Gender Role Reversal in Hairdressing Profession and Female Clients' Perception of Male Hairdressers in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria*1

by

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Abstract

This study investigated the gender role reversal into the hairdressing profession and the perceptions of female clients of male hairdressers in Ibadan North Local Government of Oyo state. Data were gathered using primary sources. The method of data collection for this study was qualitative and adopted In-depth Interview (IDI), Focused Group Discussion (FGD) and participant observation techniques. Participant observation was useful in confirming what was gathered through interviews with the male hairdressers. A total population of 50 participants were used with 10 participants consulted in each of the 5 communities that were selected. The finding revealed that majority of the female clients who have had their hair plaited by a male hairdresser had positive perception about the male hairdressers they have come across because the male hairdressers' professional skills were satisfactory enough. The findings also revealed that the patronages of male hairdressers by female clients was not based on their gender differences but on their professional capabilities.
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Introduction

Over the years, some occupations have been perceived to be either best suited for men or women. However, in recent times, gender role reversal is gradually taking place in most of these occupations as women are beginning to pursue careers earlier known to be male dominated and vice-versa. With less attention being paid to other factors affecting men such as the decline in male wages and men's labour force activity, together with growing labour market uncertainty with nothing being done to minimize this menace, many more men are being forced into the informal economy for life sustenance (Oláh et. al., 2014). In addition, the on-going gender revolution in higher education, which have women now out numbering men in universities across the globe and also graduating more successfully tends to affect men's productivity within various families and the society at large (Vincent-Lancrin, 2008) as cited by Oláh et. al., (2014). Hence, causing a gradual role reversal with some women moving into jobs that are perceived as masculine and vice-versa.

One of the jobs that is traditionally associated with females that is gradually experiencing a gender role reversal is the hairdressing profession. Hairdressing, a profession formerly regarded as an occupation for school-dropouts partly because their techniques were very simple in those days, has become more specialized since the introduction of new techniques from Europe and America (Oda, 2005). There is a rebranding of the hairdressing profession which can be accounted for as the reason it has so many entrants now including males who never took interest in the profession before this time. For instance, some salons give a graduation examination to their apprentices and award a certificate as a reward to those who passes their examinations.

To many people, it still remains a mystery how men tend to perform better at dressing a woman's hair a business that was traditionally perceived as feminine in nature, than women themselves. However, salient questions have being raised as to whether these men are actually better at hair making or it is just in the minds of women who are perhaps thrilled about having the opposite gender touch their hair (Agbonkhese and Aganbi , 2016). Various studies have looked at the communication patterns within hairdressing Salons, young people's job perception and preference in relation to hairdressing (Milllward, et.al, 2006). Salon culture among female undergraduate students of University of Ibadan (Ogundipe 2016) and how the profession of hairdressing was used as a site for debates and discussions about identity, belonging and nationhood during the twentieth century among Ghanaians (Essah, 2008). Bloggers and newspapers have also looked at reasons why women are drawn to male hairdressers but few scholarships have addressed the issues or factors responsible for the recent trends of role reversal in the hairdressing profession. Therefore, this study investigated the factors responsible for the increasing rate of male entrance into the hairdressing profession and female clients' perception of males in the hairdressing profession in Ibadan North Local Government. The aim of this study was to investigate on the factors responsible for the recent trend of gender role reversal in the hairdressing profession. The population of this study were male hairdressers within Ibadan North Local Government and female clients' within the ages of 16 years and above who at one time or another have had their hair dressed

by a male hairdresser. 50 participants were consulted with 10 participants consulted in each of the 5 communities that were selected. Key concepts in this study include role reversal; a situation in which someone or a group of people suddenly begin to move into a role which is normally assumed in relation to someone else. While perception in this study is the organization, identification and interpretation of sensory information in order to represent, understand, deduce and notice something easily about a particular thing or persons. Through this discussion, four of the research questions identified in the introduction are addressed; 1) what are the factors responsible for the role reversal in the hairdressing profession? 2) What is the perception of female clients' about male hairdressers in Ibadan North local Government, 3) To what extent does the customer service skills of male hairdressers influence their client's patronage? 4) To what extent does gender difference increase patronage of male hairdressers? This study is important in addressing issues of gender occupational stereotypes held by some clients. This work will be of great benefits to researchers in the field of gender scholarship as it will be investigating issues of traditional gender role and the contemporary role reversal in various occupations with changes in the stereotype held about gender role between boys and girls.

