STEREOTYPICAL GENDERING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: REPERCURSIONS FOR STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN TANZANIA. A CASE OF MOROGORO MUNICIPAL

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ABSTRACT: The main purpose of the study was to assess teachers' and students' perception of gendering process over girls and boys at secondary schools. Specifically the study aimed at examining the impact of socialization to the students' academic performance in secondary schools. A total of 182 respondents were interviewed by the use of semi structured questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion and direct observations were employed to obtain the required information. Results show that the common gender stereotypes in secondary schools include "boys are intelligent", "boys prefer studying science subjects", "girls prefer studying art subjects", and "girls are inferior". Results reveal that socialization process promotes effective learning and teaching, increases cooperation and participation, improves students' performance and promotes school ethics conformity. The study concludes that Gender – aware and - sensitive teachers and students play a vital role in promoting gender equality and in turn will interact in a gender lens with the society they are born into. The existing negative stereotyping notions and prejudices amongst students and teachers over girl students; call for re-thinking of the current Tanzanian Women and Gender and Development policy to address negative assumptions and prejudices over girls.

KEYWORDS: Socialization, gender stereotypes, academic performance, equality.

1   INTRODUCTION

According to Bhasin (2000), the specific process which teaches children their gender roles is also called gendering or gender indoctrination. Bhasin continues by saying that, the difference with which children are addressed, handled, treated and clothed and, through this regulation, taught how they should behave to be part of the society they are born in. Human beings are deeply influenced by and involved with other people (Farley, 1998). "Through socialization people adapt and learn to modify their behaviour, thoughts, feelings and attitudes according to the requirements of their culture and society" (Romer, 1981). Also, through socialization, gender stereotyping are learned. Gender stereotyping greatly influence how people think and behave. According to traditional stereotypes, males are strong and dominant, while females are submissive. Gender stereotypes are disadvantageous in that they create bias and prejudices against females.

Gender stereotyping refers to structured sets of beliefs about the personal attributes, behaviours and roles of a specific social group, (Wakhungu, 2008). Cuz (2012), also defined gender stereotyping as putting down someone because of their "sex" or not believing they are able to do something because they are either male or female. According to Women information centre (2005), gender stereotyping occurs when certain characteristics or roles are persistently attributed to men or women, thereby creating the belief that these are invariably linked to sex. For instance, the perceptions that all men (boys) are intelligent and breadwinners while women (girls) are less intelligent, dependent and carers of children and the family as a whole.

Education is one of the pivotal institutions in terms of socialization. It deals with the change of people's attitudes toward themselves, their lives and the surrounding world (Tjernstrom, 2005). Since human beings lack highly developed inborn knowledge, the knowledge and the technology necessary to make life easier must be transmitted to each new generation. Before modern times, the family was mostly responsible for these transmissions especially in the provision of skills necessary

for survival in the society. As a result of transition from agricultural society to industrialized societies, the educational institutions needed a big transformation as well as other pivotal institutions (agents of socialization) among which are; the family, religion, peer groups, state, mass media and work place, from informal to formal education (Romer, 1981). Because family members could not teach all that a child needs to know, formal education, known as schooling, took most of the mission of the family during that time. However socialization differs across societies; the more complex the society is, the more lengthy the education process. Idealistically, in modern societies, the central element of education lies in the belief that schools offer equal opportunities for all individuals (Romer, 1981).

2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Although education is very important in community development, formal education still has biasness among female and male students that is why today there are too many boys in secondary schools compare to girls. In secondary schools the impact of socialization is vivid because majority of teachers do believe that boy students are born intelligent compared to girls. This is more expressed in performance, responding to questions, undertaking of science versus arts subjects whereby teachers tend to favour boys over girls. Also, most of employed teachers in secondary schools are men, and so there is a high chance of differential treatment between boys and girls in selection of subjects. For instance, boys are encouraged to take science subjects while girls advised to take arts subjects. At the same time, boys are praised than girls to show that they are more intelligent. In these context boys seem to be good in performance compare to girls, something which is not true. It is from this experiences that the researcher decided to investigate the impact of gender stereotypes on students' performance in secondary schools in Morogoro Municipal.

