GENDER STEREOTYPING AND GIRL CHILD PERFORMANCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MASVINGO PROVINCE, ZIMBABWE

BY

CHEGOVO PRAY TINASHE

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DECLARATION

Student Number: 43301126

I declare that **GENDER STEREOTYPING AND GIRL CHILD PERFORMANCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MASVINGO PROVINCE, ZIMBABWE** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used and indicated are acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature

Chegovo

22 August 2022

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(Mr. P.T Chegovo)   Date

ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe is assisted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to achieve sustainable economic growth and human development. This study sought to interrogate how gender stereotypes contribute to the development and perpetuation of gender stereotyping as well as how the academic performance of the girl child is affected in primary schools in Zimbabwe. The study is informed by feminist theory, mainly from a radical feminist perspective, Bourdieu's theory of social capital and Bandura's social learning theory. Embedded in the qualitative research approach, a single descriptive case study explored how gender stereotypes contributed and perpetuated girl child performance in primary schools in Zaka District in Masvingo Province. Fourteen participants were purposefully sampled from two schools in Zaka District in Masvingo Province. Semi-structured, focus group interviews and non-participant observation were used to collect data. The results show that gender stereotyping of girl children is still rampant in schools despite efforts to integrate girls into the education system. The study made a number of recommendations to various stakeholders in the Ministry of Education, teachers and parents.

Key terms: stereotypes, feminism, culture, gender gap, academic performance, gender differences

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife, Sally, my parents and our children, Miriam and Tinotenda, for the unwavering support they rendered. May the good Lord continue to bless you.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM FORMULATION, AIMS AND RESEARCH DESIGN

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe has made great strides since attaining independence in 1980 to ensure that all forms of gender inequality are eradicated in the country, including in the classroom. The government of Zimbabwe is signatory to a wide range of conventions and declarations to ensure gender equality in schools and in the society at large. Some of the declarations, conventions and policies ratified by the government of Zimbabwe include the National Gender Policy of 2004 and 2013, the 1992 Gender Affirmative Action Policy and the 1999 Nziramasanga Commission of Enquiry into Education and Training. However, the Nziramasanga Commission noted that gender disparities are still evident across all education levels (Government of Zimbabwe 1999).

Despite the steps taken by the government of Zimbabwe and other stakeholders to address gender inequalities, the reality falls far short of targets as gender disparities still exist in schools and there is evidence of a highly unequal society in Zimbabwe at large. Chabaya (2019) highlights significant barriers to the realisation of women's potential exist mainly due to financial exclusion.

1.2   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Education in Africa, and more specifically in Zimbabwe, remains the most dynamic option for individuals and national development and social and economic transformation. Above all, it is internationally identified as a basic right and a key development index. The government of Zimbabwe is endeavouring to provide primary education at the lowest possible cost as well as educational opportunities for all its population. Equal education regardless of gender is a key aim and many women's lobby groups support women's empowerment (Marimba 2016).

Nonetheless, the literature indicates that educational attainment by girls is low (The Herald 2018). Zimbabwe has fewer girls who attend school compared to boys and girls have less access to financial and moral support from families and communities,

considering the melt down in the Zimbabwean economy (Sunday Mail 2018). Most girls are left at home to take care of their younger sisters and brothers; others migrate to towns to enter domestic service as a way to support their families. The twenty-first century has presented its own social problems where the gender gap is widening (Brown 2018). The population of Zimbabwe is above 13 million; women make up 52 percent of the total population, 51 per cent of the rural population and 53 per cent of urbanites (Sunday Mail 2018).

In the light of the above, it can be concluded that the most pertinent gender issues have not been fully examined and the girl child in Zimbabwe still remains disadvantaged. The issue of gender stereotypes in Zimbabwe has not been fully analysed especially in the Masvingo Province. This remains a gap in the research on gender.

Brannon (2016: 45) is of the view that gender stereotypes are "community's beliefs about how the sexes differ (descriptive stereotypes) or should differ (prescriptive stereotypes)". Furthermore, stereotypes that are correlated with gender are viewed as behaviour patterns associated with a certain sex more valued by the society, due to beliefs, biological patterns and wrong perceptions. Thus stereotyping of gender is widely seen as beliefs or assumptions that deal with ways of behaving and social activities attached to males and females. Thus gender stereotyping is an over-generalisation, a category or concept that is learned, factually erroneous, inflexible and sustained. For example, Siyakwazi and Siyakwazi (2015) claim that the Lemba people believe that girls should undergo initiation ceremonies where they are equipped with the motherhood skills and regarded as ready for marriage.

African countries are believed to be mostly patriarchal societies where parents give preference and attention to the boy child in educational matters compared to the girl child (Moore 2016). The girl child is encouraged to perform maternal roles as they become adolescents. These attitudes and behaviours are generally learned first in the home and are then reinforced by the child's peers, school experience and the media. However, the strongest influence on gender role development occurs in the family setting, where parents pass on, both overtly and covertly, to their children their own beliefs about gender (Brown 2018). This is a general belief in an African community

setup and is based in a study done in Nigeria by Para-Mallam (2016), which found that religious beliefs also promote gender stereotyping.

According to the World Bank (2016: 23), the boy child is viewed as of "high value in many rural households in the developing countries". In education, preference is usually given to men because of the cultural socialisation of their roles as breadwinners. For the females, the general belief is that they get married and become submissive to their spouses and accorded inferior status. Furthermore, to strengthen the male supremacy over the girl child, she is taught to be humble and docile towards her male siblings. In certain homes, the girl child is made to sell various wares to mitigate financial constraints in the family (World Bank 2016). The girls are married at a young age in order to use the bride price to educate the boy child and pay for other requisites of the family. However, until proven, it is difficult to argue that all communities in developing countries face this same predicament since countries have different traditional beliefs and levels of socio-economic development. As Zimbabwe is a developing country, there is a need to provide evidence and support these theoretical views.

In recent scenarios, the girl child is married off for domestic purposes in an urban setting for a regular family income. Studies in Kenya's Katorongo village show that the girl child and boy child are nurtured differently (Marimba 2016). The effects of psychology on gender stereotypes and socio-cultural beliefs are designed to ensure that the girl child is inferior. These perceptions combined with other interacting ways observed for boys and girls instil a sense of the male supremacy while girls are socialised to accept domesticity, apathy and subjugation (Wasarhaney 2017). However, the case of Zimbabwe has not been fully researched and recorded hence the need to do similar studies.

Most gender stereotypes that affect the girl child are the idea that boys are masculine and girls feminine; educating the girl child is a waste of resources; boys are breadwinners; an educated girl has loose morals; a girl's place is the kitchen or the private sphere and the thinking that the male child will support the parents when they attain old age. These gender stereotypical beliefs have been absorbed by girls and

women as they internalise these wrong messages from authority figures (Brown 2018).

For the purpose of this research, gender stereotypes imply socio-cultural beliefs and ways, which hinder the girl child's right to education as supported by the Sunday Mail (2018). This study is informed by the concern over the effects of gender stereotypes on the whole development of girls. In many households, girls are exposed to traditional behaviours, norms and stereotypical practices. Most practices are meant to uphold patriarchy and gender inequalities in society (UNICEF 2017). Generally the basic human rights of women and girls are damaged by these beliefs which retard the social development of females (UNICEF 2017). They increase the burden of the developmental tasks for the girl child, which hinders her developmental process. A nation that does not support the development of half its population puts itself at risk.

There is little documented research which examines how stereotypic beliefs on female gender affects the girl child's perception towards education which impedes their participation in education in Zimbabwe. Against this background gender stereotyping and their effects on educational attitudes of primary school girls in the Masvingo Province of Zimbabwe are examined.

1.3   MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

The plight of gender stereotyping affecting girl child performance in Zimbabwean primary schools is now a topical issue in the teaching-learning situation. I, the researcher, have vast experience of teaching at primary school level and was motivated to carry out this research with the view of providing long-lasting solutions that eradicate gender stereotyping in schools. Having observed gender stereotyping firsthand in schools, I was so touched by the situation, which prompted me to carry out an in-depth investigation. I observed that performance of the girl child was affected negatively to a great extent due to a wide range of reasons, such as aggression, sexism in textbooks, teachers' perceptions, gendered language, gender insensitive environment and negative labelling.

In particular, sexism in textbooks enhance gender stereotyping and affect the performance of the girl child. There are many misconceptions and misrepresentations in the books the learners are using. Many show discrimination towards the girl child as well as perceived gender roles. Textbooks depict girls as inferior while boys are depicted as courageous and brave. Usually, boys receive more teachers' questions compared to girls. In the classroom boys often get feedback that is more specific on their work, which is also compounded by praise, criticism and remediation while girl-children are commended for neatness.

According to Datzman (2015), the role of teachers is to promote equity, diversity and justice in the teaching-learning situation. Therefore, the research was motivated also by the pivotal role played by teachers in promoting gender stereotyping in the classroom. Many teachers do not use inclusive language and employ discriminatory grouping strategies. There is also lack of adequate and current training to teachers on issues pertaining to gender. Some teaching methods employed are gender insensitive since the bulk of the teachers were either trained long ago or are temporary relief teachers.

Furthermore, gendered language is used predominantly in schools. Boys are channeled to subjects which encourage the development of technical expertise and preparation for the public sphere; girls are allocated subjects which nurture and confine them to domesticity and the private sphere. Subject allocation promotes gender stereotyping. Girls are allocated subjects such as Food and Nutrition while boys are encouraged to take science and mathematics.

The gender insensitive environment also motivated this research. Most children walk an average distance of 15-20 km to and from school in the rural areas of Zaka District in Masvingo Province. This means learners arrive at school tired and the risk of sexual abuse of the girl child along the way to school is very high. Most schools do not have adequate furniture and frequently boys commandeer the available furniture while the girls sit on the floor to write. This makes the environment unfriendly for learning hence promoting gender stereotyping and affecting the academic performance of the girl child negatively.

According to Mapuranga and Chikumbu (2015), "female students' treatment in schools at home and in society lead to underperformance in schools." Their socialisation as caregivers leads to their outperformance by boys outperform them as girls have to fulfil multiple roles. GOZ (2011) is of the opinion that there is a phenomenal increase in the number of households headed by girl children. This causes erratic school attendance, poor concentration and behavioural problems which negatively affect girl child performance. Nhandara (2016) maintains that approaches to teaching are biased against uplifting the girl child; as they approach Grade 7 national exams their statistics begin to fall by 4.86% in favour of boys.

1.4   PROBLEM FORMULATION

1.4.1   Main research question

The following main research question guided the study: How does gender stereotyping affect the girl child's academic performance in primary schools in the Zaka District, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe?

1.4.2   Sub-questions

The study was also guided by the following sub-questions:

- How do gender stereotypes contribute to the development and perpetuation of gender differences?
- How do gender stereotypes affect the academic performance of the girl child?
- What are the suggestions and recommendations for reducing gender stereotyping to improve the academic performance of the girl child?

1.5   AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.5.1   Aim

The main aim of this research is to investigate how gender stereotyping affects academic performance of the girl child in primary schools in the Zaka District, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe.

1.5.2   Objectives of the research

The objectives of the research are described as follows:

- To understand how gender stereotypes contribute to the development and perpetuation of gender differences;
- To investigate how gender stereotypes affect the academic performance of the girl child;
- To suggest recommendations for reducing gender stereotyping to improve the academic performance of the girl child in primary schools in the Zaka District, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe.

1.6   LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is informed by feminist theory in general and the radical feminist perspective in particular. Pierre Bourdieu's social capital theory and Bandura'a social learning theory are also applied in this study.

1.6.1   Feminism

Feminism is both an ideology which is embraced by various social and political movements and an overarching theory dealing with women's position in a society aimed at obtaining equal rights and opportunities for women and redressing unequal power relations between women and men. Feminism implies social social action and the genesis of feminist thinking is traceable over centuries to individuals and groups

who endeavoured to liberate women from the restrictions imposed by patriarchy (Giddens 2013). Radical feminism calls for a reordering of society where male domination and supremacy should be eliminated in all social spheres. The radical feminists generally concur with the fact that men dominate and oppress women (Haralambos & Holborn 2017). Thu for purposes of this study, the assumption is that the girl child is under oppression and dominance from the boy child, hence the quest for radical feminists to fight for equity. Radical feminists see the society as patriarchal. The gender stereotyping in the classroom is seen as a result of the oppression of the girl child.

1.6.2   Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social capital

The French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, developed social capital theory (Giddens 2013). He categorised various forms of capital that determine the differences which exist among individuals. Thus, according to him, cultural capital leads to the labelling of learners. In this context the girl child who is affected by gender stereotyping is labelled as the weaker sex and is classified as one who does feminine subjects (Bryson 2018). It follows that the dominance of boys, according to Bourdieu, makes them excel academically while girls lag behind because of gender stereotyping. The detail of Bourdieu's theory has been provided in Chapter 2.

1.6.3   Bandura

Albert Bandura developed social learning theory through his close observation of the relationship between behaviourism and learning (Haralambos & Holborn (2017). He used his well-known Bobo doll experiment to explain patterns of behaviour and posited that similar behaviour is learned (Banyard & Grayson 2013). Key features of Bandura's social learning theory are learning based on observation, imitation and the modelling process. Harp (2016: 187) refers to "social learning as human behaviour, as a dynamic, reciprocal interaction based on personal factors, behaviour and living environment". Accordingly, people acquire gender stereotypes in early childhood while growing up in society.

1.7   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This study used a qualitative research design in order to explore how gender stereotyping affects the girl child's performance in primary schools in the Zaka District, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe.

1.7.1   Research Approach

According to Creswell (2016) a research approach is a basic set of beliefs that guides action. There are three different types of research approach namely qualitative, quantitative and mixed method. For this study, I opted for the qualitative research approach. Green (2007) defines qualitative research approach as a framework to describe a phenomenon in its setting and is advantageous for investigating complex, new or relatively under-researched topics. Qualitative research is "an inquiry process of understanding" where the researcher develops a "complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting" (Creswell 2009: 15). In qualitative research, the researcher gathers information from participants deeply involved in the daily circumstances in which the study is framed and data analysis is based on the meaning that these participants ascribe to their lives (Teddie & Tashakkori 2009). Qualitative methods can be defined as techniques where narrative information is collected, analysed and presented, versus quantitative methods which mainly use numerical data for collection and analysis (Teddie & Tashakkori 2009). Ultimately, qualitative research produces an understanding of the problem based on several contextual factors (Miller 2009). Qualitative research is a method of investigation and analysis of phenomena in society which does not use statistics. Its character is inductive (bottom-up) and it uses interviews, observations, artefacts and case studies.

In this study the qualitative research approach was used for numerous reasons. Firstly, I maintain that the qualitative research approach can provide an in-depth understanding that the quantitative research approach cannot offer considering the complexity of gender stereotyping and academic performance (Punch 2011). Secondly, social norms, attitudes and behaviour which are not concrete factors, and which are not outwardly obvious to others are best explored by qualitative research

(Patton 2015). It also examines complex questions that may not be possible with quantitative methods and it deals with value laden questions (Nueman 2010).

1.7.2   Research design

According to Best and Khan (2009), a research design is a master plan, a framework with logical steps and a strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to the research question. This research used a qualitative research design with a case study approach. Qualitative case study is a research methodology that helps in exploration of a phenomenon within some particular context through various data sources, and it undertakes the exploration through a variety of lenses in order to reveal multiple facets of the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

A case study is an exhaustive examination of a simple example of a phenomenon (Haralambos & Holborn 2013). A case study is as an empirical inquiry that investigates a current phenomenon within its actual lived context (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009). These descriptions indicate that a case study can be understood as a research design that involves doing in-depth examination of a single individual, group or institution. In order to do this, the researcher should gather comprehensive documented evidence of a certain case, symptoms, responses, effects of certain external and internal factors and the conclusions reached after a study. Creswell (2013) states that in a qualitative case study a researcher explores a single case or several cases over a period through comprehensive in-depth data collection using observation, interviews, artefacts, documents and reports as sources of information. This research is a case study since it was an intensive holistic description and analysis of a single functioning unit that is two selected rural primary schools in Masvingo Province that circumscribed the investigation (Merriam 2017).

I used the case study research design because it provides a wealth of detail, gives solutions and has credibility. A case study is therefore done to explain a phenomenon occurring in society. A case study may be advantageous for generating a new hypothesis which can be tested against other data or in future studies (Haralambos & Holborn 2013).

However, researcher bias may influence the case study since the data is collected by one person (Cohen et al. 2011). Therefore, a researcher might end up losing objectivity through knowing the participants since they are observed over a long period of time. As a result, he/she may end up overlooking certain factors that he/she might feel are unimportant which could be causing the behaviour being assessed.

