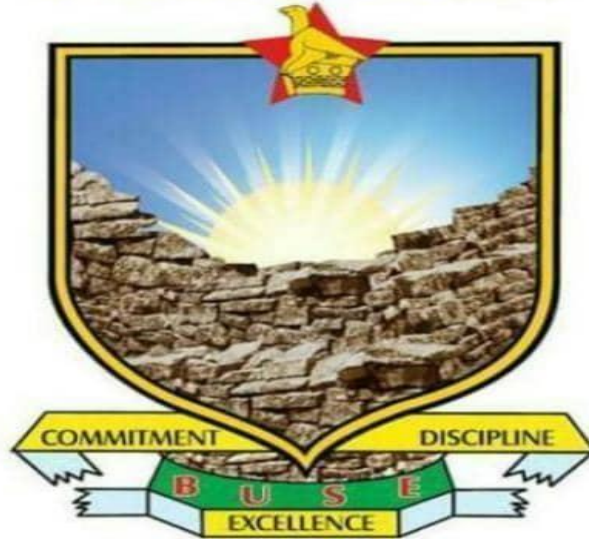


FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Bindura University
of Science Education**



**IMPACTS OF GENDER DISPARITIES ON EDUCATION. THE CASE OF BINDURA
DISTRICT**

SUBMITTED BY

JENNIFER MUSANIWA T (B210967B)

**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR BACHELOR
OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

THE APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommended to the Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE) acceptance, a project entitled “Impacts of gender disparities on education. The case of Bindura District.” submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Development Studies.

Supervisor Signature

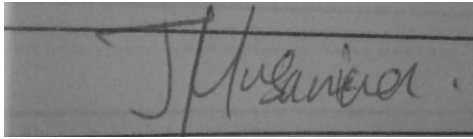
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Amukanga". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Date. 13/06/2025

DECLARATION

I, Jennifer Musaniwa T B210967B declares that the work presented in this project is a result of my own hard work as a requirement in partial fulfilment for my Honors Degree in Development Studies with some references taken from other sources and I hereby declares that this work has never been submitted in any institution before.

Student signature

A black and white photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'J Musaniwa', written on a horizontal line.

Date 13/06/2025

DEDICATION

This dissertation is devoted to my wonderful close relatives and all family members who are my source of inspiration. I also dedicate this project to my friend Brita Gwezere who has been very supportive through my academic journey. I also dedicate this project to all the women and girls of Bindura District Mashonaland Central Province.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Much honor to the Supreme, it was his power and grace for this project to be a success. Appreciation goes to Bindura University of Science Education for allowing me to do this project. I am glad with untiring backing I received from Mr Samukange who was my project supervisor who made this study a success. His effort made it possible to navigate through the difficult times during the process of carrying out the study. My friends were there for me sharing the knowledge and experiences in various capacities which made the project a success. To all of you, my friends, Mr. and Mrs. Musaniwa, I say that words can befall me, but blessings will lead me to a brighter future.

ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe is one of the countries that failed to attain an objective of Education for All (EFA) by 2015 and by now is struggling to meet equal access to education to all. The initiative was committed to different efforts to advance children's access to education, mostly girls, who face difficulties engrained in socio-cultural and gender stereotypes. This study explores the impacts of these gender disparities on education in Bindura District, Zimbabwe, focusing on the factors contributing to inequality and its effects on educational outcomes. Gender inequality in education is globally recognized that persists significantly in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged areas like Bindura.

The research employed a qualitative approach, gathering data through ten interviews and forty questionnaires distributed to students, parents, teachers, and educational leaders. The analysis was done using descriptive statistics, content and thematic analysis with Microsoft excel. Findings revealed that gender disparities manifest through reduced access to education for girls, lower self-esteem, and societal expectations that prioritize boys' education. Structural barriers such as inadequate sanitation facilities and long travel distances to schools further exacerbate the problem, especially in rural settings. The study identified key contributors, including cultural norms, economic barriers, early marriages, and inadequate school resources, which disproportionately affect girls. It highlights how these factors lead to high dropout rates, limited academic achievements, and restricted career opportunities for girls, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality.

The study also explored solutions to address these disparities. Respondents advocated for policy reforms, financial assistance for disadvantaged families, community engagement to challenge traditional norms, and infrastructure improvements in schools. Specific recommendations included providing scholarships for girls, re-entry policies for young mothers, and increasing the representation of female teachers to present themselves as role models.

This research gives understanding on localized effects of gender inequality in education and emphasizes the importance of targeted interventions to promote educational equity. Addressing these disparities is essential not for personal consent rather for fostering sustainable community growth. Recommendations to deal with these impacts involve promoting girls' education

initiatives, increase male engagement and accountability. Another recommendation from the study is that Ministries of Primary and Secondary Education, Labor and Social Welfare, Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Development Enterprise among other government institutions to come up with more programs and awareness campaigns to teach people about the issues related to gender inequality. Gender sensitive in schools that help boys and girls to improve new orientation about capabilities of both males and females financial assistance, and targeted efforts to address cultural and societal barriers. Results provide important awareness for policymakers, tutors and interested party aiming to achieve gender parity in education within Bindura District and beyond.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB - Africa Development Bank

BEAM - Basic Education Assistance

CAMFED - Campaign for female education

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

FGM - female genital mutilation

GAD - Gender and Development

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

HCT - Human Capital Theory

MDGs - Millennium Development Goals

MOESAC - Ministry of Education, Art, Sports and Culture

NGOs - Non governmental organisations

STEM - science, technology, engineering and mathematics

UN - United Nations

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund

EFA - Education for All

CHAPTER I

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The section offers an outline of the background regarding effects associated with gender disparities on education in Bindura District. It includes a statement of the problem, highlighting the potential consequences of gender inequities and their impact on educational outcomes for both males and females. The chapter also presents the research objectives and questions, which are grounded in the problem statement. Additionally, it outlines the justification for the exploration, its scope, limitations and structure of study.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Gender inequality in education has been a persistent global challenge, with women and girls historically encountering more obstacles in accessing educational opportunities than their male counterparts. Back to the 19's and early 20's, educational systems around the world were predominantly male-oriented, severely limiting formal schooling options for girls. Following World War II, United Nations (UN) began to tackle gender inequality in education, leading to significant declarations and commitments aimed at achieving universal education.

Despite these global efforts, UNESCO reported that by 2020, around 129 million girls remained out of school worldwide, highlighting that gender disparities in education continue to pose significant challenges. UNESCO (2013) emphasized that severe gender inequalities still impact the day to day lives of large segment among global population, particularly affecting girls. Approximately 34 million female adolescents are currently not attending school, depriving them of essential skills necessary for future employment (UNESCO, 2013). The first target of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targeted to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and across educational levels by 2015. However, as noted by Cerise and Francavilla (2012) and UNESCO (2010), poverty remains a critical barrier to educational access, especially for secondary-school-aged girls, compounded by socio-cultural factors.

The matter of gender disparity in education is specifically pronounced in Sub-Saharan Africa. Many countries in this region face cultural norms, economic challenges, and patriarchal traditions that favour boys' education over that of girls. According to the World Bank, this region has the

highest rates of girls who are not attending school as a result of factors like early marriage, teenage pregnancy, and insufficient sanitary facilities in schools. Additionally, gender-based violence and traditional practices like female genital mutilation (FGM) further contribute to higher dropout rates among girls. Nonetheless, initiatives such as the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Girls' Education in Africa Initiative have made strides toward addressing these disparities.

Countries like Nigeria, Ethiopia and Pakistan collectively have an estimated of nine million girls not attending school. Nearly a quarter of young women aged 15-24 in developing nations approximately 116 million have not finished primary education. Young women represent 58% of those failing to finish primary school. Generally, 2/3 out of 774 million are uneducated individuals globally are female. Current suggestion underscores that education is crucial for women's development; it helps alleviate hunger, reduces instances of early marriage and childbirth, empowers women against discrimination, and enhances awareness of their rights (UNESCO, 2013; Frank, 1990). Learned women tend to increase self-confidence and autonomy in making life choices that positively impact their health and their children's well-being while also improving their employment prospects (UNESCO, 2013; Frank, 1990). This underscores the importance of researching the impacts of gender disparities on education.

The history of gender disparity in Zimbabwean education is deeply tied to the colonial period and the country's subsequent struggle for independence. Under British colonial rule, formal education was limited for black Zimbabweans, especially for girls. The colonial administration's educational policies were racially segregated, and access to quality education was reserved for white children and a small elite of black males. The system of education during colonial era did not have a designed policy for the education of women and girls. The European Division and the African Division were only two systems present. The European Division of education was compulsory, free and of higher quality was for white, colored and Asian children. For the black children, the African Division was designed for them and it was neither free nor compulsory and had inadequate education provisions.

Zimbabwean government introduced the policy of education for all and free primary education but no mechanisms were put in place to make sure that all children are going to school. Nevertheless, some parents whose principles were entrenched in traditional patriarchal beliefs did not opt to send their children to school especially girls who were needed at home to assist with domestic chores.

The launch of interventions like the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) (as directed by Secretary's Circular Minute Number 1 of 2003) designed at averting orphans and other vulnerable children from dropping out of primary school as a result of failing to pay fees. It worked for less than half of the target population. Only 10% of pupils aged between 15 and 24 have failed to complete primary education, with girls constituting a larger percentage as of 2014.

Efforts such as BEAM are failing short in assisting the under privileged as a result of inadequate financial distributions and most donors put off their hands. Large number of people in the rural areas suffer from poverty thereby forcing young girls to get married and become wards of their spouses.

In Zimbabwe, gender is a key aspect of society's structure. Differences in gender roles contribute to the inequality in rights, resources, and opportunities available to men and women, particularly in poorer and developing countries. Traditionally, a woman's role is centred on the home, where she fulfills duties as a wife and mother, while men are associated with the outside world, holding breadwinner roles. This division leads to unequal resource allocation within households, with sons often receiving more resources, such as education, to prepare them for public life, whereas daughters are trained in domestic skills. This disparity restricts women's opportunities to alter their life circumstances.

Gender inequality in education manifests in the unequal access and opportunities available to males and females. Factors such as enrollment, completion rates, and subject choices reflect these disparities, which are particularly pronounced in rural and urban areas, as well as across different provinces of Zimbabwe (ADB, 2002). These disparities have longstanding roots and continue to challenge efforts toward gender equality. Specifically, in Bindura District of Mashonaland Central Province, the consequences of gender disparities in education are significant, hindering both individual progress and community development.

Dropout rates extremely have emotional impact on girls, often as a result of reasons involving marriage, pregnancy, financial barriers, and cultural norms that prioritise boys' education. This trend perpetuates gender disparities and limits girls' potential for personal and professional growth. Despite improvements in academic performance for females in recent years, gaps still exist, especially in areas like STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), where

stereotypes and biases discourage female participation. Promoting gender equality in education requires challenging these stereotypes and fostering an inclusive environment where girls feel encouraged to pursue their interests.

Connected to issue of child marriage, which even though was technically considered illegal before the Zimbabwe's *Marriage Act* [chapter 5:17], passed in 2022. The Act established 18 as the minimum legal age for marriage for both boys and girls, providing stronger protections against early marriages, which have been a longstanding issue in the country. This is a departure from earlier laws, which allowed girls to marry at a younger age with parental consent, while boys had to be at least 18. The impact of this change in legislation is yet to be seen since the law was recently enacted. The concerns hindering girl child education specifically in the countryside has continued understudied and therefore under appreciated. This study was driven to investigate impact of the different roles between males and females in education, focusing on the case study of Bindura District.

The socio-economic context of Bindura, marked by poverty and inadequate infrastructure, worsens these educational disparities. As Dube (2021) noted, when resources are limited, families often prioritise boys' education, which mirrors a broader regional pattern where girls' education is undervalued (UNESCO, 2018). The broader impact of these disparities affects not just individuals but entire communities, as restricted access to education for girls reduces available skilled workforce and economic productivity (Mupedziswa, 2017). Thus, addressing gender inequality in education is not only essential for fairness but also for sustainable community development.

