



Estereotipos presentes en la elección de la formación académica y profesional

Present stereotypes in the choice of academic careers and professional training

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RESUMEN.

En este trabajo se analiza cómo influyen los estereotipos de género de modo diferencial en el modo en que hombres y mujeres deciden sobre su futuro profesional. Se ha diseñado una investigación cuantitativa a fin de conocer cuáles son las creencias y estereotipos que, en el presente, influyen sobre el proceso de toma de decisión del individuo a la hora de escoger su trayectoria académica.

La investigación se efectúa desde una doble perspectiva, analizándose por un lado las creencias, motivaciones y estereotipos del alumnado y por otro lado, identificando en la sociedad gallega las creencias en relación a competencia profesional y los estereotipos que conectan a cada género. Estos datos serán correlacionados con el número de matriculados en cada una de estas titulaciones de cada género a fin de identificar qué peso ejercen los estereotipos a la hora de decidir el futuro profesional.

PALABRAS CLAVE.

Formación profesional, género, familia, estereotipos.

ABSTRACT.

This paper analyzes how gender stereotypes influence differently the way men and women decide about their professional future. Quantitative research has been designed in order to know what are the beliefs and stereotypes that presently influence the process of decision making of the individual when choosing their academic career.

The research is carried out from a double perspective, analyzing on the one hand the beliefs, motivations, and stereotypes of the students, and on the other hand, identifying in the Galician society the beliefs in relation to professional competence and the stereotypes that connect to each gender. These data will be correlated with the number of registered



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students in each of these degrees of each gender in order to identify what weight stereotypes exercise when deciding a profession.

KEY WORDS.

Vocational training, gender, family, and stereotypes.

1. Introduction.

Individuals are not oriented in the same way, which leads them to make decisions regarding their professional career that are different and are often in line with gender stereotypes, which are beliefs transmitted by society about men and women in relation to what they can and cannot do. In order to fit into the framework established by society, men and women unconsciously decide to submit to stereotypes (Colás-Bravo, 2008; Mc Ewen, 2013).

The gender stereotypes are present way in our society in various fields either directly or indirectly. So much so that even testify to the presence of female stereotypes that go against the qualities you must have to aspire to leadership and the role of work in different societies (Hidalgo and Muñoz, 2018) .

There are stereotypes, which are reinforced through gender socialization, leading to the emergence of different expectations between female and male (Osborn et al., 2001; Jimenez and Fernandez, 2016). The socialization process can be described as a set of means by which a society prescribes or encourages the behavior of systematically differentiating women from men , so that they gradually internalize subconsciously exactly which are their sexual roles, and come to consider that they are natural , and thus this assumed distinction is therefore the tool through which roles are perpetuated (Mc Ewen, 2013).

The role given to sex and gender is important in the socialization process as they follow different courses under those on going variables. . Therefore, both are present in the construction of socialization (González and Jiménez, 2016). Sex and gender are different dimensions; thus, sex is defined by its innate and biological character as a set of features and functions that distinguish men from women. On the other hand, gender is a sociological concept that refers to the social and cultural differences that exist between women and men (Alcañiz, 2016).

Gender relies on biological sex to designate gender hierarchy and division in the workplace, as well as in other multiple scenarios (Saínez and Meneses, 2018). In addition, according to Rossi and Barajas (2015), gender refers to the relationship of socially constructed domination between the sexes or between individuals of the same sex, and is composed of a set of attitudes, feelings, and reactions by which a society defines , differentiates, and hierarchizes the masculine and the feminine.

The influence of the roles associated with each gender, as Díaz and Galán (2014) have stressed, are the cause of men and women choosing professions that are consistent with what is expected, finding different enrollment rates depending on the beliefs connected to said branch of study.

Through stereotypes, according to Usoralde (2015), social roles prevail in society by influencing professional orientation, but not only on the election process, but also throughout its development. In fact, following Lizana (2016) women seek to integrate into jobs where



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they have the opportunity to reconcile family and professional life, unlike men, who are more attracted to those positions with better economic conditions and more possibilities to develop professionally. Stereotypes, as authors such as Mínguez and López (2017) or Martínez (2015) suggest, are inspired by the world, so as society evolves, stereotypes must also adapt to these changes.

