

8 Samoa Tepora Afamasaga-Wright

Introduction

Samoa consists of 9 islands in the Pacific Ocean between 10 and 15 degrees south of the equator, located to the north east of New Zealand, within a cluster of island nations which include Fiji, Tonga and Tuvalu. Land area on the two main islands, Upolu and Savaii, is about 2,820 square kilometres. The last national Samoa census identified Samoa's population to be 180,741 individuals, of which 93,677 (51.8 per cent) were males and 87,064 (48.2 per cent) were females. The population of Samoa is relatively young, with 39% of the total population being 14 years and under.

The written record of Samoa's history of contact with the western world does not formally begin until European explorers came across the islands during the 1700s and missionaries from the London Missionary Society started spreading the Christian message in 1830. In 1914, German rule in Samoa was replaced by British rule under New Zealand administration, until Samoa became self-governing in 1962. While there is little remaining evidence of the German colonial influence on Samoa's education system, the New Zealand and British influence was and still is evident in administration, policy and curriculum.

Samoa is currently identified by the World Bank as a 'Developing Country', and by the United Nations as a 'Least Developed Country'. Samoa's 'Least Developed Country Status' was reviewed by the UN in 2006, and a recommendation made to progress to 'Developing Country Status'. However, in view of the devastation and economic disruption caused by the September 2009 Tsunami, this graduation has been deferred until 2013.

Samoa's small size, remoteness from global markets and vulnerability to natural disasters as often touted as major constraints to its economic development. Its Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.771 ranks it 94 out of 182 countries globally, and 3rd in the Pacific region behind Australia and New Zealand.

Education in Samoa

Formal and compulsory schooling in Samoa begins at five years, although early childhood education is carried out by church and private providers before students enter primary schools at five years of age. This early childhood education is not considered compulsory, nor is it regulated by government.

There are 8 years of primary schooling (Years 1–8) and secondary schooling consists of 5 years (Years 9–13) at various secondary schools and colleges in the country. The distinction between secondary school and college is made because secondary schools offer secondary education up to Year 12, while colleges offer classes up to Year 13.

Year 13 is considered the final year of secondary schooling, where students study towards the leaving qualification, the Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate. However, this is not a matriculation qualification, as students still have to undergo Foundation Studies at the National University of Samoa before they are eligible to enter university programs.

The vast majority of schools in Samoa are co-educational schools. The four single sex schools are all mission schools, two of which are primary and the other two are secondary schools. The single boys' school is a primary school run by the Marist Brothers. There were more single sex schools at one stage, but these became co-educational under policies to improve access to secondary schooling for all students regardless of gender.

In total there are 163 primary schools in the country, 6 combined primary-secondary schools, and 36 secondary schools (which includes 28 colleges). Of the colleges in the country (secondary schools which offer Year 13), 13 are either missions or privately owned, and 15 are government owned.

Education Indicators

The Ministry of Education Sports and Culture 2010 census records a total school (primary and secondary) enrolment of 57,078 students, of which 28,887 are male (50.6 per cent) and 28,191 (49.4 per cent) are female. At current population estimates, the total school enrolment (57,078) is a good one third of the total Samoa population.

Table 8.1 School enrolment in all schools, 2010

	Male	Female	Total
Primary	21,234	19,575	40,809
Secondary	7,653	8,616	16,269
Total	28,887	28,191	57,078

Source: MESC Statistical Digest 2010.

Completion rates for schooling in Samoa is available in two forms – firstly as the apparent retention rate which compares current enrolment in a level compared to the size of the cohort some years ago, and secondly as the number of students enrolled compared with the number of students who sit the national examinations in Year 8 and Year 12. In the figure that follows, the 83 per cent apparent retention rate for Years 1–8 decreases to 73 per cent at Year 12 and is a dismal 46 per cent at Year 13.

Table 8.2 Apparent retention rate for all schools, 2010

Levels	Years 1–8	Years 9–12	Years 9–13
Retention Rate	83%	73%	46%

Source: MESC Statistical Digest 2010.

In 2009, of the 4,820 students enrolled in Year 8, 4,756 students sat the National Year 8 exams at the end of the year, which indicates a 98.7 per cent completion rate for Year 8 students. With reference to the apparent retention rate, this means that students start exiting the formal school system before they get to Year 8. Also in 2009, there were 2,926 students enrolled in Year 12 of which 2,330 (80 per cent) sat the Year 12 Samoa School Certificate Exams at the end of the year. With reference to the apparent retention rate, it is clear that students also exit formal schooling between Years 9 and 12, as well as during their Year 12 studies. The following tables provide the Net Enrolment Rate and Gender Parity Index for Primary and Secondary from 2006 to 2010, primary school age being 5–12 years and secondary school age being 13–17 years.

Table 8.3 Primary Net Enrolment Rate (NER) and Gender Parity Index (GPI), 2006–2010

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
NER	97%	96%	95%	95%	96%
Males 5–12yrs					
NER	99%	99%	98%	97%	99%
Females 5–12yrs					
NER	98%	98%	97%	96%	98%
Total 5–12yrs					
GPI = (NERF/NERM) 5–12yrs	1.02	1.03	1.03	1.02	1.03

Source: MESC Policy, Planning & Research Division, 2010.

Table 8.4 Secondary Net Enrolment Rate (NER) and Gender Parity Index 2006–2010

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
NER	60%	63%	64%	63%	63%
Males 13–17yrs					
NER	73%	76%	76%	78%	78%
Females 13–17yrs					
NER	67%	69%	69%	70%	70%
Total 13–17yrs					
GPI = (NERF/NERM) 13–17yrs	1.22	1.21	1.19	1.24	1.24

Source: MESC Policy, Planning & Research Division, 2010.

The data in the previous tables identify two main aspects of school enrolment in Samoa. Firstly, the slight gender disparity in favour of females of primary school age is greatly expanded in secondary school in favour of females. Secondly, Net Enrolment Rates are much lower overall in secondary than in primary. It is evident that whereas the lower enrolment rate for girls in other countries is cause for concern, the opposite scenario in Samoa should attract equal attention.

The issue

The core concepts underpinning policy and planning by the Samoa Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture for the period 2006 to 2015 are Equity, Quality, Relevance, Efficiency and Sustainability (National University of Samoa, 2006). The principle of equity necessitates the fair and equitable regard of all participants in the education system, through the design and implementation of policies that enable all learners to receive maximum benefit from their formal educational experiences. Quality is defined as 'high standards of academic achievement, cultural understanding and sensitivity, and social cohesiveness' (MESC, 2006). The principle of Relevance makes it necessary to ensure the schooling and educational experience is relevant to the life of each Samoan individual, while Efficiency acknowledges the need to ensure resources are utilised for maximum benefit to individuals. The final principle, Sustainability, acknowledges that educational development for today's learners must be at no cost to the hopes and aspirations of tomorrow's learners.

The recent Millennium Development Goals Progress Report issued by the Government of Samoa (2010) indicates that Samoa is generally on track to achieve the eight Millennium Development Goals although there are concerns regarding some MDG areas such as primary school literacy, boys underachievement compared to girls, reduction of non-communicable diseases and reproductive health.

This paper presents a case study of what is now called the 'feminisation of the teaching profession' in Samoa, offers reasons for the phenomenon, as well as possible implications on educational access and equity.

Methodology

This case study is a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methodology, with a large proportion of the report focusing on the quantitative analysis. The Samoa Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture were very helpful in providing access to raw annual census data that included teacher statistics throughout villages, districts and regions in Samoa, for primary and secondary schools (including colleges) since 1994. Other statistical reports were utilised for the data they recorded on student enrolment and achievement such as the MESC Statistical Digest. Additional data that are not collected by the MESC but are also essential in providing a complete picture of the case study such as household expenditure and income statistics, and public service salaries and population was obtained from various statistical bulletins published by the Samoa Ministry of Finance – Statistics Division.

A qualitative interview/survey instrument was developed for gathering qualitative data to assist in the provision of case study detail of the situation as it is played out in Samoa. Since the research focuses on the status, causes and implications of the 'feminisation of the teaching profession' in Samoa, it was decided to use a purposive sample of 25 males who had left the teaching profession in the last 10 years, to provide their perspective on factors behind their exit from the teaching profession. The original aim was for a sample of 50, however, this particular group of individuals was quite difficult to track, hence the smaller sized sample.

Additional qualitative interviews with key personnel in the Ministry of Education (2) as well as those involved in teacher training past and present (3) were useful in providing several angles from which to approach the picture painted by the statistics analysis.

Feminisation of teaching in Samoa: a statistical overview

Teacher education

Pre-service teacher training in Samoa commenced with the establishment of the Primary Teachers College in 1939. Enrolment into teacher training from that point on until the mid 1960s was usually in favour of males. After the mid 1960s, enrolment in the Primary Teachers' College was in favour of females, and this difference became very marked after 1978. This is probably largely due to the establishment of the Secondary Teachers' College which may have attracted more males compared to the Primary Teachers' College.

According to an ex-lecturer of the Primary Teachers College, the distinct gender shift in pre-service enrolment after the mid 1960s was probably largely due to other occupations opening up for males such as the police force and the public service. Samoa achieved political independence from New Zealand administration on the 1 June 1962, and thenceforth started building her government administration physical and human resource infrastructure.

At the time of independence there were various primary schools and only 6 secondary schools. However, the numbers of both primary and secondary schools increased post-Independence as the government moved to expand primary and secondary education provision in Samoa. There was no targeted recruitment of women with the increased need for teachers as experienced in other countries.

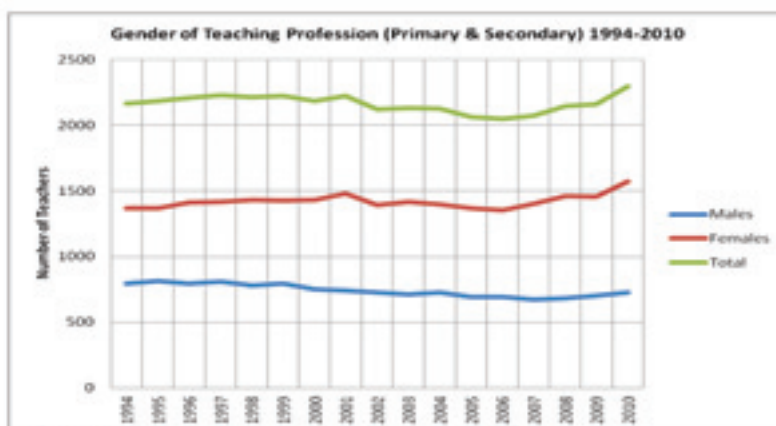
In 1978 the Secondary Teachers' College was established to train teachers for secondary schools and colleges. According to one of the long-serving lecturers of the college, enrolment in the Secondary Teachers' College was also in favour of females, but the numbers were not as disparate as in the Primary Teachers College. However, after several years, the numbers were sufficiently disproportional to warrant amendment of entry criteria to enhance access for males who usually achieved lower scores in the regional Year 13 exams.

