



# Gender Bias in Educational Material and Teaching Practices in Schools: A Case Study of Public Secondary Schools in Iganga District

Muweesi Charles<sup>1</sup>, Disan Kuteesa Mugenyi<sup>2</sup>, Kaweesi Muhamadi<sup>1</sup>, Kabasiita Jessica<sup>3</sup>, & Mirembe Rose Namaganda<sup>1</sup>

1. Faculty of Science and Education, Busitema University
2. School of Education, Kyambogo University
3. Faculty of Education, Mountains of the Moon University

## Abstract:

This study investigated gender bias in educational materials and teaching practices in a case study of public secondary schools in the Iganga district and objectively focused on; examining the indicators of gender bias in the preparation of educational materials and content delivery, identifying factors contributing to gender bias in educational programs, and examining the functional attempts made to eliminate gender bias to enhance teaching practices. Qualitative Oral-narrative results from teachers were obtained and reported in story form, while results from headteachers were obtained and reported verbatim. Findings indicated that there were several indicators of gender bias in the public secondary schools in Iganga District. This was reflected in leadership, where female headteachers were scarce, with only two schools having female principals. Besides, the internal administrative responsibilities were biased against females, as heads of disciplinary committees were predominantly male teachers, as were directors of studies and other positions. The causes for these, as per the findings, were: the perception that some jobs were best performed and suited for females; the flexibility aspect, as men were found to be so tough and rigid; and the favouritism aspect. Functional mechanisms for reducing gender biases in public secondary schools included, among other things, posting anti-gender bias messages on classroom and office walls, balancing responsibilities, and suggestion boxes. Conclusively, in almost all public secondary schools in Iganga District, there is no female head of the disciplinary committee an indicator of gender bias in the assignment of disciplinary committee responsibilities. Many female teachers are denied certain responsibilities because they are either married or unable to attend to their responsibilities at certain times of the day. The major recommendation is that every teacher should be required to ensure that gender-sensitive messages are disseminated and posted on walls and in appropriate places.

*Keywords: Educational Materials, Iganga District, Gender Bias, content delivery, public secondary schools*

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

According to UNESCO, gender equality needs to be taken into consideration across the educational system in terms of access, content, teaching and learning environment and methods, learning outcomes, and chances for life and work. UNESCO indicates that despite significant improvements, there are still significant gender differences in schooling across a variety of contexts, most frequently harming girls, but in some areas, boys also face disadvantages. Worldwide, 125.5 million boys and 118.5 million girls do not attend school. Nearly two-thirds of all adults who cannot read are still women (UNESCO, 2021).

The duty of developing action plans to address the ongoing inequities between male and female academics and administrators at all levels has been given to educational leaders in Europe. Because universities, like any other institution, continue to distinguish between male and female in terms of "advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning, and identity," they remain gendered (Eileen, 2020).

In secondary schools in Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, a quantitative content analysis was carried out to identify gender stereotypes in educational settings. The combined female share in textual and pictorial indicators is 40.4%, which suggests a pro-male bias in textbook findings. Only 35.2% of picture content in Malaysia and Bangladesh is female, according to a cross-country analysis. In Malaysia and Indonesia, the ratio of female to male characters is roughly equal (44.4% and 44.1%, respectively), whereas this percentage is only 24.4% and 37.3%, respectively, in textbooks from Pakistan and Bangladesh (Kazi, et al., 2018).

It is commonly assumed that investing in the education of women would have positive social and economic effects (Moyo et al., 2020). It is not unexpected that gender imbalance in school enrolment has declined over the past several decades in many developing nations given the evidence of the social and private advantages of female education, as well as many international accords and national efforts. Between 1970 and 2009, the average number of years that women spent in school rose from 2.2 to 7.2 in developing nations (Moyo & Perumal, 2020).

Further studies looked at current gender-sensitive education toolkits for instructors in low- and middle-income countries to identify recurring themes crucial for secondary school teachers working in the Eritrean environment. Findings suggest that the teacher should pay particular attention to the following: involving students in learning, creating a gender-sensitive classroom, using language and teaching materials, health and maturity issues, and involving parents and the community to promote gender sensitivity (Korenius, 2015).