1.7.3   Population and Sampling

Janseen (2017: 37) defines a population as, "the totality of items or things under consideration." A sample is always drawn from the larger group or population. A target population can be understood as the concrete specified large group of several cases from which researchers draw their sample and to which the findings from the sample are generalised (Creswell 2016). The population is the target group within which the research sample is drawn. The population should include individuals which the researcher wishes to investigate (Patton 2015). In this study data were gathered from two primary schools out of 15 possible schools. I gathered data from the school principals, teachers and girl learners in the two primary schools of the Zaka District in Masvingo Province, who are directly or indirectly affected by gender stereotyping.

Sampling procedures involve the choice of a population segment which represents the population. Sampling procedures may be complex since many procedures for sampling exist (Chiromo 2016). To this effect the sampling procedure adopted was based on the purpose of this study. Therefore, purposive sampling was used for this study. Based on the researcher's knowledge of the population, the researcher judges who should be chosen to provide the most appropriate information to address the purpose of the research (Creswell 2016).

Patton (2015) indicates that sample size largely depends on the degree to which the chosen sample approximates the qualities of the target population. I used a purposive sampling procedure. Flick (2015) avers that purposive sampling refers to where judgments and selections are made based on characteristics of a particular identified population selected on a non-random basis. Two school principals and two experienced teachers were interviewed and ten female Grade 6 learners were engaged in focus group discussion; this gave a total of 14 research participants.

1.7.4 Data gathering

I used widely used qualitative data gathering techniques: interviews (focus group and face to face) and observation to collect data (Janseen 2017). The choice of these techniques was based on the assumption that:

- Participants can answer questions in their own time.
- Questions are more or less uniform.
- Interviews produce spontaneous verbal and nonverbal feedback which is reliable.
- Several participants are reached simultaneously.

1.7.4.1 Interviews

Patton (2015) defines an interview as a means of learning about people from people by asking them questions in order to discover what is in their heads. The interviewer converses with participants asking questions that are aimed at gaining greater knowledge and insight. The interviews used provided a clear structure but at the same time retained the flexibility which allowed me to explore individual experiences. Individual interviews were conducted with the teachers and focus group interviews were conducted with the learners.

1.7.4.2 Individual interviews

Individual face to face interviews seek to explore participants' feelings on a particular subject. They allow the interviewer to get an understanding, interpret and seek clarity on a particular subject under discussion (Flick 2015). Chiromo (2016) posits that face to face interviews reduce non-response and produce high quality data collected. Thus, for the purposes of this study, face to face interviews were used to solicit information required and seek clarity on various concepts.

1.7.4.3 Focus group Interviews

Creswell (2016) is of the view that focus groups entail interacting with a selected group of people in order to get their views, opinions and perceptions on a particular topic or subject under discussion. Focus group interviews provide a platform whereby questions asked are reflected upon by participants (Pfukwa 2015). For purposes of this research focus group interviews were employed with learners to allow participants to share their views and experiences and helped in gathering a wide range of information within a short period of time.

1.7.4.4 Observation

Observation involves the orderly viewing of human behaviour and the recording, analysis and interpretation of the behaviour (MacMillan & Schumacher 2015). Observation aims at in-depth investigation of a problem. In this research observation assisted in understanding participants' actions, roles and behaviours. During observation the researcher studies people's performance in an everyday setting in order to understand them. Different types of observations yield different degrees of research participation, like non-participant observation (e.g., video/audio recordings), and participant observation. The researcher utilized non-participant observation and audio recordings.

1.7.5   Data analysis

Data collected from the interviews, focus groups and observations are processed first before being analysed. Data analysis is an orderly search for meaning. Qualitative data must be analysed and interpreted so the research findings can be communicated to others. Analysis means organising and interrogating data in ways that allow researchers to see "patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques or generate theories" (Hatch 2002: 148). Researchers delve into the data with rigour to make sense of it. In this process researchers identify themes and link them. In linking the themes, the findings are produced in the form of narrative texts (Creswell 2009).

For this study, interview and observational data were analysed according to the research questions followed by a discussion of the themes that emerged from the study. Thus, the data were discussed, coded, reduced, presented and analysed very shortly after collection (Punch 2011; Charmaz 2006). Flick (2015) maintains that as the researcher engages with the gathered data, themes are identified and connected.

1.8   CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Qualitative research's credibility deals with how the findings fit with reality (Creswell, 2016). Chiromo (2016) posits that ensuring credibility is essential to establishing research trustworthiness. To promote confidence that one has gathered accurate information, the researcher has to adopt well-established research methods and be familiar with the environment of participating organisations through, for example, preliminary visits to the environment. The credibility of the researcher is important because he/she is a major data gathering instrument so his/her background qualification and experience play a critical role. Trustworthiness is concerned with the extent to which the finding of a study is sound. Findings in a qualitative project are attached to a small number of specific settings and individuals and the researcher gains an in-depth understanding of human experience as it occurs in context by studying a specific case or cases (Creswell 2016) ; in this case, gender stereotyping as it impacts the academic performance of girl learners.

1. 9   ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethical considerations are essential in any research to prevent injury or emotional harm to research participants. Research ethics embody principles of right and wrong that govern the operations of researchers during the research process (Farrimond 2017). Ethics of research comprise certain principles that provide boundaries as to how the research should be conducted; they express human values and a guide to achieving them (Creswell 2016). The aim of ethical considerations in educational research is to ensure that the researcher's professional conduct is up to standard so as to protect the research participants. Hence in this study the principles of confidentiality, informed consent, anonymity, privacy and integrity are looked at.

1.9.1 Confidentiality

Flick (2015) maintains that participants value confidentiality as crucial and want their anonymity and privacy kept secure. In this study I maintained confidentiality by keeping the observation schedules secret and the responses from interviews anonymous though using codes. According to Flick (2015), confidentiality determines which people will have access to the data. In this study, the participants were not required to disclose their identity except with informed consent. The collected information or data should not be available to anyone except the researcher; hence names of the participants are not disclosed. Confidentiality is about the steps taken to keep the individual and his/her particulars private. It relates to how information that an individual has disclosed in a relationship of trust will be treated; the participant does not expect that this information will be shared with others without permission (Pfukwa 2015).

1.9.2 Informed consent

This entails that the participants should be made aware of the research aim. If the research is accompanied by any risks, the researcher must inform the participants before they agree to take part (Flick 2015). Informed consent includes the stipulated procedures according to which participants are free to choose to take part. Compulsion or unreasonable persuasion such as money or penalties should never be used, as these will affect the participants' free will to participate without undue pressure to do so (Creswell 2016). Patton (2015) states that the participants have the right to decline or leave the study. Since the learner participants in this study were minors, they had to sign informed assent forms after obtaining permission from their parents to participate in this study (See Appendix F).

1.9.3 Anonymity

This ethical principle requires that identities or names of research participants should not be shared with anyone else (Janseen 2017). Thus the researcher should not attach names of participants when gathering data. In this study I used coding to identify the research participants, for example Teacher A of School A. Anonymity refers to

refraining from using the true identities of participants in all research documents (Israel 2016).

1.9.4   Privacy

The participants have the right to privacy (Flick 2015). Their identifying characteristics, personal and private views, observation and opinions should not be shared in a public document without their agreement. Photographs and videos may not be taken of participants where the consent of research participants is absent. Privacy therefore refers to an individual's right to be free from intrusion or interference by others. Israel (2016) links the notion of consent to the right to privacy.

1.9.5   Integrity

Israel (2016) observes that the researcher should always act as a professional who is liable for his/her conduct and relationships with the research participants. Integrity implies excellent practice during the full research process. The researcher must keep to his/her agreements with participants, act honestly and maintain the same standard of conduct at all times (Pfukwa 2015). I maintained integrity throughout the research and reported data, results, methods and procedures honestly. I avoided fabrication, falsifying or misrepresentation of the data.

1.10   CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

1.10.1 Gender

Gender is defined as the state of being male or female. Haralambos (2016) postulates that gender differentiates between whether one is feminine or masculine. According to UNESCO (2017), gender is viewed as those responsibilities and roles for women and men that are assigned within families and cultures.

1.10.2   Gender stereotyping

Truscott (1994) asserts that gender stereotyping is a view of generalised preconceptions of attributes. Thus gender stereotyping entails roles that should be performed by members of a certain specified group. Gender stereotyping many times refers to women as weak while men are considered to be strong. Gender stereotyping views women as of the private sphere (cooking, caregivers) and men are perceived to be   of the public sphere (doing masculine jobs). Mawere (2014) concurs   that gender stereotyping may also be viewed as   beliefs and practices ascribed to men and women. In other words, the above the attribution of attributes, characteristics, assumptions and roles to males and females (e.g., rural women are uneducated).

1.10.3   Gender equality

This refers to equal conditions for men and women. Thus, they are equal partners in the home, community and society at large. Haralambos (2016) views gender equality as the same opportunities for men and women in the political, social, economic, and cultural fields.

1.10.4   Gender balanced curriculum

UNESCO (2017) defines a gender balanced curriculum as a curriculum which reflects the fair and equal treatment of girls and boys which seeks to ensure that full potential is achieved. It also looks at how the girls and boys are depicted in the textbooks.

1.10.5   Feminism

Feminism is both a political viewpoint and a theoretical framework dealing with women's social position focused on gaining equal rights and opportunities for women and equalising power relations between women and men. Feminism means a social movement and the seeds of feminist thinking can be traced over hundreds of years to individuals and groups, mainly women, who worked to liberate women from the restrictions of patriarchy (Giddens 2013).

1.10.6 Academic performance

These are the grades obtained after a certain level of schooling in a particular subject or course (Creswell 2016). It can be defined as a level of achievement.

1.10.7 Culture

Haralambos (2016) views culture as those customs and social behaviour of a certain group of people in a particular setting or a society. Culture therefore gives a pointer as to how members of a particular society react and think. It therefore shapes actions and how one will look at life.

1.10.8 Affirmative action

Zvobgo (2014) maintains that affirmative action is the action favouring those who are marginalised and suffer discrimination. For the purposes of this study it is a policy that gives all learners equal opportunities regardless of sex.

1.11 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The study includes five chapters as follows.

Chapter one: The chapter introduces the research topic of gender stereotyping and girl child performance in primary schools. It discusses the statement of the problem as well as the research objectives, the research significance, and scope.

Chapter two: This focuses on the review of literature including the theory which informed the study and illustrates findings obtained from past academic studies with regard to gender stereotyping and its impact on girl child performance.

Chapter three: A detailed discussion of the research methodology and its justification are presented in this chapter. The discussion centres on planning the research, how the research was carried out and the methods that were used to collect, record, analyse and present the data.

Chapter four: Findings of the study as guided by the research objectives were presented in this chapter. The study results were presented using tables and narrative descriptions.

Chapter five: This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations from the study as well as their significance to government departments and local communities in Zimbabwe.

1.12   SUMMARY

In a nutshell, the chapter outlined the background and motivation of the study, research questions, and statement of the problem as well as aims of the study. The brief literature review, research design, research site and selection of participants, data gathering and analysis, ethical issues and clarification of concepts were also highlighted. Definitions of terms were also expounded. The next chapter focuses on literature review.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter was an introduction to the study and it presented the problem statement, the research questions, the aims and objectives of the study, and the rationale for the study. This chapter will present an overview of the literature review regarding the effects of gender stereotyping on the academic performance of the primary school girl child. Gay et al. (2006) note that the literature review helps to find the gaps and errors in published research. Thus, it shows how original and relevant the research problem is. The chapter includes a review of the literature, showing how gender stereotyping affects primary girl child performance. The literature is structured in a topical order which is informed by main topics or issues, showing their relationship to the main problem or topic.

The literature review refers to how gender stereotypes contribute to the development of gender differences, how gender stereotypes affect the academic performance of the girl learner and the implications of gender stereotyping on academic performance. After the review of related literature, the theoretical framework is presented, which is underpinned by radical feminist theories, Pierre Bourdieu's capital theory and Bandura's social learning theory followed by the conceptual framework.

2.2   REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this section, studies conducted in literature in relation to how gender stereotyping affects the academic performance of the girl child will be discussed. Creswell (2016) notes that the literature review is of great importance in that it gives a description of how the research is being carried out. The literature review therefore justifies the proposed research methodology. Gay et al. (2016) also observe that the literature review shows how the current work fits in and contributes to extant knowledge in the area of study. The literature review is vital as it also indicates if the researcher is well versed with the topic under research.

2.1.1   Gender stereotypes

Narahara (1998) notes that the term stereotype was first used Lipmann in 1922 in order to describe a social group's perceived features. The Institute of Physics (2018) views gender stereotyping as widely held beliefs about the behaviours and characteristics of women and men. Thus, females are painted as weak, in dire need of protection and care and are emotional. On the other hand, males are viewed as strong, rational and career driven. Bergh (2011) refers to gender stereotypes as numerous differences that exist between women and men. Gender stereotypes therefore affect the way women and men define themselves.

Galfin (2009: 354) maintains that when looking at gender stereotypes "Women are from Venus, men are from Mars". The above categories imply that women and men originate from different planets. Even if they show similar characteristics, the stereotypical expectations attached to them make them different. It can be deduced from the foregoing that gender stereotyping has negative effects not only for women, but for men as well. Society perceives men as unable to provide warmth and care to the family. Zvobgo (2014) notes that society has the notion of educating women for domesticity, while men are meant for the public sphere. Thus women and girls are confined to the private sphere. Society nurtures the boy child to achieve public success while the girl child is looked down upon.

The Institute of Physics (2018) notes that gender stereotyping has negative effects on all genders. Bergh (2011) is of the view that as children learn, they are regularly exposed to how boys should behave and play. It is evident that gender stereotyping affects learners' classroom experience, academic performance and well-being. Mawere (2014) notes that these conscious and unconscious assumptions result in learners being treated differently based on their gender. Gender stereotyping therefore shapes the choices of the learner in school and in life.

2.2.2 Factors promoting gender stereotyping

There are enduring gaps between the ways learners perform in school. These can range from ethnicity, sexual orientation, norms, psychological factors, cultural factors and school related factors.

2.2.2.1 Ethnicity

Brooks and Allen (2016) define ethnicity as a group of individuals who identify each other on common distinctive culture, religion and languages. Siyakwazi and Siyakwazi (2015) define ethnicity as shared culture and way of life. Ethnic minorities have different cultures and backgrounds. According to Mawere (2014), limitations in language proficiency affect the academic performance of a learner from a particular ethnic background because there can be communication breakdown between the child and the teacher. Thus, to change stereotypes requires understanding their commonalities and differences as well as patterns across cultures.

2.2.2.2 Sexual orientation

According to Rees and Doyle (2006), sexual orientation is all about heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality. Haralambos and Holborn (2017) are of the notion that stereotypes are widely accepted judgements or biases about a person or a group. It therefore follows that stereotypes about gender can cause people to be treated unjustly or unequally because of a person's gender, which is sexism (UNDP 2016). Sexual orientation makes learners feel unequal and of no value. Francis (2017) observes that gender roles and sexual orientation are inexplicably intertwined. Rees and Doyle (2006) postulates that gay men and lesbian women face damaging stereotypes to the extent of being ostracised from society and schools, while bisexual men and women face the most adverse stereotypes based on prejudice. Thus, sexual orientation strongly reinforces stereotypes. Galz (2018) observes that in Zimbabwe lesbians and gays often leave school at an early stage due to discrimination.

2.2.2.3 Norms

Zvobgo (2014) maintains that the strongest forces behind persistent gender gaps are harmful norms that limit expectations of either sex. Thus, to close the gender gap, everyone needs to change how we think. UNICEF (2017) notes that gender stereotypes prevent girls to entering and obtaining quality education. Norms often dictate various expectations of boys and girls, such as completion of studies and subject choice. From the above it can be noted that gender stereotyping is the root cause which perpetuates discrimination, abuse and violence.

2.2.2.4 Culture

Smith (2008) postulates that gender is a social construct which makes culture a major factor that promotes gender stereotyping by channeling girls away from acquiring technical expertise. Mawere (2014) observes that culture is gendered in that the masculine often dominates and tells a primarily male centred story promoting a masculine view of current and past events. Thus, culture, including gender perceptions, shapes the way things are done. Culture divides labour according to gender (UNDP 2016). In turn in the classroom situation, culture sets clear parameters for girls' and boys' subject choices. Culture, therefore makes girls' representations in various fields uneven.

Smith (2018) argues that culture promotes gender stereotyping in that men are perceived to be less interdependent than women. Mapuranga and Chikumbu (2015) also observe that culture invests superiority in men and this reduces female learners' performance. The girl child is made to be inferior and of less value which adversely affects performance in class. Mapuranga and Chikumbu (2015: 185) note that sayings such as "The wisdom of a woman and the lights of stars do not take you far" contribute to negative performance of and attitudes towards girls.