It is to stereotypes that one can attribute much of the responsibility for inequality between women and men, as these convey information that does not reflect reality, and are an obstacle before the achievement of the goals and desires that individuals pose (Millán, Santos and Pérez, 2015). The educational institutions have a duty to fight against stereotypes, as well as against discrimination, and promote diversity and gender equality. Schools, as a place of emancipation, should allow students to develop critical thinking in addition to being able to eradicate stereotypes (Martínez, 2015).

2. Basis of the Problem.

To respond to the core of the problem in terms of stereotypes, the question arises, why fight gender stereotypes?

A first argument in favor of the fight against stereotypes can be found in the legislation, which establishes the equality of women and men in the labor market and in society in general as an essential premise. Gender stereotypes have been used to justify occupational segregation and strengthen the gender division of labor. In this regard, it should be noted that horizontal segregation tends to concentrate women and men in certain types of trades and thus restrict their choice.

In contrast, following Santoro and Monreal-Gimeno (2017), who analyze in their research the gender models that exist as meters of the resistance of a patriarchal culture that hinders the achievement of substantial equality between men and women, which in the Spanish context promotes the law 3/2007, of March 22.

As seen in Table 1, in the course 201 7 /201 8 in Vocational Training (FP) , the percentage of male students enrolled is superior in all modes except for distance training with women , and one may ask will this modality of study be a characteristic to consider in relation to the gender variable?

Table 1.Number enrolled FP Spain (2017/2018).

Vocational training	Enrolled students	Men %	Women %
Basic FP cycles	69,299	71.1	28.9
FP Cycles Middle Grade (face-to-face)	317,966	57.7	42.3
Higher Grade FP cycles (face-to-face)	328,319	54.2	45.8
FP cycles (remote)	77,915	40.5	59.5

Note: data extracted from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training [http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/dms/mecd/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/estadisticas/educacion/indicadores-publicaciones-synthesis / data-figures / Datosycifras1718eng.pdf](http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/dms/mecd/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/estadisticas/educacion/indicadores-publicaciones-synthesis/data-figures/Datosycifras1718eng.pdf)





Not only at the academic level are there differences, the sectoral and professional concentration influences the salary structure, and explains the existence of wage gaps, which are still persistent at present and lead women to obtain lower wages and, in the future, lower pensions at the time of retirement (Usoralde, 2015; Rossi and Barajas, 2015; Lizana, 2016).

Along these lines, the World Wage Report 2018/2019, carried out by the International Labor Organization (ILO), places the world wage gap at around 16%. For this reason, the average wages (averages) per hour have been taken into account; with data from 73 countries covering around 80 % of the world's workers (ILO, 2019).

On the other hand, vertical segregation refers to the professional hierarchy, that is, the way in which positions of responsibility are distributed within companies. It also shows that fewer women occupy managerial positions in contrast to the number of men who hold them. Therefore, it is revealed that stereotypes are a powerful factor in maintaining inequalities between men and women in this double plane (horizontal and vertical), (Colás-Bravo, 2008).

A second argument that can be referred to when justifying why fighting stereotypes is also an economic issue, might be pointed out by the fact that the optimal use of the skills of all individuals could lead companies to improve the aggregate capabilities of work teams, which would improve their productivity (Lizana, 2016). Achieving equality through the expiration of stereotypes would also strengthen innovation, diversifying the productive sectors thanks to an equitable representation of both genders (Mac Ewen, 2013; Candela et al., 2009; Jiménez and Fernández, 2016). In practice, it is clear that there are professions in which there is a demand for professionals that are not covered in the absence of trained people who can occupy these positions, a circumstance in which stereotypes have a great responsibility (Koch et al., 2015).

Among women, there are professions such as those related to mechanical and technological work, in which the parity is far from an operative fact, and becomes one of the social objectives to be raised (Alcañiz, 2015).

It is noteworthy that since 2009 only 39% of women are scientists (Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, 2018).

Stereotypes are part of the cognitive process, since they are composed of a set of information from which the brain develops strategies to interpret the world in which the individual develops (León and Mora, 2010; Osborn et al., 2001).

In addition to being a key piece to understand reality and overcome it, requires working on transforming acquired representations, which for individuals involves a complex process in which to overcome a series of resistances. Indeed, what has been internalized as "natural", and this is the interpretive key in which the individual relies on day to day, will be difficult to transform (Santana and Ruiz, 2018).



