

Preservice Teachers' Perception of Gender Stereotype Beliefs and Practices at Tumu College of Education, Ghana

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Abstract

A descriptive survey approach was used in this study to investigate preservice teachers' gender-stereotyped beliefs and perceptions of gender-stereotyped classroom practices. Participants included 422 preservice teachers (196 males and 125 females) from Tumu College of Education in Ghana. The participants were chosen using a convenience sampling technique. The Teacher's Gender Stereotype Questionnaire, adapted from Ifegbesan (2010), was completed online by participants. To answer the questions asked, descriptive and inferential statistics were used. According to the findings of the study, pre-service teachers have positive gender stereotypes beliefs, and perceptions of gender-stereotyped classroom behaviors. There were also significant differences in gender-stereotype beliefs among pre-service teachers based on sex, age, and academic level. Correlation analyses demonstrate significant relationships among age, sex and academic level, and gender-stereotyped belief. Multiple regression analysis found that gender, academic level, and age are all predictors of perceptions of gender stereotype beliefs. The study's implication is the need of educating pre-service teachers about gender stereotypes. There is also a need for gender-sensitive knowledge and pedagogies to be integrated into teacher education curricula.

Keywords: Gender, gender stereotype, pre-service teachers, teachers' demographics, preservice teachers' beliefs.

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INTRODUCTION

For a long time, the search for gender equity has therefore been on the United Nations' agenda. This is so because, the United Nations has had one of its major aims to foster gender equality and the full development of all global citizens, both male and female, and in particular to empower women to have confidence and the chance to be what they can be, not be inhibited in particular by gender (UNESCO, 2015). In this regard, some initiatives embarked on by the United Nations had led to initiating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For instance, the SDGs target 5.1 proposes to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere. In addition, SDG target 5c urges all countries to "Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels". Again SDG 4 targets to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". Particularly, goal 4.7 states that "by 2030, ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development,

including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of cultures contribution to sustainable development" (UNESCO, 2016). The above shows that the elimination of gender stereotypes and ensuring gender equality in education is a sine qua non for sustainable development and societies.

Combating gender imbalance in social systems is one of today's society's and educational system's concerns. Hence, schools and teachers play a significant role in the development of a future generation that is gender-sensitive. In every human society, and every human effort, occupation, vocation and institution, gender stereotypes exist. It exists in the business, at home, and in schools. The Council of Europe (2015) explains gender stereotypes as the preconceived views about men's and women's characters and skills aimed to steer people's behaviour, depending on their gender. Hall, Lindzey and Campell (1988) viewed stereotypes

as characteristics that are commonly believed and shared between people of a certain culture. Gender-based stereotyping is a biased notion that might be a sense of intuition, an impression, a fantasy, or a memory of what a person was before (Fung & Ma, 2000). Gender stereotype has therefore been recognized through disparities in sexes that are arbitrarily ascribed to men and women by roles determined by society's convictions and practices for each sex (Tahseldar, 2018). These gender-stereotyped socially embedded views mirror the societal expectations of parents who direct their children towards choices that are regarded as appropriate to their gender. These parent views and behaviors can contribute largely to identifying gender gaps in gender stereotypes in beliefs, practice, and awareness. For example, there is a widespread perception, that males endure more difficult task than females. This is a negative stereotype for women, but a positive stereotype for men, because it shows that women lack innate industrious abilities, but work hard is innate to men. This kind of misconception might result in prejudice in recruiting procedures, education, and many other social circumstances.

It is universally acknowledged that the elimination of gender stereotyping that casts men and women into predefined roles would lead to personal and societal progress. This is because 'gender stereotyping places harmful demands on both sexes, which hampers development and therefore limits economic advancement and social cohesiveness' (Council of Europe, 2015).

