Gender roles in maintaining discipline at a school, South Africa: A case study of teachers

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Abstract—In South African rural schools, discipline is perceived as a vast masculine challenge that most male teachers find hard to bear. This study states that most of the male teachers' stress that the teaching profession has enormously become a 'feminized'; therefore, male learners suffer due to a lack of male role models. This simply shows that masculinity is somehow centered on homophobia. Male teachers are therefore, forced to enact all manner of exaggerated masculine behaviors and attitudes to ensure that no one gets a wrong idea about them within the classroom. The study intends to focus more on the real impact of maintaining discipline among male teachers. This study adopted a qualitative research approach through a case study design. Four participants (two female and two male teachers) were interviewed at rural schools in South Africa. Data were analysed through thematic analysis. The findings showed that the male teachers fear being exposed as feminine and powerless. They should live up to standards to seek approval either in the workplace or often in the classroom, and this leads them to severe consequences. They end up being humiliated in the classroom or workplace.

Keywords: Masculinity, Feminine, Gender roles, Discipline, Humiliation, Teachers

I. INTRODUCTION

IN South African rural schools, discipline is perceived as a vast masculine challenge that most male teachers find hard to bear. This is influenced by the gender issues that are perpetuated by society. Spowart (2012) states that most male teachers' stress that the teaching profession has enormously become a 'feminized'; therefore, male learners suffer due to a lack of male role models. This simply shows that masculinity is somehow centered on homophobia. Male teachers are therefore, forced to enact all manner of exaggerated masculine behaviors and attitudes to ensure that no one gets a wrong idea about them within the classroom. This forces male teachers to fear being exposed as feminine. Male teachers are afraid of being powerless. They should live up to standards to seek approval either in the workplace or often in the classroom, and this leads them to severe consequences. They end up being humiliated in the classroom or workplace. Thus, this research project will examine the impact of gender roles on maintaining discipline amongst learners in South African rural schools. It wants to perceive how the constructions of masculinity exist for working-class men, which center on physical activity, strength, and fortitude, and how those traits align with teaching. And which barrier is one of the intersectionality of sexuality and gender that developed under masculinized male teachers within the classrooms?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter investigates the impact of male teachers' masculinity on maintaining discipline within the classroom. It wants to perceive how constructions of masculinity existed for working-class men centered on strength and fortitude and how those characteristics align with teaching. This barrier is one of the intersectionality of sexuality and gender that developed beneath masculinized male teachers within the classrooms (Skelton, 2018). The background and history of how masculinity impacts discipline in classrooms and how constructions of masculinity existed for working-class men centered around strength and fortitude and how those traits align with teaching and intersectionality of sexuality and gender that develop under masculinized male teachers (Davies, 2017). All these aspects are more relevant to my study because they examine the masculinity and intersectionality of sexuality in male teachers.

History of gender roles

According to Haywood (2019), male teachers are defined as a "dying breed." Therefore, such names brought vast anxiety about the status of culturally acceptable views of masculinity within the influential culture, which failed to discourse the gender and dynamics of sexuality that led to male teachers being reckoned to do female work. From the perspective of the classroom context, women are generally perceived as sensitive, calm, and passive. At the same time, men are brave, competitive, and powerful, and they enjoy challenging jobs such as being train drivers, principals, and firefighters (Rittan, 2016). Male teachers often enjoy participating in high-status areas (classroom activities) involving experiments and calculations (science and mathematics).

Though they like or enjoy experiments, most male teachers have the same motivation as other men to take part in the construct of masculinity. According to Davies (2017), men often encounter social pressure to achieve the construction of masculinity or a high risk of being marginalized by their peers. There is also a vast power advantage that is aligned with being a male, which most of the time needs a gender obligation. Nonetheless, there are two issues, such as the discipline of

learners and the gendered nature of the teaching profession, which may force male teachers to construct themselves in a masculine way. Studies have further portrayed male teachers as working with the pupils, often resulting in regular negotiation for their masculine identities. To endorse the above statement, Woods (2020, p. 123) said that "male teacher is expected to be a man…if a man were to be perceived as feminine it would be a problem. You need to be a male role model. Be the opposite of being feminine".

