

Education and women's right

[Sociology](#), [Human Rights](#)



In Mary Wollstonecraft's book, "A Vindication of the Rights of Women", she covers a broad range of topics in each chapter concerning the equality of women compared to men. To be clear, Wollstonecraft is not indicating that male and female are made mentally and physically the same but wants her readers to understand that both are equal when it comes to acquiring an education and their position in the workplace. This is a point that she debated with opposing theorists' statements against women, proving their perceptions were wrong.

At one point, Wollstonecraft becomes upset about the way women are perceived through statements made by society like, "Men are brainstormers that could hold a career and women are pretty trophies that could bare children" (). The writer gives readers no choice but to understand that women share the significance as men: women are not just beautiful housewives capable of raising kids. With that being said, how does a woman acquire such authority? What helps a woman be seen by her spouse, boss, and society as equal? An education. Many times, women are denied certain job positions or seen as the inferior in a work setting or even a relationship. However, an education is a necessity, as well as a bonus for women when it comes to acquiring self-empowerment, equality, and authority in the workplace and the home.

? What is the true definition of empowerment? Although it can be defined several ways, empowerment is the process and steps for becoming stronger and more confident. Whether it is for directing one's life on a better path, or claiming one's rights, empowerment is that push, or confidence needed to achieve at a higher level. Therefore, empowerment and education work hand

in hand. For decades, unequal opportunities between genders have halted and delayed the woman's ability to improve themselves. In "Gender, Change and Identity: Mature Women Students in Universities" by Barbara Merrill, she says, "To what extent, therefore, does learning as a mature woman student result in fulfillment, self-realization and a changed identity? The dialectic between structure and agency becomes a crucial dimension in analyzing how women's lives are both shaped by structural forces and their own actions" (Merrill 3). The phrase "changed identity" is very important because any woman in the process of receiving a degree will be different after taking in new skills and intelligence. Education is the key and tool utilized to empower women with knowledge, skill, and self-confidence, resulting in equal rights. "Hence, womenfolk are indispensable in growth and development of a nation, the study therefore recommended that women should be allowed access to quality education so as to be adequately empowered" (Taiwo T, Opubiyi, and Ramat). A woman who has obtained an education puts herself in a position to not only be a threat and leader in the workplace, but also become a better parent and citizen. Men become afraid of a woman who can acquire the same job as them, which may mean a higher pay grade. Although the economic opportunity is a perk of receiving a degree, it also gives a woman the confidence to not only excel in the classroom or university halls, but also adds a vibrant sense of assertiveness. Wollstonecraft states, "Consequently, the most perfect education, in my opinion, is such an exercise of the understanding as it best calculated to strengthen the body and the heart. Or in other words to enable the individual to attain such habits of virtue as will render it independent" (Wollstonecraft

160). Education starts with the feeling of wanting better for oneself; to grow as a better individual in all aspects. Striving for an education allows room for goals to be set and surpassed, for a man or a woman. However, a woman without an education could simply be seen as lesser or lack skills that may make her good for nothing but being this "pretty trophy" that Wollstonecraft's opposing theorists mention. A woman who has worked for everything and took the time to receive an education, learning new skills and work ethics will not settle for being a man's eye candy. The degree not only adds authority and confidence to a woman's demeanor, but also forces society to see her as equal.

? In the book "Love's Labor" by Eva Feder Kittay, the author covers essays on women, equality, and dependency in many aspects from politics to parenthood. The author states, "Equality-based politics have failed women in the public arena as well as in the private sphere, neither achieving their goal in representation in political office nor in sharing of domestic chores and childrearing responsibilities" (Kittay 3). Political equality ensures that everyone receives equal treatment under law, however according to the author women not receiving this fair treatment are affected in the workplace, as well as the home. The most efficient way for a woman to achieve equality is to acquire an education. Women with an education lower the gender wage gap especially in this day in age because of the number of women receiving a bachelor's degree over men. "Detours on the Road to Equality: Women, Work, and Higher Education", an article by Jerry A. Jacobs, backs up this statement well. In the article Jacobs states, "Women are earning college degrees in increasing numbers, but entering male-dominated occupations at

a decreasing pace. These two developments are linked. Work barriers may be leading women to take a detour to college" (The Inequality Reader Chapter 45, Jacobs 1). Although women are not entering these fields quickly, the point is women are turning to education before doing so. A woman must have the confidence to enter these male-dominated occupations. With that being said, it stems back to empowerment. An educated woman who now feels empowered and confident has a high self-esteem walking into any job, demanding equality for herself; whether the job is male, or female, influenced.

? Well-known author Cheng Cheng said, " In nuclear households, women with a higher level of education have a higher probability of having the final say in household decisions" (Cheng 1). A nuclear household consists of a husband, wife, and in some instances a child. In relevance these more serious relationships, duties like maintaining the home's wellbeing, paying bills, and both making money to pay these bills. Not only does an education for women show different results in the work place, but also shows with the amount of authority and " say so" at home. Throughout history there has always been this stereotype that women raise the children, and men bring home the money. Women cook and clean, while men rest and enjoy television after a long day of work. However, if a woman possesses a higher education there are very important love and duty factors changed in the household. This could cause a high sense of insecurity and low self-esteem for the husband in some cases, raising the question of does salary and education matter in a relationship? On the other hand, in the workplace, men are more likely to receive high respect and authority. In an article titled "

Authority at Work: How Men and Women Differ” by Martha S. Hill, she states, “ Men enjoy a more positive wage effect from attaining authority than women do and men are more likely to attain authority than women” (Hill 1). In a way it seems as if women must work two times harder to get equality when competing with men at the job. Hill comes back to say, “ Higher education produces the skills or credentials for higher position socializes individuals to the work habits for higher positions and through an ideology of rule by expert's education legitimizes inequalities of power” (Hill 1). The only way for a woman to be seen as equal is to acquire a higher education, which will lower the gender wage gap in due time.

? It has been observed that the more educated a woman is, the happier and healthier she will be in all aspects. The key to growth and sustainability comes from a woman's education, creating genuine choices over the lives they want to live. “ A Vindication of the Rights of Women” by Wollstonecraft also says, “ Strengthen the female mind by enlarging it, and there will be an end to blind obedience” (Wollstonecraft). There are several ways a woman could become stronger and empower herself, but education is the best solution. Wollstonecraft's opposing theorists are very wrong in their perceptions of women, saying they are just “ pretty trophies”. However, the only way these theorists are right is if a woman chooses to not receive an education, becoming inferior to their spouse and just responsible for the children. The women with no education or goal of excelling will always be just a housewife. If any female wants to pursue equal rights and opportunity an education is the answer! Only an educated woman stands a chance being seen equally by her employers when it comes to the workplace and it can be

shown through the number of women in male-dominated fields. The higher the education means the higher the opportunity of receiving equality, certain positions, and authority. It starts within the woman to want it for herself. Once she is empowered and determined, opportunity begins to open up. After she has the confidence and drive to succeed because of her higher education, receiving equality will not only be essential to her, but it will become a necessity and priority.