
Low Performance of Girls in Zimbabwean Schools: Possible Solutions

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we report findings from a study that sought to explore girl students' academic performance in the Zimbabwean schools. The study adopted a qualitative approach in which interviews with female learners and female teachers were conducted. The study found that female students' treatment in schools, at home and in society led to their under-performance in school. The study concluded that participants held certain views on factors which negatively affected performance of girls in school. These factors also affect their career aspirations later on in life. Family responsibilities and the desire to be house wives by girl students at the expense of education were found to be some of the key causes of low performances among girls in schools. Also, lack of support from family members, colleagues and the government was perceived to be another cause. The Ministry of Education was not closely monitoring the girl child's education at all levels. Policies designed to spearhead the education system and promotion of women such as Affirmative Action Policy and Gender Policy were partially implemented. Socialization of girls to believe in the sole importance of becoming a mother, wife and caregiver were a cause of low performance among girls. The study recommends that gender sensitivity should be taken seriously in schools, homes and in society at large to ensure that girls have positive self-concepts which, invariably, lead to better performance and equal opportunities in society. There is need to re-socialise families, schools and communities into a new order where gender equality is the norm. There should be more gender sensitive programs and activities in schools that assist both boys and girls to develop new orientations about the complementary roles and capabilities of both sexes. The Ministry of Education should organise workshops and offer professional development opportunities along the female's career path. This can be done through preparatory administrative training, in service training which may increase girls' chances of achieving their desired goals. The government should intensify elevation of women into leadership positions in the education system, industry, politics and government to inspire the girls to work hard in school.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Great strides have been made in education in recent years, marked by a significant increase in the number of children in schools. Nevertheless, some 77 million children have access to primary education, and many who start attending are forced to leave because of poverty or family and social pressures. Despite enormous literacy efforts, 781 million adults remain illiterate, two thirds of them women, according to the United Nations Report (2010).

Research has shown the close relationship between access to education and improved social indicators. Schooling has a special multiplier effect for women. A woman who is educated will typically be healthier, have fewer children and have more opportunities to increase household income. Her children in turn, will experience lower mortality rates, better nutrition and better overall health. For this reason, girls and women are the focus of the education programmes of many United Nations agencies hence more funding towards education in developing countries for example the Better Schools Programme implemented by all schools in Zimbabwe under the Child Friendly Schools with funding from United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). With the emphasis on the girl child, the world is serious in making sure that gender imbalances are given priority (Frank, 1990).

The Government of Zimbabwe is a signatory to several international gender declarations and conventions. Among them are United Nations Conventions on Elimination of all Forms of

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Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979), Beijing Platform for Action (1999) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs 2000). Specifically, the MDG Number Three which focuses on elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education at all levels of education by 2015. It also advocates for the promotion of gender and empowerment of women. Many parts of the United Nations system are involved in the funding and development of a variety of education and training programs. The programs range from traditional basic schooling to technical training for human resources development in areas such as public administration, agriculture and health services, public awareness campaigns to educate people about HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, human rights, family planning, and many other issues. The lead agency in the area of education is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Together with other partners, UNESCO works to ensure that all children are enrolled in schools that are child –friendly and have trained teachers providing quality education. Zimbabwe is committed to the achievement of quality education for all, with particular emphasis on girls and such groups as working children and the vulnerable. Donor countries and institutions pledged that no nation committed to basic education would be thwarted by lack of resources. UNESCO’s education sector focuses on; providing educational access to all at all levels, the success of special–needs and marginalized populations, teacher training, developing competencies for work forces, success through education, ensuring opportunities for non-formal and lifelong learning and using technology to enhance teaching and learning and expand educational opportunities (United Nations Report 2010).

To this end, the Government of Zimbabwe has been committed to the removal of all forms of discrimination in all places. For example, in 1992 the Government introduced affirmative action policy that aimed to correct the imbalances in education. This led to the creation of the Public Service Commission (PSC) which is the employer of civil servants in Zimbabwe, to come up with specific policies meant to expedite the promotion of women into positions of influence and responsibility.

