



# GENDER DISPARITIES AND SEGREGATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ROMANIA: A SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS OF ENROLLMENT PATTERNS

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**Abstract:** *Gender disparities and segregation in the context of higher education manifest in unequal patterns of enrollment across different academic fields, being women more concentrated in areas such as education, health and social sciences and, on the other hand, the men in engineering, technology as well as other STEM-related disciplines. The main objective of this study is to examine patterns of gender disparity and segregation across disciplines while providing an updated empirical overview of the Romanian context by analyzing statistical reports and presenting gender-disaggregated enrollment data across different fields of study in higher education from the academic years 2018–2019 to 2022–2023. The results reveal a consistent, stable and persistent pattern of gender segregation across the different fields of study in Romanian higher education and highlight the continued gendered field selection in this context, which demonstrates a persistent horizontal segregation within the system.*

**JEL classification:** I20, I21, I23, I24

**Key words:** gender disparities, gender segregation, higher education enrollment, field selection, Romania

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Different national contexts have studied a phenomenon related to gender disparities in higher education. The idea remains as a persistent issue across many countries, which manifests therefore in unequal patterns of enrollment across different academic fields. A large body of international research has documented throughout the years the existence of gender segregation



in the context of higher education, particularly the overwhelming concentration of women in areas such as education, health and social sciences and, on the other hand, the extremely overpopulation of men in engineering, technology as well as other STEM-related disciplines. These patterns have been interpreted mostly as the result of complex interactions between socialization processes, gender stereotypes and broader structural inequalities that influence educational and career trajectories.

In the literature, gendered patterns of selection have been linked to the reproduction of occupational segregation in the labor market, which reinforces long-term inequalities in access to opportunities as well as resources. Despite several studies serving as international evidence, in the case of Romania, existing research on gender disparities in higher education remains limited. In special, studies based on official statistical data that examine enrollment patterns across different fields of study. Thus, there is a need for updated empirical analyses which provide a clearer picture of how gender is distributed across various academic disciplines within Romanian higher education.

In order to address this gap, the present study employs a secondary data analysis of publicly available statistical reports from the Romanian National Institute of Statistics (INS), focusing on gender-disaggregated enrollment data across different fields of study in higher education from the academic years 2018–2019 to 2022–2023. The main objective is to examine patterns of gender disparity and segregation across disciplines while providing an updated empirical overview of the Romanian context.

The present research contributes therefore to the existing literature on gender inequality in higher education by offering context-specific evidence from Romania and by highlighting the persistence of gendered patterns in higher education enrollment over time.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section analyzes theoretical references addressing gender disparity (Beroíza-Valenzuela et al., 2024; Chang et al., 2022; Eshetu et al., 2024), gender stereotypes in career choice (Bruzese et al., 2025; Nisar et al., 2024; Storvik & Abrahamsen, 2022) and gender segregation (Crawford & Silver, 2024; Thompson et al., 2024; Zheng & Weeden, 2023). This will assist in identifying the main trends of these topics within the education sector. Particularly in the higher education sector and in relation to preferences, sustainability and economic development.



### **1.1 Gender disparity in higher education**

The processes that shape the transformation and development of higher education are influenced by economic factors and indicators inherent to the education system itself. These factors are affecting patterns of gender diversity as a trend. (Beroiza-Valenzuela et al., 2024; Chang et al., 2022; Kumar et al., 2025).

The study by Wolniak et al. (2023) noted that among the economic and social factors contributing to gender disparities in numerous sectors and positions is the lack of leadership from university students within the higher education sector. Therefore, gender disparity needs to be addressed more frequently in social studies. This is particularly pertinent in higher education, where students develop the skills, abilities and values that will influence their professional and personal futures (Eshetu et al., 2024; Forster et al., 2022; Quarshie et al., 2023). In the study conducted by Chang et al. (2022), the gender gap in access to higher education was assessed in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the United Kingdom (UK), since this indicator is a priority for the United Nations (UN). In particular, for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in which the Objective 5 is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The study concluded that a gender gap in access to higher education exists in Japan, South Korea and the UK. However, the analysis of indicators revealed a narrowing of this gap within the higher education sector in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. At the same time, it was recommended that this analysis be expanded to include other sectors.

