

Relationship between students' gender and teaching practices essay sample



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Abstract

The continuously declining quality of education has alerted the US government to pass laws and challenged educational institutions to implement effective strategies to improve the survivability of students in elementary, high school and college (Kafer, 2004). Among these challenges is the eradication of gender bias in the teachers' behavioral approaches which proved to have deterrent effects on students' learning and development. This research proposal aims to find out if there are differences in the teaching practices of teachers to male and female students in terms of time, efforts and reinforcement provided. The study will be conducted in XXX School involving teachers in the elementary and high school levels for school year 2008-2009 purposively sampled to assure representation in all grade levels. The study will utilize quantitative research design and use survey method in the collection of data from the respondent teachers. The survey process will be a one-on-one interview with the respondents with the use of a three-part questionnaire containing profile of the respondents, 15 questions on teaching practices and an item for comments and suggestions. Statistical tools such as Chi Square, T-Test, F-Test and measures of central tendencies will be used to test the hypothesis. These will be analyzed and interpreted using descriptive method with will be provided with corresponding recommendations and conclusions.

Relationship between Students' Gender and Teaching Practices in XXX School

Chapter 1

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The Problem

This chapter will present the background and rationale of the research, how the research was conceptualized, the purpose of the study, the research problem, the questions and the hypothesis including the scope and significance of the study.

Rationale

Among the major problems faced by the United States education system for the past decades is the growing decline in the quality of education. Too many students are deficient in knowledge and skills to succeed in school and those left behind are left behind as adults. Added to this growing concern is the diminishing number of students surviving college. What caused the trends has alerted various sectors including the government. Their theories redound to basic education that necessitated the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) which instituted nationwide programs that aimed to improve the performance of US elementary and secondary schools. The law also installed stricter requirements to teachers' qualifications to assure better quality of graduates and improved students' performance thus higher survivability (Kafer, 2004).

Following the NCLB was the revoking of the obligatory coeducation law on public schools. The obligatory coeducation law that was passed in 1970 was supposed to be the answer to the gender equality drive at that time. It required public schools to mix boys and girls in every class as a gender balance but gained significant opposition in the following years. Thus it was

revoked in 2002 by a bi-partisan majority vote in congress and was even augmented with support funds to install single-sex classes (NASSPE 2007).

The revocation of the obligatory coed law relieved public school administrators and provided them choices on how to handle the management of schools. Now the massive advocacy of concerned groups to convert coed classes to single-sex classes caused the new strain of school administrators wary on the viability of the change. Is changing to single-sex classes the solution to the diminishing quality of education? Is it the gender differences of students that cause their poor performance in school? Is it the mismatch of teachers and students' gender? Or is it simply the unconscious or conscious gender bias of teachers on their teaching approaches? All these questions revolve around the gender and the clash between nature and nurture.

Through socialization we adopt our characteristics, attitudes, values, and behaviors as well as our gender role - which is male or female ' behavioral expectations'. These expected attributes vary depending on the specific environment, society, and culture we are from. From a sociological perspective, it is believed that masculine and feminine characteristics are socially constructed, or our socialization plays a larger role than the biological perspective (via hormones) or the belief that gender is due to biological factors (Cherlin, 2008). Contemporary sociologists believe that it is a combination of factors (biological and sociological) but that our socialization plays a larger role (Cherlin, 2008).

There are various ways of “ learning” gender roles, and gender socialization facilitates learning those roles. In addition, when traditional gender roles are adopted in society, they act as a social force in ‘ enforcing’ gender roles (Basow, 1992). This social force takes place in social institutions such as schools (including preschools) and other institutions of education, religion, workplaces, family, media, peers, communities, and politics among other influential factors. These institutions and “ the individuals in the institutions give gender messages, directly, indirectly or both” (Basow, 1992).

Thus the question: Does the student’s gender affect the teachers teaching practices? Hidden behind this question are more complicated issues that affect management decision-making in XXX School, in the other public and private schools in the country and even globally. Will the XXX School be able to contribute to solving the diminishing quality of education by eradicating gender bias in their school system?