According to Dennis et al. (2018), the policies and educational cultures of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland prioritize discourses that marginalize, suppress, and obscure gender and sexual minorities. The researchers contend that a genuine engagement with the pervasive reality of heterosexist exclusion and marginalization is necessary if educational institutions in the region are to incorporate all learners.

There are still limited instances of coeducational interventions inside the educational system, according to Mara et al.'s 2020 report on Uganda. The study also shows how access has been the major focus of coeducational treatments and how some types of sexism still exist in classrooms due to concealed curricula. As a result, the study highlights the need for legislative change based on coeducational interventions as well as specialized teacher preparation for gender and equality (María, et al., 2020).

### **Aim of the Study**

The study was set to investigate gender bias in educational materials and teaching practices in a case study of public secondary schools in the Iganga district.

### **Objectives**

- a) To examine the indicators of gender bias in the preparation of educational materials and content delivery in public secondary schools in the Iganga District

- b) To identify factors contributing to gender bias in educational programmes
- c) To examine the functional attempts put across to eliminate gender bias to enhance teaching practices in public secondary schools in Iganga District

### **Theoretical Review**

Bonnie G. Smith claims that gender theory, which was created by women in the 19th century, served as the study's guiding principle. The main argument is that gender roles should be viewed by society as a collection of traits that men and women have jointly developed to influence one another's lives. It discredits the notion that a woman is not formed but rather is born (Bonnie, 2000). The study is informed by the idea because it emphasizes the need for society to stop seeing men and women or males and females as distinct groups based on artificial distinctions. The purpose of this study, which was designed to outline many ways stakeholders might contribute to addressing the issue of gender prejudice in educational institutions, particularly secondary schools, is to examine how gender theory fits in the margins.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

By research objectives, the literature cites studies on gender discrepancies conducted by various academics. The most recent citations were used in the scholarly publications from which the literature was gathered.

#### **Gender Bias in Educational Materials and Content Delivery; Indicative Tales**

Tony, et al. (2022) studied school leadership and gender in Africa and found that little new information is being produced on this crucial subject, and sources in the majority of African nations were not found. African women principals are demonstrated to be more collaborative and collegial than men. As a result, there is a critical need for ministries of education to review their recruitment and selection practices to address barriers that prevent women from becoming school principals. Roper (2019) contends that gender bias in sciences and medicine is pervasive and persistent in today's faculty and students, even though the majority of faculty and scientists believe they are fair and unbiased. This is contrary to numerous well-designed studies that have been published in prestigious peer-reviewed journals. According to recent studies, discrimination against women negatively impacts wages, tenure, respect, professional employment, grant application success, and student grades.

The recruitment, progression, and promotion of women in academia continue to be low despite tremendous advances in recent decades. Women make up a significant share of the academic talent pool and acquire more than half of all PhDs, yet they are still underrepresented in teaching and leadership roles (Mitchelle, et al., 2020). In their systematic study of gender inequalities and the factors that contribute to success and failure in math and scientific contests, Anneke et al. (2019) provide some important findings. Results show that gender stereotypes play a significant role in the mechanisms causing low female participation rates in mathematics and science competitions and beyond, particularly in physics and chemistry. These mechanisms are influenced by gender stereotypes' effects on self-concept and interest (Charles, M., & Khan, B. M., 2022).

In general, biology classes seem to draw more female students, whereas physics classes are likely to draw more male students. Between educational levels, from secondary to tertiary education and higher levels like doctoral studies, gender involvement also varies. For instance, women

receive just 27% of bachelor's degrees in Europe and 18% of all bachelor's degrees in the United States in tertiary physics education (Fan, et al., 2017).

Modern Indian education has been started following the British education system after the fourth decade of the 18th century. According to the conventional concept, boys make more noise than girls in the classroom. The seating arrangement of primary school is divided into two rows, one side is allotted for boys and the other side is for girls. It creates a division among the children without the awareness of gender (Sudeep, 2022). According to Zhuofei (2021), gender inequality in K–12 education has five key expressions and causes: instructional materials, teacher attitudes, educational opportunities, traditional family conceptions, and family investments in education. The researcher mainly discovers that: 1) K12 textbooks display gender discrimination through illustrations and contents; 2) In K12 education, teachers' unbalanced care and stereotypes towards male and female students also lead to gender discrimination in classes; and 3) The concept of son preference and discrimination against women in the workplace will push families to become more inclined to provide men with more educational resources.