The two teacher training organisations merged in 1990 and the new entity was called the Western Samoa Teachers' College (WSTC). Seven years later, the WSTC amalgamated with the National University of Samoa and became the Faculty of Education.

Analysis of gender of teaching profession (primary and secondary)

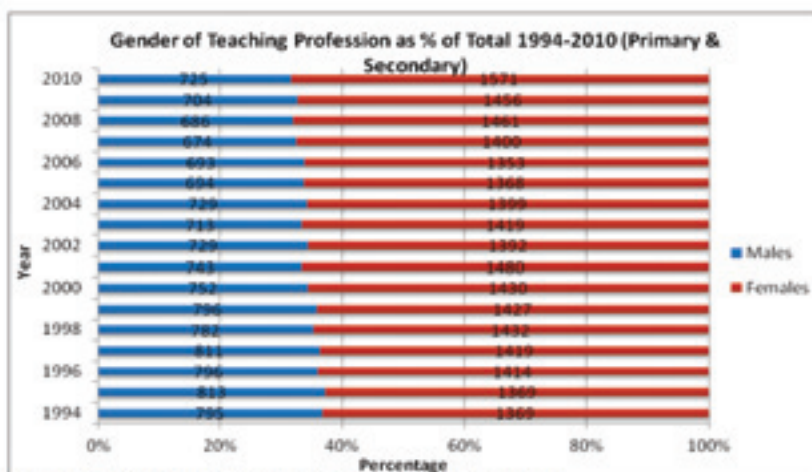
The gender distribution of teachers in primary and secondary schools between 1994 and 2010 shows female teachers outnumber their male counterparts overall, as illustrated in Figure 8.1. The number of male teachers seems to have decreased gradually since 1999, but numbers indicate a slight upward trend since 2008, reflecting on a smaller scale the upward trend in the total size of the teaching profession (primary and secondary).

Figure 8.1 Gender of teaching profession (primary and secondary) in Samoa, 1994–2010



Source: MESCS Policy, Planning & Research Division, 2010.

Figure 8.2 Gender of teaching profession as percentage of total (primary and secondary), 1994–2010



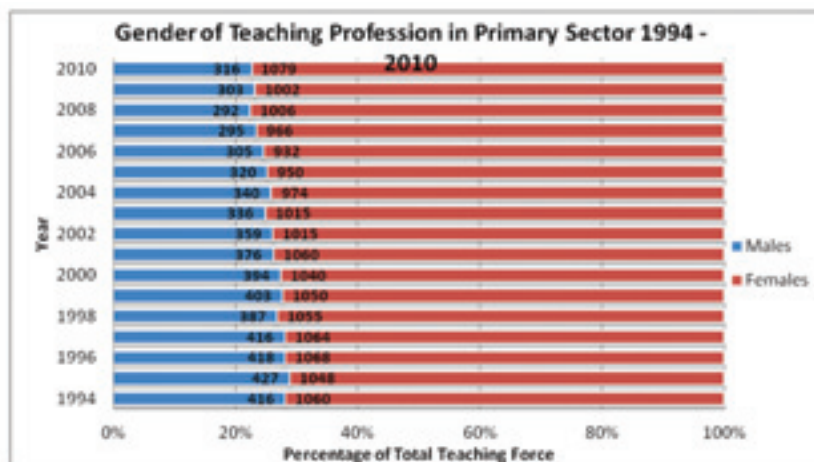
Source: MESCS Policy, Planning & Research Division, 2010.

Figure 8.2 shows gender distribution as percentages of the total teaching profession in primary and secondary schools since 1994. It is apparent that the overall percentage of males in the teaching force has declined gradually since 1994 until current figures show the teaching force in primary and secondary schools to be 68.2 per cent female and 31.8 per cent male.

Analysis of gender of teaching profession in primary sector

Figure 8.3 below shows the gender distribution of teachers in the primary sector from 1994 to 2010. The finding from this data is consistent with international trends for primary school teachers, which is that of a highly feminised teaching force.

Figure 8.3 Gender of teaching profession in primary sector, 1994–2010



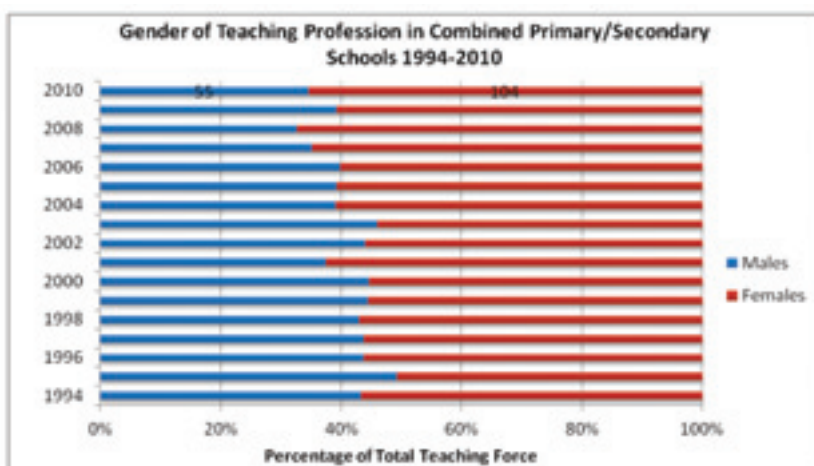
Source: MESC Policy, Planning & Research Division, 2010.

As indicated in the previous figure, primary teaching in Samoa is mostly conducted by female teachers, currently representing 77.3 per cent of all teachers in primary schools, while male teachers make up 22.7 per cent of the primary teaching force.

Analysis of gender of teaching profession in combined primary/secondary schools

There are a number of combined primary/secondary schools in Samoa, which are recorded separately from the data for primary and secondary schools. The gender distribution for teachers in these combined schools are as illustrated below.

Figure 8.4 Gender of teaching profession in combined primary/secondary schools, 1994–2010



Source: MESC Policy, Planning & Research Division, 2010.

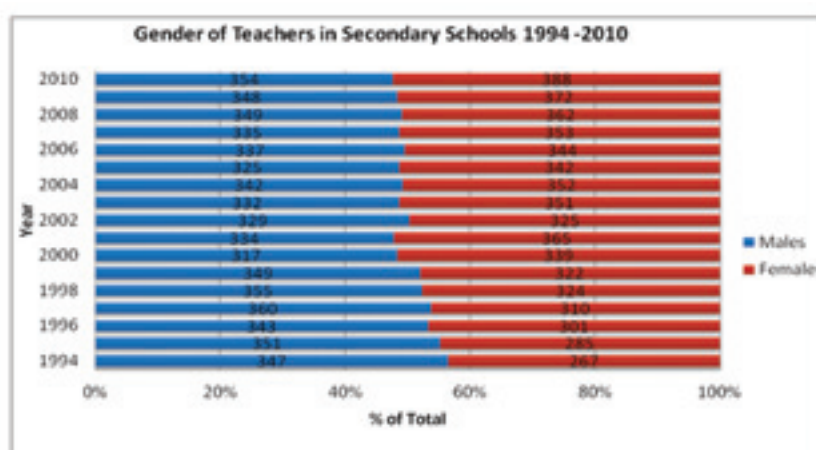
As seen above, the gender distribution of teachers in combined primary and secondary schools has varied since 1994, although there are generally more female teachers than male teachers. However, the proportion of teachers that are male is higher for this particular school sector, than for primary schools. In addition, the proportion of male teachers was above 40 per cent in 1994, but has declined gradually over the years to the current figure of 34.6 per cent of total teachers in combined primary/secondary schools.

Analysis of gender of teaching profession in secondary Schools (secondary schools and colleges)

In contrast to the composition of primary school teachers, the gender distribution of teachers in secondary schools is much more balanced. As seen in the next figure, male teachers outnumbered female teachers in all secondary schools until the year 2000. Since then, there have been more female teachers than male teachers, but the proportion of female teachers has stayed between 51.7 per cent (2000) and 52.3 per cent (2010). This indicates a vastly different case for gender distribution of teachers than that seen in primary schools, as the proportion of female teachers in secondary schools may be too low to call it a 'feminised' teaching force.

As explained previously, the secondary school sector in Samoa includes 'secondary schools' which offer Years 9 to Year 12, and 'colleges' which offer Years 9 to Year 13.

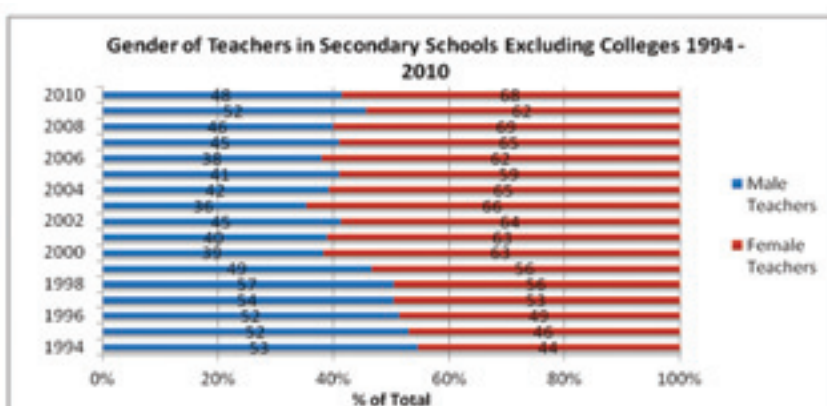
Figure 8.5 Gender of teachers in secondary schools, 1994–2010



Source: MESC Policy, Planning & Research Division, 2010.

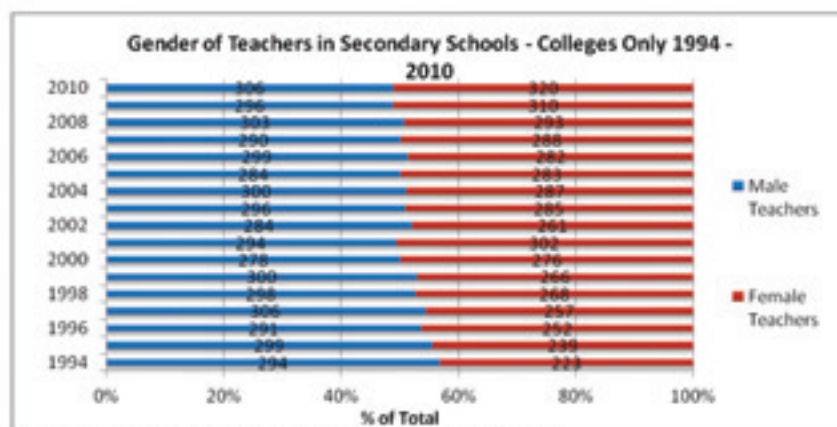
The next two figures disaggregate the teaching force into secondary schools excluding colleges and colleges only. There is clearly a different pattern of gender distribution between secondary schools proper and colleges, as secondary schools that do not offer Year 13 are more likely than colleges to have a greater percentage of female teachers.

