



Gender roles in the world of work – analysing and challenging stereotypes

Do job stereotypes affect the choice of career?

In Worksheet 1, you explored how gender stereotypes develop and how they are reflected in the representation of skilled crafts.

In this worksheet, you will investigate whether these stereotypes are also visible in the labour market. By analysing statistics, reports and personal experiences, you will explore how gender stereotypes, structural inequalities and discrimination may influence career choices in skilled crafts.

PART A – Who chooses which jobs? ★

In Worksheet 1, you reflected on your own perceptions of different occupations. Now investigate whether these stereotypes are reflected in reality. Use the statistics A and B to identify patterns before discussing possible explanations.

1. OBSERVE

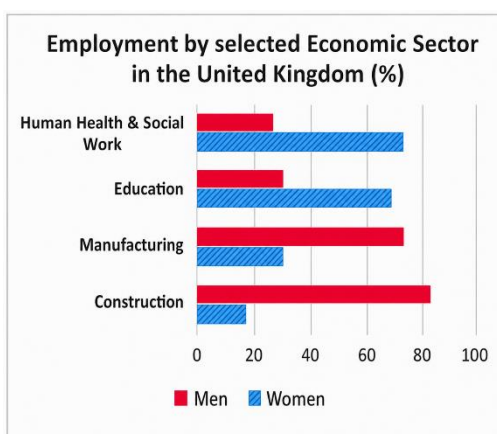
- Study both statistics carefully.
- For each statistic write down three observations.

2. COMPARE

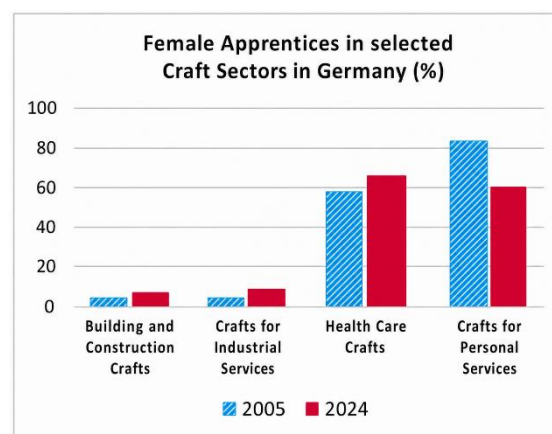
- Work with a partner. Compare the statistics.
- Discuss:
 - Which of the selected economic sectors are dominated by men?
 - Which of the selected economic sectors have a comparatively higher proportion of women?
 - Which similarities can you identify between Germany and the United Kingdom?
 - Focus on Germany: Which developments can be seen in the last two decades?

Use comparison language such as...

compared to
whereas
similarly
in contrast
more than
less likely to



Material A: Percentage of woman and men working in selected economic sectors in the United Kingdom in 2026. Based on data from [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#).



Material B: Female apprentices in selected skilled crafts sectors in Germany. Based on data from [German Confederation of Skilled Crafts \(ZdH\)](#).



Did you know...?

In Germany, the field of "healthcare crafts" mainly includes technical occupations such as opticians and hearing-aid audiologists. In the UK, by contrast, the field of "human health and social work" mainly includes occupations such as nurses and social workers.



3. PREDICT

Based on the statistics, formulate two hypotheses about the future gender distribution in two of the selected industries of your choice. Do not use external information yet.

PART B – Why does the gender gap exist? ★ ★ ★

Statistics help us identify patterns. However, they cannot explain why these patterns exist. Let's investigate possible reasons.

1. ANALYSE

- a) Work individually. Read materials C and D and complete the table on page 4.
- b) Compare how gender stereotypes affect the people described in the two materials. Consider:
 - Which gender stereotypes does each person or group face?
 - How does the stereotype affect how they are perceived by others?
 - What difficulties or barriers can result from these expectations?
 - Are there also positive developments or ways of challenging these stereotypes?
- c) Both materials originate from countries outside Germany. Discuss with a partner: "To what extent might the stereotypes and experiences described in the USA and the UK also be relevant to the German skilled crafts context?"

