STRENGTHENING gender research to improve GIRLS’ and WOMEN’S education IN AFRICA
Strengthening gender research to improve girls' and women's education in Africa

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Introduction

Research is fundamental to socio-economic development work. While it does not offer quick fixes to the complexities of poverty reduction and development, it has the potential to facilitate how we negotiate these complexities by generating knowledge on specific areas that require policy attention. As gender equality and women’s empowerment are key to development efforts, research that seeks to influence these efforts must necessarily be gender sensitive and must shed light on the realities, considerations and potential approaches to ensuring positive outcomes for all in the development process – female and male alike.

As regards education in particular, research can enlighten us on ways to ensure policy approaches, community attitudes, teaching practices and learning environments are fair, enabling and lead to enhanced learning outcomes for girls and boys and women and men. Knowledge generated from such research provides rationale for political decisions regarding education and its crucial role in poverty reduction and socio-economic development. FAWE’s objective is to ensure that the knowledge gained from this collection of studies on gender and education in Africa is integrated into decision-making processes on new and revised education policies and plans geared towards greater equity and development.

Moreover, it is essential that more women strengthen their research competencies and join the African research community in order to ensure that women’s perspectives on gender concerns are incorporated into priority research areas including quality education for all children; teachers and pedagogical practice; equality in education; and education in crisis and fragile situations. This, too, is key to development work. Greater research opportunities for African women open up more channels for them to influence their societies by asking pertinent research questions in all development areas. This also contributes to a more balanced distribution of power in the creation and use of knowledge and greater gender equality in policy dialogue on the continent.

This third cycle of research led by FAWE responds to the concerns and objectives raised above. First, the studies in this volume focus on key questions related to providing an enabling learning environment and creating the conditions for a successful transition to the world of work. They look at gendered concerns for young women on technology related degree programmes or seeking to become student leaders on their university campuses; harassment and sexual violence among secondary school learners with special needs; the interrelation among gender, education and labour market integration; and the role of the informal sector in supporting or hindering girls’ education.

Second, while male researchers brought valuable perspective and input to the studies published here, all the research teams were led by experienced female African researchers specialised in gender and/or education. The insights of these researchers can inform FAWE’s work in a strategic manner, while FAWE, taking advantage of its strong network for disseminating research, can in turn provide a platform for these researchers to widen their engagement and influence in the education policy and practice arenas. Mindful of the need to build research capacity among young African scholars, the teams also included at least two research mentees – young female or male researchers who were mentored by the lead researcher and other experienced researchers in order to strengthen their understanding and practice in the areas of gender research.

Third, with its privileged links to African policy- and decision-makers, the education sector as a whole, development partners from both within and outside the continent, and major African regional bodies and networks, FAWE is in a unique position to contribute to strengthening linkages between research, policy and practice. The three cycles of research that have been published thus far as the FAWE Research Series offer a prime opportunity to: infuse new knowledge into the African research arena and incite the continuous refinement of research agendas; offer new knowledge and perspectives to policy-making and implementation processes; open up greater channels of communication between the generation of knowledge through research and the harnessing of that knowledge through practical implementation; and create a common ground in which research informs policy and policy informs research.

This research initiative under which these studies have been conducted has been the focus of FAWE’s research activities since 2009. FAWE will endeavour to sustain its research efforts beyond this initiative, building on the continent-wide network, the mentoring of young researchers, and the FAWE Research Series over time. These are crucial to FAWE’s work and will continue to inform it.
FAWE would like to thank the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) for its unwavering support throughout the duration of the initiative and for enabling FAWE and its partners to make this important contribution. FAWE would also like to extend its sincere thanks to the research teams and institutions who have been our valued partners in this endeavour and have contributed so significantly to this volume.

Hendrina Doroba
FAWE Acting Executive Director
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## List of abbreviations and acronyms

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<tr>
<td>AAWORD</td>
<td>Association of African Woman for Research and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADEA</td>
<td>Association for the Development of Education in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AfDB</td>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGEFOP</td>
<td>Agence nationale de la formation professionnelle (National Agency for Vocational Training)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGEPE</td>
<td>Agence pour l’étude et la promotion de l’emploi (Agency for Training and the Promotion of Employment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired immune deficiency syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALMA</td>
<td>Africa Leadership and Management Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANSD</td>
<td>Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie (National Statistics and Demography Agency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASHEWA</td>
<td>Association for Strengthening Higher Education for Women in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.Com</td>
<td>Bachelor of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEAM</td>
<td>Basic Education Assistance Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEST</td>
<td>Basic Education Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BREDA</td>
<td>UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTS</td>
<td>Brevet de technicien supérieur (Advanced Technician’s Certificate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CADEFINANCE</td>
<td>Caisse d’épargne financière pour le développement de la petite entreprise (Savings Bank for Small Business Development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camfed</td>
<td>Campaign for Female Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDD</td>
<td>Contrat à durée déterminée (Fixed-term, remunerated contract)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDI</td>
<td>Contrat à durée indéterminée (Permanent contract)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEPICI</td>
<td>Centre de promotion des investissements en Côte d’Ivoire (Centre for the Promotion of Investment in Côte d’Ivoire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERAP</td>
<td>Research and Action Centre for Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFPC</td>
<td>Centre de Formation Professionnel et Commercial (Professional and commercial training centre)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIFIP</td>
<td>Centre international de formation et d’insertion professionnelle (International Centre for Vocational Training and Professional Integration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIRES</td>
<td>Ivorian Centre for Economic and Social Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNPS</td>
<td>Caisse nationale de prévoyance sociale (National Social Security Fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CODIPRAL</td>
<td>Coopérative de distribution de produits alimentaires (Cooperative for the Distribution of Food Products)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COFULEF</td>
<td>Association of University Women for Women’s Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONFEMEN</td>
<td>Conférence des Ministre de l’Éducation ayant le français en partage (Conference of Ministers of Education of French-Speaking Countries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COOPEC</td>
<td>Coopérative d’épargne et de crédit (Cooperative Savings and Loan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORAF/WECARD</td>
<td>West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSEF</td>
<td>Conseil Sénégalais des Femmes (Senegalese Women’s Council)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Certified Public Accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRVFE</td>
<td>Comité de Réflexion sur les Violences faites aux Femmes et aux Enfants (Study Committee on Violence Against Women and Children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil society organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Central Statistical Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSREES</td>
<td>Cooperative State Research Extension Education Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV</td>
<td>Curriculum Vitae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUWA</td>
<td>Catholic University of West Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWP</td>
<td>Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DESS</td>
<td>Diplôme d’études supérieures spécialisées (Diploma of Higher Specialized Studies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR</td>
<td>Dropout rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSRP</td>
<td>Document de Stratégie de relance du développement et de réduction de la pauvreté (Strategy Paper for Reviving Development and Reducing Poverty)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUT</td>
<td>Diplôme universitaire de technologie (University diploma in technology)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENSET</td>
<td>Higher Technical Teachers' Training College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENV</td>
<td>Enquête sur le niveau de vie des ménages (Survey on Household Standards of Living)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERNWACA</td>
<td>Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESPS</td>
<td>Enquête de Suivi de la Pauvreté au Sénégal (Follow-up Study on Poverty in Senegal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agricultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FASTEF</td>
<td>Faculty of Training, Educational Sciences and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAWE</td>
<td>Forum for African Women Educationalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDI</td>
<td>Foreign direct investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FENACOVICI</td>
<td>Fédération nationale des coopératives de vivriers de Cote d’Ivoire (Cote d’Ivoire National Federation of Foodstuff Cooperatives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEWS NET</td>
<td>Famine Early Warning Systems Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus group discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>GER</td>
<td>Gross enrolment ratio</td>
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<tr>
<td>GHAMSU</td>
<td>Ghana Methodists Students Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPI</td>
<td>Gender parity index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human immunodeficiency virus</td>
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<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>Human resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICLS</td>
<td>International Conference of Labour Statisticians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRW</td>
<td>International Center for Research on Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and communication technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFEF</td>
<td>Institutions de formation et d’éducation féminine (Training and Educational Institutions for Women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIEP</td>
<td>International Institute for Educational Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILFS</td>
<td>Integrated Labour Force Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INS</td>
<td>Institut national de la statistique (National Institute of Statistics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISL</td>
<td>Integrated sustainable livelihoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISSBD</td>
<td>International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUT</td>
<td>Higher Institute of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>JCRC</td>
<td>Junior Common Room Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JHS</td>
<td>Junior high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JORDE</td>
<td>Journal of Research and Development in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO</td>
<td>Life orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>Masters of Business Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEF</td>
<td>Ministère de l’Economie et des Finances (Ministry of the Economy and Finance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METFP</td>
<td>Ministère de l’Enseignement Technique et de la Formation Professionnelle (Ministry of Technical Education and Professional Training)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METFPALN</td>
<td>Ministère de l’Enseignement Technique de la Formation Professionnelle de l’Alphabétisation et des Langues Nationales (Ministry of Technical Education and Professional Training in Literacy and National Languages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MKUKUTA</td>
<td>Mkakati wa Kukuza Uchumi na Kupunguza Umaskini Tanzania (National Strategy for Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction in Tanzania)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLEYD</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour, Employment and Youth Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoESAC</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSGs</td>
<td>Mother support groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBS</td>
<td>National Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESSE</td>
<td>Network of Experts in Social Sciences of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norad</td>
<td>Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUGS</td>
<td>National Union of Ghana Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUPS</td>
<td>National Union of Presbyterian Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASS</td>
<td>Poverty Assessment Study Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PENSAPA</td>
<td>Pentecost Students and Associates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RADI</td>
<td>Réseau Africain pour le Développement Intégré (African Network for Integrated Development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPOA</td>
<td>Research on Poverty Alleviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPROF-EFFA</td>
<td>Network of Teachers of French for the Education of Girls and the Training of Women in Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>RFI</td>
<td>Radio France Internationale</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Structural adjustment programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDCs</td>
<td>School development committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHS</td>
<td>Senior high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLE</td>
<td>School life expectancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNA</td>
<td>System of national accounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Product and Service Solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRC</td>
<td>Student Representative Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA</td>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TGNP</td>
<td>Tanzania Gender Networking Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TR</td>
<td>Transition rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical and Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tanzanian Shilling
University of Dar es Salaam
University of Education, Winneba
Félix Houphouët Boigny University
UNESCO Institute for Statistics
United Kingdom
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
United Nations Population Fund
United Nations Children’s Fund
United Nations Women’s Fund
University of South Africa
United Republic of Tanzania
United States of America
World Bank
Working Group on Communication for Education and Development
Women with no schooling and integrated
Women with no schooling and not integrated
Women with schooling and integrated
Women with schooling and not integrated
Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency
Overview

The studies in this third volume of the FAWE Research Series address two specific aspects of girls’ and women’s education in Africa. On one hand, they examine some of the challenges related to violence, abuse, harassment, discouragement and intimidation that prevent girls and young women from enjoying a complete, safe and enabling learning experience. On the other, they question the relevance and effectiveness of education and training programmes for African labour markets today, and take stock of the gendered attitudes and practices that influence young women’s experiences in transitioning into the world of work.

Education is at the heart of economic and social development in all modern societies. Yet the experiences and outcomes of education are quite different for boys and girls and for men and women. While both sexes experience obstacles or difficulties based on national, cultural, geographic and socioeconomic realities, it remains that literacy levels, educational attainment and economic opportunities are overall lower for girls and women than they are for boys and men. This has serious repercussions. Lower levels of education for girls and women limit their participation in the labour market, and this underrepresentation all too often results in lower aggregate income for households as well as persistent poverty. The education and socioeconomic emancipation of women thus emerges as a key mechanism for reducing poverty among communities in sub-Saharan Africa.

Ensuring that girls and women achieve the positive educational outcomes necessary for their successful integration into the labour market, develop appropriate technical and personal skills, and are able to make informed decisions about their future requires non-discriminatory education and training. Yet a range of discriminatory or discouraging attitudes, unequal practices, and various forms of harassment, abuse and violence within the learning environment continue to undermine their academic achievement as well as their skills acquisition and personal development. From verbal harassment and abuse to sexual and physical violence, the learning experience for many girls and young women at secondary and tertiary level is characterised by discouragement, fear, isolation and physical and psychological harm. The impact on their personal development and learning achievement is far from negligible, hampering their academic and professional advancement. Mechanisms that ensure the safety and protection of female students; initiatives that enable them to cope with challenges in the learning environment; and guidance, counselling and empowerment frameworks within learning institutions are some of the measures that are crucial to enhancing the experiences and achievement of female students.

Post-primary education: Addressing violence, harassment and discouragement in the learning environment

The education of women in technology in the Higher Institute of Technology at the University of Douala

The University of Douala in Cameroon investigated gender specific patterns affecting young women studying technology in the university’s Higher Institute of Technology. Concerned with the under-representation of young women in technology programmes it aimed to shed light on factors of under-representation, existing challenges and coping strategies adopted by the female students affected by these challenges. While highlighting the need for an analysis of the ways in which higher education learning environments perpetuate gender-specific challenges, the research also investigated the strategies adopted by female technology students to deal with gender disparity experienced in their academic endeavours.

The study identified a lack of effective academic planning and follow-up targeting female students within the institute, as well as indications of verbal harassment and psychological violence against female students from their male classmates. Female study participants stressed self-motivation as a means of negotiating these challenges, a well as the positive influencing role played by educated parents, their siblings, their upbringing and counselling. Measures adopted by female students to cope with the challenges they encountered constituted powerful tools in self-building and mentality change. According to the study, this implies a need for more women’s empowerment and awareness frameworks within the university, as well as for formal counselling mechanisms and concrete measures to curb sexual harassment.

An exploration of the experiences of female student leaders in public tertiary institutions in Ghana

While student government bodies in Ghanaian universities have served as a platform and preparatory ground for some of the country’s political leaders today, the University of Education, Winneba, was concerned with why the former student leaders who have become political leaders are predominantly men. In fact, although women constitute about 51 percent of the population of Ghana, according to literature reviewed by the study they account for less than 15 percent of parliamentarians and less than 10 percent of Chief Directors at various government ministries. This research therefore chose to examine the experiences of female student leaders on the campuses of public higher education institutions in Ghana and explore how best the student leadership platform can be used to nurture and groom more female leaders.

The most prevalent challenge to female student leadership identified within the institutions studied was institutional bureaucracies that undermined their leadership efforts. Women’s commissioners in some institutions complained of a lack of budgetary allocation
for their unit, while patronage for programmes organised for female students was very low and discouraging. However, female student leaders were encouraged to vie for their positions by external elements from friends, their predecessors and role models, and received financial, campaign and moral support from parents, siblings, male and female friends, fiancés, lecturers and mentors. The study suggests that tertiary institutions should establish gender directorates with qualified staff to focus on nurturing the leadership potential of female students; extend mentoring systems that target female students within the academic sphere into the leadership realm; and liaise with gender-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide financial and logistic support to potential female leaders.

Sexual violence in schools for learners with special needs: key findings from South Africa

The far-reaching ramifications of sexual violence at school, including HIV infection and school-related problems, represent a double violation of the right to education of learners with special needs who already face grave challenges in gaining quality education. The University of South Africa thus carried out a study focusing on sexual violence amongst learners with disabilities to understand how this form of sexual violence contributes to the disempowerment and marginalisation of learners with special needs.

In documenting forms of sexual violence at schools for learners with special needs and examining school processes and practices that motivate such behaviour, the study found that sexual violence among learners was common and took many different forms, with types of sexual violence varying depending on learners’ different disabilities. The research also found evidence of practices and processes within schools that promoted sexual violence. These included limited adult supervision around school premises and in school buses; limited knowledge about sexual violence among school personnel; absence of school rules governing behaviour among learners; poor handling of reported cases of sexual violence; and peer pressure among perpetrators of sexual violence. The study recommends clear policies on sexual violence and reporting procedures within schools; well trained school personnel and appropriate sexuality education; intensification of security around school premises; and separate schools for younger and older learners. The aim is for schools to contribute towards reversing the damage created by an experience of school-based sexual violence amongst learners with special needs and promoting safe learning environments.

The labour market: Strengthening linkages between education and the world of work

Education and labour market integration for women in Abidjan

In Côte d’Ivoire, women suffer a higher unemployment rate than men, with 19.8 percent of women unemployed in 2008, compared to 12.1 percent of men. Furthermore, female illiteracy stood at 54 percent in 2009, against 39 percent for males. While educational level was not found to have any significant impact on the probability that a woman will be unemployed in Abidjan, there seemed to be a strong relationship between women’s educational level and their integration into particular segments of the labour market. Illiterate women made up 49.9 percent of women working in the informal sector, while women having secondary and higher levels of education were better represented in the formal sector, both public and private. Nevertheless, women’s participation in formal employment was found to be low. Whether in the public sector or the private sector, 70 percent of those employed in the formal sector in Abidjan were men. Women, when they worked, were more present in informal employment, accounting for 48.6 percent of those working in the sector.