Extant researches on gender stereotypes have produced an astonishing amount of material, spread over arts, education, social sciences, and sciences. Critical reviews of the published researches (Abimbola & Dada, 2015; Igbo, Onu & Obiyo 2015; Law & Chan, 2004) have proven that the school plays an important role in shaping and strengthening boys' and girls' identities, gender relations and equality in society outside the classrooms. Moreover, evidence suggests that teachers' beliefs, be it implicit or explicit, influence their behaviors towards female students and male students in their ratings of verbal and written achievements, and this is related to their perception and their attitude towards the gender role of their students, which leads to social stereotyping.

Problem Statement

Stereotypes are all too common in Ghanaian culture. People frequently make snap judgments based on stereotypes, even though stereotypes and the conclusions drawn from them are frequently incorrect. Gender stereotypes are one of the most pervasive prejudices in Ghanaian culture.

All societies and education systems are working to address gender inequalities to promote gender sensitivity. However, gender stereotypes remain

in the majority of Ghanaian communities and affect academic life directly or indirectly within educational institutions. Teachers constitute part of these communities' weave and their views stem from their habitats and environs, reflecting in their gender stereotype views and classroom leading to unthankful outcomes.

There are comparatively few studies of gender stereotypes from Africa, particularly from Ghana. The available researches focus on the investigation of contents of the curricular and textbooks materials at the schools, and gender difference in the scientific and mathematical fields (Anokye-Poku, 2020; Arthur, Asiedu-Addo, & Appiah, 2017; Nunoo, Mensah, Boahen, & Nunoo, 2017; Sefa-Nyarko, & Afram, 2019; Tetteh, Wilmot, & Ashong, 2018). Little or no previously published research has studied the view of gender stereotypes by pre-service teachers. This is a major breach in the Ghanaian literature and is a major worry given the country's expanding socio-economic growth and the demand for equal opportunities for men and women. Research on the perception of gender stereotypes by teachers before service in Ghana is deficient and is worth exploring. Pre-service teachers must be conscious of gender stereotypes and their possible role in lowering and eliminating gender prejudice among learners. The purpose of this study is therefore to address this gap by assessing pre-service teacher opinions of gender stereotypes. This study will thus help to develop gender studies in the literature through an awareness of gender stereotypes in classrooms perceived by pre-service teachers.

Research Questions

Specifically, the research will answer the following questions:

1. What are pre-service teachers' perceptions of gender stereotypes beliefs and gender stereotype practices in the classroom?
2. Are there any significant differences between demographic characteristics of pre-service teachers (academic level of study, sex, religion, age, and marital status) and perceptions of gender stereotypes beliefs and gender stereotype practices?
3. What is the relationship between demographic characteristics of pre-service teachers (academic level of study, sex, religion, age, and marital status) and perceptions of gender stereotypes beliefs and gender stereotype practices?
4. What is the impact of the background characteristics of pre-service teachers on perceptions of gender stereotypes beliefs?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender is a term used to describe how society assigns duties to masculinity or femininity. UNICEF (2017) defined gender as "*a social and cultural construct, which distinguishes differences in the attributes of men and women, girls and boys, and*

accordingly refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women” (p. 2). Similarly, World Health Organization (2011) refers to gender as “*the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men. It varies from society to society and can be changed*” (p. 134). Gender, according to Lindsey (2015), refers to the cultural, social, and psychological qualities that are related to males and females in various social circumstances. Gender construction, according to socialization theory (Lee-Thomas, Sumsion, & Roberts, 2005), is a function of acquaintance to representations in the child's surroundings, which provide the youngster with instances of how to think, behave, and feel in a socially acceptable manner. Parents, the media, classmates, siblings, and teachers reinforced and promote these viewpoints (Martin, 1995). From the above, it can be pointed out that gender is a social construct that emerges from interactions within the environment. Thus, the various roles played by men and women in society and the rewards of these roles are formed and preserved via traditions and regulations which are passed on through time and space to generations.