On the other hand, it has been found that there is low female representation in university degree programs such as engineering and computer science and even at universities and research institutes specializing in specific fields (Martins et al., 2025; Morán-Soto & González-Peña, 2022; Quarshie et al., 2023).

Thus, issues related to gender, access and inclusion in higher education are essential to reducing inequalities across regions, countries, sectors and institutions (DE Rezende et al., 2025; Eshetu et al., 2024; Masha & Mogoboya, 2024; Morán-Soto & González-Peña, 2022; Watson et al., 2022; Wolniak et al., 2023). The universities should continue to work towards closing the gender gap (Chang et al., 2022), through ongoing efforts aimed at eliminating the negative gender stereotypes that may arise when choosing a college career.



The following subsection will examine the theoretical references that are currently influencing students' decisions, as well as the stereotypes that arise when selecting a university career.

## **1.2 Gender stereotypes in career selection**

Concerning gender stereotypes in career selection, widespread inequality has been observed throughout history in the higher education sector and the decision-making and selection process of the university career (Alturaiki et al., 2025; Bruzzese et al., 2025; Diniz et al., 2025; Earle et al., 2024).

For instance, although women make up the majority of students in many higher education systems, differences and inequalities persist in the types of degree programmes that they choose to pursue. (Bruzzese et al., 2025; Nisar et al., 2024; Storvik & Abrahamsen, 2022).

The study conducted by Bruzzese et al. (2025) found there are clear stereotypes regarding the types of careers students choose and the retention rates in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) at the University of the Republic of Uruguay. The results confirmed that women are less likely to choose a STEM major and even less likely to remain in those fields. Therefore, future research should focus on access and retention, as well as identify the universities that hinder women's access to these types of programs. Thereby, marketing strategies and institutional actions could be proposed to assist in addressing this issue for the sustainability, equality and economic development of regions. (Kolhede, 2001; Nisar et al., 2024; Sim et al., 2021).

It is important to note that gender-based trends in the choice of university careers also place male students at a significant disadvantage in various fields, including education, arts and humanities, social sciences, journalism and information studies, health and social work, among others (Alturaiki et al., 2025; Storvik & Abrahamsen, 2022).

A variety of factors generally influence gender stereotypes in career choice (Stupuriene et al., 2022). These are the cases of motivation (Stupuriene et al., 2022), the equal expectations of entering a management position (Storvik & Abrahamsen, 2022), career satisfaction (Nisar et al., 2024), family (Han, 2014; Le et al., 2022; Little & Price, 2013), as well as Push and Pull factors related to location and program duration (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2016; Ahmad & Hussain, 2017; Ho, & Law, 2022).



For instance, the research by Stupuriene et al. (2022) demonstrated that women have significantly less motivation and interest in engineering and computer science careers, concluding that this scientific field is linked to gender stereotypes and technological skills. This highlights the need for initiatives and actions to challenge this perception when students are choosing and pursuing a university career.

Another interesting finding was that equal expectations of entering a management position is an important factor in choosing a career (Storvik & Abrahamsen, 2022). This study examined future employment opportunities after college graduation, as reported by 969 students in Norway. The study concluded that both men and women have the same expectations regarding access to management positions, demonstrating that it is possible to eliminate various negative stereotypes surrounding the choice of a university career. As a relevant point, it was noted that women continue to pursue graduate studies after graduation to advance their scientific and professional development.

Thus, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) should design strategies and actions that address motivation, equal expectations regarding entry into management positions, career satisfaction and family decisions. As well as Push and Pull factors related to location and programme duration, from the students' perspective (Le et al., 2022; Ho & Law, 2022). This will assist in achieving greater equity in programme selection for student gender and would mitigate gender segregation in these types of institutions.

The following subsection will discuss the most relevant theoretical references on gender segregation, which is a topic closely related to the previous subsections.

### **1.3 Gender segregation in higher education**

Gender segregation among both sexes reflects a serious inequality in society, socioeconomic development and labor markets (Arrazola et al., 2026; Heidarifar, 2023; Khan et al., 2023; Zheng & Weeden, 2023). This is particularly perceptible in higher education, a sector where various forms of gender segregation have been identified, which undermine the quality of university programs, the training of professionals and socioeconomic development (Akbar et al., 2023; Bolondi et al., 2026; Giebel et al., 2022; Li et al., 2025; Rogne et al., 2026; Verdugo-Castro et al., 2022; Zheng & Weeden, 2023).