However, male teachers are keener on controlling and managing the pupils. They regard themselves as effective natural disciplinarians.

Discipline as a tool in masculine male teachers

Male teachers control others' masculinities actions by interrogating their maleness. Thus, school is a good area for vivid hierarchies, where surveillance and management are hired to build the pupils into the normative order. As stated in the background and history, men love positions in the high-status areas of the educational curriculum, for instance, principals, deputy principals, and teaching subjects such as science and mathematics. Furthermore, taking roles central to the curriculum requires good decision-making in instilling discipline and punishment for pupils who do not listen (Stanworth, 2017). The pedagogical and ideological strategies of male teachers are to express their masculinity. On the other hand, teaching means making elicit decisions for maintaining discipline and control within the classroom or school. Male teachers are built to inhibit character defects and incompetence.

Homophobia with masculinity in the classroom

Male teachers use pupils to verify their masculinity. They often construct themselves as 'one of the lads' to prove their masculinity in the classroom. Masculinity is mostly homophobic as a discourse to reflect othering to non-masculine who are doing things that girls do. Male teachers often shame boys who have attitudes and actions that girls do. They claim that they behave like gays. Thus, this discourse makes the male teachers hate, and pupils fear being labeled or despised due to their effeminacy and rejection by the heterosexual society of masculinity (Hammersly, 2020). Further examples of such homophobia demonstrated by male masculine teachers within the classroom are that boys, instead of smelling unpleasant, smell deodorant. They smeared their hair with smelling hair gel. The male teacher considers this a form of discipline for boys. They insult and criticise boys through heterosexual discourses drawn in the classroom to make their masculinity in opposition to gays. The male teacher claims that it is ridiculous for males to be against their natural phenotype.

Harassment by Male teachers

The vast use of sexist discourses within heterosexual masculinity can expand into various types of sexual harassment between male teachers and learners. A radical female demonstrated gender power within the classroom illustrated how masculine male teachers led to the sexual identities of females, such as harassing behavior, which consisted of female appearance, leers, and an invasion of their private space and their services (Stanworth, 2015). However, male teachers are highly required to seek their own masculine identities for heterosexual identities. Male teachers utilise females as minors to explain their heterosexuality. Male teachers developed these gendered behaviors to build a strong relationship with learners and ensure good classroom motion. Male teachers used this approach as part of classroom management. Male teachers enforce commitment to equal opportunities to the learners and caring and tolerance, knowing that the main goal is to make learners accept the sexism in the classroom in the name of equal opportunities and caring. This seems as good as the classroom, which perceives or discloses the discourse implemented to control the class, and learners are keen on their work activities (Thomas, 2015).

Issues concerning sexuality have naturally been concealed and implemented in schools. They remain mainly in public. They all remain oppressive in the classroom figure. However, some sexualities are Integral to education. To differ, schools are somehow considered as areas of the constructions of sexuality. Thus, sexual behaviors are defined as oppressive and abusive and set the reminder that harassment can be perceived as uninvited and unwelcomed. As people, we can conform to experiences of mixed emotions. Being feminine involves the desire to be an object that experiences objectification as harassment. Heterosexual tradition in classrooms is seen as an equal objection that leads to the contribution of power between men and women. Therefore, all heterosexual actions are abusive and sexist (Halson, 2018).

Sexual division labour

Feminization in teaching leads to intensification and sexual division labour of a domestic belief in reaction to the changing economic and social circumstances that impact both men and female in industrialized societies (Holly, 2013). Therefore, this means that male teachers are identified as having low esteem. Due to the change in the labour market, which intends to develop enhanced urbanization and industrialization, Well-educated females filled the teaching occupations that males extensively deny, seeking those that pay better. Therefore, female teachers do not have many threads to the male power. Instead, teaching is regarded as a domestic role at home and school to nurture kids, and males are not willing to be hired as a cheap source of labour (Lowe & Mac and Ghaill, 2015). Therefore, masculinity is perpetrated by sexual division and hierarchal gendered power relations.