Stereotype influences general behavior in society and has a vital role in human decision-making (Kulik, 1999). Stereotypes are “beliefs concerning the personal attributes of a group of people” (Aiken, 2002, p. 6). Furthermore, stereotypes are culturally determined (Hall, Lindzey, & Campbell, 1988) and taken as fact (Ifegbesan, 2010). Delamere and Shaw (2010) postulate that gender stereotyping is about boys' and girls' traditional perceptions of themselves and each other in terms of what they can and cannot accomplish, whether they are capable of performing competently or not so competently, and how they should reason and act solely based on their gender. According to Ifegbesan (2016), gender stereotyping examples are that males are stereotyped as having characteristics such as independence, self-confidence, roughness, assertiveness, strength, and aggression. Females, on the other hand, are viewed as compassionate, subservient, or weak, and as exhibiting qualities such as kindness, understanding, and warmth.

Richardson (2003) explained beliefs as “psychologically held understandings, premises or propositions about the world that are felt to be true, not necessarily logically structured” (, p.2). Gender-related beliefs refer to the various features, attributes, or traits connected with males or females (Upadyaya & Eccles, 2014).

Ifegbesan (2016) noted that gender stereotyping does not start in schools or during adolescence when students choose studies and/or careers based on their gendered conceptions of various subjects. It begins at birth when parents treat boys and girls differently; they purchase pink clothes for girls and

blue outfits for boys; they give boys balls and automobiles and females dolls. When it comes to assigning domestic tasks to boys and girls, parents discriminate based on gender. Boys are frequently excluded from household activities. In the absence of their parents, girls are expected to care for their children, whereas boys, who are expected to be future “heads of families,” are exempt. Gender stereotypes beliefs about the supposed skills of males and females abound. Some subjects are more gender-specific than others. Language, for example, is strongly linked to girls' abilities (Delamere & Shaw, 2010; Eriksson, Marschik, Tulviste, & Gallego, 2012) whereas mathematics and physical sciences are strongly linked to boys' abilities (Hill, Corbett, & St. Rose, 2010; Vassilou, 2010). Teachers' gender-related beliefs about boys' and girls' learning behavior may help to maintain existing, potentially unfavorable, situations in terms of boys' and girls' aspirations and education. As a result, girls may be perceived as less capable in science and mathematics-related courses. Teachers that have gender-based assumptions about males' and females' mathematics ability, perhaps, may counsel their students differently about future education options depending on their gender, even if their learning achievements are comparable (de Kraker-Pauw, van Wesel, Verwijmeren, Denessen, & Krabbendam, 2016).

Much is unknown about the influence of teacher-related characteristics in the establishment and continuance of gender-related beliefs. There seems to be some evidence that teacher gender is an influencing factor, with female teachers holding stereotypical gender beliefs less strongly than their male counterparts (e.g., Cushman, 2010). Moreover, research suggests that female educators have more egalitarian ideas regarding gender roles than male educators, especially when it comes to work roles (Almutawa, 2005; Tatar & Emmanuel, 2001), albeit this is not always the case. For example, Nosek, Greenwald, and Banaji (2002) found no differences between males and females.

Almutawa (2005) explored pre-service teachers' ideas on gender roles and their related roles and behaviors at the University of Pittsburgh, finding that both male and female pre-service teachers held egalitarian notions regarding gender roles. Females were more egalitarian than males when it came to gender roles. Pre-service teachers' perceptions regarding gender roles were unaffected by their age or marital status. The data also revealed that pre-service teachers tended to feel that students should choose the preferred gender roles; nevertheless, it was appropriate for teachers to influence students' gender roles opinions. The majority of pre-service teachers thought teachers should work to decrease gender stereotypes that lead to uneven learning opportunities for children, and they offered suggestions for how to do so.

Ifegbesan (2010) studied Nigerian secondary school teachers' gender-stereotypical beliefs and classroom practices. The findings revealed that most teachers subscribe to gender stereotypes and engage in gender-stereotyping practices in the classroom. They hold or reinforce gender stereotypes about men and women. The findings demonstrate that male and female teachers had significantly different gender stereotype beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours. Marital status, educational qualification, school type, the class taught, and school location were among the other variables that showed significant differences.