Figure 8.6 Gender of teachers in secondary schools excluding colleges, 1994–2010



Source: MESC Policy, Planning & Research Division, 2010.

Figure 8.7 Gender of teachers in secondary schools – colleges only, 1994–2010



Source: MESCS Policy, Planning & Research Division, 2010.

Analysis of gender of teaching profession in post-school education and training sector

The formal Post-School Education and Training (PSET) Sector in Samoa is composed of two major institutions, and several small providers. The first major institution is the National University of Samoa created by the merger of the Teachers College, Nursing Training College and University Preparatory Year in 1997, and the second is the University of the South Pacific School of Agriculture and Food Technology, based at Alafua. However the other 22 much smaller PSET providers include 9 providers of theological and missions training, and 8 providers of technical and vocational training.

Table 8.5 Gender of teaching staff in formal post-school education and training sector, 2009

Males	Females	Total
181	66	247

Source: Samoa Qualifications Authority PSET Digest 2010 (draft).

There is currently limited data available on numbers and gender of teaching staff in the formal post-school education and training sector, however, the available information indicates that males greatly outnumbered females in 2009 as shown in the previous table⁵⁶. This reflects the fact that the majority of staff in the technical and vocational training providers and almost all staff in theological and missions training providers are male.

Another source of data for the gender of the post-school teaching force is to look at gender distribution of teaching staff at the National University of Samoa (NUS), as the NUS employs the majority of teachers in the formal post school education and training sector.

Table 8.6 Numbers and gender of teaching staff at National University of Samoa, 2005–2009

	2005	2007	2009
Males	36	61	71
Females	104	93	81
TOTAL	140	154	152

Source: National University of Samoa Calendars 2005, 2006 and 2007

⁵⁶ Due to the nature of data collection informing the source document, the numbers in Figure 8.12 includes numbers of staff in some Faculties/Schools of the National University of Samoa and not others.

An interesting trend can be seen in Figure 8.7 above, showing the gender breakdown of teaching staff at the National University of Samoa since 2005. The number of male teaching staff has increased steadily since 2005, while the numbers of female staff has been in decline. Although figures for 2009 show that female teaching staff still outnumber male teaching staff, the difference has decreased steadily over the years. It will be worthwhile monitoring this trend to note whether the trend will continue over the next few years.

Analysis of gender representation in leadership and management positions

It was possible to obtain data from the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture on the gender distribution of teachers in leadership and management positions for 2010, as tabulated below. These figures are for teachers on the government payroll, which excludes mission and private schools, whose data is housed elsewhere.

Table 8.7 Distribution of males and females in leadership and management positions in government primary schools, September 2010

Position of Responsibility	Males	Females	TOTAL
Principal	48 (33.6%)	95 (66.4%)	143
First Assistant	18 (39.1)	28 (60.9%)	46
Infant Supervisors	2 (5.3%)	36 (94.7%)	38
TOTAL	68 (30%)	159 (70%)	227

Source: MESC School Operations Division 2010

There are three positions of responsibility in primary schools – that of principal, first assistant and infant supervisors. These are in order of responsibility, although the Infant Supervisor has responsibilities specific to Years 1 to 3, or what is considered early primary.

As seen in the table above, the overall gender distribution of positions of responsibility in government primary schools is 30 per cent males and 70 per cent females. The proportion of females is highest in the Infant Supervisor position, which is responsible for the youngest primary school students, Years 1 to 3. The highest proportion of males in all positions of responsibility (39.1 per cent) is found in those occupying the First Assistant position.

In relation to the overall numbers of male and female teachers in the primary school sector, the distribution according to gender in the leadership and management positions is about the same as distribution in the primary teaching force.

Table 8.8 Distribution of males and females in leadership and management positions in government colleges/secondary schools, September 2010

	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
COLLEGES			
Principal	10 (66.7%)	5 (33.3%)	15
Deputy Principal	11 (52.4%)	10 (47.6%)	21
SECONDARY SCHOOLS			
Principal	4 (44.4%)	5 (55.6%)	9
Senior Assistant	5 (41.7%)	7 (58.3%)	12
TOTAL	30 (52.6%)	27 (47.4%)	57

Source: MESC School Operations Division 2010

The distribution of males and females in positions of responsibility in government colleges and secondary schools paints a different picture from the gender distribution of teachers in primary schools. It is evident that overall, there are more males than females in positions of responsibility, which amounts to a proportion of 52.6 per cent compared to 47.4 per cent females.

The highest proportion of males and conversely the lowest proportion of females are found among Principals of Colleges, 66.7 per cent male and 33.3 per cent female. The highest proportion of females found in positions of responsibility in government colleges and secondary schools is in the Senior Assistant position, which is the position next in line to the Principal of the Secondary School.

The overall proportion of male teachers in government colleges and secondary schools is 42.5 per cent compared to their female counterparts who comprise 57.5 per cent of total numbers. Comparison of such figures with the proportion of male and female teachers in leadership positions indicate that although there are more female teachers overall in government colleges and secondary schools, the fewer male teachers occupy more positions of responsibility than females.

It is also evident that females are less likely to occupy the top leadership position in a college, as opposed to a secondary school, which is perceived to have less status than a College.

Analysis of gender of teaching profession aggregated into government, mission and private schools

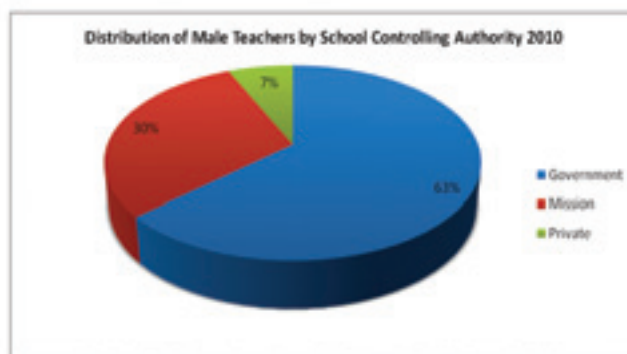
Primary and secondary schools in Samoa are either controlled by the government, mission departments of education, or private boards/committees. Although all types of schools can access government funding, the government is committed to funding public or government schools.

The government is the biggest employer of the teaching profession, employing 1520 teachers or 68.8 per cent of all teachers in Samoa (primary and secondary). They are followed by mission schools, which employ 529 teachers or 23.9 per cent of the teaching force (primary and secondary). Private schools run by school boards and school committees account for 161 teachers or 7.3 per cent of the total teaching force.

Since the educational reforms of this decade, the capacity of schools in the rural areas has been increased to reduce the pressure on schools in the Apia Urban Area, especially in the primary sector. The government has an agreement with village committees in rural areas, that the government will provide resources and teachers, while the village committees are responsible for the maintenance and payment of school operational costs such as electricity and phone lines.

The following figure shows gender-disaggregated data of teachers in Private, Mission and Government schools, according to most recent figures.

Figure 8.8 Distribution of male teachers by school controlling authority, 2010



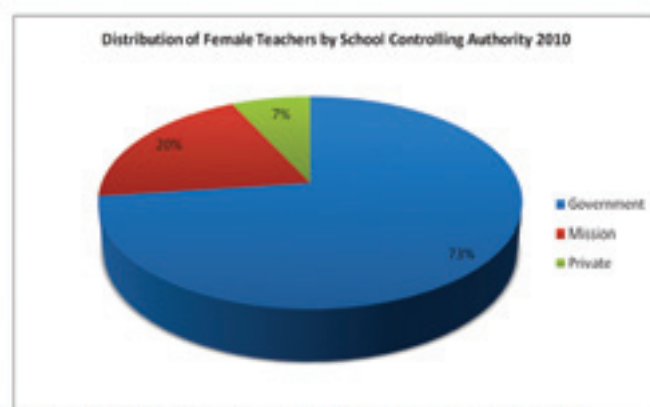
Source: MESC Policy, Planning & Research Division, 2010.

According to 2010 figures, government schools employ 63 per cent of all male teachers and 73 per cent of all female teachers in primary and secondary schools. Mission schools employ 30 per cent of all male teachers and 20 per cent of all female

teachers. Private schools represent 7 per cent of all male teachers and 7 per cent of all female teachers.

In comparison with the aggregate figure for male teachers and aggregate figure for female teachers, government schools employ a higher proportion of female teachers than male teachers; mission schools employ a higher proportion of male teachers than female teachers, and private schools employ the same proportion of either gender according to gender aggregates.

Figure 8.9 Distribution of female teachers by school controlling authority, 2010



Source: MESc Policy Planning and Research Division, 2010.

Simply put, in a group of 100 male teachers, 63 will be employed by the government, 30 will be employed by mission schools, and 7 will be employed in a private school. In a group of 100 female teachers, 73 will be teaching in a government school, 20 in a mission school, and 7 in a private school.

Furthermore, as the statistics show, the highest level of feminisation is experienced by private schools (70 per cent) followed by government schools (69 per cent). Mission schools by comparison enjoy better gender balance in their teaching force with females comprising 59 per cent of all teachers in mission schools.

The following table shows further disaggregation of the available data for gender of teachers by school controlling authority into types of schools: either primary; combined primary and secondary; and secondary.

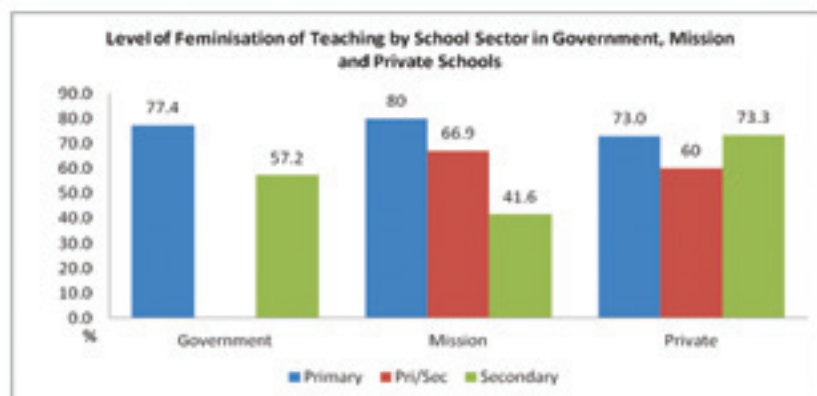
Table 8.9 Gender of teachers by school controlling authority by sector, 2010

Government Schools				
	Males	Females	Total	
Primary	262	762	1024	
Primary/Secondary	0	0	0	
Secondary	211	285	496	
TOTAL	(31%) 473	(69%) 1047	1520	
Mission Schools				
	Males	Females	Total	
Primary	31	124	155	
Primary/Secondary	41	83	124	
Secondary	146	104	250	
TOTAL	(41%) 218	(59%) 311	529	
Private Schools				
	Males	Females	Total	
Primary	30	81	111	
Primary/Secondary	14	21	35	
Secondary	4	11	15	
TOTAL	(30%) 48	(70%) 113	161	

Source: MESc Policy Planning and Research Division, 2010.

