

## SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

### Essay/Assignment Cover Sheet

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**Course:** BA Joint Hons In Art & Design and Education

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**Lecturer/tutor** Mr. Andrew Wall

**Essay/Assignment title** Gender Theory

Criteria	Ex	VG	Good	Fair	Poor	Comment
Introduction (statement of problem, response to task)						
Range and use of appropriate sources						
Development of argument (analysis, interpretation)						
Conclusions (application, findings, outcomes)						
Presentation, language, academic conventions						

Please tick Y/N for Profile of Needs

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**General comment:**

**Indicative grade:**

**Tutor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Gender theory**

In this essay, I have chosen to talk about gender Theory. I will discuss the gender inequality females face in education. It is evident both males and females face inequality in the education system. Still, for this essay's sake, I will primarily focus on the inequality that affects females in both developing countries and Irish education systems. Females face inequality in many different aspects of life, but I will focus and develop on the inequality females face in second-level education. In each of my points, I will discuss one main factor that results in females' inequality in secondary education due to the area they receive instruction. I will compare and contrast the difference for females in a developing or developed country and how this affects these females' education.

Globally women have less access to education; for example, statistics show on the 'Human Rights Career' article that 'one-quarter of young women between 15-24 will not make it past primary education.' (title '10 causes of gender inequality'). That leaves that group of '58 % uneducated females' not undergoing basic primary education. As Emily Kane states in her journal, "women, traditionally have been excluded from advanced schooling" (pg78). This differential treatment in education for females has resulted in differential outcomes resulting in lower-income or no jobs available. Emily Kane continues to discuss how depending on the society's "social interests," female's access to equal education, it is not the "goal of equality," or that society makes "efforts to achieve" better education for females. It is all in the control of the community. There is extensive evidence that inequality happens to women in secondary education in developing countries, for example, Sudan. In the same article from 'Human Rights Career', continues to discuss how 'of all illiterate people in the world women are two-thirds.' These high figures represent the inequality that women receive in education.

Sudan has been labeled the most challenging place in the world for females to receive an education as high figures show 71% of girls do not attend primary school. These high figures are a result of Sudan's government paying only '2.6%' of its national budget into its education system. Females in similar areas like Sudan are also suffering; for example, Afghanistan, which has the most 'gender disparity in primary school' globally, and Nigeria, where '17 % of girls are illiterate'. Unfortunately, gender inequality shown to females in these underdeveloped countries is due to their corrupt governments that have 100% subsidies of what money goes into education and are not investing enough money and sources into education for both girls and boys in these areas. As stated by S. Kessler in book 'gender relations in secondary schooling.', Girls are placed into roles within a society based on their gender and this is a result of the "pressure of their parents, peers, mass media and schools" (S. Kessler.pg.34)(the problems with sex-role analysis). In Sudan, girls are being influenced by 'cultural and traditional views' (unicef; Sudan), which are domesticated roles resulting in fewer girls attending and remaining in school. S. Kessler also discusses how societies influencing the education systems in these underdeveloped areas result in 'passivity, dependence, and restricted ambition among girls' (S. Kessler.pg35); stereotypes being reinforced in education resulting in gender inequality among girls in primary and secondary education. Females and boys both face inequality when stereotypes are implied in education. Women in (AAUW; 2006)

argued that the 'different treatment given to boys and girls by teachers and the society dangerously hampered the educational progress, self-esteem, and career choices of girls' (J. N. Igbo, 2015, pg.1). The Stereotypes placed on females are generally that they'll pursue domestic roles in society. The secondary education system is an example of how these stereotypes still have an effect on females within education. Women are still very unrepresented in many areas of work.

In Sudan, they are emerging out of a deep political crisis that started in 2018. Sudan's President Bashir's government imposed emergency austerity measures to try 'stave off economic collapse', resulting in unrest in Sudan society. Bashir's 'decline on bread and fuel subsidies' (BBC, 2019) sparked demonstrations over living standards in the east, and the anger spread to the capital, Khartoum. As a result of both Sudan's government and their president Bashir's in parliament, both have effectively led to females increasing dropout rates in Sudan education. Their parents can't financially support their children's education.