The Nziramasanga Commission of inquiry (1999) noted, among other findings, that gender disparities persisted at all levels of education. These disparities were not only common in the education sector, but throughout all other government departments and the private sector. This prompted the Government of Zimbabwe to launch the National Gender Policy in March 2004 with the view to eliminate all negative economic, social and political policies, cultural and religious practices that impede equality of sexes, (National Gender Policy 2004). One of its main objectives was to promote equal opportunities for women and men in education and decision making at all levels. The gender equality that was meant to be addressed made some significant measure of success. Nowadays there are many girls enrolled in secondary schools but the problem is that their performance is still low. The girls, who out-number boys, need a lot of support to raise the pass rate.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Zimbabwe has committed itself to the achievement of quality education for all, with particular emphasis on equal opportunity for girls. . The problem is that girls’ performance is still very low compared to that of boys. Therefore the study seeks to answer the question: How can performance of girls are improved to match that of boys?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the factors are causing low performance of girls schools Zimbabwe?
- How do policy issues and conventions contribute to the performance of girls in school?
- What can be done to raise performance of the girls?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Factors Causing Low Performance of Girls in Zimbabwe

There are various factors affecting the performance of girls in Zimbabwean schools. Key among these is;

Lack of Access to Resources

Gene (2003) points out that due to their secondary or low status in the society; women have been denied the right of access to different resources and benefits. Resources such as land ownership are so

important for the empowerment of women. This is a disadvantage to the single parent women who then find it difficult to send their girl-child to school. Additionally reasons such as triple roles of women and boy child preferences and various traditional practices, affect enrolment, access to education, hence affecting their performances. For instance, in Zimbabwe the school enrolment ratio of girls at secondary schools was 34.7% in 1997 and 57.4% in 2000. It also grew from 43% to 67.3% and from 26% to 47% for boys and girls respectively in the same period 2000-2001. The gender disparity in gross enrolment rate in secondary schools is still very high (Genene, 2003). In general lack of access to education for girls results in low performance of girls hence less opportunities later on in life...

Multiple Roles of Women

Laden (2000) observes that in most African cultures including Zimbabwe, socio-cultural traditions tend to assume that women's public roles are just an additional activity to their primary and secondary roles. Apart from spending most of their time in productive activities, women in Africa are also engaged in reproductive and community work. It is known that women are mothers, wives and breadwinners in their homes (Genene, 2003). So, to some female students, there is no need to work hard academically as their roles in life are pre-determined by “society”...

Family Commitment

Several studies have proved that family commitment is one of the reasons why female students shy away from performing at their best academically. Women are not prepared to take up positions away from their families. As such given a choice between career developments in places away from their families and staying with one's family most women appeared to prefer the latter. It was also noted that from an early age, daughters are groomed for their marriage roles of wife, mother and food preparers and they are conditioned from an early age to believe that a woman is inferior to a man and that her place is in the home. It can be argued that because of cultural expectations and socialization, women tend to shy away in working hard academically. In Zimbabwe there has been debate on low performance of girls. However, it has not been clearly established why the low performance of girls at “O” Level results in schools still persist (Logan 1999; Peterson and Runyan, 1999; Davidson and Burke, 1994; Cabana, 1999; Dorsey, 1996).

Low self –esteem and Lack of Confidence

The low performance of girls is a result of concerned women's low self –esteem and lack of confidence. Myths, stereotypes and prejudices related to the abilities and attitudes of women were seen as obstacles leading to girls' low performance in school. In a survey by Smith (1984), many women have, to a certain degree, internalized the attitudes and role expectations about women, that they have learnt to fit neatly into the stereotypes. This can be a major handicap in the development of their individual personality's ability and career potential.

Gender socialization was practiced, not to prejudice the child against the other sex but to let it grow naturally into its predestined role and make the child look forward with pleasure to its allotted task. This suggests that although gender socialization in a particular society creates discrimination between men and women it takes place in such a way that it is acceptable. It was also noted in other researches that women teachers' perceptions on gender roles and what women can and cannot do are influenced by gender socialization. This phenomenon affects female educational achievements (Sebakwane, 1994; Coleman, 2004 Cabana et al, 2009)