2.2.2.5 Teachers' attitudes and beliefs

The beliefs of teachers and their perceptions towards learners contribute to gender stereotyping and discrimination in the teaching-learning situation (Delamere & Show

2010). Gilbert (2008) purports that gender stereotyping and discrimination occur during the teaching-learning situation. The way in which teachers interact with learners promotes gender stereotyping in the classroom. Zvobgo (2014) maintains that the beliefs and attitudes of teachers promote gender stereotyping. Galfin (2009) observes that teachers perpetuate male stereotyping, whereby more unnecessary attention is given to boys than girls. Many times teachers give boys more challenging questions than girls (Fleming 1984). This causes the girl child to lose confidence and develop a low self-esteem due to lack of recognition of their achievements by teachers.

2.2.2.6 Hidden curriculum

Mwamwenda (2011) defines the hidden curriculum as the vehicle whereby learners learn lessons that are invisible such as the acquisition of sex roles. These invisible lessons among others are learned through the gender imbalance found in textbooks, how subjects are allocated, their contents and the classroom environment. During the teaching-learning situation in primary schools, boys are encouraged to concentrate more on maths, science and technical subjects while girls are encouraged to focus more on subjects like Home Economics and Religious Studies (Gwirayi, 2014). According to Mawere (2014), gender stereotyping also affects Zimbabwe as a country. Most textbooks depict boys as good in sciences and maths while girls excel in Home Economics and any subject to do with child bearing. This gives an impression that the place for the boy is in the public sphere while the girl is in the private sphere. Mwamwenda (2011) concurs that gender imbalance in textbooks content exists nationally and internationally. Thus, boys are portrayed as brave, intelligent and muscular while girls are weak, receptive and warm. Moletsane et al. (2010) notes traditional gender socialisation perpetuates gender stereotyping in schools.

2.2.2.7 Poverty

A case study was carried out in three provinces in South Africa, namely Western Cape, Gauteng and Kwazulu-Natal as well as in Kenya with the aim of ascertaining root causes of gender stereotyping and inequality in schools. United Nations Report (2010) observed that in all these regions, poverty was a contributory factor towards all forms of gender stereotyping. Huiseman and Smith (2009) note that the high cost of

textbooks, examination fees and high school fees has a bearing on the dropout of girls from school. United Nations Report (2010) and Huiseman and Smith (2009) concur that the desires and aspirations of the girl child are not met to a great extent because of poverty amongst other factors.

2.3   GENDER STEREOTYPING IN ZIMBABWE

Mapuranga and Chikumbu (2015) observe that Zimbabwe also perpetuates gender stereotyping and inequality. Gudhlanga (2013) notes that gender stereotyping is evident in Zimbabwean schools due to patriarchal tendencies instilled in learners. Zvobgo (2014) maintains that the family as an agent of socialisation is a source of patriarchal tendencies. The way children are socialised right from the home differentiates the girl from the boy. Siyakwazi and Siyakwazi (2015) note that the boys in the Shona culture are socialised to see themselves as breadwinners and households heads whilst the girls are taught submission, dependence, obedience and passivity. Human Rights Monitor (2015) observes that the parents' preference is to educate boys rather than girls in Zimbabwe. The socialisation process in Zimbabwe instils patriarchal tendencies which lead to girls dropping from school or those who remain in school perform poorly due to the above attitudes.

Kambarami (2016) supports the above by saying that the patriarchal attitudes found in Christianity as a religion have strengthened gender stereotyping in Zimbabwe. The Scripture, "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands" (Col 3:18) and "Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them (Col 3:19) is an example. Thus, men in broader society control women and justify their actions by the above verses (Mapuranga & Chikumbu, 2015). Broader society also portrays domestic submissiveness of women which girls carry into the classroom. Religion in Zimbabwe to a certain extent also perpetuates gender stereotyping.

Siyakwazi and Siyakwazi (2015) observe that some communities in Mberengwa, Chiredzi, Chipinge, Guruve, Beitbridge, Chiredzi, Binga and Gokwe in Zimbabwe view educating the girl child as a waste of resources and money since they will marry out of the community. In some church denominations, like the Apostolic sect, girls are married at a tender age while in primary school (UNDP 2016). As a result, *lobola* which

is patriarchal practice, adds to stereotyping and inequality as well as widening the gap between boys and girls, thereby placing girls in subordination positions.

Gudhlanga (2013) observes that the education system in Zimbabwe is designed to perpetuate inequalities and gender stereotyping. Thus, the textbooks depict boys as skilled mentally, adventurous and rough while girls are taught soft feminine behaviour and are confined to the kitchen. Chirimuta (2016) notes that the Zimbabwe education system does not take cognisance that learners come to school already with inequalities and stereotypes forced upon them by society. UNICEF (2017) has criticised the education system as insensitive and blind to gender. The education system in Zimbabwe to a great extent has notable traits that promote gender stereotyping.

2.4 GENDER STEREOTYPES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Numerous factors have been proved to affect the performance of girls in Zimbabwean primary schools, such as gendered textbooks, teachers' attitudes and behaviour, cultural beliefs and family background.

2.4.1 Curriculum and textbooks

Widespread research has focused on the portrayal of girls and women as well as men and boys in school textbooks. The former are shown in domesticated roles; the latter are shown acting in the public sphere. Certain school subjects are also gendered, such as domestic science for girls and technology for boys (Brown, 2018). Textbooks indirectly show what it means to be a child in a specific context, which includes the social position and gender identity through socialisation (Brannon, 2016). Textbooks at primary school level are very influential as they shape the factual knowledge of attitudes and skills children are supposed to acquire, which can be different for girls and boys and be a foundation for gender stereotyping (Datzman 2015).

The context in which girls are represented in the Zimbabwean textbooks is similarly gendered. When female role models are presented, they are shown as helpless, docile, tolerant and domesticated females who only support their husbands

(Haralambos & Holborn 2017). The textbooks depict girls and women in stereotypical gender roles - food preparation, shopping, cleaning, washing, raising children and performing domestic chores. Women are mainly seen in a limited number of professions such as office workers, nurses and teachers primarily (UNESCO 2017).

According to UNDP (2016), portrayals of boys and men show them active in the public domain as breadwinners and women in the private domain as home-makers. The work associated with the boy children involves intellect, imagination, and problem-solving skills. Girls are associated with nurturing and service-oriented work (e.g., housewife, teacher, nurse). Thus, in the long run, the academic performance of girls is affected negatively as they view themselves as being educated for domesticity hence they have no meaningful reason to concentrate on their studies.

Thus, women are socialised to believe that it is difficult to get positions in public offices such as the head of a school. This affects motivation to excel in school (Wasarhaney 2017). Girls as a collective have unconsciously acquired the idea that they are inadequate beings (Moore 2016). This affects the way in which girls understand and view society and its functions and these gender stereotypes reflect the false views about the role of girls and their capabilities. Thus, female students do not rate their performance in school highly. UNDP (2016) asserts that gender inequalities and stereotypical attitudes impair the performance of female students.

2.4.2   Teachers

Zvobgo (2014) posits that teachers are most likely to shower girls with praise for good behaviour while boys are praised for their understanding and various ideas they offer. The two scenarios are harmful and also lead to poor performance of the girl child. This is supported by UNICEF (2017) which maintains that girls may learn to be compliant and fear taking any risks. Zvobgo (2014) notes that most teachers tend to prepare girl children to be wives and good mothers by ensuring they take up subjects such as fashion, textiles, food and nutrition. Thus, in having teachers propagating gender stereotypes, their attitudes often influence the expectation of pupils.

UNESCO (2017) notes that the belief that men should be family heads and fend for the family has a negative impact on the girl child. Therefore acquired gender roles hinder girls from academic excellence as they lack confidence and have low self-esteem due to how teachers view them and what is imparted to them during the teaching-learning process. Bryson (2018) concurs that teachers' fuel gender stereotyping by not closing the gaps in textbooks and the curriculum at large.

2.4.3   Influence of culture on learner performance

Siyakwazi and Siyakwazi (2015) refers to culture as a set of attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours shared by a group of people, which are transferred from one generation to the next. Thus, cultural background and values mould the self of learners and it has an impact on every aspect of their lives. In the African setting in general and the Zimbabwean setting in particular, cultural beliefs to a large extent doom the girl child to the domestic sphere with little or no engagement in public life (Sunday Mail 2018).

Thus, these cultures and traditions that view men as superior are widely acknowledged as drawbacks to girl learners' performance (UNDP, 2016). Culture has stereotyped boys and men as independent and goal oriented; while girls and women are stereotyped as interdependent (Moore 2016). Many challenges remain, including workload and bad attitudes towards children, especially girls. Many children drop out of school and some are likely to produce very bad results due to cultural beliefs which impede them from excelling in their studies (Siyakwazi & Siyakwazi 2015). Zimbabwe has different ethnic groups, which have diverse traditional values. Cultural practices like traditional dances, polygamy, initiation ceremonies and widow/widower inheritance contribute to poor academic performance among pupils in Zimbabwe (Mawere 2014).

2.4.4   Family background

The composition and nature of the family background is of vital importance to every learning situation as the question of where the learners come from influences their academic performance (Giddens, 2013). The Sunday Mail (2018) also found that the

academic performance of girl children in Zimbabwe is influenced by the level of education of parents, their attitudes towards education and their expectations of the girl child. Mawere (2014) avers that the level of education of the parents and all other family members determine the family's attitudes towards education and this has an impact on the child's academic performance. The importance of parental attitudes towards education and school is linked to the family background. This study used the qualitative approach in order to obtain high quality information that gave insight into the influence of the family background on the academic performance of the girl child. Educated parents value the education of girls and their academic performance (Bryson 2018). Parents who are educated limit the involvement of girls in household chores as they realise that over-involvement in these activities affects their performance negatively (Moore 2016).

The government of Zimbabwe (1999) posits that family background affects the academic performance of learners due to the various backgrounds which children are exposed and subjected to. Warsarhaney (2017) indicates that the family's socio-economic status affects the academic performance of learners. Thus, the family background compounded together with the school qualities have an effect on how a child performs in school. The above is supported by UNICEF (2017) which asserts that those learners from low socio-economic status respond poorly to learning activities because of their background. Zvobgo (2014) points out that affluent and middle-class families are more effective in preparing their children for school since can use many means to support their children.

Children who come from broken families do not perform well in school (UNICEF, 2017). This is a result of personality problems and problems of mental adjustment. The World Bank (2016) concurs that children from families that are unstable are most likely to face financial and learning resources which impinge on the academic performance of the girl child. Marimba (2016) also states that the family background is the bedrock of any society. The family and its structure play a pivotal role in children's academic performance.

2.5 IMPLICATIONS OF GENDER STEREOTYPING ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Gudhlanga (2013) asserts that teachers' attitudes influence the learners' perceptions of masculine and feminine issues. Thus, the learners identify with their gender roles. From the above the academic performance of the girl child is affected negatively. Girls are therefore indoctrinated to concentrate on subjects considered to be suitable for females (Zvobgo, 2014). This tends to impede the girl child's educational and occupational horizons. Tope (2012) concurs that teachers instil patriarchal values in learners when they view the boy as of more value than the girl. This leads to a lack of confidence and self-esteem in the girl child which may lead to their poor academic performance.

In a study conducted by Bhavani (2017) interviews carried out with ten teachers showed that they attributed low performance of girls in comparison with boys to the acceptance of the ideology of feminism. This is also supported by Rege (2003) who noted that teachers' attitudes towards girls affect their expectance and performance. The underachievement of girls is rooted in the negative attitudes and beliefs of teachers which also manifest through labelling and gender codes. Scott (2007) posits that the attitudes of teachers have a strong bearing on the performance of the learner regardless of content taught as well as the school environment.

The government of Zimbabwe (1999) revealed that a major problem is overcoming stereotyping and other traditional practices, which impede equal access to education and academic achievement of girls. The conclusion was that the attitudes of teachers towards girl learners affect their performance academically. Chireshe (2015) notes that Zimbabwean teachers are poorly remunerated which leads to lack of motivation in their work and the poor academic performance of both girls and boys.

2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework informs research. The theoretical framework plays a vital role in applied qualitative studies, especially when researching a problem that has been extensively studied and can show a coherent link between questions and

methodology (MacMillan & Schumacher 2014). This research is grounded in the framework of feminism and radical feminism to be more precise as well the cultural capital theory of Pierre Bourdieu and Bandura's social learning theory. The theoretical frameworks selected assist in seeing gender stereotyping from different perspectives.

2.6.1   Feminism

Bhavani (2017) observes that the theory of radical feminists is based on patriarchy, men's pervasive oppression and how women are exploited in private and public spheres. The government of Zimbabwe (2004) notes that radical feminism is embraced in two major concepts, namely patriarchy and female oppression. The above dynamics have a powerful effect on girl learners and contribute to the low performance of girls in schools. Thornham (2000) also observes that radical feminists advocate for revolution where they seek to eliminate oppression which emanates from biological differences between men and women. Thus, the biological differences tend to favour the boy child at the expense of the girl child. These differences instil in the mind of the girl child that it is the boy who is meant to excel academically leaving them to be treated as a weaker sex. Bhavani (2017) agrees with Gudhlanga (2013) who argues that radical feminism looks at the oppression of the girl child and male dominance. Thus boys become the centre in subject allocation and are given preferential treatment which in turn defines the future of the girl child. Patriarchy marginalises girls who are bound to perform negatively. Mukasa (2018) notes that the school is a positive institution which promotes harmonious and sound relationships but they may also become an oppressive political institution which conveys stereotyping that prevents girls from climbing the academic ladder. Male dominance in schools causes tension between boys and girls which undermines girl child performance.

Seedam (2018) defines patriarchy as men being superior to women and this is maintained through a set of values, norms and laws. Bhavani (2017) notes that the patriarchal system still exists and it maintains that women cannot excel academically because of the belief that the women's place is confined to the kitchen and the bedroom. Thus patriarchy makes the girl child ignorant of academic studies or they perform poorly because of how social expectations. On the contrary Lumby (2011)

argues that gender stereotyping has got nothing to do with excellence, performance and competency. This is also supported by Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2016) which indicated that the low academic performance by girls is related to the notion that society has already prejudiced them. Thus, patriarchal stereotypes hinder a girl's well-balanced understanding of reality to the extent that she becomes limited in her thinking and aspirations. Bryson (2018) concurs that cultural factors contribute to female underperformance. Thus, cultural background paints girls as inferior to boys. The labels attached to the girl child, segregation, marginalisation and male dominance present a scenario in which boys perform better than girls. According to Brannon (2018), the radical feminist perspective posits that girl children do not receive priority in schools because they are assigned to reproductive tasks while boys have been assigned dominance. Thus teachers and society think it is essential to ensure the boy child's education first.

2.6.2 Bourdieu's cultural capital theory

The cultural capital theory was developed by a French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu (Giddens 2013). He grouped various forms of capital that determine the differences which exist among individuals. Thus, according to him, learners are labelled according to cultural capital. In this context the girl child who is affected by gender stereotyping is labelled as the weaker sex and is classified as one who does feminine subjects (Bryson 2018). It follows that the dominance of the boys makes them excel academically while the girls lag behind because of gender stereotyping. According to Allard (2015), the Bourdesian view is that of social space where power conflicts are exhibited and social stratification is produced. Adkins (2012) is of the opinion that class differences and power unbalances are produced, and the dominant culture reinforces mechanisms of inequality. Boys are regarded as of the dominant culture which makes them excel academically; this marginalises the girl child and leads to poor performance because of cultural expectations which have been instilled. Haralambos and Holborn (2017) concur that the school system tends to recognise and support the dominant culture.

Allard (2015) points out that the educational achievement of a child has a correlation with socio-economic status and educational level of parents. Thus, the inequalities

that exist in families are transmitted to children through transmission of cultural capital. The tasks given to boys and girls by parents determine their future. Haralambos and Holborn (2017) note that cultural capital and academic perfomance have a strong effect on educational attainment. Siyakwazi and Siyakwazi (2014) point out that family background also affects the academic performance of the learners. Thus, the family background determines whether preference is given to the boy or the girl child. The above is supported by Mawere (2014) who states that cultural capital has a strong direct effect on the girl child's academic performance which is negative. From the above it can be observed that inequalities in family background, such as parents 'level of education and occupation, shape educational inequalities of children.

Adkins (2012: 48) observes that "masculine domination assumes a natural self-evident status through its inscription in the objective of structures of the social world, which is then embedded and reproduced in the habitus of individuals". Thus according to Bourdieu, women are seen as "not typically capital accumulating subjects, rather they are capital bearing projects" (Allard 2015: 157). The above notions lead to the negative performance of the girl child. Lumby (2011) maintains that Bourdieu referred to women as docile bodies. The label and stereotyping attached to girls reduce a sense of excellence as the culture instilled in them lead to their education for domesticity. Thus, girls fail to value education as they think they are meant to be confined to the private sphere while boys are for the public sphere.

Allard (2015) observes that the cultural capital system strengthens the dominant culture by structuring education so that it mirrors the dominant culture and sets expectations based around this. The dominance of boys in this sense takes precedence in the classroom affecting the performance of the girl child negatively. Haralambos and Holborn (2017) note that class based cultural expectations can close doors to opportunities and resources which provide aid to education and progress. Thus, a socially based class system promotes inequality within the education system and the girl child falls victim to unfairness which in the end affects her academic performance.