According to Zheng & Weeden (2023), in the higher education sector, the primary objective is to train future professionals who will contribute to the sustainability and economic development of nations. Therefore, it is necessary to eliminate segregation among fields of study across different specializations to achieve greater gender equality. This study highlights aspects such as occupational segregation, occupational segregation by sectors and segregation within each sector. It was concluded that fields linked to educational segregation are directly related to the labor market, which leads to negative and irreversible consequences if not systematically addressed. The STEM field is significantly affected by this educational and social phenomenon. Student segregation is directly influenced by various social and educational factors. For instance, course types (Lessky et al., 2022; Thompson et al., 2024), the policies in the higher education sector (Heidarifar, 2023), as well as educational and occupational segregation (García-Mainar & Montuenga-Gómez, 2026).

The study by Thompson et al. (2024) verified that it is an ongoing problem in higher education. It affects HEIs differently, depending on the level of priority they assign to this issue. This study aimed to analyze how college students select their courses and to examine in depth the aspects of decision-making and gender. It demonstrates that gender directly influences the segregation of courses, programs and careers.

In the same vein, Lessky et al. (2022) conducted a study of the Austrian higher education system, focusing primarily on social selectivity and gender segregation. The study emphasizes that the issue of segregation should be examined across the entire spectrum, from the choice of degree programs to the specific courses and programs selected. It was found that, in most fields of study, similar patterns of gender segregation existed.

Another factor to consider when analyzing this phenomenon is gender-segregated education policies. The study by Heidarifar (2023) demonstrated how female students are excluded from the Iranian higher education system. This is different from the key policies established at the global level by human rights and institutional equality organizations. Similarly, it was recommended that more studies be conducted in countries facing the same situation, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya and Sudan.

According to García-Mainar & Montuenga-Gómez (2026) the growing link between higher education and the labor market is contributing to segregation, whether based on gender or profession. As a result, HEIs have been urged to develop marketing strategies and initiatives to



reverse this trend. This study used a sample of individuals with university degrees in Spain, examining the variables of gender, field of study and educational imbalance, which impacts the labor market. The findings demonstrated that the concentration of one gender in a single field of study leads to imbalances and overqualification.

In summary, the main factors that influence and affect the gender segregation in higher education are related to the course types (Thompson et al., 2024), the policies in the higher education sector (Heidarifar, 2023), as well as educational and occupational segregation (García-Mainar & Montuenga-Gómez, 2026).

The literature on gender disparity in higher education and gender segregation across fields of study has been widely developed at the international level. Nevertheless, these issues remain relatively underexplored within the Romanian context and particularly in relation to empirical analyses based on official statistical data. In this sense, there is a need for updated evidence on how gendered patterns of enrollment are distributed across fields of study within the Romanian higher education. To address this gap, the present research employs a secondary data analysis of publicly available statistical reports from the Romanian National Institute of Statistics (INS), focusing on gender-disaggregated enrollment data.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The present study employs a secondary data analysis approach based on statistical reports published by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics (Institutul Național de Statistică, INS). These reports were accessed through the official INS website and provide information on the enrollment of male and female students across different fields of study within the Romanian educational system. The data are publicly available and organized according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). For this study, the authors selected and analyzed data covering the academic years from 2018–2019 to 2022–2023.

### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The following results point to persistent gender disparities in higher education enrollment across fields of study in Romania in all the academic years covered for this study. Particularly evident is the consistent pattern of gender segregation within fields such as Education, Social Sciences, Humanities, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Engineering and



Health. Here, women and men are unevenly distributed across the academic disciplines classified under ISCED categories.