Review of Related Literatures

In Nigeria, hair styling is an art form that begins from birth. Nigerian hair styles use principles of art and design, including curves, zigzags, horizontals, perpendiculars and straight lines (Oladumiye, Adiji, and Olabiyi, 2013). Traditionally, "hair styling has been a highly respected vocation, and people who showed special talents for hair dressing were urged to pursue it as a career" (Adiji, Oladumiye and Ibiwoye, 2015: 24). Hair dressing in Nigeria is considered the beauty of every woman and a job mostly done by women in their leisure time. Liberal feminists explain this in terms of gender stereotypes and gender roles. Gender roles emphasize that "good" daughters, wives or mothers are women who care for their parents, partners, or offspring (Brym, 2004). However, the concentration of men in some occupations and women in others is often referred to as sex segregation of occupations and the notion that a given occupation is appropriate for one sex versus the other is referred to sex typing or sex labelling of occupations. According to Milward et.al, "Some of the gender segregation in today's labour market may still be accounted for by discrimination, but it is also perpetuated through young people's perceptions that certain jobs are more or less appropriate for them depending on whether they are male or female. Gender segregation in fact continues to be one of the strongest influences on young people's occupational choices, over and above actual ability" (Millward, Houston, Brown and Barrett, 2006: 9). In a research carried out by Miller, et. al. 2004 and cited by Millward, et al (2006), children within the ages of 7 to 11 were asked whether certain jobs were thought to be more suitable for women, men, or equally suited to both genders. At the end of the research, the researchers discovered that many jobs were seen in a gender-stereotypical way by both boys and girls. The responds from them showed that individuals' preferences remained largely restricted to those jobs that were viewed as in keeping with stereotypes about jobs appropriate for their own gender.

Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara and Pastorelli (2001) cited by Millward, et. al. (2006) further argue that women's career interests are restricted because they believe they are not capable of undertaking traditional, stereotypically male occupations, even when they are encouraged by parents or teachers to either broaden or heighten their academic aspirations (Millward, et al. 2006). Hence, some people grow up believing they are capable of some jobs but not all. However, boys and girls with higher academic and occupational self-belief considered a

wider range of career options than those with little or no academic qualifications. In spite of some women's qualifications, it is commonly found that while girls with greater levels of self-efficacy were more willing to pursue non-traditional career-paths than those with lower levels, they still preferred traditionally female occupations over non-traditional roles (Nevill and Schlecker, 1988).

According to (Curry and McEwen, 1989) cited by (Millward et. al., 2006) young girls' choice of skills or occupation is affected with their consideration of the possibility of running a home and family alongside their job. Such awareness may limit them to consider traditionally feminine jobs that can be done part-time or which they think can be easily reconciled with family life. Millward et.al. (2006) further citied Hakim (2002) as he opines that women often choose occupations that are 'work-centered', 'adaptive' and 'home-centered'. Work-centered women are said to be more confident about non- traditional masculine-style careers and be less concerned with future family commitments thus enabling continuation of a vocational course. Adaptive and home-centered women would be less likely to follow a non-traditional career path due to their consideration of how they will reconcile work with possible caring commitments. While work-centered women may be more influenced by job status.

In addition, Miller & Budd (1999) posit that a particular difficulty also lies in persuading men to consider traditionally feminine areas of work. It is well established that girls are much more liberal than boys in their occupational contemplations with boys far less likely to consider atypical work than girls (Morris, Nelson, Rickinson, Shoney & Benefield, 1999) citied by Millward, Houston, Brown and Barrett (2006). Millward et. al. further posit that for men, salary and status may be an additional factor that compounds gender segregation issues. However, the extent to which different types of rewards, both intrinsic (what might be especially satisfying about a particular job), and extrinsic, (pay, conditions) are associated with so-called male-dominated or female-dominated jobs is largely unknown. "While there is extensive literature on women undertaking what could be seen as men's work, 'token women' there is relatively little research on men who perform what could be seen as 'women's work'" (Millward, Houston, Brown and Barrett, 2006: 11).