In South Africa, Mwamwenda (2011) investigated the gender stereotypes among junior secondary school teachers. Differences in proportions supporting stereotypes in connection to school activities were investigated using means analysis. The results revealed gender stereotypes beliefs were endorsed for males and females.

Ifegbesan (2016) explored the perceptions of gender roles and stereotypes of pre-service Undergraduate Social Studies teachers. The findings indicated that pre-service teachers' perceptions of gender stereotypes in the classroom were negative. Moreover, there were significant differences in academic level, age, sex, mode of entry and religion. Also, the results revealed that significant correlations exist between sex, age, manner of admission, and religion, and gender-stereotyped perception. The results further demonstrated that mode of entry, academic level, religion, and sex are all determinants of gender stereotype practices.

In Beirut, Lebanon, Tahseldar (2018) researched the gender stereotype beliefs, practices, and awareness of private school teachers. The findings revealed that gender and years of experience variables had no statistical significance in altering gender stereotype beliefs, practices, and awareness.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study took a quantitative approach and used survey research, which is extremely useful for examining people's beliefs or perceptions by researching a sample of a population to generalise from that sample to the entire community (Creswell & Creswell 2018). The study's participants were chosen via convenience sampling. The primary objective of convenience sampling is to get data from respondents who are readily accessible to the researcher (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018; Neuman, 2014).

The sample consisted of four hundred and twenty-two (422) undergraduate pre-service teachers from a population of eight hundred and eighty-six (886) at Tumu College of Education in the 2020/2021 academic year. The participants agreed, completed and submitted a questionnaire online through online

learning platforms (Telegram, Google forms and WhatsApp platforms). The participants' characteristics consisted of 150 (35.5%) level 100 (first year) preservice teachers, 172 (40.8%) level 200 (second year) preservice teachers, and 100 (23.7%) level 300 (third year) preservice teachers. There were 70% males and 30% females. Sixty-two percent were between 20 and 25 years, 31% were 25 years and above while 7% were 20 years and below. In terms of religion, most of the sampled students (58%) claimed to be Christians, while 42% were Muslim. The majority (92%) of them were single while 7% were married.

Participants completed an adapted and modified version of Ifegbesan's (2010) Teacher Gender Stereotype Questionnaire. The instrument was divided into three components, the first of which dealt with the demographic and background factors of the teachers, such as their sex, age, level of education, religion, and marital status. The preservice teachers' gender-stereotype beliefs were examined in the second section, which consisted of ten statements in which participants were tasked to state to what extent the statements reflected their own gender stereotype beliefs. The final section included 13 statements that investigated preservice teachers' perceptions of gender stereotypical classroom practices. A pilot-testing of the instrument using 35 students to measure the internal consistency reliability obtained Cronbach's alpha to be 0.83.

Students' online learning platforms were used to collect data (Telegram and WhatsApp). Google Forms was used to create the questionnaire. Students' permission to participate in the study was first sought. The students' online platforms were then used to distribute the questionnaire. It took one week to collect the information. The data was then cleaned and coded after being exported from Google Sheets to Excel.

Descriptive statistics were used to explore the teachers' general perceptions of gender. Furthermore, correlational and multiple regression analysis were performed to predict the significance of sex, academic level, age, religion, and marital status in determining preservice teachers' gender stereotype beliefs. The following cut-off ranges were used to classify the teachers' perceptions as shown in the questionnaire responses: positive perception = mean value between 3.00 and 5.00, neutral perception = mean value between 2.00 and 2.99, and negative perception = mean value between 1.00 and 1.99. A standard deviation of more than 1.00 was considered indicative of considerable response variability.

RESULTS

Research question 1: What are pre-service teachers' perceptions of gender stereotypes beliefs and gender stereotype practices in the classroom?

