

## **GENDER DIFFERENTIATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

**Dr. Nadiia Vientseva, Assoc. Prof.  
Dr. Olga Starokozhko**

*Berdyansk State Pedagogical University (Ukraine)*

**Abstract.** The article provides a theoretical analysis of the term “gender” and identifies the main gender stereotypes that exist among school teaching staff. There were revealed the peculiarities of gender differentiation in the system of general secondary education. As a result of the study, the list of “male” and “female” positions and specializations in the field of general secondary education was determined. There have been developed the recommendations for heads of general secondary education institutions to ensure gender equality in the teaching staff.

**Keywords:** gender; gender differentiation; head of a general secondary education institution

### **1. The urgency of the problem**

At the present stage of society development one of the world's educational trends is the purposeful increase of the teaching profession status, namely the need to address the problem of increasing the prestige of work in education institutions through gender balance in the educational institutions staff. Noting the high level of gender differentiation in the field, it should be noted that the ratio of women and men in the teaching staff of general secondary education institutions can be an important indicator of effective school management and the prestige and status of the teaching profession in general.

**2. The purpose of the article** is to study the features of gender differentiation in the management of school teaching staff.

### **3. The current state of the problem researched**

Modern society assigns different social roles to men and women. There have been books and games “for girls” and “for boys”, “men's” and “women's” responsibilities and professions for a long time. All this reflects the concept of the

term “gender”. The term “gender” was introduced into the scientific lexicon in 1958 by California psychoanalyst Robert Stiller and defined as “social sex” or as a social manifestation of gender belonging. In 1963, the scientist spoke at a congress of psychoanalysts, making a report on the concept of social-gender (gender) self-awareness. R. Stiller's proposal to dilute the biological and cultural components in the study of issues related to sex, gave impetus to the formation of a special direction in modern humanities – gender research.

Later, in the mid-1980s, the term “gender” was used by J. Scott (Scott 2012) for distinguishing biological and social interpretations of the role relationships of men and women. The “mass” definition of “gender” turned out to be in connection with the feminist analysis of society – a critique of the discriminatory position of women. According to an English sociologist E. Giddens: if gender contains attitudes to bodily, carnal differences between women and men, the concept of gender affects their mental, social, cultural characteristics (Giddens 1999).

Researchers prove that the concept of gender is not of biological, but of social and cultural origin, while remaining culturally and historically relative. At the same time, such factors as ethnicity, race and age are of particular importance, because gender is defined as social sex, a set of social ideas, not as a natural fact (Kostikova 2005). Gender is built by public opinion as a kind of social model of women and men, which determines their role and position in such institutions as family, politics, economics, education.

In modern science, gender is a complex phenomenon that includes various aspects. Each branch of scientific knowledge emphasizes those aspects of this phenomenon that are more relevant to the subject field of a particular discipline. But the essence of gender issues in any science or sphere of human life is always reduced to the idea of equal rights and opportunities, regardless of gender.

Gender awareness is widely discussed by the world community, as any discriminatory practices have global consequences for humanity. Gender inequality leads to a decrease in human and social capital potential, uneven distribution of human resources in various spheres of life. Gender disparities, as opposed to gender equality, are the result of gender stereotypes, which are defined as a pattern of behavior, deviation from which causes public disapproval.

Society tends to the traditional notion of a woman as a housewife or a man as a breadwinner. However, the role of a woman-careerist or a man-alphonse is recognized as a deviation from the traditional stereotype. Gender stereotypes are formed under the influence of the institutional environment, and are a formal or informal norm of behavior that can limit a person's choice in a particular profession or social role.

Within the topic researched it is important to study the phenomenon of gender differentiation not only in the terms of scientific ideas about it, but also in the terms of judgments of the educational process participants about the presence or absence

of gender inequality in school teaching staff and in their leadership, because gender differentiation can affect the peculiarities of labor behavior of different sexes workers and the employers' actions towards them.

