

FEMALE TEACHERS AND MOTHERHOOD BEYOND HOMES: HOW WELL CAN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ASSUME THE ROLES?

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Abstract

Teaching for women enhances their roles as both teachers and mothers. It enables them to fulfil their maternal responsibilities beyond the home. There are numerous misconceptions regarding women who choose teaching as a career. Some educators believe that their level of education influences this choice. However, research has disproved this notion by demonstrating that female teachers are as educated as their male counterparts and, in some cases, even more so. In this era of Artificial Intelligence (AI), there is a belief that it can accomplish nearly everything humans desire and could replace female teachers in fulfilling their dual roles as teacher and mother. This is a position paper that utilises historical and survey methods to gather information from primary and secondary sources and to answer the three (3) research questions raised to address the problem of the study. The paper affirms that AI cannot effectively assume the roles of teaching and motherhood. The paper cautions against the uncritical acceptance of technology in education, particularly as nations endeavour to safeguard and promote their culture.

Keywords: Female Teachers, Motherhood, Artificial Intelligence, Roles.

Introduction

There is no gainsaying that teachers are noble professionals who lay the foundation for all other professions. This statement aligns with UNESCO's (2023) submission that "teachers are at the core of all education systems, laying the foundation for achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all" (p. 3). Although teaching is a profession for both genders, females are undoubtedly more represented, and people have started to view teaching as a female profession of sorts. From the family of orientation to the family of socialisation, women's role as mothers does not remain confined to a specific space. Motherhood is a God-given role that women play wherever they find themselves. They are mothers in schools, hospitals, businesses, factories, banks, workshops, and even as presidents of nations.

However, looking at the trend of events, females are more engaged than males in teaching at all levels of education except at the tertiary level, and educators have adduced reasons for this trend. Some say female teachers have lower qualifications, and this has been debunked by Nestour and Moscoviz (2020). Others believe teaching is a female job, yet others opine that the attrition rate is higher among males than females (Nestour & Moscoviz, 2020). However, the percentages of female teachers at the pre-primary and primary school levels, 94% and 67% respectively (UNESCO, 2023), caught the researcher's attention to look into the

probable unsung reason for the number of female teachers at these levels of education, and to confirm if these high percentages at these levels also play out in Oyo State. In the context of effectively nurturing children to become useful citizens, this research examines female teachers who serve as mothers beyond their homes. The research provided conceptual clarifications, such as defining motherhood and the roles of a teacher and a mother and linking them to the research focus.

Concept of Motherhood

Motherhood, simply put, is being a mother. However, according to Luzardo (2017), carrying a child in your womb doesn't define the true meaning of motherhood. Nurturing a baby, raising a toddler, being present, and loving unconditionally are the true components of motherhood that female teachers embody in the classroom. Motherhood is "having or relating to an inherent worthiness, justness, or goodness that is obvious or unarguable" (dictionary.com). It is also seen as "looking into your child's eyes and seeing nothing but love" (Hilt, 2017), the love of female teachers, especially those at the pre-primary level worldwide. Motherhood could be more complex than it is thought to be; with the challenges and responsibilities of nurturing, caring for, and raising children, biological or adopted, but female teachers balance these duties. It is a journey marked by love, sacrifice, and the unique bond between a mother and her child, as female teachers, alongside children, navigate their future in the classroom.

AI Copilot (2025) opines that, beyond the biological aspect, motherhood can also be a state of mind a deep sense of care and responsibility for others, whether through mentorship, guardianship, or simply being a source of comfort and wisdom. It is about patience in challenging moments, joy in the little victories, and a love that transcends words, all of which are characteristics of female teachers. Motherhood, extending beyond the confines of the home, encompasses the nurturing and influencing of others. It is about creating space for love and connection, impacting lives with values, respect, and guidance, and extending care to the broader community. It's about seeing the world with a caring heart, much like one would care for their children. In this broader sense, motherhood is about the capacity to feel connected to others and to nurture and support them, whether or not they are directly related or live within the same household. Female teachers cannot be brushed aside in any endeavour; they wear several caps, therefore, investing in women, especially their education, will accelerate societal progress, and their caps will be worn together and befittingly, as represented in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: An Adapted Representation of a Female Teacher (Mothers and Teachers are better together!) **Source:** Pictures & Royalty-Free Images

The Roles of Teachers

Drawing on figure 1 above, female teachers are fitted into different roles. However, the primary roles of a teacher, according to the Indeed Employer Team (2025), credit teachers, male and female, with playing various roles in students' lives. This aligns with Ryan and Cooper (2013), who opined that "in a completely rational society, the best of us would be teachers and the rest of us would have to settle for something less, because passing civilisation along from one generation to the next ought to be the highest honour and the highest responsibility anyone could have". This underscores the importance of teachers in society, especially female teachers, whose roles are continuous from home to school in entrenching various aspects of culture in the children. Akanbi (2019) submitted that women are moulders; they are naturally endowed with the ability to shape the lives of their biological children and other children around them. There is no gainsaying that women are more responsible for the upbringing and inculcation of acceptable attitudes in children's minds. They spend more time with the children, and they (mothers) are the first contact with the children in most cases.

