

## **Teachers' Gender and Professional Achievements in Secondary Schools**

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### **Abstract**

*The study investigated the gender of teachers and their professional achievements in selected secondary schools in Ijebu-ode township, Ogun State, Nigeria. Eight secondary schools, randomly selected from the thirteen secondary schools in Ijebu-ode were used for the study. 40 (forty) professional teachers (20 males and 20 females) purposively selected constituted the respondents. A self-developed research instrument tagged: Teachers' Gender and Professional Achievements Questionnaire (TGPAQ) was used to collect information from the respondents, having subjected the instrument to a test-retests treatment using the Chrombach Alpha formular. The questionnaire yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.94. Two research questions were answered in the study while the only hypothesis developed was tested using the Pearson product moment correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The study eventually established that female teachers are more committed to the teaching profession than the male teachers. Consequently, the female teachers more often than not occupy higher positions and invariably get more involved in school decision-making than their male counterparts. It was, therefore, recommended among others that governments should make the teaching profession more attractive to men in all ramifications.*

**Keywords:** Social Activities, teaching profession, School' system

### **Introduction**

Gender inequality is referred to by Sociologists as the surrounding systems that affect all human behaviour. Most theories highlight the institutional structures that assign women and men different positions, different roles, and consequently different behaviours (Kendall 1998).

Gender stratification refers to the ranking of the sexes in such a way that women are unequal in power, resources, prestige, or presumed worth. At the same time, both women and men are denied the full range of human and social possibilities. The social inequalities created by gender differentiation have far-reaching consequences for society at large (Eitzen 2000).

The teaching of young children has long been dominated by women. This global phenomenon is firmly rooted in issues relating to economic development, urbanisation, the position of women in society, cultural definitions of masculinity and the value of children and childcare.

There have been expressions of concern by the media, government ministers, and others in a number of countries about the level of feminisation of the teaching profession (Olufemi 1993).

When women do enter labour markets, they often are concentrated in lower-paying jobs. Women also enter the labour market later than men and often have to leave periodically because of child care responsibilities. Historically, women have had lower levels of education than men, but recently this trend seems to have begun to reverse (Oakes 1990). This reversal according to Ijaduola (2010) calls for a proper personnel administration in the labour sector, which aims at coordinating the activities of the human resources, so that each staff makes his/her best contribution to the success of the organisational objectives. A successful personnel administrative programme is that which can contribute materially to the willingness of staff to function so that both organizational and individual expectations will be accomplished. (Hayble, 2001; Ijaduola, 2012).

However, the concept of teaching has changed drastically in the modern society. Teaching is now a systematic, rational and organized process of transmitting knowledge and skills in accordance with professional principles. Thus, Ijaduola (2011) posited that those who do not perform the act in accordance with professional principles are, therefore, not teachers.

Feminist sociological theory generally takes a social structural approach, seeing the gender division of labour and economic power as the foundation for the equal treatment of women (Chafetz 1989).

It is imperative that women should be actively involved in leading educational change given the vital role that the educational system of a country plays in both national development and the development of a gender equal society for women to be active participants in the change and development process. They should be provided with necessary skills and understanding needed to participate effectively in educational leadership and policy-making at both state and national levels (Temisanren 1995). Corroborating the foregoing statement, Ijaduola (2009) remarked that education mobilizes the untapped resourcefulness of women in order for them to contribute most effectively to their surroundings

The enabling environment created in Nigeria by the return to democratic rule had given rise to a vibrant civil society engaged in promoting and protecting rights of women and girls, as well as preventing and eliminating discrimination against them. Programmes had been designed to end discrimination and gender inequalities. Federal and State women's machinery had been very active in gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment.

The researchers were therefore motivated by the need to investigate the effects of gender inequalities on teachers' achievement in secondary schools in Ijebu-Ode local government of Ogun state, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main aim of the study is to examine the effects of teachers' gender on their professional achievement in Secondary Schools in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State. The specific objectives of this study include:

- To examine the effects of gender inequalities on teachers' professional achievements in Secondary Schools in Ijebu-Ode township of Ogun State.
- To investigate whether male and female teachers are given equal opportunities in Secondary Schools as regards decision making.

### **Research Questions**

The following two research questions were posed in the study:

- Do female teachers achieve better than the male teachers in secondary schools?
- Do male and female teachers have equal opportunities in Secondary Schools as regards decision making?

