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The Effects of Electronic Media on Gender Socialisation

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Abstract:

The study investigated the effects of electronic media on gender socialisation of learners at secondary schools in a cluster in Masvingo District in Zimbabwe. The population comprised of five hundred and fifty three from which a sample of one hundred and eleven participants was drawn. The sample consisted of one hundred and seven students and four teachers. The selection of students was done using the systematic sampling while random sampling was used to select the teachers. Questionnaires and interviews were used to gather information. Feminism and gender schema were used as the theoretical base of this investigation. Literature was reviewed on underrepresentation and misrepresentation of women in electronic media as portrayed by different programs on the television. The effects of mobile phones on learners were also highlighted in the discussion.

It emerged from the study that the television and the mobile phone portray images and message that influence people's opinion on gender stereotypes and learners behaviour negatively. Participants revealed that males and females are portrayed differently resulting in female learners developing low self esteem which affect their aspirations, capabilities potentials in educational performance and attainment. Basing on the findings the researchers recommended that the government through the Ministry of Information and Technology and programming in media and through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should formulate a gender sensitive education system as early as early childhood development (ECD) stage to cater for gender disparities attributed by electronic media and other social institutions.

Keywords: Socialization, gender, media, disparities, gender sensitive, self- fulfilling prophecy, gender stereotyping.

1. Background and Introduction

Electronic media plays an influential role in transforming people's way of life which contributes to gender socialization. Gender socialization is derived from sex based division of labour which took place in the past (Haralambos and Holborn, 2010). The women's place was seen as the home where they are supposed to do nursing and caring roles while men provided food and defense against their enemies. Men's physical strength and the ability to procure food for their families enabled them to become a dominant sex. Gradually dominance was institutionalized in the values, norms and roles of societies around the world (Poponoe, 1993). Electronic media especially the television and the mobile phone is one of the institutions in which gender stereotypes are reflected hence affects the learners' attitudes and behaviour which determines their academic achievements and aspirations.

The patriarchal nature of our society reinforces traditional gender roles through electronic media. The roles contribute to gender stereotypes (Wood, 2007). Despite the introduction of gender biased policies and strategies nationally and globally, there is a slow pace of transformation and change hence media remains a powerful agent of gender socialization.

According to Marxist- feminists, socialisation is portrayed as a process of supporting and maintaining patriarchy of male dominance (Haralambos and Holborn, 2010). Girls are socialized to be females and boys to be males. They acquire gender roles through observational behaviour in media, particularly electronic. Therefore learners internalize the social norms and expectations which correspond with their sex from media images.

Electronic media, particularly television, influences learners in understanding gender roles. Programmes and advertisements on the television place women in subordinate and domestic roles. The television portrays males playing characters which are adventurous and heroic, occupying masculine prestigious positions while females are shown playing inferior characters associated with domestic roles, for example caring for siblings.

Therefore viewing such types of programmes influence the choice of subjects which the boys and girls take up at school. Boys are channeled towards technical and hard sciences like chemistry and physics while girls are channeled into humanities such as Religious Studies, Shona and practical subjects like Food and Nutrition and Fashion and Fabrics. Thus, the choice of subjects determines the learners' choice of career as boys will occupy regarded prestigious jobs like engineering and managing while girls are relegated into lowly paying jobs such as nursing and teaching.

Females are underrepresented in media. More characters featured on television are males than females (Henslin, 2003). Poponoe (1993:315) points out that “media reflects the basic belief in male dominance, the social situation in which power and prestige are given to men more than women”. In most television programmes, males are featured outside the domestic sphere while females are shown as people living with misery in their lives. For example the Zimbabwean film *Neriah* features a widow (*Neriah*) experiencing hardships when her husband’s belongings were taken away by relatives.

Children’s television features more males than females by four or five as to one (Henslin, 2003). Cartoons like *bananas in pyjamas* and *Tom and Jerry* are male dominant. More so, in some cartoons males are represented headstrong, muscular and victorious while females as smaller and weaker sex which needs protection from men. The notion that males are culturally the standard and frighteners, while females are submissive and always need protection from men manifests in school when boys dominate classroom space in participatory activities like discussions while girls become passive participants. Some girls’ contributions can be considered as valueless thereby resulting in differential educational attainment between boys and girls.

Sporting activities screened on television are male dominated and often receive sponsorship, for example to be screened on television where they advertise their products. For example, stakeholders like Nedbank, Mbada Diamonds and Coca-cola sponsor the soccer tournament. These stakeholders also sponsor other sporting activities in school. The same scenario is adopted in schools where boys sporting activities receive more sponsorship than girls. For example secondary school under twenty boys’ soccer receives sponsorship from the Coca Company whilst Cotton Company of Zimbabwe also sponsors the schools rugby tournament.

According to Cotton Company of Zimbabwe managing director, Cotco intends to sponsor the high school soccer tournament with effect from 2014 soccer season (*The Sunday Mail* 1-7 December 2013). Girls are segregated from doing sporting activities, perceived as male domain such as soccer and cricket. They become observers and cheerers of which they place less value on sporting activities leading to under achievements in sports.

