

## The Impact of Students' Non-Formal Interactions on Their Perception of Gender Equality in Uasin-Gishu County, Kenya

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### Abstract

Since education is recognized as a tool for achieving social mobility, it is expected to endow individuals with the skills and qualifications to take up social responsibilities, without any bias in regard to gender. Girls in mixed school set-ups do not feature as top performers. This paper, therefore, assesses the messages that the aspects of the hidden curriculum, specifically non-formal interactions, send to the students in regard to gender equality amongst students based on a study of mixed schools in the Uasin-Gishu County in Kenya. The authors adopted a survey research design. The target population consisted of the accessible population was the selected students in sampled mixed schools in the area. Proportionate stratified sampling technique was used to select 21 schools. Stratified random sampling based on gender was used to obtain the representative sample of 271 participants. The authors used questionnaires and document analysis as the main tools for collection of data. The collected data was coded using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively, and then presented using descriptive statistics. It was established that the non-formal interactions in mixed public secondary schools promoted gender inequality amongst students. The interactions were not fair and perpetrated sexist tendencies within the mixed schools. Most of the respondents believed that the interactions were fair while a number said that the interactions were not fair. Majority of the respondents, therefore, believed that the interactions were fair and were not struggling for gender equality in those interactions. The authors recommend that boys in mixed schools be sensitized to work towards improving the education of their female counterparts. The study is significant as it highlights the importance of non-formal interactions of students and aids in understanding the effects of the attitudes, assumptions and expectations generated on the gender gap.

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**Keywords:** impact, students' non-formal interactions, perception, gender equality, Uasin-Gishu county, Kenya.

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### INTRODUCTION

A succinct statement by the United Nations in 1980 has drawn attention to the extent of inequalities between men and women the world over: "women constitute half of the world's population, perform nearly two thirds of its work hours, receive one tenth of the world's income and own less than one-hundredth of the world's property" (Cole, 1989, p. 156). Despite gross differences between women living in industrialized countries, and those living in harsh and hazardous conditions in the third world, one constant does seem to underlie the organization of the social relations across widely differing social, cultural and geographical settings, and that is sexual hierarchy; an unequal distribution of power between men and women, with women subordinated to male power, authority and control. It has been argued since the early eighties that poverty is becoming feminized in industrial societies. Scott (1984) postulates that women are becoming the new world's poor. One thing that stands out in these studies is the continuity

of women experiencing an inferior economic position to men.

Several researchers on gender and education point out the emergence of gender based educational pathways, with males moving proportionately more into apprenticeship and universities, and hence to potentially more lucrative traditional male realms of employment while females in universities, despite significant inroads, are still much less likely to be studying Medicine, Law, Dentistry or Economics, than the Teaching profession, the Humanities or Social work (Cole, 1989). Despite the apparent parity in access in most Commonwealth countries, a clear inequality in participation seems to exist.

Girls continue to be afforded for less opportunity than boys to realize their potential. The quality of girls' education does not match that of boys in terms of developing confidence and self esteem or marketable skills. There are still fewer resources for girls schooling than for

boys. Teacher interaction with girls does not encourage creativity and enquiry to the same extent as with boys. Teacher education courses for both teachers in training and practicing teachers do not give detailed attention to non-sexist teacher behaviour. School hierarchies are providing fewer role models for girls (Commonwealth School Commission Report, 1984, p. 2).

Johnson (1988) argues that despite the appearances of school retention rates, schools contribute to the problem of gender inequality in education. Females do not necessarily stay on in school because it provides a valuable experience, rewarded in the long term, by employment possibilities equal to males, but because they lack other alternatives.

