

12-31-2018

Uncovered Truths of the Inequalities Encountered by Female Educators

Rachel Katoll

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ecommons.udayton.edu/undergradvoices>

 Part of the [Rhetoric and Composition Commons](#), and the [Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education Commons](#)

eCommons Citation

Katoll, Rachel, "Uncovered Truths of the Inequalities Encountered by Female Educators" (2018). *Undergraduate Voices*. 13.
<https://ecommons.udayton.edu/undergradvoices/13>

This Research Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of English at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Voices by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu, mschlange1@udayton.edu.

Uncovered Truths of the Inequalities Encountered by Female Educators

Rachel Katoll, University of Dayton

Introduction

This research study was produced to entail the position of women in the field of education, specifically why the female-dominated field praises male participants over women and why this should change. Teaching young children has historically been dominated by women (Hollis, 2015, p. 1). This global imbalance is rooted in economic advancements, the position of women in society, cultural interpretations of masculinity and the necessities required for childcare.

Throughout this article, I will focus on women specifically in the field of education as a profession. I will look into why the field is attracted to male influence and the roots of this discrimination. The United States Department of Education published statistics stating that across America overall schools hit record percentages consisting of 75% female educators in classrooms (Slater, 2017, p. 2). In the article, I analyze the paradox of the discrimination female educators face despite their established presence in schools. My research investigates whether or not women in the field ever feel like they are discriminated against or if they feel they are treated equally in comparison to males in their workspace. I will be detailing this piece through a feminist framework of study. Looking at this topic through a feminist perspective will feature the gender discrimination in the workplace of educators. Through the examination of this topic, it will aide to appropriately uncover relevant themes that are often brushed over by the common eye.

As a current student studying at the University of Dayton, I had the opportunity to expand my study to span across similar findings all over the United States. Infused into research, I have conducted an interview with Joan Rottenberger, a former middle school teacher of ten years, who currently lives in Florida. The context of Rottenberger's region of work holds value to represent the substance of educational challenges reported by many educators across North America. The data I collected from a personal interview has been organically integrated throughout the exploration of this topic connected with corresponding thoughts and values of other professionals. The use of Rottenberger's personal relation to my selected findings helps better grasp a connection to the everyday struggles faced by female educators.

Through research, it can be shown that there are many prominent factors that account for the mistreatment of women in the field of education as a profession. This examination presents a focus on the paradox seen in the education structure. Overall, this article was produced in hopes to show that the imbalance of women and men in the workplace has negative effects on future educators like myself. Women should be treated equally to men to keep up an ethical and moral standard not only in the field of education but the humanities department as a whole. This change for equal treatment would help attract more females to devote their life to become a teacher because it will expand their comfortability with their male colleagues and equality among all administration. Ultimately, other scholars could expand upon how the education administration has room for improvement in treating men and women equally, which would result in a more just system.

There are multiple reasons why women have been, and continue to be, treated unequally in the field of education. Many authors have collaborating viewpoints on the serious issues faced regarding the gender differences of male and female educators. Women are identified to be different and less than men in the educational system. Also, there is a perception that there is a lack of dedicated women in the education field, with multiple pre-existing bias and stereotypes of how men and women are evaluated in the agency.

Workplace Mistreatment

In comparison to their male counterparts, workplace bullying is an extreme problem that females face in the education field. According to Hollis, "workplace bullying can motivate the target to interrupt his or her career trajectory, this abusive

behavior comprises any target's progression to leadership and executive positions" (Hollis, 2015, p. 9). Instead of being treated equally as they properly deserve, female teachers are mistreated in the workplace when being compared to males. The nature of this treatment is a result of the pre-existing truths of women holding the majority of jobs in schools and the desire of administration to praise males in order to activate male personal pursuit in the field of education. The common perspective of females holding a majority of positions in schools allows the mistreatment of women to be dismissed from the outside viewpoint. As Hollis mentioned in her article, "women have sought workplace responsibilities and positions typically held by men, they have increasingly become the target of harassment and bullying" (Hollis, 2015, p. 10). This conclusion was found by an independent study that Hollis conducted, which revealed that "62% of respondents were affected by workplace bullying" (Hollis, 2015, p. 15). Within that 62% of respondents being affected by bullying, a majority were females facing workplace bullying, while only half of the men would confront any bullying happening.