The research calls for a questioning of ideologies concerning women’s roles in society and for a rethink of the means available to promote their socioeconomic emancipation and facilitate their integration in the labour market. It proposes a number of measures to be taken in this regard by different categories of education stakeholders.

Gender, labour market integration and the socio-economic impact of vocational training in Dakar

While women in Senegal have always participated in the service industry, light industry and agri-food sector, particularly in urban areas, their lack of accredited training has been a major obstacle to self-determination and productivity. ERNWACA focused its investigation on technical and vocational training in two institutions in Dakar. It posed the question as to whether gender determines successful labour market insertion and analysed the socio-economic impact of technical and vocational education and training.

While the size of the sample made it difficult to generalise findings, the study showed that that 60 percent of the women trained in the two institutions were employed, compared to 40 percent of the men. The women were also more often employed on permanent employment contracts while the men had a higher incidence of shorter, fixed-term employment contracts. It also emerged from the research that women were more likely than men to qualify as secretaries or executive assistants, while men were more likely than women to enrol in Accounting/Finance courses and International Commerce. Thus, while the labour market seemed to favour the women,
their study courses did not always allow them to reach the same professional level as the men. Recommendations emerging from this study included promotion of self-employment through financing for small- and medium-sized companies in an effort to increase employment opportunities in the private sector; measures to encourage increased recruitment of graduates of technical and vocational education and training; and provision of practical guidance and preparation to both female and male students for job applications and interviews.

Exploring the gendered nature of the education-labour market linkages in Tanzania: Beyond numbers
A study carried out by REPOA in Tanzania explored whether increased enrolment of female students in higher education is a pathway to increased gender equality in employment. The key argument of this research was that despite increased enrolment of female students in higher education, inherent gendered attitudes and practices – the result of gender differentiated processes in various spheres of life – continue to produce gendered effects on other education outcomes that work to disadvantage female graduates in employment.

Recruitment data showed more male graduates recruited in some years and more female graduates in others, while the study also signalled attitudes and practices that might have a differing impact on the transition of male and female students from higher learning to the labour market. Job opportunities were found to be limited for both male and female university graduates but while both male and female job seekers had sent out many job applications, male applicants were generally more proactive in this area. Finally, employers expressed gendered concerns such as female employees having to go on maternity leave and recruiting women with young children.

The REPOA study called for an integrated approach to education and employment policy-making and implementation processes to effectively address problems of skills mismatch; measures to promote interaction and dialogue between education and the world of work as well as measures that promote avenues of equal opportunity and discourage gender differentiated processes; and further research to explore the extent to which gendered attitudes and practices that erode confidence in female students are prevalent in the education system.

Women’s informal sector activities and support for girls’ education in Binga: Perspectives of women in the informal sector
In Zimbabwe, as poverty among households headed by women has increased, women’s participation in informal sector activities has intensified, as has preferential treatment for sons over daughters when it comes to sending children to school. However, little has been done to establish the connection between women’s increased participation in informal sector activities and girls’ education, or its relation to female perceptions of girls’ education. A study undertaken by the University of Zimbabwe thus sought to establish factors that hinder girls’ education in Binga situated in north-western Zimbabwe; women’s perspectives of girls’ education and their priorities when they have an income; how their income-generating activities have helped to address some of the barriers to girls’ education; and other factors promoting girls’ education in Binga in recent years.

Findings from the study suggested women’s participation in the informal sector contributed positively to girls’ education. Better sources of income meant families were able to send children, including girls, to school, while an appreciation of the importance of education in their business activities resulted in positive attitudinal change towards girls’ education among women entrepreneurs. This in turn encouraged women who had previously dropped out of school to take advantage of opportunities for second-chance education, and to engage with young girls on the importance of education. However, women working in the informal sector often needed assistance with their household responsibilities and tended to call on the girls within the household to take over these duties. The findings suggest a need for awareness initiatives on children’s rights, including the right to education for both girls and boys, as well as on teenage pregnancy and the school re-entry policy for adolescent mothers. Furthermore, the study called for an analysis of the impact of women’s participation in the informal sector on girls’ performance in schools, as well as further study to establish the extent of gender inequalities and stereotyping within schools as regards the distribution of available educational resources, subject selection, and assignment of roles and responsibilities, among others.

Strengthening the education research-policy partnership in Africa for greater impact
The studies contained in this volume confirm that research by Africans operating within the African education context can be at the forefront of identifying policy solutions to some of the persistent problems in girls’ and women’s education and economic integration. If research is to contribute to measures that improve academic and professional achievement for girls and women, however, it is important that linkages between research and policy-making process are strengthened. On one hand, the capacities of African researchers need continuous reinforcement and their policy research agendas need constant refinement. On the other, it is essential that clear communication from the policy level enables researchers to target critical research areas and that research forms a key component of policy implementation processes. FAWE’s objective is to harness research to influence policy at both national and learning institution level in order to enhance educational outcomes for African girls and women. Strengthening partnerships between the African research community and education policy implementers is crucial in achieving this. Through such closer partnership, the potential for the knowledge emerging from the studies in this volume to contribute positively to policy dialogue can be increased.
Post-primary education: Addressing violence, harassment and discouragement in the learning environment
Post-primary education: Addressing violence, harassment and discouragement in the learning environment

The common theme of the three studies in this section is the safety, wellbeing and personal development of female students in specific post-primary contexts. In Cameroon, the University of Douala looks at the how young women studying technology – long considered a typically male domain – cope with the verbal, sexual and other forms of harassment that undermine their motivation, self-confidence and achievement.

In Ghana, young women seeking election to university student government bodies have found avenues of support and encouragement to overcome the mockery, frustrations and isolation their leadership ambitions incite. Yet, some of those who are elected are said not to take an active role in leadership and decision-making.

In South Africa, young girls suffering from physical and mental handicap find themselves the target of many forms of sexual violence, including rape, by male students who suffer from similar physical and mental disability. Despite having few mechanisms in place for their protection and to report or pursue the offenders legally, some girls put forward suggestions on ways to reduce incidences of sexual violence, including ensuring younger girls are not subject to the same abuse.

The studies suggest that those most affected by violence, harassment and discouragement in the learning environment have the potential to identify and employ ways of overcoming these situations and can suggest effective ways to ensure some of these challenges to their personal safety, wellbeing, learning achievement and skills development are eliminated.
Technology is still portrayed as a typically masculine domain in Cameroon. Through self-determination and the support of key family relations, however, a minority of female students are venturing into the various branches of technology.

ABSTRACT
The under-representation of women in technical studies calls for an analysis of the ways higher education, through learning environments, perpetuates gender-specific experiences and challenges. This in turn leads us to inquire about strategies adopted by females to deal with gender disparity in technical studies. The present study aims to investigate gender-specific patterns affecting women’s enrolment in engineering courses at the Higher Institute of Technology (IUT) of the University of Douala, with a focus on under-representation, challenges encountered, and coping strategies deployed by women who are mostly affected. This research was carried out by female university lecturers versed in gender-sensitive factors in tertiary education.

Between March and June 2012, data was collected from female students of technology with a focus on motivational factors, perceptions and attitudes, challenges, achievements, and coping strategies deployed to overcome challenges in the school environment. These data were gathered from 231 students of first, second and third year, mostly from three technology-oriented disciplines: electrical, computer, and industrial engineering; mechanical and production engineering; and industrial and maintenance engineering.

Given that qualitative data could yield quantitative information and vice versa, we decided to carry out a mixed-method study. Qualitative data on motivational factors, perceptions and attitudes, sexual harassment, challenges, and rating of female engineers was collected through questionnaires, which were distributed among both male and female students. This purposive sampling method enabled us “to collect focused information” from “typical useful cases only” (Oso and Onen, 2008: 79) and within a limited time frame. Individual face-to-face interviews, which comprised
"person to person verbal communication", was used to obtain complementary qualitative information from 12 female students on the above-mentioned variables, since data on challenges and coping strategies that females adopted could not be “directly observed” (Oso and Onen, 2008: 84) or obtained from books. Statistical (quantitative) enrolment data on gender ratios were also obtained from a handbook provided by the school administration.

The study revealed that most of the women who chose to study technology subjects did so despite discouragement from friends and relatives, and displayed a high level of personal motivation and a passion for the subject. Most of the respondents also reported on the absence of formal counselling in high schools and universities. The majority had educated parents, who directly or indirectly encouraged them. However, positive formal counselling and orientation of girls who are good in mathematics and sciences should be emphasised to orientate them towards technology subjects.

Some of the female respondents revealed that they had been victims of sexual harassment, especially from male lecturers who attempted to seduce them with money or offered good marks in exchange for sexual favours. As a result, most of the girls believed they must talk and act like boys in order to succeed and avoid harassment. They thus developed strong personalities to appear less vulnerable to their male counterparts. Qualitative analysis on school-based challenges revealed that these counteractive measures constituted powerful tools in self-building and mentality change. Nevertheless, concrete measures need to be taken in higher education institutions to check the prevalence of sexual harassment.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Women’s right to education has attracted much attention. UNESCO’s efforts to promote gender equality and improve the status of women cannot go unnoticed. The Third Medium Term Plan (1990–1995) emphasises women’s participation, considered a sine qua non for successful development. Priority is given to “education for women and girls; key of their participation, on an equal footing, in all aspects of economic, social and cultural lives” (Tchombe, 1994: Preface). UNESCO’s contributions to improve and affirm the right of women and girls to education can be testified by existing texts on efforts, access, participation, and activities published by UNESCO’s Regional Office for Education in Africa.

A further global trend that has been fundamental in efforts towards the education and training of women is the Commonwealth Plan of Action and the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The need to ensure women’s access to “science and technology … schooling and formal and informal education” (Leo-Rhynie 1999: 12) are some of the specific priorities of the Beijing Declaration. The Beijing Platform for Action gave particular attention to the education and training of women. The objectives of this particular section emphasised the need to: ensure equal access to education for women; eradicate illiteracy among women; improve women’s access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education; develop non-discriminatory education and training; allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms; and promote lifelong education and training for girls and women (Leo-Rhynie, 1999: 12).

Although the right to education for women and girls is now guaranteed through a number of human rights instruments, ranging from Cameroon’s Constitution and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, females still constitute the bulk of the illiterate population. Hence it may not be merely an assumption to say that in Cameroon women have historically been marginalised and deprived of the right to education. According to Fonkoua (1994: 11), the 1987 census results indicated that 43.3 percent of the population aged 15 years and over could neither read nor write in any language. Of this illiterate population, 34.3 percent of men could neither read nor write, compared with 55.1 percent of women. By implication, two-thirds of the female population was illiterate. The alarming numeric under-representation statistics for higher education in Cameroon from 1999-2000 is provided by Fonkoua (1994: 11), who noted that in 1991-1992, girls constituted only 17.3 percent of the intake in science disciplines, 12.5 percent in the medical school, and 1.9 percent in the National Higher Institute of Engineering (École Normale Supérieure Polytechnique). From the above statistics, it can be surmised that even in instances where women gain access to education, they rarely opt to pursue science and technology courses, especially at tertiary level. This is also the case in IUT at the University of Douala, where female under-representation in engineering courses prompted the present study. This is not necessarily because of a lower intellectual capacity, but because of a number of factors, including their socio-economic status and religious and traditional beliefs within the wider society.

The above national and international efforts have resulted in relative improvement in women’s education. Statistics reveal that in Cameroon, between 2005 and 2009, the female population in tertiary institutions increased from 40,070 to 77,553 or from 39.73 percent to 42.53 percent (Lebogo, 2012: 2). However, the 2011-2012 statistics from IUT indicated that out of 616 students who enrolled, 89 were females and 527 were males. This alarming imbalance not only reveals the gender disparity in technology courses but shows that technology is still portrayed as a typically masculine domain in Cameroon. Through self-determination and the support of key family

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1 For more on this, see Tchombe, 1994: Preface

relations, however, a minority of female students are venturing into the various branches of technology. In view of this, the study is based on a quantitative and qualitative investigation of females in technology courses in IUT, with a focus on under-representation, school-based gender-specific challenges, and strategies for overcoming such challenges. By offering insight on motivational factors, challenges, and self-building strategies deployed by females to overcome school-based challenges, the study will be able to make recommendations to improve female enrolments in engineering, their school-based conditions, as well as make proposals on how to circumvent their fettering challenges in technology, which is still socio-culturally perceived as largely a male domain.

The study hopes to help introduce gender-sensitive measures at tertiary level. Such an attempt also aims to raise awareness on the need for self-building measures (such as self-determination, assertiveness, self-transformation, competitiveness, and self-empowerment strategies) on the part of the females.

Objectives of the study
The main objectives of this study were as follows:

- To see which attitudes and perceptions perpetuated within the school environment impede girls' and women's enrolment in engineering programmes.
- To provide data that may invite interventions of policy-makers in ways that could lead to attitude change and boost women's/girls' enrolment in IUT in particular and in technology courses in general.
- To determine the academic achievements, relationships with classmates and teachers, and factors that motivate girls to enrol in technology courses, as well as forms and manifestations of gender-oriented patterns that may affect their representation in engineering and technology programmes.
- To identify coping strategies deployed by female student engineers to circumvent the challenges they encounter.
- To suggest gender-sensitive policies and strategies that may encourage and enhance female enrolment.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
Female under-representation and gender-specific patterns affecting girls’ enrolment in engineering courses is not an unprecedented field of research. Past research has explored female representation in science, mathematics, and technology. As a divergence from these studies (specifically FAWE, 2010: 64–76) that isolate self-building motivational strategies from their context and focus on gender disparities in access, participation, and completion, this study considers motivational factors, perceptions, and attitudes, as well as independent empowerment abilities that are likely to encourage more enrolment and enable females to overcome challenges in engineering training. The following review of selected literature explores studies on females in science and technology, as well as addressing partially investigated issues that require further attention.

[Although] the education of girls and women is … an important investment …, considerable gender inequalities exist in the education sector. These inequalities are found not only in indicators which can be readily obtained from population census data, such as literacy, enrolment, achievement and levels of schooling obtained, but also in several other aspects of education which are concerned in the pursuit of gender equality and equity, for example, management personnel in decision-making roles, curriculum content and reform, and teacher-student interaction (Leo-Rhynie, 1999: 7–8).

Leo-Rhynie draws attention to factors related to gender inequalities in the education sector and areas where such inequalities are readily discernible. Literacy, enrolment, achievement, and levels of education obtained are areas where the gender disparities are visible in schools.

Vocational education programmes have traditionally been sex-segregated, channeling males and females into different courses. While females are trained predominantly in health, home economics, and office and business programmes, males can be found primarily in technical preparation (Leo-Rhynie, 1999: 23).

We have a clear understanding of the privileged enrolment of males in technology to the disadvantage of females through Leo-Rhynie, who mentions implicitly the traditional “sex-segregated” attitude of denying women access to education, training, and professions in technology. Undeniably, gender-based attitudes and perceptions are cultivated in schools. Higher education in Cameroon is not different. It would not be wrong to infer that the channelling of women into non-technically oriented training has had a very significant impact on their enrolment in IUT, especially in engineering training. The fact that the above excerpts identify the types of education programmes and levels where gender gaps are still visible and places the blame on the sex-segregated nature of vocational training is already an indication that research on gender disparities in higher education should receive more attention. That is not, however, to say nothing has been done to deal with the obstacles women and girls in tertiary education in Cameroon and elsewhere. A few accessible studies have been analysed to situate the state of the arts on gender gaps in higher technical education in Cameroon, and to identify areas not yet sufficiently addressed. A literature review of policy documents, journals, and articles on gender was also carried out.

ASHEWA in FAWE (2010: 64–76) argued that girls’ and women’s participation in science, mathematics, and technology subjects in Lesotho, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe was seriously undermined at both secondary
and tertiary levels. The work overlaps with the present study in attempting to investigate why girls and women are less likely to choose science, mathematics, and technology subjects at secondary school and university. To do so, the present study identified discouraging factors, such as females’ lack of confidence; the absence of bridging courses that can update female skills and knowledge in science and technology; curriculum and gender mainstreaming; anti-violence policies; the impact of pregnancy and marriage on female students; and problems related to off-campus lodging. They also investigated social processes within learning institutions that could enhance the participation of girls and women, and recommended the introduction of bridging courses, after-lecture activities, the establishment of gender policies and gender mainstreaming structures, as well as the provision of incentives to strengthen female performance in quantitative subjects, counter sexual harassment, change perceptions, and develop coping strategies such as self-determination, courage, assertiveness, etc. These are all absent from the ASHEWA study.

Osongo (2006) studied sexual harassment in Kenyan universities and emphasised how inequalities hamper women’s career advancement. She focused on programmes that could enhance women’s participation in traditionally male subjects, and discussed activities such as seminars on career possibilities in the sciences and exposing females to career possibilities in the sciences.

