

Gender Imparity in Skilled Occupations: A Review of Literature

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ABSTRACT

The complexity of gender issues in skilled occupations is not a new phenomenon. Some studies found that gender imparity exists in certain sectors of the economy. Females are still concentrated in certain types of job. The disparity may be due to problems associated with the stereotype, inability to make decision, the lack of information about self and career, and the pressure from parents and peers. In addition, gender ideology may play an essential role in maintaining the inequality between the sexes, particularly in the labor market. The purpose of the study was to determine the factors that influence the career choice among female students in vocational schools in Malaysia. The study found that the gender imparity in vocational fields is mainly due to career making decision process. Among the factors that hamper female's involvement in non-traditional career is the lack of confidence among them to explore the field. In other words, they are not very confident with their ability to venture into non-traditional career pathways compared to the traditional career for women. Other aspects that could hinder female students from choosing vocational field can be summarized as: (a) vocational field is a field that requires its workers to have high physical and mental endurance and durability, (b) there is a lack of encouragement from family, peers, and teachers, (c) female students seldom be given a chance to "prove" that their capability is equal to males, (d) female students may have low confidence in some areas, and (e) the gentleness in them causes them to be timid to try. Nevertheless, a relatively high proportion of the female respondents in the vocational schools assert that they are capable of competing with male students.

Keywords: Gender imparity, women, vocational field, career decision process, Malaysia