Purpose of the Study

The challenge of the government and the education sector is to bring light to the perennial struggle of finding the best ingredient for quality education – the best technologies and the best teaching approaches. This researcher is convinced that eradication of gender bias in the school system is one major step towards solving the problems of students’ survivability. Thus this research proposal was conceptualized with the purpose of determining if there is gender bias in teaching. Specifically, the research proposal aims to find out if there are differences in the teaching practices of teachers to male and female students in terms of time, efforts and reinforcement provided.

Statement of the Problem

The research proposal seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of students and teachers in XXX School in terms of gender?
2. Is there a significant difference in the teaching practices of teachers to male and female students in terms of:
 1. Teacher's time spent
 2. Teacher's efforts provided
 3. Teacher's reinforcement provided

Statement of Hypothesis

Based on the statement of the problem, the following null hypothesis will be tested:

Problem No. 1 is hypothesis free.

Problem No. 2: H_0 : There is no significant difference in the teaching practices of teachers to male and female students in terms of:

1. Teacher's time spent
2. Teacher's efforts provided
3. Teacher's reinforcement provided

Significance of the Study

Multi sector lobbying and various research studies had its contribution to the changes in history. Issues on race, poverty and gender were considered and debated that changed history to what it is now. The No Child Left Behind Act <https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-students-gender-and-teaching-practices-essay-sample/>

(NCLB, 2004) now imposes stricter standards on students and teachers. School administrators are given options to implement changes in their schools. It is therefore important for schools to implement strategies to assure that the path to education is clear or discrimination on race, poverty and most especially gender.

“ Teachers’ bias towards male and female students will produce negative influence on their study and development” (Guo & Zou, 2008). Biased teaching practices “ discourage students’ enthusiasm, decline their respect, reduce their motivation, and constrain their development” (Guo & Zou, 2008). Students will be able to develop to their fullest potentials if they are in a non-judgmental environment. It is therefore the challenge of school administrators to provide non-judgmental environment in the school community; particularly, make teachers conscious of their behavioral approaches and finally put a stop to gender bias in their teaching practices and thus improve the performance of their students.

Scope of the Study

The study will be conducted in XXX School in the state of XXX involving all teachers in the high school and elementary levels in the school-year 2008-2009. The study will also make use of data and information from scholarly journals and related literature.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

Gender Differences among Teachers and Students

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For almost 20 years, the shortage of teachers, particularly male teachers has been a problem for school managements. Barbara Pytel in her article “Teacher Shortage Looming” mentioned that the high cost of college education plus too little compensation made the profession unattractive to male teachers. Only those with the true passion would pursue, and these are mostly females (2006).

School administrators are wary whether they have to hire proportionate number of male and female teachers fitting their male and female students. Especially if they are to apply the single-sex classes, if putting female teachers would make boy classes achieve better, or vice versa, if putting male teachers would make boy classes achieve better. Will students respond more to female teachers or to male teachers or would it not matter significantly.

Thomas Dee, in his controversial publication of “The Why Chromosome: How a Teacher's gender affects boys and girls” (Teachers' Gender Might Matter, 2006) made analysis of wide-scoped national surveys conducted by the Department of Education such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS), the National Education Longitudinal Survey (NELS) which involved big sampling percentages of teachers and elementary and high school students nationwide. He used these surveys to generate findings about the effects of teachers' and students' gender on students' achievements and proficiencies in English, Math and Social Sciences. (Teachers' Gender Might Matter, 2006)

His findings revealed the following:

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1. Girls outscore boys in reading tests and boys outperform girls in math and science.
2. Students are more engaged, behave more appropriately and perform at a higher level when taught by one who shares their gender.
3. For the three subject areas, science, social studies and English, the overall effect of having a female teacher instead of male raises the achievement for girls by 4% SD, and lowers the achievement of boys by roughly the same amount producing an overall gender gap of 8% standard deviation.
4. The over-all results, the average for the three subject areas indicate an average positive impact on student achievement of 4% SD whenever the teacher-student gender was the same.
5. Teacher gender has large effects on students test performance, teachers' perception of students and students' engagement with academic material. Girls have better educational outcomes when taught by women and boys are better off when taught by men (Teachers' Gender Might Matter, 2006).