They provide mentorship by setting good examples for students to follow. They are role models in every good way, leading students to follow their good practices and live out what society cherishes. Generally, there is a connection between a caring, knowledgeable teacher and a secure, motivated learner. When teachers address students' personal challenges during mentorship, it can foster a supportive environment that extends beyond academic success. In the process of mentoring the students, teachers can discover the social, economic, and cultural backgrounds of the pupils; their learning styles and abilities; access to resources; aptitudes and

interests; and their likely home environment and family involvement in their education. Teachers' mentorship sometimes extends beyond the classroom, as seen in after-school lessons for additional review of material taught during regular school hours.

It is part of the teacher's duty to encourage curiosity and exploration in the classroom. Teachers spur students to take ownership of their learning by engaging their natural inquisitiveness, thereby connecting learning goals to lifelong value using diverse methods to increase class participation. They harness students' talents to encourage the individual expression of their intellectual capabilities, thus inspiring learners to use their innate intelligence and creativity as they serve in loco parentis. Leveraging technology, but not relying on it to support learning, makes their role crucial in classrooms, as it enhances pupils' intellectual development by nurturing healthy curiosity. The teacher creates meaningful learning experiences that will support pupils in their future endeavours by researching age-appropriate learning strategies and maximising the benefits of the teaching and learning processes. Teachers also serve as mediators and liaison officers among their students in the classroom and through communication with parents and other teachers, providing information about assignments and enforcing school policies, which is a form of conflict resolution. They might collaborate with fellow teachers to develop activities that support the school curriculum. (Indeed Employer Team, 2025).

It has been estimated that more than half of the over 80 million teachers worldwide are female. Of these teachers in pre-primary through secondary education worldwide, 67 percent are female. (Nestour and Moscoviz, 2020; UNESCO, 2023; Játiva, 2024). Notable among the reasons suggested by scholars for such higher number is that 'female peers, teachers, and school leaders are important mentors for girls as they navigate life', they are also 'role models and allies for girls' (Játiva, 2024). It is also believed, teacher's gender can matter for girls' achievements and aspirations, as female teachers can challenge harmful gender stereotypes rooted in the community, bolster parents' aspirations for girls, and help close the gender gap in educational achievement. (Játiva, 2024). According to Nestour and Moscoviz (2020), 'female teachers are important for education systems and gender equality' as they 'may increase girls' test scores and their likelihood of staying in school, heighten their aspirations, and lower their likelihood of being subject to violence'.

UNESCO conducted research in 2023 to examine the percentage of female teachers worldwide across all levels of education, from pre-primary to tertiary. However, it is remarkable that the percentage of female teachers at the pre-primary level remains outstanding. There was no year when their percentage fell below 90%, as shown in Table 2, a testament to women's role as mothers beyond the home, contrary to earlier cultural beliefs that women were irrelevant outside it.

Table 1: Percentage of Female Teachers by Teaching Level of Education in the World

S/N	LEVEL	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (No. of Counties)
1	Pre-primary	94.31	94.29	94.18	93.66	93.78	93.79	90.69 (10)
2	Primary	65.72	66.52	67.04	67.42	67.69	67.96	72.80 (10)
3	Lower Secondary	56.44	56.69	57.03	57.27	57.88	58.09	58.17 (6)
4	Upper secondary	50.77	51.22	51.09	50.69	51.57	51.89	56.96 (6)
5	Secondary	53.96	54.24	54.42	54.35	55.09	55.32	53.79 (6)
6	Tertiary	42.47	42.65	42.73	42.86	43.05	43.08	51.37 (5)

Source: <http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=3801>

The table shows that from 2017 to 2023, there were more female than male teachers at the pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, and secondary school levels; male teachers outnumbered female teachers only at the tertiary level. The implication is that the world needs to invest more in women and create an enabling environment that encourages their greater involvement as teachers in tertiary institutions.

The data could also be viewed from another perspective, such as women continuing their role as mothers at the pre-primary level of education. The foundation of everything is crucial; a weak foundation cannot accommodate a strong structure, nor can education. The pre-primary level of education is the foundation for a solid education, and tender-hearted persons like mothers must handle it. Their presence in large numbers at this level of education sends a message to the world that mothers are indispensable in young people's lives and, indeed, in everyone's lives. Female teachers must continue to serve as mothers beyond their immediate homes, given their significant presence at this level. Figure 1 also provides a clearer picture of their presence in pre-primary education, indicating the continuation of their maternal role beyond the home.

