

The Impact of Gender Inequality in Higher Education on Female Employment

Chenyu Cao^{1, †}, Huiyi Duan^{2, *, †} and Li Lan NG^{3, †}

¹ School of Sociology, Leeds University, Leeds, the UK

² School of Preschool education, Xuchang University, Xuchang, China

³ School of QSI international school of Shekou, Shenzhen, China

* Corresponding Author Email: 15011020525@xs.hnit.edu.cn

†These authors contributed equally

Abstract. Under the premise of Gender Stereotyping in education, the difference between males and females at the stage of higher education somewhat restricts the future employment development of females. Throughout this paper, it develops a series of studies on the future employment development of females around the gender inequality existing in the higher education stage. By reviewing existing literature and data, it examines the current situation of women in higher education and how it affects them. This paper analyses the impact on women's future employment choices by looking at the gender stereotypes of women in higher education, the curriculum and choices of higher education, and the representation and lack of gender equality in higher education. Therefore, this passage will discover the requirements of women's educational expectations and the influence of factors on women's employment, the consciousness of gender inequality through the teaching process of higher education, and the analysis and suggestions on the status quo of gender equality education in colleges.

Keywords: Higher Education; Women; Gender Equality; Employment Impact.

1. Introduction

Although awareness of gender equality has increased in recent decades, there has been some increase in the level of participation of men and women in higher education, and in some regions, there is a higher proportion of women in higher education. Women in higher education continue to be affected by gender inequality in terms of job opportunities and job orientation. In the context of gender stereotypes in higher education, there are different expectations of women in higher education at both the family and social levels, the division of labour and job choices also are somewhat different for men and women. These beliefs can influence young people's career choices, leading to the mutual reinforcement of gender stereotypes and gender gaps in career-related interests and choices. Previous work on gender inequality has been considered more in terms of events in the workplace, such as women receiving lower wages when men and women are in the same job, and men being more likely to have better full-time jobs than women, while gender inequality in higher education has been more easily overlooked than gender inequality in the workplace. This study examines the impact of women's higher education aspirations on their career plans from both a family and social perspective, in order to analyse the role of women's career progression and the higher education they receive, as well as to make recommendations on the problems that women face in higher education in practice.

2. The Impact of Stereotypes in Higher Education Expectations on Female Employment

2.1 Family Expectations for Women in Higher Education

According to research, it can be found that the educational expectations generated by the family environment led by parents act on their children's expectations of their own education and achievement, which further influences their children's social status and salary levels. On top of this,

there is a certain consumer value for parents in educating their children, and it is a common perception of gender bias that female education is more of a luxury behaviour than male education. In other words, a patriarchal mindset is one of the key factors preventing women from pursuing higher education, and women are more likely to be treated by their families as labourers who produce value in times of economic hardship. This is an important factor in why the level of national income is directly proportional to women's expectations of higher education. Furthermore, a family structure in which the future of the family is dominated by men, with women as secondary and subordinate members of the family, this kind of phenomenon is a long-standing one in China. As a result, families have lower expectations of higher education for women than for men, and when parents have a mindset of investment in their children's education, families perceive higher returns to education for men than for women. When subjected to the ideology of gender-unequal family education, the proportion of women in higher education is also relatively lower, their decision is influenced by active or passive factors and they choose not to continue their studies.

2.2 Social Division of Labour Expectations for Female Higher Education

Patriarchy's shaping of the division of labour in society was also reinforced by the orderly social structure of patriarchy, which gradually positioned the roles and status of men and women in society. Although there has been progress in the area of gender equality in China, the 'gender revolution' has been hindered from proceeding smoothly by the need to distinguish between male and female labour in the public and domestic spheres. With increased awareness of gender equality, women's social roles have expanded to include economic responsibilities, but the division of responsibility for domestic work has yet to be equitable. That is to say, in contrast to the positive attitude towards the recognition of equal work opportunities for men and women in the public sphere of employment, the perception of women as the main workforce in the private sphere of the home continues to be shared. Women's educational attainment and female labour force participation rates are directly proportional, and as women become more educated, their labour force participation rate increases, especially in relatively well-paying jobs. Women are more likely to go on to further education when they realise that they have more employment options with higher education, but society recognises that women can be confined to unpaid work in the private sector. The current division of labour in society expects women to pursue higher education more specifically to be able to have a certain level of literacy and to be nurturing mothers or educated wives. Thus, there is the question of whether and how women can choose to pursue higher education as stereotypes of the division of labour between men and women solidify.

