An investigation into the causes of gender disparities in Biology enrolment at ‘A’ level in schools in Makonde district, Mashonaland West Province.

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ABSTRACT

The researcher report findings from a study that sought to investigate the causes of gender disparities in ‘A’ level biology enrolment in schools in Makonde district, Mashonaland West Province. The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Questionnaires were completed with female high school learners and their teachers. Interviews were conducted with the teachers. A population of 115 respondents was used and a sample of 30 students and 9 teachers was purposefully selected. Data was analysed through descriptive statistics. The study found out that girls believe that they are mainly affected by negative stereotypes. Their treatment in schools, at home and in society led to low enrolment due to the fear of under-achievement. The study concluded that female high school students held certain perceptions which they believe negatively affect their enrolment and academic achievement. The study recommends that gender sensitivity should be taken seriously in schools and in homes as well as in society at large to ensure that female students have positive self-concepts which, invariably, lead to improved enrolment and academic attainment.