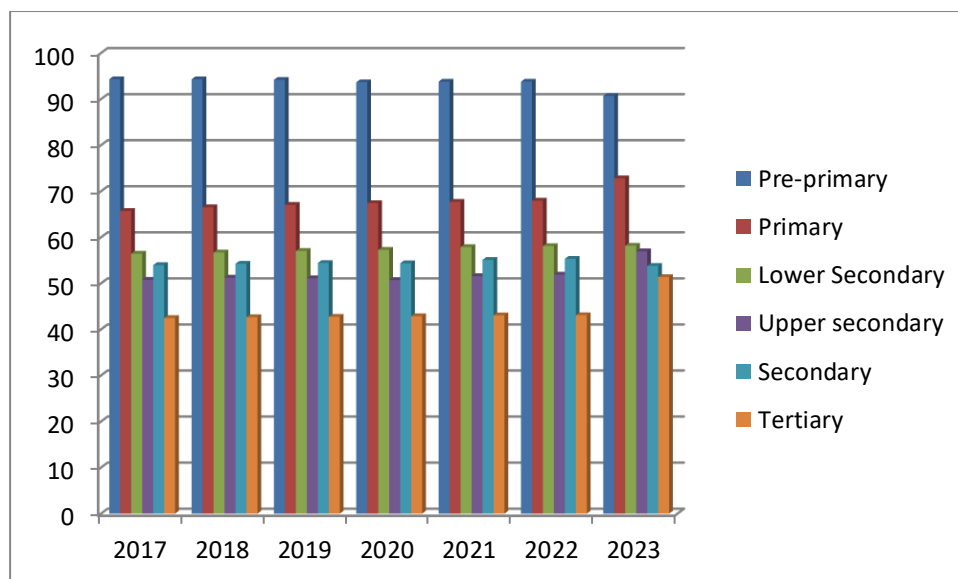


Figure 2: Graphical Representation of the Percentage of Female Teachers by Teaching Level of Education in the World

Source: Adapted from the data assessed by UNESCO

It is also interesting, as noted in the comprehensive report, that between 2017 and 2023, 22 countries had only female teachers at the pre-primary school level, an indication of the acceptance of the continuation of female teachers' motherhood role.

As stated earlier, this research examines the alignment between the percentages of female teachers worldwide and those in Oyo State. The Statistics Unit of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology was contacted to collect data. However, the researcher could obtain statistics for only three (3) academic sessions at the pre-primary/primary levels and two (2) at the Junior Secondary level. Although the statistics from Oyo State are not as comprehensive as UNESCO's, they align with UNESCO's findings, as presented in table 3 below.

Table 2: Percentage of Female Teachers in Pre-Primary/Primary and Junior Secondary Levels

Year	Level	Total No. of Teachers	No. of Male Teachers	%	No. of Female Teachers	%
2021/2022	Pre-Primary/Primary	15,252	4,423	29	10,829	71
2022/2023	Pre-Primary/Primary	12,227	3,613	30	8,614	70
2021/2022	Junior Secondary	8,653	3,461	40	5,192	60
2023/2024	Pre-Primary/Primary	16,594	4,243	26	12,351	74

2022/2023	Junior Secondary	9,541	3,737	39	5,804	61
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Source: The Statistics Unit of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology

Table 2 shows that the number of female teachers was higher than that of male teachers at pre-primary/primary and junior secondary schools. There was no year in the available data when female teachers were less than 60 per cent. If other years were collated, the trend would be the same more female teachers. This may also affirm the female teachers' role as mothers beyond their homes.

As stated earlier, some educators believe that female teachers are less qualified than their male counterparts, which is why there are more female teachers than male teachers in teaching, especially at the basic levels. However, in setting the records straight for those who have such thoughts, Nestour and Moscoviz (2020), in their study on the percentage of qualified male and female teachers in the primary and secondary level in East and Asia Pacific, Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa found that "female teachers are just as qualified as male teachers" (para. 12). Their findings are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Percentage of Qualified Male and Female Teachers at the Primary and Secondary Levels in Four Regions

REGIONS	LEVEL OF EDUCATION			
	Primary		Secondary	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
East and Asia Pacific	98.9	99.3	96.1	97.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	68.5	73.5	51.3	54.5
South Asia	72.6	71	75	78.6
Middle East and North Africa	91.5	93.3	90.4	92.4

Source: Adapted from Nestour & Moscoviz (2020)

From this table, female teachers competed keenly with their male counterparts except in South Asia, where their level of education is 71%, compared to 72.6% for male teachers at the primary school level. UNESCO's data from 2017 to 2023 shows the enormous investment in women's education that qualified them to be teachers. This data underscores the importance of investing in female education, as it is crucial for our society's development and future generations' education.