Lumby (2011: 254) defines labelling as a "process by which people are identified in a particular way and then receive special attention as a result of that label being attached

to them". Giddens (2013) notes society is a key factor in labelling and that the more powerful the negative label, the greater the damage and stigma. Thus, for Bourdieu, practising these aforementioned habits shapes one's destiny. Teachers normally attach positive and encouraging labels to boys while girls receive negative labels. In the same vein girls feel inferior which affects their performance negatively. Allard (2015) points out that the negative labels which teachers attach to girls are internalised and they in turn act in relation to that label which also affects educational performance.

Haralambos and Holborn (2013) aver to the fact that the labelling theories affect the learners' academic careers in a variety of ways. These labels can impact on their academic performance because they accept the 'label' that is attached to them. Learners who fail to perform to expected standards in the classroom are often labelled as dull and they are viewed from a perspective that is negative. Bourdieu (2016) notes that Bourdieu's cultural theory is concerned with how people are put into groups. The way learners are categorised into classes also impacts on the quality of education. Boys are put into classes of dominance over girls. The girls 'performance is affected negatively since they do not feel recognised in class; hence to them excelling will not be a priority. Lumby (2011) concurs that labelling and expected values lead to prejudice which becomes evident in the negative performance of girls.

2.6.3   Bandura's social learning theory

Gwirayi (2010) observes that many theories have been written to explain why people have certain behavioural traits. Haralambos and Holborn (2017) observe that social learning theory originated from Albert Bandura who closely examined behaviourism and learning. Bandura conducted the famous Bobo doll experiment, which explained behavioural patterns and expounded that similar behaviour is learned (Banyar & Grayson 2013). Bandura's social learning theory looked at observational learning, imitation and the modelling process.

Harp (2016: 187) refers to "social learning as human behaviour, as a dynamic, reciprocal interaction based on personal factors, behaviour and living environnment". The theory thus views gender stereotypes as acquired early in life as people grow up in society. Bandura (1977) argues that the social scenario is the primary site for

learning. The behaviour of people in a particular society is shaped by observation and modelling, which constitutes the social learning theory. Bandura (2014) maintains that gender stereotypes are influenced by the expectations of society which are norms, ethnicity, races and sexual orientation. For example, boys are made to learn that they cannot take up professions such as nursing, while girls cannot be information technology specialists. The above are stereotyped manifestations which are referred to as gender based career identification. As children grow up their choices of careers are determined and influenced by teachers, parents and the community that surrounds them. The academic performance of girl learners is affected negatively by gender stereotype manifestations.

Mawere (2014) observes that culture influences gender stereotypes. The traditional customs and practices of the Shona culture in Zimbabwe give males more decision-making powers while females are ascribed a submissive role. Gudhlanga (2013) also notes male domination and female subordination in Zimbabwe which permeates schools. Mapuranga and Chikumbu (2015) add that girls accept the cultural stereotypes unknowingly and subconsciously.

Bandura (2014) is of the view that gender stereotypes emanate from observing the social roles that exist between men and women of a particular culture. Gender stereotypes are therefore learnt in a direct or indirect way. The social learning theory provides an in-depth appreciation of why gender stereotypes differ across nations. From the above it shows that the girl child is affected in the sense that priority and value is given to boys which may lead to female underperformance in class.

Bandura (2014) observes that several sporting disciplines are gender balanced, however rugby is the only sport with no female participants. It can be deduced from the above that modelling plays a significant and pivotal role whereby a child can say they never saw a male or female taking part in a particular defined sport. Teachers and the community mention that certain sports are linked to a particular sex (Gudhlanga 2013). This is transferred into the classroom situation where girls are encouraged to do certain subjects. This results in their poor performance as they see themselves as of less value. Mawere (2014) observes that gender relations are developed day in day out by means of socialisation in society and school. It also

follows that gender stereotypes are generated by people and can be changed by people through observation of various social groups.

To theorize the relationship between structures of male domination and the inter-subjective experience of women can be termed a central problem in feminist theory. Yet feminists have not engaged the sociological literature on the related topic of the relationship between structure and interaction because these accounts rarely consider gender in any systematic fashion. Although this criticism applies to Pierre Bourdieu's writings on the articulation of structure in practical action, feminists will nevertheless find in his work a powerfully elaborate conceptual framework for understanding the role of gender in the social relations of modern capitalist society. Furthermore, Bourdieu's epistemological and methodological approach to social science research parallels and enhances feminist positions on this important subject. He recognises, like feminists, that theoretical narratives and political programmes are themselves embedded in social relations, no matter how relevant and applicable to their empirical referents. In this article, I employ a rich body of feminist research and Bandura's social learning theory in order to present, critique, and then develop Bourdieu's sociological, epistemological, and methodological writings with respect to gendered social life. Bandura's social learning theory is the glue that pronounces the interconnectedness of the two theories (feminism and Bourdieu's writings). His assertion is that behaviour is learnt or imitated by observing. Through observing the symbolic impact of cultural power in Bourdieu's work, feminists say social relations spelled out by Bandura in the concept of socialisation forms the gendered outcomes in terms of social and role outcomes.

2.7   CONCLUSION

This chapter presented an introduction to the chapter and an overview of the literature review regarding the effects of gender stereotyping on the academic performance of the primary school girl child as well as theoretical and conceptual frameworks for this study. A review of the literature, showing how gender stereotyping affects primary school girl learner performance was examined. The theoretical frameworks of feminism, Bourdieu's social capital theory and Bandura's social learning theory were discussed. The next chapter (Chapter 3) describes the research methodology

employed to explore how gender stereotyping affects academic performance of the girl child at primary school level in selected schools in the Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I present the research design and methodology for the study of gender stereotyping and girl child performance in Zimbabwean primary schools. The chapter comprises a discussion of the research paradigm, methodology, rationale for selecting the method, researcher role, selection of participants and sampling, data gathering procedures, and strategies for ensuring trustworthiness and ethical principles that guided this study.

3.2   RESEARCH PARADIGM

The research paradigm is a researcher's first point of view when approaching a field of study. According to Riyami (2015: 19), a paradigm is a "simple collection of beliefs that guides action". Research is motivated by a variety of research paradigms which include post-positivism, interpretivism, feminism, the analytical method, postmodernism, and transformative frameworks (Hammersley 2013). Researchers have various points of view on paradigmatic concepts. Some researchers prefer to study people in their natural settings, whereas others prefer to study them in controlled settings. I approached this study with an interpretive model based on people's lived experiences in specific historical contexts (Creswell 2016).

3.2.1   Interpretivism

Interpretivism is more concerned with in depth variables and factors related a context, it considers humans as different from physical phenomena as they create further depth in meanings with the assumption that human beings cannot be explored in a similar way to physical phenomena. Therefore, social sciences research requires this distinction, and should be different from natural sciences research. Interpretivism considers differences such as cultures, circumstances, as well as times leading to development of different social realities. Interpretivism is different from positivism as it aims to include richness in the insights gathered rather attempting to provide a definite

and universal laws that can be generalised and applicable to everyone regardless of some key variables and factors (Myers, 2008; Saunders et al. 2012; Bhattacherjee, 2012 cited in Alharahsheh, Helmi & Pius 2020). According to this study, two beliefs of the interpretivism approach are utilized which are relativist ontology and subjective epistemology. The relativist ontology is of the belief that reality is perceived through inter-subjectivity through consideration of meanings as well as understandings of social and experiential aspects in the research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019). The subjective epistemology is the approach that provide a clear link between the research and research subject as it assumes that humans cannot be divided from their knowledge (Saunders et al., 2019).

There are a number of reasons why I opted for this paradigm. The first benefit of this paradigm is that researchers do not only identify objects, people or events, but also seek to understand them in their social contexts with an in-depth understanding. In addition, researchers also conduct these types of research in natural settings via utilising key methodologies as grounded theory, ethnography, case study or life history to gain the insider's insights of participant behaviour. As a result, the useful information gathered provides researchers with stronger ideas for future action. I opted for interpretivism considering that it helped me to gain a deeper understanding of the topic of study and its ramifications in its particular context instead of trying to make a wide and far-reaching generalisation to the whole population (Creswell 2016).

3.3   RESEARCH APPROACH

Research methodology refers to the comprehensive methods and procedures that are put in place to ascertain data (Mishra & Alok 2022). It requires a thorough study of assumptions, concepts, and techniques in order to explain, justify, and predict phenomena accurately. To learn more about the impact of gender stereotyping on female students' academic success in Zimbabwean primary schools, I used a qualitative research approach. According to Flick (2022), the qualitative analysis model is a way of describing an event in its context and is useful for investigating the complex or under-researched. According to Merriam (2017), qualitative research uses techniques such as participant input or case studies to include narrative and descriptive accounts of a place or operation. The study is rooted in an interpretivist-

constructivist worldview and the research approach is qualitative (Flick 2022). The research design is an exploratory case study. The qualitative approach to research values depth of meaning and people's subjective experiences and their meaning-making processes. The rationale of adopting the approach is to allow the collection of relevant and sufficient qualitative representation of research participants' lived experiences towards the primary question of the study. Gupta and Gupta (2022) emphasise that the qualitative approach explores and inquires more deeply into people's accounts of social life. This qualitative approach will allow the researcher to build a robust understanding of the topic, unpacking how gender stereotyping impacts girl child performance in primary schools. Qualitative design works towards solving complex issues by breaking down them into meaningful inferences, and in this case the complex issue is gender stereotyping and how this affects girl child performance in primary schools. In this case the research seeks to interrogate factors of gender stereotypes that are impacting girl child performance, hence a qualitative research design is most appropriate.

3.4   RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Saunders et al. (2019), a research design is a planned action, framework, schedule and strategy for obtaining answers to research questions. A research design is the "map" which defines the manner and methods for data collection and analysis (Habib, Johargy, Mahmood & Humma 2014:16). I used a case study research design to investigate how gender stereotyping affects the teaching and learning of girls in Zimbabwean primary schools. A case study, according to Haralambos and Holborn (2013), is a thorough analysis of a simple illustration of something. Chiromo (2015) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry into a current phenomenon in its natural environment. A case study involves researching a single community or organisation in detail. It necessitates a detailed examination that includes reported evidence of a particular topic, distinguishing features, responses, the effects of certain factors and study findings. A researcher is provided an opportunity to examine a case or series of cases over time using detailed in-depth data collection techniques such as observation, interviews and questionnaires (Creswell 2016). Haralambos and Holborn (2017) posit that a case study may additionally be beneficial for producing fresh ideas which can be examined against other data or in later studies. In this research, the case

study method proved very relevant in exploring how gender stereotyping influences the girl child's overall performance in two selected primary schools in Zimbabwe.

I therefore utilised a case study design to gain rich, in-depth data from multiple sources and by using multiple data collection methods (semi-structured, face-to-face individual interviews and non-participant observation). I used the case study because it supplied a wealth of detail, offers options and credibility on gender stereotyping results and academic performance of the girl child. According to Janseen (2017), this strategy enables the researcher to apprehend and explore the richness, depth, context and complexity of learning challenges faced by girl children due to gender stereotyping.

3.5   SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

3.5.1   Study population

According to Asiamah, Mensah and Oteng-Abayie (2017:1607), the term "population" refers to a group of individuals who share one or more characteristics relevant to the study. The site for this study was Zaka District, a poor, remote area 60 kilometres in the province of Masvingo in Zimbabwe. Zaka District has 300 000 residents comprised of mostly unemployed families (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency 2012). The typicality of this suburb's poverty is illustrated by the fact that most Zaka residents cannot afford basic needs since they are in a rural area (Mugumbate, Maushe & Nyoni 2013). The site determination process was done (by convenience criteria because I am familiar with my home village) to get an accepted overview of the numbers, age range, household backgrounds of primary school learners who are the focus of the research. There are 15 schools found in the district and I chose to conduct the research utilising two primary schools. Primary schools were chosen for this study because gender stereotyping has been focused at secondary and tertiary levels, leaving out primary schools, yet it is evident there too. The two schools are established rural primary schools based in one of the remotest districts of Masvingo Province. They were chosen for purposes of this research because they are situated in the poorest rural areas.

3.5.2   Selection of participants and sampling

Sampling refers to both selecting the participants in the study and selecting the case or unit that will be used (Cohen et al. 2011). Flick (2015) defines a sample as part of a large population. It is usually selected to be representative of that population. Patton (2015:37) looks at a sample as, "…a subset of population under investigations." This implies that a sample was chosen or selected from the total population under study and insights about the whole population were tentatively derived from results obtained from the sample on how gender stereotyping affects girl child performance in Zimbabwe's primary schools.

Flick (2022) characterises selection of participants as deliberately and efficiently recognised gathering of individuals that meets the basis of delegates for a specific report. I used purposive critical case sampling. This kind of sampling is defined by Flick (2022) as looking for a relevant case that helps make a decision for which several different explanations are most likely or is a particularly useful example of the generalisations. Purposive sampling depends on the researcher's judgement regarding the elements within the target population. Creswell (2016) suggests that on the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the population, judgement is made about who should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research which, in this study, was how gender stereotyping affects girl child performance in Zimbabwe's primary schools in two schools in Zaka District, Masvingo Province.

Chiromo (2015) states that the choice of participants to a great extent relies upon how much they share the characteristics of the objective information. The sample for this study comprised two primary schools, two principals, two teachers and ten female Grade 6 learners who participated with due consent. Consent was sought from the parents of the learners and the learners signed the minor assent form (see appendices E and F). Grade 6 learners were selected because gender stereotyping has been focused on at secondary and tertiary levels, leaving primary schools out, yet it is evident that Grade 6 learners are also affected and are assumed to have mental capacity of comprehending the phenomena under study. Finally, Grade 6 were not engaged in exams at the time of data gathering unlike Grade 7 who were writing their

finals. Girls or female learners were invited to participate because they form the focus point of the study and their participation gives them voice in the research findings. The school principals were chosen for their experience in interacting with teachers and learners during the teaching and learning process and facilitating day to day interactions with the learners and teachers as well as among learners. Teachers were chosen as they interact with learners on a day-to-day basis in their teaching and learning and are able to identify social behaviours and actions that relate to gender stereotyping in the educational environment.

The research sample was recruited through approaching the school principals of the purposively selected schools in the district. Permission was sought from the schools' authorities to identify two teachers who had a long history of employment at the schools. Learner records were accessed to decide on learners to include in the study especially those who showed ability in their academic performance as they were assumed to be able to comprehend the variable under study.

3.6   DATA COLLECTION

Data collection instruments are techniques for gathering concrete information to be analysed in a research study (Alvesson & Skoldberg 2017; Johnson & Christensen 2014). Individual face-to-face interviews, focus group interviews and classroom observation were used to gather data for the study.

3.6.1   Individual face to face interviews

An interview is a data collection method in which an interviewer poses questions to a participant (Johnson & Christensen 2014). According to Flick (2015), the researcher is the one who asks the questions, while the interviewee is the one who is being questioned. The Individual face to face interviews were semi-structured. It should be noted that interviews can involve more than two people and can take many different formats, with verbal responses. They could be carried out over the phone or simply applied to a group. Face to face interviews were used for the purpose of the study under review. Face to face interviews were done with two school principals and two teachers; each of them is a representative of the two schools selected for conducting

the research. Therefore the interviews where scheduled and done at the two primary schools.

During the research process, interviews enabled me to probe for information and clarification of responses (Creswell 2016). Although the interviews were sufficient for this research, the interviewees could be affected by the interviewer effect, in which variables such as age and the interviewer's bias may affect the amount of information participants are willing to disclose and the authenticity with which they respond. Since no study can be successful without a method of questioning, the interview method was used to obtain data from participants. I approached each of the specified participants with interview protocols or a collection of open-ended interview questions. Each interview lasted 30 minutes.

The interview protocols had blank spaces at the end of each question to allow me to write down reflective notes on how the participants responded. At the same time, the open-ended questions had the benefit of offering the participants a wider range of options for response. For each question, I had an opportunity to follow up on any important remarks given by the participants. In this respect, probing the participants further may clarify misinformation and wrong conceptions that may arise on how gender stereotyping affects girl child performance in two primary schools in Zaka District, Masvingo Province.

The interviews also assisted me to "…explain more explicitly the purpose of the investigation and the information required" (Janseen 2017:45). In the same line of thought the interviews allowed me to evaluate the sincerity of responses, in the process picking up nuances and supplementary information from body language of the participants (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Added advantages of the interview also included that I retained control over who participated in the study. Interviews afforded greater flexibility and adaptability and a very high response rate (Neuman 2016) in establishing challenges of how gender stereotyping affects girl child performance in Zimbabwean primary schools.