### **Contributive Factors to Gender Bias in Educational Programmes**

The lack of progress toward gender parity, pervasive gender stereotypes that cause hiring discrimination and fewer opportunities for women to advance in their careers, a lack of social capital (such as support networks) (Charles, M., Kuteesa, M. D., et al, 2023 which limits women's opportunities to obtain tenure and learn about grant funding mechanisms, and the perception that their academic environment is unwelcoming all contribute to the low number of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) faculty positions (Bettinah, et al., 2020). At various stages of their professions, research shows that women experience a variety of "chutes" that prevent them from advancing in their education. These include unconscious prejudice in choices about teaching evaluations and grant funding, the belief that women are less competent and produce work of inferior quality, and lower rates of citation (Mitchelle, et al., 2020).

Another study looked at how gender bias in attitudes and outcomes, such as anxiety, pleasure, self-confidence, and self-efficacy, were affected by the extensive use of computers in schools. The findings indicate that boys are preferred in computer anxiety, self-confidence, and self-efficacy despite intense computer use; however, there are no differences in computer enjoyment. There is no proof that frequent computer use lessens gender inequalities in these results (Roser & Xavier, 2018). Women still have less access to education than men do everywhere in the world. 1 in 4 young women ages 15 to 24 will not complete elementary school. 58% of those who don't finish that basic education belong to that group. Two-thirds of all illiterate people on Earth are female. Girls' futures and the opportunities they will have been significantly impacted when they receive an education that is below that of boys (Kenneth, 2022).

Women suffer the most when religious freedom is violated. According to the World Economic Forum, gender inequality worsens when extremist ideologies (like ISIS) invade a community and impose restrictions on the right to practice one's religion. Researchers from Georgetown University and Brigham Young University were also successful in establishing a link between religious intolerance and women's capacity to participate in the economy. The participation of women makes an economy more stable when there is greater religious freedom (Geordan, Melanie, & Kate, 2019). Many women worldwide lack control over either their bodies or having children. It's frequently incredibly tough to get birth control. The World Health Organization

estimates that more than 200 million women who don't want to become pregnant don't use contraception. There are several causes for this, including a dearth of choices, restricted access, and cultural and religious hostility. Globally, 40% of pregnancies are unplanned, and while 38% of them end in births, 50% of them do result in abortions. These moms frequently lose their independence and turn to the state or another individual for financial support (Hayde, Margaret, & Gary, 2020).

The division of labour is one of the factors that contribute to gender inequality in the workplace. Most societies have an ingrained notion that men are just more capable of handling particular tasks. These are frequently the positions with the highest salaries. Women experience lower income as a result of this discrimination (Charles, M., Kuteesa, M. D., et al, 2023). Women also shoulder the majority of the responsibility for unpaid labour, so despite their participation in the paid workforce, they perform extra tasks that are never compensated financially (Eileen, 2020). The general mentality of a society has a big impact on gender inequality, even though it is less obvious than some of the other reasons on this list. Every area, including employment, the legal system, and healthcare, is heavily influenced by how society views the distinctions and relative worth of men and women. Although laws and structural changes can advance equality, there is frequent pushback after major changes because gender beliefs run deep. (Charles, M., & Khan, B. M., 2022). When there has been progress, such as greater representation of women in leadership positions, it is also typical for both men and women to ignore other instances of gender inequality (Bettinah, et al., 2020).

### **Functional Attempts to Eliminate Gender Bias to Enhance Teaching Practices**

From 2016 to 2017, the UN Women Egypt Country Office (ECO) initiated a campaign in Greater Cairo, Minia, Luxor, Aswan, and the Red Sea to reduce the gender gap in education, both in formal and informal settings. The program sought to: enhance the quality of formal educational institutions and community mechanisms to support young women's and girls' education; conduct needs analyses to identify and address the main barriers to girls' access to safe education; bring together the business community and educational policymakers to better link education to employment needs; and advocate for addressing the root causes of gender-based discrimination by expanding community (UN, 2022). Girls have less access to education and fewer opportunities than boys, even though education is a proven catalyst for gender equality and sustainable development (Wikigender, 2017). A sexist teaching built on a false and disguised curriculum perpetuates outdated notions and assumptions about female roles. Women thus have a higher likelihood of experiencing precarity and unemployment throughout their lifetimes. This, together with the daily gender-based abuse that girls experience, generates new and ongoing mental health difficulties that are not taken seriously by their teachers or schools (Plan International UK, 2020).

