

Gender issues
among lecturers in
the tertiary institutions
sociology essay



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This section of the chapter discusses the overview of the study. It illustrates areas such as the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, potential significance, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, operational definition of key terms, and the organization of the study. It highlights how the research was organized and carried out to arrive at its final work.

1. 1 Background of the Study

The issue of gender bias has become one of the most consistent violations of human rights, denying particularly women of their equality, dignity, security, self-worth, and has infringed their fundamental freedom. This endemic situation is prevalent in many developing countries of which Ghana is no exception. Mostly, the situation usually arises from considerable issues such as inequality in education, employment, and health outcomes. In Sub-Saharan Africa, there are a many discrepancies between sexes in education. Employment opportunities as well as wages and salaries tend differ greatly in developing countries (UNDP, 1995).

This situation tends to sideline women in many spheres of life. This is because they tend to be affected physically, mentally, psychologically and emotionally. Even though there have been interventions to ease the problem of gender inequalities in terms of education and employment, the encountering problems that tends to arise these days seems to be unaddressed. This is because; the limited number of female lecturers in tertiary institutions in the Ghana seems to be unchallenged. It is on the basis

of this that, this present study seeks to examine the causal factors and effects of gender disparities in education and employment.

1. 1 Problem Statement

The issue of gender with reference to education and employment in Ghana has resulted in limited human resource in terms of female lecturers in tertiary institutions. In Africa as a whole, women constitute 29% of Africa's academic staff, compared to the global figure of 41%. In the University of Ghana for instance, 24% of females are hired as academic staff. This is not a fair representation compared to male counterparts in the university. (Mama, 2008). Rathgerber (2002) argues that African tertiary institutions were set up to meet the need of male students. This has resulted in few women making it into senior administrative or academic/managerial positions. There is a continual shortage of women in professional, administrative, and clerical jobs. Manuh (1984) argues that as a result of low education women in the formal sector usually receive lower salaries and have less opportunities of promotion than their male counterparts. Even though there are many implementation plans of addressing gender inequalities in terms of education and employment of staff, the problem still seems to be unaddressed. The question therefore is what measures are being taken in place to help solve the problem of gender inequalities in terms of education and employment especially with women who tend to be most affected. Upon this issue is the basis for the research questions.

1. 2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to the continuous impact of gender

inequalities against women in Ghana

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To examine the causal factors that account for the gender inequalities in university staff

To analyze the effects of gender inequalities against women in terms of education and employment

To make recommendations to help solve the problem

1.3 The Research Questions

The research will answer the following questions

What is Gender Equality?

What factors are still causing gender disparities in terms of education and employment in Ghana?

How has gender inequality affected women in term of education and employment in Ghana?

What are the governmental interventions towards gender equality in education and employment?

What are the people and community doing to minimize gender disparities in Ghana?

1.4 Potential Significance

This study will be very beneficial to the cause of women, organizations, societies and the country as a whole. Governmental agencies such as the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, the Commission of Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Ghana National Labor Commission

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(GNLC) and even non-governmental organizations such as Women's Initiative for Self Empowerment (WISE), Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF), etc in their field of work. Additionally, it will help policy makers to formulate policies that will reinforce gender equality in Ghana. It will also provide some supportive evidence for further research studies.

1.5 Limitations

The study will be limited because of the following

Time: This may pose difficulty in how accurate data will be collected and analyzed

Finances: Interviewing many people especially women and children will pose some difficulties.

Data Collection: Cooperation and commitment on the part of lecturers to grant interviews and answer questionnaires are likely to affect data collection owing to their busy schedules.

Distance and Location: Due to the distance and location between the universities some questionnaires are likely to be distributed while some would be interviewed and this could affect the validity of results.

1.6 Delimitation

About ten male and female lecturers will be interviewed. They will be in the range of the lecturers from different departments of study within the university.

These participants will be selected through the snowball approach

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There will be the use of constant comparison approach for the qualitative data analysis to analyze the data.

1. 7 Operational definition of terms

Impact: Anything that affects individuals or a group positively or negatively.