3. Material and Method.

In order to study this influence of stereotypes, a study is being effectuated in an educational center in the city of Galicia. For this study, in the first place, a theoretical approach will be carried out through the exploration of the academic literature that has been projected on the object of study that is analyzed in this work, the gender gap and the influence of stereotypes on the elections that condition the professional future. In regard to the analysis of these investigations, and it will seek to identify which variables involved in the selection process career, on which the quantitative study is designed, and on registrations that have taken place two years in a row will also be shown (2016-2017 and 2017-2018) in the selected educational center and in the following training cycles belonging to the services branch :

- Care Technician for People in Dependency Situation.
- Higher Technician in Early Childhood Education.
- Senior Technician in Social Integration.
- Senior Technician in Promotion of Gender Equality.

The objective of this article is to detect the influence of gender stereotypes on the choice of an academic career.

For the collection of data, the sample that has been used for the first questionnaire has been constituted by 100 students (25 of each degree studied: Technician in Attention to Persons in Dependency Situations, Higher Technician in Infant Education, Higher Technician in Social and Technical Integration Superior in Promotion of Gender Equality). In addition, another questionnaire has been designed for society in general, only taking into account the age of majority and residence in the city where the study has been carried out with the intention of knowing what the beliefs about professionals by sex are, and what effect does the sex variable have on trust in professionals from different economic sectors.

In relation to the center, some characteristics are specified: it is a training center located in a city with more than 100,000 inhabitants. The educational center is located in a central and well connected neighborhood. It has 65 teachers and eight different training cycles are taught, including those dedicated to the services branch, which have been investigated in this work.

It should be noted that, as is characteristic of the centers that focus on this type of training, that is, the Vocational Training Institutes, students are marked by diversity in terms of age, interests, and expectations.

Both questionnaires have consisted of general questions about the subjects to better know their professional profile and their career choice process, pursuing to see if there are beliefs about the existence of professions reserved for a specific gender.

4. Results of the Investigation.

First, the results achieved in the first of the questionnaires, designed to investigate the influence of gender stereotypes in the choice of an academic career, are presented. This questionnaire has been administered in a Vocational Training educational center; for reasons of confidentiality, the name is not supplied.





This circumstance will be revealed in the light of the results of the investigation, although it is evident through other statistical data on registrations to which it has been possible to have access. Indeed, under one aspect, there are the speakers who enroll in these degrees as the first step in the configuration of their career, not only academic but also professional, which share their age (they are young people who have just finished their high school studies) and are attracted to these degrees for different motivations.

By RTB one intends older students who have been enrolled, and after having had contacts with the professional environment, aim through the formation to turn around their career. Among these students, there are varied motivations, but in general, they try to improve their professional and economic situation through obtaining new opportunities.

It should be noted that due to the vertiginous social changes that society is experiencing, we live in “liquid times”, where everything is dynamic and changing, and there is nothing that is stable and solid (Bauman, 2012, Ordóñez-Olmedo, 2017) . The changes, which we have witnessed in recent years, have crystallized significant progress regarding gender roles and stereotypes with which the individual becomes familiar during the socialization process. For this reason, as will be shown, the influence of stereotypes will be different between younger and older students, although in both cases it is relevant, as can be seen below.

Proceeding next to explore the results, in the first instance the questionnaire covers a series of socio-demographic data to better understand the sample. Among the four degrees, that have been considered, one found more women than men enrolled, as shown in the Figure 1.

