

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF MEN IN THE FEMINISED OCCUPATIONS

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Summary. Occupational roles in the context of gender stereotypes are subject to a growing number of research explorations. This is mainly due to ongoing changes in female and male social functioning, including occupational roles. The discussion presented in this article concerns the functioning of males in female-dominated occupations. The aim of the research was to diagnose the opinion of active teachers on the functioning of males in female-dominated occupations in the context of gender stereotypes. Attention was also drawn to the opinions of the respondents concerning the consequences of stereotypical evaluation of males' work in professions dominated by females.

NAUCZYCIELE O MĘŻCZYZNACH W SFEMINIZOWANYCH ZAWODACH

Słowa kluczowe: zawody sfeminizowane, mężczyzna, nauczyciel

Streszczenie. Role zawodowe w kontekście stereotypów płci są przedmiotem eksploracji badawczych coraz częściej podejmowanych przez naukowców. Wynika to przede wszystkim z zachodzących przemian w pełnieniu przez kobiety i mężczyzn ról społecznych, w tym ról zawodowych. Podjęte rozważania dotyczą funkcjonowania mężczyzn w sfeminizowanych zawodach. Celem badań była diagnoza opinii czynnych zawodowo nauczycieli na temat funkcjonowania mężczyzn w zawodach sfeminizowanych w kontekście stereotypów płci. Zwrócono również uwagę na opinie badanych odnośnie do konsekwencji stereotypowej oceny wykonywania pracy przez mężczyzn w zawodach zdominowanych przez kobiety.

Introduction

The teaching profession is one of the most female-dominated occupations. This is particularly true for primary and secondary education, as well as kindergartens, childcare and youth centres. Relatively low interest of males in working in the teaching profession results from several factors concerning generally the area of female-dominated professions, e.g. a social worker, a nurse, a librarian or an administrative employee. The distinction between typically male and typically female occupations results from “a quantitative disproportion in the representation of persons of a specific gender, as well as a qualitative difference in access to valuable resources, such as prestige, related earnings, promotion opportunities and the nature of work”¹. Not without significance is the occurrence of such components of work as physical effort, technology, risk and people vs. material objects².

The phenomenon of males taking up jobs in professions dominated by females is interpreted as a tendency for males to reject the traditional paradigm of masculinity, in which the dualism of gender roles and clear division-lines between male and female qualities is highlighted. On the other hand, male-dominated occupations are identified with a dominating attitude, orientation towards process management, pursuing a career and striving for professional advancement. According to Eugenia Mandal³, “among the distinctive features displayed by female-dominated occupations there are: male reluctance to perform them, unattractive salaries, limited scope of responsibility and their auxiliary, secondary character”.

It should also be remembered that changes in the understanding of masculinity are commonly evaluated in two contrasted ways. On the one hand, they are viewed in terms of the “crisis of masculinity”, which is “confirmed by the process of emancipation of females and the blurring of differences between the roles of both sexes at all levels of social and personal life. It is also confirmed by the

¹ J. Klimczak-Ziółek, *Bibliotekarz jako zawód sfeminizowany – przyczyny i skutki*, [w:] Z. Dacko-Pikiewicz, M. Chmielowska (red.), *Rola biblioteki narodowej w tworzeniu społeczeństwa wiedzy*, WSB, Dąbrowa Górnicza 2005, s. 105.

² Sz. Czarnik, A. Strzebońska, D. Szklarczyk, K. Keler, *Raport z badań ludności w wieku produkcyjnym realizowanych w 2010 r. w ramach projektu „Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego”. Polacy i Polki na rynku pracy*, Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości, Warszawa 2011, s. 8.

³ E. Mandal, *Podmiotowe i interpersonalne konsekwencje stereotypów związanych z płcią*, UŚ, Katowice 2004, s.14.

growing criticism of the male weaknesses and defects”⁴. On the other hand, the crisis is treated as abandonment, as a way of liberation from masculinity stereotypes, while granting males a choice, whereby they “are liberated from the heavy cultural burden of their harsh, armoured masculinity”⁵. This approach is reflected in the growing interest of men in professional roles stereotypically assigned to the opposite sex.

