

Gender Undertone in Occupational Competence of University Workers. An Application of Holand's Theory (1959)

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Abstract This survey research investigated gender undertone in occupational of selected university workers. The participation comprise two hundred and forty (240) male and female senior non-academic and academic university workers selected through stratified random technique from the Federal University of Technology, Akure and Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba Akoko, Ondo state. The modified self-directed search (SDS) developed by Holland (1985) was adopted for the study. The results showed that male workers were significantly higher in realistic, investigative, enterprising and artistic competences while female workers faired better in social and conforming competences.

Keyword: Occupational Competence, sex-role stereotyping, Occupational Environment.

1. Introduction

One of the fundamental ways of differentiating people is in terms of gender. In all cultural societies, the social categorization of mankind along gender dimension has resulted into some form of socio-cultural stereotyping ascribed to occupational decision making and competency. The concept of sex-role stereotyping may be viewed as indoctrination process whereby society instills in its members right from childhood appropriate adults roles. These roles usually have sex-bias, and role stereotyping also applies to cultural expectation about the attitude, belief and behaviour associated with masculinity and femininity These socialization process are usually communicated through variety of agent such as parents peers, schools, books, religious bodies and the mass media (Larkin, 2003).

There is considerable evidence that sex-role changing in modern society. Broverman, Vogel, Clarkson and Rosenkrantz (2010) observed that even though it appeared that sex roles are changing rapidly in American society the stereotype of women and men did not keep pace with changing role option and that women still viewed as possessing effectively in high-level positions. In related development Robinson, Johnson and Shield (2008) examined a number of employment and career issues that might be affected by sex stereotype and concluded that sex stereotypes operated at various stages in one's career and provide a series of barriers for women aspiring to position that traditionally had been dominated by males.

Vicki (2009) argued that gender is a culturally fundamentally criterion in categorizing the human species along varied dimensions. He further asserted that this categorization has resulted in man-woman inequality expressed in every aspect of life. This principle of inequality has permeated almost the entire culture of human race with woman playing a secondary role and that is still on in most cultural societies. Women are believed to be subordinates socially because of their innate inferiority. Robinson et al (2008) opined that many of the characteristic we associate with being male or female reflect our cultural belief and practices rather than fundamental differences. They therefore asserted that, people are taught gender roles early in life and that such gender label affect role designation.

People are found to prefer, enter, remain in, like and succeed most consistently in occupations for which they have appropriate patterns of traits. Broverman et al (2010), argued that consensus about the differing characteristics of men and women exist across groups with marked differences in sex, age, marital status, and education. In the opinion of Vicki (2009), he asserted that though sex-role definition are incorporated into the self-concepts of both men and women and that these sex-role differences vary as a function socio-cultural perceptions and stereotypes. In a study involving three

college samples on the effects of sex and academic field of colleges teachers on perceptions of teachers competences and sex-role stereotypes by Hessebalt (2004), contrary to expectations that male and female teachers would be described in sex-typed ways, regardless of academic major, subject in these three studies rated male and female instructions in the same academic field essentially the same.

2. Theoretical background

Holland's (1959) theory of vocational choice asserted occupational choice is an expression of personality. By this, Holland postulated that people search for occupations that are in consonance (or congruent) with their personality types and characteristics. Consequently, it is believed that members of the same occupations share similar characteristic and that people with similar personality types are likely to make similar vocational choice. If further postulated that people whose personality characteristics are congruent with their vocations will usually experience greater satisfaction with their chosen vocation.

In explaining the above theory, Holland (1959), went on to categorized human personality characteristics into six types. These are the realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional types. Holland also categorized working environment into corresponding six personality type. Holland's categorization of work environment was based on the premise that people seek environment that are compatible with type and will avoid based on the premises that people seek environments that are compatible with their type and will avoid those that are disagreeable to them (Adetunji, 2002). He argued that in the process of making a vocational choice, an individual searches for the situations which satisfy his hierarchy of adjustive orientations. As pointed out by Holland (1959), the adjustive orientations corresponding to the six occupational environment are also designated as motoric, intellectual, supportive, conforming, persuasive and aesthetic orientations.