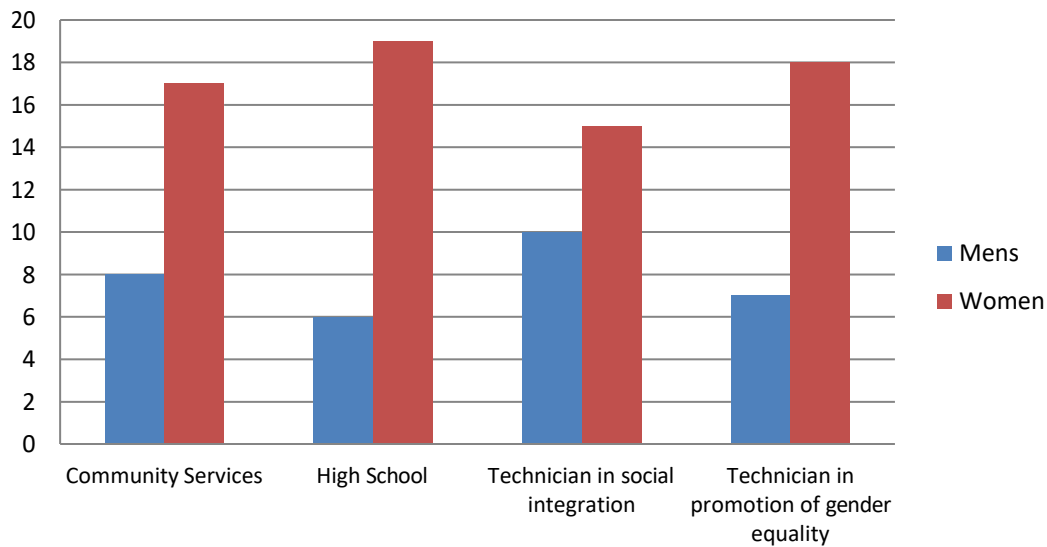


Figure 1. Number of enrolled by sex. Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaire data.





Regarding the form of access to the degree, Figure 2, the following data have been found.

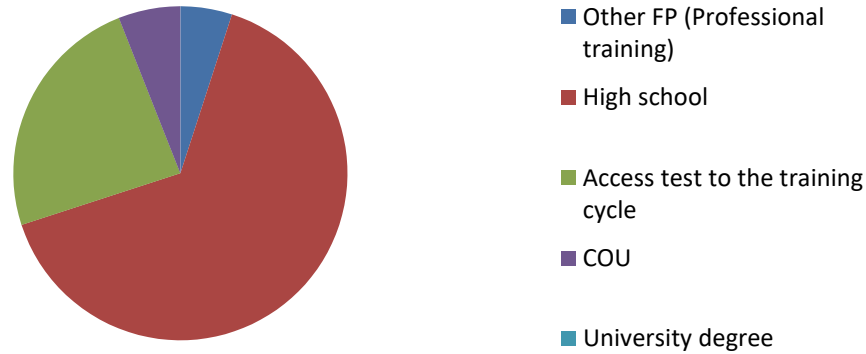


Figure 2. Form of access to the degree. Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaire data.

It is observed that the majority of the students have accessed through the baccalaureate, although there is a group that is also relevant in terms of the number of students that make it up who have chosen to access the cycle through their access tests. In general, it should be noted that the youngest students are those who have nurtured the group of students who access through high school, while among the older ones, other options prevail. In relation to the reasons that have conditioned the election, these have been measured through a Likert-type scale with which it has been requested that they be positioned in a range of 1 to 5 depending on their degree of agreement with a series of affirmations

The average scores have been calculated, which are analyzed in Table 2 below. The aggregate averages are exposed on the one hand, and on the other hand the score reached by men and women.

Table 2. Reasons why the degree is selected.

Item	Half	Mens	Women
It will allow me to face new challenges	3.45	3.50	2.90
It will allow me to develop my capacity for innovation	3.90	4.09	2.30
My family considers it the most suitable profession for me	4.10	3.40	4.50
The counselor has recommended this profession to me	2.50	1.90	3.40
It will allow me to improve the world	3.00	3.00	3.00
I think I am qualified to practice this profession	4.80	4.50	5.00
It will allow me to help other people	4.60	3.90	4.50
I can find a job soon	3.40	4.50	2.90
These studies do not require a significant investment	4.50	4.80	4.00
It will allow me to influence the world around me	3.60	4.10	2.70
It is related to my professional interests	3.70	3.90	4.10
It is a profession with many exits	3.20	4.10	3.00

Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaire data.





According to what is observed in Table 2, men and women differ in their motivations to study the profession they have taken. Thus, variations are observed with respect to all the variables. It is striking how for students, the most important thing to take the degree is their belief about their competence in this branch, which in the case of women reaches the highest score, being slightly lower in relation to men. In this sense, it can be seen how the influence of stereotypes has prompted women to feel more competent in the professions "for women", as is the case of the analyzed branches, in which a much higher enrollment rate is registered in contrast to the number of men who have enrolled.