This research examines the impact of gender disparities in education in Bindura District, aiming to understand the factors that contribute to inequality and how they affect educational outcomes. The study seeks to provide insights that can inform strategies to reduce these disparities and support educational equity for all students.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The education system in Bindura District reflects gender disparity trends commonly seen in rural areas at both national and global levels. While enrollment proportions for both boys and girls have upgraded, there are still significant gaps in retention and accomplishment rates. Girls, in particular, are more likely to drop out due to early marriage and domestic responsibilities. Additionally, a

shortage of access to adequate sanitary facilities plays a crucial role in preventing girls from continuing their education. These challenges create significant obstacles, making it difficult for girls to stay in school. Many face the difficult choice between pursuing their education and fulfilling societal expectations.

These barriers not only impact individual students but also have broader consequences for community development and economic progress. This research aims to explore the extent of gender disparities in education in Bindura District, examining the factors contributing to these inequalities and their effects on educational outcomes for both boys and girls.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The general aim of the study is to examine and assess the impacts of gender disparities on education in Bindura District.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this study are:

To determine the impacts of gender disparities on education in Bindura District.

To examine the challenges faced by women and girls due to gender disparities in education in Bindura District.

To assess the ways or solutions being put in place by the government and other institutions to deal with gender inequality in education in Bindura District.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study will seek to answer the following research questions:

What are the main causes of gender disparities in education in Bindura District?

What are the solutions or ways to deal with gender disparities in education in Bindura District?

How effective and applicable are the identified solutions?

What are the challenges being faced in implementing the identified solutions?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research holds significance for several reasons. First, it adds to the existing literature on gender and education in Zimbabwe, with a focus on the specific context of Bindura District. Second, gaining insights into the challenges faced by girls in this area can help shape targeted interventions aimed at promoting gender equity in education. Lastly, the findings may guide local educational authorities, non-governmental organizations, and community leaders in creating interventions to increase educational access and retention for all students.

1.6 ASSUMPTIONS

Researcher assumes that significant gender disparities exist in the Bindura District's educational system, affecting access to education, enrollment rates, and academic performance between boys and girls. It is also assumed that cultural norms and practices in Bindura District disproportionately affect girls' access to education, with early marriages, gender roles, and traditional beliefs acting as barriers to their educational participation.

In addition, Bindura District, such as poverty and limited resources, impact boys and girls differently, with girls often being forced to leave school earlier than boys to contribute to household labour or due to financial constraints. Further it is assumed that there are policy gaps or insufficient enforcement of educational policies aimed at promoting gender equity, which contribute to the persistent gender disparities in education within Bindura District.

Lastly it is assumed that the gender disparities in education in Bindura District have long-term impacts on an individual's future opportunities, including employment prospects, social mobility, and economic independence, with girls being more negatively affected.

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This study is limited to Bindura District and focuses on primary and secondary education. It will examine the experiences of both male and female students, along with the views of educators and parents. However, the research is constrained by time limitations and data availability. Additionally, it will primarily use qualitative methods, which may restrict the broader application of the findings to other regions.

1.7 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The paper is organized in 5 chapters. Chapter 1 introduces research topic, offering background information along with the problem statement, objectives and research questions. Chapter 2 reviews pertinent literature on gender disparities in education, emphasising key theories and frameworks. Chapter 3 details the research methodology, including the methods for data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 presents the results of the research, while chapter 5 discusses their implications and provides recommendations for upcoming research and policy development.

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provides the background of the study, outlines the problem statement, research objectives, limitations, and significance of the research. This study seeks to illuminate the significant issue of gender disparities in education within Bindura District, thereby contributing to the ongoing discussion surrounding gender equality and access to education in Zimbabwe. Chapter 2 will review relevant literature regarding the impacts of gender disparities on education in Bindura District. It will also define key terms as interpreted by various authorities and include the theoretical framework, empirical literature, research gaps, and the conceptual framework.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This chapter brings together key theories and current research on gender disparities, with a focus on how social interactions and cultural settings shape learning experiences and outcomes. By weaving these ideas together, the literature review seeks to build a well-rounded understanding of the complex factors behind gender differences in education. This understanding can help guide strategies for promoting fairness and equality in education across the Bindura District.

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Gender Disparities

The World Health Organisation (2021) explains that gender disparities are one of the socially constructed inequalities between men and women, in respect to power, opportunities, and access to resources. It also shows that these disparities are going to work toward differential access to social benefits in relation to educational opportunities. UNESCO, 2016, defines gender disparities as "the unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender," regarding which the impacts could be seen in education, for example, girls usually have to face more challenges than boys in this connection.

Education Access and Equality

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020, explains that education access is the state where individuals, especially from the most marginalised groups, can enter school without any obstacles, while equality in education is the Act of distributing opportunities neutrally to all students regardless of demographic factors like gender. Buchmann and Hannum add that educational equality involves the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities whereby all students may obtain quality education. They point out equal access will reduce disparities in the attainment of quality educational results and future opportunities.

Socio-economic Factors

According to Baker et al. (2002), socio-economic factors are a constellation of social and economic variables, such as family income, parental education, and employment, which determine life chances and access to resources of individuals. More often than not, such factors determine whether children can have access to education. Thus, these factors are likely to contribute to observed gender disparities in educational outcomes. The OECD (2018) refers to socio-economic status as one's standing within society that is based on income, education, and occupation. These factors are highly related to the accessibility and quality of education; hence, they affect students along gender lines and according to geographical location.

Cultural Norms and Gender Roles

According to Hofstede (1980), cultural norms refer to "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes members of one group or category of people from others." Closely related will be an understanding of gender roles as societal expectations of behaviours considered fitting for men and women, along with their influence upon the kind of educational path taken by either gender being considered acceptable or desirable. These roles, according to Connell (1987), are socially created and many times reinforce stereotypes about capability and expectation, sometimes relating even to education. It is these cultural influences that may either hinder or promote educational access along gender lines. The effects of cultural norms and gender roles play an immense role in how society shapes the educational opportunities of different sexes.

Gender-sensitive Policies

Gender-sensitive policies aim at addressing the special needs of both genders, precisely where the disparities exist. According to UN women in 2018, these are programmes aimed at inclusion by taking into account gender needs in frameworks and initiatives that ensure equality. Such a policy is essentially needed in education, since this will somehow reduce the disparities. Moser further expounds that gender-sensitive policies are strategic interventions aimed at reducing structural inequalities and providing equal opportunities with appropriate resources and support.

Empowerment

Empowerment through education also includes the role of education in capacitating individuals-especially from less privileged groups-to make accomplished choices in their lives. Kabeer defines empowerment as a process by which people denied the capability to make strategic life choices acquire that capability. Education becomes the central part of this process in providing individuals with knowledge and skills necessary for higher states of autonomy. As Sen puts it, "Empowerment through education is the ability of people leading lives they have reason to value, and for that purpose, education is usually a major route to enhancing agency and choice.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical framework presents the theory chosen to compare the gender differences in education and explains how selected theories form the basis for the study of systemised inequality.

Gender and Development (GAD) Theory

GAD Development theory that emerged in the early eighties as critics of the WID or Women In Development which placed women into development without questioning gender disparities. Moser, C (1989) using GAD theory explored a way in which the developmental programmes can meet both the practical and strategic necessity such as education. Practical needs are those concrete requirements such as education and health, while strategic needs involve changing the relations of power between men and women towards more holistic and sustainable forms of women's emancipation. It has been widely adopted in Intentional development policy, which aims at giving policy makers a chance to address Gender Concerns in an effective way.

Stromquist (2001) employed the GAD to explore the effects of poverty on girls education in the developing countries in relation to the manner in which gender roles cumulates with economic infringement to hinder girls education. She points out that poverty, traditional gender norms continue to be constructs that disadvantage girls and make schooling difficult and incomplete even for basic education, particularly for girls in poverty-stricken areas. The analysis provides understanding that economic and policy shifts are required to improve gender equality in education.

GAD emphasizes the social construction of gender roles, which can significantly affect educational opportunities. In many communities, including those in Zimbabwe, traditional gender roles may

prioritize boys' education over girls', reflecting societal values that consider education as less essential for girls. This theory helps in identifying and analyzing how these roles contribute to educational disparities.

Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory (HCT) suggests that the skill sets of individuals collectively called human capital, are one of the most important resources as long as factors of production, like labor and capital, are indispensable for productivity and economic growth. The theory, which goes back to the 1960s, was developed most famously by economists like Gary Becker and Jacob Mincer. HCT proposes that education and training are also investments and hence comparable to financial capital investments. Education and skills help individuals earn high wage, which leads to overall economic development (Becker, 1993).

The central premise is that education improves individuals' productivity by providing them with the skills necessary to perform specific tasks more efficiently. This investment in education is expected to yield returns in the form of higher income over the course of their careers. The relationship between education and earnings is better detailed by Mincer (1974), confirming that higher productivity leads to higher earnings, and that education is an obvious way to improve productivity - every year of schooling increases earnings. By extension, HCT further draws attention to the perpetual nature of learning and flexibility in a dynamic labor market, which especially in turn necessitates the importance of life-long education not only for maintaining but also for increasing human capital (Schultz, 1971).

There has been a lot of research on the differences in the returns on educational investment by gender, with the evidence showing that the economic benefits of education are rather uneven in favor of men. The research indicates that, though education usually pays off in the form of higher wages for both genders, women achieve lower returns than men per unit of education. Ziegler (2021) states that, for example, a World Bank report (2018) shows that, in most countries, women with the same educational attainment as men earn more unequal pay. Many things contribute to the wage gap, such as occupational segregation, discrimination in the workforce, and men and women degree patterns (Blau & Kahn, 2017). Salaries in male-dominated fields like engineering and technology are often higher than in female-dominated ones.

The implications of these gendered returns are profound for economic development. When women cannot fully leverage their educational investments, it not only affects their individual economic status but also limits overall economic growth. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report (2021) highlights that closing gender gaps in education, labor force participation, and wage equality could significantly boost global GDP.

Moreover, investing in women's education has broader societal benefits. Educated women are more likely to participate in the labor force, contribute to household incomes, and invest in their children's education and health, creating a positive feedback loop that fosters economic development (Kabeer, 2012). In many developing countries, targeted policies aimed at increasing women's access to education and employment can enhance economic resilience and foster sustainable development.

HCT provides a framework for understanding the economic value of education and training as an investment in productivity. However, the gendered nature of returns on educational investments highlights the ongoing challenges women face in the labor market. Addressing these disparities is crucial for achieving equitable economic development and harnessing the full potential of the workforce.

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory provides a critical look at the structures of education that reinforce gender biases by pointing out how traditional educational systems perpetuate existing inequalities. Feminist scholars argue that education is not a neutral space but it is created within cultural, social, and political contexts that mirror and reproduce gendered power relations. As Acker (1990) phrases it, education systems often reproduce the norms and values of society, which may contribute to the marginalization of women's voices and experiences.

Feminist theory focuses on the curriculum, teaching practice, and school policy that may be biomedical in nature, promoting stereotypes of gender and, therefore, endorsing traditional gender roles. For example, Tetreault (1999) points to the way curricular content often focuses on male experience and achievement, thus marginalizing the contributions of women and promoting the male vantage point. Moreover, there may be traditional classroom dynamics that favor masculine

behaviours and ways of learning, potentially alienating female students and restricting their ability to succeed at school (Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

Feminist theorists critically point out educational policies that perpetuate gender disparities. For example, school discipline policies place an uneven burden on girls, which further endorses traditional gender roles and deters them from exploring many subjects, particularly in the STEM fields of study (American Association of University Women, 2015). With such a critical eye, educators and policymakers can move beyond the current status quo and engage in much-needed transformational change for gender equity reform in education.