### **Research Hypothesis**

The only hypothesis developed for the study states that:

**Ho:** There is no significant relationship between teachers' gender and professional achievements in secondary schools

## Method

The descriptive survey research design of ex post-facto was used in this study. 40 (forty) professionally qualified classroom teachers (20 males and 20 females) purposively selected from 8 (eight) out of the 13 (thirteen) secondary schools in Ijebu-ode township of Ogun State participated in the study. A 25-item, four points Likert-type questionnaire called: Teacher's Gender and Professional Achievements Questionnaire (TGPAQ) as well as two research questions constituted the chief instrument used for data collection.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections (A & B). Section A comprised general information e.g. Name of school, sex of respondents etc. Section B contained questions on teachers' gender and the extent to which gender exerts influence on teachers' professional achievements. The following corresponding scores were used as rating scale for the teachers' responses: Strongly Agree (SA), 4 points; Agreed (A) 3 points; Disagree (D) 2 points, Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point.

The construct and content validation of the research instrument were done by four other experts in research. The question items were reviewed and any item not approved by three out of the four research specialists was discarded. Thus, items were reframed in tune with the corrections/suggestions made by the experts

Following a test-retest treatment within two weeks interval, the scale recorded a chombach Alpha of 0.94. The questionnaire were personally administered to the respondents; hence a hundred percent rate of returns. The collected data were analysed using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

The data collected from the field was analysed using simple percentages as well as the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient

**Research Question 1- Do female achieve better than male teachers in secondary schools in respect of getting to the peak of their career?**

**Table 1 – Distribution of responses on achievement of female teachers as against male teachers in respect of getting to the peak of their career**

| NAME OF SCHOOL                                  | SA | %  | A  | %  | D | %  | SD | %  |
|---|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|
| Our Lady of Apostle Secondary School, Ijebu-Ode | 2  | 40 | 1  | 20 | 1 | 20 | 1  | 20 |
| Muslim Girls High School. Ijebu-Ode             | 2  | 40 | 2  | 40 | - | -  | 1  | 20 |
| Ansarudeen Gram. School, Ijebu-Ode              | 2  | 40 | 1  | 20 | - | -  | 2  | 40 |
| Muslim College Ijebu-Ode                        | 2  | 40 | 1  | 20 | 1 | 20 | 1  | 20 |
| Moslem Comprehensive high school, Ijebu-Ode     | 2  | 40 | 3  | 60 | - | -  | -  | -  |
| Luba Secondary School, Ijebu-Ode                | 3  | 60 | 1  | 20 | 1 | 20 | -  | -  |
| Anglican Girls Gram. School, Ijebu-Ode          | 2  | 40 | 1  | 20 | 1 | 20 | 1  | 20 |
| Ijebu-Ode Gram. School, Ijebu-Ode               | 3  | 60 | -  | -  | - | -  | 2  | 40 |
| TOTAL   | 18 | 45 | 10 | 25 | 4 | 10 | 8  | 20 |

**Source: Authors' field survey – 2009**

Research question 1 was answered by respondents in the above selected schools. Table 1 above shows that although both male and female have access to education, female teachers are more involved in decision making in secondary schools than the male teachers. There are more females as Management staff than the male in teaching profession.

**Research Question 2 - Do male and female teachers have equal opportunities in secondary schools as regards decision making?**

**Table 2 – Distribution of responses on Opportunities of Male and Female teachers**

| NAME OF SCHOOL                                  | SA | %  | A  | %  | D  | %  | SD | %  |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Our Lady of Apostle Secondary School, Ijebu-Ode | 1  | 20 | 2  | 40 | 2  | 40 | -  | -  |
| Muslim Girls High School, Ijebu-Ode             | 2  | 40 | 2  | 40 | 1  | 20 | -  | -  |
| Ansarudeen Gram. School, Ijebu-Ode              | 2  | 40 | 1  | 20 | 2  | 40 | -  | -  |
| Muslim College Ijebu-Ode                        | 1  | 20 | 2  | 40 | 1  | 20 | 1  | 20 |
| Moslem Comprehensive high school, Ijebu-Ode     | 2  | 40 | 2  | 40 | 1  | 20 | -  | -  |
| Luba Secondary School, Ijebu-Ode                | 2  | 40 | 2  | 40 | 1  | 20 | -  | -  |
| Anglican Girls Gram. School, Ijebu-Ode          | 2  | 40 | 1  | 20 | 1  | 20 | 1  | 20 |
| Ijebu-Ode Gram. School, Ijebu-Ode               | 2  | 40 | 2  | 40 | 1  | 20 | -  | -  |
| TOTAL   | 14 | 35 | 14 | 35 | 10 | 25 | 2  | 5  |

