

Teachers perception of gender bias in the classroom education essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

One of the first things that we do when a child is born is to find out its sexual category. This proclamation at birth, boy or girl, is the most significant statement that governs one's development as a person throughout one's life. According to Weiss (2001), a person's gender marks his/her entire life from within and without.

How our gender structures the way we learn has been studied extensively by social scientists, psychologists, educationists, and feminists. They all agree that not only one's own sense of gender identity affects the learning process very significantly, but others also play a definite part in this perspective.

Teachers play a fundamental role in influencing learning progression from when the children begin school. According to David and Myra Sadker " sitting in the same classroom, reading the same textbooks, and listening to the same teacher, boys and girls receive very different educations" (Weiss, 2001, p. 44). Their research illustrates that male students not only receive more of the teachers' attention in reference with the number (and quality) of the questions asked in the classrooms, but the same is also true in case of the follow-up questions. According to them, male students also receive more precise and helpful feedback; while female students bear the effect of their teachers' asymmetrical distribution of energy, talent, and attention (Weiss, 2001).

Often, subtle gender bias is there in the classrooms but is scarcely noticed by the teachers. It remains elusive and is hard to pin down. Teachers, being wedged between several decisions every day concerning the curriculum and classroom management, find little room to contemplate and examine their

interactions with male and female students in their classrooms. While a the study done by Marshall & Reinhartz (1997) showed that the teachers' communication with their students has a key influence on the current and prospective achievement and accomplishment of both male and female students, another study by Crawford and Macleod (1990) (as cited in Lundeburg, 1997), discovered that biased classroom interaction leads to diminished confidence in their intellectual abilities by female students. A large number of studies exhibit that teacher behaviors institute the foremost contributing factor for a higher degree of student-participation in the classroom by male students than the female students. (Kosmerl, 2000). Male students are likely to get a greater share of teachers' attention and receive more specific feedback. However, female students are less likely to receive praise or remediation for the intellectual content of their answers than male students; conversely, the female students are more likely to receive an acknowledgement response from their teachers (Sadker and Sadker, 1994). It is not common to find teachers waiting for more than 5 seconds for a response from their students; it is even more uncommon to see teachers calling on non-volunteering students to elicit their responses. Teachers' behaviors such as these tend to engender classroom inequities by encouraging aggressive male students (Lundeburg, 1997). Another study by Sadker and Sadker (1986) (as cited in McGee Bailey, 1996) provides evidence that teachers' discriminatory behaviours in the classroom are not inveterate but modifiable. However, teachers are largely not conscious of their own inequitable behaviours in the classrooms, and are often found to be gender-blind, unless their attention is drawn to the matter. This can have many damaging consequences, because it is almost impossible to solve a <https://assignbuster.com/teachers-perception-of-gender-bias-in-the-classroom-education-essay/>

problem that is hard to recognize in the first instance. Nonetheless, training in gender equity is hardly ever an ingredient of teacher education (Lundeberg, 1997), especially so in Pakistan.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While a significant amount of research exists in context of students' perceptions of gender bias in the classroom, there is little research on hand regarding teachers' perceptions of the same subject matter. This study is intended to focus on the contemporary perceptions of teachers regarding gender bias. Since students continue to receive different educations, it is important to identify how teachers may proceed to notice, react, decrease, and avoid gender bias.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to illustrate the perceptions of teachers on the subject of gender bias as measured by a questionnaire. The objectives of the study are:

- i) To evaluate teachers' perceptions about gender bias.
- ii) To evaluate teachers' educational training regarding gender bias.
- iii) To evaluate teachers' experiences with gender bias.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis I:

Even if teachers do not state that they have been involved in gender bias in their own classrooms, they will report they have witnessed or heard of gender bias issues in their schools and/or others.

Hypothesis II:

Teachers will report they wish that they had received some or more educational training regarding gender bias.

Hypothesis III:

Teachers will report they have received little or no educational training regarding gender bias.

adapted from; Teachers' perceptions of gender bias in classroom, Katherine M. Kosmerl, Research Paper, The Graduate School, University of Wisconsin-Stout, May, 2000. <http://www.uwstout.edu/static/lib/thesis/2003/2003kosmerlk.pdf>

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