The research of Betz and Sekaquaptewa (2012) tested the hypothesis that gender stereotypes Act as an architect of girls' participation and performance in the fields of STEM. Results indicated that exposure to negative stereotypes regarding women's abilities in these fields undermined self-efficacy and interest in girls' pursuit of STEM careers. This study highlights the need for educational interventions that will challenge stereotypes and usher in an inclusive environment for female students.

Skelton (2009) carried out a qualitative research study into the experiences of both boys and girls in UK primary schools. Her findings suggested that boys were encouraged mostly to become more assertive and competitive, while girls had to be socialized as more passive and cooperative. In this way, students' self-concepts and academic choices were influenced by this gendered socialization, which shows how educational practices may reproduce conventional gender expectations and reduce potential.

Connell (2009) explained the 'hidden curriculum,' those implicit lessons and norms carried by educational practices. Her research has documented that schools often reproduce traditional gender roles through classroom dynamics, teacher expectations, and disciplinary actions. Knowledge of the hidden curriculum is indispensable in working toward a fair learning environment in education for both genders.

It has also been influenced by the concept of intersectionality introduced by Crenshaw (1989). Different studies, such as those by Collins (2000), explore how students at the intersection of

multiple identities—say, gender, race, and class—undergo different educational experiences. For example, African American girls may suffer from unique forms of oppression that result from the interaction between their gender and racial identities, further leading to peculiar disparities in education.

The relevance of feminist theory provides a framework for understanding how gender biases manifest in local educational contexts. Like many districts, Bindura may mirror broader societal inequalities that feminist theory tries to expose. Applying the theory to this particular case, one could investigate how the educational structure in Bindura reproduces gender inequalities by analyzing curriculum content, classroom interaction, and school policy.

For example, the knowledge of how gendered expectations mediate students' experiences in Bindura would provide insight into the thresholds that impede girls from accessing quality education. Also, by using feminist theory, researchers can now delve deeper into issues related to intersectional factors, such as socio-economic status and cultural norms, all of which increase obstacles to education in the district.

With such a feminist critique of educational structures, this research contributes to policy recommendations toward gender equity in education. This accords with the growing awareness of the importance of addressing gender disparities to ensure not only academic success but also broader social and economic development across the region.

Socialization Theory

Socialization theory postulates that through the process of socialization, individuals learn norms, values, behavior, and social skills appropriate to their social positions. This theory emphasizes the important role that societal norms play in shaping individual identity and behaviour, especially in regard to gender roles. Gender socialization starts early in life and continues throughout a person's development, impacting how boys and girls view themselves and their abilities (Thorne, 1993).

Social norms produced by society determine the expected behaviour, attitudes, and roles of each gender. For example, boys are socialized to be assertive, competitive, and independent; girls are encouraged to be nurturing, cooperative, and passive (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). These expectations related to gendered identity influence individual aspirations, choices, and interactions in various

contexts, including education. Consequently, socialization not only affects individual identities but also the larger educational context in which gendered norms may shape students' behaviour, performance, and attitudes toward learning.

A large body of research has documented how socialization impacts educational aspirations and outcomes differently for boys and girls. Other studies have found that gendered socialization not only influences students' choice of subjects pursued in school but also their confidence and motivation. For example, one study by Glick and White (2004) found that children's educational aspirations are significantly influenced by parental expectations and encouragement. Parents would also expect differently depending on the gender of their child, which in turn creates a difference in how they encourage academic achievements, particularly in subjects such as math and science, where boys are usually preferred.

Another relevant study by Eccles (1994) highlighted the socialization role in the formation of self-concept and academic interests. Eccles puts forward the idea that girls often develop lower self-efficacy in traditionally male-dominated subjects due to societal stereotypes that these fields are less suited for them. The lack of confidence, combined with gendered socialization, may turn girls away from higher education and professions in the fields of STEM—and therefore, widen the gender gap in these fields.

Additionally, a longitudinal study carried out by Oakes (1990) showed that socialization processes in schools, which extend to teacher expectations and classroom interactions, do have a significant impact on students' subsequent academic trajectories. The study showed that teachers often unconsciously reinforced gender biases through their interactions with students—boys are favored in science and mathematics, while girls are encouraged in humanities and social sciences. This differential treatment reinforces traditional gender roles and limits the academic aspirations of both genders.

Understanding these socialization processes is thus very critical to addressing the underlying causes of gender disparities in education. For instance, boys may be socialized toward leadership and assertiveness, while girls are socialized toward nurturing roles in Bindura. This can result in differential aspirations and outcomes for education. Moreover, the way these gendered norms manifest in each school can help explain how boys and girls differentially experience certain

barriers to their educational participation, such as little encouragement to pursue STEM fields or being affected by gender stereotypes that undermine their self-efficacy.

Socialization theory gives a broader insight into how the complex interplays between societal norms and educational disparities works. Such insight can inform targeted interventions toward the promotion of gender equity in education, ensuring that both boys and girls are given equal opportunities to realize their academic potential.

REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

Global Perspective on Gender Disparities in Education

South Asia has one of the largest gaps in gender secondary education completion rates. For example, less than 50% of girls in some countries, like Pakistan and Afghanistan, complete secondary education because of restrictive socio-cultural norms, economic constraints, and early marriage (World Bank, 2021).

In most conflict-affected parts of the Middle East, the gender disparities are very huge; in particular, school-aged girls suffer more disruption than boys. UNICEF has noted that in Syria, some 2 million children are currently out of school, and girls are at increased risk of dropping out due to early marriages, insecurity, and lack of access to safe educational spaces (UNICEF, 2021).

Girls in East Asia and the Pacific are highly underrepresented in STEM fields. According to UNESCO research, in many countries within the region, female enrollment in STEM programmes at the tertiary level is less than 30%, often held back by stereotypes and societal expectations discouraging women from entering these careers (UNESCO, 2022).

The other major factor contributing to gender disparities in education in Latin America and the Caribbean is teenage pregnancy. According to UNESCO, girls who become pregnant are usually forced to leave school, something that lowers their dropout rates almost threefold compared to boys (UNESCO, 2021). This tends to bring about a cycle of limitations in both educational and economic opportunities for women in the region.

The EFA initiative began in 1990 under UNESCO to provide quality basic education to all children, youth, and adults, paying special attention to the goal of gender equality. It spawned efforts to

reduce gender disparities through policies ensuring equal access, abolishing school fees, and improving infrastructure. Progress was made, although in some regions, the disparities continued unabated, with socio-cultural norms and economic factors still largely conducive to the low participation of females.

The SDGs adopted in 2015 continued to emphasize gender equality in education, including SDG 4 and SDG 5. While SDG 4 focuses on "inclusive and equitable quality education" for all, SDG 5 directly addresses gender equality by seeking to "eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable" (UN, 2015). Thus, the SDGs have mobilized resources and strategies around the world by setting measurable targets to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2030.

Gender Disparities in Education in sub-Saharan Africa

In sub-Saharan Africa there are more constraints in the education of girls than boys. Research also shows that while 100 boys enroll in a primary school, only 87 girls enroll in the same school. The difference is even worse in the secondary and tertiary levels of education by factors such as poverty, early marriage, and insecurity. According to UNESCO, 9 % of the girl child in the region gets to attend post-basic education while a 16 % of the boy child does so (UNESCO, 2022).

Cultural trends and beliefs are confirmed to present a major barrier to girls' schooling in sub-Saharan Africa generally as well as within rural environments. Chisamya et al. (2012) did a study on education barriers in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia in which they discovered that conventional gender roles play a big role in the preference of boys' education over girls'. The girls, especially, are given domestic tasks from a very tender age; that is why the attendance and dropout rates are high.

Chinen and De Hoop (2014) involved a study of gender and the results indicated that early marriage hinders girls education in Ethiopia. They found out that, girls who are married before the age of 18 years have lower probability of completing their secondary education. In many cultures education is regarded as the least priority for girls of marriage-able age and so families do drag the girl child out of school for marriage

As a result of limitation in resources, gender difference in education is further compounded by economic factors particularly in the less physically endowed families. Sperling and Winthrop (2015) on a sample study of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, they found out that families struggling with poverty distressed prefer boys education rather than girls this because boys are expected to be the bread earners in future. This prioritization reduces the number of girls from economically poor families who enroll and retain their seats in school.

Lloyd and Young (2009) offer a wider view towards sub-Saharan Africa on similar observation on poverty has been the main reason for attendance to school. To support their findings, their study made it clear that girls from low income houses are more likely to be removed from school to work or do other related errands the observation is made across many sub-Saharan countries namely Zimbabwe inclusive. Economic forces therefore play the part of enhancing gender differential which manifests in scarcities of job opportunities girls.

Studies indicate that institutional factors, including inadequate policy implementation, also limit girls' educational progress in sub-Saharan Africa. Herz and Sperling (2004) reviewed education policies across the region, noting that policies intended to promote gender equality are often under-resourced or poorly enforced. Rural schools in Maasai Mara region for instance because most of them lack key items such as textbooks and sanitation facilities more females drop out of school than males.

Sekuler et al. (2004) investigated availability and use of school toilets, while Lloyd and Mensch (2008) conducted survey which examined school facilities in Ghana, Senegal and Malawi and concluded that poor facilities particularly those required for menstrual purposes proved to be a powerful barrier to school attendance for girls. The most notable of them was that girls who are in school often absent themselves during their menstrual periods which affects their performance as well as their ability to be retained in school.

Dunne et al. (2005) discuss the extent to which gender stereotype in Nigerian classroom sustains social injustice in education. In their study, they realized that female students were assigned lower competency than the male students and as a result were encouraged to contribute less into the class. Sexual stereotyping by teachers put off the girls and they end up behaving poorly in class thus lowering their performance. Cultural believes and practices that surround gender as portrayed in

Bindura District may contribute to the discourage of girl child for higher education. Parkes and Heslop (2011) have also discussed gendered violence in the Tanzanian school, and, as the authors stated the prevalence of harassment and abuse lead to the deterioration of women's educational attainment. Risk of physical violence, molestation to the girl child makes her avoid school, in case she attends school, she is most likely to miss classes frequently.

Early marriage and teenage pregnancy are two areas that are major determinants of low education for girls specifically. Bunting (2005) also looked at the correlation between marriage and school drop out in Uganda found that pressures of care giver to either the husband, child or both which compel the girl to drop out of school. Temin et al. also opined that pregnancy results to early drop out or self sponsored drop out in many sub-Saharan African nations pregnant school going females thus end up with poor education and poor economy.

In their research article on the effects of community perceptions in Kenya Omoeva and Hatch (2017) established that a pass rate is achievable if such communities embraced the cause of girl child education. More often, where parents and caregivers see the benefits of FGE, more girls enroll and complete their schooling. On the other hand, lack of parental and community support is still evident, majorly because families are yet to consider the education for girls as of high importance as that for boys. In a study by Unterhalter et al. (2014) about the community education interventions in Nigeria, Ghana and Tanzania, the authors found out that with enhanced awareness and community participation led to increased school enrolment and attendance by girls.

Gender Disparities in Education in Zimbabwe

In the case of Zimbabwe culture marries expectations that limit girls to education. Dorsey (1996) defined how cultural attitudes hold prep education for boys as they deem boys as bearing the major future economic burden. Boys, on the other hand, are forced to be breadwinners, are an influence to the drop out rates and school attendance among girls. Nyawaranda and Tirivangana (2008) built further the conception that early marriage hinders girl's education since marriage is seen as a right direction for girls particularly in rural areas where the culture of girls' subjection to boys is well practiced and respected.

In another study conducted recently, Chinyoka and Naidu (2014) established that there are gender stereotypes in Zimbabwean classrooms that are unfavorable to education, especially for girls and

encouraged the cultural bias against STEM educational programmes. It is said that female students have low academic self-esteem and being less motivated due to bias perception that teachers and parents have regarding the knowledge competence of the girl child. These studies point to an interesting conclusion that, in order to overcome socio-cultural barriers to education among girl child in Zimbabwe, it is necessary to undertake attempts that modify gendered practices within homes as well as classroom setting.

