



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

Muweesi Charles¹, Disan Kuteesa Mugenyi², Kaweesi Muhamadi¹, Kabasiita Jessica³, & Mirembe Rose Namaganda¹

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).

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.

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