SEGREGATION BY GENDER: EXPERIENCES OF LEARNERS IN PRACTICAL SUBJECTS IN THE ESWATINI AND ZIMBABWEAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the factors that influence the choice of practical subjects by learners and the forms of gender segregation experienced by learners during the learning process. The population of the study comprised all students taking practical subjects in Masvingo district and Manzini region schools in Zimbabwe and Eswatini respectively. A sample of 50 participants was purposively selected from 30 schools of which 30 participants were students from Masvingo district while 20 were from the Manzini region comprising of 30 boys and 20 girls from both countries inclusive. The study established that the choice of practical subjects was influenced by factors such as cultural and belief systems, parents and guardians. The major effect of gender segregation on the learner was compromised academic attainment. The study concluded that gender segregation in practical subjects was found highest in female dominated practical subjects as most organisations and institutions initially focused more on the involvement of female in male dominated areas. The study recommends that every school should have a clear gender policy in place which is derived from the national policy for both countries.

KEYWORDS: Gender, practical subjects, segregation, equality, inequality

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INTRODUCTION

The introduction of practical subjects has been on the increase the world over. The move was meant to alleviate poverty through imparting skills to support student transition from education to work. Initially the subjects were taken according to gender with categorizations of subject choices between hard subjects (masculinity) and soft subjects (feminine) as part of individual identity and determine what the person will become in the future in terms of a career goal based on their gender (Zimbabwe National Gender Policy, 2013-2017). In the context of practical subjects, hard subjects include Agriculture, Woodwork, Metalwork to name a few and soft subjects such as Fashion and Fabrics, Food and Nutrition, Family Studies and more. Pullman and Andres (2015) describe gender as constructed within social practices, which therefore implies that subject choices were not driven by the internal factors, but the external factors compelling boys and girls to opt for particular subjects such as patriarchal system, socialization, sex, class and social institutions.

In the past most of the people were just focusing on the involvement of female in male dominated duties as well as job titles however, according to Aboagye (2021) and Mtemeri (2017) less attention has been given to the involvement of male in female dominated practical subjects in developing nations. Gudyanga, Gora and Moyo (2019) assert that the Home Economics curriculum is mostly in favour of the females. Hence, some of the people view it as a female subject. Gülsüm (2022) analysed seventy six science textbooks and found out that there was a disparity of gender representation which is in form of pictorial illustrations where males were depicted as doctors, carpenters, as well as engineers while their female counterparts are illustrated as dressmakers, mothers, and secretaries. From those illustrations, automatically females would prefer to do Home economics whereas boys would take Building Studies, Woodwork and Technical graphics basing on the pictures in the textbook.

Statement of the problem

The social construction of gender and the social fabric of any given society are interrelated and influence the career path of individuals. The society dictates the behaviour of people as they respond to life demands such as choice of subjects and career (Aboagye, 2021; Mtemeri, 2017; & Andres, 2015). Moral values as part of the social fabric have an impact on sanctions given to any form of behaviour or life decisions. Students in most African societies who decide to take career paths which are gender biased, for instance practical subjects, usually face negative sanctions (Nandi & Sibanda, 2019). Some of such students are likely to be given names that are linked to destroying the social fabric of the society. These sanctions may reduce the practical subject takers as they try to uphold their values and norms of being female or male. Skill training is one of the means to alleviate poverty in developing countries hence the need for both sexes to be engaged in any practical subject of their choice (Jones & Ramchand, 2016). Gender segregation in practical subjects negatively affects the way people perceive those who choose practical subjects which are dominated by the opposite sex. This study therefore sought to establish students' experiences with regards to selection of practical subjects.