The first research question of this study was to ascertain the general perception of gender-stereotyped

beliefs and classroom practices of pre-service teacher-trainees. The findings are presented in Tables 1 and 2. A critical look at Table 1 reveals that only seven of the ten items “Boys can handle pressure situations better than girls”, “Men are strong and women are weak”, “Male students generally do better in Mathematics than

female students”, “Females are better in Reading than their male counterparts”, “Boys are naturally better at most sports”, “Girls are well dress and neat than boys.” and “Women's place is at home” had mean scores above the critical value of 3.00.

Table 1: Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation of Pre-Service Teachers' Gender-Stereotyped Beliefs

	SA		A		U		D		SD		Mean	St.D
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Boys can handle pressure situations better than girls	141	33.4%	177	41.9%	8	1.9%	64	15.2%	32	7.6%	3.78*	1.26
Male are strong and female are weak	59	14.0%	147	34.8%	15	3.6%	140	33.2%	61	14.5%	3.01*	1.35
Male students generally do better in mathematics than female students	80	19.0%	168	39.8%	14	3.3%	108	25.6%	52	12.3%	3.27*	1.35
Boys generally possess more scientific skills than girls.	40	9.5%	127	30.1%	33	7.8%	171	40.5%	51	12.1%	2.84	1.24
Females are better in reading than their male counterpart.	91	21.6%	187	44.3%	14	3.3%	90	21.3%	40	9.5%	3.47*	1.30
Boys are naturally better at most sports	116	27.5%	210	49.8%	10	2.4%	61	14.5%	25	5.9%	3.78*	1.17
Boys are more active and outspoken than girls.	38	9.0%	131	31.0%	30	7.1%	171	40.5%	52	12.3%	2.84	1.24
Girls are well dress and neat than boys.	110	26.1%	162	38.4%	18	4.3%	82	19.4%	50	11.8%	3.47*	1.37
Men should be the head of the family	190	45.0%	176	41.7%	11	2.6%	28	6.6%	17	4.0%	4.17*	1.04
Women's place is at home	16	3.8%	42	10.0%	8	1.9%	175	41.5%	181	42.9%	1.90	1.09

*Mean score above the neutral value of 3.0; overall mean = 3.26

Table 2 shows the pre-service teachers' perceptions of gender-stereotyped classroom practices. Evidence from Table 2 shows that preservice teachers have a positive attitude toward gender disparities and are willing to correct them. Except for item 12, all of the mean scores were over the 3.0 crucial value. The individual item means ranged from 2.91 to 4.46, with a mean of means of 3.95. Despite the wide variation in responses, the findings show that respondents typically agreed with all propositions. More than three-quarters

of the preservice teachers were in agreed that “Awareness about the gender-stereotyped issues should be incorporated into all school subject” (80%), “Teacher education programme should prepare students to deal with gender-stereotyped and bias in classroom and schools” (85%) and “Teacher education programme should promote gender sensitive behaviour” (91%). Again, 93 percent of the respondents were in agreement that “Teachers should encourage male and female students to carry out the same activities”.

Table 2: Pre-service Teachers Perception of Gender-Stereotyped Classroom Practices

	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)		
Teachers should encourage male and female students to carry out the same activities	228 (54.0%)	166 (39.3%)	5 (1.2%)	20 (4.7%)	3 (0.7%)	4.41	.80
Teachers should devote more time to encouraging girls than boys	41 (9.7%)	156 (37.0%)	15 (3.6%)	144 (34.1%)	66 (15.6%)	2.91	1.31
Girls/women should be encouraged to enter traditionally male jobs such as engineering, medicine or architecture	161 (38.2%)	200 (47.4%)	11 (2.6%)	30 (7.1%)	20 (4.7%)	4.07	1.06
There should be concerted efforts to raise students with a non-sexist orientation, at home and in schools.	78 (18.5%)	236 (55.9%)	71 (16.8%)	26 (6.2%)	11 (2.6%)	3.82	.90
Teachers should be involved in shaping their students' perceptions about gender roles.	214 (50.7%)	190 (45.0%)	7 (1.7%)	6 (1.4%)	5 (1.2%)	4.43	.71
Teachers should discourage students from acting out gender-stereotyped roles	79 (18.7%)	125 (29.6%)	54 (12.8%)	91 (21.6%)	73 (17.3%)	3.11	1.39