Likewise, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Irish females were restricted in secondary education as the influence of 'tradition' and social norms placed in societies influenced the shaping and controlling of female roles in Ireland. Both Females and boys faced inequality when stereotypes were implied in education since the early-mid 1990s. The Irish annual statistical reports shown in the book 'Sé Sí - gender in Irish Education' between 1930-1968 discusses how 'arithmetic-girls only', which later developed to 'elementary mathematics(for girls only) were separate intermediate certificate subjects. The reports from that era exemplify that elementary maths was for girls and were seen as "unsuitable for Higher-level maths" and Higher-level was "not an option they were offered" (Sé Sí, pg5) from the education of this era. (AAUW; 2006) argued that the 'different treatment given to boys and girls by teachers and the society dangerously hampered the educational progress, self-esteem, and career choices of girls' (J. N. Igbo, 2015, pg.1). The Stereotypes placed on females in secondary level education influence females in their career choice/job. Still, in second-level education, there are subjects that are hugely male-dominated, and females are not hugely represented in, for example, physics. In 2016 on the leaving cert candidates chart, out of 27,894 female students in higher level subjects, only 1,574 represented physics. The Irish Society and the secondary education system are significant factors as to why these stereotypes still affect females within further education. Women are still very unrepresented in many work areas, for example, computer science, and engineering. In the Irish 'third level graduates in the field of study' 2016, shows that females in engineering, manufacturing and construction only represent 17.6% in this non-stereotypically female area or work. This shows stereotypes do effectively persuade Males and Females in their choice or work after second or third level education in Ireland

However, in comparison to Sudan, Secondary Education, and equality for Irish women and girls have developed significantly over the years. Over many years, the educational work of religious orders throughout the country has contributed to the relatively high levels of participation among girls in Irish second-level education. In the late 1980s, Fine Gael Minister for Education Gemma Hussey brought in the 'programme for action in education'. This act was a social justice act that focused on the "participation of women in secondary education". It focused on that all aspects of education must be available to both sexes. Due to acts like this and the "white paper

act," equality in Ireland's secondary education started to improve. For example, Ireland had brought into secondary education new principles, one being equality. In Brendan Walsh's text 'education studies in Ireland', he emphasizes how 'education should embrace all,' and those female students should receive 'equal opportunities' and that we should not discriminate against anyone based on their physical or social factors. We see from Walsh's text how this act influenced the development of equality we see females have in secondary level education. For example, as stated in the central statistics office in 2016 in Ireland, 'The proportion of students among women in the 18-24 age group rose by over 10 percent between 2011 and 2016, from 44.9% to 55.1%.' showing massive development in the equality of female students nationally. Female figures are showing higher than males in most aspects of education. Statistics as stated by Mary Hanafin TD that 'Boys account for almost two-thirds of the pupils who leave second-level education before the Leaving Certificate. Two-thirds of those boys leave 'without any qualifications at all', Which is the opposite of Sudan's gender statistics as more girls are leaving second level education. Hanafin goes on to discuss how girls are higher achievers than males in secondary education. Hanafin then states that girls are 'outperforming boys in 80% of leaving cert subjects'. Although as mentioned by Arlene Harris, psychological researchers in Britain have suggested; "social attitudes could play a part in why boys don't perform as well as girls." Although females still experience gender inequality within the Irish secondary education today, steps to better equality have been developing vastly since the 1980s/90s due to beneficial acts like 'the white paper act' being introduced in the Irish secondary education system. Compared to Sudan's government and education system. As stated in the 'Impact of Gender Stereotype on Secondary School Students' by O. Obiyo, "Without doubt, the environment a child finds himself or her-self in has a lot of impact on the child' is proven to affect when comparing Sudan and developing countries to Ireland, a developed country.

### **conclusion**

It is evident from research that the inequality of females in secondary education is influenced by factors like society, tradition and the stage of the country. As Sudan is a developing country we see a great difference in its equality towards females in secondary education when comparing it to Ireland. Although Ireland Females have experienced gender inequality in the past it's apparent that due to the involvement of the government and educated peers Ireland has developed immensely. There is a recurring theme globally that shows societies 'gender roles' affecting the inequality of females throughout the education system in both developing and developed countries.



I have inserted this image as my picture of choice because these boys are pushing the stereotypically male student uniform, which is empowering and a section I touch in my essay about gender stereotypes. This photo also represents my schooling experience as a student, as anyone could wear trousers or skirt, male or female.

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