Poverty is another major factors that hinders the education of girl child in Zimbabwe. Makwinja-Morara further explained again how such economic challenges such as during hyperinflation in the early 2000s adversely impacted on the education of girls. Girls are left at home or are supposed to contribute to family work than boys and that families with little capital invest on boys education than on girls. Chisango and Mudhovozi's (2013) also underlined how poverty has the striking consequences of high school fees, transport costs and other material costs that hardly allow many girls to remain studying in schools especially secondary ones. Moreover, the authors revealed that due to the absence of available educational scholarships for girls from low income families, an unending cycle of poverty and educational depravity is cordoned off. Research shows that other barriers also deter girls education in Zimbabwe among them being institutional weaknesses. Shizha and Kariwo (2011) discussed their concern that policies concerning gender equity in education have not been well executed in Zimbabwe as they are handicapped by want of structures and facilities especially in the rural areas.

Mangwaya, Blignaut, and Pillay (2016) established that there was an absence of gender-sensitive policies as a concern in teacher training programmes. These classroom practices suggest that teachers show up to classes without enough tools to redress inequalities along the lines of gender. This finding affirms the urgent need for redevelopment of teacher training programmes to embrace gender-sensitive training for the purpose of encouraging education among girl child.

The Zimbabwean government has come up with various policies that seek to improve the enrollment of girls in school even though different policies have yielded different results. Mutekwe, Modiba, and Maphosa (2012) considered how the government has enforced the Education Act of 1987 to desegregate education and open an equal possibility to boys and girls. The researchers did point out however that while this Act was meant to legally enshrine equality the problem is that

the implementation of such equality is not always made easy due to lack of resources especially in the rural regions.

The study done by Chitiga-Mabugu et al. (2014), focused on Zimbabwe's BEAM which is a kind of social protection employing the aim of minimize the costs of education for vulnerable children. One improvement that has been observed through BEAM is increased enrollment for girls but due to budget weaknesses many girls who could benefit from it have not. The programme is further aggravated by economic fluctuations as funding has been inconsistent at best, leading to fluctuations in efficacy of the programme.

In Zimbabwe, several NGOs have been very active in ensuring that education for girls is achieved. CAMFED (2012) notes that it has adopted measures that consist of calling for girls from the most underprivileged areas. It is noteworthy that CAMFED has an economic function because it helps to overcome economic barriers: in particular, it helps the girls to pay for school fees, uniforms and other related needs. CAMFED (2016) opines that the girls benefited by the help of the organization complete secondary school and further studies, training, or vocation intended to advance the individual, hence the financial assistance enhances the educational performance.

Gender-based violence is a significant deterrent for girls attending school in Zimbabwe. Nyamanhindi and Moyo (2015) conducted a study in Mashonaland Central and found that the threat of sexual harassment and violence in and around schools discourages many girls from attending regularly. UNICEF (2017) has partnered with local governments and NGOs to establish the Safe Schools Programme, which seeks to create safer school environments by raising awareness, providing counselling services, and implementing preventive measures against violence.

Chinyoka and Ganga (2014) further note that the inability of girls to report incidents of abuse is further compounded by the absence of appropriate legal protection and reporting mechanisms. The findings point to the development of supportive policies on gender-based violence and the creation of safe learning environments that guarantee girls access to an education without fear. Initiatives that focus on the empowerment of women and girls have bolstered the potential for education. Mwangi, 2018, deliberated on an NGO by the name of women's Action Group, which provided mentorship and support for advocacy to young women in Zimbabwe. The initiatives from WAG

have helped change perceptions of the worth of girls' education by providing role models and support networks that encourage girls to continue with education despite unfavorable socio-economic challenges. Mwangi's contribution is thus the proof that mentorship and empowerment programmes have gains in girls' educational motivation and achievement which may last a lifetime.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework identifies research variables and the relationship between the variables and it helps the researcher to decide and explain the route to take in study (Aldvidge and Coldman 2002, Fraental and Wallen 2000). Another importance of a conceptual framework is that it allows the researcher to put in place an outline that organizes thoughts and ideas describing the phenomenon to be investigated. This may assist the researcher in ensuring the research questions are answered comprehensively. A conceptual framework may serve as guidelines or pointers during data collection and analysis, enabling the researcher to focus on relevant information. Overall, the conceptual framework can bring transparency to the very findings themselves, and it can relate them to other works. The major concepts in the study are gender disparities, educational access, educational participation, cultural norms and beliefs, economic constraints, educational outcomes and long-term opportunities.

Gender Disparities

Gender disparities refer to the asymmetries in opportunities, expectations, and resources available between subjects along the gender divide. The study shall explore disparities like examples that include but are not limited to disparities in enrollment, attendance and completion rates, and other disparities in the way teachers and community members treat students based on their gender.

Educational Access

Educational access is defined as the opportunity for children to attend school and actively participate in it. In fact, cultural, family, and economic restrictions in most countries impede educational access, especially for girls. This access will be measured by enrollment and attendance records according to the number of boys and girls at the different levels of education.

Educational Participation

Educational participation reflects the level of engagement and active involvement of students in school activities, both academic and extracurricular. Gender norms often influence classroom dynamics, participation in activities, and leadership opportunities. For example, girls may have different classroom interactions, levels of engagement, and participation in extracurricular activities compared to boys.

Academic Performance and Achievement

Academic performance and achievement as a concept, focusing on measurable learning outcomes, including grades, test scores, and progression rates. Gendered expectations and the level of support given to students can significantly impact performance. Influential factors, such as resource access, encouragement from teachers, and cultural expectations around academic success, can vary based on gender.

Cultural Norms and Beliefs

Cultural norms and beliefs form another crucial concept, encompassing values and expectations within Bindura District that shape gender roles, particularly in education. Traditional beliefs may prioritize boys' education over girls', thus limiting girls' access to educational resources and opportunities. For instance, there may be expectations for girls to prioritize domestic roles, which can reduce the time or priority given to their schooling.

Economic Constraints

Economic constraints are also significant, as financial limitations affect families' ability to send children to school or provide educational resources. These constraints tend to be gendered, as families with limited resources may prioritize boys' education, leading to higher dropout rates or irregular attendance for girls. Examples of economic constraints include the cost of school fees, uniforms, and supplies, all of which can disproportionately impact girls.

Educational Outcomes and Long-term Opportunities

Educational outcomes and long-term opportunities, focusing on the long-term impacts of education on students' futures, including career prospects and socio-economic status. Gender

disparities in education can significantly influence boys' and girls' future opportunities differently, perpetuating cycles of inequality. For example, girls with limited education may have fewer career prospects, which can reinforce traditional gender roles and economic dependency. Together, these interrelated concepts provide a framework to understand how gender disparities, reinforced by cultural and economic factors, shape access, participation, and outcomes in education in Bindura District.

RESEARCH GAPS

The student managed to pinpoint the following gaps in literature which were expected to be filled. While several studies explored the effects of gender inequality on education globally and within specific African contexts, there remains a significant gap in research specifically examining the localized impacts of gender disparities in rural districts like Bindura. Existing studies often address general trends in gender inequality at national or regional levels which can overlook the unique cultural, economic, and social factors influencing educational experiences in particular communities. This gap limits the understanding of how deeply ingrained cultural norms, local economic conditions, and policy limitations affect gender equality in education at a community level in Bindura District.

Furthermore, while broader studies highlight obstacles preventing girls from acquiring and completing education namely early marriage, economic constraints, and gendered expectations of domestic roles there is little research capturing how these factors specifically interact within Bindura's distinct socio-economic landscape. Few studies offer in-depth qualitative insights into the experiences of students, parents, and educators in Bindura regarding how gender disparities shape day-to-day educational access and engagement. Additionally, little is known about the long-term impacts of these disparities on Bindura's girls, including their career prospects, socio-economic independence, and community roles.

Addressing this gap is essential to developing targeted interventions that consider the local context and cultural nuances unique to Bindura. Such research could inform policies and practices tailored to the district's specific needs, ultimately contributing to more equitable educational opportunities for both boys and girls in the area.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter reviewed related literature whereby pertinent concerns concerning impacts of gender disparities on education in Bindura District, were discussed. However, the chapter started by treating the theoretical framework whereby theories on gender were discussed, which acted as guides to this study. Literature from the rest of the world, Europe, Africa, East Africa and indeed Zimbabwe was reviewed to explore impact of gender disparities on education. The literature was not tailored to the context of Bindura District. It is on the basis of such contextual and practical gaps that this research became appropriate to launch the degree of impact of gender disparities on education in Bindura from the point of view of the above discoursed authors, commentators and researchers. The next chapter dealt with methodological issues.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

Chapter two of this study identified the work of other researchers on the four main research questions of the study. Further, it outlines the research methods, design and techniques that will be used in the study to investigate the impacts of gender disparities on education in Bindura District. The population, sample procedures, data collection methods under study will be revealed, as well as data analysis techniques. The chapter ends with a summary.

3.2. Research Design

Research Design is plan or strategy on executing the research project, from identifying the problem through to reporting a research project and publishing results. A research design is also cited as a systematic plan or blue print outlining how information is to be gathered, instruments to be used and the way they will be administered (Punch 2006). It provides a structure and framework for managing a project in a feasible manner giving meaningful answers to problems. Orodho (2003) adds that the function of the research design is to provide for the collection of relevant evidence with minimal expenditure of effort, time and money.

Following the works of other scholars on the impacts of gender disparities on education, the research will be of qualitative nature. Qualitative research design is a non - quantitative and utilizes descriptive survey to gain first hand holistic understanding of a phenomenon using methods such as interviews and questionnaires (Walliman, 2011).

"Holloway and Wheeler (2002:30) describe qualitative research as a form of social inquiry that explores how individuals interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world around them. In this study, a descriptive research design was selected as the most appropriate approach, particularly for addressing questions related to 'how' and 'what' (Wandera, 2011).

The descriptive survey method offers a valuable means of gathering extensive information. It enables researchers to use descriptions as an indirect test for theories, models, and certain behaviors or situations. However, while it facilitates observation and documentation of phenomena,

it does not establish causal relationships. In this approach, the researcher has no control over the variables and can only report on occurrences or ongoing events (Kothari, 2004)."

3.3. Population

Polit and Hungler (2019) define a population as the collective sum of all objects, subjects, or members that meet specific criteria. In this study, the population consists of teachers, school administrators, students, and parents within Bindura District. This group was selected based on their direct or indirect engagement in educational activities, as well as their ability to provide valuable insights into gender disparities within the district.

3.4. Sample

Given limitations related to cost, time, and potential unit destruction, not every member of a population can be observed or measured. Instead, a sample—a carefully selected subset of the population—participates in the study, representing a fraction of the larger group (Brink, 2009). In this research, a total of 60 participants were included: 20 students, 20 adolescents, 5 teachers, 10 parents, 1 headman, 1 gender officer, 1 education officer, and 2 school administrators

3.4.1 Sampling method

This aspect of statistical practice involves selecting a subset of individuals from within a population to generate insights about the larger group. For this study, a purposive sampling technique will be employed to identify school administrators and teachers with relevant experience and expertise in gender issues within education. Random sampling will be employed to select student participants to ensure a representative sample across genders. For parents, snowball sampling will be used, with initial contacts recommending others who could provide insights into gender disparities in their children's education.

3.5. Research Instruments

Oppenheim (1992) defined research instruments as tools for gathering the data required to discover answers to a challenge under examination. Weyner (2005) stressed that a research instrument is used to get information regarding a specific matter from individuals. A research instrument is any tool used in data collection in a survey. In the study primary data will be gathered using

administration of questionnaires consisting of structured, open-ended questions and structured interviews. (Wandera, 2011). Secondary data for the study will be gathered through reports, published books and the internet. Questionnaires will be administered to selected school administrators, teachers, students and parents.

3.5.1. The questionnaire

It is a qualitative research tool used to gather primary data. Primary data is data that has been observed, experienced or recorded close to the event are the nearest one can get to the truth.