Gender: A feature that differentiate between a male and a female

Equality: It is a way of treating a person fairly

Lecturers: People who are very high or occupy higher positions in an area of academics.

Tertiary: A high educational level

Institutions: A place where there are formal rules and mechanisms in achieving specific purposes.

1. 8 Organization of Chapters

The study will be divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1 consists of the introduction, the problem statement, objective of study, potential significance, and limitations of the study and the organization of the chapters.

Chapter 2 reviews existing literature based gender issues in education and employment in the world and Ghana as a whole

Chapter 3 will cover the methodology

Chapter 4 consists of data presentation, analysis, and discussions of the main findings.

Chapter 5 concludes the research with summary, conclusion and recommendations and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2

2. 0 Introduction

This chapter reviews theories from other literatures in relation to the topic and outlines subheadings from secondary sources. The review of literature on this study is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the theoretical framework that informs the study. The second part deals with the empirical studies that are relate to the study. The chapter will help readers understand how gender issues have affected the society and the world at large. Issues discussed here also reveal the theories of other authors concerning the answering of the research questions about the topic. The literature on both divisions will be group under suitable headings.

2. 1 Review of Literature

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Gender disparities tend to be very wide and high on the international policy agenda and the world at large. This situation has become an area of concern to many individuals, organizations and the society at large. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2005) reports that there is a continual discrepancy in education and employment opportunities in terms of gender related issues in Sub-Saharan Africa. Gender disparities still persist in these economies which tend to affect their productivity and the economic growth

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of such countries. Ghana is not far from this example. This is because, in Ghana even though women make up 51% of the population, they only represent 39% of the economically active group that tends to show the conceptual biases and disparities with regard to the activities of women (Ghana Statistical Service, 1984). In all these circumstances, the women are those who tend to suffer greatly affected than their male counterparts.

Majority of women in Ghana continue to be disadvantaged in terms of education and employment opportunities. Several factors that cause this situation may include lack of education, and societal or cultural perception of women relative to their capabilities and needs.

On the issue of education research on gender studies proves that there is inequitable gender dynamics that reflects in students' enrolment in most universities and colleges, opportunities, output, achievement and status (Mama, 2008). This assertion seems to be obvious because women constitute 25% of enrolled students while only 3% tend to assume professoriate level. (Ayayi et al, 1996). In recent studies women's overall enrolments remain far below parity, about 30% of the total enrolment; specifically in Ghana constituting about 35% of enrolment (Ashewa, 2007). This makes education for females to lags behind that for males.

On the side of employment, gender disparities continue to exist in employment opportunities. Statistics on censuses and labor forces in terms of work have led to varying degrees of women being underestimated in labor force participation (Dixon-Mueller, 1985). In Ghana even though women make up 51% of the population, they only represent 39% of the economically

active group that tends to show the conceptual biases and disparities with regard to the activities of women (Ghana Statistical Service, 1984). It is quite obvious to deduce that, this trend tends to affect productivity and economic growth of the country.

2. 2 Empirical Basis of the Study

A close view of Ghana Christian University College shows that upon all the 34 lecturers in the institution, only two of them are females. (Nortety, 2010).

This gender composition is extremely very low and do not show a trend in progress. In the University of Ghana for instance, the low numbers of faculty lecturers have improved slowly. Statistics shows that some department within the university still lack female lecturers especially Physics department, which were not employing females until 1990s. In both faculty and administrative staff, female senior lecturers have almost consistently been only 3. 3% to 4. 4% of the total staffing, while male lecturers constitute between 14% to 17% (Tsikata, 2007). Even in terms of lectureship rankings, women are disproportionately represented in the lower grade of lectureship. This is because while 79% of men are occupying higher lectureship positions, 20. 3% of females are in lower lectureship positions (Tsikata, 2007) This situation has resulted from several factors but the consistent reasons are the fact that women seems to abandon their studies at the first degrees and the demands of their biological and social roles as wives and mothers. Fagerson and Jackson (2004) even confirm that women have been socialized to subordinate their careers in favor of their families. This situation does not seem to be different in most tertiary institutions. In other African countries, such as the Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Uganda the available figures for the

proportion of women employed as faculty members are as low as 12. 4%, 17. 6% and 19. 7% respectively compared to their male counterparts. (Teferra and Altbach, 2003). This trend shows that only a limited number of females occupy senior administrative positions.