Some television programmes perpetuate violence among young viewers and girls are the victims. Haralambos and Holborn (2010) posit that the bad news from television research is that there is link between the mayhem and violence in children’s programmes and aggressive behaviour in children. Children who watch programmes like world wrestling, action films like the terminator and horror movies are more likely to imitate the violent attitudes and behaviour in the scenes.

According to hypodermic syringe model in Moore (1994:113), “People are attracted to violent or sexually exciting material in the media and are then influenced to try out the behaviour themselves. At school boys become perpetrators of violence, for example they can bully girls by beating, kicking and taking their possessions without their consent. Through victimization girls develop negative attitudes towards school.

Furthermore, media may normalize violence against females. Exposure to physical and sexual violence through media is linked to greater tolerance or even approval of violence (Hansen and Hansen cited in Wood, 2007). Even though some girls are physically and sexually abused the cases can go unreported. Fear is instilled in female learners that they perceive the world as a dangerous place to live in. They become affected psychologically and perform poorly at school.

Some sexual expressions and pornographic images on the television affect the youth’s behaviour negatively. Females are seen as sex objects and are featured more in pornography than males (Wood, 2007). The single best predictor of rape is the circulation of pornographic materials that glorify sexual force and exploitation (Baron and Stratus, 1989 cited in Wood 1994). Females especially girls, are victims of sexual abuse. Between 33% and 66% of all women have experienced sexual abuse before the age of 18 (Ibid). Through pornographic videos boys and girls can be punished for indulging in premarital sex which results in early and unwanted pregnancies and HIV/AIDS infection. Impregnated girls drop out of school early which affects their academic performance and aspirations leading to different education attainment between boys and girls.

More so, boys and girls deviate from the schools’ norms and expectations by imitating Western lifestyles from different forms of media like television, videos and the internet. They copy the hairstyles and dressing from television presenters and musical scenes featured by urban grooves for an example which contradict with the societal norms and values. For example, boys drop their trousers or shorts and plait their hair while girls opt to put on mini uniforms.

The mobile phone also creates a gender gap between boys and girls .Boys are more prone to explore the ever expanding new functional features of the current mobile phone while girls use a narrower scope of functions (Rossier cited in Geseron [http:// socio.ch? mobile](http://socio.ch?mobile)). Boys usually have more time for gaming and making up to the internet among others while girls do domestic chores. Whenever girls use the mobile phone, it is, mainly for social interaction. Boys become more independent as they stress instrumentality phone usage. For an instance, through the mobile they can organize dates, activities and meetings. The mobile hence empowers males more than females as it prepares them for future roles and positions.

On the other hand girls extensively use the mobile phone for social communications. Girls are prone to disclose personal information and emotions, discuss their subjects tastes and interests more than boys (Stern, 2004 cited by Geseron <http:// socioch/mobile>). They communicate mostly with friends and family members. For example, the use the face book and whatsapp and even text messages on the mobile phone. Girls can be more addicted to mobile usage than boys. However, the frequent use of mobile phone can disturb lessons and studies. For example, love affair messages can be exchanged in class while lessons are in progress and more time can be devoted to mobile phone usage at the expense of studying leading to low academic performance.

1.1. Research Questions

1. What are the effects of electronic media in gender socialization of learners?
2. How does the television influence learners’ gender socialization?
3. What is the role of the mobile phone in gender socialization of learners?

4. How do parents perpetuate gender socialization through electronic media?

1.2. Theoretical Framework

Several theories focus on how females are treated and portrayed through different agents of socialization. Feminist theory is one such a theory among others. Despite the introduction of gender equality policies in the society, electronic media still remains an influential agent of gender socialization as it lags behind new emerging trends of transformation and gender issues.

Liberal feminists argue that media among other institutions promotes and reinforces sexism and discrimination against females (Draper *et al.*, 2011). Females are stereotyped in electronic media which end up in sexism where their status is perceived as inferior than that of males. The beliefs about inferiority due to biology are reinforced and then used to justify discrimination directed towards females. Females occupy status inside and outside their homes associated with little prestige, less power and low wages. Thus electronic media affect most female learners' expectations, ambitions and educational performance and attainment hence the need for this research is to find out the effects of electronic media on gender socialisation of learners.

In addition, Marxists socialist feminists view electronic media as promoting patriarchal values, attitudes and gender related socialization which place females in the domestic sphere. The electronic media transmit ideologies which promote the inequalities between males and females and, put female down to keep them in their place (Thornes, 2008). Television programmes socialize males, to develop dominant patriarchal power over females. Furthermore, mobile phone usage and access is biased towards males, assist or empowers them more than female through their capability to use its functions and accessing more knowledge and current information on the internet.

According to the Marxist feminists clan oppression is the main source of gender socialization while socialist feminist hold the view that patriarchy contributes to the women oppression (Ozard and Arsoy, 2011). Therefore, electronic media reinforces the perception about clan oppression and traditional patriarchal notions of gender.