Lack of Support

Gender imbalances in schools are caused by the fact that women are not getting the necessary material and social support from their families and from the education system. Another observation made in Canada suggested that the greatest cause of low performance in educational circles was due to gender discrimination. If hiring committees preserved and promoted sexist attitudes towards women, it would be impossible for women to break the glass ceiling which exists within educational administration. The above can lead to some female students avoiding working hard academically as there is no support from the society (Wallin, 1999; Chabaya et al, 2009). Teachers are role models in schools and society. As such, their proper conduct at all the times is crucial. Teachers should not be anti-role models who behave so badly that they serve as good examples of what not to do (Orste in, et

al. 2003). In situations where male educators engaged in sexual and love relationships with girls they set a very bad example as such moves are tantamount to abuse of office and they are gross acts of corruption and immorality, (Thaw 2010). In order to perform to their full potential, girls need appropriate role models in their teachers and not teachers who cause them to underperform in school or to even hate school.

Gender Stereo Types

Research has found that women depicted themselves as individuals who could not hold leadership roles and who did not have the qualities to be leaders as is expected in the feminine gender roles. As a result women did not apply for leadership positions. Thus, women are socialized to believe that it is difficult to hold public office such as being a school head. With this in mind, there is no external motivation to work hard in school. The stereotypical notion of women as inadequate beings has gradually become entrenched in their collective consciousness. This affects the way in which girls comprehend and interpret the world around them. If the collective conscience is affected by these gender stereotypes, it reflects the distorted assumptions about the role of women and their capabilities. This leads to female students underrating their performance in school. Gender inequalities and stereotypical attitudes have a negative influence on the female students' performance. If women are socialized into society where patriarchal relations predominate, they can have limited individual choices about their performance. Such an ideology can render women inferior and society can seek to perpetuate this hierarchy (Chabaya et al, 2009 Van Deventer and Van der Westhuizen, 2000; Davidson and Burke, 1994).

Family Roles

Women's prioritization of family roles at the expense of their career advancement is not new. Culturally defined desirable feminine behavior was nurturing and caring for others, placing importance on relationships and the quality of life. The role is driven by conformity with social norms and stereotypic gender roles among others. All this is maintained by the socialization and sex role stereotyping which can lead to females not associating them with hard working students (Peterson and Runyan, 1999; Logan 1999; Richies, 1988).

Family Socialization and Peers Influences

The family is the major location where a child grew up from infancy. Whatever contributions any other setting made towards the all around development of the female child, social, emotional and intellectual, they were dependent on the foundation laid down by her parents. According to Ezewu (1980), it is due to this assumption in most people that low performance of the girls within the district is from their background as their parents were failures in education hence never encourage their children to take school serious.

Similarly, many girls who are active but dual in education may influence others not to work hard in class affecting girl's performance hence pass rate. By this many female students are interested in visiting friends and sometimes dropping out of school. Sometimes they engage in prostitution to earn money to buy petty things. This compromises both academic performance and health as there are high chances of contracting sexually transmitted infections.

Cultural Beliefs

Cultural perceptions sometimes degenerates a woman in the African culture leading especially the rural women to be confined to the domestic sphere with little or no exposure to the public domain. Sayings such as, “*The wisdom of a woman and the lights of stars do not take you far*” often reinforce the negative attitudes towards female students performance. Due to the deep rooted traditional beliefs about the subordinate role of women in society, both women and men may find it difficult to accord girl's proper education... Thus, these cultures and traditions that invest superiority in men are widely acknowledged as draw-backs to female students' performance. While many reasons have been identified for gender imbalance in governance, the most common argument is that the division between public and private spaces has created a barrier to women's participation in governance. Politics and leadership have traditionally been considered a male arena, because men operate in the public domain, while in many societies women are expected to restrict their activities around the home and immediate community. Even though distinctions between private and public domain are not

given, they are themselves part of a set of accepted ideas about male and female places in society. However, these have been frequently used as justification for women’s absence from public life. This affects their academic performances (Logan, 1999; Genene, 2003; Rai, 2005; Tambia, 2003; Brody, 2009).