Tchombe (1994) carried out an elaborate study on access of girls to basic education in Cameroon. Although she limited her research to primary and basic education, data from her study revealed that “[g]ender inequalities are still a regular feature of enrolment trends in Cameroon’s education system, with an overall imbalance to the detriment of the female sex” (Tchombe, 1994: 7). The low rate of girls’ enrolment in primary and secondary education in Cameroon (which Tchombe blames on societal factors, as well as lack of commitment from the government) sheds light on the constraints and factors that contribute to promoting mentalities that the woman is intellectually unproductive, inferior, and highly unskilful as opposed to her male counterpart. Although Tchombe’s analysis does not cover tertiary education, and particularly engineering and technology, such mentalities and cultural factors that do not favour women’s access to and equal participation in education also corroborate the longstanding legacy that certain domains are male prerogatives. Social constraints further reveal some of the ways “patriarchal ideology works to keep women and men in traditional gender roles and thereby maintain male dominance” (Tyson, 1999: 90), as well as rendering the woman ‘unfit’ for scientific and technical education.

Gender-sensitive issues related to higher education in Cameroon have been investigated by Endeley and Ngaling and Mulugeta (ASHEWA: in FAWE, 2010: 100), who examined sexual harassment, violence against women, relationships between male lecturers and female students, and the inequality in number of women to men in senior tertiary management in two universities. In the same study, Endeley and Ngaling (ASHEWA: in FAWE, 2007: 100) recommended the establishment of “a sustainable gender-inclusive environment at a university through policies and practices that everyone could support rather than depending on a few feminist enthusiasts”. The researchers further identified lack of financial support as a further impediment.

Research on gender gaps in higher education needs to focus on the school of engineering and technology, where female enrolment is alarmingly lower than that of males. Such a study should address gender factors responsible for low female enrolment rates in technology, challenges perpetuated within the school environment, and coping strategies deployed by females, as well as suggest solutions to problems that hinder equal enrolment and participation of girls and women in engineering and technology.

A similar study on gender disparities in some higher institutes of learning in Cameroon was done by Fonkoua (1994). According him, girls and women in Cameroon prefer to specialise in non-scientific courses and opt for literature, social sciences in general, law, economics, and experimental or medical sciences. Very few choose pure science disciplines such as mathematics, physics, computer science, and engineering. The researcher supports his claims with low percentages of female enrolment in five higher institutes of learning, including the Higher Institute of Engineering in Yaounde, which registered a 1.9 percent of female population in the 1991/1992 academic year. Although the researcher investigated gender disparity in enrolment in some tertiary institutes, a remarkable gap in his study is the lack of suggestions on coping strategies deployed by females to overcome campus-based challenges and boost enrolment.

A series of articles compiled by FAWE (2010) offers a variety of contributions on gender and education, with particular emphasis on improving girls’ and women’s education in Africa. These articles investigate issues such as girls’ access to primary schools in Senegal and Cameroon, the importance of schooling for girls in Africa, the relationship between teacher quality and girls’ performance in African primary schools, strategies for academic success, and gender disparities in science, mathematics and technology subjects in tertiary education in Zimbabwe (with emphasis on criteria for selecting courses, improving students’ services, gender policy, staff support outside the classroom, academic support for female students, curriculum and gender mainstreaming, effects of institutionalised family planning, impact of pregnancy and marriage on students, and access to information and communication technology [ICT] and internet resources). In another dimension, Karsenti, Collins and Harper discussed discrimination
against girls as a serious barrier to the integration of ICT in education in selected African schools.

Although these insightful reviews reveal that studies on access and participation in education exist, the situation of the schools of technology in Cameroon appears to be on the bud, especially as existing investigations have not drawn sufficient attention to motivational factors and coping strategies. It should be noticed that the present study identifies self-empowerment strategies as a trend in gender research on enrolment and equal participation of women and girls in engineering and technology-oriented programmes, a factor previous research on gender disparities in higher education appears to have ignored.

According to the present study, the representation of women in engineering and technology is shown most clearly in the 2011/2012 enrolment statistics provided by IUT, and also through attitudes and perceptions towards women pursuing technology courses.

Although past studies have acknowledged that research exists on sexual harassment of female students in school environments, the situation in IUT, where victims do not resign to sexual challenges but develop coping and deterrent or pre-emptive measures, is still to receive critical attention.

Sex-based harassment … is fairly recent but is yielding much information which previously had remained hidden. The research points to the abuse which many female students suffer as members of mixed sex classes and the lack of sanctions applied to male students and even in some cases male teachers who are guilty of this behaviour. The harassment of young female teachers by male students has also been documented.

Sex-based harassment relegates girls and women to an inferior position relative to boys and men, and makes a female feel embarrassed, frightened, hurt or uncomfortable because of her sex. The impact on the social and educational experience of girls can be devastating. In some cases either by ceasing to attend particular subjects or by leaving the school altogether (Leo-Rhynie, 1999: 22).

The above quotation underlines the risks and frustrations of victims of sexual harassment. The cases that either cease to attend particular subjects or leave school (dropouts) may be expressions of or reactions to frustration.

Although quite relevant in recent findings on gender disparities in enrolment in technology courses, the above critics have not advanced any arguments on coping strategies. Their reliance on impediments or forms of frustration sexual harassment inflicts on victims imposes restrictions on existing research on sexual harassment.

What unites the present study and existing research on gender disproportions in enrolment in technology courses is the emphasis on gender disparities in enrolment and faced by female students in sciences and technology. Like the present study still, the critics disapprove of gender-based challenges, including those perpetuated by the school environment that constitute hindrances to enrolment and training.

Considering country- and environment-specific challenges, any investigation of female enrolment in technology must take into account coping strategies that involve self-building measures. Such measures may reveal first of all that challenges make female students more conscious, more competitive and determined, and thereby increase their chances of succeeding in technology programmes. Without considering coping and other self-building strategies and recommendations that may encourage and promote female enrolment, research on gender in higher education may not fit into the mainstream current debate on eliminating gender-based attitudes that hinder the enrolment and training of females in technology.

The story of female under-representation in technology, the abuses they experience because of their gender, sexual harassment, and coping strategies is still only beginning to be written. Unlike existing investigations on gender disparities and strategies for academic success, the present focuses on a less tapped area of coping strategies, like self-empowerment and confident-building strategies. Whereas previous research on gender disparities and challenges faced by female students in technology see challenges and perceptions as discouraging factors or impediments to enrolment and academic success, this study sees challenges as propelling factors to academic success. The study goes a step further from identifying symptoms to developing positive attitudes.

Gender mainstreaming in education (UNESCO, 1999), the 1996 Commonwealth Women’s Affairs Ministers’ Meeting, and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) amongst others, have highlighted the promotion of gender equality, the empowerment of women, and equal access to education and technology for both men and women in primary, secondary, and tertiary education, amongst others. The economic benefits of gender equality in education have been analysed by the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015, within the framework of poverty eradication and economic empowerment.

A study conducted by Tabi A.J and Noula G (2011) found that gross enrolment rates in Cameroon were typically biased towards males, and became more noticeable at higher levels of schooling. They found a higher enrolment rate for rich than for poor households, and suggested that education spending target rural areas.
Lynch K and Feeley M (2009), in their report submitted to the European Commission by NESSE, analysed conceptions of gender equality with economic undertones. According to them, if society remains economically, socially, and politically very unequal, it is highly unlikely that there can be any meaningful equality of opportunity in education (Blossfeld and Shavit, 1993; Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009, in Lynch and Feeley (2009:55). They also stressed the need for gender mainstreaming and curriculum development, including mathematics, science and technology welcoming programmes. The report mentioned the effect of peer pressure, which tends to reinforce gender stereotypical behaviour and punish non-conformity, thus having an impact on subject choices (Kessels, 2005, in Lynch and Feeley 2009:38). It does not, however, emphasise coping strategies as a means to improve the enrolment of girls in technology.

3. METHODOLOGY
This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies as it intended to understand the extent of the various factors related to female under-representation in engineering in IUT on one hand, and on the other to identify the challenges and issues facing female technology students, who constitute a minority in their class. Neither the quantitative nor the qualitative methods would have been sufficient for such a study by themselves. It is an empirical study of IUT, University of Douala.

Primary and secondary data sources were used for the study. Secondary data were obtained from the official enrolment records, while primary data were generated from questionnaires given to both male and female students to gather their perceptions on the various themes of the research. Male students were included to get their perceptions and opinions on some pertinent issues, as well as to be able to compare and analyse certain variables from a gender perspective.

Interviews were conducted principally with female engineering students of IUT so as to elicit their true experiences as a minority in what has until now been considered a male-dominated discipline.

3.1 Sampling
The target population was the engineering students of IUT enrolled in technology programmes. IUT offers about five main branches of specialisation in technology that culminate in the award of a University of Technology Diploma, known by its French acronym ‘DUT’, after two years, and a Bachelor’s Degree after three years of successful studies. Admission to IUT is granted through a competitive entrance examination. The students begin by taking common courses in either industrial engineering or electrical and computer engineering at level 1. Only in the second year can they specialise in a particular branch of engineering, where there are four main branches of specialisation: electrical, computer, and industrial (or telecommunications) engineering; mechanical and production engineering; industrial and maintenance engineering; and thermal and energy engineering.

Three main branches of engineering students from the first year to the third year were sampled. These branches were:
1. electrical, computer, and industrial (or telecommunications) engineering;
2. mechanical and production engineering; and
3. industrial and maintenance engineering.

The students of thermal engineering (which consisted of 6 girls and 31 boys) were not readily available, so they were omitted from the study. We believe that this has not greatly affected the credibility of the sampling.

A total of 321 questionnaires were filled in by the students out of a total population of 965 students in the various branches of technology concerned in the study. We did not readily have access to many of the first-year students (especially of industrial engineering) due to their timetable. They were mostly tied up in various workshops. This accounts for a reduction in the sample size, especially of female students. Of the 112 female students in engineering, 89 were in level 1 and not available to fill in the questionnaires. We ended up having 21 female respondents who filled the questionnaires, and interviewing 12 of them. This was a limitation but we believe it did not affect the credibility of the study because the total number of respondents amounted to about 33.3 percent.

Due to the limited timeframe of the study, perceptions about female engineering students were mostly gathered from their male counterparts. However, this was buttressed by revelations from interviews with female respondents about the perceptions of their family members, friends, and peers, and also backed by existing literature.

3.2 Quantitative data collection
As far as the quantitative method is concerned, questionnaires were designed that were appropriate for both male and female students of level one to level three in the above-mentioned branches of engineering. The questionnaires contained both open- and closed-ended questions.

The questions were classified into various categories, such as family background (parents’ profession, siblings in the field of science and technology) and its influence on their decision to pursue technology subjects; motivational factors; studies and challenges; perceptions and attitudes; sexual harassment; and coping strategies. There were many open-ended questions concerning the perceptions of family, friends, peers, and the community at large.

First, we tested about 100 questionnaires in the Higher Technical Teachers Training College (ENSET) of the
University of Douala, after discussing with a professor of anthropology in the university. The pilot test was facilitated by a contact person in that institution, who introduced us to some engineering teachers, who in turn permitted us to distribute the questionnaires to students in their classes. The pre-test revealed that out of the 75 questionnaires distributed to male and female students, about three-quarters were only partly completed or not at all. The testing enabled us to appreciate the approximate time required to administer the questionnaires in a classroom. We also realised that some of the questions were unanswerable. We therefore modified the questionnaire before distributing copies to the participants in IUT.

We wrote to the Director of IUT and sought his permission to carry out research in the institute and personally explained the purpose of our research to him. After obtaining his permission, we contacted the heads of the various departments, some of whom were welcoming. We had difficulty obtaining accurate timetables for the classes because they were lacking, so we proceeded to contact the lecturers in their various classes, following the guidance offered by the heads of department.

A total of 231 questionnaires were distributed in both English and French about the under-representation of women. Few were returned blank. Of the total number of respondents, 21 were female students and 210 were male students. We believe that having the questionnaires filled in during class was the most reliable way of collecting credible data, because if the students were allowed to take them home they would be less likely to fill them in or more likely to discuss the questionnaires with their classmates, family, or friends.

### 3.3 Qualitative data
Semi-structured individual face-to-face interviews were also conducted, through which a total of 12 girls from levels 1 to 3 were interviewed. Most of them were in level 1.

The choice of female respondents was also purposeful. Besides the fact that we could not hold direct interviews with the boys, teachers, and the public about their attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours towards female engineers due to time constraints, female participants were deliberately prioritised because we needed information about the challenges they faced in their academic training, how they felt they were treated, coping strategies they deployed, and behaviours, attitudes, and perceptions towards them, as well as the effects of the latter on their choice of engineering as a profession.

The interviews were conducted with the help of an interview guide. We scheduled the interviews at the convenience of the respondents so as not to interrupt their studies in any way.

The use of in-depth interviews and questionnaires to solicit attitudes and perceptions from both male and female students towards female engineers was judged relevant on the grounds that responses not only reflected the realities but could unravel motivational factors, gender relations in classrooms, and factors influencing choice of field of study, as well as providing insight regarding coping strategies. The direct interview method was deemed more appropriate because it eludes assumptions and generalisations that are likely to evade practical realities. Sentences and verbatim quotes that provide an understanding of how female students experienced gender-based attitudes and perceptions were considered. These enabled the study to “develop clusters of meaning from these significant statements into themes” (Creswell, 2007: 61), write a textual description of what the female students experienced, and describe “the context or setting that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007: 61).

In terms of phenomenological data analysis, data from interviews, relevant statements, and results were categorised, transcribed, coded, and analysed using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Beginning with the insights of qualitative methodology, the study relies on Polkinghorne’s (1998, in Creswell 2007:58) approach to phenomenology. According to Creswell (2007: 61), this qualitative approach gives priority to “in-depth interviews and multiple interviews with participants” and “recommends that researchers interview from 5 to 25 individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon”. This approach is most suitable for the present study because, besides the fact that it draws on other forms of data like journals, art, poetry, music, and most importantly observations, it requires that data for the analysis be “collected from the individuals who have experienced the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007: 61). The approach thus enabled the study to ask open-ended questions in the questionnaires and conduct semi-structured interviews with the aim of discovering what kind of gender-oriented challenges participants experienced, and contexts or situations that influenced their experiences of gender and coping strategies. Open-ended questions aimed at “gathering data that will lead to a textual description and a structural description of the experiences, and ultimately provide an understanding of the common experiences of the participants” (Creswell,2007: 61).

The empirical, transcendental, or psychological phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994) was preferred because it focuses less on the interpretations of the researcher and more on a description of the experiences of the participants, analysed using significant statements and quotes and a description of what the female respondents in particular experienced.

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1. Polkinghorne’s case study on qualitative methodology is a holistic approach that draws on multidimensional or extensive sources of data collection such as interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual materials. Another advantage of the approach that makes it amenable or responsive to this study is the fact that data collected are analysed through a description of the case and themes originating from the case.
Data on perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours of male students, teachers, and the community towards female engineers were collected from the respondents.

It is noteworthy here that data collection was a tedious exercise involving initial contact with the participants, failed appointments due to unforeseen circumstances relating to school activities, feast days and public holidays, and sometimes a rescheduling of teaching activities by teachers. Making initial contact with the administrative staff to explain our study objectives and obtain authorisation to carry out research on gender also proved difficult, as some of the people we met were not willing to cooperate. They suspected we were requesting information for tax purposes. Others expressed fear that the research was being done for political reasons. Similarly, most of the participants were very reticent about filling in questionnaires or granting interviews for fear that we would use the results against them. However, we managed to persuade the administration and participants that the exercise would serve academic needs only, and that we would respect the anonymity of the respondents.

Laborious visits were made to IUT. During the first two visits we had trouble locating participants as the numbering on most of the lecture doors was misleading. Either the students were in workshops or not where they were expected to be. Further contacts were made with heads of the chosen departments, who helped us to locate the participants and provided telephone numbers of lecturers who taught specialisations that were of interest to our research. Three lecturers failed to turn up to their appointments, others requested re-scheduling, and sometimes phone calls were ignored altogether. Although monotonous, this method was productive as some teachers (three) sacrificed part of their lecture schedule (often 30 minutes or more) to allow us to schedule interviews or guide students in filling in the questionnaires during lectures.

Some of the factors that hampered the data collection could be attributed to lack of time on the part of students, infrastructure, unwillingness of some lecturers to allow us time to meet with students, irregularities in teaching schedules, etc.

Most of the scheduled interviews took place on IUT premises, either in the open air or in the corridors, and more often than not when students were on break, waiting for lecturers, or after lectures, as most lecturers could not sacrifice their lecture periods to what they perceived as an extracurricular exercise. Any notes taken during interviews were processed immediately afterwards.

3.4 Data analysis

The responses to the questionnaires and the notes from the interviews were analysed. As far the questionnaires are concerned, they were first of all numbered. They were then coded using numbers for all the variables. After coding all the questionnaires, the data were entered into the computer using Microsoft Excel. A gender analysis was carried out of the variables and the results presented in three-dimensional bar and pie charts. The findings have been presented hereunder.

Qualitative data on perceptions and attitudes were extracted from the questionnaires, analysed, and categorised, then relevant information was extracted according to the various categories.

The notes taken during the interviews were also categorised and analysed. Only 12 interviews were recorded because in some cases we simply seized opportunities to interview some of the girls in the absence of their teachers.