Feminists also argue that electronic media contributes to negative behaviour among youths. According to the hypodermic syringe model people are attracted to violent or sexually exciting material in the media and are influenced to try out that behaviour themselves (Wood, 2007). Romantic films, movies, advertisements, pornographic, images, among others which young, people view on the television and downloads on mobile phones have negative impact on learners' behaviour. Through watching pornography on electronic media learners become sexually active that they indulge in promiscuous behaviour which affects the girl child when impregnated. Girls drop out of school early thereby jeopardising their educational aspirations and academic performance. Thus, electronic media has some effect on gender socialisation of learners.

From a psychological point of view gender schema theory suggests that gender typing occurs when children are ready to perform tasks that are considered appropriate or typical for females and males in their societies (Santrock, 2004). This suggests that there are some roles that are considered to be male and female dominated. One of the consistent gender differences is that boys are more physically aggressive than boys (*ibid.*).

Television viewing largely shapes the behaviour of learners. According to interactionists the television amplifies certain behaviour, to take place (Haralambos and Holborn, 2010). Learners model or imitate characters on television thus they identify themselves with characters of their choice. According to Bandura's theory people model the behaviour they have seen. From his bobo doll film the children who were exposed to aggressive models ended up being aggressive to the doll as well (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010). Some pupils adopt the type of behaviour presented on the television which has negative impact on their behaviour, in the same vein television influences learners' understanding of identity within gender roles. For example in Africa movies women are, portrayed as receptionists or typists and this can influence types of jobs pursued by female learners. There is a tendency by children especially boys who imitate characters from programs such as wrestling, cartoons, films, just to name a few. Resultantly, female learners are victimised through imitating some of the behaviors. Female characters devote their primary energies to improve their appearances (Wood, 2007). For example, girls imitate dress codes, body and facial appearances from television presenters, adverts and modeling shows. This results subsequently in spending more time in improving oneself at the expense of studying in the case of learners. Some television programs on electronic media perpetuate violence among learners and female learners are vulnerable and in most cases they are survivors. Feminist argue that electronic media endorse violence against women (Woods, 2007). Through constant violent experiences girls become psychologically or emotionally disturbed m thereby affecting their educational performance.

Proponents of the feminists' theory, therefore advocate for equality of opportunities, elimination of sexism and discrimination of females in media for them to realize their full potentialities, capabilities and aspirations in education.

1.3. Television and Gender Socialization

The television images play a vital role in persuading, influencing and socializing males and females into gender specific roles through its programming .Most programmes are structured and designed from a masculine perspective (Bwewusa, 2008). Electronic media portrays women regarded as sex objects by men by the plethora of decorative roles assigned to them more than men and women sharing recreational activities but not work (*Ibid.*). Hence, more often than not women are relatively shown very less in working roles. This influences the types of jobs pursued by young girls for example, modeling. Therefore, television programming and advertisements under represent and misrepresent the reality about females resulting in different treatment and educational attainment between boys and girls.

1.4. Underrepresentation of Females on Television

Quite a limited number of females are featured on television as compared to males. Lack of women in the media is paralleled by the scarcity of women in charge of media (Wood, 2007). For example in Zimbabwe top positions of higher authority at Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) are held by males as executive officers, directors, producers, among others. As the media is patriarchal it determines the type of content to be covered which is biased against females. Therefore, the scarcity of female in top positions on television services make people believe that only males can take up journalism and other programmes relocated to television broadcasting. Characters on television programming like movies, dramas, and children's television among others feature more males than females. According to thirteen studies on adult television programmes by Palsdey and Butter in Durkin (1995) regarding the frequency with which males and females appear on television. Seventy-two percent (72%) of the characters are males and a twenty-eight percent (28%) are females. Furthermore, more males in children's television programmes outnumber females. Under representations is exacerbated in children's television programming with male characters appearing up to four times more frequently than female characters (Calvent, (1999) cited in Martins and Harrison on <http://crx.sagepub.com>. This is evidenced in cartoons like Bananas in Pyjamas, Tom and Jerry, and Disney Junior among others where the dominant characters are males. Consequently television does not reflect the true demographic reality and representation of gender. Therefore, learners are presented with distorted perceptions that males are the outstanding performers or characters who can acquire leadership roles while females are the followers and passive recipients who play supportive roles. As a result the females develop an inferiority complex.

It is this inferiority complex that females, girls to be particular, carry to school where most boys take active roles by occupying more classroom space, especially in discussions. Girls, because of the inferiority complex socialisation elect boys into leadership roles such as group leaders, class monitors to be depicted by monitors and not vice-versa. It is these leadership roles that boys are exposed to at tender ages that make them more ambitious and power hungry than females. Boys acquire leadership roles which prepare them for future careers as executive officers, politicians, directors of, companies, among others.

Music videos or television also show more male performers (Henslin, 2003). In Zimbabwe most prominent musicians often screened on the local television are males. For example Aleck Macheso, Oliver Mutukudzi to mention a few, are frequently featured on the local television like the Zimbabwe Television (ZTV). Through frequent featuring of males in music videos, females are discouraged from undertaking music as a profession which is seen as a male domain. Furthermore, some people associate musicians and dancers with promiscuous behaviour. Therefore females' careers in music have been affected as those who aspire to be one are forced to take up alternative careers.