#### **4. Gender differentiation in the system of general secondary education**

The ratio of men and women in the teaching staff structure of general secondary education institutions is an important social-cultural and social-economic indicator of the prestige of the teaching profession in society. Researchers note feminization as one of the main characteristics of education, which means a quantitative increase in women – representatives of this profession, increasing their influence and role in determining the social status and forming the models of the pedagogical profession realization (Drudy 2008).

In general, global practice notes the superiority of women teachers over men ones. For example, in the United States every fourth teacher is a man, and in school education their share is 35%. In the European Union, the share of women is 80% in primary school, 65% in the middle grades and 52% in high school. In China, the share of women in education is 58%, in Malaysia it is 65%, and 61% is in Thailand. The UN Statistical Commission notes the predominance of women among teachers around the world, except in Africa, Japan and Muslim countries where the teaching profession is male and is considered very difficult for women (Lenskaya 2015).

In order to identify the gender structure of the teachers labor market in Ukraine, we used the method of comparative analysis of subjects taught by men and women in general secondary education. The data obtained allow us to make a conclusion about the feminization of school education: almost 89% of all teachers are women. Analysis of quantitative data on subjects let us build a rating of “male” positions or roles at schools. The first “four” includes such subjects of the curriculum as:

- 1) Physical Education (44%).
- 2) Basics of Life Safety (39%).
- 3) Technology (Labour) (38%).
- 4) History and Social Sciences (28%).

Along with the method of comparative study of curricula, the study used a method of questionnaires among students' teachers and parents (153 respondents) from Vasytkiv district of Dnipropetrovsk region and the city of Berdyansk, Zaporozhye region (Ukraine). The question was aimed at finding out the respondents' opinion on which subjects, in their opinion, are mostly suitable for male and female teachers. We have obtained the following data. According to the respondents, male teachers should teach:

- 1) Physical Education (80%).
- 2) Sciences (Physics) (73%).
- 3) History, Law, Economics (56%).

For female teachers, according to respondents, more suitable subjects are:

- 1) Teaching in Primary School (86%).
- 2) Fine Arts and Music (85%).
- 3) Language and Literature (81%).
- 4) Foreign Languages (77%).

Thus, based on the data obtained, we can conclude about the feminization of education and the existence of a clear gender distribution in the structure of the teachers' labor market, namely: purely "female" in our society are considered Primary School teaching, Music and Fine Arts, and "male" subjects are Physical Education and Technologies (Labour).

If we analyze the gender of heads of educational institutions in Ukraine, including school principals, it should be noted that the share of women in management is 77.6%, which is also significantly higher than in other countries where the share of women principals is 49.8% averages and even less than half in some countries, in particular only 38.6%, in Australia, 40.6%, in Finland, 6% in Japan (Lee 1990).

#### **5. Providing gender equality in the teaching staff is the task of the head of a general secondary education institution**

The aim of our study was not only to study gender differentiation, but also to identify differences in school teaching staff management, taking into account its gender characteristics.

For this purpose, we analyzed this indicator at secondary schools of Vasytkiv region, Dnipropetrovsk oblast and the city of Berdyansk, Zaporizhia oblast (Ukraine) and found out that the share of men in the school management team makes only 10%, which totally confirms the idea of feminization.

It should also be noted that among the positions offered to men, the leading positions are Deputy Principal for Administrative and Economic Affairs (51%) and Deputy Principal for Safety; both positions, by the way, do not require pedagogical qualifications.

The data researched also demonstrated that no man holds the position of Deputy Principal of Educational work. This is most likely due to the specifics of its functional and the corresponding stereotypes concerning the personality psychotype.

In the next stage of the study, we needed to find out the opinion of the heads of general secondary education institutions on managerial positions at schools and their gender affiliation. The analysis of gender differentiation perceptions of one of the key participants of educational process – School Principal, is of particular interest and requires really close attention not only to identify the causes of this phenomenon, but also to achieve social justice and, importantly, increase the efficiency of labor resources.

The method of questionnaires and interviews was chosen to determine the opinion of the heads of educational institutions on the problem of the gender

structure of the staff and on the peculiarities of labor relations with teachers of different sexes. School principals (25 people) took part in the experiment.