In another sense, the role played by the academic orientation is still only slightly relevant, according to the data, being more influential in relation to women than in men, as can be seen if the distance observed between the scores is taken into account. These data should be analyzed taking into account aspects such as the number of visits to the counseling services that men and women make before deciding, but these data could not be quantified because a record was not kept in the educational center about this variable.

However, students have been asked if they have gone to counseling services, and it has been obtained that it is an underutilized service (only 30% confirm their attendance).

It is also interesting to contemplate how women give more weight to issues such as the possibility of helping others, which, again, links with the traditional role that ties women to professions related to the care of others. Certain issues are in clear contrast, such as the fact that men value aspects such as the ability to innovate, the possibility of influencing the professional environment in which they will be integrated, and the time it takes to find a job, which for women form a nucleus of secondary mobiles when choosing their profession.

Precisely, it shows the existence of different motivations for men and women, which, nevertheless, approximate their scores in two fields in particular: their feeling of competence (which, as mentioned, is greater in the case of women) and the low investment they need to train, which is one of the incentives of professional training.

In relation to previous experience in the workplace, 95% of the students did not have any previous experience in this sector, or in a similar branch. The 5% of students who have answered affirmatively are those who had already been trained in advance, and who choose to improve their professional profile by pursuing this degree.

One of the most important study variables in this work is the family influence in the choice of the training cycle; they show that for the majority of the students the family has not exercised any weight, Figure 3, being themselves the ones who have made the decision, as follows.



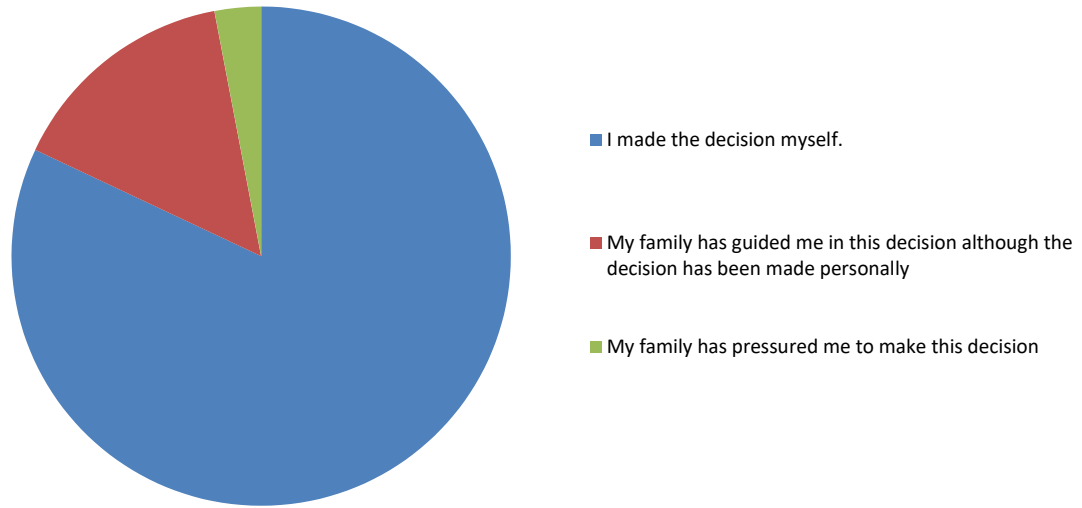


Figure 3. Family influence on the decision. Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaire data.

In this sense, it is appreciated that students are quite empowered in their family circle to study what best suits their preferences, except in the case of three people who have indicated that they have felt pressured by their families to choose this professional branch. Regarding future job prospects, they are analyzed in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Future job prospects.

	Global score	Mens	Women
I hope to find a profession after completing the training cycle	79%	90%	68%
I am not worried about the future	Four. Five%	70%	64%
I am concerned about the problems of the labor market (lack of opportunities, unemployment ...).	55%	30%	36%
I would like to continue training	twenty%	10%	2. 3%

Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaire data.

It is appreciated how in general the students trust in professional training as an academic experience that will prepare them to integrate into the labor market and, for this reason, they do not feel worried about the future. However, there are more women among those students who have projected their concern towards this stage.