Defining Gender Equality

Even though, gender equality is broad issue on the international agenda there is no general accepted definition of the term. This is because it is broad concept that is best understood within the wider context of social exclusion that is the systematic discrimination of individuals based on characteristics such as sex, economic status, sex, race, ethnicity, language and even health status. The United Nations however defines gender “ as social-cultural construct, and underscores the social relations between men and women, in which women are systematically subordinated” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 15). This definition points out that women are restricted and underprivileged in one way or the other. On the basis of this explanation, the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report on education in 2003 explains that gender equality therefore implies that male and females have equal opportunities to realize their full human rights and contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural and political development. (UNESCO, 2003). This therefore means that gender equality has wider circles of development to cover not only on education but also other aspect on development.

Key Terms in Gender Equality

According to the gender equality framework report by EQUATE (2007), three key terms of explaining gender equality were explored. They are parity, equity and equality. By parity, it meant that propositional representation of boys and girls in an education system relative to the population per age group. The UNESCO (2003) reports that parity can be attained when the same proportion of boys and girls have access to an education system, are able to achieve their educational goals and advance through different cycles. Subrahmanian (2005) said that achieving gender equality in education does not only means reaching parity in enrollments and increasing access to education but should be considered as a an outmost measure of progress.

By equity, the report explains that it is the process of being fair to male and females. In simple terms, equity does not mean treating all people the same because some people in one way or the other might be disadvantaged in achieving equitable outcomes in terms of learning. For example, people with disabilities are usually sidelined in many educational policies. On this basis the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2000) affirms that equal treatments should be not be different but there should be equal terms in rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. The report stressed that parity and equity are therefore the measurable instruments in achieving gender equality in education. This is because; equity mechanisms such as scholarships have been used in achieving parity in educational enrollments rates.

By equality, the report explains that males and females have equal rights, freedoms, conditions, and opportunities for realizing their full potential in society. This simply means that women should have the same opportunities

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in life as men, including the ability to take part in the public sphere. The explanation however denotes a liberal feminist idea in the sense that preventing discrimination in terms of equal opportunities for women makes them to achieve equal status to their male counterparts. It is based on these differentiations and problems that the Beijing Conference in 1995 was held among national governments, international agencies, non-governmental organizations and individuals to make and develop strategies on gender equitable and equality policies to narrow the gap between male and females and to give equal treatment and opportunities to women who tend to be sidelines in terms of development.

Causes of Gender Imbalance in Institutions

With many activisms, advocacies from individuals, businesses, governmental and non-governmental agencies, local and international bodies such as the United Nations Economical, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), International Labor Organization (ILO), and even world conferences including the Beijing Conference and the Millennium Development Goals which have sought to narrow the gap between men and women and to have equal opportunities, there are still causal factors that contribute to gender imbalances in many institutions in our societies and the world at large. The causal factors that contribute immensely to this gender imbalances include the following:

Absence of Gender Equity Policies in Institutions

One of the contributory factors to the cause of gender imbalances in higher institutions is the lack of gender equality and equity policies in most <https://assignbuster.com/gender-issues-among-lecturers-in-the-tertiary-institutions-sociology-essay/>

institutions in world at large. Bennett (2002) observed that in Africa, most of the tertiary institutions do not any forms of gender equity policies and even lack plans to increase female enrolments. He further stressed that even where interventions are being enforced, little attention has been received. Even though higher education institutions are obliged to respect and honor national, regional and international policy commitments to gender equality signed by their governments, these institutions by and large do not respond to these policies to achieve full intervention of gender equality policies. According to Bennett, 18 out of 24 gender units exist in most African university campuses undertaking research and activism functions. Such units are found in universities such as the University of Ghana, Ibadan University in Nigeria, University of Dar es Salaam, and University of Western Cape in South Africa among others. In the University of Ghana for instance, these equity policies are old and have not generated much controversy (Ofosu, 2006). Ellison (2001) therefore stipulates that the establishment of structures such as labor markets, legislative policies, culture and politics are managed by men and they carry out these situations by employing men to come after them especially into positions of power. This therefore means that in terms of employment and education, men continue to dominate in such spheres. It is therefore obvious to assert that, the absence of these gender equity policies has resulted in limited female lectureships in many institutions.