Research has proved that AI cannot play the role of a mother. According to Okebukola (2025), "Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most transformative technologies of the 21st century, profoundly impacting various sectors" (p. 4), and it has become a topic of discussion at academic conferences and workshops. AI is also making professionals and artisans apprehensive about losing their jobs, which is understandable given the extent to which it is deployed in establishments worldwide. However, Gertenbach (2025) identified over 120 jobs that AI won't replace, and, interestingly, teaching and motherhood were among the list. To confirm Gertenbach's submission, AI was asked, "Can AI express emotion like a female teacher?" The answer is obvious and supports this research.

I can mimic a female teacher's tone, warmth, and expressiveness, but I don't truly feel emotions like a human does. A great teacher brings patience, encouragement, and empathy into the classroom, making students feel heard and supported. While I can generate responses that reflect those qualities offering kindness, motivation, or constructive feedback I don't experience them in the way a real teacher would. But if you're looking for guidance, mentorship, or a supportive voice, I'll do my best to bring that energy to our conversation! While AI has the potential to automate administrative tasks and provide personalised learning experiences, it will never fully replace the need for human teachers. (Sider Fusion - GPT-4o)

The above AI response prompted a comparison between what AI can do and what female teachers can do, highlighting the vivid limitations of AI in playing the role of a female teacher as an embodiment of motherhood beyond their homes, as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: What AI can do and what Female Teachers can do

AI can	Female Teachers can
Generate quizzes	Lead group discussion and debate
Grade multiple-choice tests	Support students' emotional well-being
Make suggestions	Offer emotional support and mentorship.
Translate text	Read visual and physical cues that indicate distress or confusion.
Summarise facts	Teach courage, empathy, and creativity.
Make innovations available.	Innovate
Not feel empathy or sympathy for a human being	Empathise and sympathise
Operate pre-determined decisions	Make decisions
Not saving children's lives in terms of split-second decisions	Save the lives of children in a split-second decision
They appear to create unique, creative, or artistic content, but are just recombining elements that they have been fed through training data.	They have what scientists call neuroplasticity—the brain's ability to form new connections between neurons—and can adjust how different brain regions function and communicate with one another.
Not perceive, feel urgency when no warning has been issued	Have an instinct to determine urgency.

Sources: Gertenbach, 2025; Lucide, 2025. Zubairi (2025)

Zubairi (2025), in a Mother's Day 2025 Message, wrote: Celebrate the irreplaceable human connection and care that no AI can ever replicate. The Rise of AI... But What About Mom? It's 2025, and artificial intelligence has become a part of our everyday lives. ChatGPT helps

draft emails, Siri manages our calendars, and smart fridges remind us when the milk is low. From voice assistants to virtual therapists, technology seems to have an answer for everything. But there's one role it will never truly fill: the role of a mother (para. 3).

A random picture, forwarded on WhatsApp, clearly illustrates the role of a female teacher as a mother beyond her immediate family, as shown in Figure 2 below.

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A learner's uniform was torn at school, so her teacher decided to assist her in stitching it and provided her with a cloth to cover herself. She refused to let the youngster go home in that manner. "I'm not only a teacher but also a mother", said the teacher.



Figure 2: A Female Teacher Playing Her Motherhood Role
Source: WhatsApp Forwarded Message

From all indications, therefore, teaching and motherhood are beyond the reach of AI. It cannot convey the human emotions involved in caring for children as female teachers do in schools, nor does it have the warmth of a mother; therefore, it cannot serve as a female teacher, an embodiment of motherhood.

Conclusion

Teaching is an important profession that cannot be ignored, and teachers are moulders and role models for the younger generation. Female teachers worldwide, including in Oyo State, outnumber male teachers, especially in pre-primary, primary, and lower secondary classes. According to this research, one crucial reason is that female teachers serve as mothers beyond their homes and play a vital role in moulding children's lives. AI cannot replicate the roles of

these female teachers, underscoring that they are also crucial in building the nation by shaping young minds.

Recommendations

AI presents opportunities to enhance teacher training and professional development, and it is good, but it is recommended that:

1. Its acceptance should not be taken hook, line, and sinker; it is technology and could be deployed in teaching.
2. It will be foolhardy for any society that wishes to maintain its culture to leave the upbringing of its younger generation in the hands of AI. This could be dangerous for human society, especially for young children. It will be foolhardy for any society that wishes to maintain its culture to leave the upbringing of its younger generation in the hands of AI, which lacks the emotions that connect people across all societies, young and old.
3. Female teachers should be trained in the use of AI to ease their jobs in the class, especially in the area of games and simulations.
4. More female teachers are also needed at the tertiary level of education. The government should review employment procedures to prevent stereotyping and motivate them further by offering additional incentives to attract them to higher-education teaching, as they continue to play their roles as mothers.

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