In explaining male violence in the mixed school setting, Weiner (1985) argues that schools do not exist in a social vacuum. They reflect and reproduce the power relations within a male supremacist society – a society in which the dominant group (men) ultimately maintain their power position through force. So, men/boys bring to school the values and experiences of a woman-hating society. Further, male violence in mixed schools serve to support boys as they practice their sexual domination over girls and it attempts to teach girls that it is ‘natural’ for them to be tyrannized by men into a subordinate position (ibid.). A respondent in Weiner’s research commented that “You learn how the boys treat you so it has given me more experience for when I leave school”. Weiner’s (1985) study is summed up thus:

Some of us are now convinced that mixed-sex schools are dangerous places for girls and women, and that they exist to further benefit boys as they establish their sexual domination over girls. We should not be hoodwinked into subscribing into a system, which is detrimental to girls in the name of ‘progressive education’ (p. 33).

Weiner further she argues that a good educational practice involves providing all students with equal access to all knowledge that the school deems valuable. Anti-sexism must be confronted at two levels: the overt curriculum and the hidden curriculum. A better understanding is needed of the difficulties which face teachers who wish to help boys and girls overcome their well-documented unwillingness to transcend the discriminatory practices of culture. It has been argued that there are limits to what can be achieved through classroom interaction given the complexity of the problem (Deem, 1980). Boys and girls develop firm ideas about their respective life roles at a very early age but there is no reason to suppose that schools cannot effect some change in attitudes and aspirations.

Schools can have a substantial influence in modifying the effects of the disadvantaged (Whyte *et al.*, 1985). Whyte *et al.* (ibid.) further argue that there are schools where attempts are made to monitor teaching approaches and materials for sex-bias and where equal opportunities is a regular focus for staff discussion. This has, however, not attained much progress and there is need for greater understanding of latent discrimination in schools - ‘the hidden curriculum’ – and of the differential treatment boys and girls appear often to receive in the classroom (Whyte *et al.*, 1985).

Eggleston (1967) argues that the social context in which pupils experience education has important effects on their achievement in school, the length of their school life and their access to different kinds of education. The concept of environment, here, not only includes the physical environment of the home, neighbourhood and school, but also the attitudes and values of adults and children who live in them. Too (2004), in a study of achievement in Mathematics, notes that there is more constructive talking in unisex schools than in co-educational schools. Among the recommendations made by Owiti (2001), in a study of gender differences in attitude towards Mathematics, is the need to treat girls and boys equally and to provide favourable learning environment for girls (by not allowing boys to laugh at girls’ responses).

Weiner (1985) argues that the language of equality in today’s world obscures the discrimination, which girls suffer from. Most head teachers will deny the existence of sexism in their schools. But underneath, very little has changed. Because in most schools few attempts have been made to understand the nature and manifestations of sexism, it remains the constant organizing principle of mixed schooling. Girls are neat, boys are not. Boys are good at Mathematics, girls are not. For girls their understanding of sexism centres on their exclusion from football and the softer treatment they receive in the classroom. They may not have accepted sex discrimination as an everyday and ordinary event. It will take the experience of co-educational school to finish that part of their educational training. Eventually, women will accept the social injustice and systematic discrimination against them (Weiner, 1985).

In a study on young children’s understanding of sex-group membership and gender identity, Lloyd *et al.* (1992) have concluded that as soon as children can identify themselves as girls and boys, they can identify the gender marking of domestic artefacts and familiar activities at better-than chance levels. And by the time they are old enough to begin formal schooling, they already voice occupational preferences, which are parallel with the adult gender stereotypes. Lloyd *et al.* (1992), in *Looking at the*

*Pupil as a Social Actor*, reveals that ‘achievement tests of pupils at the primary level do not show any deficit, but perhaps it is the girls’ very capacity to learn, and in particular, their construction of social representation of gender which value things masculine more than things feminine and which place men in a more privileged position, that is the ultimate undoing of girls. “If men compare themselves with other men, and women with other women, it is this lesson which confounds gender appropriate behaviour and sex-group membership, which turns the girls away from mathematics, science and technology” (Lloyd *et al.*, 1992, p. 34-35).