Furthermore, after reaching out to Joan Roettenberger, M.Ed., a former teacher of ten years, to discuss her personal interaction with workplace bullying within her school district, there were detectable challenges faced as a female educator. Roettenberger stated, "in our world, there is gender discrimination on a daily basis, and therefore it is not unexpected for there to be the same in school, a microcosm of such". Additionally, Roettenberger reinforced previous research findings with her own experience of male educators provided with "many 'passes' for inadequate or below standard teaching" by the administration because "they were among the few male teachers in a mostly female world". The conversation with Roettenberger reiterates the challenges women in the field have when interacting with male co-workers. Female educators are encountered with discrepancies of the imperious advantages given to males within the same workspace due to the higher appreciation the administration holds for male educators.

Male teachers have not suffered the disturbances that female educators experience through the duration of their day to day working environment. This contradicts the push of teachers to implement anti-bullying campaigns among students when the educators themselves are confronted with the same difficulties in schools. Through the absoluteness of the education field, women are finding more trouble with acquiring positions of power in higher education systems. This is an issue because men and women who attend the same amount of schooling, from very similar universities, do not obtain equal power once receiving an occupation.

Men typically receive high-intensity jobs and projects that hold more responsibility than women. Through this male educators are not challenged with the obstacles of females who strive for an equal treatment in pursuing their career choice.

Professional Growth

Correspondingly, professional growth ties into the impact workplace bullying has upon employees. As female educators face mistreatment from the administration, it leads to little development opportunity for females to reveal their full potential. Gender has been a significant variable in the field of education as a profession (Inandi, et al., 2012, p. 543). Although there are few restrictions on a female becoming a teacher, they face various barriers in regards to professional growth and development once they have started the position.

Structure and policies of organization among administration practices and behavior can cause employees to be hesitant in sharing their ideas and knowledge in an effort to improve their work and organization among faculty (Inandi, et al., 2012, p.544). Female knowledge is not held to the same interpretation as feedback provided by male teachers. Administration should allow male and female teachers an equal opportunity to collaborate ideas without instilling fear into their employees of being incorrect resulting in a stunt of professional development. Otherwise known as the “gotcha” game or “time-out” used for toddlers after speaking incorrectly causing little to no appreciation and instead punished for input. *Common* culture has seen a surplus of female educators entering the field leading administration to become attracted to the inclusion of male educators in recruitment processes and faculty-led organizations.

After considering the specific involvement Roettenberg has experienced in her occupation she highlighted, “in my district, there was an all-male basketball group who played together in the mornings before work”. In an effort to further the conversation, Roettenberg facilitated the detail of inequalities this activity has enforced upon the female teachers. Roettenberg explained that her male colleagues who played basketball with staff allowed them to increase personal chances of moving up the ladder. Female staff members with the same goals of advancement did not have an equal opportunity of access to these administrators to accomplish professional advancement.

The issue of professional growth status has become increasingly permanent in the United States while suffering acute teacher shortages (Kelleher, 2011, p.16).

The large numbers of female teachers in schools today has caused the administration to seek 'solutions' resulting in female voice being less valuable to males to energize the men to join the profession. Social opinion influenced by prevailing concepts of female superiority in the field leads competitive males to shun the profession unless rewarded by administration causing an imbalance of achievement in the professional growth of teachers (Kelleher, 2016, p.22).

Female teachers have been deprived of their ability to achieve personal standards of the teaching profession in growth and development through their incapability to be heard over their male colleagues. Not only are females exiting the field due to these various reasons once they have acquired a position as an educator, they are now changing their paths before even getting into it.

Recruitment

After addressing components of workplace mistreatment and the lack of professional growth opportunities it is of substance to explore the recruitment struggles women endure to enter the field of education as a profession. The evaluation of recruitment obstacles faced by aspiring female educators sheds light upon the paradox of the circumstances to uncover the truth of the gender inequalities in schools.