Therefore, with the present situation where majority of teachers deployed in basic education classes are females, boys are in big trouble. Then, school administrators have to do something about their class programming and deploy the right gender of teachers to the right gender of students. Dee's findings rocked the education community and invited oppositions from other scholars. Among these were views from the National Women's Law Center and the National Education Association (Teachers' Gender Might Matter, 2006).

They contended:

1. Thomas Dee's conclusions were based on limited studies, considering that the bases of his generalizations were on surveys conducted to only 8th. Many parents are still convinced that boys still benefit by having both male and female role models; that many can vouch experiences of being inspired by teachers of the opposite sex and still many had very unhappy experiences with teachers of the same sex. Maria Greenberger of NWLC (Teachers' Gender Might Matter, 2006).
2. " Student success cannot be narrowed to gender of the teacher. Experienced teachers, good textbooks, smaller class sizes and modern equipment all influence how boys and girls do in class." Reg Weaver of NEA (Teachers' Gender Might Matter, 2006).

There are various studies that determined whether the teachers' gender would affect their approaches to teaching. A study by Nixalis Rodriguez on " Gender Differences in Disciplinary Approaches" explored differences in approaches of male and female teachers toward boys and girls; examined the connection between teachers' gender and the method of disciplining children. Analysis indicated that " although there were many similarities between male and female teachers' discipline responses, male teachers were more likely to select a more aggressive disciplinary approach towards boys. Female teachers were slightly more consistent with their disciplinary responses for both boys and girls" (2002).

This literature review may be fully tackled with a discussion on the nature and nurture aspect of gender differences. What is different in boys' brain and

their emotional development compared to the girls' that makes their responses different? Boys and girls use different parts of their brain effectively. Each gender has some stronger left-hemisphere capacities and some stronger right-hemisphere capacities. These differences have significance on how and when children learn. Boys tend to have an advantage of their left hemisphere by being able to recall facts, rules and categorize. Their right brain strengths encompass visual-spatial and visual-motor skills which enable them to excel in topics like geography, science and math (Connell, 2004).

Gender Bias among Teachers

The study conducted by Melody D'Ambrosio and Patricia S. Hammer on "Gender Equity in the Catholic Elementary School" studied the treatment of girls and boys in Catholic elementary schools building on some previous studies that demonstrated bias against girls in American classrooms and curriculum. Based on teachers praise, acceptance, remediation and criticisms, the study found that male students receive more attention in all categories with the greatest difference in remediation (1996).

Another study worth mentioning is by Kathleen L. Simac on "Sex Equity in Teacher - Child Interaction in Preschool Classrooms" surveyed preschoolers in three private preschool classes and determined the differential treatment of boys and girls based on the teacher responses: teacher gives a soft reprimand, teacher gives praise, teacher gives directions and teacher gives comments. The results revealed that in all four types of responses, there

were no significant difference in the way teachers responded to boys and girls (1993).

These studies contributed to the generalization that the genders of the teachers themselves are significant factors that affect the responses of students. There is such thing as pygmalion effect of teachers' expectations of their students. The investigation of Barbara Simmons " Sex Role Expectations of Classroom Teachers" suggested that the teachers' expectations of students, particularly their gender, affect and limit students' learning and self concept development; that teacher expectations play important role in the learning of students. They concluded that " only when teachers recognize their behaviors that express expectations and fully understands these expectations' effects on students, can educators guarantee that they promote positive learning experiences for all students" (2001).

Chapter 3

Methodology

Discussion on the research proposal methodology includes the research design, the categorization of variables, data collection, statistical treatment and analysis and interpretation of results.