The teaching profession in the context of gender stereotypes

According to Barbara Kutrowska “teaching belongs to those professions whose representatives are characterized by the awareness of serving the community, pursuing a unique vocation, consisting among other things in safeguarding the binding normative systems”⁶. In the teaching profession, three basic components are emphasised: the subject knowledge, pedagogical skills and personality. The sense of mission also plays a role, but it can only be fulfilled when teaching is a conscious choice of a professional path, grounded in one’s own beliefs and a desire for self-realization⁷. Contemporary approaches to the essence of human functioning indicate that prerequisite to developing a sense of happiness, satisfaction and life success is a decision to realize oneself in those areas of social life that a person defines as significant. As Mirosława Nowak-Dziemianowicz argues, self-knowledge “enables a person to overcome his or her own shortcomings and weaknesses, develop positive personality traits, increase control over his or her own behaviour. This is why self-knowledge must be seen as a key factor in choosing a career as well as making other informed life choices. It allows to choose one’s own way of life, enables people to build competence to understand themselves, both in the sphere of their own needs, aspirations and motives, as well as in relation to the ways of satisfying and realizing them”⁸. Competence in this area allows people to achieve autonomy and free themselves of external risks and

⁴ Z. Melosik, *Kryzys męskości w kulturze współczesnej*, Wolumin, Poznań 2002, s. 9.

⁵ M. Fuszara, (red.), *Nowi mężczyźni? Zmieniające się modele męskości we współczesnej Polsce. Wstęp*, Trio, Warszawa 2008, s. 18.

⁶ B. Kutrowska, *Spojrzenie na rolę nauczyciela z perspektywy różnych oczekiwań społecznych*, [w:] P. Rudnicki, B. Kutrowska, M. Nowak-Dziemianowicz (red.), *Nauczyciel: misja czy zawód? Społeczne i profesjonalne aspekty roli*, DSW, Wrocław 2008, s. 49.

⁷ Cf. A. Dudak, K. Klimkowska, *Sukces jako doświadczenie biograficzne ojców sprawujących opiekę nad dzieckiem*, UMCS, Lublin 2017.

⁸ M. Nowak-Dziemianowicz M., „Wielki Przegrany Współczesności”. *Polski nauczyciel jako podmiot i przedmiot kształcenia*, [w:] P. Rudnicki, B. Kutrowska, M. Nowak-Dziemianowicz (red.), *Nauczyciel: misja czy zawód? Społeczne i profesjonalne aspekty roli*, DSW, Wrocław 2008, s. 143.

contingencies. Autonomy is particularly important when choosing a profession where gender stereotypes and, consequently, horizontal or vertical occupational segregation are involved. Horizontal segregation, with regard to women, relates to the fact that female professional activity concentrates around specific areas of employment, e.g. health care, education and the auxiliary service sector. Vertical segregation, on the other hand, means that the percentage of women who reach managerial positions is much lower than that of men, and that when men choose to work in feminised occupations, it takes them less time to achieve professional advancement⁹. The teaching profession is still rooted in a traditional approach to perceiving the social roles of women and men. A stereotypical approach to the personality traits, competences and skills the teacher should possess indicates that it is a profession traditionally intended for women. It requires qualities such as caring, ability to work with children, patience etc. Moreover, the teaching profession is considered unattractive due to low income and lack of promotion opportunities. Unfortunately, this profession is currently less associated with prestige and the teacher is no longer treated as an authority. The fact that the profession has been depreciated in the public opinion for many years has turned it into a female-dominated profession. According to Krystyna Janicka, females more often decide to work in professions that do not require high qualifications, are worse paid and do not offer career advancement opportunities. What is more, females are looking for jobs in professions of lesser prestige, not requiring too much availability and a requirement for further education¹⁰. Males, on the other hand, avoid professions that are unattractive in terms of income and prestige.¹¹ At the same time, those who choose to work in a female-dominated environment identify less with the traditional masculinity model¹² and are often affected by negative social perception due to persistent gender stereotypes.

⁹ M. Gawrycka, J. Wasilczuk, P. Zwiech, *Szklany sufit i ruchome schody – kobiety na rynku pracy*, CeDeWu, Warszawa 2007, s. 29.