Moreover, feminism is perpetrated by sexual division and hierarchal gendered power relations through the complex number of women being supervised by male teachers in higher positions. Due to those mentioned above, patriarchal power and discrimination were utilised to endorse a gender regime where women were getting paid fewer salaries than men in the profession. Therefore, heterosexual masculinity led to how male teachers are seen and how they feel themselves stacked in female-dominated jobs. Historically, teaching has been more formulated and is associated with female domestic duties such as mothering and nurturing kids. Thus, this can be bounded with the socio-cultural context of the sexual division labour, estimated as an economic relief to the feminized work, like their masculinised occupations (Delamont, 2016).

III.   OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the influence of gender roles in maintaining discipline amongst male teachers in South African Schools. The following questions were answered in this study. What is the impact of masculinity amongst black male teachers in maintaining discipline within the classroom? and how does the masculinity of black male teachers influence discipline?

IV.   METHODS

This study employed the qualitative research approach. This includes when and how research will be conducted, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be collected (McMillan & Schumacher, 2012, p. 8). Thus, the meaning of data will appear from the context in which the research is being done. Mpya (2007, p. 49) explains that research design or methodology states how the research will be constructed. It entails the methods of data collection and the procedures that will be abided in the study.

Research site

The study was conducted in one Free State Province, QwaQwa area secondary school. Qwaqwa falls under Maluti-A-Phofung Municipality in the Eastern Free State under the Phuthaditjhaba region. This place consists of African people with different religious and socio-economic backgrounds living in suburbs, townships, and rural communities. This school is located at the center of QwaQwa. That means I can get concrete data for my research since stakeholders such as teachers, parents, and pupils are from different areas.

Research paradigm

There are fundamental aspects of research that tell the type of

research theory one will be doing. These might include comprehending and showing distinguished beliefs about the nature of reality, what one might understand about it, and what is accomplished to achieve it (Grix, 2004). Guba and Lincoln (2005) argue that a paradigm is a system of beliefs and a framework with conjectures about methodology and methods. It assists us to comprehend reality and to make sense of it. In the next part, I entailed an interpretive paradigm and two components: ontology and epistemology.

Interpretive paradigm

The interpretive paradigm is fundamentally the same as the research paradigm. Thus, paradigms are reckoned as assumptions or beliefs based on existence, which often leads to the formation of a certain world perspective. This will, therefore, be applied to this study by the researcher. According to Guba and Lincoln (2005), the interpretive paradigm rejects any permanent, unchanging standards that claim that the truth about reality can be universally known. Instead, interpretivists believe the truth about reality is socially constructed (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This implies that truth and reality are created, not something one discovers. It is, therefore, impossible to know reality as it is because our senses facilitate it. Therefore, the interpretive theory is relevant in this study, considering it focused on participants' perceptions regarding male teachers' masculinity in maintaining discipline within the classrooms. The participants in this study will deliberate on their expert knowledge and experiences. These deliberations differ because each will describe how they comprehend the questions, which is why this theory is relevant to this study.

Participants

Sampling is the process through which a researcher picks a subgroup of stratified individuals in the population, from which assumptions or beliefs of the whole population could be made (Rossouw, 2010). Rossouw (2010, p. 107) explains that sampling aims to pick a group of people with the traits the researcher is interested in accumulating.

Therefore, the researcher will use the convenience sampling method to select participants. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling strategy that gathers data from people in the community who are readily available to participate in the study. Convenience sampling is a sort of sampling in which the first available primary data source is utilised without further constraints for the research. This sampling was advantageous because it helped collect data quickly, and researchers utilised it for quick data gathering when they encountered time constraints. Its sample is cheaper to create and more accessible to proceed with without investing adequate money, and it is easier to access for researchers.

