) and an almost even-up gap. Interestingly, the dismal figure that was observed for Faculty of Arts four years back, with the females in the faculty continued with males far outnumbering them even when courses in this faculty icon be perceived as feminine courses . Same trend was observed for the Physical Sciences faculty where thirty seven females earned the masters (females: 37; Males: 120), though this faculty is perceived as masculine based area. At the Basic Medical science, the gap was almost close up for the males and females with twenty one females and twenty six males (Females: 21; Males: 26).Another Faculty where males are said to dominate is the Agriculture Faculty, where a substantial number of female could be found in relation to the males (Females: 33; Males: 52).

Discussion

Faculty of Education a Faculty that produces teachers for various levels led other faculties consistently at masters and doctorate levels for the period under study in producing higher female graduates in comparison to other Faculties. .The number of female graduates was impressive across faculties if compared to what was operational in the nineties [8] where female doctorates were few and scanty across Faculties. It is interesting to find that a science based area; industrial

Faculty	Masters	MBA/MPA/MILR/MGIS/MPH	PHDs	Total
Agriculture	(0)-3	0	(2)-7	(2)-10
Arts	(18)-107	0	(2)-9	(20)-116
Basic Medical Science	(2)-24	0	(0)-3	(2)-27
Business and Social Science	(9)-27	(11)-39	(0)-9	(20)-95
Clinical Science	--	(13)-30	(0)-0	(13)-30
Communication and Information Sciences	(1)-8	0	(0)-2	(1)-14
Education	(58)-122	0	(10)-30	(68)-191
Engineering and Technology	(3)-19	0	(1)-4	(4)-23
Law	(9)-27	0	(0)-0	(9)-27
Science	(29)-62	0	(4)-8	(33)-87
Total	(129)-399	(24)-69	(19)-72	(172)-620
NB-figures in bracket are no of females for each case.				

Table 1: Higher degree/postgraduate diplomas 2010-2011.

Faculty	Ph. D		Masters		MBA/MPA/MILR/ MIS/MGIS/MPH		Diploma/Certificate		Subtotal		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Agriculture	7	4	52	33	0	0	0	0	59	37	96
Arts	14	6	136	39	0	0	0	0	150	45	195
Basic Medical Sciences	3	2	26	21	0	0	0	0	29	23	52
Clinical Science	1	0	-	-	21	10	-	-	22	10	32
Communication and Information Science	4	3	12	5	0	0	29	11	45	19	64
Education	31	12	94	84	0	0	0	0	125	96	221
Engineering and Technology	3	0	20	3	0	0	0	0	23	3	26
Environment Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Law	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
Life Science	4	5	36	12	0	0	0	0	40	17	57
Management Sciences	3	1	14	10	69	27	52	20	138	58	196
Pharmaceutical Science	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Physical Sciences	15	0	120	37	0	0	15	12	150	49	199
Social Sciences	4	1	18	8	18	9	1	0	41	18	59
Veterinary Medicine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Institution of Education	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	21	4	21	25
Subtotal	89	36	529	252	108	46	101	64	827	398	
Total	125		781		154		165		1,225		1,225
Percentage	10.20%		63.76%		12.57%		13.47%				100%

Table 2: Higher degree/postgraduate diploma for the 2014/2015 academic session.

chemistry in 2010-2011 actually had an all-female outing with no male. By 2014-2015 session, most of the Faculties had higher female graduates in which Faculty of Arts had more females and the same was the result for the Physical Sciences Faculty with thirty seven (37) females, to twelve (12) males for the same period. Law Faculty had two females with doctorate degree and no male. In other science Faculties like Agriculture and Basic Medical Sciences, there were quite a substantial number of females, with them constituting more than half of the graduates at the master's level [9]. In Life Sciences, all five (5) graduating doctorates were females. It is noteworthy that the number of females found across Faculties improved tremendously especially at the doctorate levels. This is a far better result than what was reported in 1995 in the same institution by the researcher.

Conclusion

More women are delving into areas hitherto said not to be for women and earning higher degrees than what was operational before. It is hoped that this trend will continue for national progress. It can be rightly assumed, that gender stereotypes are in a state of flux in the society. This is a good trend to instigate scientific progress in the society, if the trend is maintained.

References

1. Block JV, Lippa S, Block JH (1973) Sex role and socialization patters: Some Personality concomitants and environmental antecedents. J Consult Clin Psych 41: 321-341.
2. Maccoby EE, Jacklin CN (1984) The psychology of sex differences. Stantford University press, Standford, California.
3. Korman AK (1967) Self-esteem as a moderator of the relationship between self-perceived abilities and vocational choice. J Appl Psychol 51: 65-67.
4. Calson ER, Calson R (1960) Male & Female subjects in personality research. J Abnorm Soc Psych 61: 482-483.
5. Bem S (1975) Psychology looks at sex roles. Paper presented at UCLA, US.
6. Anderson O, Bem S (1981) Measurement of psychological androgyny. J Clin Psychol 42: 155-162.
7. Mowaiye FO (2005) Gender behavioral flexibility: Trend for Millennium. Paper presented at Open University of Nigeria conference, Nigeria.
8. Mowaiye FO (1995) Psychological Androgyny. Doctoral Dissertation, Unilorin, Nigeria.
9. Hollander M, Parker HJ (1972) Occupational stereotypes and self-description. J Vocat Behav 1: 75-83.