Olley (2009) defines a questionnaire as a list of carefully structured questions with a view of eliciting reliable responses from the chosen sample. It is also described as a document containing questions designed to solicit appropriate information for analysis from subjects by writing responses to the questions. The questionnaire will be ideal for the study because it is a totally impersonal probe which guarantees objectivity since respondents answer in the absence of the researcher, information on the questionnaire is standardized for all respondents making the data gathered more reliable and easier to quantify and process.

The researcher will combination closed and open-ended questions on the questionnaires. The questionnaires are planned to be distributed to school administrators, teachers, students and parents.

Advantages of using the Questionnaire

Questionnaires enable the researcher to gather a great deal of information quickly and gives greater consistency.

Questionnaires give respondents enough time to formulate correct answers and usually yields high response rate.

More honest answers are obtained as fear and suspicion is greatly reduced.

Information obtained by use of questionnaires is easy to analyze.

Disadvantages of using the Questionnaire

Questionnaires might produce superficial data caused by little or no checking of frankness or degree of seriousness in the responses.

3.5.2. Interview

An interview is a qualitative data collection method characterized by direct verbal interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. It involves personal engagement with participants, who provide responses to structured or semi-structured questions, offering valuable insights for research analysis. Structured questions are going to be used for this study. Interviews are proper for this study because they allow the researcher to probe for responses, note reactions, feelings and motives which leads to greater accuracy. In the study interviews will be used to solicit information from school administrators and teachers.

Benefits of interviews

Usually achieves a very high response rate.

Respondents can expand on areas of interest.

Researcher can make use of non – verbal cues like gestures, facial expressions to understand responses.

Disadvantages of interviews

Interviews are time consuming. Respondents have to be interviewed individually which takes time, patience and commitment of the researcher.

3.6. Procedure for data Collection

Data collection procedures are steps taken to administer and collect data from subjects under study. For this study, the researcher is going to administer questionnaires using a drop and pick later method. The answered questionnaires were collected after five (5) working days on average. Appointments for interviews will be made by phone and each interview lasted about five (5) minutes.

3.7. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data will be presented in narrative form. Tables will be used to group and organize data so that it becomes manageable and easy to interpret. Graphs will also be used to display and interpret data. Data will be analyzed statistically using descriptive statistics, conceptual content and thematic

analysis in Microsoft excel. Conceptual content analysis is a systematic and objective technique used to derive insights by identifying specific characteristics within messages and applying the same methodology to related trends. Kothari (2004) explains that content analysis employs categorization to make valid and replicable inferences, ensuring data is accurately interpreted within its context. The findings are then analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions and actionable recommendations.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations concern morale principles and how people should conduct themselves in social affairs. Participants will be informed about the purpose and nature of the study and their role to enable them to choose whether to participate or not. Privacy and confidentiality of sources were maintained by concealing identity of participants. The researcher will uphold professional standards by reporting honestly and not fabricating data.

3.9. Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure. External validity refers to approximate truth of generalizations might be affected by wrong conclusions due to sampling methods, inclusion and exclusion and psychological realism. Sampling threat will be reduced by random selection and ensuring that respondents participate in the study. Inclusion and exclusion will be contained by clearly defining the population while psychological realism, minimized through making sure that the participants are experiencing events of the study as a real event by explaining the aim of the research.

Internal validity is the quality of data gained from true experimental designs should genuinely reflect the influence of controlled variables to be made beyond immediate experiment situation (Walliman, 2011). Instrumentation threat will be reduced by making every effort to maintain consistency in constructing the items in the instruments and administration of instruments. Maturation threat will be reduced by decreasing the amount of time between pre-test and post-test.

3.10. Reliability

Reliability as defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2015) is the degree to which observable measure that exemplifies a theoretical concept are accurate and stable when used for the concept

in several studies. Wilson (2016), posited that reliability issues are usually related with subjectivity and when the student adopts a subjective approach towards the study, then the level of trustworthiness of the work is going to be compromised. It also refers to the purity and consistency of a measure to repeatability to the probability of obtaining the same results if the measure were to be duplicated. The student will carry out a pilot study to test the instruments and ascertain if they are reliable.

3.11. Summary

This chapter provided a comprehensive overview of the research methodology and design, defining the study's population, sample, and sampling techniques. It examined data collection methods, research instruments, and their validity and reliability. Additionally, the chapter outlined data collection procedures, as well as the plan for data presentation and analysis. Ethical considerations relevant to the study were also discussed. Moving forward, this chapter focuses on the presentation, interpretation, and discussion of findings related to the impact of gender disparities on education in Bindura District.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the data gathered through questionnaires and interviews, using visual tools like bar graphs, tables, and pie charts for clarity. The analysis is guided by the research objectives, which focus on understanding the effects of gender disparities on education, exploring the challenges faced by women and girls due to these inequalities in Bindura District, and evaluating the solutions and measures being implemented by the government and other institutions to address gender inequality in education.

4.1 Distribution of questionnaires and return rate

Table 4.1 : Research tools response rate

Research Instrument	Planned/ Distributed	Returned/ Undertaken	Response Rate
Interview	25	25	100%
Questionnaire	35	25	71%

The table above shows details about the research tools used, how they were distributed, and the responses received. All 25 planned interviews were successfully conducted, achieving a perfect 100% response rate. Out of 35 questionnaires distributed, 25 were completed and returned, resulting in an impressive 71% response rate. These high participation levels ensured that the data collected was thorough and reliable.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of the Respondents

The research study sampling was carried out ensuring adequate representation from individuals with experiences of gender disparities, the respondents age and roles are given below in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1.

4.2.1 Age of Respondents

Table 4.2: Age of respondents

S/N	Below 18	18–25	26–35	Above 35
Students	8	15	10	0
Parents	1	3	2	2
School Heads	0	0	0	1
Teachers	0	1	3	2
DEOs	0	0	0	1
DGOs	0	0	1	0
Community Representatives	0	0	0	1
Overall	9	19	16	7

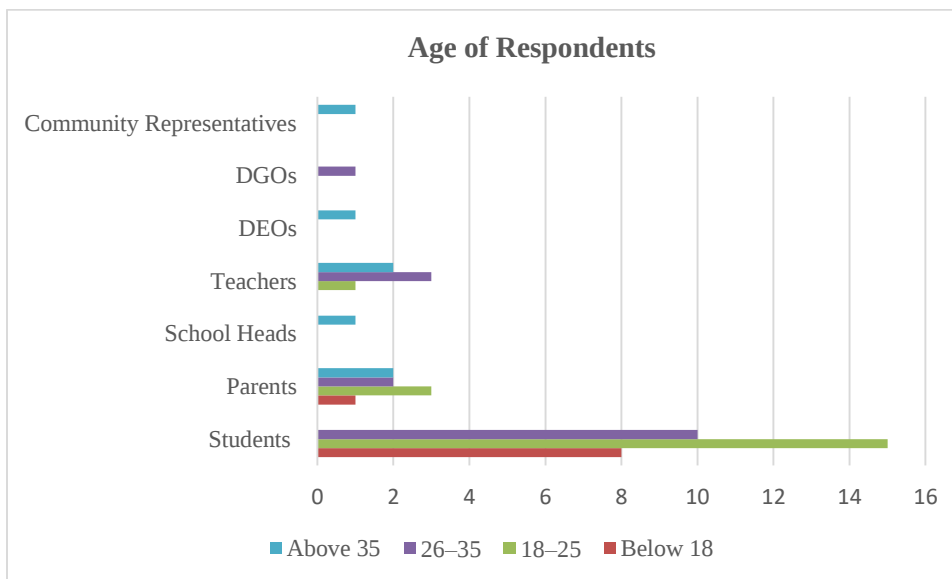


Figure 4.1 : Age of respondents

Students dominate the group, primarily aged 18–25 and 26–35, with fewer below 18 and none above 35. Parents are distributed across all age groups, while leadership roles, such as school heads,

DEOs, and community representatives, are filled exclusively by individuals above 35. Teachers are mostly in the 26–35 and above 35 age groups. The overall highest representation is in the 18–25 age group and a small community representation.

4.2.2 Gender of Respondents

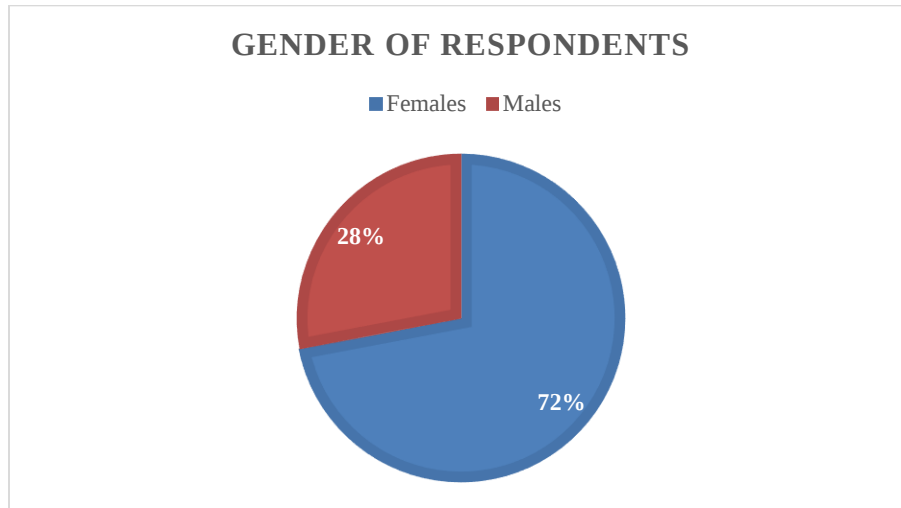


Figure 4.2: Gender of respondents

In this research as shown in the figure above twenty eight percent were males and seventy-two were females. The design of involving more females than males was to ensure adequate representation of view of the affected gender in the interviews.

4.2.3 Marital Status of Respondents

The study respondents categorized by marital status were captured on the questionnaire, as this gave additional information about the respondents. In Figure 4.3 shows the number of study respondents divided according to their marital status.

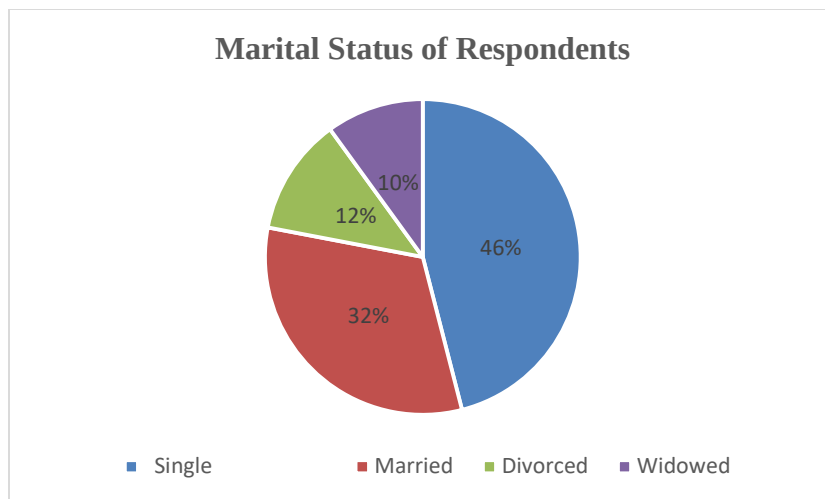


Figure 4.3: Marital status of respondents

Figure 4.1 shows that fourth six percent were single mostly girls who were still students and are directly affected by disparities of gender. The second major group was married giving an insight in the burden of raising children.

Education Level of Respondents

Education level of respondents was captured on the questionnaire as it gave different views among respondents with different levels of education. Table 4.3 and figure 4.4 below depicts the respondent's education in the study.