2.3 The Impact of Higher Education Expectations on Female Employment

The shared family and social expectations of women in higher education, and the stereotypes that they reinforce, indirectly or directly, contribute to the creation of unequal expectations of men and women in higher education. In addition to this, analysis of the data shows that women are expected by society to be better suited to participate in more socially sensitive human-centred jobs, while men are seen as more adaptable to mastering technical and competitive positions, hence the low representation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Women also have tendency to choose the same few sectors, for example, the service sector is a sector where women are more involved, in contrast to men who dominate the government and technology sectors. The employment choices of women are closely linked to the expectations of higher education, both in terms of family and social stereotypes of women's access to higher education, which expect women to be auxiliary and subordinate. It can therefore be observed that women are expected by society to concentrate on labour in the private sphere in preference to men. Based on the gender roles of men and women in a patriarchal social structure, men occupy the main leadership position in the public sphere, while women's initiative is usually allowed to be exercised in the domestic sphere, which has implications for women's access to higher education and in their subsequent employment choices.

3. Impact on Women throughout the Process of Higher Education

3.1 The Impact of the Curriculum in Higher Education on Women

The curriculum in higher education mainly includes course structure and course content, with the rapid development of higher education for women in recent years, according to the survey, the proportion of female students in higher education in China is more than half of the total number of college students in the country. However, there is still this problem that the higher education curriculum system is not complete. Throughout one aspect, studies around women are almost non-existent in college while this is a very feminine course designed to improve the quality of women's education. Throughout this course, more women can popularize different facts in higher education which specifically address the current situation of women. In this way, when women face employment problems, they can solve the problem from the psychological and value aspects specifically for women. At the same time, although the proportion of female college students accounts for half of the total number of college students in the country, women are still disadvantaged in employment issues. Therefore, the setting of feminist studies in higher education provides the opportunity for female students to clearly recognize their own potential, which is extremely important for women's future employment.

3.2 Influence of Major Division through Higher Education on Women's Employment Direction

The gender division of subjects and majors in higher education has gradually become common, and the division of arts and science in high school has greatly restricted women's choice of majors in college. Moreover, people's inherent thoughts between males' and females' decisions, males often to choose a science-related major, and females always choose a literature-related major. Therefore, this becomes a concept that women usually prefer liberal arts, such as language, management, or teaching. The proportion of females in college choosing science and technology majors, such as mechanical engineering and electrical engineering, is much lower than the proportion of males in college majors. This indirectly leads to the extreme imbalance between men and women in 985 and 211 universities in China, and even the phenomenon of gender restriction in some majors. Among 39 high-ranking universities in China, except for the Minzu University of China, and the proportion of women is more than 50%, the proportion of women in all other universities is less than that of men. When women enter college, though they have a chance to study, gender inequality in college makes them get a higher possibility of narrowing through that time. Moreover, it narrows down their future employment direction and career choice opportunities. According to the survey, the employment situation of female college students is cruel, the employment rate of female graduates is only 80% of the employment rate of male graduates. However, the time cost required for female students to be employed is higher, while the corresponding choices are fewer. Analysis shows that within one month after graduation, the proportion of male graduates finding jobs reaches 43.25%, while the proportion of female graduates finding jobs is only 23.65% in total. What's more, the professions with relatively higher income for men and women after employment are mostly science and technology, which means the professions with a high proportion of men, and the liberal arts in education with a high proportion of women, with relatively lower income.

3.3 The Influence of the Teaching Process in Higher Education on Women's Employment

In the dynamic classroom, there are different interactions between men and women with their teachers. For example, in the same classroom, teachers generally prefer to find male students to answer some innovative, more personal thought questions, while the questions usually found for female students to answer are more memory-based and do not require too much interactive nature. This is a gender difference that teachers are not aware of in the teaching process. In other words, teachers subconsciously believe that men are intellectually superior and that women's success is only due to hard work. Such problems in the dynamic classroom indirectly led to less active and motivated

women in the classroom. This results in the traditional belief that women are less capable than men and that they should be knowledgeable and belong to the family domain. This greatly exacerbates the stereotypes that women are subjected to in this process. In the static teaching process, the gender difference and imbalances in the teaching materials affect the development of female students even more. According to the relevant data, at this stage, men have more social education resources than women and there is a large difference in social expectations for the benign teaching of men and women. Teaching materials are usually male-dominated, and the women in them usually appear in a virtuous shape, which is a hidden gender stereotype of women in the teaching materials. This ubiquitous gender stereotype affects the employment development women face upon graduation, thus when female graduates begin to seek employment, they are often labeled as incompetent and inexperienced, leading them to be unappreciated. At the same time, this can effectively lead to the employment options of female graduates being restricted.

4. Challenges and Suggestions of Gender Equality Education in Higher Education for Women's Employment

4.1 Lack of Gender Equality Education in Universities

The lack of gender equality education in universities is mainly reflected in three aspects: the lack of educational content, the lack of gender awareness of educators, and the lack of educational environment. In fact, the lack of gender equality education is also an important factor causing women's employment problems.

4.1.1 The lack of gender equality education in colleges and universities and the main problems faced at present.

Universities pay attention to the all-around development of moral education, intellectual education, physical education, and aesthetic education, but in the actual teaching process, there is a lack of gender education for students. In the questionnaire, "Do you think there is gender education awareness in the context of ideological and political education courses or teachers' teaching?" Although 45.45% of the respondents think they have, nearly 48.50% did not know it. This shows that in the education of daily life, teachers ignored gender education even more. Ignoring the importance of gender equality in the growth of students and ignoring gender differences between men and women. At the same time, in the selection of curriculum and syllabus content, gender education courses are few and far between. Even if some of them are related, more attention is paid to the emotional aspects of the sexes.