From the above information, the level of feminisation in each school sector for government, mission and private schools is as shown in Figure 8.10 below.

Figure 8.10 Level of feminisation of teaching by school sector in government, mission and private schools, 2010



Source: MESCS Policy Planning and Research Division, 2010.

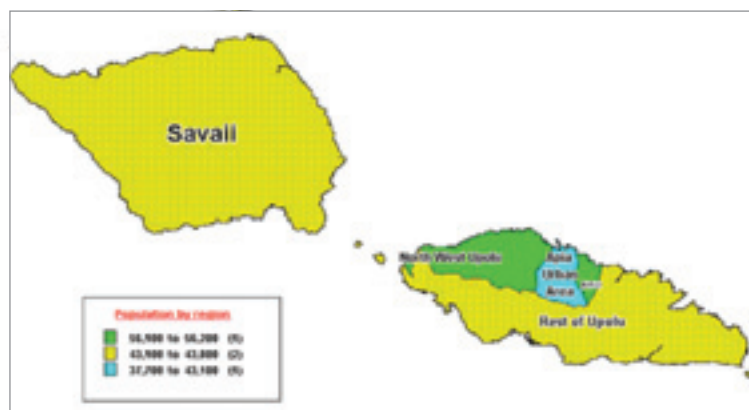
In all types of schools (government, mission and private), the level of feminisation of the teaching force is highest in the primary schools. It is 73 per cent in private primary schools, 77.4 per cent in government schools and 80 per cent in mission schools. Combined primary/secondary schools also have a feminised teaching force, 66.9 per cent for mission schools and 60 per cent for private schools. Mission secondary schools are not feminised, with 41.6 per cent of total secondary teachers being female. Teaching in government secondary schools is moderately feminised at 57.2 per cent while teaching in private secondary schools is highly feminised at 73.3 per cent..

This means that a secondary school teacher is 57 per cent likely to be female if teaching in a government school, 73 per cent likely if in a private school, and only 41 per cent likely to be female if teaching in a mission school.

Analysis of gender of teaching profession in rural and urban areas

Samoa is divided into 4 statistical regions, namely the Apia Urban Area, North West Upolu, Rest of Upolu and Savaii. The Apia Urban Area is so labelled because of the concentration of government, economic and social infrastructure, and is physically the smallest statistical region in terms of land area.

Figure 8.11 Map of Samoa showing statistical regions



Source: Ministry of Finance 2006 Population & Housing Census Report.

The Apia Urban Area has the highest population density, followed by the North West Upolu region. This is due to the centralisation of most social and economic services in the two regions. Formal employment opportunities in both the public and private sector are concentrated in the Apia Urban Area and North West Upolu Region.

The following table shows female teachers as a percentage of the total teaching force in each statistical region over a 16-year period, from 1994 to 2010.

Table 8.10 Female teachers as a percentage of the teaching force in each region, 1994–2010

	Apia Urban Area	North West Upolu	Rest of Upolu	Savaii
1994	65	63	62	62
1998	66	64	66	63
2002	68	63	66	64
2006	68	64	69	63
2010	67	66	69	70

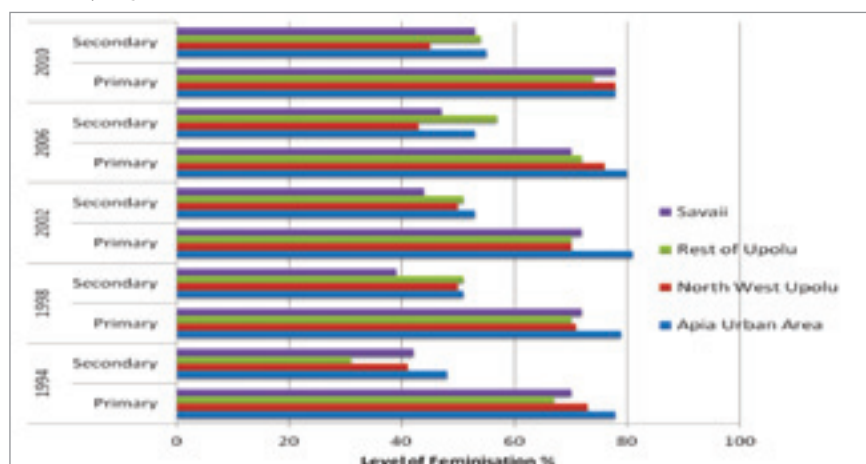
Source: MESC Policy Planning and Research Division, 2010.

Analysis of data above yields several findings. Firstly, the number of females as a percentage of the teaching profession in primary and secondary schools increased in every region between 1994 and 2010. Secondly, although the Apia Urban Area had the highest proportion of female teachers in 1994, this distinction was shared with the Rest of Upolu region in 1998, taken over by the Rest of Upolu Region in 2006, and subsequently Savaii in 2010. This means that the highest level of feminisation of the teaching force is variable between regions over time, and is not attributed to a single region.

This may reflect several factors, not the least of which is the government’s efforts to provide incentives for people to stay in the rural areas instead of migrating to the Apia Urban Region in search of jobs and better schooling. Some of these strategies included the upgrading of primary and secondary school facilities in rural areas, and increasing the capacity of rural secondary schools to become colleges and offer Year 13 for students in their vicinities. Equally important, the establishment of a town centre in Savaii (Savaii Region) to encourage business and employment formation at a location other than Apia was welcomed by Savaii residents.

Further analysis is possible by breaking down the data tabled in Figure 8.12 into primary and secondary sectors. The figure below shows female teachers as a percentage of the teaching force in each school sector, employed in each statistical region, between 1994 and 2010.

Figure 8.12 Female teachers as a percentage of teaching force in primary and secondary sector by region



Source: MESC Policy Planning and Research Division, 2010.

Several trends are evident from the graphical representation above. Firstly, the percentage of female teachers in the primary teaching force has consistently been highest in the Apia Urban Area every year until 2010. In 2010, this distinction was shared between Apia Urban Area and two other regions. The second trend is that every region with the exception of Apia Urban Area experienced an increased proportion of primary female teachers (compared to total primary teachers) between 1994 and 2010. The female proportion of primary teachers in the Savaii Region in particular increased from 70 per cent in 1994 to 78 per cent in 2010, which means that the male teacher proportion declined from 30 per cent to 22 per cent in the region's primary schools.

The case of secondary schools is different from that of primary schools, which is to be expected given the overall gender distribution of teachers in secondary schools. In 1994, male teachers outnumbered female teachers in secondary schools in every region. Four years later, the proportion of female teachers in secondary schools increased to half the number of secondary teachers in all regions except Savaii Region. In 2010, the female proportion of secondary school teachers by region was 55 per cent in Apia Urban Area, 45 per cent in North West Upolu, 54 per cent in Rest of Upolu Region and 53 per cent in the Savaii Region.

In more than 10 years (between 1998 and 2010), the female component of secondary school teachers had increased from 51 to 55 per cent in the Apia Urban Area and from 51 to 54 per cent in the Rest of Upolu Region. The Savaii Region experienced the biggest increase, from 39 per cent in 1998 to 53 per cent in 2010, while the figure for North West Upolu actually declined from 50 per cent in 1998 to 45 per cent in 2010.

The figures outlined above represent slight increases, and the question can be posed whether a 50–55 per cent proportion of teaching force being female is sufficient to grant an occupation a 'feminised' status. The question is especially pertinent given that some regions experienced declining numbers of female secondary teachers in the period 1994–2010.

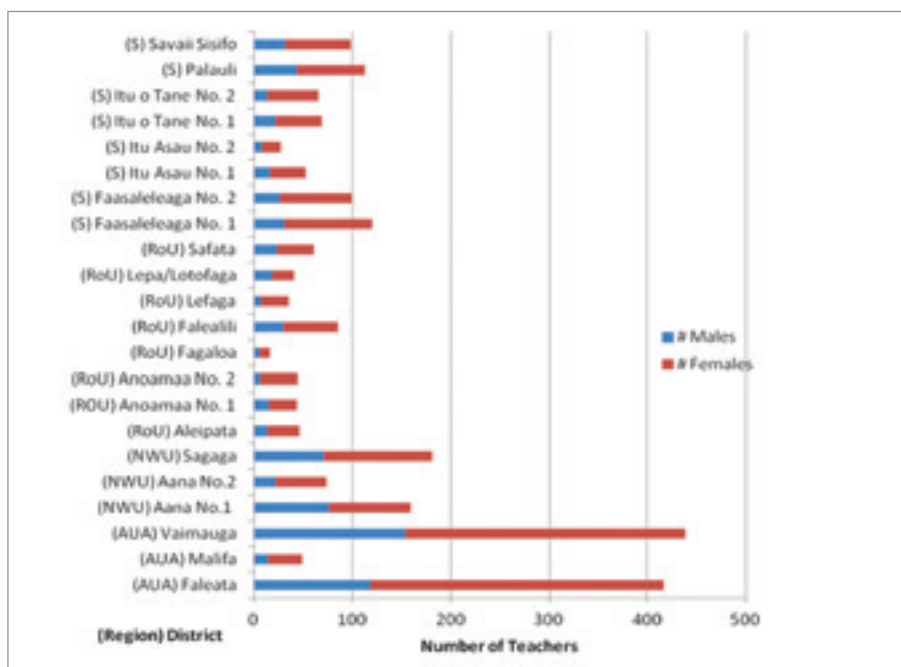
Analysis of gender of teaching profession in each district

Samoa is divided into 22 school districts that roughly correspond to electoral constituencies, although there are more school districts than electoral constituencies. Figure 8.13 shows the gender of teachers by districts according to 2010 figures.

At first glance, Faleata and Vaimauga districts immediately stand out as the districts with the highest numbers of both male and female teachers compared to other districts. This is explained by the fact that both districts are in the densely populated Apia Urban Region, with a higher school age population than other regions. In order to comply with the required teacher student ratio of 1:30, more teachers are needed in these districts.

To further illustrate the point, the Faleata district includes 20 schools, 13 of which are primary schools. The Vaimauga district which is also in the Apia Urban Area includes 22 schools, 15 of which are primary schools. By comparison, Fagaloa district which has the smallest numbers of female teachers consists solely of 4 primary schools. As it happens, male teachers outnumber their female colleagues in the Fagaloa district.