	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)		
Boys and girls should be given equal opportunity and not treated differently.	255 (60.4%)	133 (31.5%)	2 (0.5%)	26 (6.2%)	6 (1.4%)	4.43	.89
Every student needs to learn about gender issues	228 (54.0%)	179 (42.4%)	3 (0.7%)	6 (1.4%)	6 (1.4%)	4.46	.72
Awareness about the gender-stereotyped issues should be incorporated into all school subjects	126 (29.9%)	213 (50.5%)	19 (4.5%)	42 (10.0%)	22 (5.2%)	3.90	1.10
Schools, colleges and government are not doing enough at the moment to create awareness about gender issues in Ghana	66 (15.6%)	200 (47.4%)	35 (8.3%)	102 (24.2%)	19 (4.5%)	3.45	1.15
Teacher education programme should foster awareness of gender-stereotyped issues	135 (32.0%)	254 (60.2%)	17 (4.0%)	13 (3.1%)	3 (0.7%)	4.20	.71
Teacher education programme should prepare students to deal with gender-stereotyped and bias in classroom and school	142 (33.6%)	216 (51.2%)	20 (4.7%)	22 (5.2%)	22 (5.2%)	4.03	1.03
Teacher education programme should promote gender sensitive behaviour	142 (33.6%)	242 (57.3%)	16 (3.8%)	14 (3.3%)	8 (1.9%)	4.18	.81

Overall mean = 3.95

Research question 2: Are there any significant differences between demographic characteristics of pre-service teachers (academic level of study, sex, religion, age, and marital status) and perceptions of gender stereotypes beliefs and gender stereotype practices?

The T-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to assess whether there were significant differences in preservice teachers' background variables and their gender-stereotyped beliefs and perception of gender-stereotyped classroom practices. The following is a summary of the findings (Table 3 and 4). Table 3 shows the findings of a t-test

analysis to see if there were any significant differences in gender stereotype beliefs and perceptions of gender-stereotyped practice based on sex, religion, and marital status as independent variables. Significant differences were found for sex and gender-stereotyped beliefs. Female teacher-trainees have lower mean scores than male teacher-trainees. This implies that female preservice teachers are more likely to hold positive perceptions and express fewer gender-stereotypical views. However, there were no significant differences between gender, religion and marital status in respect of perception of gender-stereotyped classroom practices.

Table 3: Beliefs and Perceptions of Gender-stereotyped Practices and T-test of differences in some independent variables

		N	Mean	SD	t	sig
	<i>Sex</i>					
Beliefs	Female	126	2.99	.69	-4.926	.000*
	Male	296	3.37	.73		
Practices	Female	126	3.94	.41	-.495	.621
	Male	296	3.96	.43		
	<i>Religion</i>					
Beliefs	Christianity	243	3.29	.70	1.183	.237
	Islam	179	3.21	.79		
Awareness	Christianity	243	3.99	.42	1.843	.066
	Islam	179	3.91	.43		
	<i>Marital Status</i>					
Beliefs	Married	32	3.26	.54	.033	.974
	Single	390	3.25	.75		
Awareness	Married	32	4.01	.42	.784	.433
	Single	390	3.95	.42		

