

Exploring the Teachers' Role in the Social Construction of Gender through the Hidden Culture Curriculum and Pedagogy: A Case of Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT In this qualitative study the researchers adopted a case study design genre and utilized multiple data collection tools: focus group discussions, individual phenomenological interviews and discourse analysis to unmask the patriarchal nature of the Zimbabwean school curriculum. Our analysis of data thus involved content and discourse analyses of curricular material as well as the coding and decoding of participants' responses in accordance with the emerging themes. This approach was motivated by our quest to obtain deeper insights by examining the phenomenon in its natural setting. As a result they unraveled a wide range of the gender biases and prejudices embodied in the school curriculum, which entrench gender disparities by polarizing the educational and occupational aspirations of boys and girls along gender lines. These results followed the interviewing of a sample of 40 participants distributed as 30 school-girls and 10 teachers and were also complemented by the content and discourse analyses conducted to selected curricular material. The participants were conveniently and purposively sampled. The results also revealed that through their classroom pedagogy teachers play an influential role in the perpetual production and peddling of gender role ideologies and stereotypes that culminate in the consequent gender polarization of social roles for boys and girls or men and women in society. The study also revealed that in spite of the level of consciousness on the need for equality and equity between women and men in society, the Zimbabwean school curriculum continues to play a significant role in the reproduction and structuring of gender role stereotypes, prejudices and disparities.