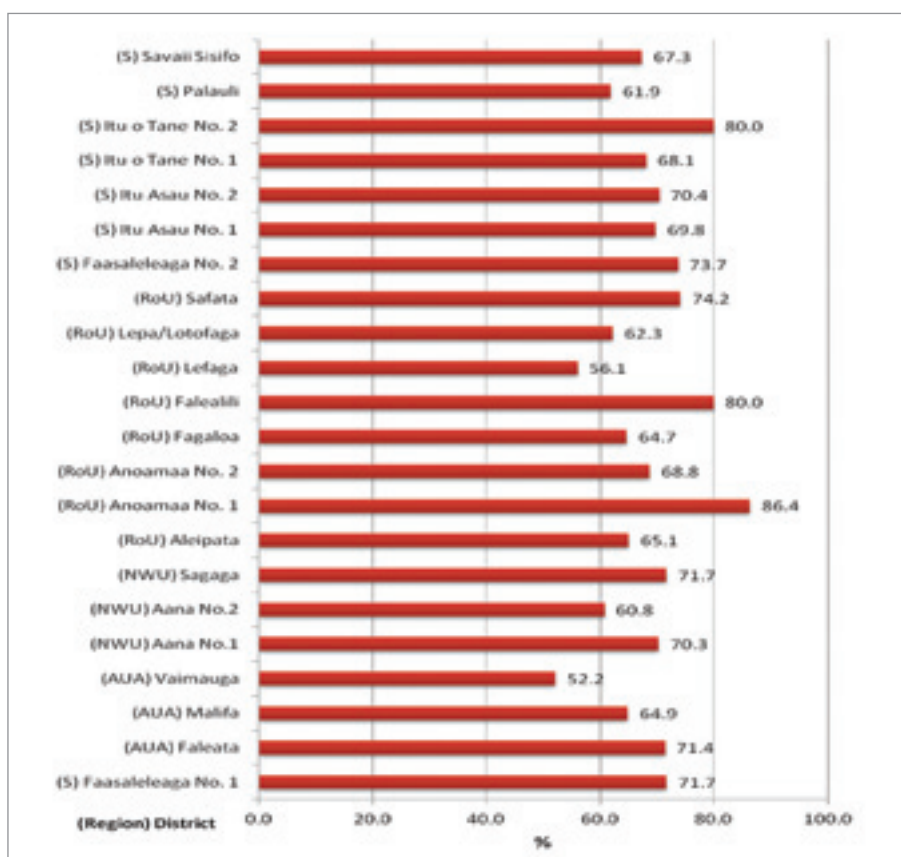
Figure 8.13 Gender of teachers by district, 2010



Source: MESC Policy Planning and Research Division, 2010.

The following figure shows female teachers as a percentage of the total teaching profession in each district, according to 2010 figures.

Figure 8.14 Female teachers as a percentage of total teaching force by district, 2010



Source: MESC Policy Planning and Research Division, 2010.

As illustrated in the above figure, female teachers make up more than 50 per cent of the total teaching force in each district. The highest level of feminisation is in the Anoamaa No.2 district, where females represent 86.4 per cent of the district’s teachers. Anoamaa No.2 consists of 8 primary schools, 6 of which are government schools, with the other two being mission schools.

The district with the lowest proportion of female teachers is Aana No.1, with 52.2 per cent of its teachers being female. Aana No. 1 district consists of 8 primary schools, 2 secondary schools and one combined primary/secondary school. It is to be noted that Aana No.1 district includes Nuuasala College, a mission secondary school that employs 16 male teachers from a total of 21 teachers.

The only other district where female teachers comprise less than 50 per cent of total teachers is Lepa/Lotofaga, which is characterised by 5 government secondary schools, and one government secondary school. As to be expected, male teachers outnumber female teachers in Lepa/Lotofaga College, which explains the lower overall percentage of female teachers compared to other districts.

Analysis of gender of teaching profession by average household income

The most recent household and income census in 2008 identified the average household income and expenditure levels in each statistical region. As mentioned in previous sections, statistical regions in Samoa are divided into the Apia Urban Area, North West Upolu Region, Rest of Upolu Region, and the Savaii Region.

In 2008, the national average household income per week was \$694 tala (about \$277 USD), and the highest average weekly household income was found in the Apia Urban Area at \$807 tala (about \$322 USD). However, these figures shouldn’t be taken at face value since the average weekly household expenditure was greater than average weekly household income in every region, as well as nationally. For instance, the national average weekly household income was \$694 tala (about \$277 USD) in comparison to the national average weekly household expenditure of \$840 tala (about \$336 USD).

Table 8.11 Average household income by region, 2008

Region	Apia Urban Area	North West Upolu	Rest of Upolu	Savaii
Average Income	\$807	\$724	\$600	\$641
Average Expenditure	\$969	\$877	\$708	\$781

Source: Household Income and Expenditure Report 2008, Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Government of Samoa, 2010

Comparison between the average household income by region and the proportion of the teaching force (primary and secondary) that is female does not indicate a strong relationship between average household income and the gender distribution of the teaching profession.

Analysis of gender of teaching profession and subject areas

There is indication of a strong relationship between teacher gender and subject area. For instance, an analysis of teaching staff at the National University of Samoa shows that the greatest concentration of female lecturers is found in the Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Education, while the greatest concentration of male lecturers is found in the School of Engineering and School of Maritime Training.

Table 8.12 Gender distribution of National University of Samoa teaching staff

	Male	Female	Total
IHE Faculty of Arts	1	16	17
IHE Faculty of Business & Entrepreneurship	5	5	10
IHE Faculty of Education	3	15	18
IHE Faculty of Nursing & Health Sciences	1	5	6
IHE Faculty of Science	8	13	21
IOT School of Business & General Studies	6	17	23
IOT School of Engineering	25	2	27
IOT School of Maritime Training	6	0	6
TOTAL	55	73	128

Source: NUS Calendar, 2010

Possible factors responsible for transforming teaching into 'women's work'

Access to pre-service teacher training

Female students usually outperform male students in the PSSC examinations, and this is reflected in enrolment into teacher training every year because females are more likely than males to achieve the scores needed for entry...

Gatoloai Tilianamua Afamasaga, 2010

Enrolment figures into pre-service teacher education are hugely in favour of females, laying the foundation for the continuation of a predominantly female teaching profession. An important factor determining the profile of the teacher profession is the profile of those who are able to enter teacher training.

Since the establishment of the National University of Samoa in 1997, which merged the Western Samoa Teachers' College with the newly created Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Sciences, entry into the Diploma of Education was dependent on achievement at Pacific Senior School Certificate (PSSC) level. The PSSC is the focus of studies at Year 13 level, and entry requirements into NUS programmes are usually in terms of an aggregate score obtained for English and best three subjects in this regional examination. PSSC subject scores range from 1 (highest) to 9 (lowest). For several years, the aggregate score for entry into the Faculty of Education programmes has been 18, for English and the best 3 subjects.

It has been noted for several years that female students on average out-perform their male counterparts in this regional examination. Gatoloai Tilianamua Afamasaga, considered an expert on teacher education in Samoa having served as head of the Faculty of Education for many years, made the observation that entry into teacher education programs are in favour of females because they are more likely to achieve the PSSC scores required for entry every year.

Figures show that on average, male students made up 44.1 per cent of all Year 13 students from 1999 to 2008 as shown on the table below. This is the closest we can get to numbers of students sitting the PSSC examination every year, which also represents the pool from which to draw teacher trainees.

Table 8.13 Male students as a percentage of total Year 13 enrolment, 1999–2008

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
%	45.7	45.5	47.0	43.5	43.6	43.7	45.9	42.1	40.9	43.4

Source: MESC Statistical Digest, 2008.

As seen in the above table, the pool of potential teacher trainees is already skewed towards females. Given that PSSC achievement figures show female students achieve

higher scores than males, the profile of the student pool that can enter teacher training is hugely in favour of females.

Perceptions regarding teachers' work

It is entirely possible that females are more likely to enter the teaching profession than males because of its perceived benefits. The teaching profession is perceived to have shorter working hours and more flexible arrangements regarding maternity leave. It is also possible that teaching primary students holds a greater attraction for females whose socialisation as a Samoan female exposes them to being responsible for younger children at a young age.

The current Dean of the Faculty of Education at the National University of Samoa, Epenesa Esera, is of the view that the teaching profession seems to be more suited to a 'female' temperament and family priorities.

Interviews with males who had left the teaching force in the last ten years provides other clues to reasons for the relatively few numbers of males who enter teaching in the primary school sector. One respondent asserted that female teachers are more suitable for primary school classes as they have more patience compared to male teachers who are more likely to be impatient and lose their temper with misbehaving students. This perception of female teachers as having more patience with students than male teachers was echoed by 10 out of 20 participants.

Males – like me – are the head of the family... and my family rely on me for everything so that is the reason I wanted to look for another job with better pay and I left when I got one...

Male Interviewee

Areas of specialisation in teacher training

The Diploma of Education offers specialisations for primary school or secondary school teaching. The primary specialisation requires a general understanding of all subject areas, while teacher trainees specialising in secondary school teaching have to identify specialist school subjects as their teaching subjects.

The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture has for a number of years sponsored selected students to undertake the Diploma of Education program at the NUS. It is the observation of the current head of the School Operations Division responsible for this scheme, that female students prefer the general specialisation preparing them for primary school teaching, while the male students prefer to concentrate on specialist subjects, preparing them for secondary school teaching.

Teacher salary

The current Dean of Education at the National University of Samoa notes that female teachers seem to stay longer in the profession compared to males. When a group of males who had left the teaching profession in the last 10 years were asked why they left the teaching profession, 18 out of 25 responded that they left for better salaries elsewhere. Salary factors seemed by far the strongest factor contributing to male teachers' desire to leave the teaching profession. Other factors mentioned were a desire for a change in career and environment (3), disagreement/conflict with management (3) and the call of God to ministry (1).

The teacher salary was especially central to the decision to continue as a teacher or seek better-paid jobs, because it was seen as the major determinant of a male's ability to provide for their household, as head of the household.

All interviewees spoke of the all-important need to provide for their families, as provider and breadwinner. Two respondents indicated that they sought better-paid employment after getting married and starting a family, as the salary was no longer sufficient to provide for their needs. These particular respondents entered the community development sector where they obtained higher paying jobs.

The information in Table 8.14 below reveals the salary a teacher expected to receive in comparison with other public service positions between 2002 and 2006. The teaching force represents more than 60 per cent of employees of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture. The average salary for someone working in the MESC in 2002–2003 was second to lowest of the entire public sector. For the next two years, the average MESC salary was in the lowest 3 of all ministries, and in 2005–2006, it moved up to the bottom 4.

Table 8.14 Average salary paid to public service employees between 2002 and 2006

Ministry	2002–2003	2003–2004	2004–2005	2005–2006
Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries	6949	6692	7910	11473
Commerce, Industry & Labour	15285	17556	18379	24965
Communication and IT	19137	16841	18733	23541
Education, Youth & Culture	11037	10894	11650	14565
Foreign Affairs & Trade	12824	16827	17661	20399
Finance	12824	16827	17661	63151
Health	11460	12675	12639	16672
Justice & Courts Administration	15105	17458	17762	29137
Natural Resources & Environment	15900	11647	11501	11443
Police, Prison & Fire Services	11217	12792	12614	14504
Office of the Prime Minister	12215	13452	16563	18895
Revenue	13648	12172	14521	18783
Women, Community & Social Devt	46848	17347	38533	40166
Works, Transport & Infrastructure	19944	18588	18797	20337
Attorney General	20391	22540	25552	32948
Audit	19134	20121	21399	28696
Legislative	14384	14758	16696	21573
Ombudsman	19662	24924	19846	21401
Public Service Commission	25449	27407	28885	37477

Source: Ministry of Financial Statistical Department Annual Statistical Abstract 2005 (37th Issue), Ministry of Finance, Samoa.