Mosley (2004), reported that in Ethiopia, cooking, cleaning and fetching water are considered feminine activities, whereas agricultural activities, such as ploughing with oxen are considered masculine roles. In another study, Mwaba (1992) found that a sample of South African secondary school boys and girls characterized housecleaning as predominantly women-only jobs. This invariably negatively affects girls’ performance and participation in society (Hurley and Pitamber 2009). It is in this light that many researchers (including Dorsey 1996; Gaidzanwa 1997; Gordon 1995; Mutekwe 2007; Nhundu 2007) are agreed that in Zimbabwe girls are educated for domesticity. Therefore, school curriculum should be responsible for the deconstruction of the gender roles and stereotypes embedded in it.

Policy Issues and Conventions that Contribute to Performance of Girls in Zimbabwean Schools

A number of conventions and policies have been promulgated to protect the rights of women and promote participation of women in development activities, particularly in education and managerial positions in the industry. Some of these conventions to which Zimbabwe is a signatory will be discussed below.

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979)

The above convention was adopted in 1979 and came into force in 1984. Article 7 emphasizes that “state parties shall take all measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and private life including the right to participate in the formulation and implementation of government policy. CEDAW (1979) and the Convention of the Rights of the Child (1990) contain the most comprehensive set of legally enforceable commitments on the right to education and gender equality. The Zimbabwe Government took measures to create a gender desk in the office of the President which was later transformed into a fully fledged government ministry. Its key function was described as being to streamline gender into government departments and ministries (UNESCO, 2003; Geisler, 2004).

Beijing Platform for Action (1999)

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action reaffirmed the fundamental principle set forth in the Vienna Declaration (1990), that the “human rights of women and the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of human rights”. This sought to promote and protect the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women. Strategic objective, B1 80(a) is to advance the goal of equal access to education by eliminating discrimination on the basis of gender. It also emphasized the need to promote women into leadership and decision making positions. Strategic objective B4 83 (f) states the need to increase access of women to decision making and policy roles. This cannot be achieved if the girls are performing poorly in their academic activities.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The Zimbabwe Head of State was among the 189 Heads of State and Government, who agreed to the Millennium Declaration at the Millennium Summit of September 2000, held in New York. The International Development Goals which were drawn from UN global conferences and the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration were merged to create the (MDGs). Millennium Goal Number 3 clearly states the promotion of gender and empowerment of women. Its target is to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and all levels of education not later than 2015 (UNDP, 2004).

The Zimbabwe National Gender Policy

The Zimbabwe National Gender Policy was launched in March 2004, with the aim of eliminating all negative economic, social and political policies, cultural and religious practices that impede equality of sexes. One of its main objectives was to promote and support equal and equitable access, control and ownership of resources, information, opportunities and decision making positions for women and men. It highlights the importance of addressing the imbalances with respect to women’s access, control and ownership of resources and decision making positions.

This policy also notes with concern that enrolments at secondary school level, universities and vocational training institutions are significantly lower for female than for males. Its strategy is to provide equal and equitable education resources to women and men. It therefore became imperative for all policies to recognise women's multiple roles with respect to production and reproduction as they impact on their capacity to participate effectively in national development. Its other strategy is to appoint more competent women at decision making levels in the education sector to create equitable representation of the sexes (National Gender Policy, 2004).

Ways to Raise Performance of the Girls in School

It is important for the school heads and staff in consultation with learners and parents, to review and tackle stereotypical constructions of masculinity and femininity which exacerbate gender differences and impact on girls' engagement with the curriculum. The emphasis on boys' underachievement can lead to a situation where all boys are seen as, and see themselves as, underperforming. Similarly, assumptions that all girls are academically successful could mean that those girls who lack confidence or whose achievement is not couched in academic performance might be marginalised (Myers et al, 2007)

Several studies advocate the use of a wide variety of approaches as means for deconstructing and challenging stereotypes. Since gender stereotypes impede the involvement of girls, there is need to re-socialise individuals into a new order where gender equality is the norm. Programmes to assist in modifying stereotypical conceptions of femininity and masculinity need to be introduced quite early in childhood. Children at an early age would realize that they are equal and they grow up with the idea that no gender group is superior or inferior to the other. Similarly, teachers are imitated a lot by learners in the schools. The implication is that the need for their proper conduct all the times is crucial. Teachers should not be anti-role models who behave so badly that they serve as good examples of what not to do (Orstein et al. 2003).