Holland further enunciated in his theory that motoric orientation personality enjoys activities requiring physical strength, aggressive active, motor co-ordination, and skills. They prefer playing masculine roles. The intellectual person are task-oriented. They avoid interpersonal relationship with people. The supportive persons on the other hand prefer teaching and therapeutic roles and possess verbal and interpersonal skills which reflect their desire for socialization. They value humanist and religious roles and are feminine in nature and attitude. The conforming people prefer subordinate roles also prefer structure verbal numerical activities. The persuasive orientation person prefer to use their verbal skills for dominating and leading others. They conceive of themselves as strong and masculine leaders. The aesthetics persons, on the other hand prefer dealing with environmental problems through self-expression in artistic media.

There has been an accelerated tempo of researches investigating various aspect of Holland's theory such as occupational stereotype and congruence. Kenneth, Catherine, Micheal & Gugel (2008) investigated stereotype of traits, personalities and skill of people in differing occupations. Similarly, the general result of these investigation indicated that the prestige level and various personality characteristics including gender, associated with occupation are frequently cross-currently stereotyped. Robison, Johnson and Shield (2008) related the degree of competency required to functions in an occupation in determining the attractiveness of the occupation to the individual. Male college students were to rate occupations in terms of prestige and the competence required for success in them. Their findings indicated that those who preferred occupations higher on competency requirement earned higher score on the mastery index than those who preferred occupations that are low on competency requirement. They therefore concluded that for some people, mastery is a more potent occupational motivator than power and prestige.

In a research involving about seventy-nine practicing mental health clinicians conducted by Vicky (2009) on sex role characteristic of a mature, healthy, socially competent adult gender differences were observed. Both men and women agreed that competence was more characteristics of the healthy male than of the healthy female. He argued that healthy women differ from healthy men by being mores submissive, less independent, less adventurous, less objective, more easily influenced, less aggressive, less competitive, more table in minor cases, more emotional, more concerned about their appearance and more prone to having their feeling hurt. Uwe (2007) in study which replicated Holland theory to Nigeria situation observed that, male workers in their studies did not differ in their vocational orientations from their females counterparts in within the realistic, investigative, enterprising and conforming vocational groups. They further concluded that less females than males prefer occupations involving risk-taking behaviour.

Stemming from the above theoretical considerations, this study was carried out to ascertain the extent to which the efficacy (competency) of male and female Nigerian university worker is significantly influenced by Holland's typology of occupation orientations.

3. Statement of the problem

Gender is culturally a fundamental criterion in categorizing the human species along varied dimensions. This categorization results in different treatment of extent to which gender orientation can significantly influence the competence of university workers.

4. Research questions

1. Do the respondents differ in their competences across the six occupational environments irrespective of sexes?
2. Is there any gender difference in the occupation competence of workers in the various occupational environments?

5. Research Hypothesis

There is no significant gender difference in occupational competences of workers in the six occupational environments

6. Significance of the study

The results of the study will hopefully be beneficial to parents, individuals concerned and employees of labour as well as the government. It will enable the individual explore his/her areas of proficiency in life. This will also yield positive dividend to the beneficiaries to tailor their competences towards occupational environment congruent to their personality traits. Counselors will utilize the knowledge in vocational guidance of male and female clients towards appropriate career choice. Employers of labour will also find the result of this study as useful guide in appropriate job selection based on specialized skills and personal traits.

7. Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select 140 males and 100 females teaching and non-teaching university workers not below

CONTISS 07 or CONUASS 01. these categories of respondents were randomly selected from Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko (AAUA); The Federal University Of Technology Akure (FUTA)

Altogether there were 140 male and female subjects evenly spread across the various categories of senior university workers viz: Academic Staff Union of Nigerian University (ASUU); the Senior Staff Association Of Nigerian University (SSANU); The National Association Of Academic Technologies (NAAT). A total of 300 questionnaires were administered out of which only 240 were validly completed and retrieved