3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study assesses teachers' and students' perception of gendering process over girls and boys at secondary schools. Specifically, it aimed at examining the impact of gender stereotypes on students' academic performance in secondary schools.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopted *an ex post facto* design. It is a kind of systematic empirical inquiry whereby a researcher does not have direct control over independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulable (Kerlinger, 1973). The study was carried out in Morogoro Municipality in four (4) selected secondary schools namely SUA, Morogoro, Mafiga and Kayenzi secondary schools.

4.2 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The sample of this study comprised of Heads of schools, Teachers, WEO, MCDO, WECO, School inspectors and Parents. The sample size of the study was one hundred and eighty two (182) respondents.

Table 1. Sample and sample size distribution

Respondents' category	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
MCDO	01	0.55
Schools inspector	01	0.55
Heads of schools	04	2.20
Teachers	10	5.49
Students	166	91.21
Total	**182**	**100**

Source: Research findings, 2013

Both probability (simple random) and non probability (purposive) sampling techniques were applied. According to statistics from selected schools, the total student population was one thousand, six hundred and sixty three students. The 10 percent of the sample was therefore one hundred and sixty six students of which one hundred and thirty six were boys and one hundred and thirty were girls. However, the total teacher population was 102 and its 10 percent was ten teachers. Simple random sampling technique was used to obtain 166 students and 10 teachers. While purposive sampling technique was used to select one MCDO, one Municipal secondary schools inspector and 4 heads of schools.

5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND INSTRUMENTATION

Data collection included primary sources and secondary sources. Primary data was exhausted through interviews, questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and observations. While, secondary data was obtained by the use of books, internet, government and relevant schools' reports.

5.1 INTERVIEW

Interviews were conducted to all respondents. The questions were systematically arranged in order to maintain both consistency and direction in the interview. Face to face interaction between the researcher and respondents was held to pursue the responses and ask for elaboration in case of ambiguous matters.

5.2 QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaires were prepared in such a way that it aided to obtain relevant information including the way teachers treat boys and girls according to their specific needs, how do they consider boys and girls in academic matters. The questionnaires were administered MCDO, schools inspector, heads of schools and teachers

5.3 DOCUMENTARY REVIEW

Documentary included the use of books, internet, newspapers, government and NGOs publications together with different reports were reviewed. This helped the researcher to capture the required information pertaining to this study.

5.4 OBSERVATION

Ocular findings were obtained by open eyes through observing the real life situation on how socialization was taking place, especially aspects like lifestyles, interactions, behaviours, total number of boys and girls in school and other similar nature from different school in Morogoro municipality.

5.5 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD)

The researcher hold discussion with students by using a checklist of questions well prepared to capture relevant information. Discussion was carried out by timing students during break sessions. This method was applied in order to boost the answers to questions which was not answered correctly using other methods and was specifically applied to students.

5.6 DATA PROCESSING, PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Data collected in Kiswahili language were processed in English language. Moreover, data obtained from the field were edited, coded, so as to be useful in analysis. This study adopts interpretive naturalistic approach as a kind of qualitative analysis as narrated by (Gladding, 2008). This approach involves acquiring detailed information about phenomenon being studied and establishing patterns and trends from the information gathered (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2006). This is followed by assigning meaning to the huge information which was collected through organizing the data, categorized them and creating specific themes for easy understanding.

6   RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

6.1   STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' STEREOTYPES OVER BOYS AND GIRLS.

The table below shows various assumptions expressed by students and teachers over boys and girls in regard to academic aspects.