Methodology

The study adopted the ethnographic research design. Data were gathered using primary sources. The method of data collection for this study was qualitative and adopted In-depth Interview (IDI), Focused Group Discussion (FGD) and participant observation techniques. Observation was useful in confirming what was gathered through interviews with the male hairdressers. It also proved a useful means in generating issues that were discussed during In-depth interview. The research was carried out in selected male hairdressers' Salons at Agbowo, University of Ibadan, Bodija, Sango and Mokola in Ibadan North, Oyo State. These communities are represented in Ibadan North Local governments and are highly populated with male hairdressers compared to other communities within this local government. Ibadan North Local Government of Oyo state is one of the five urban local Government in Ibadan. As at 2006 census, the population was 306,795 people. The breakdown of the population shows that there are 153,039 males and 153,756 females (Olajire, 2011). The sampling technique adopted for this study was purposive and convenience sampling technique. Participants for this research were male hairdressers and female clients within the ages of 16 years and above within the selected communities in Ibadan north local government. The population for this study covered 2 male hairdressers in each of the five (5) selected

communities and eight (8) female clients for In-depth interview. A focused group discussion comprising of 8 participants was also employed for the purpose of this study. Data gathered were transcribed into an exercise book, sorted, coded and thematically categorized according to the research questions. Then pertinent information were analyzed to draw conclusions in regard to the questions.

Theory

Masculinity (Hegemonic Masculinity) Theory

Hegemonic masculinity is a gender order theory propounded by R.W. Connell's. Hegemonic masculinity is defined as the practice that legitimize men's dominant position in the society and subject women subordination. In addition, it explains how and why men maintain dominant social role over women, and other gender identities that are perceived feminine in a given society (Connell, 2005). Other types of Masculinity according to Cummins (2016) include Marginalized masculinity which is a form of masculinity that is unable to conform with or derive benefits from hegemonic masculinity. *Marginalized masculinity* might mean lacking some of the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity. While *Subordinate masculinity* means a person lacks many of the qualities of opposite to hegemonic masculinity. This include things like being overly emotional or acting in a feminine way or not being heterosexual. *Complicit masculinity* do not have all of the qualities of hegemonic masculinity but it does not challenge it either. These are men who are sympathetic to women and children, live up to their family responsibilities but still support societal view of male dominance. However, people with this type of masculinity may benefit in their society from both the women's standpoint and that of hegemonic masculinity even while still trying to fit into hegemonic masculinity. Since they are not challenging the systems of gender that are present in our societies, they do receive some benefits from being male.

Complicit masculinity also admires the qualities of hegemonic masculinity. Men in the hairdressing profession often belong to the complicit masculinity as they enjoy both the position of hegemonic and complicit masculinity due to their constant interaction with the female gender. Oftentimes, with the hours spent with female clients, male hairdressers consciously or unconsciously gradually get enculturated into the feminine conversational patterns and these help them to understand the female gender better than others.

Positive Deviance Theory

Deviance theory propounded by Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and cited by Macionis and Gerber (2010) looks at the reason why some people behave the way they do. Emile Durkheim holds the belief that society is made of various morals (norms, values, and laws) and that individuals are taught to keep their behaviours. He also believes that youngsters are taught the rights and wrongs of the society early in life. He asserts that this moral belief, in large measure, determine how people behave, what they want and who they are. Just like 'gender norms' which is a socio-cultural regulation to encourage socially desirable behaviours. Individuals as a member of a group or representing a particular social position are also taught what is required of them under given circumstances and when norm is perceived as a regulation, sanctions are always associated (Stepanek, 1996) cited by (Macionis and Gerber, 2010). Durkheim first observed the term "deviance" when people were becoming distanced

from one another and people were losing their sense of belonging to their communities and the norms and expectations of their groups were becoming less clearly defined. Deviant behaviour occurs when socially sanctioned means are not available for the realization of highly desirable goals. Therefore, the only means of achieving such goals then amount to detouring around them, to bypass the approved means in order to get at the approved goals. In summary, deviance is the obvious alternative. This implies that structural opportunities or their lack are seen as the root cause of deviance rather than some psychological or individual pathology.

