

Mens-Verhulst, J. van, Woertman, L. & Radtke, H.L. (2015). Faculty women as models for women students: how context matters. *Studies in Higher Education*, 1164-1178.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2013.865163>

Abstract

We explored how frequently academic staff serve as role models for women undergraduate students, how this compares to the family context, and the qualities associated with potential role models in both contexts. Participants were 138 psychology students at a Dutch university. They completed a self-administered, online survey about inspirational people and a sentence-completion task. Older university women were inspiring for 20.5% of students; younger university women for 14.4%. Men were rarely identified as role models in the academic context, but with almost the same frequency as women in the family context. Academic women were admired primarily for qualities related to their work and as people with authority/power while family women were associated mainly with relational qualities, like caring. Focusing on the academic context, we argue that there is a 'hidden gender curriculum,' which contributes to students' identity development and which may reproduce or disrupt social and cultural inequalities.

Keywords: faculty members; identity formation; models; gender differences; curriculum