During interviews, reasonable time was allowed for participants to answer questions. Interviews were also susceptible to interview bias (Chireshe 2015) and to address this

problem I stuck to the question schedule and clarifications were within the confines of the prepared questions. Recording of the interview process enabled me to keep the original information on how gender stereotyping affects girl child performance in Zimbabwean primary schools.

3.6.2   Focus groups

A focus group discussion entails gathering individuals from a selected target population who have similar backgrounds, and experiences in order to deliberate on research issues that fall within their expertise and specialty (Baral 2016). Baral (2016) further states that a focus group discussion is a form of qualitative data gathering where the group's perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, opinions and ideas are explored.

The discussions and composition of a focus group should be carefully planned so that an environment free of intimidation is created. This allows the researcher to acquire quality responses since the participants are free to talk openly and give honest opinions in both their responses and when contributing to other participants' answers. Baral (2016) finally notes that focus groups offer a depth, register and range of data that cannot be obtained through surveys and questionnaires. The other advantage is their ability to capture real-life data in a flexible, speedy and low-cost manner (Kumar 2018).

The scheduled focus group sessions were conducted with ten female Grade 6 learner participants who represented the two schools selected. The focus group participants were chosen through learner school records based on merit. Two focus group sessions (because we have two schools under study) of about one hour in duration were conducted with five learners each per school on the school premises. Detailed instructions to the participants were given prior to the sessions. These focus group interviews provided participants with a space to discuss and engage in meaningful debate where they aired their views about gender stereotypes in schools in a context where they were allowed to agree or disagree with each other. I guided the groups of participants and I introduced case topics for discussion and helped the group to participate in a lively and natural way. According to Kumar (2018), the advantage of these group discussions is their potential to allow the participants to agree or disagree

with each other and this provides insight into how a group thinks about an issue allowing for various opinions and ideas, a diversity that exists in a particular community in terms of beliefs, experiences and norms. According to Saunders (2019), focus group discussions yield rich information as participants respond to each other's comments and raise unexpected topics.

3.6.3   Non-participant observation

Observation involves the orderly recording and viewing of people's actions and the recording, analysis and interpretation of their behaviour (Wiek & Lang 2017). Where observation is used, data are collected spontaneously in real time (Bryman 2016). Quantitative observation focuses on the frequency of participants' actions while the qualitative observation emphasises meanings that people give to their actions (Boyatzis 2016) or a problem under investigation. In the present instance classroom participant observation was used in two lessons given by Grade 6 teachers. Participation implied that I was present in the middle of the action when lessons were observed (Bryman 2016). Specifically, I participated as an observer whose identity was openly recognised (Johnson & Christensen 2014).

I chose non-participant observation for its suitability where participants' attitudes and behaviour patterns are studied in their natural settings. I was able to gain direct experience of a specific situation or event in the schools (Chiromo 2015), which in this study was a lesson. In that regard, I obtained quality ecological validity - a situation where I witnessed, recorded and provided a thick description of the events as they unfolded in a real setting (Alvesson & Skoldberg 2017).

Non-participant observation aimed at in depth investigation of the problem. Besides being context sensitive, participant observation was a means of triangulation in the sense that two or more methods of collecting data concerning the same topic were employed in the study (Johnson & Christensen 2014). I was actively involved in observation throughout the process of all data collection from individual face to face interviews to both focus groups. I observed group dynamics during my interaction with the participants the time I was at the school and when I was conducting the focus group discussions. I observed the interaction among the learners, how they related

with each other, verbal and non-verbal cues of administrators and teachers as well as behaviour between genders during my visits to the schools during break time which was 30 minutes and during two class sessions that lasted an hour

Focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations have a common link. These methods allowed groups' attitudes, beliefs, and opinions to be explored. They also called for engagement in a meaningful debate as well as interaction in the form of verbal and nonverbal responses. Thus, they are interlinked.

3.7   DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is an activity to process subjective information with the goal that what has been realised can be conveyed to other people (Alvesson & Skoldberg 2017). Analysis in qualitative research means sorting out and coding information in manners that enable researchers to see designs, distinguish subjects, find corrections, create clarifications, develop understandings and produce speculations (Wiek & Lang 2017). In this study, thematic analysis have been used to analyse data. Thematic analysis method has been selected because it systematically identifies, organises, and offers insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across dataset. It allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences. Braun and Clarke (2006: 2) explain that thematic analysis "offers a way into qualitative research that teaches the mechanics of coding and analysing qualitative data systematically, which can then be linked to broader theoretical or conceptual issues".

3.7.1   Thematic analysis

Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis, one of the most common forms of analysis in qualitative research. For purposes of this study inductive thematic analysis was used. Boyatzis (1998) in Majumdar (2019:199) notes that "thematic analysis further interprets important aspects of research topics and hence describes data in an organized rich format." It involves coming to the data with the expectation that some preconceived themes will be reflected. Saunders (2019) concurs by saying that the inductive thematic process means that the researcher does not attempt to fit any preexisting frames or conceptions into the coding process. It includes identifying,

examining and recording patterns or themes within data. Qualitative modes of data analysis provide ways of discerning, examining, comparing and contrasting and interpreting meaningful patterns or themes (Bryman 2016). A display of data can be a detailed segment of text or diagram, chart, or matrix that provides a novel way of arranging and thinking about the more embedded data (Flick 2015). According to Creswell (2016), analysis of data is a process of inspecting, cleaning and transforming data with the goal of identifying relevant information and supporting insights.

In this study themes were formed, coded and defined on how gender stereotyping affects the girl child performance in Zimbabwean primary schools. The collected data were presented and discussions and findings on how gender stereotyping affects the performance of girl child in Zimbabwean primary schools were established. The data collected were analysed according to the research questions and individually by presenting the responses of each participant in return. Discussions of the findings were discussed immediately after data was presented. Comparison and contrast with the data from literature review was done.

3.7.1.1 Thematic analysis process

Hennink (2017: 225) points out that data analysis involves reading textual data, synthesising the analysis into various themes to respond to research questions and thus bringing about a theoretical conclusion of the data. In this study the gathered data were broken up into small, manageable parts for comprehensive analysis called themes. This guaranteed that the data were put into themes based on quality of response rather than the quantity of the data collected. This endorsed the qualitative approach and provided understanding of each thematic issue which arose. Data analysis was done using the following given process prescribed by Braun and Clarke (2006).

The main thrust of thematic analysis is to identify themes and to use them to address the research. Braun and Clarke (2006: 76) provide a six-phase guide for conducting thematic analysis as tabled below:

Table 3.1: Six phase guide for conducting thematic analysis

Step 1: Familiarisation with data	Step 4: Reviewing themes
Step 2: Generate initial codes	Step 5: Defining themes
Step 3: Search for themes	Step 6: Write up

Step 1: Familiarisation with data

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), familiarisation with data entails transcription of data and field notes, reading and re-reading the data, and jotting down initial ideas. As a result, rough notes are made on the extract at this point to get early impressions. According to Creswell (2016), data preparation must be systematic, sequential, and coherent. Organisation, printing of transcripts, collection of notes, papers, or other materials, reviewing and exploring the data, developing codes, reviewing codes, and coming up with themes in a coherent way, and generating a report are all steps involved in data preparation.

Familiarisation enables researchers to think about their own position within the research as well as establish their position (or role) as researchers within the community. It also contends that familiarisation can be an effective tool for effectively accessing children's "voices" and working with so-called "hard to reach" groups.

For effective data management I ensured that data sets captured was filed (White, Oelke & Friesen 2012). All files (that is the raw data) were given names to represent the case from which the data came, a unique identifier for the source (that is participant code, type/name of document or meeting) and the dates the files were created. This raw data were stored on a secure password guarded computer with folders for each type of raw data and were archived with dates to provide an audit trail and a means of confirming data analysis and interpretations for adequacy. I used an Excel spreadsheet to log all raw data and to detail the progress in collecting and converting raw data to text that could be subsequently analysed. I also ensured that observation notes and interview transcripts were coded.

Step 2: Generating initial codes

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), data coding must be organised in a meaningful and structured manner. According to Janseen (2017), there are various methods for coding, and the process will be decided by the research questions. As a result, coding reduces a large amount of data into small chunks of meaning. According to Boyatzis (2016) and Braun and Clarke (2006), coding data in a structured manner within interview and field notes, as well as throughout the entire data collection, is an important step in producing initial codes. "Coding is the process of labelling and arranging qualitative data to classify various themes and the relationships between them," according to MacMillan and Schumacher (2014: 96). According to Wiek and Lang (2017), coding is the process of connecting themes/codes to qualitative data passages. From the above, it can be deduced that codes are used in place of actual names of research participants for ethical purposes. As a result, coding was used to obtain the desired results in this study.

Codes should have strict boundaries, ensuring they are not interchangeable or irrelevant (Attride-Stirling 2001). There can be as many levels of coding as the researcher finds useful, but too many levels are not helpful towards the goal of attaining clarity in organising and interpreting the data (King 2004). Sections of text can be coded in as many different themes as they fit, codes may be reworded, coded once, or coded as many times as deemed relevant by the researcher (Braun & Clarke 2006). I performed hierarchical coding which allowed me to analyse texts at varying levels of usefulness with broad wider order codes providing an overview and detailed lower order codes allowing for greater particularisation to be made within and between cases (King 2004). Accounts that differ from the dominant interpretation in the analysis should not be ignored when coding (Braun & Clarke 2006).

A thematic network is another tool used in conducting a thematic analysis. The development of thematic networks aims to take the researcher deeper into the meaning of the texts, exploring the themes that emerged and identifying the patterns that underlie them (Attride-Stirling 2001). Peer debriefing and reflexive writing throughout the coding process also helped in the process of data evolving and capturing thoughts. I kept a journal of notes of observations, focus groups and

interviews which I shared with other colleagues (Tenzek 2017). The notes created in the reflexive journal become auditable evidence to support the trustworthiness of the study (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

Step 3: Searching for themes

A theme, according to MacMillan and Schumacher (2014), is a pattern that encapsulates an important or meaningful point about the data or analysis. A theme is described by its significance, as Braun and Clarke (2006) clarify. According to Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2016), searching for themes entails organising codes into potential themes and collecting all relevant data for each potential theme. The development of themes or categories occurs in parallel with the formulation of problem statements and/or sub problem statements.

Themes are "features of participants' accounts characterising specific attitudes and/or experiences that the researcher sees as important to the research question," according to Creswell (2016: 154). The development of themes or categories allows data to be coded and categorised into themes. For instance, how issues affect participants' perceptions. Processed data may be presented and categorised according to similarities and differences in thematic analysis (Chireshe 2015).

The method should involve coding, categorising, and noting patterns of linkages between variables and factors in order to construct a fair and logical chain of proof, which is accomplished by the establishment of themes (Creswell 2016).

I managed to identify themes by drawing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often are useless when viewed in isolation. I did this through making use of mind maps and thematic networks according to instructions by Braun and Clarke (2006). I covered a wide variety of concepts during the interviews and focus groups, so I initially utilised the conceptual framework in form of thematic systems that are web-like diagrams to develop broad, higher order codes to help organise the data. These deductive codes often formed main themes, which matched the interview questions.

Step 4: Reviewing themes

Reviewing themes, according to Bree and Gallagher (2016), entails going over, updating, and improving the preliminary themes found throughout the theme hunt. As a result, at this stage, the main concern is whether the themes are coherent. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), updating themes is essential for gathering all relevant data for each theme. The research themes that were produced were examined in order to verify and assess their credibility. I was able to create a thematic map of the study in this section.

During this phase, I reviewed the coded data extracts for each sub-theme to determine if a coherent pattern was apparent. All themes and sub-themes were vetted through cross-case analysis by comparing the findings from previous studies that were conducted in different locations (for example, a study by Manwa 2018) to ensure that themes and sub-themes had enough data to support them, as the richness and diversity of the data were more apparent with a larger data set (in comparison to single-case data set). To ensure that the themes reflected the participants' voices, I also returned to the raw data.

Step 5: Defining themes

According to Boyatzis (2016: 21), identifying themes seeks to "... define the core of what each theme is about". The correlation of themes and their interaction are also important considerations when defining themes. The interpretation is deduced from the preceding, allowing for the recognition of relationships as well as the discovery of meanings and patterns. Data analysis, according to Alvesson and Skoldberg (2017), is the process of adding order, structure, and meaning to a large amount of data.

As a result, it is reasonable to conclude that data analysis necessitates the application of logic to science. In this regard, Janseen (2017) states unequivocally that data analysis and interpretation entail the use of deductive and inductive reasoning in study. Data interpretation is used for inference to show the research study design in some way based on the above data. It also aids in the identification of trends or features that have similarities and differences, allowing the researcher to avoid erroneous

conclusions and inferences. Themes on how gender stereotyping affects the academic performance of girls in primary schools were chosen for this research.

During this phase, I wrote a detailed discussion on each individual theme, identifying the main thread that each theme told while considering how each theme fit into the overall narrative about the entire data set in relation to the research questions. The themes were not considered final until all of the data had been read through and I had scrutinised the coding to insure the credibility of the findings.

Step 6: Write up

According to Boyatzis (2016), the write up typically marks the conclusion of study in the form of a paper, which is either a journal article or a dissertation. Braun and Clarke (2006) agree, stating that the write up is the final opportunity for the study, in which vivid and convincing extract examples are chosen. Direct quotes from participants were essential components of the final report. I used short quotes to aid in the understanding of specific points of interpretation of gender stereotyping and academic success of girl children. Extracts of raw data were incorporated into the analytic narrative to illustrate the complex nature of the data (Braun & Clarke 2006).

3.8   TRUSTWORTHINESS

This is done to ensure that results of the qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with similar conditions. Trustworthiness of a study refers to the amount of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study (Pilot & Beck 2014).

3.8.1   Credibility

Credibility of the study, or the confidence in the truth of the study and therefore the findings, is the most important feature of a study (Polit & Beck 2014). Johnson and Christensen (2014) note that to be accepted as trustworthy, researchers must show that data analysis has been conducted in a clear, coherent and rigorous manner through recording, systematising and disclosing the methods of analysis with enough

detail to enable the reader to determine whether the process is authentic. Merriam (2017) notes that credibility involves establishing that the results of research are credible or believable. Sometimes, especially in qualitative research it is only the participants of the research who can legitimately judge the credibility of results.

Merriam (2017) reveals that the qualitative researcher's credibility deals with how findings fit reality. Muchapondwa (2017) posits that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness to promote confidence that one has gathered accurate information. Credibility of the researcher was important I was a major data gathering instrument so my background, qualification and experience played a critical role in the exposition of how gender stereotyping affects girl child performance in Zimbabwean primary schools. When evaluating qualitative research, credibility is linked to the research purposes and responsible research decisions are those fit the researcher's purpose (Creswell 2016), requiring researchers and practitioners to think critically and when judging methodological decision making and to consider context.

To achieve credibility, I spent as much time as possible with the participants to become oriented on how gender stereotyping affects the performance of the girl child in Zimbabwean primary schools. This involved spending adequate time observing various aspects in the teaching and learning of the girl children in the two selected schools in Zaka District. For the purposes of this study, I spent time with learners being taught various subjects with the view of ascertaining how they are allocated roles. This was a sure way of achieving persistent observation and a measure of achieving credibility.

Credibility is achieved when the participants' views and the researcher's portrayal of them are consistent (Tobin & Begley 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest several ways a researcher can address credibility including activities such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, data collection triangulation, researcher triangulation and peer debriefing allow an external check on the research process, which may therefore increase credibility, as well as examining referential adequacy as a means to check preliminary findings and interpretations against the raw data. Where

members (participants) check and verify the findings and interpretations, credibility is reached (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

3.8.2   Transferability

Johnson and Christensen (2014) view transferability as the degree to which findings of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other participants. To do this, Creswell (2013:173) claims that the researcher should give enough information about him/herself, the research journey, context and researcher-participant relationship. In this study, I enhanced transferability by describing in great depth how gender stereotyping affects academic performance of girl learners in the primary school environment, the research process and the participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) claims that transferability is essential to the application of research findings because policymakers and sponsors rely on data, conclusions, and recommendations from a single or small number of research projects undertaken in a range of circumstances that can be different to the one in which applications will be made. I ensured transferability was achieved in this study by utilising a homogeneous group of Shona speaking female learners who live in same rural environment, explained the research process, and made sure the two schools selected where in same setting sharing common features such as nature of curriculum, infrastructure in schools and the schools' environment in terms of behaviour outcomes and student-teacher relationships.

In qualitative research, this concerns only case-to-case transfer (Tobin & Begley 2004). In this case since I do not know the sites that may wish to transfer the findings. Therefore I provided thick descriptions, so that any reader who may wish to transfer the findings to another similar site can evaluate transferability (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

3.8.3   Dependability

Chiromo (2015) defines dependability as the reliability of findings over time. Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of the research findings and the degree to which research procedures are documented, allowing an outsider researcher to follow and evaluate the research process (Wiek & Lang 2017).

Dependability therefore involves participants' evaluation of the findings, interpretation and recommendations of the study such that all are supported by the data as received from participants of the study.