*Significance level 0.01

Additional one-way ANOVA analyses were performed to determine whether there were significant differences in preservice teachers' gender stereotype beliefs and perception of gender-stereotyped practices according to age group and academic level. As shown in Table 4, there were statistically significant

differences among the age groups for belief, ($F(2, 421) = 8.311, p < .00$), and for academic level, ($F(2, 421) = 9.780, p < .00$). In order to determine where the difference in perception lies, Scheffe's post hoc analysis was performed. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences in the perception of

pre-service teachers aged 20 years and below and 21-24 years, and between participants aged 20 years and below years, and 25 years and over. Younger teacher trainees have a significant mean score than older trainees. Thus, the younger the trainee the more likely to hold positive perceptions and express fewer gender-stereotypical views. Furthermore, concerning academic level, statistically significant differences were found

between pre-service teachers in the level 100 and 200 level, and between level 100 and 300 level. Level 100 students were more likely to hold a positive perception and express fewer gender-stereotypical views. However, they were no significant difference between age group and perception of gender stereotype practices, and for academic level and gender-stereotyped practices.

Table 4: Gender Stereotype Beliefs and Perceptions of Gender-Stereotyped Practice and Analysis of Variance in Some Independent Variables

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
	<i>Age</i>					
Beliefs	Between Groups	8.795	2	4.398	8.311	.000*
	Within Groups	221.689	419	.529		
	Total	230.484	421			
Practice	Between Groups	.116	2	.058	.324	.724
	Within Groups	74.906	419	.179		
	Total	75.022	421			
	<i>Academic Level</i>					
Beliefs	Between Groups	10.279	2	5.140	9.780	.000*
	Within Groups	220.204	419	.526		
	Total	230.484	421			
Practice	Between Groups	.020	2	.010	.055	.946
	Within Groups	75.002	419	.179		
	Total	75.022	421			

*Significance level 0.01

Research question 3: What is the relationship between gender stereotype beliefs and demographic characteristics?

To answer the third research question, which is to determine the relationship between the students’ demographic characteristics and gender stereotype beliefs and practices. The results in Table 5 indicate that academic level, sex, and age were positively correlated with gender stereotype beliefs. Religion and marital

status show no relationship with gender stereotype beliefs. This suggests that pre-service teachers’ religion and marital status have nothing to do with the gender stereotypes beliefs held. The results further show that the background variables were not related with pre-services teachers’ perception of gender stereotype classroom practices. Also, there were no correlation between gender stereotyped beliefs and perception of gender- stereotype classroom practices.

Table 5: Correlations between Demographic Characteristics and Gender Stereotype Beliefs and Practices (N=422)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Academic Level	1						
Sex	.14**	1					
Religion	.15**	.06	1				
Age	.22**	.23**	-.07	1			
Marital status	.17**	.05	-.12*	-.19**	1		
Gender Stereotype Beliefs	.16**	.23**	-.06	.19**	-.00	1	
Perception of Practices	.01	.02	-.09	-.03	-.04	.00	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Significant at the 0.05 level

Research question 4: What is the impact of the background characteristics of pre-service teachers on perceptions of gender stereotypes beliefs?

Multiple regression was performed to address the fourth research question, which is to determine the impact of students’ characteristics on their gender stereotype beliefs. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Multiple regression analysis of six independent variables on the dependent variable

Model Summary					
	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		
ANOVA (b)	.30	.09	.08		
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	20.73	5	4.15	8.22	.000
Residual	209.76	416	.50		
Total	230.48	421			
Coefficients (a)					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.209	.36		6.13	0.00
Academic Level	.117	.05	.12	2.46	0.01*
Sex	.311	.08	.19	3.95	0.00**
Religion	-.113	.07	-.08	-1.57	0.12
Age	.147	.06	.11	2.27	0.02*
Marital Status	.066	.14	.02	.48	0.63

** Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Significant at the 0.05 level

The five independent variables were academic level, sex, religion, age, and marital status. The results indicate that the five background characteristics variables of the students explained 8% of the variance of gender-stereotyped beliefs ($R = 0.30$ and adjusted R square = 0.08). The impact was significant ($F(5,421) = 8.22$, $p < .000$). All of the background variables included in the regression except for religion and marital status were predictors of perception of gender-stereotyped beliefs. In the analysis, academic level ($\beta = 0.12$, $t = 2.46$, $p \leq .01$), sex ($\beta = 0.19$, $t = 3.95$, $p \leq .00$) and age ($\beta = 0.11$, $t = 2.27$, $p \leq .02$) were identified as significantly positive predictors of gender-stereotyped beliefs among pre-service teacher-trainees. This result indicates that sex is the most predictor of gender-stereotyped belief while age has the least predictive capability of gender-stereotyped beliefs among the teacher-trainees.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In this study, pre-service teachers' opinions of gender stereotypes were studied. The findings revealed that pre-service teachers had positive perceptions of gender-stereotyped beliefs. The majority of the pre-service teachers are guilty of gender-stereotyped beliefs. Hence, in terms of their beliefs, the participants were gender stereotyping. The findings in this study are similar to studies by Ifegbesan (2010), Mwamwenda (2011) and Tahseldar (2018). The pre-service teachers' positive sentiments could be linked to their socialization process and cultural background. The findings also revealed that the preservice teachers showed an understanding of gender stereotype practices. It was found that the majority either agreed or strongly agreed to the statements. This means that the preservice teachers have favorable views and are more likely to address gender disparities. The findings also demonstrate a significant difference between female and male pre-service teachers' gender stereotype beliefs;

which is consistent with prior studies (Ifegbesan, 2010; Almutawa, 2005). Females were more egalitarian in their views on gender roles than males. The findings also revealed that age and academic level were significantly related to preservice teachers' gender stereotyped beliefs. This contradicts prior studies (Ifegbesan, 2010) which revealed that age did not play a role in explaining differences in individuals' views about gender roles. This study did not find any significant difference in religion and marital status for gender stereotype beliefs. Socio-demographic variables, age, sex, and academic level played a significant role in predicting the perception of preservice gender stereotype beliefs. However, religion and marital status were not found to be significant predictors. Also, the study results revealed that there were no significant differences in all the five preservice teachers' variables and their perception of gender stereotyped classroom practices. This is in contrast with Ifegbesan (2016) where sex, academic level, age and religion were found as significant predictors. Furthermore, the study found a no relationship between gender-stereotype beliefs and practices.

Although the majority of preservice teachers hold gender stereotype views, they have a positive perception of gender-stereotyped practices with regards to treatment, activities, and awareness. They failed to articulate their gender-stereotyped views when the majority agreed with "men being the head of the family," "men are naturally better in sports," and "females are better at reading than their male counterpart." In terms of beliefs, practically everyone disagreed with the phrase "women's place is at home," implying that they value equality with males and feel they should be the leaders of their families. The positive perception of gender stereotype classroom practices of the preservice teachers is welcoming. This implies that though they are guilty of gender stereotype beliefs they

are ready to challenge these in their classroom practices hence ready for change. A significant conclusion revealed in this study is the considerable variations in teachers' gender-stereotyped beliefs, which showed the need of acquiring gender sensitivity knowledge, abilities, and developed attitudes of preservice teachers. Hence, this calls for sensitization of gender issues in colleges, homes and communities as well as the creation of a gender-balanced and sensitive teacher training curriculum.

CONCLUSION

This study shed light on pre-service teachers' gender beliefs and related practices. The results revealed that the preservice teachers are guilty of gender stereotype beliefs though they possessed a positive perception of gender stereotype classroom practices. The results indicated that the major factors affecting pre-service teachers' gender stereotype beliefs are their sex, age, and academic level. Furthermore, this research confirmed that pre-service teachers' gender beliefs are influenced by sex and their academic level and age. As a result, it is recommended that:

- Teacher educators should make teacher trainees aware of their gender prejudices, which may affect their students.
- Teacher educators should learn to identify and eradicate gender prejudices in teacher trainees' interactions both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Curricula for teacher training and professional development for both in-service and preservice teachers should be infused with gender sensitivity knowledge and pedagogies.

Finally, we may state that the findings of this study are not generalizable because it was limited to one college and the investigated subject deserves further research.

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