In situations where male teachers engaged in love relationships with girls they set a very bad example as such moves are gross acts of corruption and immorality. In order to perform to their full potential girls need appropriate role models in their teachers and not teachers who cause them to underperform in school or to even hate school. Teachers need to play an important role in closing the ranks and gaps created by the gender role stereotyping experienced by pupils in the home and those incorporated in curricular and reinforced through the hidden curriculum of the school. Research shows that there is a serious need for teachers, parents and older siblings and other significant others to bring to the attention of children that the social behavior, roles and characteristics associated with different genders are nothing but products of gender socialization and that there is nothing to stop them from performing well in school (Thaw 2010).

Teachers and parents need to constantly expose pupils to programmes based on selected life stories and experiences of successful female role models of relevant social and cultural backgrounds so that they can positively influence the occupational aspirations of girls in non-traditional careers trajectories. Girls need to defy the odds by taking up school subjects, careers or occupations traditionally stereotyped as masculine to prove to society that gender differences are not intellectually different and that girls and boys can perform well in school (Mutekwe et al, 2012; Chikuvadze and Matsvetu, 2013).

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach was employed to bring forth the views of female teachers and female students on the performance of girls in Zimbabwe. Qualitative research presents facts in a narration of words. It deals with data that is principally verbal and is based on a naturalistic phenomenological philosophy which believes that multiple realities are socially constructed through individual and collective definitions of the situation. The study employed focused group discussions, in-depth interviews, observations and narratives to elicit data from the participants.

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Sub Problem1: What are the factors contributing to low performance of girls in schools?

Findings of the study suggest that girls are much affected by their background resulting in low performance and low participation in school. It is their socialization that affects their performances.

The findings of this study further suggest that the stereotypes embedded in the way women are socialized in the home; school and community hinder their performance in school. Similar observations were made by Coleman (2001) when she commented that in a society where men are more likely to be leaders and where women have been stereotyped into playing a subordinate and supportive role, it is not entirely surprising that women are less likely to plan a career that includes leadership.

The study findings reveal that most of the participants attributed the causes of low performances of girls to family commitment, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, lack of support from family members, influences of peers, and family socialization. Most participants found family commitment to be the major reason why there is low performance of girls in schools. It was pointed out that girls are reluctant to take up education seriously because they are occupied with family roles and they had nothing in mind except those roles affecting their performance. One participant said the following about family commitment: *Girls are very comfortable in being house wives and they are afraid to do other roles outside being mothers. This made most of them to take school work lightly while their male counterparts worked hard in school.* Another said, *“It is a waste of time to be educated because I am going to be a house wife managing my family”*.

Women's low self-esteem and lack of confidence were believed to be the causes of low performance of girls at in schools and industry. The following sentiments also emerged from the participants:

- Social background has heavy influence on the performance of girls in school
- Women have multiple roles for example, wife, mother, worker, etc.
- We grow up in families where females are undermined, so this affects us...
- Women feel inferior and believe that education is not necessary”.

The following emerged from one participant: *“Girls do not take schooling seriously because of family background. If our parents were dull in class, how do you expect us to be sharp? Also culturally women should not be above men otherwise you fail to find a man to marry.”* Quite a number of interviewees pointed out that low performance of girls in school were caused by the fact that women are not getting the necessary support from their families and from the education system. That is why some of the girls are not working hard academically. Some participants claimed that girls were discriminated against by the education system, just because they were girls. They felt that discrimination was implicit in the organizational structure or in the attitudes of those in authority hence affecting their performance. It also emerged from the study that girls did not have adequate time to work on their academic tasks at home. This finding corroborates Mosley (2004) and Mwaba (1992) who contend that at home parents tend to afford boys more time and space for extra studies compared to girls who have to endure the dual burden of household chores and extra homework studies.

Sub Problem2: How do policy issues and conventions contribute to girls' performance in school?

When asked about policies that mandate their equal opportunities in, most participants' responses suggest that policies were not known. Participants were not familiar with other conventions and policies such as Affirmative Action Policy and gender Policy that help to spearhead the girl education. It was observed that some educated and successful women had no knowledge of policies on gender issues. The few who knew the policies could not state the major objectives stipulated in most of them. Most participants did not know that a number of these conventions and policies have been promulgated to protect the rights of women and promote their participation in development activities, particularly in education (UNESCO, 2003; Geisler, 2004).