2. DISCUSS

Discuss in class:

- What similarities can you identify between the experiences described in materials C and D?
- In what ways are the stereotypes faced by men and women different?
- Why might a man be discouraged from entering a traditionally female-dominated occupation?
- Why might a woman be discouraged from entering a traditionally male-dominated occupation?
- Do gender stereotypes necessarily lead to discrimination, or can they also influence people in more subtle ways?

Interview extract – Perspective from the United Kingdom (UK)

Interviewer: Tiarna, tell us about your career in construction.

Tiarna (Construction professional): I started my career in the construction industry when I was just 19. I was initially studying business and PR at University but quickly discovered I was more suited to the working world than student life. Fast forward 10 years and I can confidently say it was the best decision I made. I am working for an amazing company and have grown a network of clients I feel extremely lucky to work alongside.

Interviewer: Describe your experience as a woman in the building sector.

Tiarna: Entering a male dominated industry meant I faced several challenges at the start of my career. [...] It was initially a struggle at times to be taken seriously when discussing the customer's Formwork requirements with typically male project teams who were far more experienced than myself. However, I chose to use these challenges as motivation, to not only prove them wrong but to demonstrate that a job can be done properly, regardless of gender. It shouldn't even be a consideration. [...]

Interviewer: What advice would you give to the next generation of young women joining the industry?

Tiarna: My advice would be not to be put off by the outdated view of what a woman needs to be to make it in the construction industry, along with the perception that women need to be more like men to succeed. There are many interesting opportunities within the construction industry and women can prove they are just as capable.

Successfully achieving your objectives and targets is the best indicator of how well you can do your job. Gender shouldn't be a factor for anyone building a career in this industry.

Material C: Women in Construction Week: Interview with Tiarna Davidson, Doka. Source: [Construction Magazine UK](https://www.constructionmagazine.co.uk/).



Men as hairdressers: Challenging Gender stereotypes – Perspective from Australia

Hairdressing is often perceived as a female profession. Many people believe that women are better or more creative at styling hair. As a result, men who are interested in cutting and styling hair may choose to become barbers instead, because barbering is often seen as more masculine.

Although the number of male hairdressers has increased in recent years, men still face obstacles when entering the industry. One important reason is the influence of gender stereotypes. Hairdressing is still considered by many people to be a profession mainly suited to women. In salons, this stereotype can be seen in the fact that women are often the stylists working directly with clients, while men are more likely to work in less visible roles.

In 2020, women made up more than 90% of hairdressers, hairstylists and cosmetologists in Australia. Equal opportunities in the industry require a change in the way people think about hairdressing and barbering.

Material D: Men as hairdressers. Source: Adapted from [Unsustainable Magazine](#)

3. EVALUATE

Look again at **materials A – D**. Explain how gender stereotypes may contribute to the unequal representation of women and men in different occupations. In your answer,

- refer to both statistical and personal evidence,
- include examples affecting women and men,
- distinguish between stereotypes, individual experiences and structural barriers.
- critically consider to what extent the materials can explain the statistical patterns.

Write **100 – 120 words**.

PART C – To what extent do job stereotypes affect career choices? ★ ★ ★

The statistics and personal experiences suggest that gender stereotypes can influence access to occupations in different ways. Now evaluate whether these stereotypes also affect career choices.

- a)** Write an argumentative comment (120 – 150 words): "To what extent do job stereotypes affect career choices?"

In your comment

- summarise the main findings of this worksheet,
- refer to at least two of the materials,
- explain your own opinion,
- support your arguments with evidence from the materials.

- b)** Conclude by answering the guiding question.



Aspect	Material C	Material D
Main issue(s)		
Challenges		
Structural barriers		
Examples of stereotypes		
Consequences		
Possible solutions		