Most sporting activities screened on the television are male dominated. Television programmes emphasize the difference between male and female attributes (Schaefer, 2010). Television coverage in sporting activities is biased against females. Most sports programmes both locally and internationally feature male sporting activities like soccer, golf, cricket among others and often receive sponsorship from local and multinational companies like coca-cola, Banc ABC. The soccer games are aired on television where the sponsors advertise or market their products. International soccer games like UEFA championship also receive sponsorship from multinational companies like Barclays. Digital Satellite Television (DSTV) shows soccer as a male domain as it provides channels like supper sports. Cricket also receives sponsorship from companies such as Fly emirates. Furthermore, best players in male dominated sporting activities receive more awards than female ones such that they become popular on television as it reaches a high proportion of audience.

Schools focus more attention and finance on male sporting activities than females (Appelbaum and Chambliss, 1996). For example, schools prefer to buy more sporting uniforms kits for sporting activities perceived as male domain than females sporting activities. Sponsors such as Coca Cola, Cotton Company of Zimbabwe sponsor boys' soccer and rugby respectively. Girls are therefore segregated from doing sporting activities perceived as a male domain. Consequently they fail to display their capabilities and talents. They become observers and cheerers of male dominated games, thereby placing less value on sporting activities leading to girls' underachievement in sports.

Thus, girl learners develop a sense of inferiority to partake subjects like mathematics and hard sciences. Hence they pursue simple subjects that channel them to low paying jobs as well as to domestic work, for example food and nutrition helps girl learners to be well versed in cooking. Thus, electronic media has effects on gender socialisation of learners.

1.5. Misrepresentation of Females on Television

The television places females in subservient and domestic roles. It reflects the basic belief in male dominance, the social institution in which more power and prestige are given to males than females (Poopoe, 2003). On television females are shown role playing inferior characters showing dependency, and powerlessness while males play adventurous and heroic characters demonstrating independence power and aggression. Thus movies, dramas, cartoons among other programmes contribute towards girls' inferiority complex (Wood, 2007). Due to inferiority complex girls become subordinates, dependents and passive learners while, boys become competent, confident, powerful and active in class. Therefore, girls underestimate their ability resulting in differential educational attainment between boys and girls. Television viewing also affects learners' type of play. According to Fiona Norman and Colleagues, the form of play boys and girls engage in contributes to the development of different sets of aptitudes (Haralambos and Holborn, 2010). Through watching television girls are influenced to engage in female roles associated with nurturing while boys in roles associated with masculinity. For example girls play with toys like dolls and miniature kitchen utensils while boys play with constructional toys like building blocks, cars and guns, Some television programmes excite children that they role play what they have seen. For instance, boys may imitate shooting with guns where girls are the victims of the shootings.

Television also reinforces gender stereotyping as females are depicted in traditional roles. Males are featured in the public sphere while females in the domestic sphere. Santock (2004) expounds that in one analysis of rap videos on television, teenage girls were primarily shown as concerned with dating, shopping and their appearances. In some cases women are screened doing household chores like cooking, washing, caring for siblings. The role models of women were in inferior occupations such as nursing and teaching at primary school where they preserve of females. These professions were perceived feminine and only males getting into such professions where said, to be females. Males appear in high status jobs and positions associated with masculinity such as engineering, medicine, driving heavy vehicles and managing just to mention a few. Therefore, television affects children's occupational choices. On the other hand males are portrayed as incompetent in work related to domestic sphere while females are shown experiencing difficulties in performing masculine work.

When females are featured on television as main characters, they are portrayed as wicked. This image tarnishes them by showing bad women as mostly involved in destroying family happiness through gossip and rumour managing (Bwewusa, 2008). In some movies, films and dramas, females are portrayed as role playing characters which involve prostitution, witchcraft among others. For example, most African movies like two rats, blood sisters and the in heritage show cruel acts by females. They destroy family relationships through prostitution and often visit *sangomas* for love concoctions that are disastrous at the end. Therefore, television images demean and belittle females self esteem thereby affecting their individual ego to do better. It is this portrayal that socializes the girl child to see no good in her together with her kith and kin (Bwewusa, 2008). This results in everlasting images of inferiority and inadequacy. Unfortunately this kind of perception haunts her even at school thereby playing second fiddle to the male counterpart.

In addition, males are portrayed on television as having power, authority and control over females. Movies, films and advertisements cast females as helpless and males come to their rescue (Schaefer, 2010). For instance, the famous Zimbabwean film 'Neriah' features Neriah as a widow who faces a number of problems at the hands of males that is her brother in law after her husband's death. Her belongings are taken away by the brother in law. She is portrayed as helpless and is always in tears and seems to have resigned to her fate. The film inculcates in the girl child negative sense of oneself, hence deep-seated feelings of inadequacy are developed. Thus movies, dramas and films portray that women should be submissive to preserve the society's culture (Bwewusa, 2008). Most African dramas and movies show women battering as a way of disciplining them. They are not allowed to reply back when a dispute arises. Advertisements also feature males in authority and rescuing females. Women are routinely shown anguishing over dirty floor and bathroom fixtures only to be relieved of their distress when a male shows up to tell how to keep their homes spotless (Woods, 2007). For instance, this is portrayed in Mr Muscle a disinfectant and toilet cleaner advert, where a female having trouble in cleaning the toilet is relieved when Mr. Muscle cleans it. Also Gavason, used for the relief of stomach inflammation and heartburn is advertised with the firemen extinguishing the burning sensation in the stomach. Through these adverts female learners limit their perceptions and feel that they are incomplete and inadequate. This result in low self esteem and this has serious consequences on their school work. Feelings of underachievement are entrenched in them at a tender age.