Research Questions

1. What factors influence the choice of practical subjects by learners?
2. What are the forms of gender segregation experienced by learners during the learning process?
3. What are the effects of gender segregation on the academic performance and social life of learners?
4. Suggest possible solutions to reduce the influence of gender segregation on learners in practical subjects?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

According to SADC Education for sustainable development strategic framework (2021), since the 1960s, enrolment rates in education throughout Southern Africa have increased at all levels; however, while these improvements are encouraging, the SADC region still falls behind international and continental averages. Hence, SADC remains committed to improving access to quality education in the region, as evidenced by its Protocol on Education and Training, established in 1997 which has also been extensively highlighted in the RISDP 2020-2030, outlining the strategic goal focused towards increasing access to quality and relevant education and skills development for SADC Citizens (SADC Gender and Development Monitor, 2018; Knowledge for Development, 2021). In light of this, there has been a shift from inclining a particular gender to a practical subject area which might be obsolete yet there are more marketable subjects reserved for a certain gender. This goal is expected to bring about enhanced equitable access to quality and relevant education as well as enhanced skills development for industrialisation.

The Education and Skills Development Sector in the SADC region faces challenges common to many countries around the world in ensuring access, equity, quality, efficiency, relevance and democracy in their educational and training policies (SADC, Regional codes and policies, 2020). Amongst the more specific challenges is the need for the education system to prepare students for employment opportunities in both rural and urban areas through the provision of relevant Technical, Vocational, Entrepreneurial, and Indigenous Skills (Nandi & Sibanda, 2019). Certainly, these skills should be imparted without segregation to both male and female students through the practical subjects offered in schools. This study focused on Eswatini and Zimbabwe which are amongst the SADC countries.

The Eswatini scenario

In Eswatini, equal education opportunities for both male and female remain fundamental in the education domain (Moges, 2019; Doroba, 2017). The importance and significance of education to human development has long been acknowledged. The introduction of more practical subjects has been on the increase in Eswatini schools, and they are open to any gender in order to foster general knowledge to address the challenges of industrial development and poverty alleviation.

Doo (2021) states that, despite ratification of several international and regional human rights instruments that promote gender equality, the situation remains unchanged in Eswatini especially in the uptake of practical subjects. There are still subjects that are dominated by boys and others dominated by girls yet the constitution of Eswatini is instrumental in facilitating recognition of gender equality and equity (Kingdom of Swaziland Constitution Act/2005). Thus, Eswatini recently came up with what is termed the Country Level Implementation Plan (CLIP) which is based on an analysis from an intersectional and human rights-based approach seeking to address root causes of gender inequality across political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of life (Doo, 2021). The same scenario is experienced in other SADC countries where governments insist on gender balance in all subjects but still there is gross imbalance in enrolment of male students in Home Economics/ Consumer Science subjects. With the need to eliminate gender imbalance, there emerged the declaration for a decade of women which culminated in the Beijing Conference in 1985 and the Education for the Millennium Development Goads (OECD, 2019) (UN, 2000 & UNDP, 2001). Despite these entire efforts gender imbalance still exists in practical subjects (Mpofu, 2014).

Gender imbalance is experienced in several countries as evidenced by literature in countries such as the Republic of Ireland, Nigeria and Southern African countries. According to Jones and Ramchand (2016) male learners tend to turn back from Home Economics in favour of the male dominated practical subjects. Moges (2019) and Prix (2011) analysed the effect of teachers on gender stereotypes on their impression to their students' choice of practical subjects as they mostly see female teachers in Home Economics and male teachers in Woodwork. The notion is that there should be equality of opportunity in education, where everyone has fair and equal access to a good quality education regardless of social background, race, gender or religion, and where people achieve success in education according to their efforts and ability, free of any form of discrimination.

The Zimbabwean context

It is worth noting that even though the Zimbabwean education is designed to provide education which fosters freedom and autonomy of all pupils by offering and equipping students with skills deemed necessary to take charge of their own destiny, the curriculum offered restricts and creates gender imbalance in schools (Baten, de Haas, Kempter & zu Selhausen, 2021; Moyo, 2021). Despite the fact that Zimbabwean education has been considered as one of the best in Africa, gender stereotyping interferes with the pupils' choices of subjects, occupational choices and their life in general (Nani & Sibanda, 2019).