Table 1: Number of Undergraduate Students Enrolled in Higher Education in Romania. Course 2018-2019. Source: Personal elaboration based on information from INS (2020)

Fields of study	Total	%	Women	%	Men	%
	<b>402696</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>217066</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>185630</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Education</b>	12082		11066	92	1016	8
<b>Arts and humanities</b>	34107		21738	64	12369	36
<b>Social sciences, journalism and information</b>	32942		23204	70	9738	30
<b>Business, administration and law</b>	96422		58571	61	37851	39
<b>Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics</b>	15696		9668	62	6028	38
<b>Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)</b>	29459		8896	30	20563	70
<b>Engineering, manufacturing and construction</b>	81479		25524	31	55955	69
<b>Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary sciences</b>	19000		7855	41	11145	59
<b>Health and social work</b>	65799		45571	69	20228	31
<b>Services</b>	15710		4973	32	10737	68

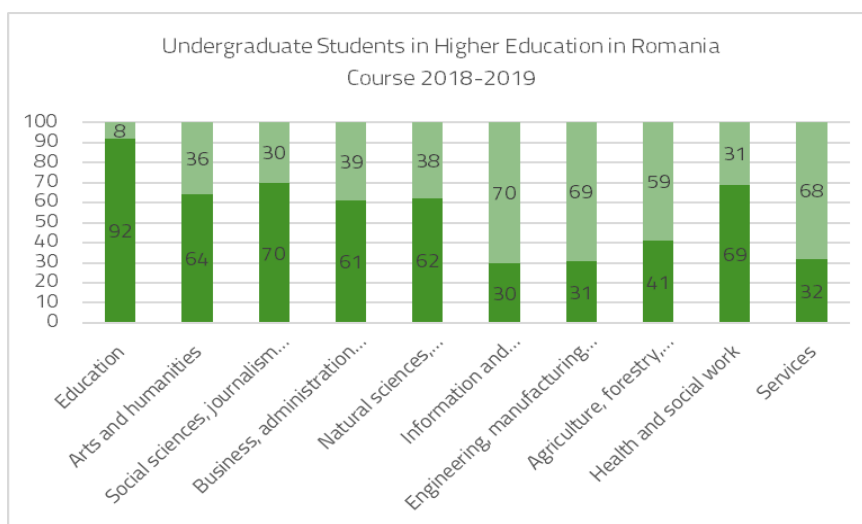


Fig 1: Undergraduate Students Enrolled in Higher Education in Romania (%). Course 2018-2019. Source: Personal elaboration based on information from INS (2020)

The data presented above reveal a clear gender disparity in undergraduate higher education enrollment across different fields of study. As it can be noticed, women are overrepresented in



several disciplines including: Education, where they account for 92% of enrollments compared to 8% of men, as well as Arts and Humanities (64% women and 36% men), Social Sciences, Journalism and Information (70% women and 30% men), Business, Administration and Law (61% women and 39% men), Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics (62% women and 38% men) and Health and Social Work (69% women and 31% men). In contrast, male students predominate in Information and Communication Technologies (70% men and 30% women), Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction (69% men and 31% women), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Veterinary (59% men and 41% women) and Services (68% men and 32% women). The findings indicate that there is a strong gendered pattern in field selection, with women concentrated in education, health and social-related disciplines, while men are more represented in technical and applied fields such as engineering and ICT, which highlights a persistent gender segregation in higher education enrollment.

Table 2: Number of Undergraduate Students Enrolled in Higher Education in Romania. Course 2019-2020. Source: Personal elaboration based on information from INS (2021)

<b>Fields of study</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>%</b>
	<b>407373</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>219638</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>187735</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Education</b>	12488		11442	92	1046	8
<b>Arts and humanities</b>	33568		21279	63	12289	37
<b>Social sciences, journalism and information</b>	34521		24147	70	10374	30
<b>Business, administration and law</b>	98989		59498	60	39491	40
<b>Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics</b>	15721		9588	61	6133	39
<b>Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)</b>	30432		9015	30	21417	70
<b>Engineering, manufacturing and construction</b>	80188		25306	32	54882	68
<b>Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary sciences</b>	18715		7959	43	10756	57
<b>Health and social work</b>	67549		46724	69	20825	31
<b>Services</b>	15202		4680	31	10522	69