Table 4.3: Education Level of Respondents

Respondents Level of Education	Number
Primary.	18
Secondary	11
Tertiary	9
None	12

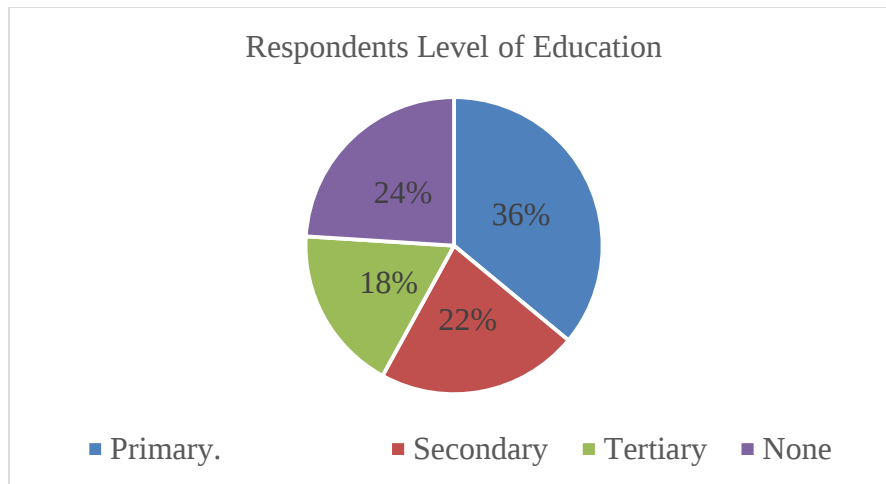


Figure 4.4 : Respondents level of education

The participants were from different education backgrounds from none to tertiary and thirty-six were had primary education as their highest level. Participants with none, secondary and tertiary represented 18%, 24%, 22% respectively.

4.2.5 Respondents' Occupation

Occupation of respondents was captured on the questionnaire to offer an insight on what one's view of gender disparities affect education based on their profession. The table below highlights the research participants according to occupation.

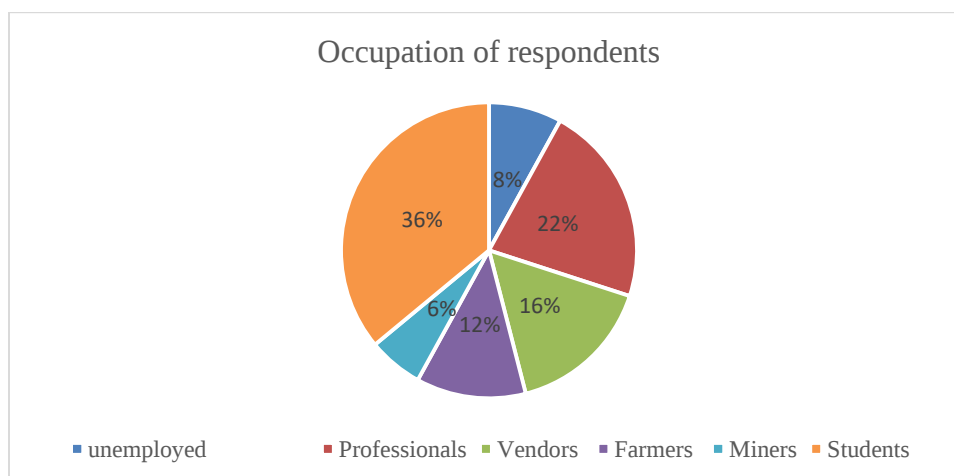


Figure 4.5: Participants' occupational status

On the Figure 4.3, shows that the research had students as the largest constituents of respondents. Some of the participants were vendors, farmers, miners and others unemployed reflecting varied economic status of the respondents.

4.2 Presentation of the Research Findings

This section organizes findings under subthemes based on research questions that is effects and causes of gender disparities, solutions or ways to deal with gender disparities, effectiveness of identified solutions.

4.2.1 Effects of gender disparities

Findings are organized under the following headings: school dropout, academic interests, academic trajectories, attitudes toward learning, low self-concept, confidence and motivation, students' behavior, poor academic achievement, limited career opportunities and low income.

Table 4.4: Effects of gender disparities

S/N	Effects of gender disparities	Number who mentioned it	Percent of respondents
1.	School dropout	32	63
2.	Academic interests	20	40
3.	Academic trajectories	12	23
4.	Attitudes toward learning	26	52
5.	Low self-concept	10	19
6.	Students' behavior	28	56
7.	Poor academic achievement	35	70
8.	Limited career opportunities	27	54

Figure 4.4: Effects of gender disparities

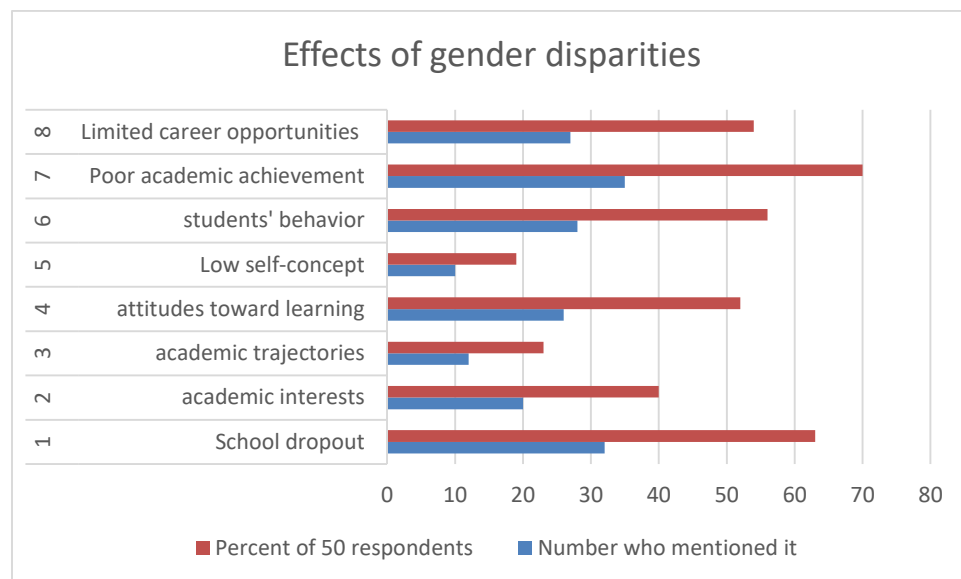


Figure 4.6: Effects of gender disparities

The table and figure above shows the effects of gender disparities on students' education, as reported by 50 respondents. It sheds light on the different ways gender inequality is perceived to impact students' academic experiences.

One of the most striking findings is that 63% of respondents (32 out of 50) believe that gender disparities play a major role in student dropouts. This highlights how gender-related challenges might push students, particularly those facing inequality, to leave school before completing their education. Gender disparities are also seen as influencing students' academic interests, with 40% of respondents (20 people) mentioning this. This could be because societal expectations often push students into certain subjects based on their gender, limiting their academic choices.

One of the respondents a female student said when asked why she drop out of school?

She said,

“My parents had trouble paying fees so I saw no future as a student because I will always be turned away from school and always remained behind on school work”.

Another female student, married at fourteen said:

“In our family we are given into marriage at this age it is what our religion demands, we go to school to learn and read”.

Additionally, 23% of respondents (12 people) pointed out that gender disparities affect academic trajectories. This could involve how students' education paths—such as their course choices or progression—are shaped by gender norms. Almost half of the respondents (52%) also noted that gender disparities influence students' attitudes toward learning. Gender biases or stereotypes may cause some students to become disengaged or discouraged from fully participating in their education.

The idea of low self-concept due to gender disparities was mentioned by 19% of respondents (10 people). This suggests that societal expectations tied to gender can make students feel less confident or capable in their academic abilities. In terms of behavior, over half of the respondents (56%) felt that gender disparities affect how students behave in school, possibly due to the pressures placed on students to act in certain ways based on their gender.

The district gender officer had this to say about gender disparities,

“Parents exert strict rules and punishment on girls if they cross any line making them feel inferior to boys who are left to do as they please”.

Finally, one of the most significant effects is poor academic achievement, which 70% of respondents (35 people) linked to gender disparities. This points to how gender inequality can hold students back academically, either through biases, fewer opportunities, or other barriers. Respondents also highlighted how gender disparities limit career opportunities, with 54% (27 respondents) suggesting that students' future career choices are restricted because of gender-based discrimination or expectations.

Overall, the table illustrates how gender disparities in education are not just a matter of academics—they affect students' behavior, attitudes, self-esteem, and future prospects. The findings show that the impact of gender inequality is widespread, with dropout rates, poor academic achievement, and limited opportunities standing out as particularly significant concerns.

The findings from the study shed light on the significant impact of gender disparities on students' education. One of the key issues identified was the high dropout rate, with 63% of respondents

pointing to gender disparities as a major factor. This echoes research by Luna and Koonce (2020), which found that gender stereotypes, particularly those placed on girls, often lead to higher dropout rates, especially in disadvantaged communities.

Gender disparities also affect students' academic interests and educational paths. Forty percent of respondents noted that gender influences the subjects students choose, and 23% said it shapes their academic trajectories. This aligns with Cheryan et al. (2017), who found that societal expectations often push girls away from STEM fields. Similarly, Moss-Racusin et al. (2012) found that gender biases discourage girls from pursuing advanced courses in math and science, reinforcing the idea that gender plays a significant role in shaping students' academic choices.

The study also revealed that gender disparities impact students' attitudes toward learning, with 52% of respondents agreeing with this. Research by Thompson (2019) supports this, showing that gender biases can lead to a lack of motivation and engagement, especially for girls who may internalize negative stereotypes about their academic abilities. In addition, 19% of respondents mentioned that gender disparities lead to a lower self-concept in students. Cohen and Garcia (2008) found that girls, in particular, can experience diminished self-esteem due to gender expectations, which can affect their confidence in school.

Gender also shapes students' behavior in school, as 56% of respondents indicated. This finding is supported by Simmons et al. (2013), who found that boys are often expected to be more assertive or disruptive, while girls are pressured to be more passive. These gender norms can impact how students behave and interact in the classroom, potentially affecting their academic performance.

Another major issue highlighted was poor academic achievement, with 70% of respondents linking gender disparities to lower performance in school. This mirrors the OECD (2015) report, which found that gender biases in education can hinder girls' success, particularly in subjects like math and science, where they are often undervalued or overlooked. Similarly, 54% of respondents said gender disparities limit career opportunities, reflecting findings from the World Bank (2018), which noted that women, especially in male-dominated fields like engineering and technology, face significant barriers to career advancement.

These findings reinforce existing research and highlight how deeply gender disparities influence every aspect of students' education, from their academic interests and performance to their

behavior, self-esteem, and future career prospects. The study shows that gender inequality in education is a complex issue that needs to be addressed in order to ensure equal opportunities for all students.

4.2.2 Causes of gender disparities on education

"The findings are categorized under the following key themes: child labor; household responsibilities and caregiving; early pregnancy and forced marriages; religious and traditional beliefs; loss of parents or guardians; child abuse and challenges related to long travel distances; peer pressure and related influences; inadequate sanitation facilities and limited school resources; and financial constraints, including direct costs and perceived opportunity costs of girls attending school.

S/N	Causes of gender disparities on education	Number who mentioned it	Percent of 50 respondents
1	Child labor, house chores and caring	40	78
2	Early pregnancy and forced marriages	29	57
3	Religious and traditional beliefs	21	42
4	Parents/guardians deceased	13	25
5	Child abuse and long distances	22	43
6	Peer pressure and others	17	33
7	a lack of adequate sanitation facilities and other school resources	28	56
8	direct costs and perceived opportunity costs of girls attending school	24	49

Table 4.5: Causes of gender disparities on education

The table reveals the key factors contributing to gender disparities in education, as identified by 50 participants.

Child labor and house chores and caring

The most frequently mentioned causes are child labor and house chores and caring, both of which were highlighted by 78% of respondents. These responsibilities often fall on girls, leaving them with little time or energy to attend school, which significantly hinders their ability to pursue education. Early pregnancy and forced marriages, mentioned by 57% of participants, further contribute to the issue, as many girls are pushed out of school by societal expectations or circumstances beyond their control.