In the first block of questions, respondents had to express their attitude to the fact of women's priority in education. It is logical that School Principals confirm the fact that mostly women work at secondary schools. 42% of respondents are positive about this fact, and 58% of participants negatively perceive the predominance of women in the teaching profession and point to the need to involve men at school.

A significant part of respondents (73%) are positive about the role of women teachers in the educational process, as women's participation makes the environment "... more humane, they are more interested in teaching and educating adolescents." About 20% of respondents believe that the predominance of women in school has a negative impact on students' development.

Then school principals needed to identify differences in male and female teaching. The majority (88%) of respondents indicated that there are differences, 12% of respondents did not note differences.

Describing the style of female teachers work, respondents used descriptions such as "they are kind, create a favorable atmosphere", "...are distinguished by high emotionality", "... have flexibility in communication, friendly, love children".

Assessing the style of male teachers work, respondents use phrases such as "... create a friendly atmosphere and know how to keep discipline", "own the audience, authoritative, avoid quarrels and conflicts, neutral ...". Herewith 20% of respondents believe that male teachers teach their subjects professionally, but they are too demanding and strict.

The next question that school leaders had to answer was: "Do you consider the feminization of the teaching profession a problem of the modern education system?" It should be noted that 71% of respondents have a negative attitude to the feminization of the teaching profession, while 29% do not see this as a problem and do not consider a significant predominance of women teachers a negative characteristic of the teaching staff of general secondary education. At the same time, one in five (21%) principals indicates that they do not care about the teacher's gender.

Important for our study was the question of the reasons for the disproportionate ratio of women and men in education. The majority of respondents consider inappropriate wages the main reason (67%). This is followed by the low prestige of the teachers profession (44%); high requirements for teachers (24%); a large amount of paper work that reduce motivation to work (21%).

Among the reasons for the numerical women teachers dominance in the general education system, respondents identified:

- "women find better and faster contact with students" (52.5%);
- "gender stereotype about "women's" responsibilities, in connection with which the profession is considered purely female" (37%);
- "women choose this profession because they do not claim a higher salary" (35%).

As the respondents' answers are of interest not only in terms of quantitative indicators, but also in terms of quality, we consider it necessary to clearly demonstrate the answers and comments of the heads of secondary schools (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Attitudes of heads of general secondary education institutions to gender differentiation in teaching staff

Questions	Answers
Can we say that the teaching profession in Ukraine is a profession for women?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– yes;</li><li>– yes, because it is a statistic;</li><li>– “forced female”;</li><li>– yes, and the state is “guilty” of it;</li><li>– yes, it is convenient for a woman;</li><li>– yes, women are stronger and more resilient;</li><li>– yes, women filled the vacated niche</li></ul>
When selecting candidates for the position of a teacher, will you (under equal conditions) choose a man or a woman?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– a woman, it is calmer with her;</li><li>– a man, it is useful for the staff;</li><li>– a woman, she is more disciplined and organized;</li><li>– a woman, she is not against working overtime;</li><li>– “hiring men to school is a difficult choice for the head.”</li></ul>
Can you say that you use different management approaches towards male and female teachers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– yes of course;</li><li>– yes, just like using different techniques with children of different sexes;</li><li>– yes, it is more difficult to force men, it is not enough to just ask them, they need to be persuaded, to be given arguments.</li></ul>
Do you agree with the statement that men achieve better results than women in the teaching profession?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– yes;</li><li>– it is easier for a man in the women's team;</li><li>– it is easier for a man to achieve results in the women's team than in the men's team.</li></ul>
Name the reasons for men to choose the profession of a teacher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– salary;</li><li>– regime and vacation;</li><li>– career prospects;</li><li>– do not hire anywhere else;</li><li>– a good example (dynasty, acquaintance);</li><li>– vacation.</li></ul>
Can you affirm that men's incomes are higher than women's incomes in the education system?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– incomes are not higher, but there is an opportunity to get a job faster;</li><li>– no, they can just work in the afternoon.</li></ul>
Do you think that male teachers move up the career ladder faster?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– of course;</li><li>– nowadays the situation is the same as it was before;</li><li>– yes, a man is an exception in the teaching profession, he is more supported;</li><li>– yes, stereotypes of society work.</li></ul>