Data collection techniques

Semi-structured interviews

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2012), researchers use interviews for many reasons. They contend that interviews can be used to collect information from participants about their own beliefs or opinions. Interviews can also be used to collect information about past or present experiences, and they can be utilising to collect background information or get more details from the participants (Rossouw, 2010).

This data collection technique is relevant for this study because it used standardised questions. The questions focused on getting participants to describe their experiences and knowledge regarding the topic under investigation. The semi-structured interviews have the advantage of allowing participants to answer in-depth questions. The qualitative data collates with future data. Interviewers can sometimes prepare questions ahead of time to keep the participants on the topic. In qualitative research, there are plenty of different forms of interviews, including semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews help better understand respondents and develop better interview questions for current and future research.

Data Analysis

After obtaining the interview results, I will sort and analyse the data. This study follows two qualitative steps to analyse the data more effectively. The first step is familiarization. This is a process through which the researcher immerses him or herself in the raw data generated by listening to recordings of four interviews. According to Guba and Lincoln (2005), a researcher must ensure trustworthiness in a study by considering credibility. Credibility concerns the researcher's confidence in the truth of their findings (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Guba and Lincoln (2005) argue that guaranteeing credibility is one of the most crucial factors in ascertaining trustworthiness. They further assert that another way to ensure trustworthiness is to utilize more than one method to generate data to show that the research study's 22 findings are credible. This study used semi-structured interviews. Guba and Lincoln (2005) argue that qualitative researchers can use considerable explanations to prove that the research findings may be associated with other contexts.

Ethical considerations

Ethics should be first and foremost in a researcher's mind when conducting research. This should guide the entire research process. Ethics are the engine of scientific research inquiry and inform the whole process. Ethical considerations in research are critical, as ethics are the norms and standards for conduct that distinguish right from wrong. Ethical standards ensure that the researchers do not manufacture findings to suit them and their research agenda, as they should endeavor to be truthful and reliable. Regarding ethics, the following should be considered: Informed consent- all participants agreed and consented to participate in the study. I will ask permission from the stakeholders to be my participants. Anonymity and confidentiality– the researcher's responsible for granting confidentiality and, if possible, anonymity to respondents. Confidentiality means that individuals choose the information they want to discuss and should not be forced to give information they feel uncomfortable sharing. The researcher obtained ethical clearance from the University of the Free State to conduct the research. They will be given a fair chance not to participate in the study at any given time should they feel like quitting. Participants were requested to provide information by email or hand delivery, and signed consent forms were provided during this study. Participants' and schools' identities will be kept confidential.

V. RESULTS

The participants mentioned above believe that parents do not take full responsibility for building a solid relationship with their children and instilling discipline from home, causing these children not to fear discipline at all, from home or school. Educators even find it strenuous to instill this discipline without the basics from the parents. One of the participants' most common issues is that the external organizations and the Department of Education lack assistance concerning learners' lack of discipline. Another common point mentioned by the participants is that the newly employed teachers are not adequately trained to deal with the practical issues they encounter on the school premises. One of the participants emphasized that the Department should bring someone to the schools to help those learners understand all the teachers regardless of gender.

Furthermore, all the participants believe that dealing with gender roles and maintaining discipline is challenging but that every educator can conquer with experience.

Table 1: Profiles of participants

Participants	Gender	Teaching experience	Age
Jessica	Female	17 years	50
James	Male	30 years	58
Charlotte	Female	14years	48
William	Male	10years	39

Table 1 above shows the profiles of the four members of the interviewed school. It shows their experience, age, number of years as a teacher, and years they have worked in the school. The names that are utilised for the participants are not real.

When conducting quantitative analysis, the issue of gender roles and discipline seems to be overlooked and neglected by statistics, where the

focus is mainly on most male teachers who do manage discipline rather than on those who struggle. It is essential to recall that not every male teacher is recorded in statistics.