Table 2.   Produced stereotypes by students and teachers over boys and girls

Gender stereotypes as a result of socialization	Frequency of responses	Percentage (%)
Boys are intelligent	98	59.04
Girls prefer studying art subjects	117	70.48
Girls are inferior	114	68.67
Boys prefer studying science subjects	109	65.66

Source: Research findings, 2013

'Boys are intelligent'

In table 2 above 98 (59.04%) of all respondents said that boys are intelligent compared to girls in the sense that they perform better than girls. Boys are viewed as rational, logical, unemotional, and strong and are also expected to be friendly, smart, and naturally academically talented. In contrast, girls are said to more likely to receive criticism rather than praise for risk-taking behaviour. This result suggests that, as schools operate through the interactions among students and between students & teachers therefore there is a chance to construct gender inequality in the classes and thereby impacts the learning environment. Also result suggests that, in schools, gender stereotypes attribute boys' academic success to innate intelligence and dwindle girls' efforts toward higher achievements.

The assumption that "boys are intelligent" may be a product of the customs and traditions of most of Tanzanian societies which tend to deny girls with education opportunities through assigning them with reproductive role that tend to consume a lot of their time in expense to self studying. Customs and traditions put majority of girls under pressure of cultural belief that they are the once supposed to attempt reproductive role than studying, thereby discouraged them to study hard when at schools. According to Campbell et al (1994), gender stereotyping occurs when a person is expected to enact a series of norms or behaviours based upon their sex. Although, girls depend upon their socio-economic status, but many societies reinforce and support gender stereotypes that always male are breadwinners while female are housekeepers.

'Girls prefer to study art subjects'

117 (70.48%) of all respondents showed that girls are considered, treated, handled and addressed differently from boys, impacts students' perceptions of the girls' abilities and their achievements. This finding is supported by the above discussion that, teachers' and students' expectations of girls & boys' abilities, achievements and behaviours are influenced by gender stereotyping. However, gender stereotyping is usually subtle, and often unrecognized or unchallenged.

In Tanzanian societies there are assumptions that girls are less intelligent in school but are capable in art subjects like history, Kiswahili[1] and civics, and quiet and unassertive behaviour, can mean that they set aside their own learning needs for others. Boys are assumed to be intelligent. Gender stereotype suggests that they should have natural talent to achieve, and that they are expected to exhibit rationality and logic as well as loud, dominant behaviours. These cases of girls are capable in art subjects is supported by MCDO who said;

> *"Male students do very well in science subjects and girls perform better in humanities subjects.'' (**Mama Lindi.**)*

Gender stereotypes remain strong influences in schools, community and the daily life in classrooms. Yet inequities because of gender issues are often rendered invisible to girls and teachers by their very occurrence in classrooms. A major challenge for teachers is to establish classroom environments that do not favour one group of students to the loss of another

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[1] *Kiswahili is a National Language of Tanzania*

group. And recognize that gender stereotypes do not influence development of girls in schools' organization, instead of that practices students' attitudes and behaviours of feel being intelligent and less intelligent among girls and boys.

'Girls are inferior'

Table 2 above shows that, 114 (68.67%) of all respondents responded that girls are inferior. For instance teachers' and students' notion over girls is such that girls are caring, nurturing, quiet, considerate of others, and place others' needs before their own while boys were being rewarded for assertive behaviour, uniqueness, and risk-taking. Respondents further explained that, there are differences in attitude and understanding between girls and boys. Girls' preference for a positive, personal connection with their teachers can also influence their course selection. For example, girls may avoid mathematics or science because they dislike the teacher.

Girls' motivation for succeeding in school is often related to satisfy others, such as parents and teachers, rather than themselves. This idea is supported by one studen who said;

> "Patriarchy system in our school and community at large is more common and places females (both women and girls) in subordinate position thereby exacerbate their vulnerability as well as dependence behaviour to males."(*Edina Mkuki*.)

Negative stereotypes over girls are learned and helplessness. This is because when girls struggle with learning materials, teachers often give them the answer, propagating a status of learned helplessness. In other words, because they are given the answers, girls learn that they are inferiors in learning process.