Any disadvantage that girls may experience in primary schools is, to some extent, a matter of judgment, but Kelly’s (as cited in Lloyd *et al.*, 1992) conclusions certainly sustain the hypothesis that girls learn that they occupy an identifiable and different place in the educational system to that of boys. Again sex group membership and gender socialization are confounded. As a result, girls learn their place; they make fewer demands and are accorded fewer resources. Girls who pursue careers in science and technology or positions of leadership find themselves challenging the dominant view of femininity (Lloyd *et al.*, 1992). The last decade has shown that there is a pandemic of sexual violence and harassment, especially in Kenyan secondary schools, which has been a major cause of concern for students, parents and school authorities. The most outrageous case involving girls was in July 1991 at the St. Kizito Mixed Secondary School in Tigania, Meru District where 71 girls were raped, and 19 died after being attacked by their male colleagues (Chege *et al.*, 2006).

Frith and Mahony (1994), in their study of gender in co-educational schools, reiterate how the staffing hierarchy invites sexist assumptions from the pupils: “... And the messages that we give to children, for example a male head of a school – there must be some message there” (Frith & Mahony, 1994, p. 57). In the same research, other issues were also identified. The boys’ dominance in the playground and moving about the school buildings was noted. The boys’ physical education activities tended to be far more spread out than that of girls. Girls’ activities tended to be peripheral.

### **The Hidden Curriculum in Schools**

The hidden curriculum refers to the messages that are transmitted to the students through the schools underlying practices – reflected expectations and assumptions about pupils that relate to their ethnic origin, social class and gender (Riley, 1994). The concept of hidden curriculum expresses the idea that schools do more than simply transmit knowledge as laid down in the official curriculum. Behind the school lies a criticism of social implications, political

underpinnings and cultural outcomes of modern educative activities. The phrase ‘hidden curriculum’ was reportedly coined by a sociologist Philip Jackson who argued that educationists need to understand education as a socialization process.

Meighan (1981) argues that the hidden curriculum is taught by the school, not by any teacher, but something comes across to the pupils, which may never be spoken about in the English lesson or prayed about in the assembly. As students go through school life, they pick up an approach to living and an attitude to learning. Haralambos (1991) argues that the hidden curriculum consists of those things pupils learn through the experience of attending school rather than the stated educational objectives of such institutions. Jackson (1968), in his work *Life in The Classroom*, draws attention to the idea that schools do more than simply aid the transmission of knowledge between one generation and the next. Jackson further argues that we need to understand education as a socialization process. According to him, we have to understand not just the social construction of knowledge (the way cultures define and produce what they consider to be valid forms of knowledge), but also the way the teaching and learning process is socially constructed.

Jackson’s (1968) definition of the hidden curriculum encapsulates the argument that pupils, if they are to succeed within the education system, have ‘to learn how to learn’, that is, they have to learn to conform, not just to the formal rules of the school, but also, to the informal rules, beliefs and attitudes perpetuated through the socialization process. The basic idea behind the concept of the hidden curriculum, therefore, is that pupils learn things that are not actually taught in the formal curriculum and in this respect the concept of hidden curriculum refers to the way learning process is organized:

- (a) **Consciously.** For Example:
  - i) In terms of physical organization of the school itself - a place separate from the home, the work place, and the like
  - ii) The organization of the classroom - for example, the teacher standing in front pupils seated and arranged in rows
- (b) **Unconsciously.** For example:
  - i) The way individual teachers interpret the behaviour of pupils
  - ii) The way teachers have different expectations of pupils based on interpretation of behaviour in class

Whyte (1985), in a study on *Gender and Primary Schooling*, points out that there is still a long way to go in understanding just how fundamentally gender is inscribed into the organization of all our social institutions, including schools and just what the significance is. In Kenya, the effort to get gender

taken seriously as an issue in education has consisted virtually of a campaign around the rights of girls to receive an education equal to that of boys. In this sense, it has not been directly about gender or girls and boys equality. Building on a framework about equality and citizenship achieved through education relatively rapid progress is being made, in lip service at least, towards the principle of equal opportunity for both sexes.