This study aimed to learn about the impact of gender roles in maintaining discipline amongst male teachers in South African schools, specifically in the QwaQwa area. The study's goals and objectives were met successfully. The initial goal of the study was to determine the level of drug use at secondary school. According to the participants, inequality of discipline and gender roles has been rising. It is astounding that society has not banded together to fight this crisis.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that teachers, both male and female, hold stereotypical and discriminatory attitudes about boys' and girls' characteristics, abilities, and roles. In studies worldwide, teachers attributed girls' academic achievement to hard work but to boys' natural ability and assigned competency in certain subjects to a specific sex – for example, reporting that boys were better at math (Plan, 2013). Teachers' behavior also varies based on the sex of the student, consciously or subconsciously. Teachers have been observed paying more attention and interacting more frequently (positively and negatively, through discipline) with male students (Eurydice, 2010; Sadker, Sadker, & Zittleman, 2009). For example, classroom observations from a study in South Africa found that although teachers stated that girls should have the same right as boys to attend school, they called on boys.

We often asked them more challenging questions and praised them more frequently (Miske, 2013). Research has also shown that teachers assign roles and tasks in the classroom based on gender stereotypes, such as sweeping or cleaning assigned to girls, monitoring the class, rearranging desks, or interacting with other adults and boys (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2007). These attitudes and behaviors have important implications for children: for example, Lloyd, Mensch, and Clark (2000) found that in Kenya, girls were more likely to drop out of schools, in which teachers rated math as less necessary for girls than boys. Overall, these attitudes and differential treatment reinforce existing gender roles and may encourage passivity and conformity in girls while placing more excellent value on independence and leadership for boys. At the same time, harsh treatment, and expectations for quiet or submissive behavior may alienate boys.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study recommends that the decision-makers and stakeholders promote gender equality through a comprehensive and systemic approach. Gender training for education officials and collaborations across units and ministries may be necessary to garner support. Support for gender equality initiatives must also be built at the grassroots level with students, teachers, parents, and communities. Efforts should be guided by in-depth gender analyses and supported through data collection, monitoring, and evaluation, with specific attention to the intersection of gender with socio-economic status, ethnicity, regional differences, sexual orientation, disability, etc. Data should go beyond measures of access to capture equality within and through education, including gendered experiences, attitudes, and outcomes.

Policies to prohibit discrimination and stereotyping, promote positive messages about equality, and reduce violence in schools should be developed and incorporated at the national, local, and school levels. Processes and guidelines for addressing these issues should also be developed and widely disseminated to school authorities, teachers, parents, and students. Training on gender inequality, power dynamics, human rights, and violence should be an integral part of pre-and in-service teacher training, training for curriculum developers and school inspectors, and the student curriculum. Resources to support teachers, including self-assessments, sample lesson plans, mentoring, and accessible resource persons or centers, are necessary to help teachers improve their practices.

Efforts to train, monitor, and support teachers to use child-centered, participatory, and diverse teaching and assessment styles, as well as training on positive, non-violent classroom management and disciplinary strategies, should continue, as these methods focus on the diversity and strengths of children, rather than on gender stereotypes. Comprehensive approaches to eliminating violence in schools (both against girls and among boys or girls) should include establishing national and school-level policies prohibiting violence and procedures to effectively address it when it does occur, as well as training programme for violence prevention and teacher or bystander interventions. Holistic, multi-dimensional programs that build social, emotional, and financial competencies in addition to educational skills, with a component on gender analysis and human rights, should be implemented as part of the curriculum or as supplemental programs for both girls and boys. Gender analysis may reveal that programs targeting specific disadvantaged groups are necessary. These programs may include incentives for enrollment, additional support, and condensed or distance learning programs, depending on the specific needs. To the extent possible, continuous monitoring and rigorous evaluation of policy and program initiatives should be undertaken using participatory methods. Lessons learned from these initiatives should be incorporated into the design and planning of current and future interventions. This report presented an overview of gender equality issues and initiatives in the education sector. Challenging gender norms and inequalities is a long and complex process involving a change at the individual and institutional levels. However, gender inequality also has severe costs for men, women, and society.

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