While "deviance" is seen as moving from the normal moral norms and standards to something negative, "Positive Deviance" is an approach to behavioural and social change based on the observation that in any community there are people whose uncommon but successful behaviours or strategies enable them to find better solutions to a problem than their peers, despite facing similar challenges and having no extra resources or knowledge than their peers. These individuals are referred to as positive deviants. This concept first appeared in nutrition research in the 1970s. The Positive Deviance approach was first operationalized and applied in programming in the field by Jerry and Monique Sternin through their work with save the children in Vietnam in the 1990s (Khatoon, Ambreen, Shaifique and Sternin, 2002). Researchers observed that despite the poverty in a community, some poor families had well-nourished children (Zeitlin, Ghassemi, and Mansour, 1990). Through a Positive Deviance inquiry, the villagers found poor peers in the community that through their uncommon but successful strategies, had well-nourished children. These families collected foods typically considered inappropriate for children (sweet potato greens, shrimp, and crabs), washed their children's hands before meals, and actively fed them three to four times a day instead of the typical two meals a day provided to children (Mackintosh, Marsh and Schroeder, 2002). Without knowing it, Positive Deviants had incorporated foods already found in their community that provided important nutrients: protein, iron and calcium. With this finding, a nutrition program based on these insights was created and instead of simply telling participants what to do differently, they designed the program to help them act their way into a new way of thinking.

Pascale and Sternin (2010) further assert that the principles of positive deviance comprises of the following;

- Communities already have the solutions.
- Communities self-organize and have the human resources and social assets to solve an agreed-upon problem.
- Collective intelligence. Intelligence and know-how are not concentrated in the leadership of a community alone or in external experts but is distributed throughout the community. Thus, the positive deviance process's aim is to draw out the collective intelligence to apply it to a specific problem requiring behavior or social change.
- Sustainability as the cornerstone of the approach. The positive deviance approach enables the community or organization to seek and discover sustainable solutions to a given problem because the demonstrably successful uncommon behaviors are already practiced in that community within the constraints and challenges of the current situation.

- It is easier to change behaviour by practicing it rather than knowing about it. "It is easier to act your way into a new way of thinking than think your way into a new way of acting".

With these principles, it is arguable that male hairdressers who deviated from the traditionally perceived male gender role had the solution to their problems of unemployment long time ago situated right within their various communities. With the available social assets (female clients) to solve an agreed upon problem ranging from unemployment, underemployment to other financial crisis in the society. Thus, the positive deviance process' aim is to be able to draw out the collective intelligence to apply it to a specific problem requiring behaviour or social change. Over the years, those men in the field of hairdressing tend to have discovered sustainable solutions to their problem because the demonstrably successful uncommon behaviours are already practiced in those communities and have proffered answers to the challenges of the current situation in the country. This profession's ability to provide solution to some of the problems of the country have also changed the orientation that the profession is not only meant for females but can also be practiced by anyone provided there is passion for it. This implies that male hairdressers have successfully changed some of their men ascribed roles and behaviours by practicing the so called 'feminine' occupation rather than just knowing about it.

Therefore, 'Positive deviance theory' is considered suitable for this research as it seeks to unearth the reason behind the sudden trend and the factors responsible for the moving away of some group of men from the jobs earlier associated to men to the hairdressing profession traditionally known as women's field. Positive deviance theory can provide a theoretical foundation upon which this research can rest and be guided in solving the issues of female clients' preference for male hairdresser as this was not the norm some years ago in various African communities.