Lloyd *et al.* (1992) conclude that 'girls move away from feminine preferences and identity during a period of about 5 or 6 years until adolescence', although the girls' knowledge of gender stereotyping is increasing just as that of boys. Lloyd *et al.* (ibid.) also present a discouraging conclusion; that changes in understanding do not necessarily lead to changes in behaviour. Archer's (1992) review of the development roles is of gender typical. He suggests that 'Boys and girls gradually develop different subcultures within their segregated groups' (ibid.) and this implies that boys and girls' restricted interaction contributes to the construction of systematically distinct social worlds. There is, therefore, need to specify dimensions within the mixed-gender school setting that could contribute or fail to contribute to gender equality amongst students. In a study on primary schools, Whyte (1985) points out how achievement concerns focus on boys at this level rather than girls. "But in primary education the most striking gender differences or problems (social and academic) tend to revolve around boys. They read less and a significant minority possess more discipline or behaviour problems. Teachers are more worried about boys in primary schools and girls in secondary" (Whyte, 1985, p. 187). The progress of boys and girls changes sharply as they progress through the education system as a whole. Shaw (1985) further highlights how boys who start off below girls end up seemingly more successful in educational terms; making it wise to conclude that neither gender nor social consequences are fixed. This sharply contrasts a recommendation by Owiti (2001), in a study of gender difference in attitude towards mathematics, that teachers should not ignore "the slow learners, majority of who are girls. Involve them in activities and teach application of mathematics" (p. 109).

As a matter of fact, Shaw (1985) argues that 'the switch from single-sex schools to mixed schools has been regressive, rather than progressive, for girls and that girls are educationally better off in single-sex sets and perhaps in single-sex schools too' (p. 184). Some studies have also discussed the limited options available for girls within the present educational system. There is strong gender bias in subject choices for girls and they are often streamed out of the sciences and mathematics fields into traditional female subjects. Due to cultural factors as well as

perceived and preferred career possibilities, girls opt for subjects that steer them into non-professional and non-administrative jobs. This limits further options open to women in the formal labour market as they continue to concentrate in non-competitive fields (Kinkajou, 1987; Ndunda, 1990; Mbiliny & Mbughuni, 1991, as cited in Chege *et al.*, 2006).

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

During the study, the authors noted the respondents' unwillingness to freely comment about the school administration. This posed a danger on the reliability of the study findings as some might distort information to play safe within the strict school rules. The authors however assured them of the confidentiality of the research process. In addition, perception is an issue that is influenced by a set of factors including formal curriculum and co-curriculum, apart from the hidden curriculum. The study focused only on the aspect of non-formal interaction in the hidden curriculum. Other factors may also influence students' perception of gender equality. Nevertheless, the study sheds light on the importance of the hidden curriculum aspects to students' life both in and after of school.

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was carried out in Uasin-Gishu County, Rift Valley Province in the Republic of Kenya. The authors adopted a survey research design in investigating the relationship between the aspects of hidden curriculum and gender equality. The authors used this design to study the relationship between students' students' non-formal interactions and gender equality in mixed public secondary schools. The target population consisted of the accessible population was the selected students in sampled mixed schools in the area. All the respondents were either day scholars or boarders. The respondents in selected schools engaged in co-curricular activities apart from pursuing their academic studies. They comprised all students from form one to form four in the selected schools.

Proportionate stratified sampling technique was used to select 21 schools from the seven divisions, namely Soy, Turbo, Kaptagat, Kesses, Kapsaret, Ainakboi and Moiben. The sample was drawn from 21 schools spread across 7 divisions. Stratified random sampling based on gender was used to obtain the representative sample of 271 participants. The authors used questionnaires and document analysis as the main tools for collection of data. Apart from that, minutes that showed composition of Board of Governors for the purpose of detailed analysis and interpretation were looked at. The authors also examined the schools' organization charts or school hierarchical structures to determine staff distribution.