Next, the data obtained with the questionnaire addressed to the general population will be analyzed. This questionnaire has been made available through a Google Drive link that has been shared with professionals in the sector with the aim of transmitting it to their acquaintances, and thus disseminate it to the greatest extent possible. The response of 40 people has been achieved, and the questionnaires have been filtered based on some features of the population, with the aim that all respondents were of legal age. Through this questionnaire, it was intended to know the existence of stereotypes in this context.

40% of respondents are male, and 60% female. Of these, it has been recorded that 80% live as a couple, and 20% are single or separated/widowed, a variable that according to some studies may influence the "creation" of stereotypes. All of them belonging to the city in which is situated the educational center that has carried out the research for this article.

Regarding the level of education, it has been recorded that 40% have primary studies or a school graduate, 32% have professional training and the rest have university education. 90% are active, having registered very diverse professions.

Figure 4 shows that for 60% of respondents, there are professions that are more suitable for each gender, a circumstance that they reaffirm by indicating that, within Vocational Training, there are specialties more suitable for women than for men. In relation to the competence of men and women to carry out one profession or another, it is again indicated in 75% of the questionnaires that men are more qualified for professions such as computer science, construction, or industry.

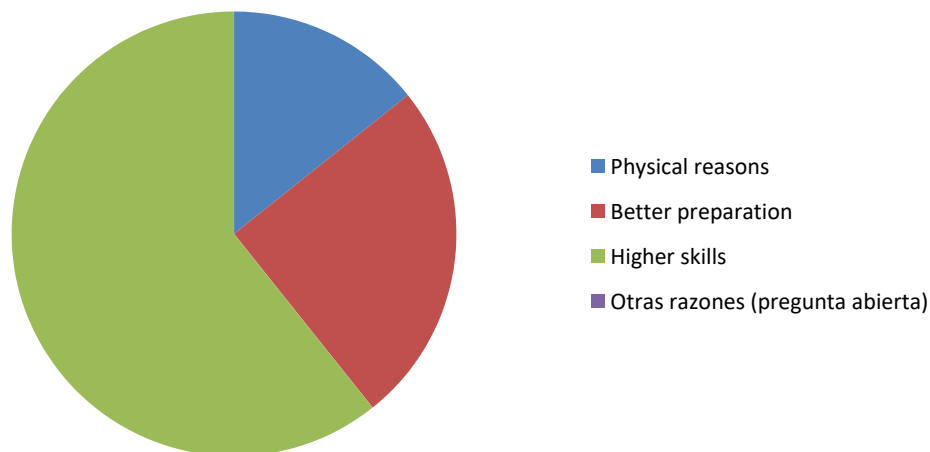


Figure 4. There are more suitable professions for each gender. Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaire data.

When asked about the qualifications investigated, it has been found that for a large part of the respondents they are branches that are more suitable for women than for men, having recorded the following results in Table 4.





Table 4. Analysis of the type of degree and its adaptation by gender.

Titration	Is for men	It's for women
Care Technician for People in Dependency Situation	5	35
Higher Technician in Early Childhood Education	0	40
Higher Technician in Social Integration	5	35
Senior Technician in Promotion of Gender Equality	2	38

Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaire data.

According to what has been observed, it is noted that for the majority of respondents, the branches with respect to which they have been asked, are rather intended for women. The reasons given to support this belief, which is investigated below, are the following (Figure 5).