Despite hearing messages of empowerment at school, girls face a threatening reality when they are unable to reach their full potential. To make sure that students comprehend any subject, teachers must first reflect on their classroom procedures and the intentions, goals, and values that direct them (Charles, M., Kuteesa, M. D., et al, 2023). Then, teachers should think about how they interact with students because teachers need to avoid giving students expectations that are solely based on gender or sex roles (Kisha, 2020). The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) is disaggregating all sex-related indicators to the greatest extent feasible to assist nations in their efforts to carry out and live up to their pledge that they would have closed the gender gap by

2030. The UIS also creates gender parity indices and is working to create new indicators that will better represent, include, and treat both boys and girls equally (UNESCO, 2022).

The 2030 Education Framework for Action, which is part of the organization, aims to "Ensure equitable and inclusive education of quality and to Promote Lifelong Educational Opportunities for everyone." To achieve gender equality, SDG-5 of UNESCO calls for the empowerment of all girls and women (UNESCO, 2022). The most significant barriers that prevent girls and women from exercising their legal right to receive and complete their education and benefit to the fullest extent are geographical isolation, poverty, minority status, early marriage and pregnancy, disability, gender-related violence, and traditionally developed attitudes regarding the role and status of women (Andrews, 2019).

Numerous environments offer learning opportunities and the chance to continue one's education, typically at the expense of women and girls, while there are also places where boys and men face disadvantages. Despite significant advancements, more than 17 million girls will never be able to enter a classroom or a school, and generally, females continue to drop out of school at a higher rate than boys (Siqueira, 2021).

### **Fissures Leading to the Study**

The recruitment, progression, and promotion of women in academia continue to be low despite tremendous advances in recent decades. African women principals are demonstrated to be more collaborative and collegial than men. There is a critical need for ministries of education to review their recruitment and selection practices. Gender bias in attitudes and outcomes, such as anxiety, pleasure, self-confidence, and self-efficacy, were affected by the extensive use of computers in schools. There is no proof that frequent computer use lessens gender inequalities in these results. Girls are underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics faculty positions. Girls have less access to education and fewer opportunities than boys, even though education is a proven catalyst for gender equality and sustainable development. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) is disaggregating all sex-related indicators to assist nations in their efforts to close the gender gap.

The prior literature helps provide insights into numerous gender-related issues that improve knowledge of the study's specific objectives. However, there is still a paucity of knowledge on the signs of gender differences, the causes of them, and the practical measures taken to address them. Additionally, the study was carried out at Iganga District public secondary schools, which have various administrative and geographic structures. Therefore, until this study was conducted, no literature applicable to governments outside of Africa or other nations could be extrapolated to the study region.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The researcher used a primarily qualitative data collection and analysis technique in this study. The qualitative technique was used to explore the emotions and sentiments of the teachers regarding commitment to policy and students' welfare in public secondary schools.

### **Study Population**

The study was conducted in the Iganga district with 200 participants, including 128 students, 64 teachers, and 8 head teachers. These were carefully chosen among eight (8) public secondary

schools, including Bukoyo Secondary School, St. Paul Nasuti Secondary School, Nkuutu Memorial Secondary School, Iganga Secondary School, Iganga High School, Nakigo Secondary School, and Makuutu Seed School.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

Explanatory data were presented in the form of paraphrased statements and verbatim responses from the key respondents and other respondents. The results did not in any way include the numerical findings. The findings were not rated numerically, but rather by emphasizing them verbatim.

## **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

This section aids in understanding the findings obtained from the respondents in public secondary schools in Iganga District. The arrangement is the gender of respondents; results concerning indicators of gender bias in educational materials and content delivery; factors contributing to gender bias; and functional approaches to curbing gender partialities.

### **Gender of Respondents**

According to findings, teachers in the public secondary schools in the Iganga District are mostly males. This may have influenced the findings in such a way that female teachers' perspectives were underrepresented. Most of the secondary schools did not have representation from female teachers, which specifically justifies why such a study as this is a step in the right direction.