Data on the representation of women/girls in IUT were imputed. That is, we transferred what we had coded from interview guides into quantities and established descriptions and meanings. Direct quotations were used, not only to avoid misinterpretation of data but also to give weight to certain arguments. A comparative analysis of the four different levels was also done to provide a quantitative analysis. Results were presented in the form of graphs, pie charts, and narrative analysis.

4. KEY FINDINGS

The statistical records from IUT for the 2011/2012 academic year revealed that there were just 89 girls out of 616 students in level 1, 20 girls out of 313 students in level 2, and 3 girls out of 125 students in the three main areas of specialisation in level 3. This gives a total of 112 female students and 853 male students.

Three developments emerged relating to perceptions and attitudes towards girls and women taking up courses, training, and professions in engineering. The first trend was a sexist, rather obnoxious attitude, implying that women are inferior to men. This is an attitude that Tyson (1999: 34) called “biological essentialism”. On a purely sexist orientation, some male respondents were of the opinion that technology was more suitable for men than women and based their arguments on purely psychological dispositions that society relates exclusively to women, such as feebleness, timidity, reticence, nervousness, and over-emotional and irrational behavioural traits.

Another category of respondents recognised the rights to training and professions like engineering and technology as male prerogatives, a patriarchal assumption they sought to justify purely on socio-cultural grounds. Besides the biological and emotional traits perceived as typically feminine, another category rejected female engineers on the grounds that the male monopoly of economic power keeps women at home to raise and nurture children, while a domain for acquiring educational and occupational power like engineering should be reserved for men.

Yet another category thought that allowing women to study engineering may predispose them to competition with men. Nonetheless, a majority of the male respondents, like the females, recognised that women
possessed knowledge and skills as men do, and could be equal contributors to nation building. A few respondents, mostly female, also explained that they feared answering questions in class, and were often timid during oral presentations due to “mockery” and “name calling” from boys, which was commonplace in classroom contexts.

4.1 Motivational factors
The motivational factors identified include: parents and their profession, upbringing, siblings who are already in the field of technology, self-interest, and determination.

4.1.1 Parents’ profession
Of the 21 female respondents who filled in the questionnaires, one returned it blank and 20 stated their parents’ profession, as is shown in Figure 1.1.

The replies revealed that 90 percent of the female technology students had parents working in the field of arts or science and technology, while only 10 percent were children of blue-collar labourers. None had unemployed parents. Therefore it appears that parents’ education affects their daughters’ decision to study technology. Not only are their parents able to cover the cost of their studies, but they understand and encourage their daughters’ choices.

This is backed by qualitative data from interviews. Most of the female students interviewed revealed that they were encouraged by their parents, who were either employed in the field of technology or some other white-collar job. Those whose parents did not expressly encourage them did not vehemently oppose their choice of technology. This ties in with Lynch and Feeley (2009: 55) in the NESSE report, which noted that equality in opportunity in education cannot be achieved if society remains economically, politically, and socially unequal. Social and economic equality can, on the other hand, be achieved through education.

Of the 21 female respondents, 62 percent were motivated by their parents to opt for technology. Of these, only those whose parents were in the field of arts or science and technology were motivated by their parents to study technology. Thirty eight percent of the parents who motivated their children worked in the area of technology, while 62 percent worked in arts and social sciences. The current findings indicate that students whose parents were blue-collar labourers had no influence over their choice of technology, thereby indicating a direct correlation between parents’ profession and the choice of technology.

Table 1.1 Number of female students motivated by parents, according to profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents’ profession</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents in arts and social sciences</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents in technology</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents in blue collar labour</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed parents</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some respondents indicated more than one source of motivation. Of the 21 female respondents, 33 percent were motivated by their parents, 28 percent by their friend(s), 14 percent by a family member, spouse, or sibling, and 25 percent by others.
4.1.2 Siblings
The results of the survey indicate that a lower percentage (40 percent) of respondents’ sisters than brothers (60 percent) were also in the field of science and technology. This confirms the fact that women are under-represented in the field of science and technology and that the sisters of the female respondents were not a strong motivational factor.

![Figure 1.4 Siblings of female respondents and the choice of technology](image)

4.1.3 Upbringing
When we looked at the statistics obtained in connection with the influence of upbringing on the choice of technology at university, 9 of the 19 female respondents indicated that their upbringing had a positive influence on their decision. This ties in with the statement that meaningful equality of opportunity in education cannot be achieved if society remains economically, politically, and socially unequal (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009, cited by Lynch and Feeley, 2009: 55). The qualitative data also revealed that most of the female participants (19 out of 20) grew up with their parents, who either encouraged them or did not vehemently oppose their choice of technology. Most of them were sponsored by their parents, who had the means to do so. In some cases, their mothers did everything to support them, despite not being educated.

![Figure 1.5 Impact of upbringing on choice of technology](image)

4.1.4 Self-determination and strength of character
Faced with the numerous barriers and obstacles to studying science and technology subjects, such as cultural hindrances and society’s perceptions of women in technology, the qualitative data obtained from our study revealed that most of the girls who enrolled in technology courses were independent-minded and very determined. Many of them stated that they had a passion for mathematics and physics. One of the respondents intimated that she had always been interested in electrical appliances as a child and always tried to repair anything that was broken. She wanted to pursue technical education after obtaining the first school leaving certificate but was considered by the school authorities as being too young to be admitted into a technical school at the age of 11. In spite of this, she insisted to her parents and finally succeeded to gain entrance into a technical high school, and subsequently IUT. Some were discouraged by friends and relatives who considered technology to be a principally masculine domain. Another female respondent revealed that the relatives accused her father (a mechanical engineer) of trying to transform her into a boy and told her she would not be able to find a husband. Nevertheless, she decided to pursue her education in that field. Another respondent ignored her mother’s advice to study accounting, while another went ahead to do engineering in spite of attempts by an aunt (who brought her up and sponsored her) to influence her to study economics in the university. Many respondents bravely such negative comments from friends and relatives but went ahead with a determined spirit to study technology.

4.1.5 Counselling
The majority of students at IUT lacked any kind of counselling. While a few admitted that their brothers and sisters told them about IUT and its programmes, most of the students, especially those from rural areas, complained about lack of information about the existence of IUT and its benefits. Very few students heard about it from friends who had passed through the institute. To corroborate the above, numerical data on motivational factors reveals that only 39 boys and 11 girls out of a total of 231 respondents received any counselled in high school (see Figure 1.6).

![Figure 1.6 Counselling offered regarding choice of studies](image)
4.2 Challenges and coping strategies

4.2.1 General challenges
Data revealed impediments such as lack of effective academic planning and follow-up, irregularity and constant absence of teachers, and financial, moral, and emotional challenges. The majority of the students indicated that they were not satisfied with the curriculum, saying: “it lacks possibilities for practicals”. More than three-quarters of the students at IUT complained that teachers focussed more on theory, leaving them with almost no knowledge of practical skills required in engineering. According to them, some teachers were “lazy”, void of professional ethics; “incompetent” in their subject areas, deployed bad teaching methods, and engaged in constant strike actions, while some “spent more time teaching in private institutes”. The students also complained that teachers preferred to dispense lectures via photocopies or electronic copies that they could not afford.

Figure 1.7 Challenges faced by respondents

Many complained of lack of equipment, tools, and machines. Some observed that no time was allocated for students’ personal work and tutorials. Quantitative data, as displayed in Figure 1.8, revealed that the main challenges faced by female respondents were domestic, followed by those of a moral nature, while their male counterparts faced mostly financial, followed by academic challenges. The female respondents were the principal victims of verbal and sexual harassment, and mockery.

Figure 1.8 Respondents reporting that they have been victims of sexual harassment

Of the female students who claimed to have been subjected to sexual harassment, one testified to being accosted by a male lecturer, who attempted to lure her with money, but she refused. She stated that he constantly cornered and propositioned her, and when she refused he resorted to threats of failing her or not releasing her results.

I have been a victim of sexual harassment. It happened only once. One teacher attempted to give me 3,500 francs. I refused to take the money. He resorted to verbal threats when I resisted. He threatened he would never publish my results. He started calling me names each time he came to class. I reported to the Dean of Studies. When my marks were published, I dropped the issue. The teacher stopped further moves. We are on good terms now.

The use of the phrase ‘verbal threats’ in the above quote suggests that tone of voice constitutes a further manifestation of sexual harassment in institutions of learning. It also means an utterance that is authoritative, commanding, and bullying in nature. Verbal terrorism becomes a tool of sexual harassment. No doubt, some feminists see any form of male behaviour intended to keep women powerless as an attempt to “justify and maintain the male monopoly of positions of…power” (Tyson, 1999: 84). The persistence of sexual harassment of female students in environments of learning, specifically the school of technology, is also visible in language. Verbal threats in the example above suggest that language is a tool for sexual harassment.

The effects of sexual harassment are seen in intimidation, the production of power, and the oppression of victims. Much is also revealed about forms and manifestations of cultural differences. The participant said she did not make any efforts to uncover any further occurrences, but felt “the issue of dress code could be implemented by the administration” to limit dressing habits, which was reported to be another form of sexual harassment and a factor that roused sexual feelings.
Another female participant said: “Girls' indecent dressing habits alarmingly expose their bodies and cause panic.” She said this should be reported to the university so that they can institute a dress code.

Most respondents replied that the type of clothing worn by female students unavoidably encouraged sexual attraction and could be perceived as a form of sexual harassment. One male respondent said:

*The conduct I find deplorable is the dressing habits of teachers. I feel affected when some female lecturers dress as if they want to seduce students. Female students wear short skirts. We see their laps. A man is likely to be emotional.*

Another male student admitted feeling sexually aroused in the presence of a female lecturer because of the way she dressed, and yet another case complained that “female lecturers have the attitude of going out with students.” Others did mention cases of sexual harassment.

Behavioural traits constitute one form by which sexual harassment is manifest in the school of technology. According to one female participant: “A teacher once made sexual advances toward me, which had no effect. I just decided to avoid him.” According to another, the issue of sexual harassment is also encouraged by students of the opposite sex. As one student said: “It makes me uncomfortable, but my silence discourages them.”

The chart below reveals that most of the victims of sexual harassment either remained silent or told a friend. Rarely would they report it to the school authorities for fear of victimisation. This is also backed by qualitative data from the female respondents who admitted to have been victims. Indeed, a new determined character is born of only ordinary capacity but of extraordinary persistence. Deplorable aspects of teachers’ conduct that students felt were demeaning and embarrassing as well as obstructing their participation in class included intimidation, arrogance, insults, irregularity, delegation of students to teach courses they themselves had no mastery of, refusal by teachers to answer questions in class, negligence, lateness for lectures, and lack of respect for students, especially when students were asked to kneel down as a form of punishment. While another category indicated that lecturers administered continuous assessments without informing the students, another raised an alarm that some lecturers compelled students to give bribes or make propositions in exchange for good marks.

### 4.2.3 Verbal harassment

A further form of harassment faced by female students is verbal. The majority of female students interviewed complained of constant insults during classes, compounded by pejorative comments such as “pencil”, “dirty, ugly girl”, etc. Some said they were booed when they attempted to answer questions or did oral presentations. One girl revealed that a video of her was shot by a male classmate and put on the internet to ridicule her. Despite feeling humiliated and exposed, she reported the case to the administration and the boy was punished.

Most of the female respondents had devised coping strategies to deal with insults. Some simply ignored negative comments, especially from their male classmates. A female respondent said: “I avoid going unnecessarily close to my lecturers in order to avoid any attempts at harassment.” Some female respondents, however, admitted that the insults and mockery in class made them hesitate to participate in class.

Other female respondents said there was a need to be assertive and self-confident. “You need to be imposing,” one said, otherwise the boys would not allow them to do anything in the workshops. Some declared their natural God-given intelligence: “God gave us the same brains,” and said they would never allow themselves to be intimidated by their male classmates or anyone else. Others acknowledged taking up character traits attributed to men (such as courage, emotional strength, and assertiveness) in order to succeed.

Persistence and determination were seen to be the keys to success for some of the female respondents. This ties in with an old-time scientist Mitchell’s statement: “I was born of only ordinary capacity but of extraordinary persistency” (Mitchell in O’Neill, 1979: 143).

### 4.2.4 Teachers’ conduct

Although the majority of the respondents indicated that teachers’ conduct was generally encouraging, some raised a serious moral issue that requires attention. Deplorable aspects of teachers’ conduct that students felt were demeaning and embarrassing as well as obstructing their participation in class included intimidation, arrogance, insults, irregularity, delegation of students to teach courses they themselves had no mastery of, refusal by teachers to answer questions in class, negligence, lateness for lectures, and lack of respect for students, especially when students were asked to kneel down as a form of punishment. While another category indicated that lecturers administered continuous assessments without informing the students, another raised an alarm that some lecturers compelled students to give bribes or make propositions in exchange for good marks.

### 4.3. Perceptions and attitudes

#### 4.3.1. Opinion about girls’ choice of technology

When asked to rate female engineers as either excellent, very good, good, fairly good, and bad, a total of 187
(167 male and 20 female) responded. All of the female respondents naturally considered girls to be either excellent, very good, or at the very least, good. A majority of the male respondents acknowledged that the girls were good when not very good or excellent, with only a minority considering them to be bad or fairly good.

**Figure 1.10 Should girls study technology?**

The low enrolment and participation of females can be linked to perceptions and attitudes. Those guided by patriarchal prejudices saw the place of women at home with domestic responsibilities, such as rearing children and feeding the family. Although most female students said their parents were happy with their daughters’ choice of engineering, arguments against their choice rated men as heroic, daring, biologically constituted to face tasks outside the home, energetic, “more intelligent than women”, etc. The male respondents, however, acknowledged the capability of female students to study engineering. Of the 171 who responded to this question, a majority of the girls (17) and the boys (151) acknowledged the potential of female engineering students and respected their choice.

**Figure 1.11 Opinions about female engineers**

Contrary to the general perception of family members, friends, and society at large, Figure 1.12 shows that the majority of male respondents did not have any problems with the idea of marrying a female engineer. Qualitative data also revealed that a number of the female engineering students were already engaged, mostly to men also in technology. Most female respondents who were interviewed did not feel less feminine because of their field of studies and did not look unfeminine either. The general perception of their relatives and society at large, as revealed by many of the interviewees, is that they cannot get married because they would not be fit for domestic duties.

**Figure 1.12 Perception of whether women engineers are good potential wives**

5. **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Below are the ethical issues that were considered in the study, first of all concerning the research participants, and then ourselves as researchers.
5.1. Ethical issues concerning the research participants

First, authorisation was sought from the Director of IUT to carry out research on gender in his institution. The teachers were also contacted and their permission requested to use the allocated time for their lectures. The research participants were informed of the purpose and benefits of the research. The informed consent of the participants was sought in written form as part of the questionnaires. Before distributing the questionnaires, the purpose and benefits of the research was also explained to them. A few students refused to fill in the questionnaires in two different classes. In the first class (second-year industrial and production engineering), the teacher was not very cooperative and did not receive the researchers well. In another class, the teacher was not present and some of the students did not feel obliged, while others were impatient to go home.

Those who were interviewed gave their voluntary consent. Time was taken to explain the purpose of the research and its benefits to them. The interviews were conducted at their convenience.

The participants were interviewed separately and individually, with guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. This was essential, since their names were marked on the forms. Codes were used when the data was entered into the computer. This was also important in order to earn the confidence of the female respondents to discuss issues concerning sexual harassment.

5.2. Ethical issues concerning the researchers

We have attempted to present the results as they were. We have not hidden or distorted any relevant quantitative or qualitative information. The results of all the interviews have been produced and analysed in a gender perspective and not just as ordinary research.

We believe that the appropriate research methodology was used. Boys’ perceptions were also gathered through the questionnaires. Gender imbalance was displayed, and most of the girls at all levels were interviewed.

The research findings have been presented in such a way that they reflect the situation in the field and the opinions of the participants. We have tried to quote participants in order to avoid misrepresentation or falsification of data.

Still on ethical grounds, we also consulted Tchombe’s (1994) article with a view to determining gender-sensitive aspects of the Cameroon education system that are not yet exploited and require further attention. Given that Tchombe singled out the education system, the family, and socio-cultural factors as hindrances to access to basic education in Cameroon, we decided to focus on a less exploited area like attitudes, perceptions and, most importantly, management strategies deployed by female students to curb challenges. Apart from direct quotations, graphs are considered in the analytical sections to elude any possibility of misrepresentation of research data.

We believe that no information we obtained has been used against the participants. Questions were asked about their school curriculum, relationships and interaction with the teachers, and sexual harassment, which they were afraid could victimise them if divulged. Since there is anonymity in reporting, the interests of the participants have been protected. The information obtained will not be used against them in any way. They do not run the risk of being targeted by teachers because of the information provided.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the study of the under-representation of girls in the University of Douala’s IUT, the secondary data revealed that girls are actually a minority in the field of technology. In spite of the challenges encountered by girls in the course of their studies (as revealed by the primary data from questionnaires and interviews), they still forge ahead with the help of coping strategies devised by them themselves. Traditional perceptions of family, friends, and peers about technology being a male discipline have not significantly changed.