¹⁰ K. Janicka, *Kobiety i mężczyźni w strukturze społeczno-zawodowej: podobieństwa i różnice*, [w:] A. Titkow, H. Domański (red.), *Co to znaczy być kobietą w Polsce*, IFiS PAN, Warszawa 1995, s. 89–91.

¹¹ I. Reszke, *Nierówności płci w teoriach*, PAN, Warszawa 1991, s. 66.

¹² See: D. Shen-Miller, A.P. Smiler, *Men in Female-Dominated Vocation: A Rationale for Academic Study and Introduction to the Special Issue*, "Sex Roles" 72, 2015, p. 270; S. Cross, B. Bagilhole, *Girls' Jobs for the Boys? Men, Masculinity and Non-Traditional Occupations*, "Gender, Work and Organization" 2002, vol. 9, no. 2, p. 208.

The outline of the research

The aim of the present research is to diagnose the opinions of active teachers on stereotypes and their consequences for males in female-dominated occupations. The research problem was formulated as the following question:

What are the opinions of the surveyed teachers on stereotypes and their consequences in relation to the functioning of males in female-dominated occupations?

The research employed the diagnostic survey method, using the questionnaire technique, based on the author's own questionnaire form. The research focused on diagnosing the teachers' knowledge about professions dominated by females, motives for male involvement in these professions, manifestations of negative and positive discrimination of males working in female-dominated workplaces. An attempt was also made to learn about the diversity of opinions of the respondents according to the gender of the respondent.

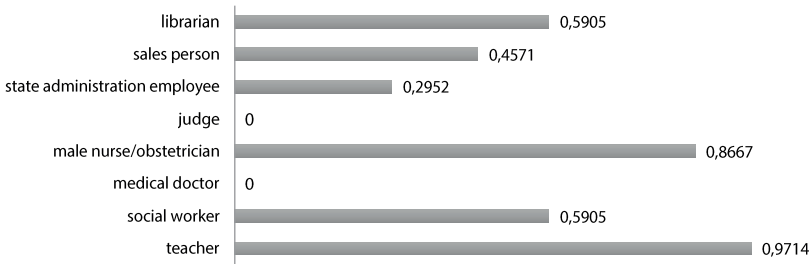
The method and the research group profile

The research was conducted from December 2018 to March 2019 and used the author's own questionnaire to collect responses from active teachers. The research group was dominated by women (63.80%) and people living in cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants (59.04%). In terms of age, the largest group were people in the brackets 41–45 (40%), 51–55 (21.90%) and 36–40 (18.09%) years old. The vast majority of the respondents are qualified teachers (74.28%). Almost half of the respondents (46.66%) assessed their financial situation as good, 37.14% as average, and 4.76% of the respondents considered it bad. Only 4.76% indicated that their financial situation was very good.

Research results and analysis

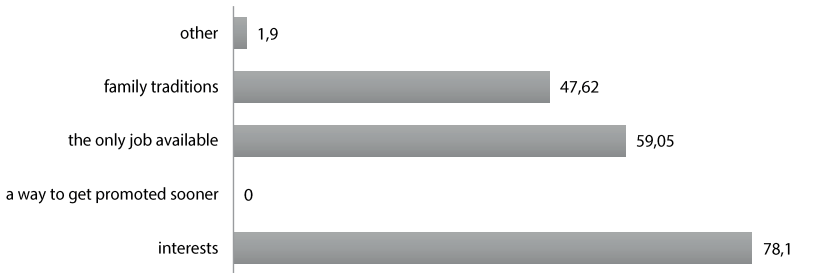
On our way to attain the research objective, we first analysed the respondents' opinions on the female-dominated professions. The results presented in Table 1 indicate that the majority of the respondents regarded the teaching (97.14%) and the nursing/obstetrician professions (86.67%) as female-dominated. Moreover, little less than 60% of the respondents considered the social worker and the librarian to be a typical female occupation as well. Further on the list of female-dominated professions the respondents pointed out the salesperson (45.71%) and the state administration employee (29.52%).