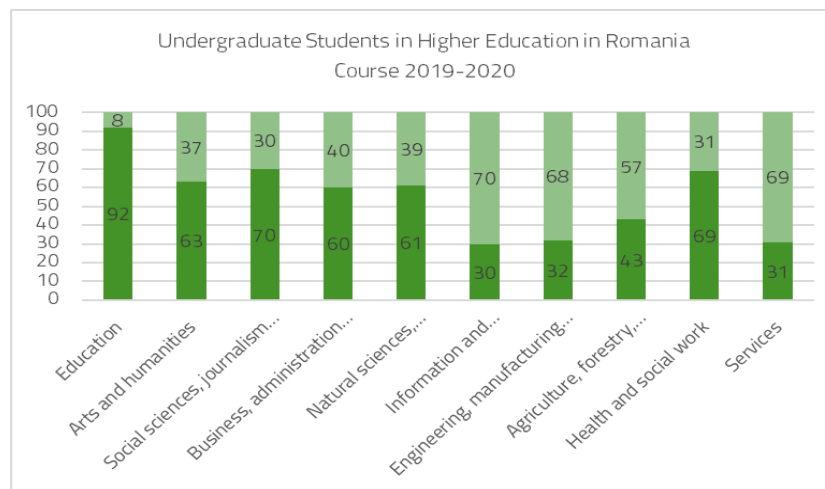


Fig 2: Undergraduate Students Enrolled in Higher Education in Romania (%). Course 2019-2020. Source: Personal elaboration based on information from INS (2021)

The results, once again, reveal there is a huge disparity in undergraduate higher education enrollment across the various fields of study. Women are present mostly in several disciplines including Education, where they represent 92% of enrollments compared to 8% of men, as well as Arts and Humanities (63% women and 37% men), Social Sciences, Journalism and Information (70% women and 30% men), Business, Administration and Law (60% women and 40% men), Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics (61% women and 39% men) and Health and Social Work (69% women and 31% men). In contrast, male students predominate in Information and Communication Technologies (70% men and 30% women), Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction (68% men and 32% women), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Veterinary (57% men and 43% women) and Services (69% men and 31% women). Generally, the findings for this academic year indicate a pattern of gendered enrollment across disciplines, with women concentrated in fields such as education, health, and social sciences, while men are more represented in technical and applied fields such as engineering and ICT. These patterns reinforce the persistence of gender segregation in higher education and suggest that career selection remains strongly gendered, which contributes to ongoing educational disparities.



Table 3: Number of Undergraduate Students Enrolled in Higher Education in Romania. Course 2020-2021. Source: Personal elaboration based on information from INS (2022)

Fields of study	Total	%	Women	%	Men	%
	<b>418346</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>226799</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>191547</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Education</b>	13148		12026	91	1122	9
<b>Arts and humanities</b>	34269		21655	63	12614	37
<b>Social sciences, journalism and information</b>	34309		24280	71	10029	29
<b>Business, administration and law</b>	103825		62111	60	41714	40
<b>Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics</b>	16072		9729	61	6343	39
<b>Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)</b>	30013		9193	31	20820	69
<b>Engineering, manufacturing and construction</b>	81941		26000	32	55941	68
<b>Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary sciences</b>	19587		8637	44	10950	56
<b>Health and social work</b>	69403		48209	69	21194	31
<b>Services</b>	15779		4959	31	10820	69