The Government of Samoa took steps between 2002 and 2006 to improve public service salaries resulting in substantial improvements in the remuneration scale for most sectors of the public service. While remuneration for the teaching force increased during this period, the improvement in salaries for those in the Education sector lagged noticeably behind the majority of sectors in the public service.

It has also been noted that while further improvements in the teacher salary scale was approved by government within the last five years, these have not been administered to teachers as expected. For those contemplating a career, teaching is still expected to have close to the lowest salary of all professional occupations, resulting in fewer individuals choosing the profession.

The importance of the rate of remuneration for male teachers cannot be emphasised enough. The salary scale does not have different scale for male and female teachers, yet it seems male teachers are more negatively affected by it. One respondent explained this by saying that female teachers were more likely to continue in the teaching profession regardless of the rate of remuneration, because their desire to teach outweighed the negative feelings they might have had regarding the salary. In comparison, because of the role of the male as head of the family and main

breadwinner, the need to ensure financial security for themselves and their families outweighed the interest males felt in practising the teaching profession.

One interviewee (male) made the observation that if a teacher possessed or gained a bachelor degree they were less likely to remain in the teaching profession, as the bachelor degree was the passport to a better paying job elsewhere. This perception seems to be supported by the current scenario in primary school teaching.

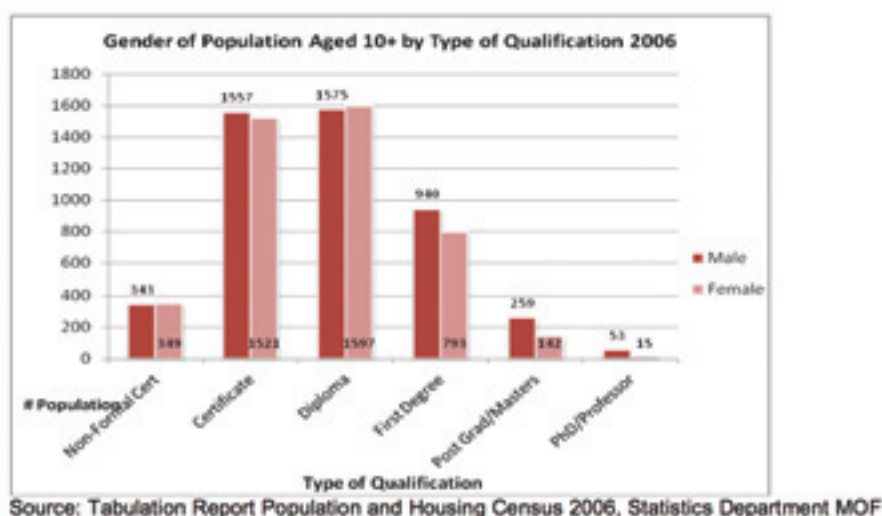
2010 figures show that 74 primary school teachers have Bachelor degrees while the rest have Certificates or Diplomas. Of this number, 62 are employed in private or mission schools while the remaining few are teaching in 7 government primary schools. The major reason for this revealing analysis is that non-government schools, private schools especially, pay comparatively high salaries so that they can attract teachers with higher qualifications to their staff. While this data is unfortunately not disaggregated by gender, we can draw conclusions on the likelihood of the gender of these teachers based on the ratio of male to female teachers.

I left teaching because my salary of \$7,000 was not commensurate with the workload that I carried as a teacher...
 Male Interviewee

In the 7 government primary schools where teachers are found to have a bachelor degree, the male to female staff ratio ranges from 1:2 to 1:16, implying that these degree holders are more likely to be female than male. The impact of the salary scale on the attraction and retention of males into the teaching profession is best expressed by one respondent who indicated that:

It must be said however, that the fewer numbers of males with bachelor degrees in primary schools does not reflect the national distribution of tertiary qualifications by gender. As shown in the following figure, males with post-secondary qualifications outnumbered females with post-secondary qualifications during the last national census in 2006.

Figure 8.15 Gender of population aged 10+ by type of qualification, 2006



Career structure

The second reason most often mentioned by male interviewees for leaving teaching was the perceived lack of opportunity for promotion within the teaching profession. As one interviewee put it *“there are so many of us teachers, and only one principal... it seemed like I*

would be going nowhere if I stayed in teaching, so I moved". Respondents spoke of their desire to keep moving forward in terms of promotion and career advancement, a desire that most decided would not be met within the teaching profession. One interviewee started looking for another job outside the teaching profession after realising that, because he was employed in a Catholic girls' school, there was no option for promotion as headship of the school could only be occupied by a nun or sister.

The current career structure for the profession includes only 3 positions of responsibility in primary teaching, and 3 in secondary teaching, and no practice of salary increments tied to performance review. Although it is clear from the MESC guiding documents that there is a policy for awarding salary increments based on performance, salary rewards have not been tied to performance appraisal in practice for at least 5 years.

However, the positive news is that the MESC is currently working together with the Public Service Commission to address the issue of teacher career and salary structure, as one of the strategies to improve the teacher retention rate and overall education outcomes for Samoa.

Feminisation of teaching profession and sexual/class divisions in society

Data from qualitative interviews with a purposeful sample of males who had left the teaching profession for a completely different government sector can help shed light on the possible link between feminisation of the teaching profession and gender identity.

Males were asked 8 questions targeting the reasons why they joined the teaching profession, the extent of their teaching experience, the reasons they left the teaching profession for jobs elsewhere, and their perceptions of differences in the practice of teaching (if any) relating to gender differences.

It was evident that the main reason for joining the teaching profession was the professional appeal of teachers' work including a desire to help young people learn and the intrinsic attraction of imparting knowledge to others. All participants indicated that they still felt attracted to the practice of teaching regardless of having left the teaching profession for some years. However, their desire to leave for better paying jobs was due to the need to provide for their households, as head of the household. The gendered understanding of the male/father as head of the household is supported by data on heads of households in Samoa.

The most recent Population and Household Census Report (2008) indicate that the vast majority of households in Samoa are headed by males. As shown on the following table, 78 per cent of Samoa's households are headed by males and 22 per cent are headed by females.

Table 8.15 Gender of head of household by region, 2008

Apia Urban Area		North West Upolu		Rest of Upolu		Savali		National Total	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
4178	1319	6211	1681	4535	1241	4705	1255	19625	5495
76	24	79	21	79	21	79	21	78	22

Source: Samoa Bureau of Statistics Household Income and Expenditure Survey Report 2008, Government of Samoa 2008

The male interviewees also spoke of an additional factor pushing them to pursue better salary paying jobs elsewhere in the form of customary responsibilities associated with being a matai or chief of the family and village. As a respondent indicated, "being a chief brings with it a lot of responsibilities many of them financial. I have to make sure I earn enough money for my family as head of the family, but also to fulfil my obligations as a matai (chief)".

Matai (chiefs) in Samoa enjoy a status not accorded non-matai or untitled individuals. As the head of their households, they represent their families in extended family and village council discussions and can stand for election to represent their electoral districts in Parliament. Suffrage for those aged 21 years and above was introduced in 1995, but was limited to matai prior to 1995. The only exception was the Individual Voters Roll, which represent those who have no linkages with traditional village councils. Matai also make the decisions regarding allocation of land to build and cultivate. However, matai are also expected to provide financial assistance when needed in their service to family, village and church. Researchers have estimated the annual extent of this financial contribution to family, village and church obligations at about 50 million Tala (approximately 22 million AUD) (Thornton, Kerslake & Binns, 2010).

The table below shows the gender distribution of matai as of 2006.

Table 8.16 Numbers and percentage of matai by gender, 2006

Male		Female	
12,589	79.8%	3,194	20.2%

Source: Population and Housing Census Report 2006, Samoa Bureau of Statistics , APIA

In the last census, 8.7 per cent of Samoa’s population were matai or held chiefly titles. Of this number (15,783), 79.8 per cent were male and 20.2 per cent were female. Of the male ex-teachers interviewed, only 2 were non-matai, while the rest held one or more chiefly titles.

These numbers illustrate that, due to their roles and responsibilities as heads of their households, and matai in their families and villages, male teachers were more likely to leave the teaching profession to pursue better paying employment to assist with the associated financial demands of being a matai and head of the family. It is testament to the employability of the teaching profession that many (males and females) were able to find better-paid employment outside of teaching.

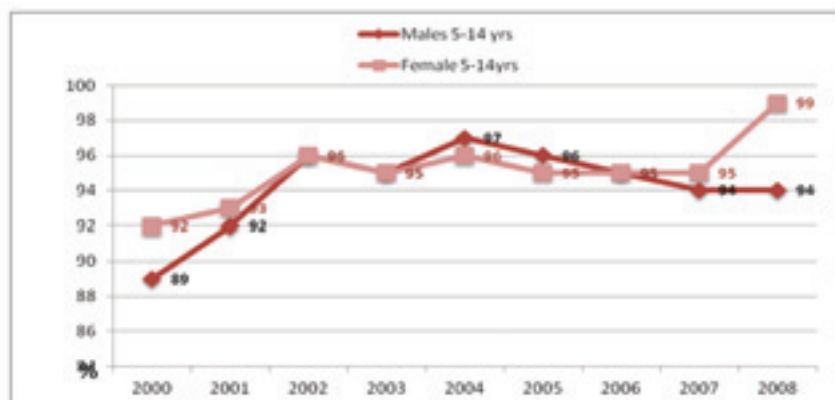
Implications and assumptions

Commencing from the standpoint that ‘feminisation of the teaching profession’ refers to the increasing proportion of women in the teaching profession compared to men, and without entering into a complex dialogue on gender issues, there are several implications suggested by research through the years.

School participation

The first implication, which needs focused investigation, is related to the assumption that female teachers encourage girls’ participation and the absence of male teachers discourage male student participation. If this were true for Samoa, the result of increasing over-representation of women in the primary teaching workforce over the last two decades should have resulted in declining male student representation in primary schools in the same period.