To achieve dependability, I have ensured that the research process is logical, can be traced according to its steps and fully documented (Tobin & Begley 2004) and this dependability is able to be traced through audits of the process (Koch 1994).

3.8.4 Confirmability

Kyngäs, Kääriäinen and Elo (2020) claims that confirmability as the degree to which the findings of the research study could be confirmed by other researchers. Confirmability is concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are fictitious or outlandish but clearly derived from the data. To achieve confirmability, researchers should show how they link their results to the conclusions in a way that can be audited and, as a process, repeated if necessary. It is similar to credibility, where confirmability has particular implications for studies that provide policy recommendations. In qualitative research, the paradigmatic and epistemological position of the research are informed by both the problem and the individual interest of the researcher in terms of their way of viewing what is considered true and authentic (Moon & Blackman 2014). To ensure confirmability I have included markers such as the reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the entire study, so that others can understand how and why decisions were made.

To account for all these processes and make sure evidence is available to ensure transferability, generalisability, credibility, confirmability, I have kept audit trails. I have managed to make information available through having evidence for the research process in form of keeping records of the raw data, field notes, transcripts, and a reflexive journal to help me order, link and cross reference data, as well as report the research process (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

3.9   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Researchers must comply to ethical responsibilities and legal procedures when gathering and reporting of information to protect the human rights and wellbeing of the participants involved in the research study (MacMillan & Schumacher 2014). Ethical considerations in this study focused on those issues that protect the participants' rights. Most ethical issues fall into categories such as informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and protecting participants from harm; also getting permission and being honest with all participants are essential ethical issues (Boyatzis 2016). The following ethical issues were considered:

3.9.1   Permission

I requested permission from the University of South Africa's College of Education Ethics review committee and permission was granted (See Appendix H). An ethical clearance certificate was given in order to collect data. Permission was sought before collecting the data by approaching the schools' gatekeepers (Ministry of Education) for permission (see Appendix G1 and G2). This is supported by Astroth and Chung (2018) who suggest that there is need for commitment to obtain official approval.

3.9.2   Informed consent

Participants must give their informed consent before taking part in a study (Flick 2015). Informed consent is greater than obtaining a signature on a form but also requires that researchers inform the participants to ensure that they can reach a clear decision about whether or not to participate in the research. Informed consent was sought from the participants to avoid deception (Merriam 2017). This entails that the participants should be made aware of the purpose of the research (See Appendices D to F). Flick (2015) notes potential risks associated with the research which participants need to know about before agreeing to take part. Creswell (2016) concurs that there are set procedures according to which participants should decide to take part. Thus, renumeration or penalties may affect the potential participants'' ability to consent. Patton (2015) notes that the participants have rights such as freedom to say no or withdraw from the study.

To ensure consent was properly sought from the participants, appendix D was used to seek consent of principals and teachers to participate and parents' consent and minor assent forms are represented by appendices E and F respectively.

3.9.3   Anonymity and confidentiality

Patton (2015) observes that participants value confidentiality as crucial and want their anonymity and privacy kept secure. I maintained confidentiality by keeping the observation schedules secret and the responses from interviews anonymous by not writing the names of the participants and all information they gave was kept confidential on how gender stereotyping affects the performance of the girl child in Zimbabwean primary schools (See Appendices B & C).

According to Chireshe (2015), anonymity is the situation where the researcher does not record or publish the details of those researched. In the research the participants were not identified by their names but as school principals, teachers and learners. Thus, anonymity was ensured and guaranteed in the topic under research. This ethical principle requires that identities or names of research participants should not be shared (Janseen 2017). I did not attach names of participants when gathering data. Ii made use of codes to identify the research participants, for example Teacher A of School A. Anonymity refers to concealing the identities of participants in all documents resulting from research (Coffelt 2017). This means that care should be taken in storing the data.

3.9.4   Protection from harm

Protecting participants is a key task of the researcher (MacMillan & Schumacher 2014). In this study participants were not harmed in any way since I ensured that all ethical codes depending on what is morally upright were enforced. All participants were treated with dignity and respect including the learners who could get tired or struggle to express themselves due to their age.

3.10 SUMMARY

The chapter focused on the methodological processes employed in the research study on how gender stereotyping affects the performance of the girl child in Zimbabwean primary schools. It dealt with the research design, population of the study, the sample and research instruments used. A qualitative research paradigm was used which is also in line with the case study research design selected for this research. An outline of data collection and data analysis methods was given. The next chapter dwells on the presentation of data and discussion of findings on how gender stereotyping affects girl child performance in Zimbabwean primary schools.

CHAPTER FOUR
DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings on each data collection technique. Data was collected through semi-structured face to face interviews, focus group discussions and observation. The study sought to establish the impact of gender stereotypes on the performance of the girl child in Zimbabwean primary schools. Data were presented under theme categories that emerged from the main and sub-research objectives. The objectives of the research were described as follows:

- To understand how gender stereotypes contribute to the development and perpetuation of gender differences;
- To investigate how gender stereotypes affect the academic performance of the girl child;
- To recommend suggestions for addressing the implications of gender stereotyping on academic performance of the girl child in Zimbabwean primary schools in Masvingo Province.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

This section contains a description of the schools and the biographical information of the participants.

4.2.1 Description of the participating schools

Participants were drawn from two primary schools. The schools are referred to as School A and B respectively. These schools are situated in the rural setting of Zaka District in Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe. The schools are located in poverty-stricken communities where most people in the community are unemployed. Codes instead of school names were used for ethical reasons.

4.2.2 Biographical information of the participants

The sample comprised two principals, two teachers and ten Grade 6 girl learners which mean a total of 14 participants. This section presents the background and personal information of the participants as mentioned in chapter 3: schools' administrators, teachers and learners. Participants' personal information or profiles, such as gender, marital status, years of experience, employment history and age are highlighted. All this information is provided in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, after which discussions follow. Four participants who are school staff (two principals and two teachers) participated in the interview process and ten female learners participated in the focus group discussions (giving a total of 14 participants).

Table 4.1: Profile information of teachers and school principals

Participant's code	Position	Name of school	Gender	Years of experience	Marital status
A	Grade 6 Teacher	School A	Male	5	Not married
B	Grade 6 Teacher	School B	Female	11	Married
C	Principal	School A	Male	10	Married
D	Principal	School B	Male	7	Married

The data above shows that the schools' principals are predominantly male, and majority of the administrator participants were males, one female teacher and one teacher participant was not married.

Table 4.2: Profile information of Gr 6 female learners for the two schools

Participants' code	Position	School	Gender	Age	Grade
E	Learner	School A	Female	13	6
F	Learner	School A	Female	12	6
G	Learner	School A	Female	13	6
H	Learner	School A	Female	13	6
I	Learner	School A	Female	14	6
J	Learner	School B	Female	12	6
K	Learner	School B	Female	12	6
L	Learner	School B	Female	14	6
M	Learner	School B	Female	13	6
N	Learner	School B	Female	13	6

The learners' age ranges from 12-14 years in all two selected schools. Girls were utilised for the study because the research focuses on giving them a voice and they are central to the study. For these learners involved in the study, parental/legal guardian consent was sought during parent meetings that was called out by the principals to inform the parents of the leaners about the study.

4.3   PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

Table 4.3 presents summary of themes and sub-themes derived from the triangulated data analysis process. Theme 1 of the findings emerges from objective 1, and theme 2 from the second objective.

Table 4.3: Summary of themes and sub-themes derived from triangulated data analysis process

Theme	Sub-theme
Theme 1: Gender discrimination	▪ Emphasis on women's sex role ▪ Cultural beliefs
Theme 2: Educational gender gaps	▪ Gendered school environment ▪ Reinforcing of masculine and feminine gender norms ▪ Unequal allocation of school resources ▪ Gendered school activities
Theme 3: Acceptance of inferiority and discrimination	

4.3.1   Theme 1: Gender discrimination

This research theme is linked to the research question: How do gender stereotypes contribute to the development and perpetuation of gender differences? Here the notion is to establish factors that have contributed to development and perpetuation of gender stereotypes regarding girl learners.

(a)   Emphasis on women's sex role

Under this sub-theme, household chores are unevenly distributed in families on the basis of gender. The prevailing perception which drove the allocation of household chores was that domestic chores were the responsibility of the female members of the household. Principal D said:

> *In most households female children are expected to take part in household chores from a younger age than their male counterparts. This is largely based on the standpoint that females belong in the home and must therefore become accustomed to domestic duties from a tender age. On the other hand, the*

males are considered to be destined for greater things and are therefore spared from domestic chores.

The targeting of female children for household chores perpetuates the stereotype that the female child is destined to become a housewife and must therefore learn the wifely duties at an early age. This has the potential of inculcating a belief in the child that being a housewife is an acceptable fate for them and hence they may not aspire for greater achievement. For the boy child the view that the woman's place is in the home and in the kitchen also develops from this tender age. Teacher B said:

> *Because of the allocation of chores in the home, the boy child grows up with the belief that the female's role is in the home. Females who want to step out of this stereotype and strive for a better fate are thus often viewed with scorn and suspicion.*

Because of being expected to learn their role in the home, the girl child is distracted by the burden of responsibility which the boys are not affected by. Teacher A indicated:

> *Whilst the boys focus on school work and nothing else, the girls are sometimes occupied with the challenges they are facing with regard to the duties they are expected to perform in the home. For instances in times when water is scarce, the girl might be thinking about the long trip they will need to take in order to fetch water from far off. This naturally distracts them from schoolwork and impairs performance.*

Girls often find their minds focusing on challenges back home where they are supposed to perform certain chores as soon as they get home. In some cases, this may result in some of them skipping late classes to get home and perform chores such as fetching water or firewood before dark. Learner G said:

> *Our disadvantage as girls is that most times I am late for school, and expected to be home early I will have to perform some tasks helping at home.*

In reality these adverse factors prevail against girls, but from the findings it is clear that the female learners at least they are having support and are doing well to counter the effects or outcomes of the gendered stereotypes in terms of balancing school work with house chores.

(b)   Cultural beliefs

The sub-theme which emerged was that gender stereotypes emanate from cultural norms which were usually beyond the control of children and their parents. People were expected to respect and conform to the cultural norms of their society and in this case, there were culturally defined roles for males and females. In this context the cultural capital labels the girl child, who is affected by gender stereotyping, as a weaker sex and is classified as one who does feminine subjects (Bryson 2018). Principal C said:

> *Whilst families may want to embrace gender equality and do away with stereotypes, such conduct may be considered against culture and invite scorn and ridicule from their communities. Practices which encourage the development of gender differences and perpetuation of stereotypes may therefore persist even when people have become enlightened.*

The discussions established that the Shona culture which was prevalent in the study area was very explicit in terms of the expectations from males and females which made gender differences very pronounced. Teacher A indicated that:

> *The local community respects their culture very much and any teaching which negates it is taken with negativity. Unfortunately, gender stereotyping is very deep in the culture and children growing up in that environment have their attitudes shaped from an early age.*

The role of culture in the development of gender differences was therefore considered to be very significant. The findings were similar to Kessels (2015) who found that culture played a significant role in the perpetuation of gender stereotypes, hence having an effect on academic performance of learners.

Culture supports male superiority hence males and females were not considered to be equal, with males occupying a higher status than females from an early age. This kind of thing extended beyond home as the girl child would never be expected to excel ahead of the boy and both genders grew up with this mentality. Teacher B said:

> *Because male superiority is ingrained in the social norms, boys are expected to perform better than girls in all areas of achievement. This breeds a community which has different expectations of the male child and the female child from an early age and this transcends to all aspects of life as they grow up.*

Staring from a point whereby the male was considered to be superior to the female, it was always going to be difficult to have a society where gender differences are not exploited to the disadvantage of one gender. It was however gleaned from the discussions that the notion of male superiority remains a thorn in the flesh as it denied girls equal access to opportunities. This is in line with feminist theory that postulates the impact of male dominance in a patriarchal society. Because boys are prioritised in being the focus to receive education among our rural communities, this sidelines the performance of girls and two incidences can occur.

Based on the cultural capital theory, Adkins (2012) is of the opinion that the class differences and power unbalances are produced and the dominant culture reinforces mechanisms of inequality. It follows that boys tend to be of the dominant culture which makes them excel academically, marginalising the girl child and leading to her poor performance because of the culture instilled. Haralambos and Holborn (2017) concur by noting that the school system tends to recognise and support the dominant culture.

Adkins (2012: 48) observes that "masculine domination assumes a natural self-evident status through its inscription in the objectives of structures of social world, which is then embodied and reproduced in the habitus of individuals". Thus, according to Bourdieu, women are seen as "not typically capital accumulating subjects, rather they are capital bearing projects" (Allard 2015: 157). Thus, evidence of gender stereotyping being exhibited by the above notions lead to negative performance of the girl child. Lumby (2011) maintains that Bourdieu in his studies referred to women as

docile bodies. The label and stereotyping attached to girls reduce their sense of excellence as the culture instilled in them leads to their education for domesticity. Thus, girls end up de-valuing education as they think they are meant to be confined to the private sphere while boys are for the public sphere.

Household chores were the most salient element supported by the sub-theme of cultural beliefs as they influence the effect of gender stereotypes on the girl child's academic performance. Teacher B explained:

> *Because girls have to take care of household chores before and after school, they are generally less prepared than the boys. For a start when they get home, they have less time to do their homework as they have to perform chores. In the morning the same situation prevails and they often end up leaving for school after the boys have gone. Their cases of being late would imply poor performances but at our school the girls tend to do well in such an adverse environment.*

The performance of household chores was therefore considered not just a duty but an essential training process for every girl. Girls were therefore expected to perform household chores in the morning before going to school while boys just woke up, prepared for school and went. This put the girls at a disadvantage as they sometimes were late as a result while the boys could afford to be punctual. Learner L said:

> *I help my mom every morning with house chores and after completing household chores, I often have to resort to running to school to make it in time.*

While they are tired after performing chores and running to school, girls are expected to now learn at the same pace as the boys who do not go through a similar routine which disadvantages the girls. The same issue of gender role stereotyping is highlighted by Bandura in the social learning theory where he cited that girls are socialised into motherhood and feminine related duties such as cleaning, cooking, taking care of the household and so forth whereas boys find themselves doing calculations and duties that are related to masculinity (Bandura 2014). The boys would be more energetic and alert and no effort is made to accommodate the tiredness of

the girls. The fact that they find themselves running late also means that they may need to run to make it on time and hence arrive tired.

Feminist theory necessitates addressing the patriarchal system which sees men as superior to women and this is maintained through a set of values, norms, laws and cultural background that makes the girls inferior to the boys. The labels attached to the girl child, segregation, marginalisation and male dominance present a scenario were boys are supposed to perform better than girls. Brannon (2018) says that the radical feminist perspective views girl children as not receiving priority in schools because they have been assigned to reproductive tasks.

4.3.2   Theme 2: Educational gender gaps

This research theme is linked to the research question: How do gender stereotypes affect the academic performance of the girl child? The following sub-themes emerged from the main theme.

(a)   Gendered school environment

Teachers play an important role in creating a conducive learning environment. The way in which teachers interact with learners may promote or deprecate gender stereotyping in an educational setting. Teacher A and B agreed that the way they relate with the learners to a greater extent influences some sort of gender bias and they shared the same sentiment that this is influenced by the traditional way of thinking towards gender issues.

Teacher A said:

> *We are so accustomed to our societal beliefs and practices such that we either consciously or unconsciously impose our own gender biases on these kids and this has always been the case. For example, girls need a lot of attention and their emotional needs make me prefer my boy learners when it comes to handling pressure.*

This shows that the stereotyped belief that boys can handle pressure in situations better than girls is imposed on the learners. The female teacher B had a different sentiment though she supports the idea that teachers' attitudes influence gender bias and impact on learner performance.

Teacher B had this to say:

> I personally prefer working with girls than boys, I understand girls better and boys tend to be childish and disruptive such that their uncontrollable behaviour makes me agitated.

This was contrary to what Principal C had in mind as he said:

> I think it's all about personal choice and the level of awareness of one to gender issues that triggers either gender stereotypes or not. Being with the school for the past 10 years, I have seen that lately gender equality is starting to form on treatment of learners. Both boys and girls are now treated the same and it is good to maintain the standard and ensure our learners enjoy equal opportunity inside and outside the classroom.

Learner E and H also had the same views as their teachers that their teachers' attitudes and behaviour influence gender stereotypes which impacts on their performance. When asked about the relationship they have with their teachers, Learner E said:

> In our class we girls do well in languages as compared to boys. Girls are now competent in Maths subject areas because our teachers put on extra time to teach us girls. Nowadays girls are even getting prices receiving prices as best students in the subjects such as Maths during price giving days.

Learner H said:

> I like my teacher because he plays with us and is always giving us extra work to practise at home and we get rewards for passing.

Both teachers hold the stereotype that boys are better in mathematics than girls, hence their attitude towards learners of both genders differs.