### **Results for the Indicators of Gender Bias in Preparation of Educational Materials and Content Delivery in Public Secondary Schools in Iganga District**

One of the identified causes of gender bias on the side of students is dropout. Findings revealed that from senior one to senior four, and in some other three schools up to senior six, the minimum number of streams per class is three. However, observations indicated that as students advanced in classes, their numbers reduced, and this reduction was mostly on the female side.

The attendance rate, just like enrollment, helps establish how gender performs in terms of regular school attendance. The attendance of students in the Iganga District about gender varied with class. According to the findings, school attendance at the senior level is usually regular and higher for female students. However, though in many schools' females are the majority, the trend changes such that, with time, the number of students attending is more frequent for males than for females. On this subject, the principal of School B was quoted as saying: *When students reach grade three, significant differences in attendance begin to emerge, with boys putting in more effort to attend schools with fewer students enrolled. After secondary school, the gap widens so much that few girls are likely to advance to senior four or senior six...*

In terms of gender sensitivity and content delivery, results indicated that in designing schemes of work, School A scored highly in responding to gender issues, followed by School B. However, generally, gender sensitivity in preparation and content delivery is still low. On the other hand, there was much attention given to lesson planning in secondary schools, where headteachers could not discriminate against teachers based on gender when demanding lesson plans. Asked whether gender sensitivity is considered in content delivery, the headteacher of school B had this to say: *At this school, we believe that the food for thought for every stakeholder is to see that students receive adequate materials in the teaching-learning process. Fortunately, there is no*

*discrimination when it comes to this kind of responsibility. I must make sure that regardless of whether one is a male or female teacher, there are lesson plans made.*

There are also concerns about the issue of the head and deputy head teacher, whereby it was indicated that in many secondary schools except school B, which is Iganga Girls Secondary School, it is rare to find a female headteacher. Equally, there are always two or three deputies in public secondary schools. However, it is also not common to find a female headteacher or female deputy headteacher, which also reflects gaps as far as gender equality is concerned. Asked about the comment about gender sensitivity in secondary school administration, the headteacher of School B stated: *Well, you find that as bad as gender bias is in schools, this one is particularly different. It is good to always have a female headteacher because it is a single-sex school, and I hardly think that a male headteacher can understand the concerns of a female student. Besides, I am truly convinced that it will be a little difficult for a female student to freely share concerns about her private life with a male school leader. This is where the gender issue requires much more attention while discussing it...*

Furthermore, findings revealed that there is gender bias in the assignment of disciplinary committee responsibilities. In other words, the study results indicate that in almost all public secondary schools in Iganga District, there is no female head of the disciplinary committee, yet each secondary school comprises teachers of each gender. One of the comments made by the principal of School D was: *Let us now discuss something to which you rarely pay attention. Have you seen many secondary schools appointing female teachers to lead the school's disciplinary committee? In most cases, the people in charge of discipline are deputies in charge of administration. However, besides these, there is always space for another administrator. Unfortunately, female teachers are not given priority.*

The other issue was about the spaces for convenience. Under normal circumstances, it is good to have separate toilets or latrines with clear labels on structures. However, from the findings, it was indicated that even with the labels, you may find males continuing to go and use latrines or toilets meant to be used by female teachers.

### **Results for Factors Contributing to Gender Bias in Educational Programmes in Public Secondary Schools in Iganga District**

Observation has shown that the adolescence stage affects female students more than their male counterparts. This is because in many schools, the enrollment rate is normally high for both male and female learners, but numbers keep reducing with cases of pregnancy among female students in the different schools. In the words of one of the head teachers, it was indicated as follows: *...However, as students advance to higher classes, the number of streams reduces from three to two and even to one. This signifies an unsteady retention rate for students and mind you many of the drop-outs are female students, who as they cross over to upper primary, many of them drop out due to adolescence-related consequences.*

In terms of allocating responsibilities, gender bias comes in when it comes to specific responsibilities. When it comes to catering for female students in dormitories, the matron is needed. However, at the staff, there is a need to have a senior woman teacher. Here the cause for gender bias is that the responsibility is directed to female students, not their male counterparts. In response to some of the reasons why gender bias exists in schools, the head teacher of school D indicated: *The most obvious is the nature of the responsibility to which one has been assigned.*



*When we want to appoint a senior official to be in charge of female students, we can appoint John or Moses; even parents can sue us. We need to appoint a lady who can reach out to the dormitories and make sure everything is in order. The reason men are disadvantaged in this way is that they have their weaknesses, which, I think are natural when they get close to the opposite sex, and vice versa...*

More results reveal that on many occasions, male teachers take on certain decisions that their female counterparts cannot equally take on. For instance, when it comes to disciplining students, findings revealed that many female teachers tend to be soft while male teachers are always tough and command the attention of the students when they say something. It is for this reason that when it comes to appointing leaders of the disciplinary committee, it is always male teachers taking on the responsibility.