7.1 Instrumentation

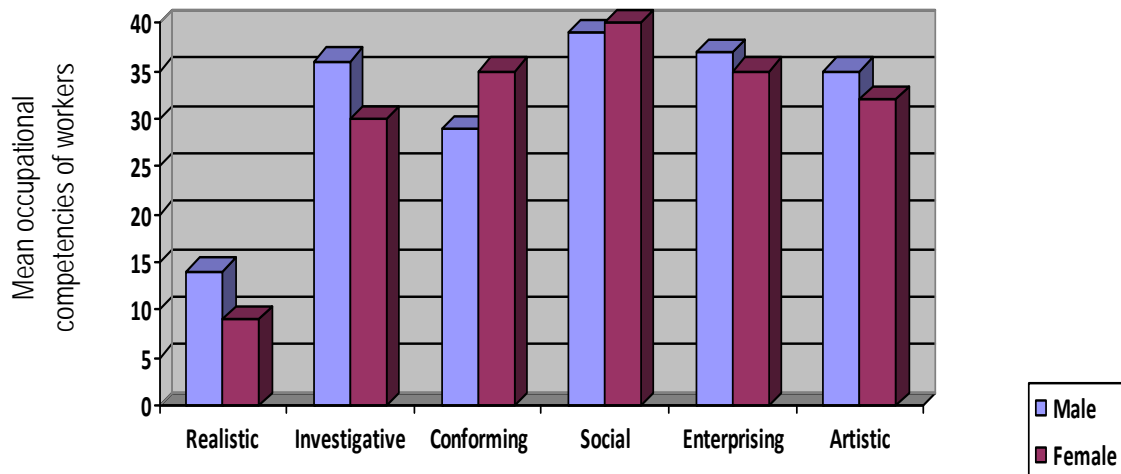
A modified version of standard inventory the self-directed search (SDS) Holland (1985) was adopted for this research. This self-administered questionnaire allows for individual's self assessment of his/her ability capabilities, competencies, e.t.c. about one's work. Uwe (2007) established the test-retest reliability coefficient of the modified version of the instrument (SDS) at 0.72. The instrument was also pilot tested on 30 subjects at Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo and a test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained. These were adjudged high enough to be used for this study.

7.2 Data analysis

In finding out whether any significant differences existed between the mean scores of men and women regarding their occupational competencies, independent t-test of the means and standard deviations for the occupational competence area were calculated and statistically compared using t-test technique. The five percent ($p=0.05$) level of significance was used for the hypothesis testing.

8. Results

Data in tables 1-2 and figure 1 below address research questions 1 and 2 as well as hypothesis 1.



Holland occupation competences of Male – Female workers.

Figure 1: Mean comparison of occupation competences of male-female workers

In order to answer research question 1 and 2, fig. 1 presents the comparison of mean distribution of workers in the respective occupational environment based on gender of subject of subjects. From fig. 1, it was observed that males were higher in their mean scores than their female counterparts in realistic, investigative, artistic and enterprising competences, while females obtained significantly higher mean scores in social and conforming competences.

9. Hypothesis testing

The results of data analysis in respect of hypothesis 1 is presented in fig 1 and tables 1 & 2 below.

Table 1: Analysis of variance comparing workers competences in different occupational environment

Source	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Model	425.562(a)	7	60.795	257.792	.000
Sex	.667	1	.667	2.830	.153*
Occupation	35.584	5	7.117	30.178	.001**
Error	1.179	5	.236		
Total	426.741	12			

*Sex Significant at $P > 0.05$

Result in table 1 indicated that gender of university workers was a significant factor in determining their work efficiency (competence). This is indicative of the probability value of $P > 0.05$ for gender comparison of occupational competencies. The hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the occupational competence of workers is therefore not accepted. The analysis however, established a significant difference in workers competence across the six occupational environment irrespective of gender. This observation is confirmed by probability value of $P > 0.05$

Table 2: Scheffee's Post Hoc multiple comparison showing differences in mean competencies of occupational environment