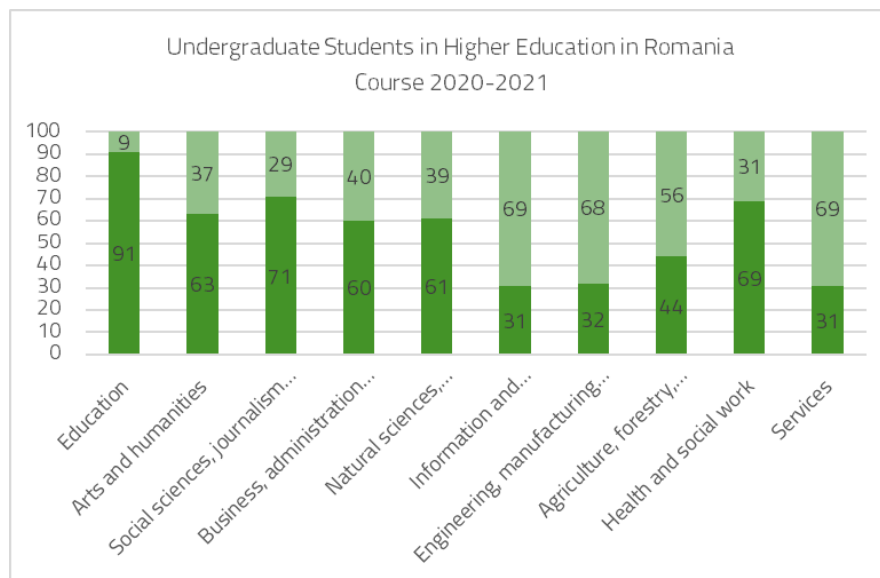


Fig 3: Undergraduate Students Enrolled in Higher Education in Romania (%). Course 2020-2021. Source: Personal elaboration based on information from INS (2022)

Here, the results show that, in the academic year 2020–2021, there is again gender disparity in undergraduate higher education enrollment across the various fields of study. Women continue to be more present fields such as Education, where they account for 91% of enrollments



compared to 9% of men, as well as Arts and Humanities (63% women and 37% men), Social Sciences, Journalism and Information (71% women and 29% men), Business, Administration and Law (60% women and 40% men), Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics (61% women and 39% men) and Health and Social Work (69% women and 31% men). At the other extreme of the line, male students predominate in Information and Communication Technologies (69% men and 31% women), Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction (68% men and 32% women), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Veterinary (56% men and 44% women) and Services (69% men and 31% women). The findings indicate a stable pattern of gendered enrollment across all the disciplines, with women concentrated in education, health and social sciences, while men are more represented in technical and applied fields such as engineering and ICT. These patterns reinforce and add more evidence to the continued educational disparities.

Table 4: Number of Undergraduate Students Enrolled in Higher Education in Romania. Course 2021-2022. Source: Personal elaboration based on information from INS (2023)

<b>Fields of study</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>%</b>
	<b>415839</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>227897</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>187942</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Education</b>	13410		12361	92	1049	8
<b>Arts and humanities</b>	34102		21451	63	12651	37
<b>Social sciences, journalism and information</b>	34318		24309	71	10009	29
<b>Business, administration and law</b>	104067		62741	60	41326	40
<b>Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics</b>	16018		9722	61	6296	39
<b>Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)</b>	30910		9401	30	21509	70
<b>Engineering, manufacturing and construction</b>	77102		24658	32	52444	68
<b>Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary sciences</b>	19527		8934	46	10593	54
<b>Health and social work</b>	70462		49113	70	21349	30
<b>Services</b>	15923		5207	33	10716	67

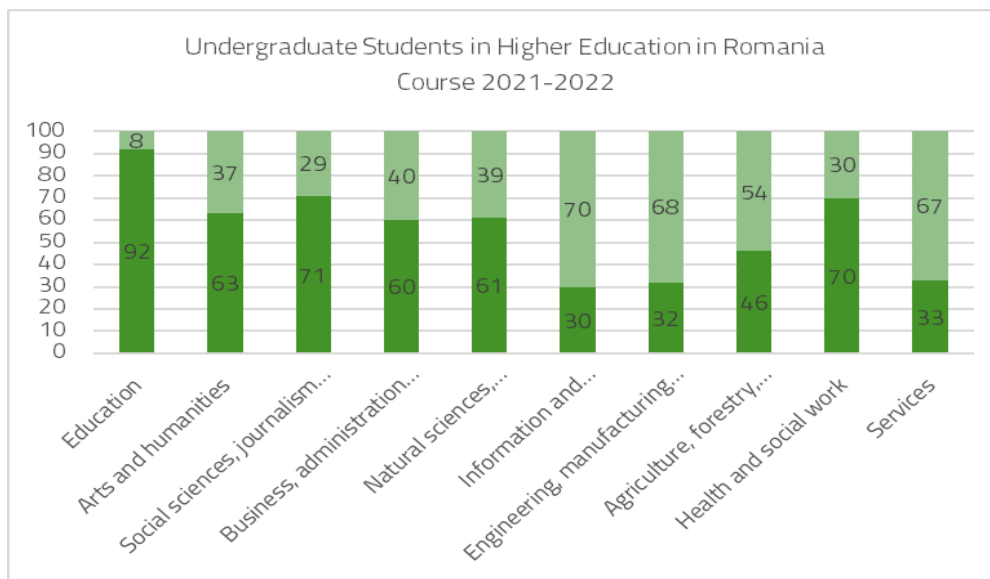


Fig 4: Undergraduate Students Enrolled in Higher Education in Romania (%). Course 2021-2022. Source: Personal elaboration based on information from INS (2023)