Research Design

The study will utilize quantitative research design specifically using survey to determine the relationship between gender and teaching practices in XXX

School. The study intends to conduct a survey among a sample of the <https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-students-gender-and-teaching-practices-essay-sample/>

population of teachers in the high school and elementary levels of XXX School. Considering the limited number of teachers in the school and to equally represent teachers in the different grade levels, purposive sampling will be used to determine the teachers to participate in the survey. The survey will be conducted through an interview and using printed questionnaire. An interviewer will individually field the questionnaire and ask other questions that may provide helpful information in the analysis and interpretation of data.

Categorization of Variables

Data will be interpreted using descriptive analysis comparing relationships of the independent variables and the dependent variables. In this study, the independent variable is the gender of the students and the dependent variables are the teaching practices measured in terms of the amount of time spent by the teacher, the amount of efforts provided to the students and the amount of positive reinforcement provided to the students.

Below is the schematic diagram of the relationships of the dependent and independent variables.

Figure 1

Schematic Diagram of the Dependent and Independent Variables

1. Independent Variable

Students' Gender

2. Male

3. Female

Dependent Variable

Teaching Practices

1. Teacher's Time Spent
2. Teacher's Efforts Provided
3. Teacher's Reinforcement

Provided

Data Collection

The survey questionnaire will serve as the data collection instrument. It will be divided into three parts: Part 1 will cover the profile of the respondent teacher. The name, the teacher rank or position title, age, gender, the grade levels taught and the specialization or subjects handled. Part 2 will contain 15 questions, five questions allocated for each dependent variable arranged at random. Questions in Part 2 will generate responses that will be represented by three numerical choices. 1 represents a bias infavor of boys, 2 represents a bias infavor of girls, 3 represents unbiased treatment of boys and girls. Part 3 will ask the respondent to give comments, suggestions and other remarks that the respondent feels helpful to the research.

Table 1

Description and Numerical Representation of Responses

Teaching Practices	1	2	3
Teacher's Time Spent	More time spent with boys	More time spent with girls	Same amount of time spent with boys and girls
Teacher's Efforts Provided	More efforts provided to boys	More efforts provided to girls	Same amount of efforts provided
Teacher's Positive Reinforcement Provided	More positive reinforcement provided to boys	More positive reinforcement provided to girls	Same amount of positive reinforcement provided to boys and girls

The interview will be conducted in the XXX School after proper authorization is provided by the school administrators. Selected teacher respondents will be scheduled on a one-on-one interview in a venue conducive for the <https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-students-gender-and-teaching-practices-essay-sample/>

activity. The respondents will be assured of the confidentiality of their responses. The researcher will review the accomplished questionnaires for completeness and prepare the data for statistical processes and analysis.

Statistical Treatment

The study will test the difference between the variables gender and teaching practices with the use of Chi Square, T-Test and F-Test for determining the relationships of the variables. The null hypothesis will be tested 95% level of significance or 5% margin of error. Measures of central tendencies, the mean, median, mode and standard deviation will also be used to determine the profile of the respondents and process the responses to the 15 survey questions. The results of the statistical computations will be presented in tables and graphs for purpose of analysis and interpretation.

Analysis and Interpretation of Results

Though the null hypothesis assumes that there is no significant difference between the gender of students and the teaching practices of teachers in XXX School, this researcher personally believes that the findings of the test will reject the null hypothesis. There is a difference between gender and teaching practices of teachers in XXX School. As a general rule, this researcher believes that teachers, as being part of a social institution, do indeed treat boys and girls differently and thereby teach them differently. Teachers often demonstrate, consciously or not, gender cues based on their own experiences and role expectations. The scholarly journals and researches support this belief. Should the findings of the study be consistent with this, corresponding recommendations and conclusions will be made, <https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-students-gender-and-teaching-practices-essay-sample/>

part of which will be for the school administrators to implement strategic actions so that teachers will take caution and make their best efforts to behave and teach in gender neutral ways.

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