Figure 8.16 School participation rate for population aged 5 to 14 years, from 2000–2008

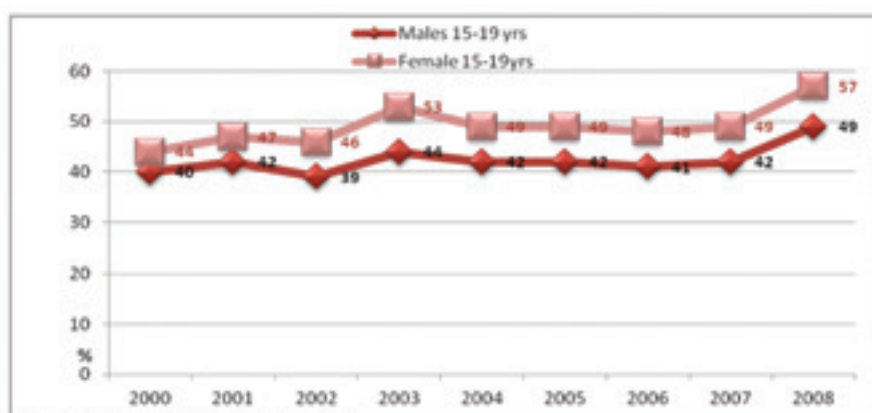


Source: MESC Statistical Digest 2008.

However, as shown in the above figure, school participation of boys aged 5 to 14 years increased from 89 per cent in 2000 to 97 per cent in 2004, declined then remained steady at 94 per cent since 2007. Although the rate of participation is lower than for girls of the same age, which is 99 per cent as of 2008, the rate of boys' participation is still high compared to many countries of the world. In addition, the differences in male and female 5–14 years participation rate did not constitute a large gap between 2001 and 2007. While the question should be asked why school participation for males aged 5 to 14 years did not increase in 2008 as it did for females, the assumption that having the majority of primary teachers being female leads to declining male participation is, in Samoa's case, unsupported.

The same assumption of female teachers benefiting girl student participation/absence of male teachers discouraging male student participation can be extended to secondary school participation should be evident in increased male participation in comparison to female participation in secondary schools. This is because the proportion of male teachers in comparison to female teachers in secondary schools is higher than in primary schools, as discussed in previous sections. However, the following figure shows that this is not the case for Samoa.

Figure 8.17 School participation rate for population aged 15 to 19 years, from 2000–2008



Source: MESC Statistical Digest 2008.

It is immediately obvious that the school participation rate for males and females aged 15 to 19 years is much lower than for their younger counterparts. It is also apparent that there is a consistent gap between the participation rate for males and

that of females of this age group. At 2008 figures, just under half of all males aged 15 to 19 years were participating in school, in comparison to 57 per cent of their female counterparts. However, the 2010 figures are an improvement on school participation in 2000, which was 40 per cent of males aged 15–19 years, and 44 per cent of females in the same age group. The trend in the period analysed ends on an upward note, so it will be worthwhile observing whether the participation rate for both males and females in this age group continues to improve.

There are several possible reasons for the overall lower participation of males in schools. Firstly, the author’s observations of the numbers and ages of the ‘untitled men’s group’ in the home village of Samata-i-Tai indicate that many current members of this traditional group are of secondary school age. Informal questioning reveals many of them have opted out of formal schooling before the end of Year 12 in order to focus on supporting their extended family and fulfilling village obligations. The case of Samata-i-Tai might well be an example of what happens in other rural communities in Samoa. Males in the rural areas are responsible for the subsistence agriculture that feeds families and provides surplus that can be exchanged for money to buy needed items.

A second possible reason, which is really a contributing factor to the first reason, is that unless they are planning to move to Upolu to find jobs in the formal employment sector, completing 5 years of secondary schooling seems to be of little use to rural living. Although young people are encouraged to attend and do well in school, the life that much of secondary schooling prepares young people for is slightly removed from the reality of existence and being in the rural areas, where plantations have to be cultivated, heads of households must be served, and lands and homes must be maintained.

As seen in the following figure, secondary enrolment in most districts is less than half of the primary enrolment figures. It seems that whereas the majority of Samoan families are convinced of the importance of completing primary schooling, this conviction does not extend to secondary schooling. In view of the gendered enrolment in secondary schooling, it seems that the reasons for not participating in secondary schooling are stronger for males than females.

Table 8.17 Primary and secondary enrolment by district, 2010

Region	District	Primary Enrolment	Secondary Enrolment
Apia Urban Area	Faleata	6569	2676
	Malifa	Not available	1260
	Vaimauga	7990	3157
North West Upolu	Aana No. 1	2793	820
	Aana No.2	1807	442
	Sagaga	3469	1806
Rest of Upolu	Aleipata	1087	244
	Anoamaa No.1	684	416
	Anoamaa No.2	1373	no school
	Fagaloa	282	no school
	Falealili	1644	600
	Lefaga	644	156
	Lepa/Lotofaga	730	263
	Safata	1391	313
Savaii	Faasaleleaga No.1	1974	749
	Faasaleleaga No.2	1220	694
	Itu Asau No.1	784	430
	Itu Asau No.2	692	no school
	Itu o Tane No.1	915	582
	Itu o Tane No.2	1163	366
	Palauli	1774	783
	Savaii Sisifo	1824	512

Source: MESCS Statistical Digest 2008.

It is highly likely that one of the major reasons for the lower participation rate in the 15 to 19 age group is that this age group may include individuals who have completed all 13 years of formal schooling and have moved on to find employment.

If the data in the previous figure is considered in conjunction with the finding that there are more male teachers in the secondary school sector than in the primary school sector, the tentative conclusion can be drawn that feminisation of the teaching profession does not have an adverse impact on school access and male participation rates. It is evident that school participation rates for males are generally below that of females of in the 15 to 19 age group. In relation to the assumption of female teachers encouraging female participation and male teachers encouraging male participation, this set of data for Samoa suggests otherwise.

Gender parity

Samoa has achieved gender parity in primary schooling as reported in the latest EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2007). Nevertheless, mention must still be made of the case that Samoa has been identified as at risk of not achieving gender parity in secondary schooling by 2015 (UNESCO, 2007). It is highly likely that there are various factors behind the overall lower participation of both males and females in secondary schooling. It is also highly likely that certain factors are impacting more on males than females, resulting in less than half of secondary school age males participating in schools. It is unlikely that the increasing proportion of female teachers is the leading factor in Samoa's secondary school participation profile. More research is needed to identify and suggest solutions to the leading causes of Samoa's low secondary school participation rate, which is particularly poor for males of secondary school age. While concerns for boys' education and achievement have been expressed within regional networks, focus on other important issues in education means that there is a noticeable lack of attention on boys' underachievement and under-participation within Samoa itself.

Student achievement

An often-mentioned argument for measures to address the gender imbalance in favour of females in the teaching profession is the possible link with male student achievement. As already established, approximately 77 per cent of all primary school teachers are female. Results from national assessments show that there are serious problems regarding boys' achievement in primary schools.

The following figures show student achievement in national assessments at Year 4 level in English, Samoan and Numeracy.

Figure 8.18 At risk students in English (results from spell one test) as percentage of student gender, 2001–2007

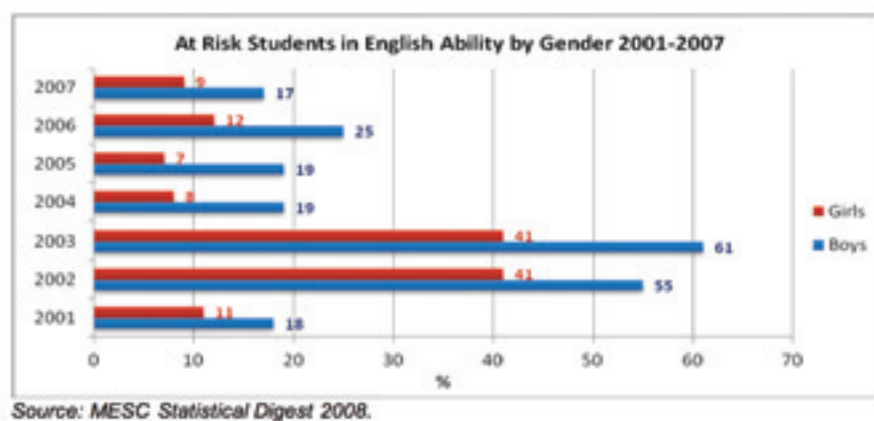
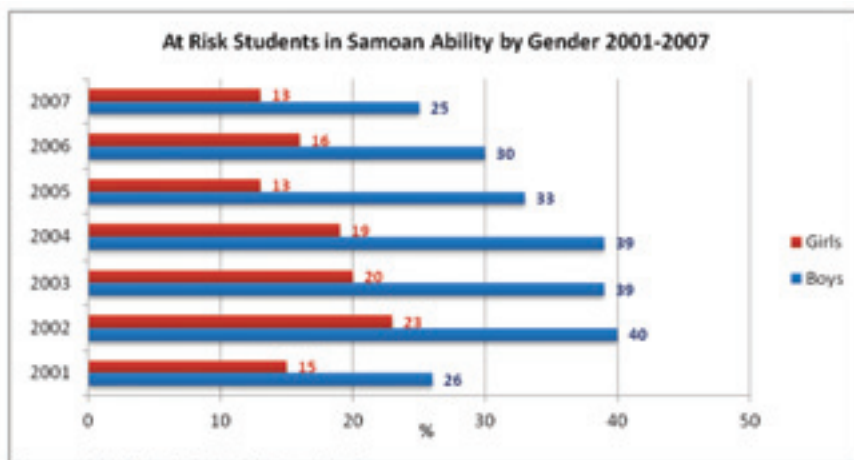
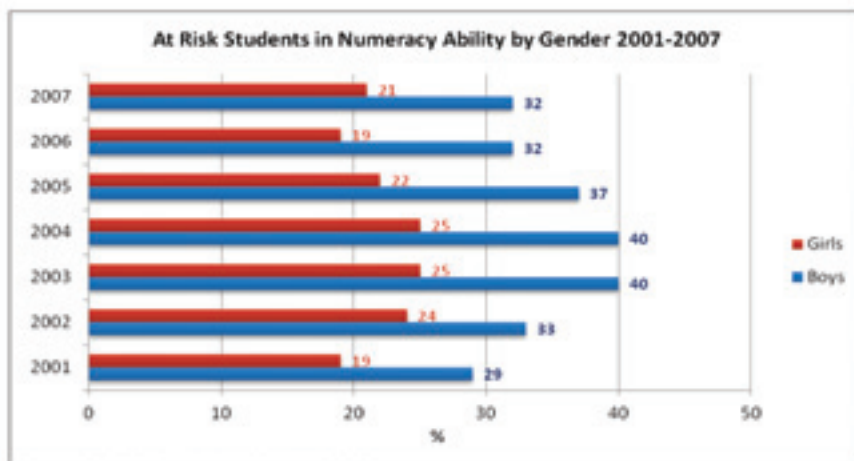


Figure 8.19 At risk students in Samoan (results from spell one test) as percentage of student gender, 2001–2007



Source: MESC Statistical Digest 2008.

Figure 8.20 At risk students in numeracy (results from spell one test) as percentage of student gender, 2001–2007



Source: MESC Statistical Digest 2008.

Analysis of Figures 8.18, 8.19 and 8.20 shows an unmistakable pattern of higher numbers of male students at risk compared to female students in all three areas, English, Samoan and Numeracy. The highest proportion of male students at risk is found in results for Numeracy assessment in comparison to the other assessment areas.

