

Research paper on culture and inequality

Profession



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Recent studies regarding the patterns of employment and occupations indicate that there are differences in occupational choices between the male and the female gender. Due to the increase in the number of women attaining education in the United States, women have remained to be an integral part of the United States' workforce. However, statistics indicate that jobs that have traditionally been associated with men have continued to be male dominated and vice versa. For example most of the blue collar jobs that entail the operation of heavy machinery and other craftsman skills continue to be dominated by men. On other hand jobs such as clericals and other jobs in the service industry have continued to be dominated by women (Radford, 1998, p. 49). Despite the differences in occupational choices between men and women it is important to understand that there is more equality among men and women in jobs that entail management, technical, and other professional occupations. In the light of these characteristics of the job market this paper seeks to explain why there are gender differences in occupational choice.

Researchers have over the years continued to research and investigate about the difference that exists in the job choices between men and women. It is prudent to understand that the differences in occupations between men and women are not only brought about by the differences in occupational choices. Other factors such as the characteristics and demands of the occupations, and other market forces such as occupation segregation are believed to be some key factors that lead to occupational differences between men and women. Occupational segregation, for example, refers to the exclusion of certain individuals from a given kinds of jobs while the same people are highly represented in other kind of jobs. Gender is one of the

<https://assignbuster.com/research-paper-on-culture-inequality/>

segregating factors that are used to bar women from accessing some of the occupations that are male dominated.

Considering that occupational segregation based on gender is among the factors that shapes the differences in occupational choice between men and women, researchers have since the 1960s been involved in studying the implication of gender segregation in the job market. It is important that it during the 1960's and 1970's that various groups in the United States such as the Feminist movement arose with the intention of fighting for better representation of women in the work place. Despite the fight by feminist groups to create job environments that are more inclusive to women gender segregation has remained to be a key tendency many modern employment institutions today. Segregation in the labor market has led many women to go for jobs that they believe they will not be segregated against. However, it is important to understand that segregation in the work place has adverse effects both to the individuals being segregated and society as a whole. This is because it is due to the existent occupational segregation based on gender that there are substantial income gaps between men and women. This is because many women are forced to occupy low paying jobs such as clericals and in the service industry. Despite these jobs being low-paying the fact remains that these jobs are less stable because of the lack of job security. Secretaries can easily be fired, while it would take a huge process to replace a manager or a blue collar worker who has great experience in the operation of heavy machinery. One of the meta-questions that results from the idea of occupational segregation and its effect on occupational choice differences between men and women, is the question of what causes gender segregation to be part of the labor market. First of all, it is important to <https://assignbuster.com/research-paper-on-culture-inequality/>

understand that employers have the final verdict about whom they should hire and who they should not. However, employers have various factors that influence their decisions about who they should hire to a give job opportunity or occupation. Many employers are of the perception that women have different barriers that make it difficult for them to be hired into some crucial job positions. For example, in some cases are in need of maternity leaves, which some employers consider to cause adverse effects to the operations of a given job environment. Therefore, some of the cases of segregation that is propagated by employers are based on the long term effects that employees might have on the occupation that they occupy. Despite the substantial arguments that have been outlined by employers about the reason as to why they would prefer to have men and not women in some of the occupations, some scholars have written widely on a different perspective. Some of these scholars are of the view that differences in occupational choices between men and women are determined by the educational choices that men and women make early in their lives. For example men tend to take more technical courses such as engineering and similar specializations in college. On the other hand, women tend to prefer careers in medical and health care fields. These early educational choices that are made by men and women determine the post-graduation jobs that both of these genders end up in. This means that the educational choices influence men and women preference in terms of the kind of jobs that they apply.

Despite the fact that job application behavior to given jobs might be influenced by the educational choices that both men and women make in their early educational careers, the fact remains that the difference in occupation choices is also shaped by the fact that some of the application

<https://assignbuster.com/research-paper-on-culture-inequality/>

decisions to different jobs. Different studies have shown that applicants to jobs that are considered to be gendered in a given direction in most cases tend to belong to the same gender. For example, jobs that entail the use of heavy machinery tend to be male dominated. In this case most of the people who apply to those kinds of jobs are most likely to be men. Therefore, labor market segregation cannot be purely associated with the differences in occupational choices. This is because most job applicants do not apply to jobs that are considered to be dominated by the opposite gender despite the fact that their occupational attainment allows them to apply to these jobs. The decision to apply for a given job in both men and women is shaped by a couple factors. First of all, it is important to understand that any applicant to a job is concerned by the question of whether they are specific rewards that would be associated with attaining a given job. Some of the rewards that might be associated with given jobs would include ideas such as the possibility of attaining a promotion or the ability to generate more money within a given occupation. Taking a job that is predominantly occupied by members of the opposite gender poses the challenges of being able to rise through the ranks of a given job. For example, occupations such as nursing tend to be gendered towards women. Men might find it difficult applying to such jobs because the rewards of rising through the ranks in such a profession would at times be considered as being difficult to attain. Identification with a given occupation is also another important factor that shapes the possibility of a person to be able to apply for a given job. Men and women alike tend to take pride in the kind of jobs that they attain. For example, many men would consider it a prestige to operate heavy machinery. However, the same men might not take pride in the idea of being