The presence of a significant proportion of women teachers in the United States is a long-standing phenomenon rooted in the historical characteristics of education systems. Women represent a significant majority of the teaching workforce. As future educators seek a position in the teaching profession, the United States has evolved to associate with organizations such as Education For All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which create a deficit of female educators (Kelleher, 2011, p.18).

Family Consumer Science article has reported that half of all states in America continue to struggle with hiring adequate numbers of highly qualified educators and the challenge of gender bias in favor of males narrows the lens of professionalism (Douglas, et al., 2000, p. 51). Female teachers are struggling through recruiting processes to be seen as an equivalence as male educators. With this, schools have endeavored to receive well-trained professionals and at the same time have centered their focus on the diversity of gender preferences. The Department of Education proposes that they have implemented a number of strategies to attract high-quality graduates to pursue teaching as a career for both men and women positively (NSW

Government, 2015, p.1). With more knowledge of the problem at hand, educators expose the experience they face in their current position that contradicts the equality promised to them (Douglas, et al., 2000, p. 46).

Roettenberg's personal experience focused that the recruitment process in her school, in particular, favored male educators when evaluating for an occupation within their district. This causes conflict between student success and the administration recruitment process in the demand for a higher quantity of male educators favored over the experience and talents of teachers.

In the effort to resolve such an issue, Harvard Business school advises potential job candidates to “be aware that employers may have preconceived ideas about average ability differences among men and women in certain areas, so applicants need to provide any information they can to outweigh certain beliefs employers may have” (Gerdeman, 2017, p. 2). This taste-based discrimination against “prejudiced” women causes a decrease of females to be hired despite their qualifications resulting in students receiving an inadequate education.

Conclusion

The fundamentals of calling attention to the paradox held in the education field not only promote higher ethical standards of gender equality in the workplace but simultaneously advocates for positive self-confidence applicable to all job positions. For education administration to adhere to the equal gender standards will better maintain moral integrity for all.

After conducting this research, it can be concluded that it would be of value for future researchers to look into how the proportion of women in education could potentially reach equality and the creation of policies that would help benefit both genders. There is a large amount of research on the surplus of women in this particular field but it is often told from an advantage point where female teachers are said to have more than their male co-workers. If this negative stereotype and paradox against female educators were eliminated, there would be more gender quality in school systems and the number of appropriately experienced teachers would likely escalate at a rapid rate. This conducted investigation aims to prove that women who take on education as a profession should have fair treatment among administration and an equivalence of opportunity.

Overall, through a methodical fusion of the research on gender discrimination in education as a profession, this research study poses to offer a concern of

inequalities faced in society today. It is clear that there are negative effects of sex discrimination that would drive many females away from their passion. Women looking into acquiring a degree in education would no longer chase after an occupation in a field with many unjust obstacles. These arguments illustrate the concealed truths of the demolition in the culture of education.

References

- Gerdeman, D. (2017). Why Employers Favor Men. *Harvard Business School*.
- Hollis, L. P. (2015). *Take the Bull by the Horns: Structural Approach to Minimize Workplace Bullying for Women in American Higher Education*.
- İnanđı, Tunç, (2012). – İnanđı, Y., Tunç, B. (2012). Kadın öğretmenlerin kariyer engelleri ile iş doyumları arasındaki ilişki. *Journal of Educational Sciences Research 2* (2), 202-222.
- Kelleher, Fatimah. (2011). Woman and The Teaching Profession: Exploring the feminism debate. Commonwealth Secretary Library.
- Lingard, B., & Douglas, P. (1999). *Men engaging feminisms: Pro Feminism, backlashes and schooling*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- NSW Department of Education (2015). Gender Analysis of School Teachers. Retrieved from:
<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/documents/15060385/15385042/gender-analysis-school-teach>
- Slater, R. (2017, January 11). American Teachers. Retrieved from
<http://educationnext.org/american-teachers/>