A wide gap between male and female enrolment in practical subjects in Zimbabwe has existed over a number of years and deliberate efforts have been made especially by the United Nations OECD (2017). Due to gender imbalance in practical subjects the government of Zimbabwe came up with the National Gender policy (Mapolisa, Tshabalala & Ncube 2015; Mutekwe & Modiba 2012). This was put in place in order to eliminate the negative economic, social and political policies that impede equity to mainstream in all aspect of developmental processes. The National Gender Policy also ensures a sustainable equity, equality and empowerment of female and male in practical subjects such as Fashion and Fabrics and Building Studies.

In some countries such as Malawi and Zambia Home Economics subjects are offered as optional subjects in both primary and high school education (Inspectorate, 2002). According to Mtemeri (2017), Jones and Ramchand (2016), Lloyd (2005) and O'Connor (2007) even though a number of schools offer Home Economics subjects in the curriculum, only a few boys high schools offer them as separate subjects. They are mainly offered to female students against what is perceived as the male dominated practical subjects such as woodwork, metalwork, and building studies. Culturally, females are expected to bear children to whom they devote their lives and traditionally domestic duties assigned to females (Moyo, 2021; Lažetić, 2020; Nderezina, 2012; Lörz, Schindler & Walter, 2011). Girls are automatically channeled towards Home Economics subjects which is mostly promoted by identification and modeling of students by adult females. Females are in favour of their mother's duties and the reverse is true for their male counterparts, thereby promote female students to enroll into Home Economics subjects in their numbers than male students.

According to Knowtton (2005) and Fullan (2005) female students are generally represented in low numbers in male dominated subjects. According to Fousiya and Musthafa (2016) in their study, they established that females are generally represented by only ten per cent or less in total number of students who are enrolled in subjects such as Metalwork, Woodwork and Technical Graphics. Murphy (2000) and Gibbs (2008) supported that low level of girls' involvement in male

dominated practical subjects is also seen in countries such as the United States of America and New Zealand.

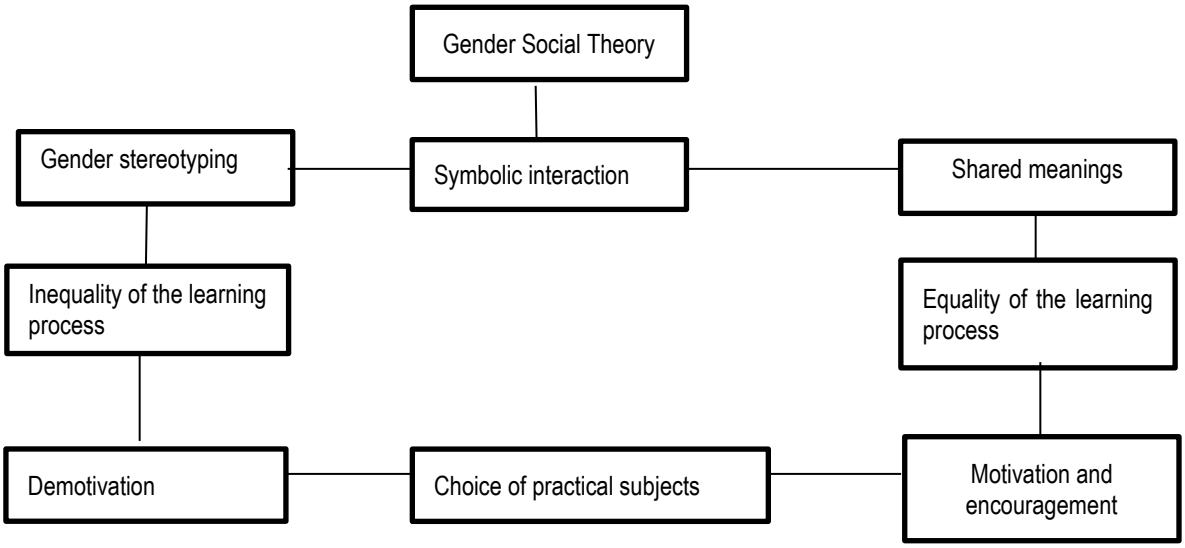
According to a study by Fousiya and Musthafa (2016) some teachers channeled their male students into subjects such as wood carvings, farming and traditional medicine while female students had a pre-eminence training in the art of home keeping especially cookery, home management as well as motherhood crafts. Mutekwe and Modiba (2012) alluded that, female students' lack of interest in male dominated practical subjects maybe an influence of their background traditions and societal needs in general. Some of the traditions and societal needs such as always being submissive to the husband and take care of the family discouraging females from entering the male dominated practical subjects basing on their culture which can be referred to as '*Unhu/Ubuntu'* socialization. All this creates and perpetuate gender imbalance in practical subjects.