It was confirmed that sexual harassment did exist, with many victims preferring to remain silent. It can be concluded from the study that women need to be motivated at all levels to increase their prevalence in the field of technology. This study will therefore be useful to researchers and policy-makers, specifically the ministries of women’s affairs and higher education in Cameroon, to provide current information on motivational factors, gender-based experiences in academic institutions, and coping strategies. It provides data and current information on female experiences in engineering and technology; an area that has received insufficient attention in research on girls/women in education in Cameroon. In terms of improving practice, it is hoped that the institutions concerned may set up a framework for mentality change, create more female empowerment and awareness frameworks, as well as take appropriate decisions and actions that may help eliminate factors that hinder women from taking courses and training in technology.

The emphasis on the academic, moral, psychological, and other challenges and coping strategies is intended to direct the attention of policy-makers to gender-specific problems that are perpetuated by academic institutions and that require attention.

It is hoped that similar endeavours would not be limited or restricted to traditional or socio-cultural challenges faced by women in technology but on current gender-based issues perpetuated by academic institutions. Below are some recommendations that emanate from this study.

There is the need for more formal counselling and orientation units, both at high school and university levels. Many students who are discouraged and less courageous could end up choosing technology if given proper orientation.
So far we have examined sexual harassment, how it is perpetuated in the Higher School of Technology, the effects on victims who are mostly female students, and strategies deployed by victims to counter such behaviours. Due to the effects that the escalation of such deviant practices may have on female enrolment, certain recommendations are suggested in the study. Measures that encourage female students to voice their opinions and ideas about sexual harassment and other challenges in the school including the provision of hotlines for victims of sexual harassment in the school. Since female students are the ones who are mostly affected when it comes to low enrolment and sexual harassment, they should be encouraged to take up courses, training, and professions in the field of technology (which, in Cameroon, is still considered to be a largely male prerogative) through sensitisation programmes and the teaching of technology-oriented subjects.

Since sex-based harassment is a recent area of research that is yielding information that previously had remained hidden (Leo-Rhynie, 1999: 22), the school authorities should not only encourage female students to report gender-grounded abuses, but should also mete out severe sanctions to male students and teachers who are guilty of such practices. Within a wider spectrum, legislation on sexual harassment should be considered in Cameroon in order for the perpetrators to be prosecuted and an end put to impunity. It might be worthwhile to carry out further research in other universities or institutes of higher education in Cameroon to determine the extent of such harassment and its manifestations, especially since this study, as already mentioned, was limited in scope and time.

The best starting point for any attempt to cope with school-based challenges is self-building strategies. Female students should be encouraged to study science subjects in secondary schools. From a pedagogic point of view, female lecturers as well as role models in science and technology should be used as illustrative examples in classroom discussions. Pictures of female role models in science and technology should feature on cover pages of science books. In addition, women should be empowered in order to empower their daughters by orienting them towards science subjects. The number of women in decision-making roles within government circles, non-governmental organisations, and counselling units should be increased so that women themselves help advocate for and generate gender-oriented policies, strategies, and programmes that promote the education and training of females in technology. Both women and men need to be trained or encouraged through gender-sensitive workshops and the provision of financial and technical assistance, and they in turn should share the knowledge with others in their community.

IUT does not have any gender-sensitive policy that is applied in the selection process of candidates who sit the entrance examination. A gender-sensitive affirmative action policy (such as reserving a quota for girls who succeed, or admitting them with a slightly lower average score in the exams that that of their male counterparts) could be introduced, in IUT and in other schools of technology, in order to increase the percentage of girls and encourage others to apply.

Generally speaking, IUT at the University of Douala needs to develop a gender-awareness policy framework that encourages the training of female students in technology courses.

Females in technology should be encouraged through grants to take up further training abroad so that they will serve as role models for other females who may have been brainwashed into thinking that technology is a male prerogative. Both government and private media should be used as channels for guiding girls towards education, training, and professions in technology.

The Ministry of Women’s Affair should set up more gender mainstreaming structures that plan, institute, and follow up on activities that promote gender equality in technical institutions.
REFERENCES


Student governments have served as a platform and preparatory grounds for some of the political leaders we find in Ghana today. However, most of these former student leaders who have become political leaders are men.

ABSTRACT
The study was conducted with the objective of examining the experiences of female student leaders on the campuses of public higher educational institutions in Ghana and exploring how best that platform can be used to groom and nurture more females for leadership positions in the future. A mixed method descriptive research design (quantitative and qualitative) was adopted for the study. A sample size of 54 (49 female student leaders and five male student leaders) was used. All the female Student Representative Council (SRC) and National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS) executives were selected for the study. The questionnaire and interview guide were used for data collection. A reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained using the Cronbach Alpha. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to answer the research questions, while data from the interview were analysed textually. The findings of the research revealed that immediate family members as well as "prominent people" outside their institutions had directly or indirectly motivated female students to vie for positions in student governance. Support available for female student leaders was very limited. Indeed financial and logistical support was from the immediate families and male students really supported the females as campaign leaders. As to the coping strategies, most of them resorted to prayers, consulting their religious leaders for assistance, and some also just turned a blind eye and a deaf ear to discouraging comments. Views of five participant male student leaders indicated that some female student leaders were doing well but they most often wanted the males to step out first before they joined. Core recommendations made were: every tertiary institution should as a matter of urgency establish a functional gender unit with appropriate and qualified staff to focus on nurturing leadership potentials of female students by conducting symposia and seminars. Mentoring systems within the academic spheres should be extended into the leadership realm of female students in the tertiary institutions. Gender directorates in tertiary institutions should liaise with gender based NGOs to offer financial and logistic support to potential female leaders.
1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In Ghana, women constitute about 51 percent of the country’s population, which is consistent with the global average. Yet, they account for less than 15 percent of parliamentarians and less than 10 percent of Chief Directors at various government ministries (Prah, 2002 as cited in Ohene, 2011). Conscious effort has been made at the national level in the recent past to improve on the situation. This is manifested by the recent appointments of women into various top-level leadership positions in government. Prominent among them are the appointments of the following as the first females to occupy various top level offices in the country – the Speaker of Parliament, the Attorney General, the Chief Justice, the immediate past Chairperson for the National Chamber of Commerce, the former Acting Inspector General of Police, Director of Immigration Service, and the appointment of the first female Vice – Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast.

In line with the Beijing Declaration in 1995, the Government of Ghana has since 1999 initiated an affirmative action policy to observe a 40 percent quota for women at all levels of leadership in the education sector. The idea is to set aside quotas for qualified females for either admission or positions in the university system. In spite of all these, there is still more to be done in terms of creating equal opportunities for both sexes, and removing cultural elements that create barriers of intimidation for females who even have the skills and competencies. Besides one area that has not received much attention and has not been explored regarding the creation of opportunities and grooming women to get into leadership positions and to contribute to decision making in Ghana is student government in tertiary institutions. Generally, leadership development in students is considered a priority at contemporary institutions of higher education (Astin & Astin, 2000; Boatman, 1999). These colleges and universities provide numerous leadership opportunities for students. Universities, polytechnics and other institutions of higher learning have demonstrated a commitment to educating students to be responsible citizens and as a result have encouraged the establishment of bodies such as the SRC, NUGS, and Junior Common Room Council (JCRC) in the various institutions. Some religious organisations found on campus are Ghana Methodists Students Union (GHAMSU), Pentecost Students and Associates (PENSA), National Union of Presbyterian Students (NUPS) among others. Besides, other past students’ associations also exist.

In Ghana, all these avenues are available to provide the opportunity for students to contribute to issues concerning them in their various institutions and the country at large. They are therefore, a force to reckon with since their activities have enormous influence on the decisions authorities make in the various institutions. However, like any West African country such as the Republic of Togo and Ivory Coast, female students seem not to benefit much from these exposures since they are still seen to be grossly underrepresented in campus governance.

1.1 Problem statement

The development abilities such as leadership skills are outcomes often associated with college experience (Mendoza, 1996). Students governments such as, the SRC, NUGS and the like have served as a platform and preparatory grounds for, especially, the political leaders we find in Ghana today. However, most of these former student leaders who have become political leaders are mostly men. This presupposes that such leadership roles in the institutions had influenced them by equipping them with the requisite skills and competencies. However, among undergraduate women, leadership experiences have been shown to enhance competence and self-confidence (Astin & Leland, 1991). In spite of this, not many female students on university and polytechnic campuses in Ghana have the opportunity to run for positions in student governments. All the public universities and polytechnics in Ghana are co-educational and female students’ inability to vie for positions or settle for less visible positions such as treasurer, secretary and the like may be attributed to various challenges in the environment of co-educational campuses.

Mendoza (1996) posits that women on co-educational campuses encounter many barriers to becoming leaders. One is the biased treatment when women earn less respect than men, which causes their voices to be ignored and devalued (Leornard & Signall, 1989). Traditionally, it appears, people have been made to believe that some positions are suited for men. Unfortunately, women who do overcome challenges and take the initiative are often criticised for being overaggressive by peers, both male and female alike. In Ghana, in the Akan language, which is widely spoken, expressions such as olomogyata (lioness), and obaadindin (hard woman) are forms of stigmatisation used for females who are daring to compete for responsible positions. With these potential demoralizing outcomes in mind, leadership often does not seem worth the price to women on campuses.

It is observed then that the issue of women underrepresentation in leadership positions is not only in high places but also at lower levels that can serve as a good platform. For instance in Ghana, female students in the University of Education, constitute close to 45 percent of the entire student population (University of Education, Winneba Vice Chancellor’s Annual Report for 2009-10), yet their male counterparts occupy the majority of campus leadership positions. At best the females settled only for positions such as financial secretaries and treasurers. This may be attributable to access to support. Unlike their male counterparts who are often supported financially by some politicians and political parties to run for top positions in the SRC and NUGS, it appears female students have a difficulty in soliciting such financial support. They only become beneficiaries when they deputise or run as vice. This may be one of the reasons why female students may not run at all for competitive positions but settle for less visible
positions in campus governance that may not require much financial support. More so, though, some of these higher educational institutions have gender offices or directorates much of their concentration has been on staff development. It is against this background that this study sought to explore female student leaders’ views and experiences on leadership in public higher education institutions in Ghana.

1.2 Objectives and key questions
The general objective of the study is to examine the experiences of female student leaders on the campuses of public higher educational institutions in Ghana and explore how best that platform can be used to groom and nurture more female leaders. The specific objectives are to:
- Examine what motivates female students to vie for positions in student government.
- Look at forms of support available for female student leaders.
- Study the challenges that female student leaders do encounter and the strategies they use to cope with the situation.

The following research questions guided the study:
- What motivates female students to vie for positions in student government?
- What forms of support are available for female student leaders?
- What challenges do female student leaders encounter?
- What strategies do they adopt to cope with the situation?

1.3 Significance of the study
The attainment of the third Millennium Development Goal (MDG 3), which seeks to promote gender equity and empower women at all spheres is crucial here. Gender Units within the public universities and polytechnics will have documents in assisting and unearthing young women’s potentialities that will enable them to take up competitive leadership position.

The findings of the study will provide female student leaders with insights about the viability of the platform provided. This will empower them to compete for higher leadership positions such as chairpersons, presidents or vice presidents of organisations. Moreover, it will encourage the establishment of more Gender Units in tertiary institutions, especially on campuses of polytechnics who will expand their activities to include the provision of support and encouragement for female students in general and females vying for leadership positions in particular.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
This chapter deals with the review of related literature on the experiences of female leaders, their motivations, challenges and coping strategies. It examines views of authors that have relevance to the subject of study from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. The literature will be reviewed under the following topics:
- Conceptual framework
- Motivation for leadership
- Achievement and motivation
- Role models and mentors in nurturing of female leaders
- Impediments/challenges/barriers to women’s development
- Coping strategies

2.1 Conceptual framework
Leadership as a concept has attracted a lot of literature at various levels of discussions; however the dimension of female leadership has not attracted much scrutiny as that of their male counterpart. In view of this, this work is guided by the fact that there is a constellation of various variables that interplay to produce and nurture leaders in general and for female leaders in particular, as shown in Figure 1.13 below.

Figure 1.13 Conceptual framework

This conceptual framework is an interplay of the variables - motivation, support (logistics), institutional environment - which help in nurturing and grooming female student leaders. For instance, the psychological makeup, experiences, family link support and role models to which individuals are exposed influence them to become who they are. Institutionally too, the culture, co-education, and positions held in pre-tertiary institutions, interactions with others are all factors and sources of influence in nurturing the female leaders.

In Ghana as in most African countries, female leaders have faced challenges from both within and without their sphere of operations. In spite of these challenges some have been able to break through to achieve the ultimate in leadership (albeit, few). In grooming these leaders, motivation, support systems and chance factors have played prominent roles in the attainment of success in leadership.

2.2 Motivation for leadership
Motivation is that which gives impetus to behaviour by arousing, sustaining and directing it toward the
attainment of goals (Madsen, 1959). It is also explained as that which involves goal-directed behaviour (Weiten, 1996), and Santrock (2000), defines it as involving the question why people behave, think and feel the way they do. Thus motivated behaviour is energised directed and sustained. There are a number of theoretical approaches to motivation that can intrinsically or extrinsically trigger the individual to assume leadership positions. For the purpose of this study, McClelland’s Need for Achievement motive will be discussed.

2.2.1 Achievement and motivation
McClelland (1966) asserted that there are three needs that motivate humans, namely, the need for power, the need to achieve, and the need to affiliate with others. Familiarly known as nAch. McClelland’s (1966) publication, The Urge to Achieve, represented 20 years of work on the idea of nAch. Weiten (1996), defined the achievement motive as the need to master difficult challenges to out-perform others and to meet high standards of excellence. Santrock (2000) also defines it as the desire to accomplish something, to expend effort to excel. Thus the need for achievement involves the desire to excel especially in competition with others. McClelland (1985), suggests that the need for achievement is the spark that ignites among other things inspirational leadership.

The degree of achievement-oriented behaviour depends on many factors such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and situational determinants. Extrinsic motivation depends on needs that must the satisfied by external reinforcers. Extrinsically motivated behaviour are performed not out of interest in the behaviour itself, but because they are seen as instrumental to some separate goal (Deci & Ryan 1985). Thus the leader who is extrinsically motivated is one whose behaviour is other-directed and seeks affirmation of traits, competencies and values from external perception. The ideal self of the leader in adopted from role expectation of reference groups, and they behave in ways that satisfy reference group members; first to gain acceptance, and after achieving that to gain status. Intrinsic motivation on the other hand includes those behaviours which are engaged in for its own sake, for the sheer joy and satisfaction derived from the performance itself (Sprinthall, Sprinthall & Oja, 1994). Thus a leader who is intrinsically motivated sets internal standards for traits, competencies and value, that become the basis for their ideal selves (Leonard, Beauvais & Scholl 1999). Leaders are then motivated to engage in behaviours that reinforce the standards and later achieve high level of competency.

Many researchers believe intrinsic motivation has more positive outcomes than extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan 1994). Though they stress that many highly successful individuals are intrinsically motivated, that is, they have a high personal standard of achievement and emphasise personal effort; those extrinsically motivated are highly competitive.

In terms of situational determinants of achievement behaviour Atkinson’s (1964) extensive elaboration on McClelland’s original theory of achievement motivation theorised that the tendency to approach and achievement related goal (T) is a product of three factors; the need for achievement or the motive for success (M) the probability that one will be successful at task (P) and the incentive value of success (I). This has a formula of T=M x P x I, In this equation, M represents the achievement motive, a relatively stable or enduring disposition to strive for success (M) was presumed to be learned early in life and to be shaped by particular childbearing practices. (P) or the probability of success refers to a cognitive expectancy or the anticipation that an instrumental action will lead to the goal and (I) is the incentive value of success. In other words, achievers have the urge and are influenced by the training they undergo; they are goal oriented and have the incentive to be successful. But how do these affect women? Horner (2005) dealt with women and how they achieve their goals.

Horner (2005) has argued that achievement-critical women are propelled in opposite directions by the powerful forces. On the one hand, they are pushed toward achievement by their desire to obtain the psychological satisfaction associated with accomplishment. On the other hand, they have learned from childhood that success for a woman is unfeminine and socially disapproved, especially by men. Consequently, they are also motivated to avoid success. Nevertheless, this trend is not so with all women. Examples are some current and past presidents in various countries. The question is what motivated these women to break these artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organisational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in the organisation into management level positions, otherwise known as the glass ceiling?

Various studies have explained the motives of some women who have excelled to high-level positions. These can be grouped under Self/Intrinsic Motivation and Extrinsic motivation (Role Models and Mentorship role).