Chart 1. Feminised occupations



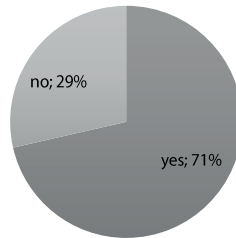
An essential part of the undertaken research was to learn the opinions of the surveyed teachers on the motives for male choice of the teaching profession. The vast majority of the respondents stated that men decided to pursue the profession because of their own interests. This answer was chosen by as many as 78.1% of the participants. At the same time, it is worth noting that another large group of respondents (59.05%) indicated that a lack of more attractive job offers could be a decisive factor in males' decision to take up a job in the teaching profession. Therefore, according to these respondents, men simply choose the only job they find available. For almost half of the respondents, the choice of the teaching profession by men is motivated by a wish to follow a family tradition.

Chart 2. Motives of male involvement in the teaching profession



According to the respondents – active teachers – there are stereotypes concerning males working in the teaching profession. This is what as many as 71% of the respondents said. The results are in line with the general public opinion on the explicit division into typically masculine and typically feminine occupations, the choice of which is conditioned by the stereotypical assessment of both gender-specific personality traits and the attractiveness of the profession on the labour market.

Chart 3. Existing stereotypes concerning men working in the teaching profession



The research also aimed to diagnose the teachers' opinions on the consequences of stereotypes concerning males in female-dominated occupations. The researched teachers who acknowledged that such stereotypes existed indicated that males hesitate to take up employment in female-dominated occupations despite their own interests in these areas. This answer was chosen by as many as 58.67% of the respondents. For many men, jobs that are most commonly taken up by women are, by definition, unattractive, and as such, inadequate for the image of a real man. Therefore, it can be assumed that despite their interests, e.g. in work with children, education, care etc., males do not decide on this type of profession, fearing to compromise what is stereotypically defined as true manhood. A confirmation of the above tendency can be found in the analysed research results. More than half of the respondents indicated that stereotypes concerning men result in a fear of negative social perception and discrimination outside the professional sphere.

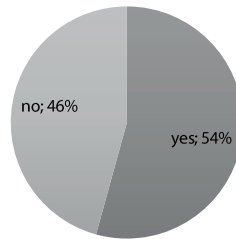
Chart 4. Consequences of stereotypes concerning men in the teaching profession (N= 75)



Interestingly enough, the respondents declared that despite stereotypes, men are not subject to discrimination in the workplace, even though such

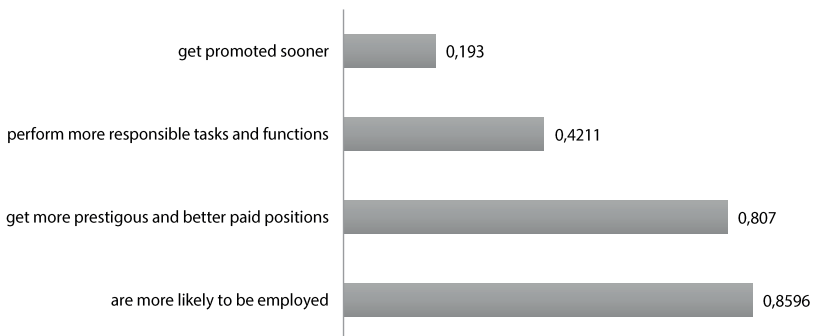
discrimination takes place outside the professional realm. This is what 23.9% of the respondents believed to be true. All the respondents who pointed to the occurrence of discrimination (N=25) stated that this phenomenon manifests itself in the perception of such men as inferior and incapable.

Chart 5. Male privileges in the female-dominated teaching profession



In the available publications concerning the functioning of men in professions dominated by women, attention is also drawn to the phenomenon whereby men are advantaged precisely because of their work in the female environment. The survey did not reveal a clear position of the respondents on this issue, since 54% of them agreed that males are privileged in female-dominated occupations, while 46% disagreed.

Chart 6. Manifestations of male privileges (N=57)



The respondents who pointed out the advantageous position of males in the workplace dominated by females most often indicated that the advantage manifested itself in a greater readiness of employers to recruit male staff (85.96%), as well as in bestowing men with more prestigious and better paid tasks than the

women in the same workplace or position. This answer was given by as many as 80.70% of the respondents. Nearly half of them (42.11%) added that males employed in female-dominated companies perform more responsible tasks and functions, and 19.30% of the respondents stated that men are promoted sooner than women.