The students' desire to follow family role models has long been a very influential factor in the choice of practical subjects and career choices (Ayriza, Triyanto, Setiawati & Gunawan (2020); Ulrich, Frey, & Ruppert, 2018; Lupas & Farin (2021). Ayalon and Mcdossi (2018) suggest that those female students who enter male dominated practical subjects are mostly coming from families where both parents are educated. Ulrich, Frey and Ruppert (2018) also supported that the issue of parents as role models in life is a major cause of gender imbalance in practical subjects. Most female students are always in favour of jobs which they have been trained by their mothers while boys are in favour of their fathers. This tends to make most of the male students to shun Home Economics subjects. According to Gülsüm (2022) and Aboagye (2021) female students tend to prefer Home Economics subjects since it mainly comprising of subjects such as Food and Nutrition, Fashion and Fabrics as well as Home Management, of all these are referred to as female domains.

In most countries culture is the main cause of gender imbalance in practical subjects (Conzo, Aassve, Fuochi & Mencarini, 2017). Female and male roles are significantly defined structurally and culturally. Through this process of socialization, boys and girls are conditioned to behave in different roles in the society such as cooking and helping fathers to build resting shades. People conform to established cultural norms by being rewarded or punished for a behaviour hence, the effects of considering capabilities of girls and boys to perform different tasks at home as well at school influences the uptake of different practical subjects.

The frequency of low enrolment of boys in female dominated subjects and girls in male dominated subjects has created anxiety and loss of productivity in practical subjects. Most practical subjects are now almost obsolete because of gender considerations in practical subjects rather than effort. There is an enormous gender imbalance in practical subjects especially in Home Economics where girls are only people who are represented in their numbers.

Theoretical Framework



The gender social theory is examined through three major sociological perspectives which are functionalism, conflict theory and symbolic interactionism theory (Eagly, Wood & Diekman, 2000). However, this study is underpinned on the symbolic interaction which stipulates that gender is created through social interaction and is inherently contextual in its impact. According to Thiem and Clark (2023), the symbolic interaction framework believes that boys and girls learn ways of behaving through interaction with parents, teachers, peers and mass media. In this instance symbols are used to show relationships through interaction where positive or negative choices of an entity may result. On the positive, shared meanings promote equality of education which consequently results in well informed choices of practical subjects. In the contrary, symbolic interaction may yield gender stereotyping which brings about inequality in the learning process resulting in demotivation in choosing practical subjects that are considered to be of the opposite gender.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey design was chosen for this research because it examines a relatively large population and probes deeply and analyses interaction between factors on gender segregation in practical subjects. The researchers chose the qualitative approach as the guiding paradigm for a thorough understanding of the phenomenon of this study. Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2011; Patton, 2002). Cresswell (2017) and Merriam (2009) describe qualitative research as any kind of research that produces findings that are difficult to quantify. The advantage of using the qualitative analysis is that it results in a deeper understanding of events from the participants' point of view.