The graphics above display that in the academic year 2021–2022, there are once again disparities in undergraduate higher education enrollment across the fields of study. Women remain having the most representation in several disciplines such as Education, where they represent 92% of enrollments compared to 8% of men, as well as Arts and Humanities (63% women and 37% men), Social Sciences, Journalism and Information (71% women and 29% men), Business, Administration and Law (60% women and 40% men), Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics (61% women and 39% men) and Health and Social Work (70% women and 30% men). On the other hand, male students predominate in Information and Communication Technologies (70% men and 30% women), Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction (68% men and 32% women), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Veterinary (54% men and 46% women) and Services (67% men and 33% women). Once more, the findings point to a stable pattern of gendered enrollment across the different disciplines, with women concentrated in fields like education, health and social sciences; men, on the other hand, are more represented in technical and applied fields such as engineering and ICT. These results continue to reinforce not only gender segregation in higher education but also that career selection remains strongly gendered.



Table 5: Undergraduate students enrolled in higher education in Romania. Course 2022-2023. Source: Personal elaboration based on information from INS (2024)

Fields of study	Total	%	Women	%	Men	%
	<b>410181</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>224647</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>185534</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Education</b>	13789		12373	90	1416	10
<b>Arts and humanities</b>	32997		20685	63	12312	37
<b>Social sciences, journalism and information</b>	34203		24133	71	10070	29
<b>Business, administration and law</b>	100653		60103	60	40550	40
<b>Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics</b>	15309		9330	61	5979	39
<b>Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)</b>	31360		9435	30	21925	70
<b>Engineering, manufacturing and construction</b>	75331		24484	33	50847	67
<b>Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary sciences</b>	19451		9170	47	10281	53
<b>Health and social work</b>	72167		50077	69	22090	31
<b>Services</b>	14921		4857	33	10064	67

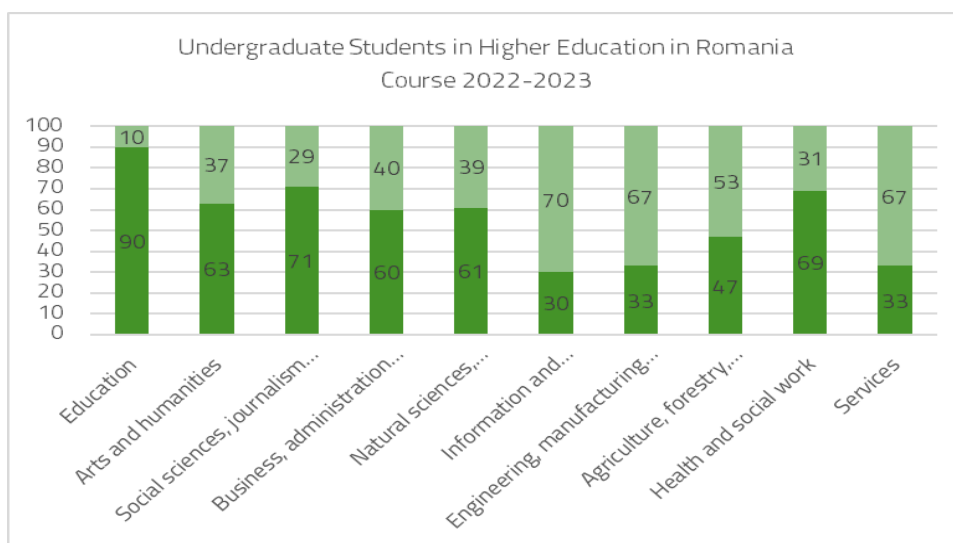


Fig 5: Undergraduate Students Enrolled in Higher Education in Romania (%). Course 2022-2023. Source: Personal elaboration based on information from INS (2024)