A teenager mother said,

“I had to quit school due to my pregnancy but my boyfriend continued to go to school despite being the one who was responsibility of the pregnancy”

Religious and traditional beliefs

Other factors that play a role include religious and traditional beliefs, and the death of parents or guardians, both of which were cited by 42% of respondents. Cultural norms and the loss of family support can create barriers to education, especially for girls, who may be seen as less deserving of schooling or who lack the resources to continue without a guardian. Child abuse and long distances to school, both mentioned by 33% of respondents, also contribute to the challenges girls face in accessing education. Abuse can create an unsafe learning environment, while long distances can make regular attendance difficult.

Peer pressure and other social factors

In addition, peer pressure and other social factors were noted by 33% of participants, showing how societal expectations and influences can discourage girls from continuing their education. The lack of adequate sanitation facilities and other school resources, which was highlighted by 79% of respondents, is another significant obstacle, as many girls feel uncomfortable or unable to attend school without proper amenities. Financial challenges, such as the direct costs of education, were mentioned by 49% of respondents, indicating that the expense of schooling can prevent girls from attending or continuing their studies, especially in families facing economic hardship.

A parent said,

“Girl children are not serious with their education because all they think is marriage as their security to a better life especially if they are married to a well-off man because they see others living a better life without education”

Direct costs and Perceived opportunity costs of girls attending school

Finally, perceived opportunity costs of girls attending school cited by 59% of respondents reflects the belief that girls' time might be better spent helping at home or contributing to the family income rather than in school. This mindset can limit girls' educational opportunities, reinforcing the cycle of inequality.

A girl said during interview that:

“His father said he had no money for her to register for ordinary level examinations but he managed to pay registration fees for my brothers. Had, it not been for a donor that paid for my fees I would not have sat for my ordinary level examinations”.

Overall, the table paints a clear picture of the many interconnected challenges that contribute to gender disparities in education. These issues are deeply rooted in cultural, social, and economic factors that create significant obstacles for girls, often limiting their chances of getting an education and perpetuating gender inequality for future generations.

4.2.3 Solutions or ways to deal with gender disparities

The findings are categorized under the following key themes: child labor; household responsibilities and caregiving; early pregnancy and forced marriages; religious and traditional beliefs; loss of parents or guardians; child abuse and challenges related to long travel distances; peer pressure and related influences; inadequate sanitation facilities and limited school resources;

and financial constraints, including direct costs and perceived opportunity costs of girls attending school.

Table 4.6 : Solutions or ways to deal with gender disparities

S/N	Policy factors	Number who Mentioned it	Percent of 50 Respondents
1.	Policy Reforms	34	67%
2.	Community and Cultural Engagement	24	48%
3.	Financial Assistance	33	65%
4.	Infrastructure Improvements	27	54%
6.	Curriculum and Teaching Practices	18	36%

The table highlights important policy factors that respondents believe are essential for addressing gender disparities in education. The responses show a clear understanding of the different strategies needed to create equal opportunities for all students, especially girls, and how these strategies can make a real difference in their educational experiences.

Policy

Reforms

Policy reforms stood out as the most frequently mentioned factor, with 67% of respondents identifying their importance. This reflects a widespread belief that systemic changes are necessary to address gender disparities. Revising outdated policies, enforcing anti-discrimination laws, and implementing new regulations are seen as crucial steps to ensure equal access to education for everyone.

The district education officer said,

“To ensure equality of gender they is need to put in place review policies that promote equal opportunities for all gender”

Financial

Assistance

Financial support was also highlighted by 65% of respondents, showing its critical role in helping

families afford education. Scholarships, grants, and other forms of financial aid can reduce the economic burden on families, ensuring that girls, particularly those from low-income households, can stay in school and complete their education.

A student said,

“The support she has got has changed her life compared to a number of others who have wasted the opportunity by not taking school serious or did not benefit from it”.

Infrastructure improvement

Over half of the respondents (54%) pointed to the need for better school infrastructure. This includes adequate classrooms, safe learning spaces, and proper sanitation facilities, which are essential for creating an environment where girls feel comfortable and supported, particularly during adolescence.

A female teacher said,

“Many of her female students confides to her that they skip school because at school they are no proper facilities to use during their menstruation period”.

Community and Cultural Engagement

Nearly half of the respondents (48%) emphasized the importance of involving communities and addressing cultural norms that can discourage girls from attending school. Programs that engage traditional leaders, parents, and other community members can help change attitudes and create a more supportive environment for girls’ education.

Curriculum and Teaching Practices

Although mentioned by 36% of respondents, curriculum and teaching practices remain an important factor. Gender-sensitive teaching methods, inclusive learning materials, and efforts to eliminate biases in the classroom can significantly impact how students perceive themselves and their potential.

The findings suggest that people see systemic changes, such as policy reforms and financial assistance, as the most effective ways to tackle gender disparities in education. Improvements in infrastructure and efforts to engage communities are also seen as vital, while curriculum and

teaching practices are recognized as an essential part of creating a more inclusive education system. Together, these factors offer a well-rounded approach to addressing the barriers that many girls face in accessing quality education.

4.2.4 Effectiveness of identified solutions

Table 4.7 : Effectiveness of identified solutions

Solution	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Provision of scholarships	50	25%
Community awareness campaigns	40	20%
Construction of sanitation facilities	30	15%
Training teachers on gender-sensitive teaching	20	10%
Enforcement of anti-child marriage laws	15	7.5%

The table highlights how people view the effectiveness of various solutions to tackle gender disparities in education.

Financial support

Scholarships were the most commonly mentioned, with 25% of respondents emphasizing their importance. This shows that financial support plays a crucial role in breaking down economic barriers and ensuring that girls, especially those from low-income families, have access to education.

The community leader said:

“Many girls and women had their lives changed as a result of the work of a number of NGOs that are helping them. As an example girls in my community are given assistance with fees and all other school requirements which has seen some going overseas to learn”.

Community awareness campaigns and building proper sanitation facilities in schools

Community awareness campaigns were the second most recognized solution, with 20% of respondents acknowledging their impact. These campaigns are vital for changing societal attitudes and emphasizing the value of girls' education in communities where cultural norms and traditional beliefs often act as barriers. Similarly, 15% of respondents pointed to the importance of building proper sanitation facilities in schools. This highlights how basic infrastructure, such as clean and private toilets, can make a significant difference in ensuring that girls, particularly those experiencing menstruation, can attend school regularly.

Enforcement of anti-child marriage laws and training teachers in gender-sensitive teaching methods

Legal measures, like enforcing anti-child marriage laws, were identified by 7.5% of respondents as an effective way to protect girls' education and prevent practices that push them out of school. Training teachers in gender-sensitive teaching methods was also noted by 10% of respondents as an essential intervention. This shows how creating supportive and inclusive classrooms can boost girls' confidence and participation in education.

In conclusion, respondents viewed financial aid and community-focused interventions, such as scholarships and awareness campaigns, as the most effective ways to address gender disparities in education. While infrastructure improvements, legal enforcement, and teacher training were also valued, they were mentioned less frequently, possibly reflecting implementation challenges or lower visibility. These insights underline the importance of a holistic approach to creating equal opportunities for girls in education.

4.2.5 Challenges being faced in implementing the identified solutions

Table 4.8: Challenges being faced in implementing the identified solutions

S/N	Policy factors	Number who Mentioned it	Percent of 50 Respondents
1.	Inadequate Enforcement	29	57%
2.	Resource Limitations	19	38%

3.	Deep-Rooted Cultural Norms	28	55%
4.	Dependency on external funding and resource limitations	20	40%

The table highlights some of the main challenges that hinder efforts to reduce gender disparities in education. It gives us a clear picture of the obstacles that are faced when trying to create equal opportunities for girls to access and succeed in education.

Inadequate

Enforcement

The biggest challenge identified by respondents is inadequate enforcement of policies. Over half of those surveyed (57%) believe that while policies might exist to promote gender equality in education, they are not always effectively carried out. This could be due to weak government systems, lack of resources, or simply not having strong measures in place to ensure that these policies are consistently implemented in schools and communities.

Deep-Rooted

Cultural

Norms

Close behind, 55% of respondents pointed to deep-rooted cultural norms as another major barrier. In many communities, traditional beliefs about gender roles remain strong, and these norms often place limits on girls' educational opportunities. For example, societal expectations might prioritize girls taking on household chores or getting married early, rather than attending school. These cultural pressures continue to create challenges despite efforts to promote gender equality.

The community leader highlighted that:

“In my community they are religious organizations that do not agree to the laws of the country and require strong enforcement for them to cooperate. Also poverty push families to exploit women seeking financial benefits”.

Dependency on External Funding and resource Limitations

Around 40% of respondents highlighted the dependency on external funding as a significant challenge. Many educational programs, particularly those aimed at improving girls' access to education, rely heavily on financial support from international donors or organizations. This

reliance can be problematic because it makes long-term planning uncertain. If funding dries up or is inconsistent, it can disrupt initiatives and prevent sustainable progress.

The gender officer said,

“Many of the initiative to promote improvement of the state of the girl child is funded by mostly donor funding”.

These findings show that the biggest barriers to addressing gender disparities in education are often a mix of practical challenges and deeply ingrained societal factors. Policies might be in place, but if they are not enforced properly, or if they clash with cultural norms, their impact is limited. Moreover, financial and resource constraints can make it difficult to maintain momentum in addressing these issues. Overcoming these challenges will require a long-term, collaborative approach that strengthens policy enforcement, shifts cultural attitudes, and ensures stable funding and resources for education.

4.3 DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS

The research identified a range of causes, effects, and solutions related to gender disparities in education, with a focus on responses 50 participants. The findings highlight significant barriers faced by girls, which undermine their ability to access and succeed in education. These barriers are rooted in various factors, including societal attitudes, economic challenges, and policy weaknesses.

Among the primary causes of gender disparities in education, child labor (78%) and household chores and caregiving responsibilities (66%) emerged as the most significant. These findings align with previous research (UNICEF, 2020), which highlights how girls often bear the brunt of domestic labor, restricting their time and energy for academic pursuits. In many cases, girls are expected to prioritize household responsibilities over attending school, which ultimately affects their academic performance and long-term educational outcomes.

In addition, early pregnancy and forced marriages were mentioned by 57% of participants, highlighting how societal expectations and early life pressures force many girls to leave school, curbing their educational potential. This finding supports studies by Plan International (2017),

which show that early pregnancies often result in girls abandoning their education due to societal pressures or family expectations.

Cultural factors like religious and traditional beliefs and the death of parents or guardians were cited by 42% of respondents as contributing to gender disparities. These factors can limit girls' opportunities by either reinforcing societal norms that devalue girls' education or by depriving them of the family support they need to continue their studies. Other barriers include child abuse and the long distances to school, both of which were mentioned by 33% of respondents. Alongside these, peer pressure and other social influences also contribute to discouraging girls from pursuing education, pointing to the social norms that often work against girls' educational aspirations.

The lack of adequate sanitation facilities and school resources were highlighted by 79% of respondents, emphasizing how poor infrastructure, especially the absence of proper facilities for girls, affects their ability to attend school. Similarly, direct costs of education, mentioned by 49% of respondents, and perceived opportunity costs (50%) are significant financial barriers that limit girls' access to education. These economic challenges make it harder for many families to prioritize girls' education over immediate household needs.

The World Bank (2018) also discusses how deeply ingrained cultural beliefs and gender stereotypes can hinder girls' education, a theme echoed by the 42% of respondents who identified religious and traditional beliefs as obstacles. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE, 2021) further supports the importance of school infrastructure, noting that inadequate sanitation facilities, particularly for girls during menstruation, is a key barrier to their education, aligning with the 79% of respondents who flagged this issue.

These findings align with a body of global research that underscores how social, cultural, and economic factors work together to create and perpetuate gender disparities in education. These barriers prevent many girls from accessing education, thereby limiting their future potential.