Limitations of the study

Busy schedules of respondents, epileptic power supply caused the non-availability of some of the electronic devices that were needed as these devices could not be charged when they were to be used. For easy comprehension of the research question, the study had to interpret the research questions into a native language (Yoruba language). However, this study still had challenges interpreting some of the research questions from its original language (English) to (Yoruba). Stigmatization, rejection and lack of encouragement from guardians of the researcher affected the time and duration used in learning the skill to be acquainted with the profession as participant observation was necessary for the research. Time for lectures and academic schedules were also major challenges in carrying out this research.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This aspect presents and discusses the analysis of data generated through the study instruments. This study focuses on gender role reversal in the hairdressing profession and female clients' perception of male hairdressers in Ibadan North Local Government. Basically, the discussion of findings was based on the set objectives of the study. Ten (10) male hairdressers were interviewed, 7-of-10 gave similar reasons as the leading factor responsible for joining the hairdressing profession. They are of the opinion that hairdressing is a lucrative business especially for men in this field. This point was maintained by the opinion of some

respondents; "I joined this profession because it is a business that will help the guy to make more money since they are dealing with ladies. Most times when you give them your price they hardly argue with the male hairdresser for as long as he can deliver the work to the clients satisfactorily" (Ibid). This finding corroborates with the work of Millward et. al. (2006: 11) that "for men, salary and status may be an additional factor that compounds gender segregation issues"; what might be satisfying about a particular job and its extrinsic e.g. pay, and conditions are associated with men's choose of jobs. The finding also contradicts Millward et. al. findings that stated, "The responds from them showed that individuals' preferences remained largely restricted to those jobs that were viewed as in keeping with stereotypes about jobs appropriate for their own sex". Male hairdressers within these areas do not have the same attitude and stereotype toward the hairdressing profession.

Majority of the respondents believe that, the profession is such a lucrative business especially for the male gender who is seen performing what the females are traditionally known for. Therefore, most women get so impressed with these even to the point of giving them a trier. While one of the respondents said that he joined the hairdressing profession due to lack of employment after graduation. Other respondents joined because they had a family member or friend who is into the profession. From the overall results, it can be concluded that financial challenges, unemployment, subtle flirtation, peer influence and the need for a continuity of the family business were responsible for the recent trends and changes in gender role in the hairdressing profession. Youth also get involved in the profession because of the fear of the unknown. "You know with the way things are going in this Nigeria, one needs to have something doing. This one that if you don't know anybody at the top it becomes difficult to see government job. So, one needs to help himself with something like skill acquisition that is why I am here" (Ibid). Environment also contributed significantly to the recent raise of men in the hairdressing profession. Some respondents explained that the environment where they were, influenced them into the hairdressing profession. Most of the respondents explained that the area where they stayed were dominated with male hairdressers with various shops and regular customers. "Since I realized that in my area most of the hairdressers there were guys and they were making it big time. So I decided to join the profession" (Ibid). These finding corroborate with Sati Fwatshak's research on Male Braiders in Nigeria which stated that most enter into the profession for various reasons. According to the author, "In Nigerian's case, no single model explains the entry of males into braiding. As noted in our story about the business in Lagos, Seun one of the practitioners said he was in it because he could not raise funds to further his education. For Agama Iji Moses, the issue is just that he was driven by interest in the profession. While Caleb Sesugh explained that it was a combination of two factors which were his interest and its lucrativeness" (Fwatshak, 2013:261). The author further stated that "two major factors stand out clear from the various practitioners as their reasons for entry into braiding: the issue of interest and of gainful employment".

Female clients had positive perception about male hairdressers and some few respondents patronize male hairdressers because they believe that male hairdressers are more patient and accommodating than female hairdressers in the delivery of their services; this point was maintained by the opinion of some respondents;

They relate well than their female counter parts. They keep the environment lively and not boring. In addition, most male hairdressers are more professional in grooming (fixing) and

they do their works well (Excerpt from a respondent: IDI/Female clients/23yrs/student/Feb, 12 2018).