Furthermore television portrays men as physically stronger than women. Television promotes a masculine ideal and encourage men to exude on aura of physical strength to repress and loath the female traits (Jacobson and Mazur in Bwewusa, 2008). Males are revealed as stronger and muscular while females are smaller and weaker as portrayed in the cartoon Power man. In addition, men are always more victorious than the female counterpart. Through watching such kind of television shows or images girls are corrupted to believe that they are only capable of doing less challenging work than boys. This has a misappropriating effect on the female learner. Her potential to excel is curtailed and nipped in the bud. Thus, from the onset the female learner is already disadvantaged. The playing field is skewed in favour of the male learner right from the beginning for female learners are socialized by the television to play a second fiddle to male learners as have been demonstrated by the examples given.

Females are usually portrayed as obsessed by beauty thereby frequently appearing in advertisements modeling and pageant shows on television. Women appear in adverts to attract views and consumers (Poponoe, 2003) For example, cosmetics products such as bathing soap adverts emphasise on women's facial appearance. Therefore, women are exploited for economic gains as advertisers create and expand markets for their products. In addition, females are depicted in modeling and beauty pageant shows which emphasise on hyper sexual clothing and body proportion.

According to the Miss Zimbabwe Trust Chairperson, the criteria or expectations of the models include a height of 1,72 meters or above not more than, 60kg (sixty kilograms) weight but size thirty two inches hip size, ninety-nine centimeters among others (Sunday Mail, 17 December, 2013). Therefore to qualify one needs to control her body weight to meet the requirements. Losing weight or controlling of body weight may result in some illness thereby affecting the female learners' performance. On the other hand males are featured on modeling shows on television where they play a supportive role. In modeling shows, men appear as judges or advisors (Schaefer, 2010). Men appear as audience and advisors in modeling shows. If men appear in modeling shows they depict muscle development and ugliness. For example, Zimbabwe holds Mr. Ugly pageant contests where those who are ugly battle it out. The current holder of the competition in Willain Masvinu and is now used to advertise copper oxychloride Mancozeb and monochrotophos pesticides (The Herald, 24 February 2014). All this is done in order to demonstrate that adverts have an indelible imprint and can have serious impact on how people view themselves and are viewed by the world. These adverts have long standing effects hence the surging argument that media has effect on the socialization of learners.

1.6. Television and Learners Behaviours

Television viewing also contributes to certain cultures which contradict with norms and expectations of society, particularly the school. According to Sutherland in Gwirayi (2010) people become deviant to the extent to which they participate in settings where deviant ideas, motivations and techniques are viewed as favourable. Thus, the videos, movies films and other programmes enable them to be copycats of an alien culture. For example as characters on television are learners' role models they copy the dress code, hairstyle among others.

At school boys can drop their shorts or trousers and plait hair imitating musicians like urban grooves and rappers while girls may put on mini uniforms or adjust the length of their uniforms to suit their choices. These acts have implications as they violate the rules and regulations at school which may result in their suspension from school thereby affecting learners performance in education. More so, adverts provoke learners especially boys to try it out (Bwewusa, 2008). For instance, smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol and use of condoms on advertisements may influence learners to behave in a certain manner that may be detrimental to learners' performance.

Television viewing has a bearing on how learners behave. Television can perpetuate violence among learners. The girl learner is seen at the receiving end in this equation. The girl learners are usually the survivors in these trails of violence often perpetuated by the boys at school. Earlier research has demonstrated that there is a linkage between mayhem and violence in children's programmes and aggressive behaviour in children (Gwirayi, 2010). Thus some characters on television become role models for children they therefore imitate the violent behaviour and attitudes they see on television. Violent behaviour is acquired from the bad or violent role models on the side of the masculine who perform cruel acts such as atrocities, murder (Bwewusa, 2008).

Therefore viewing violent behaviour can lead to gender based violence perpetuated by males of which girls are the survivors. Such programmes include fiction and action packed films, horror movies, kung-fu and world wrestling. Boys identify themselves with prominent character such as John Cena in wrestling or Batista by imitating the character. Therefore, most violence done in schools is attribute to violent behaviour viewed by learners on television. Girls are on the receiving end of television inspired violence. Boys imitate what they see on television and perpetuate it on girls who because of bullying develop negative attitude towards school. They begin to unnecessarily absent themselves from classes and the next effect is poor performance.