The study found that gender disparities in education result in a variety of negative effects. Poor academic achievement (70%) was the most commonly reported effect, with many respondents indicating that gender disparities significantly hinder students' academic performance. These results are consistent with the findings of the World Bank (2018), which asserts that societal biases and lack of support systems often place girls at a disadvantage, leading to poor academic outcomes.

Other significant effects include dropout rates (63%) and low self-concept (19%). As girls often face barriers such as early pregnancies or cultural expectations, they may be forced to leave school prematurely. Furthermore, these challenges can erode their self-confidence and motivation, contributing to a negative self-perception of their abilities. These effects have long-lasting consequences for their personal development and future career opportunities.

To address these disparities, the study revealed that financial assistance (65%), policy reforms (67%), and community and cultural engagement (48%) were considered the most effective solutions. The role of scholarships, grants, and other financial support mechanisms cannot be overstated, as they help reduce the financial barriers that prevent girls from attending school. This finding is supported by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE, 2021), which emphasizes the importance of financial aid in improving educational outcomes for girls in low-income settings.

Moreover, respondents suggested that policy reforms should focus on creating and enforcing gender-sensitive policies that ensure equal access to education for both boys and girls. Community engagement was also emphasized, as changing cultural norms and attitudes toward girls' education is essential for creating a supportive environment. This aligns with the findings from the Gender and Education Association (2020), which highlights the importance of involving communities in the fight for gender equality in education.

Despite the recognition of these solutions, the study also revealed several challenges in their implementation. Key barriers include inadequate enforcement of policies (57%) and resource limitations (38%). While policies may exist, their effective implementation is often hindered by a lack of political will, insufficient resources, and weak monitoring mechanisms. This finding mirrors the concerns raised by the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2015), which underscores the challenges in translating policies into tangible outcomes.

Another significant challenge is the deep-rooted cultural norms (55%) that continue to perpetuate gender inequality. Changing these deeply ingrained beliefs and practices takes time and sustained effort, and often requires the active involvement of local communities, religious leaders, and policymakers. Lastly, the dependency on external funding (40%) also presents a challenge, as reliance on international donors can lead to instability and a lack of long-term sustainability.

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter presented collected data using tables, pie charts, bar charts and summaries. The findings of the data were discussed on the tabular and graphical presentations of the data so that meaningful findings can be determined from the data. The next chapter aims to remind the reader of the findings from the previous chapters, summarize the interpretations, and illustrate how the research will contribute to the field.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion of the findings from the study on gender disparities in education, with a focus on identifying the causes, effects, and solutions, as well as the challenges associated with addressing these disparities. The findings are framed in the context of existing literature, followed by an exploration of the implications of these results and recommendations for future policy and practice. Finally, the chapter offers conclusions drawn from the study's findings.

5.1 SUMMARY

The general objective of the study was to investigate the impacts of gender disparities on education in Bindura District. In addition, the study aimed to highlight and understand the specific issues faced by women in the context of gender inequality in education and explore the strategies or solutions to effectively deal with the impacts.

According to the analysis of various definitions gender disparities refer to the asymmetries in opportunities, expectations, and resources available between subjects along the gender divide. In analyzing the impact of gender disparities in education the research has found a number that are caused by barriers rooted in socio cultural, economic and policy factors. The primary causes of were found to be gender disparities in education are child labor, household chores, care giving, early pregnancy and forced marriages, religious and traditional beliefs, loss of parents or guardians, lack of adequate sanitation facilities and school resources, direct costs of education and perceived opportunity costs.

After analysis of various theories and empirical studies conducted by scholars all over the world as well as survey carried out among research participants, it was found that gender disparities are unfavorable factors that result in poor academic performance and achievements for the girl child. The finding in this research resonates perfectly with GAD theory and other theories discussed in this research that society priorities boys' education over girls a reflection of values in Bindura. In the long run these effects impose long lasting consequences on personal development and future

career opportunities. When it comes to addressing gender disparities in education a number of interventions were come out during the research and financial assistance, policy reforms and community and cultural engagement came out strongly. However, for the interventions to have a long-lasting impact the research found that intervention must be continuous because of deep rooted cultural and traditional beliefs are very strong. Another significant hindering factor to equate gender in education stems from limited funding of effort to fight gender inequality.

Feminist theory postulates that education is provided in a society already pledged with disparities further promoting inequalities between genders. According to respondents it was noted that schools and curriculum require fine turning to improve equality. Research done in other parts of the word agree to the same findings in this research which highlight poverty, strong cultural practice and child labor affect the girl child greatly. In addition, the study noted that theories and empirical research are commensurate with the findings that gender disparities have cultural, economic and policy causes which requires interventions highlighted above. Bindura District is mostly rural which has low economic standing and strongly traditional which follows that gender disparities are present. The research noted communities that are remote have greater burden on girls, this is more likely due to limited opportunities.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

To tackle the issue of gender disparities in education in Bindura, a range of practical and community-focused recommendations can make a real difference. First, policies that promote gender equity in education need to be strengthened and actively enforced. For example, girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy or early marriage should be supported with re-entry programs, allowing them to continue their education without stigma. Families must also be held accountable for ensuring all children, especially girls, get the opportunity to learn.

Engaging the community is essential to change the cultural and religious norms that hold girls back. Programs should focus on educating parents and local leaders about the life-changing benefits of educating girls—not just for the individual, but for entire families and communities. By partnering with community organizations and religious institutions, we can start reshaping attitudes toward girls' education.

Improving schools themselves is another vital step. Girls need access to proper, hygienic sanitation facilities to feel comfortable attending school, especially during menstruation. Schools must also be safe spaces where students are protected from gender-based violence and harassment. For children living far from schools, creating more local schools or offering safe transport options would ensure no one has to give up their education because of distance.

Financial barriers also play a huge role in keeping girls out of school. Programs like BEAM should be expanded to help cover the costs of school fees, uniforms, and supplies for those in need. Partnering with NGOs and private donors can also bring in more scholarships and funding opportunities for girls. Alongside financial support, teachers must be trained to recognize and challenge gender biases in the classroom. A gender-sensitive curriculum, featuring inspiring female role models, can empower girls to see themselves in fields like science, technology, and leadership.

For girls who become pregnant or young mothers, it's vital to have support systems in place. Schools should welcome them back without judgment, and counseling services can help them balance their studies and new responsibilities. Regular monitoring and accountability mechanisms would help ensure that these initiatives are actually working and reaching the intended goals.

Boys also play an important part in this journey. Teaching boys about gender equality and encouraging them to support their sisters, friends, and classmates helps build a more inclusive environment for everyone. Lastly, tackling gender disparities in Bindura will require collaboration across the board—government, NGOs, private businesses, and communities must come together to make these changes a reality. With the right level of support and increased funding, girls in Bindura can finally get the education they deserve, unlocking brighter futures for themselves and the entire community.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

This study highlights the complex and multi-dimensional nature of gender disparities in education. The causes, effects, and solutions identified in this research reflect the intricate interplay of cultural, economic, and policy-related factors that contribute to the marginalization of girls in education. While various solutions have been proposed, their effectiveness is often undermined by challenges such as inadequate enforcement, resource limitations, and deeply rooted cultural norms.

To make meaningful progress in closing the gender gap in education, a comprehensive approach is needed one that includes policy reforms, community engagement, financial assistance, and targeted efforts to address cultural and societal barriers. This study's findings provide a foundation for future research and policy development, aiming to create a more inclusive and equitable educational environment for all students, regardless of gender.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Questionnaire: Impacts of Gender Disparities on Education in Bindura District

Instructions

Please answer all questions honestly. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for academic purposes.

Tick (✓) the appropriate option or provide written answers where required.

Section A: Demographic Information

What is your gender?

☐ Male ☐ Female

What is your age?

☐ Below 18 ☐ 18–25 ☐ 26–35 ☐ Above 35

What is your marital status?

☐ Single ☐ Married. ☐ Divorced. ☐ Widowed

What is your highest level of education completed?

☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Tertiary ☐ None

Section B: Effects of gender disparities on education

Give a list of all the effects of gender disparities on education?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Section C: Challenges in education due to gender disparities

Did you face any barriers to accessing education?

☐ Yes. ☐ No

If yes, what were the main barriers? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Child labor
- ☐ House chores and caring
- ☐ Early pregnancy and forced marriages
- ☐ Religious and traditional beliefs ☐ Child labor
- ☐ Parents/guardians deceased
- ☐ Child abuse and long distances
- ☐ a lack of adequate sanitation facilities and other school resources
- ☐ direct costs
- ☐ perceived opportunity costs of girls attending school

Are boys and girls treated equally in your household or community in terms of educational opportunities?

☐ Yes. ☐ No

Have you ever had to repeat a grade?

☐ Yes. ☐ No

Do you think curriculum promote gender disparities?

☐ Yes ☐ Yes

(Specify): _____

How would you rate the availability of learning resources (e.g, textbooks, teachers) for girls compared to boys?

☐ Better for boys. 3232

☐ Equal for both. ☐ Better for girls

Do you believe cultural norms influence girls' ability to complete their education?

☐ Yes. ☐ No

In your opinion, which gender faces more challenges in pursuing education in Bindura District?

☐ Boys. ☐ Girls

Do you feel that gender stereotypes in your community discourage girls from pursuing certain careers?

☐ Yes. ☐ No

Section D: Solutions or ways to deal with gender disparities

What is being done by parents or guardians to support equal education for boys and girls?

What is being done by education institutions to support equal education for boys and girls?

Are there any government or NGO programs in your area that assist with educational costs?

☐Yes ☐No

(Specify): _____

Are you aware of any laws or policies that promote gender equality in education?

☐ Yes ☐ No

(Specify): _____

Section E: challenges being faced in implementing the identified solutions

What are the major challenges faced in implementing the solutions you have identified above?

Thank you for your time and participation!

Appendix 2:

Questionnaire: Impacts of Gender Disparities on Education in Bindura District

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your gender?

☐ Male ☐ Female

2. What is your age?

☐ Below 18 ☐ 18–25 ☐ 26–35 ☐ Above 35

3. What is your marital status?

☐ Single ☐ Married. ☐ Divorced. ☐ Widowed

4. What is your highest level of education completed?

☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Tertiary ☐ None

Section B: Effects of gender disparities on education

5. Give a list of all the effects of gender disparities on education?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Section C: Challenges in education due to gender disparities

6. Did you face any barriers to accessing education?

☐ Yes. ☐ No

7. If yes, what were the main barriers? (Select all that apply)

☐ Child labour

☐ House chores and caring

☐ Early pregnancy and forced marriages

☐ Religious and traditional beliefs ☐ Child labour

☐ Parents/guardians deceased

☐ Child abuse and long distances

☐ a lack of adequate sanitation facilities and other school resources

☐ direct costs

☐ perceived opportunity costs of girls attending school

8. Are boys and girls treated equally in your household or community in terms of educational opportunities?

☐ Yes. ☐ No

9. Have you ever had to repeat a grade?

☐ Yes. ☐ No

10. Do you think curriculum promote gender disparities?

☐ Yes ☐ No

(Specify): _____

11. How would you rate the availability of learning resources (e.g., textbooks, teachers) for girls compared to boys?

☐ Better for boys. ☐ Equal for both. ☐ Better for girls

12. Do you believe cultural norms influence girls' ability to complete their education?

☐ Yes. ☐ No

13. In your opinion, which gender faces more challenges in pursuing education in Bindura District?

☐ Boys. ☐ Girls

14. Do you feel that gender stereotypes in your community discourage girls from pursuing certain careers?

☐ Yes. ☐ No _____

Section D: Solutions or ways to deal with gender disparities

15. What is being done by parents or guardians to support equal education for boys and girls?

16. What is being done by education institutions to support equal education for boys and girls?

17. Are there any government or NGO programs in your area that assist with educational costs?

☐ Yes ☐ Yes

(Specify): _____

18. Are you aware of any laws or policies that promote gender equality in education?

☐ Yes (Specify): _____

☐ No

Section E: challenges being faced in implementing the identified solutions

19. What are the major challenges faced in implementing the solutions you have identified above?

Thank you for your time and participation!