2.2.2 Empirical review on self/intrinsic motivation
Harris (2007) study on motivation for women superintendents, found that key motivations for women in educational leadership and management positions included the desire to make a difference, the ability to initiate change, the urge to have a positive impact on people and the challenge of the experience. According to Scherr (2010) these are visionary goals that are an effective tool or leadership. In Scherr’s (2010) qualitative study among six women leaders, all six participants were passionate individuals with an inner drive for achievement irrespective of whether it was for themselves, their families, for others around them or for the companies they worked for. Also a need to feel challenged was critical for their sense of success, as was their over-arching desire to make a difference. Scherr (2010), states that with the many directions women are
being pulled, being motivated to push oneself to the next level takes vision, commitment and drive.

Miner (1974) as cited in Kalkowski and Fritz (2004) study of business managers (44 female and 26 males) and educational administrators (25 females and 194 males) found that managerial motivations was significantly related to the success of female managers, but there were no consistent differences between men and women in managerial motivation. Miner concluded, “it implies only that those women who became managers have the motivational capacity to do so as well as male who became managers.” In a further study by Miner (1974b), he tested motivation to manage among women who were college students with data from 56 different groups of students taking education, business and psychology courses at 4 different universities, he concluded “there is nothing to indicate that women cannot possess the motivation needed for managerial success” (p. 249).

This implies that women can perform equally to men in management and leadership when given the opportunity and motivation.

2.2.3 Role models and mentors in nurturing of women leaders
A role model can be said to be a person whose behaviour, example, or success is or can be emulated by others especially younger people, and in Mayer (2001) study among four women directors of the Cooperative State Research Extension Education Service (CSREES) in the USA, the participants defined a role model as someone in greater authority in whom they “saw things that were strong” that they “wanted to emulate” and also played an important role in their careers. In this study, the participant stated that they found few role models in CSREES, and therefore had to find role models in other fields or turn to male mentors in CSREES. The study also showed that participants benefited from mentors, both male and females. These mentors affirmed their potential, encouraged them to take risks, participated in conversations in which there was an open exchange of ideas, listened to them, and helped them define career goals. Scherr’s (2010) study that explored the career journey of six women in non-profit organisations revealed that all the participants credited elements of their personal professional growth, knowledge of some of their preferred management style methods and portions of their success to various mentors. Mentors varied from family members to bosses, but each of the participants stated that she could not have gotten to where she currently is without the input, guidance, and perspective from those around her.

However Scherr (2010) cited Heilman, (2001) in explaining the downside of mentorship especially in organisations, that “mentoring programmes, for example, although often set up to mitigate against sex bias in organisations, may inadvertently promote it by providing on-looker with a plausible explanation for a woman’s success that does not involve her competence” (Heilman, 2001, p.665). Thus the woman’s mentor may be credited with the true rationale or idea behind her success.

A study by Bearden (2002) of high profile women in Alabama, United States found that mentors and role models were particularly influential in the lives of the women. Teachers, parents grandmothers and sisters were cited as role models. Chandler (2008) also asserts that women who are developing their leadership competence may look for others who model for them desirable leadership skills. Chandler’s (2008) qualitative study also found that, the most impacting role models on the participants were family members such as uncles, aunts, fathers, mothers, male leaders in the community, opinion leaders in the media as well as world leaders such as Mother Theresa, Mahatma Ghandi, and Martin Luther King Junior.

2.2.4 Impediments and challenges to women’s development
Unlike their male counterparts, females from all spheres of life go through a lot of stress to get to the top due to the barriers and challenges of the glass ceiling effect, gender discrimination, perceptions, people self-fulfilling prophecies, and finding success in a business world dominated by men (Brian, 2008).

According to Buckmaster (2004) the barriers encountered by women in aspiring to leadership positions emanate from the notion that women lack experience necessary for taking up senior-most positions. Valian (1998) however, shares the contrary view and asserts that the issue of unequal treatment borders on the variables such as sex stereotyping and discrimination against women through interviews for promotion or recruitment into positions.

The mismatch between qualities attributed to women and the qualities thought necessary for leadership roles places women leaders in a double bind and subjects them to a double standard. Though, women are thought to be altruistic, unselfish, “soft” and nurturing, women in positions of authority are thought to be too aggressive or not aggressive enough, and what appears assertive, self-confident, or entrepreneurial in a man often looks abrasive, arrogant, or self-promoting in a woman (for a review, see Heilman & Parks – Stamm, 2007). Women who achieve in distinctly male arenas are seen as competent but are less well liked than equally successful men. Merely being a successful woman in a male domain can be regarded as a violation of gender norms warranting sanction (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). In short, women can face trade-offs between competence and likability in leadership roles.

Challenges that women face may also be attributed to other factors such as the fact that only few role models exist for women. People learn new roles by identifying with role models, experimenting with provisional identities, and evaluating experiments against internal
standards and external feedback (Ibarra, 1999). For instance, since 1992 when Ghana returned to democratic rule, though some progress has been made, not many women have been appointed to very high offices and become well-known enough to become role models for young female leaders. Election statistics indicate that in 1992 only 16 out of 200 parliamentarians were women. In 1996, 2004 and 2008 only 18, 19 and 19 women respectively were voted to parliament. This is underscored by an opening address at the Conference of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), West Africa Sub-Region, in Accra by the speaker of Ghana’s parliament, Mrs Joyce Bampford-Addo. She intimated that the average percentage of women parliamentarians and ministers of state worldwide are 19 percent and 16 percent respectively. With specific reference to tertiary institutions only a few female are members of the faculty and only a number of them are able to work their way to the top. According to Ohene (2011) women’s under-representation in the universities appears to be a global phenomenon (Dines 1993; Singh, 2008). Dines (1993) for example described the global picture in the universities as one of men outnumbering women by the ratios one to five and one to twenty in the middle and senior management levels respectively. Statistics provided by the Association of Commonwealth Universities (2008) indicate that only 5.7 percent, 14.4 percent and 12.6 percent of faculty are female professors, associate professors/senior lecturers, academic heads, and directors respectively. Only few female leaders, thus, exist on campuses as role models for female students. Further, the complexity of the university setting even makes it difficult for female mentors to be seen or heard by the majority of the female students since they may not be offering courses taught by them.

Systematic differences in men’s and women’s formal organisational positions, together with people’s preference to interact with others of the same sex, yield differences in the composition and structure of men’s and women’s networks (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001), moreover, the ties women do have tend to be less efficacious: men’s network ties provide more informal help than either white or black women’s (McGuire, 2002), and men’s mentors are more likely than women’s to get them promoted (Ibarra, Carter, & Silva, 2010). On the flip side, powerful, high-status men tend to support and channel career development opportunities to male subordinates, whom they judge as more likely to succeed than women (McGuire, 2002). Thus, women’s networks yield fewer leadership opportunities, provide less visibility for their leadership claims, and generate less recognition and endorsement.

Women leaders’ heightened visibility: Some women rise to leadership positions in spite of these challenges, but structural impediments and cultural biases continue to shape their developmental and leadership experience. As women rise in the hierarchy, they become increasingly scarce, more visible and subject to greater scrutiny. Cultural attitudes towards women in authority compound the problem. Some women manage the competence-likeability trade-off by downplaying feminine qualities in the interest of conveying competence, while others attempt to strike the perfect balance between the two. Unfortunately, when people are focused on how they are coming across to others, they divert emotional and motivational resources away from the larger purposes at hand (Steele, 2010). While any leader can become overly focused on self-preservation and self-image, heightened visibility contradictions may be a particular trigger for women leaders. In short, cultural and organisational biases that inadvertently favour men impede the identity work of talented, ambitious women in or aspiring to leadership roles. Despite the organisational structure, which does not have a clear-cut bias for men, Gender Units are empowering females so that they realise their capabilities so as to mainstream for effective productivity.

2.3 Personal barriers to success

Personal barriers may be explained as obstacles or conflicts that women leaders experience at the personal level (Tiao, 2006). As shown in Figure 1.14 below, personal barriers reported by women leaders can be grouped into these two categories: Psychological and family-related barriers. Almost all of these personal barriers are directly or indirectly related to the polarised value systems and gender roles of men and women in a society.

**Figure 1.14 Personal barriers to success**

![Personal Barriers Diagram](image)

*Source: Tiao (2006)*

Psychologically, the fear of success and fear of failure are cited as one of the barriers that affect women (Witmer, 1995). She argues that since women are not socialised to compete and stand out (positively or negatively), they have more to deal with, win or lose. Since women usually take their jobs more seriously than men, they frequently have difficulty separating failure of a task from failure as a person (Witmer, 1995). A study conducted by Flanagan (2002) indicates that some eight women leaders interviewed admitted that as they challenged the status quo by leading differently, they experienced fear when strongly resisted. Also, senior women leaders interviewed by Dietz (1997) reported the issue of isolation for women occupying top leadership positions as well.
In fact, gender stereotypes can negatively affect both men and women. For instance, while women are expected to be the source of strength for successful men, acting as catalysts for successful women is not so easy for men (Tiao, 2006). Nevertheless, the trend is changing. Conventional wisdom emphasises how women are overburdened and often prefer not to move up the career ladder, yet scholars (Moore & Sagaria, 1986; Sagaria, 1988), did not buy into this notion. Based on two large-scale survey studies on women administrators, they found that many women administrators were not only willing to move geographically but also anticipated such a move for career advancement. Despite possible negative consequences of advancement, some 84 senior women administrators and faculty surveyed by Zakery (1991) still aspired to higher positions. In Ghana, although only few women are at the top position, administratively, the country can boast of the immediate past Vice Chancellor of University of Cape Coast, the Speaker of Parliament, the Chief Justice among others. Despite personal barriers, such as family, and difficulties in balancing work and family, women have made it to the male dominant positions.

Higher aspirations can lead to more responsibilities and challenges for females. Moving the whole family only for the sake of the wife’s advancement is still less acceptable in society and, thus, becomes a potential obstacle for women’s career advancement (Touchton, Shavlik, & Davis, 1991). Studies have shown that, given the demands placed upon women leaders, they were more likely to suffer from “mommy guilt,” marital instability, role conflicts, health problems, and stress unless they have reliable and quality support systems (Dietz, 1997; Gatteau, 2000; Gerdes, 2003; Rosynsky, 2002; Tiao, 2006). In practical terms, in Ghana, many students, both male and female, are married and especially those on study leave are of childbearing ages or have children. It is therefore likely that high level position grabbing will be another burden so the best means is to avoid any competition for leadership position at the tertiary level but to pick up later in life.

2.3.1 Strategies for overcoming personal barriers

To deal with psychological barriers, senior women leaders interviewed by Tiao (2006) advised aspiring female leaders to focus on improving their individual strengths and confidence. For instance, women leaders that participated in Dietz (1997), Gatteau (2000), and Flanagan’s (2002) dissertation studies as well as those in Gerdes’s (2003) survey emphasised that a future woman leader needs to know herself, be herself, do her best, recognise her limitations, view things positively, establish quality support systems, have confidence, use her strengths and advantages, and take assertive actions. Villadsen and Tack’s (1986) study that focused on how women executives in public institutions juggled multiple family and career demands in which they interviewed 20 female executives who had at least one child under 18, these women decision-makers identified balancing strategies that helped them set clear boundaries between home and work. The strategies included getting support, delegation of household chores to full-time maids, friendships and social contacts, putting off publishing. These boundaries either helped them cope with stress or helped them set priorities to make balancing possible. Anglis (1990) obtained similar conclusions and emphasised the strategy of time management for combining personal and professional obligations.

Four women college presidents interviewed by Rosynsky (2002) also emphasised the importance of effective negotiation, having a very supportive “significant other” and family members, and establishing quality support networks for successful balance between personal and professional lives. It is therefore important that aspiring female leaders learn how to effectively negotiate and use all the support systems available.

Senior administrative and academic women leaders who participated in Gerdes’s (2003) study offered a wide range of advice that can help aspiring female leaders and women in general overcome individual barriers. Some of their suggestions were: “stand up for yourself; develop confidence; do what’s good for you; follow your values; be yourself; do what you love; have high aspirations; do your best; and have fun, a sense of humour, and friends” (pp. 272-274). They also recommended that women choose their partners carefully, negotiate and establish support networks, and have no or few children.

Individual scholars and practitioners also offered suggestions such as obtaining social support from mentors and networks, being assertive and speaking up and using time effectively, including time for stress relief (O’Laughlin & Bischoff, 2001; Dickson, 2000; Jones, 1993). All in all, findings available from both empirical studies and women’s experiences verified the existence of personal obstacles that can impede women’s quest for leadership positions.

2.4 Professional barriers to success

Women in various leadership positions have reported negative experiences at all levels, that is, interpersonal, institutional, and societal levels. Tiao (2006) refers to all these as “professional barriers” (p.44). She further identified the three types of professional barriers as structural, cultural, and political barriers as illustrated in Figure 1.15.
The first type of barriers, that is, structural barriers, include sex segregation in occupations, promotions, positions, and earnings, among others; these barriers are more obvious and can be more easily measured. Konrad and Pfeffer (1991), for instance, used the Duncan segregation indexes to analyze the College and University Personnel Association’s 1978 and 1983 annual compensation data. As they examined the hiring patterns, they found that some positions in colleges and universities were segregated by gender. To produce gender integration in 1978, 42 percent of the men and women in higher education administration had to change jobs. Five years later, that percentage dropped slightly to 37 percent. They also found that women were more likely to be hired for lower-paying and lower-level jobs.

Other scholars reported gender stratification of college and university employees as well (Johnsrud, 1991; Johnsrud & Heck, 1994; Kulis, 1997; Moore, 1984; Sagaria, 1988; Tinsley, 1986). After conducting a national study on male and female administrators in four-year institutions, Moore (1984) reported that “Women...seem to be able to build careers in some tracks more easily than in others (p. 7)” that they were more likely to be “pocketed” (p. 13) in certain positions, and that they were less likely to be promoted as principal line administrators. After Tinsley (1986) reviewed the literature available at that time, she concluded that most women administrators in higher education were still doing “women’s work” and that they were “far more likely to be assistants to, assistants, or associates than they were to be directors, deans, vice presidents, provosts, or presidents” (p. 7). This also reflects in student governance systems on the campuses of tertiary institutions. Whereas males occupied the top positions such as the presidency, the females more often settled as their deputies, secretaries or took position that made them less visible. For instance, in a study conducted by Ohene (2011) when a female student in the SRC Executive Committee was asked why she did not apply for the position of the President of the SRC she indicated that she applied for the position of the Vice-President because conventionally that is the position reserved for girls and the presidential slot for boys. She lamented that “this attitude starts from home, and even the girls will not vote for you.” (p.177)

As to the effect of gender on administrative promotion patterns and outcomes, Johnsrud (1991) conducted a three-year study on men and women administrators in a large research university and found that women gained significantly less return from administrative promotions than men administrators did. A further analysis of the same data set by Johnsrud and Heck (1994) showed that gender had both an initial and a subsequent negative impact on the status and responsibility of employees even though females in the study had equivalent education and more experience than their male counterparts. They handled measurably more job responsibilities with significantly lower salaries. To make matters worse, the stratification and wage gap was perpetuated and widened over time. Many women executives interviewed by Thompson-Stacy (1995) in her dissertation study also reported being paid less than men for comparable work. In addition to visible structural obstacles, women leaders experienced more intangible cultural bias in the workplace. Socio-cultural barriers such as gender stereotypes, negative attitudes about women in leadership positions, or an inhospitable organisational climate are often products of the widely accepted traditional ideas about men, women, and leadership. In Jablonski’s (1996) qualitative study, for instance, seven female college presidents from the Northeast described the negative impact that the traditional masculine leader image has on female leaders. According to Jablonski (1996), women presidents promoted a participatory leadership style to empower others, but male-dominated board members and faculty leaders (including males and females) did not support such a style because they expect strong, assertive, and aggressive traditional leaders.

The conflict of women’s social and professional roles produced problems for women as well (Sandler, 1986). For instance, the “double bind” refers to the dilemma of having to fulfil the traditional masculine image of serving as a good leader and the image of being a good woman (Curry, 2000; Jones, 1993; Sturnick, 1991; Tedrow & Rhoads, 1998). On the one hand, a female’s ability to lead was questioned if she did not follow the male pattern of leadership. On the other hand, her leadership was criticised and resisted if her behaviours contradicted the traditional model of a nice, good, virtuous woman (Jablonski, 1996; Sandler, 1986; Wajcman, 1998). While male leaders can simply “be themselves” and easily establish their legitimacy, female leaders have to struggle between two incompatible roles and find a way to balance skilfully between them. The six female vice presidents interviewed by Cline (1996), for instance, expressed their frustration over the fact that they received totally opposite feedback when exerting similar behaviours as their male counterparts. For example, Ohene (2011) reported that in Ghana, women who

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**Figure 1.15 Professional barriers to success**

- **Structural Barriers**
  - Lack of work-related assistance, role models, and mentors
  - Exclusion from old boys’ network
  - Difficulty in getting recognition, double standards
  - Demeaning, devaluation, inappropriate jokes

- **Professional Barriers**
  - Hiring and salary gap
  - Unequal job assignment and marginalization
  - Role conflicts & double binds

- **Political Barriers**
  - Need for masculine leader image, inconsistent organizational expectations

- **Cultural Barriers**
  - Negative attitudes and inhospitable work climate
  - Gender stereotypes

- **Workplace politics and lack of access to power**

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show signs of leadership or enforcing rules and getting things done quickly are described as being too forward and called names like "Margaret Thatcher", the former UK Prime Minister who has been portrayed in Ghanaian papers as a strong lady. Others are also labelled *alomo dzata* (lioness) or *obaa dindin* (hard woman) in the Akan dialect.