It is also highly worrying that there are relatively high numbers of at risk male students in Samoan (25 per cent in 2010) in view of the fact that Samoan is the first language of the majority of the Samoan population, as well as being the language of instruction from Year 1 to Year 3.

It is evident that after increasing to disturbing highs in 2003 (English and Numeracy) and 2002 (Samoan), male student achievement in the Spell 1 Tests has followed a gradual improvement trend.

The question that remains to be answered is whether the increasing proportion of female teachers in primary schools is a causal factor in the relatively higher numbers of male students at risk in English, Samoan and Numeracy at Year 4. It is suggested that a direct causal relationship would be apparent in increasing proportions of male students at risk over the years, corresponding to an increasing proportion of female primary school teachers. That this is not the case indicates otherwise.

However, there are certainly troubling factors in play that result in the mismatch between male and female student achievement. A research initiative that focuses on identification of such factors and development of recommendations to address the effects of such factors would have to commence from an open theoretical viewpoint, one that is not limited to the lens of the 'feminisation of teaching' debate.

Continued perception of teaching as 'women's work'

It is highly likely that one of the impacts of feminisation of the teaching profession is the impact on children's perceptions of the teaching profession as being a gendered profession, at least for primary teaching. Children's perceptions of who is involved in the educational experience are very likely to be affected by having mostly female teachers throughout their school lives. It is to be expected that, after having gone through twelve to thirteen years of formal schooling in which the majority of teachers were females, young people will have the perception that teaching is for the most part, a female's profession. This is likely to affect career choices when contemplating careers and learning pathways, so that male students will unconsciously perpetuate the situation by making study choices that will take them away from the teaching profession.

That the teaching profession unfortunately pays a lower salary than other professional occupations in Samoa presents another possibility, that Samoan children will increasingly associate females with teaching and lower salaries, compared to other occupations. International research examining loss of status for the teaching profession as a consequence of 'feminisation' should consider whether the loss of status is the result of increasing numbers of female teachers, or whether the loss of status is due to it being a low-paying profession. It does not need to be said that this aspect of the debate merits further research and analysis.

Perceptions of teaching and authority

There are possible implications of the extent of feminisation of teaching profession on reproduction of cultural norms regarding gender and leadership. As shown in a previous table, the ratio of males to females in management positions in primary school is approximately 30:70. If children regard primary school teaching as 'women's work', due to the sheer numbers of women carrying out the task, then seeing more women than men in management positions will reinforce that perception. Equally important, children might develop the perception that women are the more authoritative source of information for their young lives, which is likely to challenge the stereotype of the male as the traditional authority figure. However, this assumption certainly needs further examination, not the least from school children's perspective.

However, perceptions of teaching as mostly women's work is likely to be challenged in secondary school, when students encounter not only more male teachers, but more male teachers in positions of leadership. The schooling years are a time of important identity formation and development of understanding of the world and social relationships, perceptions developed during primary schooling as a result of interaction with mostly female teachers will be revised in secondary school when they encounter more male teachers.

Practice around HIV/AIDS, non-communicable diseases and education

Samoa has been fortunate to escape the ravages of the HIV/AIDS pandemic as experienced by other nations in the region and all over the world. The most recent Samoa Progress Report against achievement of the Millennium Development Goals indicates that Samoa has achieved 91.6 per cent access to HIV/AIDS treatment for those who need it while HIV prevalence is lower than 0.2/1000 as of 2010 (Government of Samoa, 2010).

However, other equally important risks to the quality of life have been identified by the Ministry of Health in the high incidence of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and obesity. In addition, Chlamydia, a sexually transmitted infection (STI) is reported to be present in endemic proportions in Samoa's population (Government of Samoa, 2010).

The increased proportion of women in the teaching profession presents a unique opportunity to reduce the incidence of Non-Communicable Diseases and STIs in Samoa's population through the role they can play in promoting awareness and disseminating information on prevention. Their perceived 'mothering' role as primary school teachers can be utilised to develop students' awareness of healthy living, especially on the delicate topics of sexual and reproductive health. This role need not be limited to the classroom, since as teachers; women can be accepted into most groups on the basis of their status as *fai'a'oga* (teachers).

Status of teaching and subject areas

As previously discussed, the loss of status of the teaching profession need not be attributed to the increasing proportion of female teachers, as there is little evidence to corroborate this. In fact, 60 per cent of male ex-teachers interviewed in the course of this research indicated that teaching was still considered a prestigious profession, especially in the rural areas. People living in the rural areas recognised the great importance of schooling to self-development, and regarded the main agent in the schooling process (the teacher) with very high esteem. Of the 25 per cent of interviewees that responded that teaching was considered a low-status occupation, some noted that this was because the salary of other occupations was much better than teaching, and that this low status had not always been the case for the teaching occupation. The other 15% of responses were not able to make a generalisation but responded that different people had different views of the status of teaching. The high esteem with which rural and school communities regarded teachers was present regardless of whether the teacher was a female or male.

Following this line of thought leads to the implication that a perceived loss/increase of status in certain subject areas is not due to the higher/lower numbers of female teachers that teach it, but due to the remuneration it is likely to bring as a career path. Certainly this is seen to be the case in areas traditionally dominated by males such as engineering and sciences, where there are now increasingly female students pursuing such career paths.

Nevertheless, it is worthwhile remembering that the best source of information on the status of teaching subjects, and the perceived impact of having more women teachers in such subjects, would have to be the perceptions of students themselves. This is an area worthwhile pursuing in future research initiatives.

Conclusions and recommendations

It is clear from this case study that the teaching profession in Samoa is largely female, and has been for at least the last 20 years. Enrolment figures into pre-service teacher training since before Independence indicate that this feminisation started around the mid-1960s. The reasons for this early gendered distribution may have been due to increasing number of jobs being available to males, and entry into teacher education being in terms of a scores achieved at secondary school examinations, achievement of which favoured female students.

Feminisation of the teaching profession has ranged from about 62 per cent of total teachers 16 years ago and increased over the years to currently 68 per cent of the total. When this information is disaggregated into primary and secondary teachers,

feminisation is higher in the primary school sector at currently 77 per cent, compared to 53 per cent in secondary schools (including colleges). There are a few schools that offer both primary and secondary schooling, and the rate of feminisation in these schools is currently 65 per cent. In both primary and secondary schooling, the increase in female proportion of the teaching force has been gradual over the last 16 years.

Analysis of gender distribution in management positions shows that in managers in government primary schools are 70 per cent female and 30 per cent male compared to the overall primary teacher gender distribution of 77 per cent female and 23 per cent male. Management in government secondary schools (including colleges) is 53 per cent female and 47 per cent male, which is the same as the overall secondary teacher gender distribution of 53 per cent female and 47 per cent male.

Government schools account for the largest numbers of male teachers employed in the country (63 per cent of total), followed by mission schools (30 per cent) while private schools account for 7 per cent of all male teachers. In comparison, 73 per cent of all female teachers are teaching in government schools, 20 per cent are teaching in mission schools, and 7 per cent are in private schools. In other words, in a group of 100 male teachers, 63 will be employed by the government, 30 will be employed by mission schools, and 7 will be employed in a private school. In a group of 100 female teachers, 73 will be teaching in a government school, 20 in a mission school, and 7 in a private school. Of all three types of schools, private schools are the most highly feminised (70 per cent of all teachers are female), followed by government schools (69 per cent of all teachers are female) and mission schools were 59 per cent of all teachers are female. The feminised teaching force is not particular to any statistical region – all 4 regions have a female teacher proportion of 66 to 70 per cent.

While data is not available on the gender distribution of teachers by teaching subject in the primary and secondary school sector, the information from the National University of Samoa shows lecturers in education, nursing and the arts are more likely to be female, while male lecturers dominate engineering, maritime training and science.

The factors responsible for turning teaching into a 'women's work' include access to teacher training being in terms of PSSC national assessment scores, the continuing perception of teaching as women's work, structure of subject specialisations in teacher training programs, and the availability of other occupations for males such as the police force and ministry. Factors that cause male teachers to exit the teaching profession include the low teacher salary compared to other occupations and lack of career advancement options within teaching. The need for a better salary is itself linked to the need to earn enough money to meet family, community and church obligations associated with being a matai and head of the family.

It is clear from the statistics that the feminised teaching profession is not to blame for problems with student achievement and retention, which are of great concern especially at secondary level. However, the nature of student achievement and retention is 'gendered', in that boys underachieve throughout primary and secondary schooling and are more likely to exit the school system before completion of secondary schooling.

The impacts of a feminised teaching force is likely to be a continuation of perceptions surrounding teaching as women's work, which might have resulting impacts on the way children perceive authority roles. The assumption that the decreasing status of the teaching profession is due to it being a feminised profession is unsupported by the findings in this research. Rather, it is apparent that a more likely explanation for the declining status of the teaching profession is its earning power compared to other professions and occupations.

Recommendations for addressing the disproportionate number of men in the primary sector of the profession

It will not come as any surprise that any action to address the disproportionate numbers of males in the teaching profession should start with improvement of the current salary package for the teaching profession. As discussed in this report, male teachers are highly likely to exit the teaching profession because of financial responsibilities that cannot be met through the available salary package for teachers. The financial responsibility is tied to the traditional role of the male/father as the head of the household, and as matai, their responsibility extends to the wider family and village network.

Secondly, it is perhaps opportune to consider revising the career structure so that there are more options for recognised career advancement, which is of great importance to the gender identity of the Samoan male. In fact, the latest update from the Samoa Ministry of Education, Sports & Culture indicate that they are working on this aspect to help address the overall teacher retention rate, which is a commendable development. It is also recommended that policies addressing teacher retention and recruitment should be examined from the gender perspective, to establish whether they in fact pose limitations on teachers of a certain gender.

It may be also prudent to consider the expansion of pathways into the teaching profession that at this point in time is limited to achievement scores on the PSSC examination in Year 13. As already mentioned, the pool of students sitting PSSC greatly reduces the pool of possible teachers, not to mention that the PSSC examinations have comparably lower rates of achievements for male students.

Possible pathways can be created through appropriately structured teacher training programs for mature individuals who did not achieve the required scores in PSSC but have since then joined the work force and demonstrated achievement of skills and knowledge in a particular area. However, such an undertaking would only be successful through partnership between the relevant organisations, in view of the possible barriers that might be encountered in implementation.

Furthermore, it seems that the increasing proportion of female compared to male teachers in the teaching profession has attracted attention to its perceived negative impacts. A recommendation may be made to consider and maximise the possible benefits of such a profession profile, in view of the fact that the situation will not be reversed in the short term at least in the primary school sector.

Finally, there is no doubt that further research is needed to establish and address the root causes of important issues such as male student underachievement, lower participation rate of both male and females in secondary schools, and high non-completion rates for students in secondary school. It may well be identified that where 'feminisation of the teaching profession' is not considered a major causal factor, it can most certainly be instrumental in strategies to address the issues plaguing education in Samoa