Is there a connection between a teacher's professional development, growth and gender?	– no; – yes, but it's not a person's internal reserves that depend on his/her gender, it's society's perception of who and where is better, higher, faster ....
Why do you need a male teacher at school?	– “healthy” relationships in the team; – to counter women's opinion (men think differently); – for balance in the education system.
Is there a mandatory % of men in the teaching staff?	Minimum 20, maximum 30

Thus, the heads' answers confirm the opinion about the need to involve men into the teaching profession. In this context, in the framework of our study, of particular interest there were the opportunities that school principals are willing to offer to men in general secondary education. For this purpose, an interview method was used in which school principals had to answer the following questions:

1. In your opinion, which school subjects will be better taught by a male teacher and why?
2. What pedagogical positions are you ready to offer to a male teacher in your educational institution today?
3. What areas of management activities in the educational institution do you consider the best for a man – Deputy Principal?
4. Do you think that an increase in teachers' salaries can lead to involving men into the teaching profession?

The principals' answers confirmed the results of the first stage of the experiment and general educational trends and stereotypes. Principals believe that the basic subjects for a male teacher are History, Social Studies, Law (67%), where clarity, impartiality, restraint are important. The next in the ranking are Life Safety and Technology (Labour Study) (59%), ie those subjects where the “personal example” of a teacher is important. It should be noted that according to the analysis of the gender structure of the teachers' labor market proposed in the first stage of the study, 44% of male teachers work as Physical Education teachers, which is an absolute majority compared to other subjects. However, principals of general secondary education institutions include male teachers who teach Physical Education to the “risk group”, as there is a high probability of conflicts between them and students, their parents and colleagues due to increased demands, refusal to take into account students' individual features, exaggeration of the importance of victories and achievements to the detriment of the educational process. Other subjects, such as Computer Study, Mathematics, and Physics, are mentioned by 15% of respondents.

During the interview, the heads of general secondary education institutions indicated the subjects such as History and Social Sciences, Technology (Labour Study), Computer Science, Physics, for teaching which, in their opinion, it would be better to hire a male teacher, even if he was inferior to a female teacher in



experience or education. At the same time, principals note that positions such as a Primary school teacher, Music teacher, and Fine Arts teacher are influenced by existing gender stereotypes among parents, and overcoming this barrier is currently impossible and requires serious work.

As for the management team, the position that principals consider “female” one is Deputy Principals for Educational Work in primary and secondary schools. It is because their duties will include mostly paper work, educational process supervision and preparation for external independent evaluation, monitoring educational outcomes in the educational institution. Principals also consider the position of Deputy Principal for Security and Informatization of the educational process the “male” ones, focusing on the stereotypes formed in society, although women can cope, if necessary, with these duties. At the same time, the principals note that they would never entrust headmaster to support teachers’ certification and control over the activities of the general secondary education institution for implementing programs for children with disabilities.

Analyzing the opinion of respondents on the involvement of male teachers into school, we can conclude that salary increases and additional financial incentives are becoming the main mechanism in solving the problem of increasing the share of men in education.

Principals honestly admit that the incentives can not only attract teachers, but also keep them in the workplace: “The man is, above all, the earner in the family. He can not be interested only in a 56-day vacation, social package, service. The main thing is the salary. “Among the responses there were “confessions” that if a woman teacher was rather fined for an incorrect act or a conflict situation, a male teacher would be “pardoned” and an educational conversation would be enough for him. In any case, the principals’ responses confirm that the predominant way to solve the problems of the male teachers shortage in the education system is to increase salaries.

The interview results give an opportunity to conclude that gender differentiation in teaching staff is supported by some school principals when hiring. Heads of educational institutions have identified three options for the principals in selecting a candidate for the position:

1. The principal takes into account only professional qualities: “I estimate only the professional qualities of the candidate and choose the one who more fully meets my requirements.” Such a choice will “work” to achieve gender equality.