On the other hand, findings revealed that many female teachers are denied certain responsibilities because they are either married or unable to attend to their responsibilities at certain times of the day. Results revealed that if, for instance, a female teacher is married, it is not easy to call her for a commitment at 5.00 p.m. Such a person, as the findings indicate, will be busy with domestic chores. Asked about why gender bias predominates in most school responsibilities, the headteacher at school D had this to say: *As you talk about the issue of gender bias, there is yet another issue that we need to look at with a keen eye. First of all, we relate to and supervise female teachers who are married and have lots of responsibilities back in their homes. This alone can make someone who is a fully trained administrator give certain responsibilities to men and others to female teachers. What we look for here is a family-work balance, or else you will end up messing up people's marriages.*

The findings also showed that there were several cases in which male teachers expressed anxiety about their ability to fill particular roles. Some teachers asserted that similar to the matron and senior female teachers, there would be a senior male teacher in charge of boys' issues in addition to the warden. Almost all public secondary schools were found to be lacking in this type of structure. According to the study's objective, the inability of administrators to balance positions of responsibility on both sides is what leads to this divide. One is always left wondering if male students don't face the same difficulties as their female colleagues. The concern about the cause for bias on the side of males was also raised by one head teacher who indicated; *At times, you may find that the assignment of responsibilities is, for sure, biased against men, as you say. However, as a headteacher with some experience, I've noticed that there are many cases where male teachers are difficult to delegate to. They are always feeling superior, and many think they cannot tolerate instructions. This is why, in certain schools, you will find that a female teacher may start acting in a position they are not qualified for.*

Finally, but not least, the causes for gender bias or factors contributing to gender bias in public secondary schools in Iganga District include; favouritism. According to findings, it is possible to find public secondary schools in Iganga District where a head teacher favours either female or male teachers. This automatically dictates the occurrence of the gender bias theory.

### **Results for the Functional Attempts Put Across to Eliminate Gender Bias to Enhance Teaching Practices in Public Secondary Schools in Iganga District**

The question of whether gender advocacy messages were disseminated in particular secondary schools was investigated. This was done to see if the different stakeholders—in particular, the head teachers, the staff room, the classrooms, the complex, and the buildings—had access to

these communications. Results showed that head teachers' offices successfully reflected gender advocacy messaging. In response to the functional measures in place to eliminate gender bias, headteacher school B indicated: *I, for one, keep encouraging teachers, whenever possible, not to discriminate against anyone when assigning responsibilities. There is a tendency—I heard that teachers in some other schools tend to give more marks to one gender than the other. I want to tell you that this hearsay has helped me as a tool to fight favouritism and encourage equality among teachers and students in this school.*

Another review investigated whether or not some public secondary schools accomplished much to advance gender equality in the classroom. According to the messages, among other things, positive gender-based behaviour by teachers and students can be disruptive to the teaching and learning process. Boys picking on females, bigger students picking on both boys and girls, bigger students picking on smaller students, mocking, abusive language and gestures, sexual overtures, touching and groping, or sharing notes are just a few examples of this. In response to the question about whether gender-sensitive advocacy is implemented in the classroom, responses from headteacher school C revealed that: *At least whenever we meet as headteachers, there are certain government programs to which we give much attention. Gender equality is one of them, and for us as headteachers, we believe this must start at the classroom level. Students are the real owners of institutions. It must be realized that there are no separate fee requirements for male and female students. Therefore, we encourage equal treatment among students themselves and between students and teachers.*