The results from the interview and focused group discussion (FGD) conducted revealed that female clients would patronize male hairdressers who are good in the profession and have good customer relationship. Hence, having positive perception about a person (an individual) or a group of persons determines the level of closeness and patronage the professionals will get. Some of the responses generated from the respondents to buttress these assertions are that, "Sometimes when they fix your hair, they do it so well and fantastic that you sometimes think you are wearing a wig because the weavings underneath is not pronounced. And then when you pack the hair upward, the whole thing just looks real. I think these guys have studied hair making and seen where female hairstylists are missing it" (Ibid). Others added that male hairdressers know what fits almost every face and they are also more accommodating. Unlike most female hairdressers who do not even care about building good relationships with or respecting their customers" (Ibid). Similarly, men in the hairdressing profession display trait that are accommodating which also served as the reason why female clients had positive perception about them and their profession. Hence, it can be claimed that most male hairdressers had these traits before entering into the profession. This finding further support Fwatshak (2013) study on women's preference, "some preference for men was confirmed by two Nigerian customers of the Cotonou Boys. Accordingly, Oluwadipe Alao preferred Cotonou Boys to Nigerian women because they were focused, and they kept to the time they set to finish the braids. They don't gossip or talk while braiding. They hardly get tired and you don't find them going about when they should be working. So, if they tell you they will be through in six hours, you are sure it will be so" (Fwatshak, 2013:265). Fwarshak's work further revealed that most women preferred men hairdressers because they were serious-minded, their works are always neat and perfect, and they liked their touches. Lady hairdressers cannot take the nastiness female clients sometimes exhibits. Chineyere Constance said that she left her former female braider for a male because he gives her hair a tender and gentle touch and that he is patient and hardworking.

Customer service skills of male hairdressers also influenced their customers' patronages. 38 of 40 participants in an In-depth Interview (IDI) said they would patronize male hairdressers who know the onus of their job in the hairdressing profession. While responses from 7 out of 8 participants in a Focused Group Discussion (FGD) also supported the results from the Interview. The results of the finding established that there is a strong positive relationship that exist between male hairdressers' service skills and female clients' patronages. It was also discovered that female clients would rather patronize female hairdressers who perform better than male hairdressers in the same hair style.

This finding provides a clear answer to Agbonkhese and Aganbi (2016) who stated that salient questions are been raised as to whether these men are actually better at hair making or it is just in the minds of women who are perhaps thrilled about having the opposite sex touch their hair. Hence, Female clients are not just thrilled about having the opposite sex touch their hair but are thrilled by the quality of services rendered by male hairdressers in relation to their gender identity. As a result of this, the finding therefore promotes the idea that male hairdressers' adequate skills and service delivery in the hairdressing profession will continue to increase clients' patronage level in as much as the male hairdressers maintain a good level of professionalism with their clients and do not have extra-affairs with their female clients. Among other things to consider in the likeness of this profession is the role gender

differences plays in the patronages of male hairdresser. From the respondents interviewed; 29 of 40 respondents believed that sex difference is not a criterion to choosing a hairdresser to patronize especially if the male hairdressers are not as good as the female hairdressers. This implies that for male hairdressers to keep their clients, they need to be good at what they do. However, in situations where the males are good at the profession, gender differences play a pivot role. One of the reasons for this is because women see themselves as a big threat to one another. Like one of the participants stated in an interview and supported by an observation made at a salon conversation

some women think that a female hairdresser won't have their best interests in mind especially if they are friends because she would always assume the client would be after her man as she feels that the finer she makes the client hair look, the more appealing she becomes to her partner. Male hairdressers' ability to manage hair breakage can be considered as another reason why female clients prefer male hairdressers to female clients. (Excerpt from a respondent: FGD/female clients/34yrs/January/24/2018).

The finding of this study has revealed that majority of the female clients who have had their hair groomed or dressed by a male hairdresser have positive perception about the male hairdressers they have come across because the male hairdressers' professional skills were satisfactory enough. The findings also revealed that the patronage level of male hairdressers by female clients was not based on their gender difference but their professional capability. However, gender differences also play a significant role in female clients' choice of patronage between female and male hairdressers whose professional skills are satisfactory enough and recommendable.