<https://assignbuster.com/research-paper-on-culture-inequality/>

a nurse. Therefore, the identification of different gender with a given occupation might deter members of the different gender from applying for a given job. The third important factor that shapes the decision of whether both men and women are going to apply to a given job is the idea of whether applicants expect that they are going to get a given job. Both men and women are less likely to apply for a job which they are not sure that the stakes of getting a given job is high. The process of applying for a given job is demanding in some cases requires investment of money. However, men and women alike are not likely to apply for a job, where statistics show that a job is biased towards a given gender. This is because rejection in a given job opportunity comes with a psychological, monetary, and time. Therefore, occupational choice is highly shaped by the social and cultural expectations that both men and women might have regarding their success in being able to secure a particular job opportunity. Despite the facts that people are concerned about factors such as identification with a given job opportunity or the idea of rewards within a given job opportunity, the fact remains that there are some circumstances that force people to take up jobs that are sometimes they do not identify with. For example, some men end up taking up nursing careers because most of them are bread winners within their families. This means that jobs that have a higher pay despite the jobs being gendered towards the opposite gender are attractive in such cases.

In the midst of the idea of the behavior of both men and women in the application for different job opportunities, it is important to realize that culture plays a key role in shaping the occupational choices of both men and women. Cultural norms and beliefs that are present in society create constraints in both men and women regarding the jobs that they should apply

<https://assignbuster.com/research-paper-on-culture-inequality/>

for in the job market. Bearing in mind that women have over the years increased their levels of education, most women are concerned about the long-term benefits that their occupations might provide for them in the future. For example, women might in some cases fail to take up job opportunities in organizations or industries whereby women are readily hired at the entry level but find it difficult to ascend to higher managerial positions within the same organization. This means that short terms benefits from a given employment opportunity is not the only thing that both men and women are looking in the labor market (Steinmetz, 2012, p. 89). There are also concerned about their future in various occupational choices.

It is worthwhile to remember that many cultures have traditional linked women with the domestic sphere while their male counterparts have been associated with the public sphere. Despite the fact that many societies have over the years increased more equity in the responsibilities of the household to both men and women, the fact remains that the responsibility of care giving to different members of the house hold and children have in most cases been a key responsibility among women compared to men. Various studies indicate that women are more concerned about how their work effectively meshes with their house hold values. This would mean that women are concerned with ideas such as how their work hours would allow them to attend to their children effectively(McMullin, 2004)This trait of meshing work values to those of the household have been found to be existent even in young women who do not have children yet. Women are in most cases concerned about the ability to commute easily from their places of work or even their time of work. Men on the other hand are not very concerned about working late in the night. Most men who are married are

<https://assignbuster.com/research-paper-on-culture-inequality/>

not concerned about how their work meshes with household values because conventionally they assume that their wives or their women counterparts are going to take care of such responsibilities. This means that women would find it difficult to work in strict working environment that are not compatible with their family lives. This means that despite the fact that women are more likely to value work that men, they would find it difficult to work in occupations that do not reconcile between work and family demands.

Various studies have determined that women were more like to face work-family conflicts after to get children (Siltanen, 1994, p. 57) it is after many women working in executive careers get children that the amount of hours begins to reduce. This is because in some instances they have to respond to family emergency demands that relate to their children rearing responsibilities.

In addition to the responsibility of women to the family and the household, societies tend to create stereotypes about the capabilities of women right from a tender age. For example, subjects such mathematics has been associated with men. This is not to mean that women do not have the capacity to perform in those field, however cultural beliefs and norms have caused many women not try to pursue degrees in those areas. Failure to pursue some of masculine courses in colleges and other higher institutions of learning by women has been the reason why fewer women occupy careers that are believed to be gendered towards given careers. Many parents and members of the household tend to bring up their children with the notion that only masculine traits can be successful in many areas especially in the learning environment. This perception is detrimental to young women because they grow with the notion that females are inferior to the masculine

<https://assignbuster.com/research-paper-on-culture-inequality/>

gender and therefore their expectations of success both in the learning environment and the labor market are lower compared to those of their male counterparts (Watt & Eccles, 2008, p. 112).

Therefore, the differences in occupational choices between men and women are shaped by various factors within society. First of all, there is a traditional perception that some careers are gendered such that jobs such as operatives and craftsmen are predominantly male. On the other hand entry level careers such as secretaries and clericals have traditionally been associated with women. This stereotypical perception of the job market is not appropriate because it accounts for reasons why women and men alike do not look for jobs in occupations that are believed to be gendered. The second important factor that can be associated with the differences in occupational choices between men and women is the fact that there exists occupational segregation in various occupations. Various employers might not give employment opportunities to women on the grounds that women are less likely to reconcile their work values to their family demands. This means that the productivity of women in the work place is more likely to be put at stake because women may at times require attending to emergencies relating to their family members especially children. On the other hand, men are considered to be more flexible and not concerned about the reconciliation of work and family life. This is not to mean that women have lower value and productivity compared to their male counterparts. However, these stereotypes have been used in the work place to segregate against the employment of women in various careers.

References

McMullin, J. A. (2004). *Understanding social inequality: intersections of class, age, gender, ethnicity, and race in Canada*. Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press.

Radford, J. (1998). *Gender and choice in education and occupation*. London: Routledge.

Siltanen, J. (1994). *Locating gender: occupational segregation, wages, and domestic responsibilities*. London: UCL Press.

Steinmetz, S. (2012). *The contextual challenges of occupational sex segregation deciphering cross-national differences in Europe*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.

Watt, H. M., & Eccles, J. S. (2008). *Gender and occupational outcomes: longitudinal assessments of individual, social, and cultural influences*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.