The last category of obstacles emerged from the struggle over power and status between men and women. Political conflicts over positions, ranks, resources, influence, information, and alliances between men and women are often hidden, yet real. Stokes (1984), for instance, selected 23 possible barriers reported in literature and asked 240 women administrators working in nine Florida universities to identify which ones they had encountered. Out of the 240 women administrators, 168 (70%) them responded, half or more of whom had experienced 19 of the 23 barriers. Of the 19 barriers, four were experienced by more than 80 percent of the respondents. The top four barriers were less access to power (89 percent); exclusion from informal networks (87 percent); having to work twice as hard (87 percent); and difficulties in receiving recognition (81 percent). In terms of frequency, the two most commonly experienced barriers were having to work twice as hard and less access to power. With less access to power, information, and recognition or resources, these women felt they had to work much harder to be effective or to survive. Some female participants in a study conducted by the Gender Mainstream Unit (2006) in the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) expressed the similar sentiments to the effect that they always had to go the extra mile as women to prove their worth on the job.

2.4.1 Strategies for overcoming professional barriers

Given the long patriarchal history of the structure of most organisations and systems, the environment has been friendlier to men than to women. Consequently, to succeed, women must be able to manoeuvre around the previously described interpersonal, organisational, and societal barriers (Tiao, 2006).

- **Structural barriers**

Scholars and women leaders have offered some useful suggestions that can help women deal with structural barriers such as hiring, the salary gap, and marginalisation. According to Johnsrud and Heck (1994), to avoid structural barriers, such as stratification or marginalisation, women should actively seek different opportunities to demonstrate a variety of skills. Seeking sponsorship and creation of new positions were two other strategies commonly used by women in Johnsrud’s (1991) study. Cook’s (2001) solutions to the problem of being irreplaceable in a position were to train a successor or to restructure the work for others to complete more easily.

In terms of strategies for avoiding gender bias in hiring practices, Thompson-Stacy (1995) interviewed 20 female executives and concluded with the following five most commonly used strategies: improving one’s negotiation skills, benchmarking, improving interpersonal communication skills with male colleagues, networking, and using male as well as female mentors.

- **Cultural barriers**

Dietz (1997), report that many of the men in both mid-level and senior management are struggling to accept women as peers on multiple levels of consciousness even though these women had “paid their dues” As a result, executive women leaders in Dietz (1997), Rosynsky (2002), Thompson-Stacy (1995), and Zakery’s (1991) studies all stressed the importance of knowing the culture of one’s institution, taking the initiative to help their male counterparts feel comfortable working with them as well as to avoid the “double-bind” barrier, by striking a balance between role-related and gender-related expectations (Gerdes, 2003; Harter, 1993; Tedrow & Rhoads, 1999; Twombly & Rosser, 2002; Yoder, 2001). The 84 senior women leaders and faculty members in Gerdes’s (2003) survey, for instance, noted the significance of not being too feminine or too masculine. According to Tedrow and Rhoads (1998, 1999), many senior women administrators in community colleges used the strategy of constant evaluation of the gender dynamics of different situations or events and application of gender knowledge and skills accordingly.

As Harter (1993) emphasised the importance for women to develop and demonstrate both feminine and masculine competencies and Yoder (2001), opined that the traditional male leadership style will bring women more problems than benefits. She believed that women should instead use both status-enhancing and status-levelling strategies to be effective. Her specific recommendations for women included active listening, being humorous and respectful of others, adopting team work, conforming to group procedures first to accumulate credits before trying to influence and change the group, becoming exceptionally competent, and avoiding dominant speech.

- **Political barriers**

Ropers-Huilman (1998) suggested strategies for women to become politically savvy. Among them are that they must first know what kinds of power they possess and how they can use their influence skilfully and effectively. Similarly, advice offered by senior women leaders interviewed by Clemens (1998), Cline (1996), and Thompson-Stacy (1995) was to be knowledgeable about the power bases on which they as well as other major players have relied, must be willing to spend time identifying and analysing the political situation and plan a strategy to confront their opponents, when necessary. After Bashaw and Nidiffer (2002) examined women administrators’ careers in higher education, they found three political strategies women leaders often use to pursue their goals. First, these senior women leaders were observant and formed strong male alliances to remain in power as well as to accomplish their goals. Second, they were highly skilled at fundraising. Last, they were flexible with a repertoire of different strategies that allowed them to manoeuvre around different roadblocks to, at least, partially fulfil their goals. English (2000) also studied
five women administrators and found that they dealt with the roadblocks by “assuming different roles, playing the game, and picking battles wisely” (p. 242). Other scholars and women leaders viewed the art of negotiation as a crucial strategy for women administrators to overcome political barriers as well. For women leaders in Cline’s (1996) study, the art of assessment and negotiation was part of their administrative life as in “when to take a step back, when to duck, and when to dodge” (p. 136). To explore further the “battling strategies” women used, Clemons (1998) interviewed 10 women leaders in a western state. She concluded her study with these six commonly used negotiation strategies: “gathering information, delivering information, employing manoeuvres, selecting battle weapons or tools, using allies/advisors, and using emotion” (p. 83).

Other solutions to the issue of devaluation of women’s works proposed by scholars (Carli, 1998; Cook, 2001) included documenting their achievements from the first day, taking credit for their ideas and successes, participating in and obtaining support from both female and mixed-gender networks, and working on interdepartmental projects to demonstrate ability as well as to increase visibility, finding advocates and mentors, taking risks, creating individual as well as institutional ties and alliances, negotiation and delegation, and enhancing the status as well as legitimacy of women as leaders (Guteck, 2001; Sturnick, 1999; Lynch, 1990; Yoder, 2001).

2.5 Women’s leadership and public life in Ghana

In recent times, there has been a growing awareness on the need to improve female participation in public life in Ghana. Ghana has subscribed to international protocols/conventions that advance the cause of women. Examples of such protocols/conventions include CEDAW (1998), the MDGs, interalia MDG3, and the African Union Gender Policy Commitments adopted in 2009.

The 1992 4th Republic Constitution of Ghana (Chap 5, Acts 11) stipulates female participation in the governance structure of the state. To ensure successful implementation of the constitutional injunction most government institutions have put in place gender policies to assist qualified females to climb-up the employment ladder. For example, in 2005 the University of Education, Winneba established a Gender Mainstream unit to guide the university in bridging various gender gaps, which were identified through a baseline study conducted in the academic year 2004-05.

The gender policy was to guide the university in its actions to eliminate barriers and gender inequalities within the university community (UEW Gender Policy, 2009). The policy sought to create a framework that assisted the university in encouraging gender equality in all staff and student activities and ensure equitable participation and appropriate representation of both genders throughout its entire decision-making process.

Though the Gender Policy document of UEW is currently being implemented, its focus is largely on the teaching and non-teaching staff. Female students are being assisted in areas of admissions and financing, but nothing much is being done by way of student leadership and politics.

In conclusion, the literature expounded on issues of motivation, barriers, and empirical studies on how such barriers were overcome by female leaders in many spheres of work. Despite the fact that some of the literature information dates back to a decade or more, the information is still as valid as the contemporary information obtained and used to complement the existing ones that are relevant to this study. Although literature on tertiary female leaders is almost unavailable in Ghana, this present study is filling that gap with the choice of the topic “An exploration of the experiences of female student leaders in public tertiary institutions in Ghana.”

3. METHODOLOGY

The objective of the study was to examine the experiences of female student leaders on the campuses of public higher educational institutions in Ghana and to explore how best that platform can be used to groom and nurture more female leaders. The research addressed the following questions:

- What motivates female students to vie for positions in students’ government?
- What forms of support are available for female student leaders?
- What challenges do female student leaders encounter?
- What strategies do they adopt to cope with the situation?

3.1 Research design

The study was a descriptive survey that employed the mixed method research approach using the convergence model of triangulation. The convergence model represents the traditional model of a mixed method triangulation design (Creswell, 1998). In this model, data was collected and analysed quantitatively and qualitatively separately on the same phenomenon and then the different results were converged (by comparing and contrasting the different results) during the interpretation. This allowed the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to generate enough data for the study, validate and interpret using systematic principles (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The use of this design enabled the researchers to collect data from the entire sample to provide answers to the broad and complete range of research questions and also generated stronger evidence for a conclusion through convergence of findings.

3.2 Delimitation of the study

The study examined the experience of female students who contested and won leadership positions in public higher educational institution in Ghana. It involved only female students who are executive members of the SRC and the NUGS of public universities and polytechnics in Ghana. The study was restricted to only members of these two student-governing bodies because vying for especially the top positions were highly competitive and more often motivated and influenced by political parties. Also, the prestige attached to the positions is very high.
since some of the executives become automatic council members representing the students, especially in the public universities. It is worth noting that, though there are other organisations on campuses as mentioned earlier, some executive members are even sometimes appointed due to the lack of interest especially on the part of the females. Females in these areas are also therefore grossly underrepresented.

3.3 Sampling
All female student leaders in public universities and polytechnics in Ghana constituted the target population. However, only female student leaders who contested for their position (SRC and NUGS) in public tertiary institutions - seven universities and ten polytechnics - formed the accessible population as well as five male student leaders. Originally the study was focused on only the females but on the field, the researchers decided to interview some of the males student leaders because it was realised that some of them had contested and won traditionally female positions and also because others worked with the female student leaders. Thus the intention was to ascertain their views of the roles of their female counterparts in leadership positions. The total accessible population was 49 female student leaders and 5 male student leaders. The rational for including five males is that the female leaders worked with males, so it was necessary to know the views of the males on how they perceived the roles the females played.

A census selection was employed since the respondents constitute the entire accessible population. Involving each individual in the population was considered necessary since the number of female student leaders in the above mentioned bodies was estimated to be small and therefore manageable. The total sample size was 54, including 27 female student leaders from the universities and 22 female student leaders from the polytechnics and five male student holding executive posts, which in the past were the preserve of females. The convenience sampling technique was used to select five male student leaders in the SRC and NUGS who were holding positions like treasurer and secretary, which are perceived as positions reserved for females.

3.4 Research instruments
A questionnaire and an interview guide (please see Appendix A and B) were the main instruments used for the study. All the items were generated from the research questions and the available literature. The questionnaire consisted of mainly close-ended items on a four point Likert-type scale, (strongly agree-SA; agree-A, disagree-DA, strongly disagree-SD) which demanded female student leaders to tick responses that best applied to them. The questionnaire was in four sections (A-D).

- Section A of the questionnaire elicited information on the demographic characteristics of respondents, namely institution, area of leadership, position held, programme being pursued at the university, and family background.
- Section B elicited information on their motivation for vying for the leadership position. It consisted of 13 close-ended statements and four other open ended questions.
- Section C elicited information on the kind of support they received. It consisted of 17 close-ended statements and two open-ended statements.
- Section D elicited information on the female student leaders' challenges and coping strategies. It consisted of 21 close-ended statements.

Examples of the statements associated with each of the sections are shown below:
- Family members encouraged me, Held leadership position in basic school (Motivation);
- Logistic (materials, vehicle, stationery), support from both parents (Support);
- I feel intimidated by my fellow male leaders (Challenges);
- I turn a blind eye and deaf ear to discouraging comments (Coping strategies).
- In view of the lapses associated with close-ended items in restricting the responses of respondents, two interview guides were also used. This provided female and some of the male student leaders enough latitude to express their views and opinion in a face-to-face interaction with researchers. This enabled the researchers to ask follow-up questions. The female student leaders’ interview guide consisted of 12 open-ended statements and that of the males consisted of 16 open-ended statements. Examples of the statements associated with the female and male student leaders are shown below respectively:
  - How do your male counterparts treat you especially at meetings and during decision-making? (Female);
  - What is your general assessment about the competency of female student leaders on your campus? (Male)

In order to ensure the reliability of the data collection instruments, the instruments were pilot tested using 15 female hall executives in the University of Education, Winneba, who were not part of the sample for the study. Questions eliciting comments on the physical layout of the questionnaire, the length of time taken to complete and how the questions were posed were included in the questionnaire schedule to help clarify some of the questions in the questionnaire. Subsequently, appropriate revision was made. A reliability co-efficient of 0.81 was obtained using the Cronbach Alpha.

3.5 Data collection and analysis
The help of 10 research assistants was solicited in administering questionnaires to the 49 female student leaders (SRC and NUGS) throughout the seven public universities and ten polytechnics in Ghana. The research assistants were gathered and taken through intensive training on data collection. Introductory letters signed by the lead researcher were then given to them to enable the respondents not to be suspicious in granting them audience. However, in order to ensure confidentiality of information provided, the interviewing of 17 selected female student leaders (one from each institution) was done by the researchers. Respondents’ consent was sought in order to record the interaction. This helped the interaction to flow rather than stopping intermittently to take notes. After each interview, the recoded information was played
back to the respondents and any misconceptions and misunderstandings were corrected.

A multi-type mixed analysis technique was used in the analysis. This enabled the use of varying techniques to analyse quantitative and qualitative data. The first step of data analysis in this study was to serially number completed copies of the questionnaires after which they were edited. The edited responses were then coded. The Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 17.00 was used to analyse responses from the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, and independent sample t-test were used to describe the differences in motivations, support, and challenges-faced of the university and polytechnic student leaders.

Data from the interview were transcribed and analysed thematically. Both quantitative and qualitative data were interpreted and discussed concurrently under research questions. This approach provided an opportunity for data comparison, data integration and triangulation.

3.6 Ethical considerations
The researchers obtained a list of all the tertiary female student leaders in all the 10 regions of the country from their colleague at the University of Education, Winneba campus. They were then contacted by telephone to seek their consent to participate in the study; they were also informed of their voluntary participation, their privacy and the purpose of the study. A date was fixed to meet them in person at their campuses. The telephone contacts were made to ensure availability when the research assistants and the researchers traveled to the various campuses in the regions. Their rights and protection stipulated above were repeated to them when the researchers and research assistants met them in person at their campuses. The instrument was also designed in such a way that it assured the respondents’ anonymity. Thus they were not required to write their names on the questionnaires or interview guides. For the interview recordings, the interview guide was made available to the respondents to study for any clarification, and participants who were not happy with the direction of the questions could opt out or ask for modification of those questions/statements.

3.7 Limitations of the study
Despite the fact that appointments had been made well in advance, it was nonetheless difficult to gain access to some of the respondents to conduct a face-to-face interview. As a result telephone interviews were conducted. This made it difficult to observe respondents’ gestures and their verbal cues that could have added a lot to their expressions.

The position of the researchers as lecturers could have influenced responses provided by respondents. Some respondents felt hesitant to provide some information, which might be confidential.

4. RESULTS OF THE STUDY
In this section, quantitative and qualitative data on the experiences of the 49 female student leaders in public tertiary institutions as well as five male leaders’ assessment of their female counterparts is presented. The quantitative section presents data from the questionnaire, which elicited information on their motivations, support received, challenges and coping strategies. The qualitative section presents themes and verbatim statements from the interviews. The presentation has been rendered according to the research questions. Demographic information about respondents is presented first.

4.1 Demographic data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.2 Positions of female respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 1.2 it was noted that only 10.2 percent of respondents occupied vice presidential positions, indeed nobody was a president in her institution. Majority were secretaries or women’s commissioners (preserve of women). It came out that traditional positions reserved for females (treasurers & financial secretaries), were being occupied by males, for example only 4.1 percent of the respondents were financial secretaries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.3 Age profile of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-22 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-27 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-32 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-37 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Combined together, a large majority the respondents fell in the age range of 18-27yrs (85.7), it is noted that these are females who have graduated from the Senior High Schools (SHS). Females who were advanced in age seem to be concerned with other priorities such as marriage and family life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.4 Birth order of female respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My position among siblings (birth order)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1.4 above indicates that as much as 44.9 percent of respondents were second in birth order, while 20.4 percent were first in order of birth. In writing about Alder’s birth order and sibling relationship, Corey (2009) noted that “the typical second child behaves as if (s)he were in a race and is generally under full steam at all times.” They sometimes behave as though they are being trained to surpass the older sibling. According to Corey (2009), this competitive struggle between the first two children influences the later course of their lives.

Table 1.5 Educational attainment of parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest level of education</th>
<th>Highest educational level of father</th>
<th>Highest educational level of mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 1.5 above it is noted that the level of educational attainment of parents had positive impact on them. It is also noted that educational attainment of parents of females shapes their leadership abilities or potentials, it is noted that 51 percent of the respondents had fathers that have had tertiary education. Indeed everybody’s father has had some sort of education. The trend was almost similar when asked about the educational attainment of their mothers, 42.9 percent of the respondents had mothers who have had tertiary education. This suggests that the higher the education of parents, the higher the support/encouragement females may receive in developing their leadership potentials.