When asked about the feasibility of the policies only a few mentioned that those policies are being implemented. These were the few lady teachers who felt they had made achievement in life because of the policies. Others felt they were partially implemented because to them a lot of girls are still being discriminated against and as a result they are performing lowly in school... This therefore suggests that policies are only on paper and not being availed and explained to people these findings concur with those by several researchers who stressed the need for implementation of policies.

Sub Problem3: What can be done to raise performance of the girls in school?

Findings indicate that conditions in schools should be favorable to a girl education so as to attract more girls to work hard academically. Findings also suggest the need to remove stereotypes associated with girl education by creating gender balance and acceptance between females and males in schools. It is also suggested that Ministries of Education should have more educational workshops for girls to boost their confidence and self esteem. Schools are also encouraged to include women in school leadership positions in schools so as to encourage the girls to emulate them and work hard academically. Participants recommended a review of the teacher training curriculum towards gender sensitivity in teacher attitudes and expectations. This calls for improved gender training workshops and in-service programmes for teachers. These sentiments corroborate with several studies that recommended the need to have a change in the school curricula so as to remove gender imbalances and encourage all students to participate and achieve high grades in school (Mutekwe et al, 2012; Chikuvadze and Matsvetu, 2013).

There were suggestions from participants that policies that promote girl education should be closely monitored. Asked to make suggestions on ways to reduce the gender biases and prejudices prevalent in their school curriculum, participants recommended that: schools needed clear cut measures to promote learning equity and reduce prejudices based on gender stereotypes; the Ministry of Education needs to ensure that teachers who abuse girls are not only blacklisted, but that they are severely dealt with in accordance with the laws of the country. These recommendations were similar to those by several researchers who pointed out the need for reduction of stereotypes and prejudices in schools as well as having a balanced curriculum that benefits both sexes (Orstein et al. 2003).

It emerged from the findings that parents also need to give ample time to their girl children at home to cope with school work and avoid overburdening them with household chores at the expense of study time. Girls need to be encouraged to realize their full potential along with their boy counterparts. It was observed that some girls indicated that their parents did not worry if they failed in school but would get worried if the boys failed. One participant said, “*It does not matter if I fail because I will be looked after by my husband*”. This implies that parents were not advising the girls to learn so as to be economically and socially empowered. (Mutekwe al, 2012; Chikuvadze and Matsvetu, 2013). The Ministry of Education should offer educational workshops and professional development opportunities along the female’s career path. Preparatory administrative training, in service training, may increase women’s chances of achieving their desired goals. The government should intensify elevation of women to senior positions in industry, politics and government for the girls to be motivated to work hard academically.

CONCLUSIONS

The above research findings lead to the following conclusions:

- Family responsibilities and the desire to be house wives by girl students at the expense of education were found to be the main causes of the low performances among girls in schools and industry.
- Lack of support from family members, colleagues and the government was perceived to be a cause of low performance among girls.
- Ministry of Education should closely monitor the girl child’s education at all levels.
- Policies designed to spearhead the education system and promotion of women such as Affirmative Action Policy and Gender Policy were not implemented fully.
- The implementation of policies was not closely monitored and evaluated.
- Educated females in industry are motivations that attract girls to take education seriously.
- Cultural stereotypes stemming from patriarchy where girls and women were socialized to believe in the importance of being a mother, wife and caregiver were a cause of low performance among females.
- Not much was done to address cultural stereotypes which can continue to contribute to the low performances among girls despite the policies and strategies put in place to enhance high performance in girls.
- Community education on the potentials of girls and their rights is very important.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study the researchers made the following recommendations:

- There is need to re-socialise families and communities into a new order where gender equality is the norm.
- There should be more gender sensitive courses in schools that assist both boys and girls to develop new orientations about the roles and capabilities of both girls and boys.
- The Ministry of Education should conduct workshops and offer professional development opportunities along the female`s career path through preparatory administrative training, and in-service training to increase girls` chances of achieving their desired positions.
- The government should intensify elevation of women into leadership positions in the education system, industry, politics and government.
- There is need for further research into why some girls-only schools in Zimbabwe are producing better results than boys-only and mixed schools.

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