Population

The population for this study covered students from high schools in Masvingo district in Zimbabwe and the Manzini region in Eswatini urban and peri urban centres. According to Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorenson (2009) population and the sample are selected in relation to the purpose of the study and objectives. The geographical locations of both countries were selected based on the indicators such as high density urban centres where a number of schools are located in a small

area. Cresswell and Clark (2017) define a population as any group of people on observation or test in which researchers happen to have interest in.

Sample and sampling procedure

A sample of 50 participants was purposively selected from students in 15 secondary schools from Zimbabwe and Eswatini schools. Thirty (30) students were selected from 10 schools in Masvingo, Zimbabwe and 20 students from Manzini in Eswatini. The sample comprised of 30 female learners and 20 male learners from Form 1 to Form 6. Kumar and Gaur (2018) describe a sample as participants of a research who are willing to share their experiences with researchers. The research sample from both communities adhered to the criterion of being representative of the research population. Apart from a consideration of purpose of study and population, the number of the participants selected depends on the objectives of the research (Mcleod, 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Bogdan, 2007).

Research instruments

In-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires were the research instruments used to collect data in this study. The two instruments were used together in this study owing to the fact that they complement each other. According to Kumar and Gaur (2018) the use of more than one research tool is important as the weaknesses may be countered by the strength of the other method. The two instruments blended very well as the other probed deeply while open-ended questionnaires maintained anonymity and confidentiality as participants were asked not to write their names. All instruments were distributed after consent was sought from all participants. The interviewers followed the interview protocol of staying neutral when information was exchanged so that the presence of the interviewer could have no effect on the perceptions of the participants. Female learners were interviewed while the male learners were given questionnaires. Mason (2015) and Patton (2002) note that in-depth interviews are credited for their flexibility of an openness of adapting and remolding the inquiry to allow for a deeper understanding of the studied phenomenon with new insights gained as data is collected. Females who were in male dominated practical subjects were more than the males in female dominated subjects. The interviews took about 30 minutes for each student and it took a week to complete the process. An open-ended questionnaire is administered in research owing to its strengths of reducing bias (Debois, 2019; Neuman, 2006). Open-ended questionnaires were self-administered by the respondents, and it was done to suit conditions at the school. On average the questionnaires were filled in 20 minutes and the learners were given them in practical labs at the same time at each school.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from this research indicated that there are a myriad of factors that influence choice of practical subjects. Chief among them are cultural factors such as belief systems in both countries, Eswatini and Zimbabwe. The results of this research revealed that the common forms of gender segregation were stereotyping and labelling learners as misfits in subjects considered as those of the opposite sex, as well as lack of support from parents and guardians. Compromised academic performance by learners was established as the major effect of gender segregation on the learner. This study revealed that concerted effort from all stake holders is needed to reduce the impact of gender segregation on academic performance in practical subjects.

Factors that influence the choice of practical subjects by learners

Results on the factors of gender segregation in practical subjects revealed that gender roles which are common for the Eswatini and Zimbabwean cultures allocate roles along gender lines. One participant indicated that;

> *"The duties that my mother taught me to do at home guided me into choosing Consumer Sciences because I already know a lot of things like cooking so I would not struggle with that rather than learning new things in Wooodwork."*

According to Nani and Sibanda (2019), gender socialisation is embedded in the Zimbabwe and Eswatini patriarchal value system which manifests itself in the educational curriculum.

The results also indicated that teachers are part of the society hence they may uphold the norms and values related to gender roles. One male learner submitted that:

> *"Teachers treat girls differently from boys and doing subjects for boys will put you in the lime light. Everyone will be looking at you and they will be eager to see how you perform in a male or female dominated subject while you are of the opposite sex."*

In the same vein, Bigler, Hayes and Hamilton (2013) define gender socialisation as a process through which children learn about the social expectations, attitudes and behaviours typically associated with boys and girls. Schools are major contexts for gender socialisation because that is where learners spend large amounts of time and in most cases the school takes a reinforcement role. Mutekwe and Modiba (2012) assert that consequently, the occupations by men and women tend to be aligned towards cultural expectations and behaviours of that particular society. The shared cultural beliefs, where notions of masculinity and femininity are culturally embedded, mediated, and solidified through interaction processes with parents, teachers, and peers (Hägglund &_Lörz,_2020). However, numerous studies show that changes in gender segregation are caused by specific country education systems (Ayalon & Mcdossi, 2018; Helland & Wiborg, 2018; Ayalon &Yogev, 2005). Hence, educators and peers shape learners' gender attitudes and in turn gender differences in cognition and behaviour.