4.1.2 Educators lack awareness of gender equality

Gender education has not been paid attention to in universities before, which has caused a shortage of teachers. In school life, many teachers will involuntarily pay more attention to boys, and intentionally or unintentionally promote the idea that men are strong, and women are weak. It also makes students get the wrong gender awareness in the subconscious mind. According to the questionnaire data, only 7.07% of students who learned the concept of "gender education" chose to study in the classroom. Among them, 41.41% of the students asserted that in the course of their ideological education, there exists a phenomenon of gender discrimination (such as teaching activities and campus cultural activities). It can be seen from this that in college classrooms, teachers are obviously lacking in imparting gender education awareness. Gender equality education in universities has unclear educational rights and responsibilities, and there is no department specifically responsible for carrying out relevant teaching. Universities do not carry out gender equality education as a separate curriculum. Or they think gender education can be regarded as a kind of moral education, especially traditional moral cultivation. Ignoring Education Gender Equality Education is a subject that requires long-term, clarity and professionalism.

4.1.3 The lack of an educational environment

The influence of ancient patriarchal ideology on modern Chinese society still exists, and in some places, it is still a stubborn bad habit. This also has a serious impact on the development of a gender equality environment in universities. For example, the gender ratio in the personnel structure of universities varies greatly, and the phenomenon of "men are superior to women" easily indoctrinates university students with the wrong knowledge of gender equality, which will affect women's expectations of their gender roles. Even in future employment, women will lose confidence in striving for higher positions. At the same time, the problem of gender differences among professional teachers in colleges and universities is also very serious. According to the 2017 China Education Statistical Yearbook, women account for half of the full-time teachers in universities and colleges, but there is a significant gap between female teachers and male teachers in high-level professional, technical, and administrative leadership positions, such as professors, doctoral supervisors and school leaders. Lack of educational resources, professional teachers, standard teaching materials and a complete curriculum system. The conventional wisdom is that women are not suitable for high-intensity, high-tech, leadership and enterprising jobs, and are not suitable for pursuing high education and high salary. If scientists, cadres, entrepreneurs and doctors are female, they will be regarded as freaks, or they may be suspected of being "superior" through some improper way. On the contrary, men are expected to be engaged in enterprising occupations. If men are engaged in occupations related to modeling, clerical work, baking, tailoring, nursing, etc., they are considered sissy, weak, failed and unproductive men. The traditional mode of husband and wife and social division of labor stipulate that men should occupy a substantial position in the "thousand events", while women occupy a virtual position; Men occupy the main position of society, while women are at the edge; Men belong to careers and women belong to families. These realities, which are based on the feudal ideology of "son preference" and "strong men and weak women", are not only conducive to women's employment, but also to the in-depth implementation of gender equality education in colleges and universities.

4.2 Suggestions on Promoting Gender Equality Education for Women's Employment in Universities

4.2.1 Special courses on gender equality education in universities

It can be set as a compulsory course to teach students to identify and resist gender discrimination and help students establish a correct concept of gender equality. In such courses, students can discuss marriage and love issues, and legal knowledge lectures on domestic violence and sexual assault can be set up. In the process of guiding the construction of student associations, gender education-related fields can be expanded. In addition, in the daily work of students, we should encourage the gender balance of student cadres and give full play to the practice and application of gender education.

4.2.2 Create a harmonious and equal cultural environment for gender education

First of all, we should strengthen the gender education awareness of college educators, and actively focus on the introduction of gender education awareness in teaching content and methods. Secondly, various campus cultural activities to promote gender equality are held to guide their physical and mental health and overall development. Schools should strengthen the quality of educators, improve their profound understanding of gender equality education and apply it in the actual education process. At the same time, universities, as an important place for spreading advanced ideas, have a good classroom environment, which is to cultivate students' complete gender personality and promote their harmonious and balanced development. Create a good atmosphere for the topic, vigorously promote the idea of "equality and freedom" and implement the concept of "gender education".

5. Conclusion

This paper sums up the impact of stereotypes in higher education expectations on female employment, the impact of women's educational opportunities and degrees in higher education on female employment, and the impact of higher education integrated with gender equality education on female employment. We can get "The difference of gender roles between male and female in the education of patriarchal society; The unreasonable setting of courses and majors in higher education and the lack and weakness of gender equality education in higher education." These three main conclusions affect women's employment. The study is helpful for higher education workers and leaders to think about what is wrong with the current education about gender equality and make improvements. It is also hoped that colleges and universities will have a good atmosphere of gender equality in the future so that college students can establish a correct concept of gender equality and drive society to improve the status quo of inequality in female employment so that women can play a strong role in social development.

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