Television violence increases the toleration of aggression in real life (Van Der Zanden 1988 in Schaefer 2010). Learners therefore may view violence as an appropriate behaviour to adapt. Television violence is often used to express the common fears that violent imagery programmes brewed aggression in viewers (Haralambos and Holborn, 2010). Most African movies and other films have a lesson in them but the unfortunate part of it is that the lesson or message comes at the end. Children would have conceptualized what happen in the greater part of the story which can be immoral. Scenes on television depict domestic violence thereby breeding aggression in learners.

On the contrary some writers view television as not a source of acts of violence but television reinforces attitudes already held by those who are attracted to it. Moore (1994) posits that media is not the cause of violence but it strengthens the attitudes of those attracted to it. Be that as it may suffices, to say that television cause violence as well as reinforcing it in learners. Furthermore, television perpetuates sexual violence and abuse of females. Females are portrayed as either decorative objects who must attract men to be valuable or as victims of men's sexual impulses (Wood, 2007). For example, females are shown in adverts on television while nude or half dressed or in undergarments while males are rarely featured unclothed.

Music videos also feature females in provocative sexual revealing clothing to gain men's attention (Wood, 2007). Therefore girls are associated with indecency, loss of dignity and are considered as valueless. Girls are featured more in pornography than males whether they are sexually abused or not. Viewing sexually violent material on television increases men's belief in rape myths (Ibid). The increase in pornography viewing has led to an increase in sexual abuse. There is a correlation that again leaves females at the receiving end.

A Harare man is said to have followed up a nine year old girl and raped her after viewing television images with sexual innuendos. (H. Metro, 23 July 2013). The man is said to have been incited by what he was viewing before committing the rape. More so, the perception of the famine being considered as an object by the masculine has escalated the inhuman behaviour towards the famine (Bwewusa, 2008). The raped suffer from psychological traumas. Most survivors of rape continue to deal with the emotional aftermath of rape for the rest of their lives (Marchefer *et al*, 1988 as cited in Wood, 2007). Sexually abused female learners are constantly traumatized or haunted by the abuse experience resulting in poor academic performance. For example they become passive in class, isolate themselves from others.

Ironically, television's portrayal of violence against females seems to be acceptable and normal. The more people are exposed to violence on television the more acceptable is violence by society as part of normal relationship (Ibid). This unfortunate correlation normalizes violence. Under such scenario, chances are that females became less likely to object or defend themselves against physical violence. As such cases of violence in its various forms go unreported. Females begin to look at the world as a male dominated world. This nurtures in females an inferiority complex as they lack the confidence to change their status quo.

Sexual expressions in nomadic films, movies and pornographic videos affect learners' behaviour negatively. Sexual images and activities shown on television can be seen as exciting and pleasurable by all parties involved (Mackinnon, 1987 cited in Wood, 2007). Thus due to exposure to these types of images, learners are coerced to indulge in pre-marital and unprotected sex. As a result female learners get pregnant and are vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections (STI's).

According to the Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey (ZDHS) 2010-2011 teenagers pregnancies increased from twenty-one percent between 2005 and 2006 to twenty four percent between 2010 and 2011 (The Sunday Mail, 19-25 January 2014). This demonstrates that learners viewing of nomadic movies and pornographic material on television contribute to early female learners'

pregnancies. Resultantly, the female learners' dropout of school while the male learners responsible for the pregnancy remains at school. Female learners' educational attainment and aspirations are adversely affected resulting in differential educational attainment between the boy and the girl learner.

From the foregoing, it is almost a truism that electronic media in general and television, in particular have an effect on gender socialisation of the learners. What socializes learners as they grow determines how they are likely to behave. The television has immense contribution towards how learners related to one another and to the society at large. The discussion, so far has been underpinning the reality that gender stereotyping is consciously or unconsciously perpetuated by what learners view on television.

1.7. Mobile Phone and Gender Socialisation

Similarly the mobile phone socializes males and females differently. According to Wakanauna's study mobile phones as electronic media can reinforce the existing gender relationships, further strengthening male dominated societies and powers structures (Munyua and Mureithi, 2008). It is used in destructive and oppressive ways to reinforce the traditional roles which are gender biased. Females' use of the mobile phone is viewed as a corruption of nature (Ganito, 2010). Thus if females use the mobile phone culturally they are supposed to be presented in domestic sphere. However, it enables the females to cross over boundaries and venture into areas perceived as male domain. Therefore, mobile phone is viewed as technology of gender construction as it alienates females from usage and access leading to gender digital divide.

1.8. Mobile Phone and Gender Stereotyping

Mobile phone reinforces gender gaps in its intensive and extensive usage. Some studies represented mobile phone as a site for men and women to act out their traditional gendered identities, activity and technological appropriation for men and dependency and domesticity for women (Lemish and Cohen, 2005 cited in Ganito, 2010). From this point of view males are perceived as stressing instrumentality usage while females use it just for communicating especially with family members, friends and relations. For boys the mobile phone is used to organize life, arrange dates and contacts actions and meetings (Lovente, 2002 as cited in Geser, 2006 on [http:// socio: ch/mobileit gser 3.pdf](http://socio.ch/mobileit_gser_3.pdf)). Using the mobile phone boys make their phone conversations short and problem solving oriented.