The collected data was coded using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively, and then presented using descriptive statistics.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the study, an assessment of students' non-formal interactions outside the classroom was sought for the purpose of shedding light on schools' pertinent issues that may be taken for granted in the school system, yet reflect the positions of the students and help to shape their experiences and achievements within the mixed school set up. In this paper, the authors look at equality of opportunity for both sexes in terms of the informal rules, beliefs and attitudes perpetuated through the socialization process. Jackson (1968) argues that education is not just about transmission of knowledge between one generation and the next, but also a socialization process. The authors, therefore, assessed the learners' non-formal interactions on a Likert-type of scale. One open ended question was also included to assess the struggle for gender equality.

### Break-time Interactions

The authors sought to find out break-time interactions of students by seeking their opinions on the statement: "During break time male and female students sit together and engage in lively discussions." A total of 269 students made their responses to this item. Those who Strongly Agreed were 61(22.7%) consisting of 33 males and 28 females. The respondents who Agreed with the statement were 71(26.4%), with 38 males and 33 female. Those who were Undecided were 11(4.1%) with 7 males and 4 females. The respondents who Disagreed with the statement were 69(25.7%) consisting of 35 males and 34 females. The respondents who Strongly Disagreed were 57(21.1%) consisting of 27 males and 30 females. Although majority of respondents agreed with the statement, it must be noted that more females disagreed with it as compared to those who agreed with.

### Girls Only Groups and Conversations

The authors sought to establish whether or not girls stayed in their own groups while outside the classrooms by seeking their opinion on the statement: "Girls Stay and Play in Their Own Small Groups and Enjoy Lively Conversations". A total of 268 students responded to this item out of which 39(14.6%), consisting of 21 males and 18 females, Strongly Disagreed. Those who Disagreed were 44(16.4%) consisting of 24 males and 20 females. Those who were undecided were 11(4.1%) with 6 males and 5 females. Majority of the students, 93(34.7%) consisting of 55 males and 38 females, Agreed with the statement. Those who strongly Agreed were 81(30.2%) consisting of 34 males and 47 females.

A significant majority therefore agreed that girls sit on their own and have own discussions. The responses show that there is gender differentiation in the mixed school set up. Girls sit on their own and enjoy lively discussions instead of interacting with their male counterparts. In a situation of fair equality of opportunity, gender should not be a barrier to interactions. All students should look at themselves as equal and have full confidence in discussions irrespective of gender. The findings, however, indicated segregation and hence a lack of struggle towards gender equality.

### Girls Only Groups and Level of Confidence

Further, the respondents were asked to state their opinion on girls' level of confidence. Table 1 presents the findings.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Girl's Loud Conversations

Type of Response	Gender of Respondents		Total	%
	Male	Female		
SD	39	34	73	27.0
DA	34	27	61	22.6
UN	11	8	19	7.0
A	32	27	59	21.9
SA	25	33	58	21.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>100</b>

A total of 270 students responded to this item, where 73(27.0%), consisting of 39 males and 34 females, Strongly Disagreed. Those who Disagreed were 61(22.6%), consisting of 34 males and females 27 females. Those who were Undecided were 19(7.0%), consisting of 11 males and 8 females. The respondents who Agreed were 59(21.9%) with 32 males and 27 females. Lastly those who Strongly Agreed were 58(21.5%) with 25 males and 33 females. Although the opinions of female students were more or less the same, the male students significantly disagreed with the statement as is highlighted in Table 1.

The study thus established that the level of girls' confidence was quite low as perceived by the respondents. The authors noted that the girls are not "loud" in their conversations and are not comfortable in the presence of boys. The authors felt that in a fair struggle for equality of opportunity all students should be comfortable in the presence of each other. The male students, however, pointed out that girls' level of confidence is low. The struggle towards gender equality is therefore quite minimal.

### Boys Only Groups and Level of Confidence

The respondents were asked to give their opinions on boys' level of confidence. A total of 270 students responded to this item. Two respondents skipped the item. Table 2 presents the findings.