Teacher A said:

> *I have dedicated more time to take the girls for extra classes in mathematics because I want them to pass and improve in their grades.*

The findings above are consistent to Agir's (2019) research that teachers' attitude and behaviour in relation to gender stereotypes may influence learner performance. Rege (2003) agrees with Agir (2019) that gender stereotyping and discrimination may occur during the teaching-learning situation and will lead to learners' performance. Bryson (2018) concurs that the girl child who is labelled according to cultural or gender stereotyping is classified as one who does 'feminine subjects'.

The other challenge girl children are experiencing in the school environment was being 'labeled' with other names. These labels can impact on their academic performance because they accept the "label" that is attached to them. Learners who fail to perform to expected standards in the classroom are often labelled as dull and they are viewed from a perspective that is negative.

Teacher B said:

> *There is the situation whereby female offspring are considered to be dull, not intelligent, shy and weaker than their male siblings despite their relative ages. The girl child grows up with the belief of male superiority and this goes with them to school and beyond.*

Thus for Bourdieu practising these aforementioned habits shapes one's destiny. Teenagers normally attach positive and encouraging labels to boys while girls receive negative labels. In the same vein girls tend to be inferior which affects their performance negatively. Allard (2015) points out that the negative labels which teachers attach to girls are made theirs and in turn they act in relation to that label which also affects their educational performance.

For instance, Learner J mentioned:

> *In my class they tease me and they have nicknamed me Bhanguza* [trans. a
> big head, useless brain-wise]*.*

These labels can impact on their academic performance because they accept the
"label" that is attached to them. Learners who fail to perform to expected standards in
the classroom are often labelled as dull and they are viewed from a perspective that
is negative.

In support of the Bourdieu's cultural capital theory, Allard (2015) points out that the
educational achievement of a child has a correlation with socio-economic status and
educational level of parents. Thus, the inequalities that exist in families are transmitted
to children through transmission of cultural capital by parents. The tasks given to boys
and girls by parents determine their future also. Therefore, from the findings, where
parents, guardians or teachers attach labels to girls and boys, according to the
Bourdieu, this can significantly affect learners' performance especially the girl child.
However though the effects are there, from this study findings it is clear that the labels
or cultural transmissions has had no effect on performance of girls who get high grades
despite the stereotypes.

(b)   Reinforcing of masculine and feminine gender norms

Teacher attitudes lead to the stereotype of masculinity versus femininity of the learner.
Teachers assign different roles among the learners. Both the teachers and principals
agree that there is gender bias when it comes to assigning roles and duties among
learners.

Principal D gave his views based on duties that are undertaken by learners at his
school and said that:

> *One can find out that because of the assumption that females are weaker than
> boys they are usually assigned light tasks like cleaning classrooms and boys
> take the heavy tasks of lifting desks and so forth.*

Sports and recreation were used to reinforcing masculinity and feminine gender norms in the two schools. From an early age, there are certain specific recreational activities which are considered to be for women and men respectively. This inculcates from a very early age the belief that the male and female are very different even in terms of what they can and cannot do. According to Teacher A:

While boys' recreation involves activities which take them away from home such as hunting, the girl child is mainly confined to activities which they do at home such as indoor games. This in itself has a significant bearing in exacerbating gender differences.

A subtle statement on gender differences is embedded in the way sport for the two genders is perceived. Until recently males participated in sports which were considered to be physically challenging while women were excluded. While women have since been included in the previously male only sports, they are given easier conditions such as shorter playing time. According to Principal C:

Efforts to introduce gender equality in areas such as sport have largely not been effective since there are still situations in which the female teams play different rules from the males. They are still considered to be the weaker gender even in areas whereby gender equality is being actively promoted. So, in actual fact it is not truly possible to eradicate gender differences.

In sports and recreation, the gender differences remain pronounced and difficult to remove. The different sports and recreation activities which are designated for boys and girls aid in the development of gender differences. This is mainly because of females being viewed as the weaker gender. It can be deduced from the above that modelling plays a significant and pivotal role whereby children can say they never saw a male or female taking part in a particular defined sport. Teachers and the community mention that certain sports are designated to a particular sex (Gudhlanga 2013). Mawere (2014) observes that gender relations are developed day in day out by means of socialisation in society and in schools. It also follows that gender stereotypes are generated by people and can be changed by people through observation of various social groups.

(c)   Unequal allocation of school resources

During the data collection phase, teachers, school principals and learners mentioned inappropriate prioritisation of teaching and learning materials as another factor that has contributed to gender differences and preferences among learners.

Teacher A responded to the question by saying:

> *Under the prevailing circumstances of uncertainty of education processes because of Covid-19, libraries are needed in our communities especially given that we are in a poor rural community where parents cannot afford their children extra reading materials and if they could, priority would be given to the male learners. Girls are mostly sidelined and mostly attached to household activities rather than meeting their learning needs.*

School Principal C had this to say:

> *The government is responsible with provision of school materials required but given the economic situation in our country, schools have been in dire need of resources to even being short staffed. Teachers have been lacking motivation in the profession because of low salaries and many have left the country, leaving rural schools at menace of short staffing. Because government is failing to provide resources such as textbooks, there has been inadequate teaching and learning materials such as textbooks, furniture and proper infrastructure in terms of classrooms themselves. Enrolment in our local schools is dominated by boys than girls as parents prioritise paying fees of male learners, girls are ascribed to cheap labour for their homes.*

Learner N (School B) said:

> *In our community many girls drop out of school, I have seen my cousin and sisters who are no longer in school because their parents cannot afford them fees and resources needed at school. It's mostly boys that are majority in our school as compared to girls. I am happy to be still in school although I struggle*

sometimes to get books and pens. We own a small garden that I do vegetables and sell during holidays to raise money for books.

The data from this sub-theme indicated that there is bias towards on allocation of resources among schools and female learners are at the plight of resource shortages. Due to social and parental support, male learners find the help they need in terms of their fees being paid on time. Parents' priority on resources tend to be biased towards boys who get extra reading materials from parents.

The findings in this sub-theme is that inadequate teaching and learning materials make learning very difficult because it hinders effective teaching. Learners will fight for the few textbooks available and at times sharing is difficult given large numbers of learners per class. However, despite all these challenges, girls surpass expectations because of the fact that they mature physically and psychologically at an earlier age, have higher and more advanced verbal abilities and regard the world around them from a personal, aesthetic and viewpoint, thus their ability to thrive even in the face of the shortage of resources or negative attitudes (Beans, Muza & Maireva 2021).The social learning theory of Bandura supports the above findings: the theory posits that the school learning environment (physical facilities, resources and learner behaviour) has an influence on the learning process and ultimately on learner achievement (Efeza 2011). Thus, with lack of physical facilities and resources learners' academic performance will be negatively affected and at most times girls are not prioritised in provision of resources by their parents.

4.3.3   Theme 3: Implications of gender stereotyping on academic performance of the girl child

There are basic implications of gender stereotyping on the academic performance of the girl child in primary schools and they are:

(a)   Acceptance of inferiority

The main challenge with gender stereotyping is that it is accepted that girls perform less well than boys in school. This view therefore makes it easy for the poor

performances of the girl child to be accepted as fact and not attention be given to improving their performance. Whilst this is what stereotypically is considered to be true, the girls are excelling in their school and have not looked down upon themselves. Teacher B said:

> *In my experience I have seen that parents are more concerned and more likely to engage the teacher when their boy child is not performing well than in the case of girls. Unfortunately, this results in girls not receiving the assistance and push they need to make it academically. We as teachers has been trying to correct this anomaly by paying attention to girls' needs.*

The problem with gender stereotyping becomes very significant in situations where the girls believe they belong outside the school system as the society seems to suggest. Once they accept that they are just fulfilling a formality, even the desire to achieve is lost. That might explain while girls' performance drops as they grow older (Beans et al. 2021). Once the effects of gender stereotyping are accepted as an unshakeable reality, girls stop trying and their performance is irretrievably compromised. But results from the study indicate that girls are doing well.

Learner G said that,

> *We are not afraid to even say something in class anymore though boys used make a joke out of our contributions, which used to make us feel bad and therefore we opt not to say anything. Our teacher has been giving us support motivation to speak out.*

Precedents which show boys performing better than girls are often used to perpetuate the stereotype that academics is not for girls. However, these ignore the fact that girls face so many disadvantages and in the absence of such disadvantages they would perform much better as in this case results shows girls are doing well.

(b)   Discrimination

Another basic implication that emerged was that of discrimination whereby parents and guardians preferred to facilitate the education of the boy child at the expense of girls. Situations were found whereby parents and guardians with children in school paid fees for boys first whilst the girls' fees remained unpaid. Principal D said:

> *The situation whereby parents discriminate between boys and girls is very evident. When it comes to paying school fees, cases whereby girls are excluded from school because of nonpayment of fees while boys from the family have their fees fully paid is not uncommon.*

Parents and guardians do not treat girls and boys equally when it comes to providing for their school needs. This is clearly based on the stereotype which considers the woman's role to be in the home as wife and mother. Girls are just expected to go through the schooling process as a formality while waiting for their ordained role of wife and mother. The discrimination which girls face sees them miss classes, lack resources and lack support for their academic pursuit, which negatively impacts on their performance. The findings agree with Matějů and Smith (2017) who found that gender discrimination tends to result in inequitable access to education between the genders. Haralambos and Holborn (2017) note cultural capital and academic performance have strong effects on educational attainment. Siyakwazi and Siyakwazi (2014) point out that gender stereotype also affects the academic performance of the learners because of undermining and demeaning effects of such gender stereotypes on girl children. This creates an inferiority complex in girls as postulated by the culture capital theory. Thus, the inferiority complex in girls develops where preference is given to the boy or the girl child. The above is supported by Mawere (2014) who said cultural capital has a strong direct effect on the girl child's academic performance which is negative. From the above it can be observed that acceptance of attributing a low aptitude to girls, mockery and undervaluing the girl child by parents lead to gender educational inequalities.

4.4 RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS

I observed that a significantly higher number of girls came late for school. This could be attributed to the requirement of performing household chores before coming to school. Though they would be late, during the class sessions, I also observed the interaction between the female learners and teachers is conducive for the girls to do well. They were getting extra work to do at home, teachers gave them photocopies of extra reading materials. During the class participation, girls would be lively and giving meaningful contributions to questions being asked.

However, at the close of the school day I would see most boys playing around with their friends while girls would be in a hurry to leave for home apparently to perform chores which would be waiting for them.

4.5 TRIANGULATION

I used a range of qualitative research methods to collect data from each participating site, including interviews, focus groups and observations. Each research method was chosen to access different types of information for comparing findings across methods. For example, an issue that was identified during an interview or focus group could also be examined during observations of practice in the naturalistic work setting. Similarly, issues witnessed during observations could be explored during focus group discussions.

From the research findings, it was evident that there was commonality of data findings across the three data collection methods used (interviews, focus groups and observations). It was found out through all the data collection methods that household chores are unevenly distributed in families on the basis of gender. The girl learners mentioned their need to do extra household chores at home, the teachers mentioned how this was affecting performance of the girl learners who would be constantly late for school and the researcher observed the rush by the girl learners to go home after dismissal whilst their male counterparts would be playing in the school grounds. The prevailing perception which drove the allocation of household chores was that domestic chores were the responsibility of the female members of the household and

the targeting of female children for household chores perpetuates the stereotype that the girl child is destined to become a housewife and must therefore learn the wifely duties at an early age. The role of culture in the development of gender differences was also discovered to be very significant throughout all the data collection procedures. In this context the cultural capital labels the girl child, who is affected by gender stereotyping, as the weaker sex and is classified as one who does feminine subjects (Bryson 2018).

The findings therefore indicated that culture plays a significant role in the perpetuation of gender stereotypes, hence having an effect on academic performance of learners. However, despite all these hurdles of facing gender related stereotypes, it was evident from all the data collection methods that, with the support of teachers, the girl learners were able to perform better than their male counterparts. Teacher participants emphasised the support they were giving their girl learners and the learners also hinted at how support from their teachers enabled them to do well in maths (which is considered a male dominated subject). To support this finding, the researcher observed that the teachers provided the female learners additional photocopied learning materials.

4.6   SUMMARY

This chapter presented the findings of the study in the light of the research questions. The qualitative data which was gathered was analysed thematically and presented in line with the objectives and the data collection methods. The dominant themes were considered as the findings of the study. The next chapter looks at the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations with regard to a study on gender stereotyping and girl child performance in Zimbabwe's primary schools. The study used a qualitative research approach and considered a sample of 14 participants. The study was guided by the following research objectives.

The study was guided by the following research objectives:

▪   To understand how gender stereotypes contribute to the development and perpetuation of gender differences;

▪   To investigate how gender stereotypes affect the academic performance of the girl child;

▪   To recommend suggestions for addressing the implications of gender stereotyping on academic performance of the girl child in primary schools in Masvingo Province.

5.2   SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Based on the purpose of the study, I aimed at providing an assessment on gender stereotyping and girl child performance in Zimbabwe's primary schools in Zaka District, Masvingo Province. The first chapter of the study presented the introduction, background and motivation of study, research questions and objectives, statement of problem and study aim as well a brief literature and research methodology and design. Although there are strides to ensure incorporation of women in the education sector, based on the study background the educational attainment by girls in Zimbabwe is still low and gender stereotypes still pose as a challenge as a contributory factor to girls' disadvantage. The second chapter provided an overview of the literature review regarding the effects of gender stereotyping on the academic performance of the primary school girl child as well as theoretical and conceptual frameworks for this

study. The theoretical frameworks of feminism, Bourdieu's social capital theory as well Bandura's social learning theory were discussed. Chapter three described the research methodology employed to ascertain how gender stereotyping affects the academic performance of the girl child at primary school level. The fourth chapter presented the findings of the study and analysed them to come up with answers to the research questions. The qualitative data which was gathered were analysed thematically and presented in line with the objectives and the data collection methods. The dominant themes were considered as the findings of the study. After synthesising data collected in chapter four, this chapter therefore focuses on summarising the research findings and makes contributory comments and recommendations.

5.3 FINDINGS FROM FACE TO FACE INTERVIEWS, OBSERVATIONS AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following is a summary of the research findings based on objectives.

Theme 1: Contribution of gender stereotypes to the development and perpetuation of gender differences among learners

It was established from the study finding that issues related to gender discrimination [4.3.1], which include emphasis on women's sex roles [(4.3.1 (a)] and cultural beliefs [4.3.1 (b)] are contributory factors to development and perpetuation of gender differences.

Drawing conclusions from Bourdieu's cultural capital theory (cf. 2.6.2), the findings from the study indicated that social spaces created by communities and school environment affected girls' self-concept in the sense that the labels and gendered stereotypes portray women as weaker sex. This leaves girl learners with no aspirations thus they give up on their hopes and future self-opting for ordinary status of being mothers and housewives with no motivation for future achievements thus perpetuating gender imbalances.

The findings also indicated that cultural beliefs [cf. 4.3.1 (b)] is a major contributor to and perpetuator of gender stereotypes towards female learners. Preference given to

boys to attend school versus girls creates imbalance and bias towards girls. Generally cultural practices in the area supports male superiority hence males and females were not considered to be equal, with males occupying a higher status than females from an early age. This kind of thing extended beyond home as the girl child would never be expected to excel ahead of the boy and both genders grew up with this mentality.

Also, of significant importance to discuss is the influence of culture on gender roles. Based on gender roles, it was found from the study that girls were therefore expected to perform household chores in the morning before going to school while boys just woke up and prepared for school. This put the girls at a disadvantage as they sometimes would be late for school, or eventually drop out. Male dominance is also displayed based on cultural practices of patriarchal society. Because boys are prioritised in being the focus to receive education among our rural communities, this sidelines the performance of girls and two outcomes may occur. Girls give in to the stereotype and end up underperforming. Duties and responsibilities heavily weighed upon girls can cause many to drop out of school.

Due to poverty parents do not earn much, thus they fail to support their children's education; as a result boys become a priority for support in school versus girls.

Theme 2: The impact of gender stereotypes on academic performance of the girl child

Teachers' attitudes and behaviour [cf. 4.3.2], gendered school environment [cf 4.3.2 (a)], reinforcing of masculine feminine gender [4.3.2 (b)] and unequal allocation of school resources [4.3.3 (c)] affect gender stereotypes which impact on academic performance of the girl child. The attitude of the teachers plays an important role in the academic performance of both female and male learners. Results indicate that most of the teachers who participated promote gender stereotypes. Much of what constitutes gender inequity in classroom practices and interactions is unintentional, subconscious and subtle (Agarwal & Shukla 2017).