On the other hand girls' mobile phone usage is perceived as involving the domestic sphere. According to some studies girls are more prone to disclose personal information and emotions and to discuss their subject's tests and interests with others than boys (Buhrrmesteri 1995 as cited in Geser, 2006 on [http:// socio.ch/mobile it gesder3pdf](http://socio.ch/mobileit_gesder3pdf)). Thus they communicate with family members relatives and friends will talk at length to express their personal and emotional matters. The lengthy the conversation the more their conversation is associated with gossip by the males. Females are said to be gossipers and as such males see no constructive conversations from females. Mobile phones are said to asset boys in developing maturity and autonomy which prepare them for future careers while the mobile phone for girls is platform to gossip and engage in trivialities.

Furthermore girls are addicted to mobile phone usage than boys. Networks of female are often larger and more complex than these of males (Cochran, 1993 and Moore, 1990 as cited in Geser, 2006 on <http://socio:ch/mobile It - geser 3.pdf>). That they use the text messages to face book and whatsapp to communicate with their family members, relative and friends to maintain their social work. Ling's studies revealed that adolescents female as well as women up to forty (40) are more active than males (Ibid). Therefore females heavily immersing themselves in mobile phone usage have a negative impact in their academic performance. More time is spent in social networks such as face book and whatsapp rather than studying. This affects the learner resulting in failure to school.

In addition mobile phone turns to empower boys more than girls. The mobile phone seems to be an extension of the public world when used by males, an extension by the public when used by females (Rakow and Navamo, 1993 as cited in Ganito 2010). Due to the exploration of functional features of the mobile phone of accessing the internet boys given more knowledge and current information while girls confine themselves to social networking whose benefits is rarely realized in communities. Already the use of mobile phone is a gendered discourse that tends to associate female's use of mobile phone with trivialities whereas with male it is an essential instrument for advancement and self improvement. Proportionally, there are more males with access to mobile phones than females. This scenario is premised on the same gender stereotyping socialisation whereby the majority of females, especially rural females understand the use of mobile phones of one of these areas males must dominate. Female seems to care less to the use of the mobile phones. For most of them it is male domain and preserve.

Nevertheless, the use of mobile phone by females has positively changed their status. The mobile phones are valuable to females as they serve as a liberator (Frissen, 1995 and Rakoy, 1998 in Lee, 2009). Thus cases of gender based violence (GBV) sexual abuse, among others can be reported by the female survivors using the mobile phones. The quicker the reports the easier and earlier the culprits are brought to book. According to Rakov 1998 (ibid) mobile phones mitigate women's fear, isolation, loneliness and boredom. Mobile phones therefore can create a peaceful conducive environment for loving and learning. The submission here is that while the use of mobile phones by female is ordinarily perceived in the negative way there are times, though minimal where they can be handy, serve and save females.

Mobile phone can be an empowerment tool for females who get access to and use it electively. Female empower is whereby those who are denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such ability (Kabeere 1999 in Munyua and Muriethi, 2008). These life choices include claims and access to resource decisions made, negotiations, deceptions, manipulation, and achievement. When appropriately used the mobile phone increases formal potential to access information to better their self esteem thereby increasing confidence and exposing them to more career opportunities (Munyua and Muriethi, 2008). As mobile phones has no physical

boundaries female venture into areas perceived as the male domain for example, they can access information on the internet through data of information downloading thereby improving their academic performance.

Mobile phones, being gender gadgets can also be classified as race gadgets. As gender gadgets they express gender identities through colour. It is argued that producing the mobile phone is pink in order to appeal to female in a gender script (Ganito, 2010). Silver, black and grey mobile phones are associated with males. Culturally colour communicates meaning in people. Thus, colours as male domain are associated with power hence female choose colours understood as female domain is comfort to the masculine norm. The moment mobile phones are perceived in such a manner, they act as gender gadgets where one gender (male) enjoys colour associated with power and the opposite is true for females.

As class and race gadgets, mobile phone defines one's class and even race. In the social stratification of mobile phones, the black female suffer most. She is at the bottom of the stratum. She is female first like a white counterpart but black second. This advantages her and in most the case she losses interest in mobile phones and other related electronics media. Since the world is unwelcoming she recoils in the gender socialisation and remain silent. The vicious circle continues generation after generation.

Cyber bullying results in labeling of the victim cyber bullying and violence, which involves labeling, can result itself fulfilling prophecy (Schaefer, 2010) For example, the victim which is labeled promiscuous or a trickster can live according to the label. This leads to self filling prophecy. This a process through which our expectations about another person causes us to act in ways that lead the person to behave as we expected (Feldman, R.S. (2009).