Source: Authors' field survey - 2009

Table 2 shows that 70% of the respondents agreed that male and female teachers have equal educational opportunities in secondary schools. This is unlike in those days when females are only expected to be in the kitchen or doing other domestic work. Females now attend universities, and occupy high positions both in private organisations and government establishments.

**Table 3:** Pearson's product moment correlation of the relationship between teachers' gender and professional achievements in secondary schools

| Pearson (r) | N  | Sig 2 tailed    | Remark      |
|-------------|----|-----------------|-------------|
| 0.311       | 40 | 0.000<br>P<0.05 | Significant |

Table three indicated that there was a significant relationship between teachers' gender and professional achievements in secondary schools because the r calculated = 0.311 at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the gender teachers constitutes an indispensable determinant of teachers' professional achievements.

### Discussion of findings

The study found out that there is no discrimination in gender as far as access to education is concerned. Both male and female have easy access to education. This was agreed to by 70% of the respondents in Table 2.

In the same vein, female are no longer regarded as only housewives. They occupy high positions both in private organisations, government establishments, politics etc. 70% of the respondents agreed to the fact that both male and female teachers have equal educational opportunities in secondary schools but because the male teachers look at the teaching profession as a weaker profession, they look down on the profession. Only few male take the profession seriously. This is shown in Table 1. This is in line with Oakes (1990) who believed that when women do enter labour markets, they often are concentrated in lower-paying jobs.

The result showed that teaching profession was characterised by moderate levels of gender based discrimination during recruitment. The overall perceived levels in discrimination were also shown to be moderate. T-test for mean differences in perception in discrimination in recruitment to the teaching profession showed that women's perceived discrimination in recruitment was substantially higher than that for men.

The results also showed that, contrary to expectations, women perceived substantially higher chances of participation in decision making relative to men. This is in line with Olufemi (1993) who believed that the teaching of young children has long been dominated by women. This suggests the existence of what amounts to reverse discrimination in the teaching profession with male teachers considering themselves to be at a disadvantage relative to their female counterparts. These findings could be interpreted to indicate either or both of two things. First, as the teaching profession is pre-dominated by women, it obviously entails high levels of participation in decision-making by women. Secondly, males are reeling from the over-representation of women in the profession and this causes them to experience heightened deprivation with respect to decision making.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the results of the study revealed some but not strong support for the view that women in teaching profession experience greater disadvantage relative to men with respect to hiring practices and within the workplace environment itself. Interviews with teachers that are the main part of this research indicated that many gender inequalities survive in schools in Ijebu-Ode. High feminization of the teaching profession has an impact on a low social prestige of the profession and its low financial remuneration. The core focus of the study was the perceived nature and extent of gender discrimination in the teaching profession. It sought to establish whether teaching profession favoured men over women in the terms of pre-entry discrimination and within the job discriminations. Overall, the study results point to low levels of disadvantage suffered by women in the teaching profession in Ogun State.

Contrary to expectation, women perceived substantially higher chances for participation in decision making relative to men. This suggests the existence of what amounts to reverse discrimination in the teaching profession with male teachers considering themselves to be at a disadvantage relative to their female counterparts. This shows that there is high level of participation in decision making by women. The substantially higher work overload perceived by female teachers could be explained in terms of the interface between formal employment and domestic responsibilities for women. Women teachers may not necessarily take more classes than men teachers do. However, they withstand the worst of domestic chores and this may make them more prone to perceptions of work overload.

## **Recommendations**

The research pointed to many areas that would require intervention in order to achieve gender justice in schools, classrooms and the education process as such. It is therefore necessary to increase gender sensitivity of teachers both in the classroom and their daily lives. In order to achieve higher gender sensitivity of teachers, it is important to foster change in their social status, remuneration, working conditions and gender balance of the profession. Male teachers should be encouraged to be more committed to the teaching profession so that both sexes would be well represented in decision making.

Government should encourage people in the teaching profession by making the remuneration to be very attractive.

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