

Effects of Gender Role Portrayal in Textbooks in Kenyan Primary Schools, on Pupils Academic Aspirations

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Abstract

The researcher aims to investigate the effect of gender role portrayal in selected textbooks in Kenyan primary schools on pupils' academic aspirations. The study explored participants' perceptions of what academic levels they wanted to attain and whether their aspirations and expectations were partly a product of the influences in their textbooks. The research was guided by the following objectives; to establish the gender roles portrayed in the pupils' textbooks and their effect on pupils' academic aspirations, determine gender attributes suggested through the statements and their effects on pupils' academic aspirations, and to establish the presence of appropriate textual role models and its effects on pupils' academic aspirations. The research addresses the following research questions; What are the gender roles that male and female characters are portrayed in?, What gender attributes are suggested through the statements in the textbooks and what appropriate textual female role models are present in the pupils' textbooks? The paper was based on a study undertaken in Dagoretti District in Nairobi County, Kenya. The target population was 88 pupils and 60 teachers. The sample was selected through random sampling for the teachers and stratified random sampling for the pupils. Descriptive statistics was used in data analysis. The data was collected by use of interview guide, a questionnaire and content analysis of 40 text books in class one to three. The results show that gender stereotypes had an effect on pupils' academic aspirations as pupils tended to mostly identify with characters of their gender in the textbooks. The study recommends for intervention by the stakeholders in the education sector in order to improve gender aspirations by including a variety of activities and illustrations in the textbooks for both boys and girls.

Key words: gendered stereotypes, textbooks, gender portrayal, pupils' aspirations

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