Table 2: Boys Level of Lively Conversations

Type of Response	Gender of Respondents		Total of Frequencies	%
	Male	Female		
SD	30	31	61	22.6
DA	29	22	51	18.9
UN	7	7	14	5.2
A	28	23	51	18.9
SA	47	46	93	34.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>100</b>

When asked whether or not boys spoke loudly in their groups, a significant majority of the students, 93(34.4%), Strongly Agreed. When compared to the item that highlighted girls' level of interaction, it was noted here that the male students were more confident and lively in their non-formal interactions. Those who Agreed with the statement were 51(18.9%) while those who Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed were 51(18.9%) and 61(22.6%) respectively. The frequencies in Table 2 illustrate that boys interact on their own during break time and that their level of confidence is high. The authors also noted that the girls' level of confidence was lower compared to the boys. There is no struggle for gender equality amongst students but an attempt to entrench gender differentiation and sexism in students' interactions.

#### Boys' Use of Football Pitch

The responses to the statement "Boys Often Use and Occupy the Football Pitch More than Girls Do," are presented in Table 3 below. When asked whether or not male students often use and occupy the football pitch more than the female students, a significant majority of 119 respondents (44.8%) Strongly Agreed with the statement. Those who Agreed were 54(19.9%), which is the second largest percentage.

Table 3: Extent of Boys' Use of the Football Pitch

Type of Response	Frequencies by Gender		Total	%
	Male	Female		
SD	29	16	45	16.9
DA	14	22	36	13.5
UN	7	5	12	4.5
A	32	22	54	20.3
SA	57	62	119	44.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>100%</b>

The findings illustrated in Table 3 show the extent to which boys dominate the football playground. Note that this pitch occupies a relatively large surface area of the school and the exclusion of girls from this pitch means that girls are excluded from the central and larger part of the school playground. This exclusion from the schools' football pitch renders the girls less active in school activities. The struggle in this case is towards gender inequality rather than equality. Although there are campaigns around the rights of the girl-child to receive an education equal to that of boys it must be noted here that this gender differentiation in non-formal interaction implies that

a change in understanding does not necessarily mean a change in behaviour.

#### Female Students' Use of Netball Pitch

The informants were asked to respond to the statement: "Female Students Often Play Netball More than the Male Students." A total of 265 students responded and the findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Girls' Use of Netball Pitch

Type of Response	Frequencies By Gender		Total	%
	Male	Female		
SD	26	17	43	16.2
DA	17	22	39	14.7
UN	14	10	24	9.1
A	34	25	59	22.3
SA	49	51	100	37.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>100</b>

When asked whether female students often occupied and used the netball pitch more than male students, those who Strongly Agreed and Agreed were 100(37.7%) and 59(22.3%) respectively. These were the two largest percentages in the responses as compared to those who were Undecided, 24(9.1%) and those who Disagreed, 39(14.1%) while the respondents who Strongly Disagreed were 43(16.2%). It is worth noting here that netball is seen as a feminine game, and what female students are seen doing is just conformity to social expectations of their gender.

When a comparison is made between the item on use of football pitch and the use of netball pitch, it is clear that there is a systematic exclusion of one gender from every game. Football is still seen as a masculine game, while netball is seen as feminine. When school management ignores these trends, they are in effect reinforcing gender stereotyping and gender inequality in students' interactions.

#### Girls' Self-Worth

On the statement, "Girls Feel They Are More Important Than Boys in This School", a total of 269 students responded. The remaining 3 students skipped the item. When asked whether or not female students felt they were more important than male students, a significant majority strongly disagreed with the statement. A total of 102 respondents (37.9%) Strongly Disagreed with the statement. Those who Disagreed were 58(21.6%). The rest of the frequencies were 27(10.0%), 33(12.3%) and 49(18.2%) for Undecided, Agree and Strongly Agree respectively.

The responses clearly depicted the school system as a sexist society where girls are made to suffer less confidence and low self-esteem. The mixed school, in this case, reflected and reproduced the power relations within a male supremacist society, a society in which the dominant group (men) ultimately

maintain their power position though force. The authors felt that in a fair struggle, any gender should feel important, but because of unexplained reasons, the respondents felt that the female students never felt important about themselves.