The findings showed that there is a reinforcement of masculinity in the school environment. Although the demand for education is generally high for both sexes,

preference for educating boys still persists. There are certain specific recreational activities which are considered to be for women whilst men also have their own. This inculcates from a very early age the belief that the male and female are very different even in terms of what they can and cannot do. Women take responsibility for more household chores than men do and the notion that these tasks are women's responsibility is perpetuated. Domestic tasks are often delegated by mother to their daughters more often than to their sons, particularly in under-developed rural areas where girls are expected to assist their mothers with tasks such as collecting water from springs, rivers and wells, collecting firewood, cooking and childcare. Even sport and recreation are gendered and females are discriminated against as from an early age.

Another finding in this theme is unequal school resource allocation [cf. 4.3.2 (c)]. Learners will fight for the few textbooks available and at times sharing is difficult given large numbers of learners per class. This hinders learners' participation in class. From society and parents, male learners find the support they need in terms of their fees being paid on time and parental priority on resources tend to be biased towards boys who receive financial resources from parents.

Theme 3: Implications of gender stereotyping on academic performance of the girl child

The findings in relation to implications of gender stereotypes on academic performance of girl learners were acceptance of inferiority [cf. 4.4.3 (a)] and discrimination [cf.4.4.3 (b)]. The main challenge with gender stereotyping is that it has been accepted that girls perform less well than boys in school thus resulting in acceptance of inferiority among girl learners. The problem with gender stereotyping related to acceptance of inferiority that came out if the study was in situations whereby the girls believe they belong outside the school system as the society seems to suggest. Once girls accept that they are fulfilling an inevitable destiny, the desire to achieve is lost. That might explain why girls' performance drops as they grow older. Once the effects of gender stereotyping are accepted as an unshakeable reality, girls stop trying and their performance is irretrievably compromised (Bean et al. 2021).

Given the family set-up, the targeting of female children for household chores perpetuates the stereotype that the female child is destined to become a housewife and must therefore learn the wifely duties at an early age. This has the potential of inculcating a belief in the children that being a housewife is an acceptable fate for them and hence they may not aspire for greater achievement.

Discrimination also emerged from the study as one of the implications of gender stereotypes on girl learners, whereby parents and guardians preferred to support the education of boys at the expense of their daughters [cf 4.3.3 (b)]. Parents and guardians do not treat girls and boys equally when it comes to providing for their school needs. This is clearly based on the stereotype which considers the woman's role to be in the home as wife and mother. Girls are expected to go through the schooling process as a formality while waiting for their ordained role of wife and mother. The discrimination which girls face leads to missing classes, lacking resources and lacking support for their academic pursuits, which negatively impacts on their performance. The findings concur with Matějů and Smith (2017) who found that gender discrimination tends to result in inequitable access to education between the genders.

5.4   CONTRIBUTION TO NEW KNOWLEDGE

The study was done focusing on gender stereotypes and performance of girls in primary schools. I focused on contributory factors to perpetuation of gender difference, effects of gender stereotypes on girls' performance and implications of gender stereotypes for girls. This would assist the educational sector in understanding how gender stereotypes affect female learners. However, further studies can be done in areas such as strategies or measures that can be employed in school to eliminate gender stereotypes. The study found that, despite being faced by gender stereotypes, girls did comparatively well especially in subjects like maths which was deemed more suitable to male learners, the support for girls by teachers was overwhelming and though having other prevailing difficulties, girls were found to enjoy their learning contrary to most previous research. Hence there is a need to explore further how this can be supported to enhance girls' adaptation in completing their education despite other prevailing external factors such as lack of parental support and societal stereotypes which militate against educating girl children.

5.5 FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study show that gender stereotypes towards female learners are still rampant in schools despite efforts to integrate girls in the education system. Emphasis on women's sex role, cultural beliefs, poverty, gendered school environment, reinforcing of masculine and feminine gender norms, and unequal allocation of school resources were contributory factors that were identified to have perpetuated gender imbalances. A stereotype usually leads to a distinction and physical segregation between one group of people and the other, where one group is considered superior over the other. Gender stereotyping among members of a group negatively create cognitive and emotional stress that can impede performance and consistently yield negative expectations. From the findings, gender stereotypes have had a negative result on academic performance of female students. The implications or outcomes of gender stereotypes were identified as acceptance of inferiority by girls and gender discrimination in respect to gender roles, having equal opportunities to boys or being afforded enough support to pursue their studies. Generally, the results revealed that gender stereotyping has a significant influence on academic achievement of girl students.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the study the following recommendations can be made to the various stakeholders.

5.6.1 Ministry of Education

The study findings highlight that changes are required to be made in the education system. To address the problems related to gender stereotypes in schools, the Ministry of Education must open dialogue and discussion forums and capacity building should be carried out to create awareness for all the stakeholders on the importance of education and accommodating female learners. The Ministry must also ensure sufficient funding for girls to access schooling. There is also a need for government through the Ministry of Education to support schools with adequate resources like textbooks, clear curriculum and infrastructure.

5.6.2 Parents

The parents should ensure that all children should be sent to school regardless of sex. The cultural practices carried out in the region that affect the academic achievement of learners should be avoided through rigorous campaigns to create awareness of its irrelevance to the society. Strategies must be in place to ensure communities to cooperate on projects to generate funds to pay school fees well as provide educational resources.

5.6.3 Teachers

Both in-service and preservice teacher education should ensure that teachers are informed about gender theories and issues and are equipped to provide equal opportunities to boys and girls in curricular as well as co-curricular activities to promote and maintain gender equity. The teachers may need to create discussions on various gender issues with learners. Teachers attitudes relating to gender stereotypes must be addressed through training and continuous development assessment to promote and enhance teachers' competencies in addressing such problems. The teachers should undergo refresher courses so as to enable them teach more effectively.

Overall, In addition to expanding education for girls, teachers' attitudes and practices, school co-curricular activities and facilities must also be changed to reflect a commitment in addressing gender stereotypes. The schools should provide adequate facilities, teaching and learning materials, conducive environment and effective teaching of all learners without disparity.

5.7   LIMITATIONS

Findings derived from using the qualitative research paradigm cannot be generalised to the whole population (Patton 2015). Small groups of interviewed individuals cannot be taken as representative of the whole population (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011).

Generally, women are marginalised in our communities. There is no fair representation of women in positions that influence social settings of our communities, for instance,

at the school the majority of staff members are male and in reference to the research participants, there were more adult males than females.

The study was done in deep rural and poverty stricken setting and many of the constraints the female learners encountered may not be same within an urban setting hence the results findings should be understood in this context. However, this should not diminish their value particular when compared to the gender stereotyping of girls in similar contexts.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

1. What do you understand about gender stereotypes?
2. What factors do you consider when allocating roles to your learners?
3. Do gender stereotypes contribute to gender differences? If yes how.
4. How can you rate the academic performance of boys and girls in your class?
5. What factors do you think contribute to their academic differences?
6. What are the positive effects of gender stereotypes on academic performance of girls in your class?
7. What are the negative effects of gender stereotypes on academic performance of girls in your class?

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRINCIPALS

1. What do you understand about gender stereotypes?
2. What factors do you consider essential when allocating roles to learners?
3. Do gender stereotypes contribute to gender differences? If yes how.
4. How can you rate the academic performance of boys and girls in your School?
5. What factors do you think contribute to their academic differences?
6. What are the positive effects of gender stereotypes on academic performance of girls in your School?
7. What are the negative effects of gender stereotypes on academic performance of girls in your School?

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR LEARNERS

Research Question 1

1.   Are you given the same duties at home with your brother or sisters? If not, name the roles allocated to you.

2.   In your class are learners given the same duties you do in class?

3.   How do you feel when given different tasks with others at school?

Research Question 2

4.   Who performs better in your class boys or girls?

5.   How does the teacher treat girls in your class?

6.   Are you given equal time to study with your brothers or sisters at home? If not, why does the study time differ?

7.   From your observation what can you say about the performance of girls in your class?

APPENDIX D: PERMISSION LETTER FOR PARTICIPATION OF PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

March 2021
6 Acacia Avenue,
Rhodene
Masvingo

Dear Participant

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR YOUR PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY TO BE UNDERTAKEN AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am Pray Tinashe Chegovo, a Master's student at the University of South Africa. You are invited to participate in a research interview for a study entitled: **GENDER STEREOTYPING AND GIRL CHILD PERFORMANCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MASVINGO PROVINCE, ZIMBABWE**.

This study will be of use to our nation as it will focus on creating an understanding of gender stereotypes and their impact on academic performance of girl child learners in primary schools. Furthermore, the study will provide recommendations to schools for ways to address the impact of gender stereotypes on performance of girl child learners.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw or refuse to participate without any consequences, however your expertise and participation is greatly encouraged as it will assist in gathering useful information that is beneficial for Please do not write any form of identification such as names as your anonymity and confidentiality is important.

Any questions about participating in this study please feel free to contact me, Pray Tinashe Chegovo on Mobile Contact: +263775 540 017 and E-Mail: 43301126@mylife.unisa.ac.za and tinachegovo@gmail.com.

Thank you for your consideration in advance.

Yours Faithfully

Chegovo Pray Tinashe (Mr)

Consent to Participate:

I, _____ (participant's name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation. I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable). I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified. I agree to the recording of the interview. I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant's name & surname…………………………………   (please print)

Participant's signature……………………………………………   Date…………………

Researcher's name & surname……………………………..   (please print)

Researcher's signature………………………………………   Date…………………

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

Dear Sir/Madam

Your child is being invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Pray Tinashe Chegovo, who is a student at University of South Africa as part of fulfilment for Master Degree. The study is focused on assessing gender stereotypes and their influence on academic performance of girl child learners at primary schools in Masvingo, Zimbabwe.

The study, as well as your rights as a participant, are described below. Description: The study will require conducting focus group discussion with learners. The learners are to share their experiences as female students at the school and how gender stereotypes impact on them. The learners will be observed by the researcher in order to monitor their learning pertaining to the research.

Confidentiality and anonymity will be upheld in this study as their identity will not be revealed to anyone and their answers will not be associated with their names as alphabetic codes will be used. Audio tapes of the discussions will be destroyed once the information is transcribed. No one will be forced to take part in the study as voluntary participation is encouraged.

I agree to have you audio/videotape my child during this study. I understand this audio/video will only be used for the purposes of research (e.g. analysis of responses, transcriptions of responses and will not be available to anyone aside from the researcher.

_____

Signature
Risks & Benefits:

There are no risks to your child's safety. You may opt to preview the audio recording. The discussion raises no sensitive or controversial issues and does not contain elements typically frightening to children.

Because the focus group engages children in thinking about their experiences as girls in school, there are potential benefits to your child's ability to improve their learning experience as girls in school.

Freedom to Withdraw or Refuse Participation:

I understand that my child has the right to stop participating at any time, or to refuse to answer any of the researcher's questions without prejudice from the investigator. Grievance Procedure: If I have any concerns or am dissatisfied with any aspect of this study I may report my grievances anonymously if desired to the Principal or school head.

Questions? Please feel free to ask the investigator any questions before signing the consent form or at any time during or after the study.

Please feel free to contact me on Pray Tinashe Chegovo on Mobile Contact: +263775 540 017and E-Mail: 43301126@mylife.unisa.ac.za and tinachegovo@gmail.com.

Informed Consent Statement:

I, _____, give permission for my child, _____ to participate in the research project entitled, GENDER STEREOTYPING AND GIRL CHILD PERFORMANCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MASVINGO PROVINCE, ZIMBABWE

The study has been explained to me and my questions answered to my satisfaction. I understand that my child's right to withdraw from participating or refuse to participate will be respected and that his/her responses and identity will be kept confidential. I give this consent voluntarily.

Parent/Guardian Signature:

_____   _____

Signature   Date

Investigator Signature:

_____   _____

Signature   Date

APPENDIX F: ASSENT FORM FOR MINORS

I am Pray Tinashe Chegovo, a Master's student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I am doing a study to figure out gender stereotypes and their impact on girl child performance in primary schools. You are being asked to take part in this study because your school was selected as the research community through the permission of Ministry of Education and your principal. Grade 6 female learners are considered for the study also because you were recommended by your principal as grade 7 are busy in preparation n for their exams and only girls are selected because you are the focal point of the study.

For this research, we will *ask you some questions about how you feel about school, your experience as girls in the school, and how duties they do at school and at home impact their school performance as well as how they evaluate their performance.* All your answers will be kept private with permission to share with the school and Ministry of Education primary school department as well as people from University of South Africa working on the study.

We don't think that any big problems will happen to you as part of this study, but you might *(feel sad when we ask about bad things that happen at school. You also might be upset or shy to answers some of the questions, but you should be aware the study is for educational purposes and your contribution will be beneficial to enhance treatment of girls in schools.* You can feel good about sharing information that will assist in evaluating impact of gender stereotypes on performance of girls in schools and way forward to address them.

You should know that:

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. You won't get into any trouble with *(your parents/guardian, myself as the researcher, your teacher, or the school)* if you say no.

You may stop being in the study at any time. *(If there is a question you don't want to answer, just leave it blank.)*

Your parent(s)/guardian(s) were asked if it is OK for you to be in this study. Even if they say it's OK, it is still your choice whether or not to take part.

You can ask any questions you have, now or later. If you think of a question later, you or your parents can contact me at: Pray Tinashe Chegovo on Mobile Contact: +263775 540 017 and E-Mail: 43301126@mylife.unisa.ac.za and tinachegovo@gmail.com.

Sign this form only if you have understood what you will be doing for this study, have had all your questions answered, have talked to your parent(s)/legal guardian about this project, and agree to take part in this research.

_____   _____   _____

Your Signature   Printed Name   Date

_____

Name of Parent(s) or Legal Guardian(s)

_____

Researcher explaining study

_____   _____   _____

Signature   Printed Name   Date

APPENDIX G1: LETTER REQUESTING FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH

30 March 2021

6 Acacia Avenue,
Rhodene
Masvingo

The Director of Research
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
P.O Box CY121
Causeway
Harare

Dear Sir/ Madam,

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH AT TWO SCHOOLS IN ZAKA DISTRICT IN MASVINGO PROVINCE

I am requesting for approval to conduct Educational research at two schools in Zaka District in Masvingo Province. I am a Masters student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). The research study is focusing on gender stereotyping and girl child performance in Zimbabwean primary schools: the case study of Zaka District in Masvingo Province.

The study will require interviews with learners, teachers and the administration staff comprised of the Head and Deputy Head. The learners will be observed by the researcher in order to monitor their learning pertaining to the research. Confidentiality and anonymity will be upheld in this study. No one will be forced to take part in the study.

May you find attached the Ethics Clearance Certificate from the University of South Africa (UNISA) College of Education Ethics Review Committee.

For more details, please contact Pray Tinashe Chegovo on Mobile Contact: +263775 540 017and E Mail: 43301126@mylife.unisa.ac.za and tinachegovo@gmail.com

Thank you for your consideration in advance.

Yours Faithfully

Chegovo Pray Tinashe (Mr)

APPENDIX G2: PERMISSION GRANTING LETTER

All communications should be addressed to
'The Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education
Telephone: 794895/796211
Telegraphic address: 'EDUCATION'
Fax: 794505

ZIMBABWE

Reference: C/426/3
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
HARARE

30 March 2021

Chegovo Pray Tinashe
6 Acacia Avenue
Rhodene
Harare

Re: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN MASVINGO PROVINCE: ZAKA DISTRICT: DANDA AND CHIMEDZA PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Reference is made to your application to carry a research from the above mentioned schools on the research title:
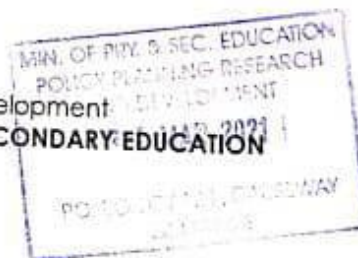
"GENDER STEREOTYPING AND GIRL CHILD PERFORMANCE IN ZIMBABWE PRIMARY SCHOOLS: THE CASE OF ZAKA DISTRICT IN MASVINGO"

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial Education Director Masvingo Province, who is responsible for the schools which you want to involve in your research. You should ensure that your research work does not disrupt the normal operations of the school. Where students are involved, parental consent is required.

You are also required to provide a copy of your final report to the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education.

L.D. Mkwala
Deputy Director: Innovation and Development
For: SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

APPENDIX H: ETHICS CLEARANCE

UNISA | university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2021/02/10

Ref: **2021/02/10/43301126/12/AM**
Name: Mr PT Chegovo
Student No.:43301126

Dear Mr PT Chegovo

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2021/02/10 to 2024/02/10

Researcher(s): Name: Mr PT Chegovo
E-mail address: +263775540017
Telephone: 43301126@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof J Seroto
E-mail address: serotj@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: +27 12 429 4579

Title of research:

Gender stereotyping and girl child performance in Zimbabwe primary schools: the case of Zaka District in Masvingo Province

Qualification: MEd Socio Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2021/02/10 to 2024/02/10.

The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2021/02/10 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2024/02/10**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2021/02/10/43301126/12/AM** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,

Prof AT Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za

Prof PM Sebate
EXECUTIVE DEAN
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017