In addition, the findings also showed that men in the hairdressing profession do not hold jobs traditionally associated with women with any form of stereotype for as long as it is lucrative and also have a future prospect. Finally, this work supports the work of Miller & Budd (1999) cited by Millward, Houston, Brown and Barrett, (2006:11) "It is well established that girls are much more liberal than boys in their occupational contemplations with boys far less likely to consider atypical work than girls. For men, salary and status may be an additional factor that compounds gender segregation issues". However, the extent to which different types of rewards, both intrinsic (e.g. what might be satisfying about a particular job), and extrinsic, (e.g. pay, conditions) are associated with so-called male-dominated or female-dominated jobs proves that men can take up jobs perceived as 'feminine' in nature for as long as it is rewarding.

CONCLUSION

The results from the interview data collected showed that 34 of 40, a percentage of 85% of the respondents had soft landing for male hairdressers as they had pre-conceived notion that all male hairdressers are good at the hairdressing profession prior to the time of patronizing them. However, female clients after giving a male hairdresser the first trier and do not get the satisfaction they needed then changes customer to female hairdressers. Additionally, professional skills of male hairdressers play important roles in sustaining female clients as gender difference does not guarantee male hairdressers the loyalty of their female clients if they are not well skilled at what they do.

Sexual flirtation is considered one of the top strategies used by male hairdressers to retain their female clients unlike their female counterpart. Additionally, female clients get thrilled by the touches from male hairdressers at the course of rendering their services. Non-verbal cues such as smiles, body gestures and the sigh of satisfactions exhibited by most female clients during interview and focused group discussion revealed that they appreciated the soft, emotional and romantic words used by their male hairdressers during preening. Hence, the professional skills of male hairdressers and the desire for flirtation of their female clients contribute significantly to the patronage of male hairdressers over female hairdressers. It also played very important roles in the positive perception the female clients had about the male hairdressers within the selected areas in Ibadan North Local Government of Oyo state, Nigeria. Male hairdressers also create an enabling and accommodating environment such that they often work in groups (Cooperativism), while most Nigerian female hairdressers operates as solitary service providers. For instance, at Orita UI, Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria, the area where the participant observation was carried out there were more than 15 female hairdressers working separating and always fighting over customers.

Recommendations

From the foregoing, it has been sorted out that high rate of unemployment in the country has pushed men into the hairdressing profession. While most chose it as a career, some made it as alternative job for sustenance. It is recommended that government should ensure they provide jobs for graduates or also empower youths during National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) so as to help them develop their potential for vocations of their choices, creating opportunities for self-employment to address the problem of unemployment among youths. This will go a long way in making provision for economic growth since majority of the males that participated in this study are young and agile.

Men skilled in professions associated with women tend to explore more in the field. Same with women in male dominated fields. Therefore, the importance of sex difference cannot be taken for granted.

Also, female clients have no bias for gender but expertise, quality services, good customer relations and time management including personality of the hairdressers. This finding suggests that male hairdressers can be successful on the job provided they have abilities and qualities that female clients admire. This pave way for opportunity to improve, learn how to relate with customers and self-adjustment since gender has no effect on the female choice of hairdressers as found in this study.

Also, in the technical and vocational colleges, there should be counseling on career choices as we have seen in this study that male hairdressers possessed certain quality characteristics that were pointed out such as tolerance, human relation, courtesy, positive regard, and lively; therefore, these findings will be quite useful for counseling males who show interest in this type of career.

Also, it was observed that male hairdressers do not attend hairdressers' association meeting in the population studied which shows that, gender status identity maybe a factor that contribute to their negative attitude towards hairdressers' meeting.

Both male and female hairdressers' need a good understanding of what their clients want and demands as this is considered paramount to the female clients whose main purpose for paying is to look good.

Therefore, careerists, scholars and business conscious organizations can then package training for male hairdressers addressing personality traits and social relation skills, customer orientation attitudes that can help hairdressers succeed on the job.

Further studies will be encouraged to look into the relationship between the communication patterns of the male hairdressers to their feminism ideologies.

Further study is encouraged to look into the issues of space contestation in this profession and how the female sector/section of the Nigerian labour market is protected from the penetration of the foreigners.

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