The research under analysis also aimed at diagnosing gender discrepancies in the opinions collected from the respondents – active teachers – on female-dominated professions and on the functioning of males in the teaching profession – as representative of female-dominated occupations. The research results presented in Table 1 reveal that the nursing and the obstetrician professions were significantly more frequently recognised by the researched women as feminised ($p=0.008$). It is worth mentioning that the increased interest of males in employment in this profession may result from changes in the related public image. Opinion polls indicate an increase in the recognition of the nursing profession. It turns out that, despite lower earnings and being treated as auxiliary staff, nursing enjoys greater recognition than the medical profession¹³.

Table 1. Feminised occupations

Analysed variable			Professions								
			Teacher	Social worker	Medical doctor	Male nurse obstetrician	Judge	State administration employee	Salesperson	Librarian	Other
Gender	Female	N %	65 97.01%	43 64.18%	0 0.00%	63 94.03%	0 0.00%	24 35.82%	26 38.81%	37 55.22%	0 0.00%
	Male	N %	37 97.37%	19 50.00%	0 0.00%	28 73.68%	0 0.00%	7 18.42%	7 18.42%	25 65.79%	0 0.00%
	Chi ² p		0.255 0.613	1,472 0.225	–	7.014 0.008*	–	3.528 0.061	3.561 0.059	1.119 0.290	–
Total (N=105)		N %	102 97.14%	62 59.05%	0 0.00%	91 86.67%	0 0.00%	31 29.52%	48 45.71%	62 59.05%	0 0.00%

Y – Chi-square test with Yates' correction

*significance level < 0.05

¹³ U. Kluczyńska, *Mężczyźni w pielęgniarstwie. W stronę męskości opiekuńczej*, Uniw. Med., Poznań 2017, s. 63.

Secondly, it was found that the respondents' opinions on the motives for male involvement in the teaching profession were differentiated by gender. It turned out that there was a significant correlation between the opinions and gender of the respondents in the case of the two motives indicated. Women significantly more often indicated that, when choosing the teaching profession, men are guided by family traditions ($p=0.000$), and that the choice of this profession was determined by teaching being the only available job for these men ($p=0.000$). The data presented in the table below show that the highest percentage (almost 80%) of the researched women identified male interests as the motive for their choice of the teaching profession. These results may be indicative of the belief of these female respondents that the choice the profession practised predominantly by women, which is not related to the image of a typical man, prestige and high earnings, must result from individual interests, which determine this choice to a greater extent than earnings or promotion.

Table 2. Motives for male involvement in the teaching profession

Analysed variable			Motives for male involvement in the teaching profession				
			interests	way to be promoted sooner	The only job available	Family traditions	Other
Gender	Female	N	53	0	48	41	2
		%	79.10%	0.00%	71.64%	61.19%	2.99%
	Male	N	29	0	14	9	0
		%	76.32%	0.00%	36.84%	23.68%	0.00%
Chi ²			0,007	–	12.143	13.677	0.110
P			0,931		0.000*	0.000*	0.739
Total (N=105)		N	82	0	62	50	2
		%	78.10%	0.00%	59.05%	47.62%	1.90%

Y – Chi-square test with Yates' correction

*significance level<0.05

Conclusions

The issue of gender stereotypes is becoming an increasingly frequent subject matter of research analysis in relation to many spheres of human life. Due to the transformation in how social roles are performed and how people strive for self-fulfilment in various areas of life, it is important to recognize the significance of the needs, interests and life situations of people undertaking diverse

life activities, including professional work. In the present study, attention was paid to the functioning of men in the professional areas predominantly identified as feminine, and to the evaluative opinions concerning the representatives of one of those female-dominated professions – teaching. The opinions about the specificity of the situation of men wishing to pursue a self-realization trajectory in professions dominated by women were also analysed. The analysis of the collected material allows us to conclude that the functioning of men in the teaching profession is burdened with its stereotypical evaluation, in accordance with the public beliefs about typically feminine and typically masculine occupations. These stereotypes result in fears of negative social perception and, consequently, in rejection of a career path consistent with one's interests. At the same time, the respondents acknowledged their belief that men are more often entrusted with more prestigious and better paid tasks and that they are more willingly employed, which is a sign of male privileged position in the feminised working environments.

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