Girls as a one group isolated, create different feeling, attitude, idea and direction as believing that they are less intelligent. So, no need to study hard hence deciding to engage in wrong behaviors which bring out truancy, spread of diseases and early pregnancy because of wrong thinking towards the teachers, boys and learning environments. These mislead them, hence fall down academically.

'Boys prefer to undertake science subjects'

109 (65.66%) of all respondents said that boys prefer to undertake science subjects. Respondents believe that science subjects are difficult so it is only boys who can manage to study them because boys are also considered to be intelligent and great thinkers. Typical sex differences contributed to fewer female studies in the sciences subjects like physics and biology. Due to that assumptions, society tend to support more boys in educational matters as compared to girls thereby build assertive behaviour to boys which enables them to have more access to and control over school resources. For example, in classes boys dominate books and girls are relegated to roles such as listeners, data recorder, or cleaning up the classrooms etc. However, laboratory works can be important facet for girls to learn science subjects since they can be full engaged in carrying out experiments than sitting aside watching their counterparts doing exercises. Society's views of science as a masculine endeavor may promote girls to perform passive roles.

Campbell *et al* (1994) shows that there are closely equal numbers of girls and boys enrolled in secondary school science classes, with the exception of physics and biology science courses. Girls prefer studying subjects that they perceive as having value, being connected to people or other living things and having relevance in their lives. Often science is taught without an emphasis on how the subject connects to the "real" world. Boys are viewed as less able than girls in reading and the language arts, subjects that are stereotyped as feminine. It is bringing back positive socialization which develops girls and boys academically in those art and science subjects.

6.2 IMPACT OF SOCIALIZATION IN STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Effective learning and teaching

121 (66.48%) of all respondents said that effective learning and teaching is an impact of socialization that stimulates and increases the effective learning among students. It was observed by researchers that, in classrooms, girl and boy share one desk, ideas and challenges against their studies. Under this context, students learn from each others without marginalize others. In learning process everyone feels freely to ask, be asked and approach anyone she or he think can be helpful. One teacher of Morogoro secondary school who said;

> "Having proper indoctrination at school, will encourage both boys and girls to respect each others and work hard in a cooperative manner. By doing so it is my hope that, academic performance will be improved." (*Mrs. Rehema Athuman*.)

Results from SUA secondary school shows that 2010 and 2011were increased by 05% and 08% respectively. The strategies employed in such increased performance included more gender responsive teaching and learning environment. There were gender friendly school attitude and mentoring programs which focused boys and girls exclusively whereby students of different sexes were being taught on gender perspective, different life skills/experience and define intelligence in classes and outside school compound.

Increased cooperation and participation

Table 3 below shows that 125 (68.68%) of all respondents said that, socialization lead to collaboration and participation among students while at school and even with their families at home. This implies that when students are socialized to work together it reduces chances of discrimination among students based on sex. This study suggests that, equal teachings between boys and girls eliminate the notion that certain tasks are appropriate for either sex instead it imparts the sense of equality especially towards accomplishment of responsibilities as assigned by their teachers. This case of cooperation and participation is supported by the witness of school inspector, who said;

"Girls and boys do cooperate in various school matters ranging from class assignments and outside activities and this is a result of good job done by their teachers'' (**Mrs. Mercelina Baitilwake.)**

However, socialization towards equality brings the sense of solidarity among boys and girls during learning process because it can help them to gain the sense of ''we feeling'' for instance they can work very well during their studies if boys and girls cooperate in studies. Also socialization in classes offers sharing and collaboration in academics which in turn creates unity and solidarity among students. Equal sharing socialized students have higher chances of well mental development through their participation in academic aspects. This phenomenon can build in students' intelligence and eliminates all the negative attitudes about girls.