2. The preference is given to women: “I will choose the easier way and hire a woman.” This decision of the principal will support discrimination against men in the industry.

3. The principal knows in advance who to choose: “When announcing a vacancy, I imagine a future employee, including who I want to hire a man or a woman, and will adhere to this image.” Taking into account the choice of the most appropriate



role for a male or female employee, the principal maintains the barriers inherent in gender differentiation in the labour market.

Thus, the results of the interview make it possible to conclude that gender differentiation among pedagogical staff is supported by certain preferences or attitudes created by the heads of general secondary education institutions themselves. It should be noted that principals demonstrate a certain “gender sensitivity”, an approach in which principal of a general secondary education institution is aware of and responds to the manifestations of gender in the team. There is no doubt that in the pedagogical environment there are gender stereotypes that are characteristic of society as a whole.

## **6. Conclusion**

Thus, providing gender equality of teachers is one of the tasks of the head of a general secondary education institution. When managing a mixed team, the school principal needs to take into account stereotypical male and female characteristics, avoiding negative influences by creating conditions for positive change in gender equality, which contributes to the development of human resources and becomes its competitive advantage. The principal's management style is one of the factors in the existence of the phenomenon of gender differentiation, as his/her “behavior” can provoke and exacerbate direct or indirect discrimination or stop any of its manifestations and ensure gender balance.

The study found out that the ratio of men and women in the teaching staff is an indicator of the status and prestige of the profession. In the gender structure of pedagogical teams of general secondary education institutions, only 10 – 14% of male teachers stand out. At the same time, raising the salaries of educators is seen as a major factor in national policy to attract male teachers to school.

According to the ranking “male” positions in schools built in the research process, the first position goes to a teacher of Physical Education, then to a teacher of Technology (Labour), teacher of History and Law, Mathematics and Foreign Languages. At the same time, such positions as primary school teacher, Music teacher and Fine Arts teacher are influenced by existing gender stereotypes among parents and it is possible to overcome such stereotypes only by working hard.

The share of men in administrative staff is 10%. The most common position for them is Deputy Director for Administrative and Economic Affairs.

The peculiarities of providing gender equality in the teaching staff as the task of the head of the educational institution are studied and it is found that school principals recognize different attitudes towards employees of different sexes and note that:

- discrimination against male teachers is the only specific feature of gender differentiation in the industry;

– while maintaining the feminization of general secondary education, the gender structure of the teaching staff is changing: there is an influx of men to teaching positions;

– gender differentiation in the field of general secondary education is manifested in: 1) gender preferences of principals when hiring staff; 2) the preferences of parents and students in the possible choice of a teacher of a certain subject; 3) ideas about the differences in male and female teachers' payment, as well as the dependence of career growth on the teacher's sex.

Thus the conclusions made allow us to make assumptions about the need for state regulation to achieve gender equality in the pedagogical environment.

## REFERENCES

- DRUDY, Sh., 2008. Gender Balance/Gender Bias: The Teaching Profession and the Impact of Feminization. *Gender and Education*, **20**(4), 303 – 323.
- KOSTIKOVA, I., 2005. *Introduction to gender studies: a textbook for university students*. Moskva: Aspect Press.
- LENSKAYA, E. & PINSKAYA, M., 2015. *Russian Educators in the Mirror of the International Comparative Study of the Pedagogical Corps (TALIS 2013)*. Moskva: Higher School of Economics.
- LEE, V., SMITH, J., 1990. Gender Equality in Teachers' Salaries: A Multilevel Approach. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, **12**(1), 57 – 81.
- SCOTT, D., 2012. *Gender: a useful category for historical analysis*. Moskva.

✉ **Dr. Nadiia Vientseva, Assoc. Prof.**

ORCID iD: 0000-0002-1994-7187

**Dr. Olga Starokozhko**

ORCID iD: 0000-0003-3793-9655

Humanities and Economics Faculty  
Berdyansk State Pedagogical University  
Berdyansk, Ukraine

E-mail: no\_venceva@bdpu.org.ua

E-mail: om\_starokozhko@bdpu.org.ua