The investigation into privacy about gender responsiveness was based on several issues, including separate restrooms for boys and girls or female and male teachers, changing rooms, incinerators, separate urinal locations, counselling rooms, and easy access for SNE students to all buildings in the school or college. These difficulties show how seriously schools take the planning and division of pit latrines and bathrooms for boys and girls. In the responses of headteachers, it was indicated that: *We have done everything possible to ensure that the issue of privacy is addressed. Here, the school prioritizes the idea of having separate toilets for males and females. And by the way, it is not only reflected on the side of students; rather, it is everywhere, even on the side of teachers. Males cannot make use of females' facilities when it comes to convenience.*

Two secondary schools have semi-public changing rooms set up so that individuals may change their clothing privately, either one at a time or according to their gender. Men and women may have separate changing areas, or there may be an open area without cubicles or stalls designated for either gender. A person may occasionally change into a different set of clothes in a restroom's toilet cubicle. Responding to ways gender sensitivity is catered for, the headteacher for School E stated: *This being a school with an Islamic foundation, there are changing rooms here. The females have their changing rooms. We respect privacy so much in this school and hate to see any violation of the rules that govern privacy. Here we try to protect female students from any form of harassment by advocating for the use of long skirts. We discourage minidresses and skirts.*

Typically, suggestion boxes are required in classrooms. Notes regarding topics for discussion in class at the weekly meeting can be placed in the box by students. The majority of the time, students write about a situation that involves one or more people or that has an impact on the entire class. Findings showed that although there were suggestion boxes available in schools, they were rarely used.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions were drawn from the study's findings. The recommendations, on the other hand, are based on the gaps identified per the specific objective of the study.

### Conclusions of the Study

According to the findings, school attendance at the senior level is usually regular and higher for female students. In terms of gender sensitivity and content delivery, results indicated that school A scored highly in responding to gender issues. In almost all public secondary schools in Iganga District, there is no female head of the disciplinary committee. However, each secondary school comprises teachers of each gender. There are concerns about the issue of separate toilets or latrines for male and female teachers. Findings show that there is gender bias in the assignment of disciplinary committee responsibilities.

In terms of the factors contributing to gender bias, it was concluded that male teachers are more likely to be tough and command the attention of students when they say something, while female teachers tend to be soft when disciplining them. Many female teachers are denied certain responsibilities because they are either married or unable to attend to their responsibilities at certain times of the day. Public secondary schools in the Iganga District lack structures to balance the responsibilities of male and female teachers.

The study looked at whether or not some public secondary schools accomplished much to advance gender equality in the classroom. Results showed that head teachers' offices successfully reflected gender advocacy messaging. Findings showed that suggestion boxes were available in schools but rarely used by teachers and students.

### Recommendations

Findings indicate that language has to be changed such that "students" or "friends" are preferred over "girls and boys." These nicknames portray guys as hard and girls as soft. The results show that advocacy messages are crucial and effective change agents for gender equality. Therefore, it should be required of every instructor to see to it that gender-sensitive messages are disseminated and posted on walls and in appropriate places. It is also important to balance responsibilities among teachers. Most importantly, male teachers ought to be prepared to respect the female gender by assigning them responsibilities to take care of them. If we can have male chefs, we can have male teachers take charge of certain aspects of female students.

## REFERENCES

- Andrews, D. J. (2019). The Impossibility of Being "Perfect and White": Black Girls' Racialized and Gendered Schooling Experiences. *Sage Journals*, 56(6). doi: <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219849392>
- Anneke, M. S., Tim, H. N., Keller, M. M., & Ilka, P. (2019). Gender differences in mathematics and science competitions: A systematic review. *Wiley Online Library*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/tea.21580>
- Bettinah, J. C., Jillian, E. F., Kittleman, M. M., Allana, C. R., Hall, Y. D., & Patzel, Z. W. (2020, October 20). Gender inequality in academia: Problems and solutions for women faculty in STEM. *Neuroscience Research*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jnr.24631>
- Bonnie, G. S. (2000). *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice*. Harvard University Press.
- Charles, M., & Khan, B. M. (2022). Gender and Participation in Sexuality Extra-Curricular Education in Primary Schools in Bugiri Municipality, Uganda. *Studies in Social Science & Humanities*, 1(3), 1-8.

Charles, M., Kuteesa, M. D., Muhamadi, K., George, K., Robert, T., Christopher, I., Shira, N.T., Taddeo, K.Y., Lawrence, S., Mercy, W. and Justine, N., & Victoria, N. (2023). Gender Parity Approaches in Uganda's Education System: A Case of Public Secondary Schools in Bugiri District.