2. Methodology

The researchers used the qualitative approach and the survey research design in which the findings of the study are described and explained comprehensively. Leedy (2012:180) defines survey as, "to look or see over and beyond the casual glance or the superficial observation." This means that a survey is a method of gathering data for descriptive, explanatory and exploratory purposes in analyzing the study. Data from a big population is to be observed directly (Babbie, 2010). Thus the survey makes the task of a large sample feasible, as it is difficult to use the whole population. A total population of five hundred and fifty three (553) was from two secondary schools in one cluster in Masvingo. The researchers targeted the group as they believe it can provide valid knowledge and information about the issues raised in the study. Systematic sampling was used for the sample. To obtain the participants from the population, the total number of form four students was counted in each school and every fifth student was chosen.

The study used the questionnaire and the interview methods for collecting data. These are ways of collecting data for analysis and interpretation (Rubin and Babbie, 2013). The interview used to gather data from four secondary school teachers in who teach in the same secondary schools and they employed face to face interviews with open ended questions.

2.1. Summary of Major Findings

The major findings of the study are summarised and based on the research question and the research sub-questions outlined before. The study revealed that the television and the mobile phone have an effect on the learners' gender socialisation. It was established that the television influence learners gender socialisation in various ways. Learners and teachers revealed that the television influence learners gender socialisation in stereotypical ways. The learners indicated that females are mostly portrayed on television doing household chores like cooking, washing while males are shown doing work associated with masculinity such as driving, building and supervising people. Views of the learners concurred with those of the teachers as they admitted that the television is not doing enough in promoting a gender neutral mode of production and programming. They argued that positions in media are still male that they determine the content and types of programmes to produce which are biased in their favour. However, learners believe that an improvement is seen on television whereby some programmes now feature females in areas perceived as male domain. One teacher echoed and acknowledged that the television is now taking into consideration gender sensitive issues in its programming although the programmes are still few.

The study also revealed that the portrayal of females in traditional gender roles in the domestic sphere and in males in the public spheres doing work associated with masculinity and prestige on television influence boys and girls choice of subjects and ambitions. The students indicated that boys' and girls' choice of subjects and aspirations are influenced by television programming. All the teachers acknowledged that the television influence learners' choice of subjects as girls are channeled into subjects associated with the domestic sphere while boys do subjects related to the public sphere. They indicated that learners' aspirations are influenced by characters who act as their role models.

It also emerged from the study that mobile phone create a gender gap between boys and girls. Students indicated that the use of the mobile phone by boys was centered on instrumental roles while girls use it expressively for communication purposes. Most of the learners revealed that girls were more restricted from using and accessing the mobile phone than boys. Teachers and students shared the same that most girls were restricted from using the mobile phones as compared to boys. The argument was that girls will be influenced to promiscuous behaviour. Few learners contradicted with the view. One teacher also disagreed as he believed that both boys and girls are restricted from using mobile phone by their parents as they fear that there can be a barrier to their children's educational performance and attainment as more time could be taken in using them at the expense of studying. Electronic media affects people's perceptions about different roles attached to maleness and femaleness which eventually has an impact on learners' attitudes, behaviour and choice of subjects and careers. It has proved to be one of the most influential agents of gender socialisation. Television programmes and mobile phone usage reinforce gender roles that, males and females are expected to perform thereby disadvantaging female learners' academic aspirations and success.

Lastly the study also established that the television and the mobile phone have a negative effect on learners' behaviour. The learners confirmed that violent behaviour shown on television programmes result in aggressive behaviour in learners at school, at which girls are victimised. The teachers concurred with the view and cited examples of programmes like wrestling action films which depict violent behaviour and influence learners to be violent learners also revealed that romantic and pornographic videos on television and the mobile phone through accessing and downloading the material on the internet contribute to promiscuous behaviour among learners, resulting in the girl child disadvantages when impregnated. Teachers shared the same views with learners as they revealed that television influence learners behaviour as they imitate characters shown. They gave evidence of television related indiscipline problems they face at school such as bullying others, dishonesty and indulging in love affairs.

2.2. Recommendations for the Study

2.2.1. The Researchers Recommended That

- The government through the Ministry of Information and Technology should introduce a code of conduct for media houses and professionals to be more sophisticated and to develop expertise knowledge on gender issues to promote a gender balanced mode of production and programming.
- The government through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should introduce gender education as early as ECD stage to cater for gender disparities contributed by electronic media and other factors.
- As gender is a social construction it can be deconstructed socially. Therefore, teachers should be ambassadors in addressing gender issues like misconceptions thereby creating a conducive and genders sensitive environment.
- Proper parental guidance is needed on the use of different types of electronic media and to take into consideration the duration of time children spend on watching the television to develop awareness of the effect of electronic media.
- Other stakeholders should raise awareness campaigns to sensitize learners and parents on the positive and negative impacts of electronic media.

2.2.2. Further Studies Should Be Done to

- Explore how electronic media can be used in schools to promote gender sensitivity attitude in pupils and teachers
- Establishes the importance of electronic media in gender socialisation of learners.
- The study revealed that the television and the mobile phone have a negative effected gender socialisation of learners. It emerged from the study that most programmes on television are biased towards males which corrupt people's opinions on how they view females and influence female learners' attitudes, ambitions and educational performance and attainment.
- The study also revealed that the mobile phone is a technology of gender construction where boys use it instrumentally and girls expressively which reinforce traditionally gender roles thereby empowering boys than girls.

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