The last statistical data analyzed which belongs to the academic year 2022–2023, presents again an enrollment in undergraduate higher education which is deeply gendered. Women continue to stay strongly represented in several disciplines like Education, with 90% of enrollments compared to 10% of men, as well as Arts and Humanities (63% women and 37% men), Social



Sciences, Journalism and Information (71% women and 29% men), Business, Administration and Law (60% women and 40% men), Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics (61% women and 39% men) and Health and Social Work (69% women and 31% men). Male students contrast this scenario, as they continue to be more predominant in Information and Communication Technologies (70% men and 30% women), Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction (67% men and 33% women), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Veterinary (53% men and 47% women) and Services (67% men and 33% women).

The findings throughout all the five academic years presented show a persistent pattern of gendered enrollment across these disciplines, being women concentrated in education, health and social sciences, whereas men are more represented in technical and applied fields such as engineering and ICT.

While a slight increase in female participation can be observed in traditionally male-dominated fields over the different academic years analyzed, these variations are minimal (1–2%) and not consistent across academic years. In addition, such changes fluctuate over time and do not indicate a transition towards greater gender balance. In general, these results suggest that gendered patterns of field selection remain structurally stable, reinforcing the persistence of gender segregation in higher education and contributing to ongoing educational disparities, rather than an improvement in balance between genders.

In the period considered, from 2018-2019 to 2022-2023 the situation reveals some major differences in terms of segregation (Table 6).

Table 6: Undergraduate students enrolled in higher education in Romania from 2018-2019 to 2022-2023 (%). Source: Personal elaboration based on information from INS (2024)

Field of study	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
<b>WOMEN</b>					
Education	92	92	91	92	90
Arts and humanities	64	63	63	63	63
Social sciences, journalism and information	70	70	71	71	71
Business, administration and law	61	60	60	60	60
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	62	61	61	61	61
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	30	30	31	30	30
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	31	32	32	32	33
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary sciences	41	43	44	46	47
Health and social work	69	69	69	70	69



Services	32	31	31	33	33
<b>MEN</b>					
Education	8	8	9	8	10
Arts and humanities	36	37	37	37	37
Social sciences, journalism and information	30	30	29	29	29
Business, administration and law	39	40	40	40	40
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	38	39	39	39	39
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	70	70	69	70	70
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	69	68	68	68	67
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary sciences	59	57	56	54	53
Health and social work	31	31	31	30	31
Services	68	69	69	67	67

As seen, the situation reveals some significant differentiations in the considered fields. The most significant representativeness of women is in the field of Education (more than 90% in the considered period), while the most significant field for men is Information and Communication technologies (69-70%). There are no significant evolution in the 5 academic years in the considered fields, but for women from Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary sciences which became more representative for women (from 41% to 47%).

## CONCLUSIONS

The present study examined gender-disaggregated enrollment patterns within the Romanian higher education system across the period 2018–2019 to 2022–2023, based on secondary data retrieved from official statistical reports published by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics (INS). The findings reveal a consistent, stable and persistent pattern of gender segregation across the different fields of study. Women appear to be predominantly represented in education, health, social sciences and related disciplines, while on the other hand men are mostly concentrated in technical as well as applied fields such as engineering and information and communication technologies (ICT). These findings confirm studies which revealed that gender differences in the likelihood of entering a male-dominated/women-dominated occupation from the same field (Zheng, 2023; Lessky, 2022).

Across the period of time that has been analyzed, these patterns remain largely unchanged, with only minimal fluctuations that do not necessarily indicate a structural shift towards greater gender balance. Even though slight increases in female participation within traditionally male-



dominated fields can be observed in some cases, the variations are small and inconsistent over time, which suggests that they do not reflect a sustained transformation in enrollment.

Thus, the results highlight there is a continued gendered nature in terms of field selection in Romanian higher education, which demonstrates a persistent horizontal segregation within the system. These findings contribute to the understanding of how gender disparities continue to be embedded in educational trajectories; at the same time, reinforce the need for further research as well as policy attention to address structural inequalities that might be hindering the access to different academic domains.

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