> Another participant indicated that: *"Subjects such as Metal Work and Woodwork are still dominated by boys but there are a few girls like me who have enrolled for the subjects."*

This finding resonates with the findings by Nani and Sibanda (2019) who established that most learners in Secondary Schools in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province, Zimbabwe are still biased towards gender lines in choice of practical subjects. However, results from this study revealed that there were some learners who did not consider gender to be a barrier anymore. Some girls were now doing Technical Graphics and Metal Work while some boys were now into Food and Nutrition. Some boys were enrolled in Food and Nutrition which was previously dominated by girls and some girls were now studying Technical Graphics, a subject considered to be for boys.

However, most girls were struggling to use heavy tools hence found it difficult to master the skills. One female learner said that: *"I was very interested in building but bricks and then tools used are very heavy.* "It was noted by most female students that lacked stamina to do male dominated subjects as most of the practical subjects for males require extra muscles as they demand a lot of strength.

Some female learners have seen the importance of male dominated subjects but the challenge is mainly parental influence as they feel that these subjects cause girls to have boys' traits. One of the students indicated that: *"My parents advised me not to take male dominated subjects because in the long run I will behave like a boy."*

A number of girls were interested in studying Technical Graphics which was mainly selected by boys as some of them were enjoying the drawing part of it. One of the girl learners indicated that:

> *"I feel elevated to the level of boys as we compete in the subject. It is believed that boys perform better than girls but I am even performing better than the boys in our class. The only problem is boys call me a boy in a dress but I was not discouraged by those comments."*

Forms of gender segregation experienced by learners during the learning process

The results from this study revealed that forms of gender segregation are hinged on lack of parental and administrative support in subject choice. Literature suggests that girls everywhere have been experiencing lower levels of parental investments and support, be it via family structure, parents' time or educational investments (Bharadwaj & Ketkisheth, 2010). Although both sexes are free to do practical subjects that they have a passion sometimes they are restricted by the timetable and other administrative issues such as facilities.

> One male student echoed that: *"My parents were not willing to support my choice as they thought doing female dominated subjects reduces the male hood in me."*

Helland and Wiborg (2018) suggest that parents' level of education and their educational fields affect the choice of educational field for their offspring. In the same vein, there is an increasing number of studies that illuminate how inequalities with respect to student segregation by parental educational background and gender is affecting the teaching of practical subjects (Lažetić, 2020; Ayalon & Mcdossi, 2018; Triventi et al., 2017; Pickard & Ingersoll, 2016). Therefore, this will remain a cycle of gender segregation if these students will also become parents who were socialised in gender roles.

Effects of gender segregation on the academic performance and social life of learners

Findings from this research revealed that gender segregation affects enrolment levels of the opposite sex in either female or male dominated practical subjects. Most schools studied experienced low subject takers of the opposite gender in practical subjects. The results of this study also indicated that gender segregation is visible in work places as evidenced by the teachers in schools who teach the subjects. The fear of being segregated in the work place reduces the number of takers at secondary level. Pullmann and Andres (2015), in their gender-sensitive analysis of applied versus general higher education in the Canadian province showed that general fields of study appear to be more gender-'neutral' compared to the more segregated practical/applied fields of study. This may imply that gender segregation is the major reason while there is low enrolment of females in male dominated practical subjects and vice versa.