#### Female Students' Politeness in Language Use

Further, the authors sought to find out about the girls' politeness as compared to boys' in the use of language. The responses were to the statement "Female Students are More Polite than Male Students in their Use of Language". Majority of respondents Strongly Agreed with the statement. A total of 85(31.7%) Strongly Agreed while 65(24.2%) Agreed, which is the second highest score. The rest of the responses were 20(7.5%), 53(19.8%) and 45(16.8%) for Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree respectively.

The authors noted that the trend in the case of language use is towards inequality. Female students are more polite while male students are not. The research also established the mixed school set up was an extension of the wider society where the female gender occupied a subordinate position as compared to the male gender. In explaining male violence in the mixed school setting, Weiner (1985) argues that schools do not exist in a social vacuum, but that they reflect and reproduce a society where both genders bring to school the values and experiences of the wider society. Further, Weiner points out how male students practice their domination over females in an attempt to teach them to occupy a subordinate position. It is natural for girls to be tyrannized into a subordinate position. The study reflected how the female students have learnt to occupy a subordinate position in the school set-ups.

#### Boys' Expectation of Respect from Girls

The authors also sought to find out whether or not the male students naturally expected to be respected by their female counter parts by use of the statement "Boys Expect To Be Respected By Girls". A total of 271 students responded to this item. Table 5 presents the findings. Majority of the respondents strongly agreed with this item. A total of 90 (33.5%) Strongly Agreed, while 89 (33.1%) Agreed. These results depicted an atmosphere where one group, female students, had to be careful in their interactions in order to meet the expectations of their male counterparts in what they termed respect. A mixed school set up should be an environment where all learners are free to pursue their academic interests on an equal basis. It appeared to the authors that girls and boys in these mixed school settings have developed firm ideas about their respective life roles at an earlier age and a lot ought to be done to overcome their unwillingness to transcend the discriminatory practices of culture.

Table 5: Boys' Expectation of Respect

Type of Response	Frequencies by Gender		Total Frequencies	%
	Male	Female		
SD	16	18	34	12.6
DA	18	18	36	13.4
UN	14	6	20	7.4
A	47	42	89	33.1
SA	45	45	90	33.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>100</b>

#### Boys and Girls Fair Interaction

The respondents were asked to give their opinions on non-formal interactions in general by answering the question: "Do You Think Boys and Girls Interact Fairly in This School Such That Each Group Is Respected?" A total of 270 students responded to this item. Majority of the students thought that the interactions in the school were fair and that each group was respected. A total of 172(63.7%) respondents agreed that the interactions were fair while 98(36.3%) felt that the interactions were not fair. Although the authors have noted generally that the interactions within the mixed school setup tend towards gender inequality, the students were quick to say that the interactions were fair. On the issue of fairness, Rawls (1971) says that people should be given what they deserve. The authors noted that the male students felt they deserved a privileged or superior position as compared to their female counterparts. The female students were also comfortable even when the authors felt that the interactions were not fair. There is a very strong socialization, therefore, that makes students occupy respective positions within the mixed school setup. The mixed school set-up is also organized in a way that boys feel superior and girls subordinate. The authors noted that that was the situation that the students felt was fair.

#### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the study findings, it was noted that the non-formal interactions in mixed public secondary schools promoted gender inequality amongst students. The interactions were not fair and perpetrated sexist tendencies within the mixed schools. Most of the respondents believed that the interactions were fair while a number said that the interactions were not fair. Majority of the respondents, therefore, believed that the interactions were fair and were not struggling for gender equality in those interactions. The study established that the female students rated themselves second after their male counterparts, a situation that destroys the potential of the girl.

The authors recommend that boys in mixed schools be sensitized to work towards improving the education of their female counterparts. This could work through establishment of Equal Opportunities Clubs that could actively participate in all activities and clubs in the school. Boys must be sensitized to

help in the granting of equal opportunities. School systems must deliberately work towards changing or even reversing the cultural socialization of girls and boys towards the inequality.

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