Dennis, F. A., Anthony, B., McAllister, J., Mosime, S. T., & Thani, G. T. (2018, May 17). A Five Country Study of Gender and Sexuality Diversity and Schooling in Southern Africa. *African Educational Review*, 16(1), 19-39. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/18146627.2017.1359637>

Eileen, D. (2020). *The Gender-Sensitive University: A Contradiction in Terms?* Sage Publications.

Fan, X., Chen, M., & Matsumoto, A. R. (2017). Gender differences in mathematics achievement: Findings from the national education longitudinal study of 1988. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 229–242. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.1997.99434>

Geordan, S., Melanie, J., & Kate, W. (2019). Gender equality in science, medicine, and global health: Where are we at and why does it matter? *Science Direct*, 560-569. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)33135-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)33135-0)

Hayde, E., Margaret, E. G., & Gary, L. D. (2020). Time poverty: Obstacle to women's human rights, health and sustainable development. *Journal of Global Health*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.7189/jogh.10.020313>

Kazi, M., Islam, I. M., & Niaz, A. (2018). Gender stereotypes and education: A comparative content analysis of Malaysian, Indonesian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi school textbooks. *PLOS One*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0190807>

Kenneth, U. (2022). Human Rights: An Overview Perspectives and Conditions That Create Problems of Human Rights and Why It Is Often Ignored by Authorities. *Canadian Social Science*, 18(2). doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/12644>

Kisha, M. (2020). Black girls are not magic; they are human: Intersectionality and inequity in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) schools. *Taylor and Francis Group*, 50(2). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.2020.1729660>

Korenius, S. (2015). Gender-sensitive education – A literature review of relevant toolkits for secondary school teachers in Eritrea. *Theseus*. Retrieved 2022, from <https://www.theseus.fi/handle/10024/157296>

María, A., Anna, R. L., & Dina, G. G. (2020, February 19). Coeducation and gender equality in education systems: A scoping review. *Elsevier*, 111. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.104837>

Mitchelle, I. C., Emilly, D., Yarar, C., Monica, F., Hidalgo, B., McClure, L. A., . . . Nathaniel, B. (2020, May 13). Turning Chutes into Ladders for Women Faculty: A Review and Roadmap for Equity in Academia. *Journal of Women's Health*, 29(5). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2019.8027>

Moyo, Z., & Perumal, J. (2020). A systematic review of research on women leading and managing education in Zimbabwe. 18(2). Retrieved from <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/gab/article/view/198193>

Moyo, Z., Perumal, J., & Hallinger, P. (2020, October). Struggling to make a difference against the odds: a synthesis of qualitative research on women leading schools in Zimbabwe. *Emerald Insight*, 34(10), 1577-1594. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-01-2020-0015>

Roper, R. L. (2019, July 17). Does Gender Bias Still Affect Women in Science? *Microbiology and Molecular Biology Reviews*, 83(3). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1128/MMBR.00018-19>

Roser, C. S., & Xavier, C. F. (2018). Effects of intensive use of computers in secondary school on gender differences in attitudes towards ICT: A systematic review. *Journal of Information Technology Education*, pages 2111–2139. doi <https://doi.org/10.28945/168>.

Siqueira, S. (2021). Critical Pedagogy and Language Education: Hearing the Voices of Brazilian Teachers of English. *MDPI*, 11(5). doi: <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11050235>

Sudeep, S. (2022). A Review on Gender Discrimination in India. *International Journal of Recent Research in Social Sciences and Humanities (IJRSSH)*, 9(1), 1-4.  
doi:<https://www.paperpublications.org/upload/book/A%20Review%20on%20Gender-19012022-4.pdf>

Tony, B., Kirezi, J., Ashford, R., & Derek, G. (2022). School Leadership and Gender in Africa: A Systematic Overview. *Research in educational administration and Leadership*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.30828/real.1159040>

UN. (2022). Confronting gender discrimination in education: Expanding education for gender equality. *UN Women*.

UNESCO. (2021). UNESCO guidance on communicating gender equality in and through education.

UNESCO. (2022). Gender Inequality in Education. *Gender stats*, 1-4.

Zhuofei, L. V. (2021). Proceedings of the 2021 International Conference on Public Relations and Social Sciences (ICPRSS 2021). *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.211020.325>