It can be noted here that, teachers can promote equal participation between boys and girl only if they concur to human rights principles at their workplaces such that; every person/people are entitled to active, free and meaningful participation in contribution and realize freedom. Other principle is equality and non discrimination in teaching environment which recognizes that "all individual are equal as human beings and by virtue of their inherent dignity". In so doing, all the biases, prejudices, bad stereotypes, barriers to education opportunities over girls will be eliminated. Human Development Department (HDD) (2009), documents that "Equality of access to education for boys and girls at secondary levels of education, does not only imply that girls and boys have equal access to schooling. It also means that the processes of schooling must ensure that boys and girls are able to access the full range of opportunities and experiences that are available to expand their capacities, develop their potential so that they can contribute to the development of a more just, and compassionate society.

Table 3. Impact of socialization in students' academic performance

Impact of socialization in secondary	Frequency of responses	Percentage (%)
Effective learning and teaching	121	66.48
Increased cooperation and participation	125	68.68
Improved students' performance	132	72.53
Promotes school ethics conformity	103	56.59

Source: Research findings, 2013

Improved students' performance

The study finding shows that 132 (72.53%) of all respondents said that increased performance of girls and boys, is among the impacts of socialization. Performance measured by their general knowledge and skills on art and science subjects, and reading assessment scores. The students (girls and boys) seem to perform well due to being aware/socialized among them.

Teachers encourage students to form groups for discussion, academics clubs like mathematics, English, Kiswahili and biology clubs, and debates by taking into account gender equality in those groups. This phenomenon calls for students' participation in academic issues whereby learning from one another can be an opportunity to advance their performance. In that way, socialization gendering improves and enhances good performance due to encouragement from other students who feel as closely friend or relative.

Promote school ethics conformity

103 (56.59%) of all respondents said that teachers promote respect and obedience amongst students (both girls and boys) and this maintains gender equality. This role discourages gender stereotypes and disparities among students thereby improve cooperation and participation in academic context. This gives impression that if students respect their teachers and respect each others then they stand a good chance cooperate and participate in academic context, in turn it has meaning to effective learning and thereby improves students' intellectuals. One student supports this idea by saying;

"Our school has regulations whereby each student (girls and boys) have to obey and whoever goes against it the strict punishment is imposed". **(Monica, aged 16 years)**

However observation by researchers shows that, teachers were punishing students in classrooms which shows that those students infringed rules and regulation were summoned and punished to maintain orders.

7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 CONCLUSION

Gender – aware and - sensitive teachers as well as students play a great role in promoting gender equality between girls and boys in schools thereby act as a gender lens to the society they are born into. That means socialization play great role in creating equality, to remove gender stereotyping which seems to be sanction of equality in different schools. The students can understand that to be intelligent does not correlate with being boy or girl. It is own capacity of each one, there is no need to discourage one from benefiting educational opportunities and services.

Different social mechanisms teach children masculinity and femininity of personality and make them internalize behaviour, attitudes and roles. Therefore if teachers and community members at large practice bad/harmful traditions and customs will end up building patriarchal system which gives boys feelings that they intelligent, strong and dominants thereby widening gender gap between boys/men and girls/women. Hence, it is imperative to create and promote positive socialization towards boys and girls, so as both can enjoy equal access to and control over resources, opportunities, services and events at schools.

As schools are potential institutions for socialization, girls and boys are expected to be good future mothers and farthers respectively if are well prepared, treated, handled in terms of equality basis by their teachers, school advisors, and parents. However, such well preparation, treatment, handling of girls and boys is useful in course of obtaining knowledge and skills for the sake of future nation's standard workforce. Government and community members play major part in addressing negative gender stereotypes through different interventions which focus community as well as through socialization.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need for teachers to be gender aware especially on issues relating to gender stereotypes so as to eliminate inequalities between girls and boys students in secondary education, and then to general issues that may improve well-being of students (girls and boys).

Education oriented stakeholders need to promote equal opportunity and participation to girls and boys in order to bridge gap and eliminate negative perceptions over girls, this can be achieved through carrying out gender sensitive and awareness campaigns, trainings seminars and exhibitions.

The existing negative stereotyping notions and prejudices amongst students and teachers over girl students; call for re-thinking of the current Tanzanian Women and Gender and Development policy to address negative assumptions and prejudices over girls.

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