Gender segregation during the learning process was cited as a hindrance to good academic performance. Gender roles produce a diversity of educational pathways which lead to a variation in life chances, and thus is a major driver of the reproduction of gender inequalities which influence the learning process (Hadjar & Gross, 2016). Most learners indicated that teachers may look down upon students who are in opposite sex dominated subjects; hence that causes lack of confidence and self-esteem. One male student indicated that: *"I had an experience of being told by the teacher that I cannot produce fine embroidery as my hands were fashioned for manual work."*

> On the other hand one female lamented that: *"Those teachers in male dominated subjects, especially metal work discourage female learners to use heavy duty cutting machines."*

This implies that exposure and skills acquisition is greatly compromised. In a practical subject the influence of the hierarchically order of the family cannot be ignored as they may affect how teachers treat boys (Brown, Reay & Vincent, 2013; Triventi et al., 2017).

Food and Nutrition has made gainful inroads in both countries under study because more boys are opting for the subject as they seriously study and write the examinations at SGCSE, Ordinary and Advanced Level. However, according to Lessky, Nairz and Wurzer (2022) gender segregation is still visible in practical subjects as girls are treated different in male dominated subjects and vice versa. The hospitality industry in both Eswatini and Zimbabwe seems to have a balance of males and females but still females are in most cases allocated female duties such as cleaning. Fashion and Fabrics has few takers in Zimbabwe as most boys are shy to be seen sewing. However, the number of boys enrolled in Fashion and Fabrics in Eswatini is a bit higher than in Zimbabwe. The culture of Zimbabwe has labelled sewing as a female duty but surprisingly the clothing industry in Zimbabwe is male dominated same as in Eswatini.

Possible solutions to reduce the influence of gender segregation on learners in practical subjects

The current study established that gender segregation is still a thorn in the flesh in practical subjects. There is still a significant gender differential in the take-up of practical subjects (Hägglund & Lörz, 2020; OECD, 2019). However, according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2004) there have been attempts by governments in various countries to demystify the myth of 'boys' only and 'girls' only practical subjects. Some positive changes have been noted though, in both developed and developing countries. The findings from this study indicated that there are no incentives given to students who take-up practical subjects of the opposite sex. This may imply that the government of Zimbabwe may consider applying the STEM policy to encourage learners to break the barrier of gender segregation in practical subjects. In Eswatini all the current programmes on offer should be adapted to include gender equality as a principle objective in order to eradicate the imbalance that is experienced in different fields and organisations, and the education domain in particular.

In developing countries, where all along parents preferred educating the boy more than the girl child, educational opportunities have been availed to both, irrespective of gender (Khumalo, 2006; Makombe, 2006). It has been common in both Eswatini and Zimbabwe that parents preferred to educate boys more than girls. Despite the fact that both Governments of Eswatini and Zimbabwe have been concerned about gender imbalances and their active participation in various national, regional and international forum and conferences on gender segregation, they have yielded minimum results as a lot is left to be desired. Some learners were suggesting that gender policies should be included in the curriculum from elementary level. This may be used as means to neutralise gender roles. Schools in this case will encourage gender neutrality as

learners will be treated equally at tender age. According to Lautenbach (2018) concerning the chances of successfully mastering the skills required for the profession gender inequalities should be removed from the classroom and the learning process.

CONCLUSION

Several factors have been identified as influential in the choice of practical subjects by gender which includes cultural factors such as belief systems. The common forms of gender segregation were stereotyping where anyone who enrols in a subject dominated by the opposite gender would be considered as misfits and support denied by parents or guardians. The major effect of gender segregation on the learner is ccompromised academic performance by learners. Overall, gender segregation in practical subjects is highest in female dominated practical subjects as the interpretation was done with respect to the constellations of educational principles and policies in the respective schools. In light of all the factors laid out, concerted effort from all stakeholders is needed to reduce the impact of gender segregation on uptake and academic performance in practical subjects.This relationship needs to be managed and nurtured for pronounced results in gender mainstreaming in Eswatini and Zimbabwe. It will make positive contribution in creating the desired environment for holistic, incremental mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment in both countries.

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