Lower Admission and Female Enrolments in Institutions

It is easily seen in most African universities that female enrolments have been consistently low. In terms of admission, there has been low admission <https://assignbuster.com/gender-issues-among-lecturers-in-the-tertiary-institutions-sociology-essay/>

and enrolments because of inadequate and unqualified females to enter into tertiary institutions. With higher demand for education for both sexes, the preference for educating boys still keeps on going. Higher institutions for the girl-child education are however limited in countries. For instance, in Ghana there are more boarding secondary schools for males than females (Manuh, 1984). Manuh further provides that even in the mixed schools, there are more facilities in place for males than females. Although, there exists affirmative action in most tertiary universities to lower the cut off points for more females to be enrolled, the number is far below parity as to male students enrollments. With a lower cut off points for female students, Ayayi and other provides that there was an increase in enrollment from 21% to 27% in the Ghana between 1990 and 1999. Furthermore, " The net enrolment of children in primary school constitutes 68% in South Asia with 12% more than girls enrolled" (Bellamy, 1999 p. 55). A report from UNESCO (2002) also confirms that literacy rate for male and female adults were 92% and 80% respectively in East Asia, and this has reduced the gender gap. This means the low enrolments of females in education has become a global phenomenon. Considering African universities, in general women enrolment constituted 25% (Ajayi et al, 1996). This still explains that the number as compared to male students' enrollment is far below parity. Contrary to this basis is the result of limited women in tertiary institutions.

Socio-Cultural Constraint on Women

Many socio cultural beliefs, values and practices have restricted many females from pursuing higher and advanced studies. The traditional factors arising and resulting into gender gap include less value of education for <https://assignbuster.com/gender-issues-among-lecturers-in-the-tertiary-institutions-sociology-essay/>

females, early marriages, and early value on motherhood, domestic labor among others. The problem can also be resulted from poverty, which is a major constraint on families finding it difficult to send their girl-child to school especially in the developing countries (UNESCO, 2002). In Ghana, the preference for educating both sexes tends to shift to males rather than females. This is because; certain roles such as childrearing, household chores especially washing and cooking of food, as well as work outside the home have been gendered. However, the prevailing factor affecting most on the gender gap in the traditional institution is as a result of marriage. Mostly the females are easily prone to early marriages with the view of giving birth early and maintain their family. However, these females who fall under the influence of early marriage find it difficult to maintain their homes. For instance, it is affirmed by Mehrotra and Jolly (1997) that women who are educated marry afterwards, have fewer children and even maintain themselves well and their children. They further argued that, such women also seek medical attention for children and themselves which will eventually lead to higher survival rate of both the women and the children. Many studies suggest that there are conjugal situations that are related to spouses in marriages, and over 90% of women tend to suffer abuses (Dobash and Dobash, 1979 and Schwartz, 1987). This specifically means that domestic violence against women usually happens within the context of societal framework where public, family and individual relations are based on male authority and power. Kabeer (1998) even states that the intrahousehold relations are indeed characterized by power. These and many others are contributory constraints and challenges that militate against education of females in our societies.

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Insufficient Role Models

By and large all over the world, there are very less and few educated women occupying leadership positions and other professional careers to help encourage more females to enter into tertiary institutions and subsequently reach higher potentials in the educational ladder. It would have been a welcome development to have many women becoming writers, novelists, professors, lecturers but the trend of gender gap still remains the same. Presently, Ghana Christian University College can boast of only three female lecturers (Nortey, 2010). Nortey also confirms that only three females graduated in 2010 among eighteen students in the School of Community Development. In the School of Theology, there was no female representation. This gender disparity is most severe at higher positions and administrative levels in most universities around the globe. It is somehow clear that, the senior positions in tertiary institutions are mostly males. In the University of Zimbabwe, only a single woman is at the professor level (Ayayi et al, 1996).