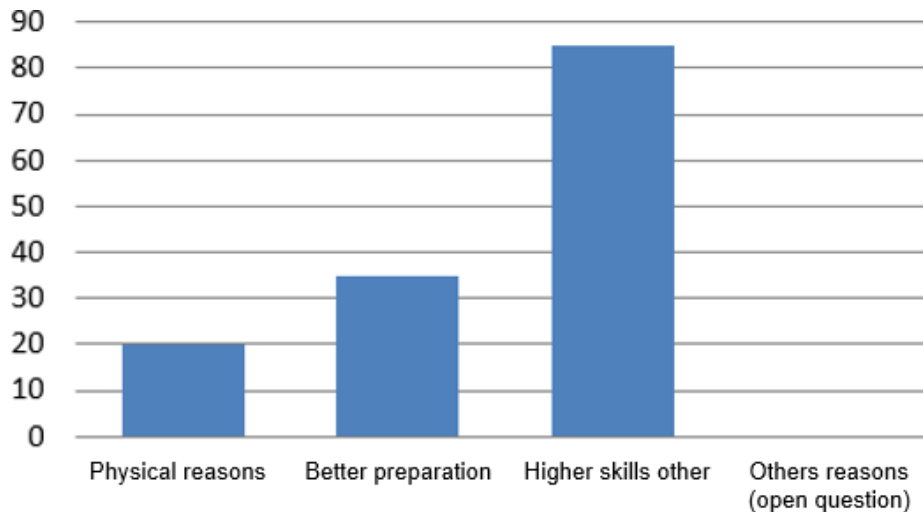


Figure 5. Reasons for supporting the gender perspective. Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaire data.

Finally, the questionnaire contains a closing question in which it is asked whether men and women are believed to be equally prepared to practice their profession, in which 75% of respondents have indicated: yes.



It is revealed that gender stereotypes are still present in the society analyzed, since certain training branches are thought to be “reserved” for women because of the differences between the sexes. The unfounded beliefs that have been found in this population during the study that has been carried out highlight that it is a social scenario on which one must intervene to curb the role that these cognitions have acquired and acquire at the time of choosing a career.

5. Discussion.

Gender stereotypes are still tangible in society and pressure the individual at the moment when he or she makes one of the most momentous decisions of his or her life: where to channel one's professional future. As it has been shown in the investigated context, there are important associations strongly established in the mentality of individuals that lead them to make a selection of their career inspired by their influence. Specifically, it is conceived that, for the society analyzed, men and women are diversely gifted for the exercise of different professions and, consequently, there are "men's" and "women's" jobs.

In this line of argument, the formation binomial / g is black, continues to reflect the typically stereotyped professional roles, limiting the freedom and autonomy of development of each individual.

It is a reality that the autonomy of the person in the field of training and profession is limited by the mastery of a stereotype that manipulates the development of the expression of the freedom of choice of each individual.

According to Subirats and I took:

In order to maintain the freedom of choice of all human beings, gender prescriptions must be eliminated: any boy and girl must have within their reach all the possibilities that a society can offer to its young individuals at one time (2007 p.34).

The influence of stereotypes should be considered as a matter on which to intervene in that it is a factor that distances society from gender equality, in addition to imposing unfounded beliefs that do not allow the individual to develop their interests around certain professional areas because of these social pressures.

To alleviate the problem, it is proposed that after detecting the influence of gender stereotypes on career choice, an intervention proposal is designed to correct the effects of these beliefs on this process through the guidance services.

It is important that society be aware of the need to achieve gender equality through actions that make it tangible that in the different spheres in which the individual develops in his or her daily life, there are no vetoes or limitations due to gender that can be projected for any reason (physical capacity, attributes, qualification ...). Specifically, it is essential to work thoroughly to consolidate in the social ideology that men and women can be competent in any discipline, and are not born predetermined for biological reasons to occupy certain positions in society, working to avoid horizontal and vertical segregation to the one that the academic literature has alluded to in the different researches that have been analyzed.

Using the evidence obtained in the research as a basis, the intervention proposal should try to mitigate the effects of social learning in the career choice process.





One of the limitations of the work is that, despite having achieved the objectives that had been set, it is necessary to check afterwards if the proposal has been effective, for which a follow-up on the number of registrations of men should be followed, and women in the degrees referred to in the courses that occur to the application of the same.

However, all of this raises the necessity to continue this research by setting new targets through which to know if it has been effective, and discover whether it is necessary to continue intervening on the social scene toward which this study is designed, offering results through which it may be offered a more complete perspective.

In addition, it is important to underline that Galician society has worked in a specific context, and, concretely, with a training center. In this sense, it would be interesting to be able to extrapolate this research to other scenarios in order to contrast the various aspects addressed, in particular the differences between the influence of stereotypes between different populations and the correlation of these with the number of students enrolled in different degrees, expanding the scope of research, and thereby enriching the explanatory capacity of its results.

The results of the proposal are expected to increase the number of men in the branches studied in the future, bringing the figures towards parity in the short run. In addition, among other more ambitious objectives, it is intended to support that society gradually immerses itself in a process of transformation, contributing a grain of sand towards gender equality, and reducing the weight exerted by stereotypes.

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