(1) Occupational Groups	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	P-Value	95% Confidence Interval	
				Upper bound	Lower bound
Realistic					
investigative	-2.4850(*)	.48562	.047	-4.9253	-.0447
Conforming	-2.1600	.48562	.079	-4.6003	.2803
Social	-5.8350(*)	.48562	.001	-8.2753	-3.3947
Enterprising	-3.2750(*)	.48562	.015	-5.7153	-.8347
Artistic	-2.9000(*)	.48562	.025	-5.3403	-.4597
Investigative					
Realistic	2.4850(*)	.48562	.047	.0447	4.9253
Conforming	.3250	.48562	.990	-2.1153	2.7653
Social	-3.3500(*)	.48562	.014	-5.7903	-.9097
Enterprising	-.7900	.48562	.749	-3.2303	1.6503
Artistic	-.4150	.48562	.973	-2.8553	2.0253
Conforming					
Realistic	2.1600	.48562	.079	-.2803	4.6003
Investigative	-.3250	.48562	.990	-2.7653	2.1153
Social	-3.6750(*)	.48562	.009	-6.1153	-1.2347
Enterprising	-1.1150	.48562	.478	-3.5553	1.3253
Artistic	-.7400	.48562	.790	-3.1803	1.7003
Social					
Realistic	5.8350(*)	.48562	.001	3.3947	8.2753
Investigative	3.3500(*)	.48562	.014	.9097	5.7903
Conforming	3.6750(*)	.48562	.009	1.2347	6.1153
Enterprising	2.5600(*)	.48562	.042	.1197	5.0003
Artistic	2.9350(*)	.48562	.024	.4947	5.3753
Enterprising					
Realistic	3.2750(*)	.48562	.015	.8347	5.7153
Investigative	.7900	.48562	.749	-1.6503	3.2303
Conforming	1.1150	.48562	.478	-1.3253	3.5553
Social	-2.5600(*)	.48562	.042	-5.0003	-.1197
Artistic	.3750	.48562	.982	-2.0653	2.8153
Artistic					
Realistic	2.9000(*)	.48562	.025	.4597	5.3403
Investigative	.4150	.48562	.973	-2.0253	2.8553
Conforming	.7400	.48562	.790	-1.7003	3.1803
Social	-2.9350(*)	.48562	.024	-5.3753	-.4947
Enterprising	-.3750	.48562	.982	-2.8153	2.0653

Based on observed means.

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

In table 2, the Scheffee's multiple comparison was used to determine which of the pairs of occupational environments were significantly different with respect to workers' competence. The post hoc results indicated pair-wise significant difference with respect to each of the following pairs of occupational group as exemplified by $P > 0.05$; Realistic versus Investigative, Realistic versus Social, Investigative versus Social, Social versus Conforming, Social versus Enterprising versus Realistic, Artistic versus Realistic and Artistic versus Social competencies.

10. Discussion of results

From the result of the findings it was observed that sex has no significant influence on occupational competence of university workers. A significant difference in workers' competences was also established across the six occupational environments irrespective of gender. Results in table 1 further show that males were higher in their mean scores than their female counterparts in realistic, investigative, artistic and enterprising competences, while female counterparts in realistic, investigative, artistic and enterprising competences,

While females obtained significantly higher mean scores and conforming competences.

The fact that female respondent fair better in social and conforming competencies may be explained in term physiological difference the sexes. This findings thus partly confirm that male workers are traditional believed to be more involved in energy sapping vocations and consequently perform better than their female counterpart. Moreover, there is the occupational stereotype in our culture in which certain jobs are designated men's jobs while some are designated "women's job" (Marano,2005)

The results of this study therefore lend support to the earlier assertion of Broverman et al. (2010) that gender differences in job competences and the attendant sex-role stereotype in varying occupational environments could partly be explained by the fact that females, being feminine and not physiologically strong, would prefer occupation that may not demand excessive energy dissipation. Again, the fact that this study confirmed gender difference in occupational competency of workers based on physiological personal characteristic of the sexes have lend credence to Holland's theory of vocational typology which he based on personal characteristic traits of individual.

11. Recommendation

Based on the result of this study, the following recommendation were made.

1. Counseling should help student to identify and develop talents as well as assist people in planning realistic career division.
2. School based and community counseling programme can serve the community at large by helping to de-emphasize sex-role stereotyping so as to reduce the socio-cultural factors reinforcing sex-role stereotyping in our society.
3. Early self-concept enhancement training and empowerment of the girl-child is also being advocated as a means of assisting the girl child compete and cope with non-traditional careers.
4. Women should be given equal opportunity to develop their potential because it has been proved that occupational competencies have nothing to do with sex.

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