High Rates of Unemployment for Graduates

Unemployment rates of graduates in African countries are always in a recession. In many West African countries and Ghana in particular, owing to depressed economies coupled with academic programmes that are unrelated to the job market, unemployment rates for male and female graduates are usually high. This has contributed negatively to how most females do not make any attempts in getting into tertiary institutions. Even where there are employment opportunities, the opportunities for the males are usually higher

than the females. In Ghana women accounts for 51% of the total population and 39% forms the economic active group. Women are generally given employment in lower levels economic activities such as trade, agriculture, small and medium scale manufacturing. There is therefore a deficit of women getting employment into formal sectors of the Ghanaian economy even after completing a degree. In 1984 with women constituting 51% of the populations only 9% of women were employed into managerial and administrative positions (Ghana Statistical Service, 1984). This shows a wide gap of gender disparity. In contrast, women who are even gainfully employed in the formal sector receive lower salaries and have less chances of promotion than their male counterparts as a result of lower levels of education (Manuh, 1984). Additionally, studies on gender discrimination indicate that female managers are more discriminated against male managers in promotional opportunities (Arnold and Shnew, 1988). In many institutions especially in tertiary academic institutions, there are virtually no strict mechanisms for dealing with occupational hazards such as sexual harassments. This makes most institutions to be women friendly and has contributed negatively to women moving into higher educational positions thereby leading into higher employment positions.

The table below shows the unemployment rates in terms of gender and age groups.

Age Group

Male

Females

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15- 24

12. 7%

18. 7%

25- 44

7. 3%

7. 5%

45-64

4. 8%

4. 5%

Source: Ghana Statistical Service (Unemployment Rate 1984-2000)

This table therefore indicates that unemployment rates among females are high than males.

Effects of Gender Disparities in Education and Employment

Chapter 3

3. 0 Methodology

This chapter will discuss the research design, the population and sample. It will also discuss the instruments to be used in the data collection, the procedure for data collection and the method for data analysis.

The research design

The research design for this research will be that of a survey. The survey method will involve data collection and analysis from key women personnel who holds executive positions in tertiary institutions. The data will be observed, classified and formulate hypothesis.

3. 2 The Population

The target populations of this study are four tertiary institutions in Ghana such as the Ghana Christian University College, Valley View University, University of Ghana and Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). This is because of there are limited number of women who are lecturers in these institutions

3. 3 Sampling Procedure

In getting a fair response, the sampling procedure or technique will be to interview two women and male lecturers in to find out why there are few females in lectureship positions in the universities. The interview will be done with the help of recorder which will later be transcribed. Additionally, questionnaires will be prepared for those who are very busy and will be demanded from them when answered. Purposive sampling approach and the snowball approach will also be used since lecturers in one field of study will be able to direct you to a specific lecturer who lecturers in gender related subjects for the needed information for the study.

3. 4 Research Instrument

The most effective instruments to be sued to collect the data are through questionnaires and the snowball approach. The questionnaires will be based

on researcher's objectives in an orderly manner in order to obtain a solution to the problem. In terms of the snowball approach, both the questions will be based on closed and opened questions. Recorder cassette is likely to be used for the interview. Observations will also be used by the researcher.

3. 5 Data Collection Procedure

Ten questionnaires will be used for each respondent. The answers to these questionnaires will be solicited through one-on-one interview.

3. 6 Data Analysis

For analysis, the outcome of the data collected will be analyzed, hypothesized and qualitatively interpreted.

Chapter 4

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3. 7 Discussion of Findings

The findings of the data collected will be interpreted for easy understanding.

Chapter 5

4. 0 Summary, Suggestions and recommendations

Based on the research findings, the findings will be summarized while appropriate measures will be suggested or recommended to eradicate or minimize the problem entirely.

4. 1 Conclusion

It can be concluded that gender inequality is one of the violations of fundamental human rights. In spite of its numerous effects against women, laws are not effectively enforced to make the act work in practice.