4.2 What motivates female students to vie for positions in student government?

The various forms and sources of motivation female students receive are captured in the Table 1.6 below.

Table 1.6 Distribution of what motivates respondents to go into leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SA %</th>
<th>A %</th>
<th>D %</th>
<th>SD %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family members encouraged me</td>
<td>18(36.7)</td>
<td>17(34.7)</td>
<td>10(20.4)</td>
<td>4(8.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother encouraged me</td>
<td>17(34.7)</td>
<td>25(51.0)</td>
<td>3(6.1)</td>
<td>4(8.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father encouraged me</td>
<td>7(14.3)</td>
<td>28(57.1)</td>
<td>9(18.4)</td>
<td>5(10.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings encouraged me</td>
<td>19(38.8)</td>
<td>24(49.0)</td>
<td>2(4.1)</td>
<td>4(8.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband/partner encouraged me</td>
<td>10(20.4)</td>
<td>7(14.3)</td>
<td>11(22.4)</td>
<td>21(42.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female friends encouraged me</td>
<td>16(32.7)</td>
<td>21(42.9)</td>
<td>9(18.4)</td>
<td>3(6.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male friends encouraged me</td>
<td>23(46.9)</td>
<td>22(44.9)</td>
<td>3(6.1)</td>
<td>1(2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held leadership position in basic school</td>
<td>29(59.2)</td>
<td>12(24.5)</td>
<td>3(6.1)</td>
<td>5(10.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held leadership position in secondary school</td>
<td>28(57.1)</td>
<td>7(14.3)</td>
<td>7(14.3)</td>
<td>7(14.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held leadership position in training college, polytechnic, etc.</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>6(12.2)</td>
<td>19(38.8)</td>
<td>24(49.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My upbringing</td>
<td>28(57.1)</td>
<td>11(22.4)</td>
<td>9(18.4)</td>
<td>1(2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female leaders</td>
<td>25(51.0)</td>
<td>15(30.6)</td>
<td>4(8.2)</td>
<td>5(10.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender unit of my institution</td>
<td>9(18.4)</td>
<td>9(18.4)</td>
<td>22(44.9)</td>
<td>9(18.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.6 shows that encouragement from male friends 45 (90.8 percent), siblings 43 (87.8 percent), mothers 42 (85.7 percent), influence of positions held in basic schools 41 (83.7 percent), female leaders 40 (81.6 percent), upbringing 39 (79.5 percent) and female friends 37 (75.6 percent) were the most influencing factors that motivated female leaders to compete for positions. 31 (63.3 percent) of the respondents disagreed that the gender unit of their institutions motivated them to vie for positions. This was as a result of the fact that most of the polytechnics in Ghana do not have a gender unit, and also the universities having gender unit do not consider supporting female students in bids for leadership positions.

Female student leaders in universities and polytechnics in Ghana provided varying sources of motivation and inspiration when interviewed. Responses given regarding what motivated them to vie for the positions they occupied indicated that most of them were encouraged by external elements; their friends, predecessors and role models. Either their friends told them that they had the qualities and that they could make it or they were encouraged to go ahead after they discussed their intentions with them.
Though some also did indicate they were discouraged by their colleagues by either telling them to rather concentrate on their studies or the position they were vying for was for men. It also came to light that though most of them indicated that they had role models, only two of the female leaders cited senior women academics in their institution as role models as well as female politicians, media personnel, former heads of organisations in Ghana and world leaders.

One thing that was quite revealing was that most of the females did indicate that they had more males encouraging them than their female counterparts. This was also evident in the interviews conducted. A treasurer observed: “Males were following me, I had males encouraging and assisting me. And it was the first time a lady was vying for such a position since this school came into existence. I am the first lady to hold the position of Treasurer…”

Another explained: “The President approached me personally saying that he wants me to be his running-mate because he has been seeing me around. So he informed me and I also informed my parents. He gave me good advice and I accepted it.”

With respect to taking inspiration from previous leadership which was also found to be one of the significant motivating factors one female secretary explained that: “…sincerely, I can say that I've been a leader since childhood. I'm the first born so right from home I was taught to lead. So through primary school I was a leader, JHS a leader, SHS a leader and over here. I don't know my spirit just pushes me to go for the position because personally I know I am good at it…”

While some were externally motivated by friends and family members, an appreciable number were also internally motivated, they wanted to make a difference and saw an opportunity to vie for the position. Their statements are presented below:

“Yes, it takes a lot of courage to embark on or to vie for a position like this. It takes a lot of self-confidence. I must say that I actually vied for this position because of the passion I have for service.”

“I am the wife of a pastor and by encountering a lot of women I thought it wise to lead the women and come out with some of the lacks I see in their lives. That made me vie for the position”

“It has been some misconception in the school that there are some positions in the school that women cannot contend for, for example the President. There have been several occasions where ladies go for such positions but they have been denied by those saying they can't do the work, they can't do the work. It is now time for us to tell them that what men can do, we can even do it better”

However, there is also an indication that some female leaders were also encouraged by their mothers, female role models and female friends which is naturally expected, some of the leaders did lament that they were surprised when some of their own female counterparts discouraged them. For instance, a female leader in one of the polytechnics said: “...when I decided to run for the position, some of my lady friends asked me not to because I would waste my time and would not be able to learn and I may not even win since I am contending with guys…”

Although some stated that they did not have role models at all, a number of them mentioned the names of local politicians, former heads of organisations, opinion leaders and some world leaders. They also gave reasons for their choice of such role models.

“Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings is a woman who has excelled in so many disciplines – 31st December Women's movement as the founder. She has even gone to the extent of vying for a slot as the President of Ghana. I think she is a brave woman and I believe her behaviour is worthy of emulation”

“Madam Joyce Aryee (the former Chief Executive officer of the Ghana Chamber of Mines), because looking at the challenges she has passed through, she still made it to where she is now”

4.3 What forms of support are available for female student leaders?
Data in Table 1.7 below provides information regarding the various forms of support female student leaders received.
Table 1.7 Distribution of support respondents received

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SA F %</th>
<th>A F %</th>
<th>D F %</th>
<th>SD F %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial support from both parents</td>
<td>15(30.6)</td>
<td>18(36.7)</td>
<td>10(20.4)</td>
<td>6(12.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support from my mother</td>
<td>22(44.9)</td>
<td>11(22.4)</td>
<td>12(24.5)</td>
<td>4(8.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support from my father</td>
<td>13(26.5)</td>
<td>18(36.7)</td>
<td>11(22.4)</td>
<td>7(14.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support from my siblings</td>
<td>6(12.2)</td>
<td>16(32.7)</td>
<td>18(36.7)</td>
<td>9(18.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support from husband/partner</td>
<td>6(12.2)</td>
<td>9(18.4)</td>
<td>16(32.7)</td>
<td>18(36.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support from my female friends</td>
<td>1(2.0)</td>
<td>8(16.3)</td>
<td>21(42.9)</td>
<td>19(38.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support from my male friends</td>
<td>5(10.2)</td>
<td>18(36.7)</td>
<td>15(30.6)</td>
<td>11(22.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support from other family members</td>
<td>4(8.2)</td>
<td>13(26.5)</td>
<td>21(42.9)</td>
<td>11(22.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic (materials, vehicle, stationery, etc.) support from both parents</td>
<td>11(22.4)</td>
<td>8(16.3)</td>
<td>22(44.9)</td>
<td>8(16.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic support from my mother</td>
<td>15(30.6)</td>
<td>15(30.6)</td>
<td>13(26.5)</td>
<td>6(12.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic support from my father</td>
<td>9(18.4)</td>
<td>12(24.5)</td>
<td>18(36.7)</td>
<td>10(20.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic support from my siblings</td>
<td>4(8.2)</td>
<td>17(34.7)</td>
<td>14(28.6)</td>
<td>14(28.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic support from other family members</td>
<td>1(2.0)</td>
<td>10(20.4)</td>
<td>20(40.8)</td>
<td>18(36.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic support from husband/partner</td>
<td>4(8.2)</td>
<td>9(18.4)</td>
<td>12(24.5)</td>
<td>24(49.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic support from some organisations (NGOs, churches, political parties, etc.)</td>
<td>3(6.1)</td>
<td>6(12.2)</td>
<td>12(24.5)</td>
<td>28(57.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic support from my female friends</td>
<td>6(12.2)</td>
<td>12(24.5)</td>
<td>9(18.4)</td>
<td>22(44.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic support from my male friends</td>
<td>7(14.3)</td>
<td>24(49.0)</td>
<td>5(10.2)</td>
<td>13(26.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Certainly I couldn’t have done anything with my personal money. I had financial support from my parents, from my friends and from some mentors I had at church. My parents gave me the encouragement and when I needed some money, not everything but some, they supported me. My mentor also supported with money. My friends supported with the campaign, not necessarily the money but they did the campaign for me.”

An SRC secretary intimated: “My academic teacher was one, my sibling too. I called them to give me money to do posters. Some of my friends also opted for printing free some of the posters I needed for the campaign.”

In addition to the provision of financial and logistic support, it was evident that some leaders received support from supernatural sources. A female leader in one of the polytechnics in the northern part of Ghana attested to this by saying that: “…I had spiritual support by way of protection from my father, and that has brought me this far. Elections in this institution are highly competitive and sometimes violent. It is not easy so you need that aspect…”

It was noted, as submitted by some of the female leaders that in some cases the male students were more supportive. It was admitted by one SRC secretary that her campaign team were all males. Responses gathered suggest that female student leaders did not solicit or receive support from any political party and Gender Units in their institutions. Since, most of the institutions have no Gender Units.

4.4 What challenges do female student leaders encounter?

Data on challenges female student leaders encounter have been rendered in Table 1.8.

From Table 1.7, financial support 33 (67.3 percent) and logistic support 30 (61.2 percent) from parents, and logistic support from male friends 31 (63.3 percent) were the major supports received by female leaders. A gleaming from the above suggests that just like motivation, male friend play a significant role in terms of provision of support for aspiring female leaders. An SRC secretary in one of the universities admitted that: “my campaign team were all men and they were very helpful…”

Interaction with the female student leaders on the various campus revealed that they received support from different sources such as parents, siblings, both male and female friends, fiancés, lecturers and mentors. Support they received took the form of money, printing of posters, call cards, encouragement and moving round to campaign. A women’s commissioner stated:
Table 1.8 Distribution of the challenges respondents encounter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I struggled financially during my campaign.</td>
<td>13(26.5)</td>
<td>22(44.9)</td>
<td>5(10.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not get enough logistic support during my campaign</td>
<td>16(32.7)</td>
<td>19(38.8)</td>
<td>1(2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel discouraged by my family members as a leader</td>
<td>3(6.1)</td>
<td>20(40.8)</td>
<td>25(51.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel discouraged by my female friends as a leader</td>
<td>7(14.3)</td>
<td>23(46.9)</td>
<td>19(38.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel discouraged by my male friends as a leader</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>27(55.1)</td>
<td>22(44.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel intimidated by my fellow female leaders</td>
<td>7(14.3)</td>
<td>19(38.8)</td>
<td>23(46.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel intimidated by my fellow male leaders</td>
<td>8(16.3)</td>
<td>22(44.9)</td>
<td>18(36.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not encouraged by my fellow leaders</td>
<td>13(26.5)</td>
<td>21(42.9)</td>
<td>13(26.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not getting encouragement from female lecturers</td>
<td>10(20.4)</td>
<td>20(40.8)</td>
<td>17(34.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not getting encouragement from male lecturers</td>
<td>7(14.3)</td>
<td>20(40.8)</td>
<td>19(38.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not getting support from the university/poly-technic authority</td>
<td>8(16.3)</td>
<td>18(36.7)</td>
<td>14(28.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.8 shows that the major challenge faced by the female student leaders was getting enough logistical support during their campaign 29 (59.2 percent) as well as financial support 22 (44.9 percent).

Responses gathered from female student leaders through the interview indicate that they encounter various challenges; the most prevalent being institutional bureaucracies. Almost all of them admitted that the way the system is structured coupled with the procurement laws made it very difficult to access money for projects and programmes. Proposals put in have to go through a very long process before sometimes they are approved. This makes it difficult for them to sometimes organise programmes or complete projects before they leave office. A hostel representative stated:

“I know on the side of the student leaders sometimes there is the notion out there with regards to accountability and leaders being corrupt so as a result they have to put in structures but those structures are impeding the process of the student leadership. I remember one time I planned to go on hostel visitation. I had to walk, talk about this, write letters here and there, the bureaucracy was too much. At the end of the day it delayed, the result that I was expecting was not what I really got. I wouldn’t say it was my fault that I failed but it was as a result of the system.”

A treasurer also commented on how the bureaucratic nature of the system results in her being given derogatory names because she wouldn’t dish out money whenever the other leaders needed it. Her verbatim expressions are the following:

“There are so many challenges especially the aspect of dealing with money, so it needs a lot of care and caution because some people think that money is just there, if they want money they just call you, Bertha we need money and then you take the money for them but they don’t know that it passes through a process before the amount is released so most people think “me kyer me ho, oy obaa e ntsi, s oobaa de ob nya position a, kyer noho” (you are arrogant, because you are a woman, when a woman takes up a position she becomes arrogant).

They are sometimes disappointed when they go out to solicit sponsorship from cooperate bodies. When they are not able to carry outlined programmes or projects, the students brand them as failures. Some women’s commissioners in some of the institutions lamented that no budgetary allocation is even made for their unit. It also came to light that, patronage for programmes organised for female colleagues was very low and discouraging. A women’s commissioner at one of the universities stated:

“You organise the programme and call meetings and ladies will not attend. You will end up getting twenty out of say 250 ladies on campus, and you feel like “what am I doing?” It’s like you don’t get the support you need especially from the ladies every time, but for the guys, even if you will not invite them, they will come in their numbers and those were the main problems we had.”

Some also complain about discouraging remarks from students and saying things to undermine and tarnish their reputation. Combining academic work and the responsibilities as a leader was quite tedious for most of them. An SRC secretary stated:

“The major challenge is academics because once you are a student leader on campus, you shouldn’t compromise on your academics because lecturers don’t favour you. There is nothing like favour for student-leaders. If you get zero, you have zero, you will trail. So being a student leader you must take your academics seriously or else you are out.”

For a particular SRC secretary the fear of disappointing the parents by not making good grades always haunted her. More so, some female student leaders in the northern

...
part of Ghana did indicate that sometimes they are intimidated by men.

4.5 What strategies do female leaders adopt to cope with the situation?

Table 1.9 presents information on coping strategies female student leaders employ when they encounter challenges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I connect with colleague student leaders when I</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>encounter difficulties</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I contact the gender directorate/unit of my</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>institution when I encounter difficulties</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I call my parents when I encounter difficulties</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk to friends when I encounter difficulties</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I cry when I encounter challenges/problems</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I eat a lot when I encounter challenges/problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I pray when I encounter challenges/have problems</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consult a religious leader when I encounter</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>challenges/problems</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consult the counselling unit of the institution</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I turn a blind eye and ear to discouraging comments</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 1.9, praying 47 (96.0 percent), calling parents 40 (81.6 percent), talking to friends 40 (81.6 percent), consulting religious leaders 37 (75.5 percent), and turning a blind eye and deaf ear to discouraging comments 33 (67.1 percent) were some of the coping strategies used by female student leaders.

Some indicated that because of the bureaucratic nature of the system they had to send their proposals for programmes and projects they want to carry out far in advance and lobby in order to get financed.

“With issues about finances I try as much as possible to always lobby my way through that is the basic thing there is nothing we can do. This is a Procurement Act that has been passed by Parliament that is an Act of Parliament, so there is nothing you can do so if there is anything to be done then highest is to lobby the authorities so that everything goes on successfully.”

In order to address the issue of low patronage, all available media such as Facebook, notice boards, text messages and FM radio stations are used to disseminate information to students. Cooperating with other executive members to get things done also helped to reduce the stress. A female SRC treasurer intimated that: “I played deaf and mute to discouraging remarks made about me because I am aware leadership comes with such challenges and that I encourage myself since I know it is a preparatory ground for future aspirations.” Some also indicated that when they encountered challenges they “prayed to God and seek advice from older people.”

Another treasurer from a polytechnic explained how she copes with being given derogatory remarks because of a position and gender:

“All the challenges I am facing I am not discouraged because I know where am going, and I know to be a leader it’s not easy and what has helped me is that I don’t do things to please people. I do the right thing and make sure that what I do I’m not doing to please somebody... And because of the vision that I have even when I’m going through challenges and problems, I see it to be something that is equipping me well to face future positions and challenges. I know that to be a leader you will by all means face challenges but when you press on you will go on higher grounds.”

In terms of academic challenges, an SRC secretary in a university stated: “You know it’s all about time management and determination, once you’ve decided to take up the challenge of combining academics and leadership you have to try and apportion time for both ends and find the way out.”

Exploratory analysis was used to examine the differences in motivation, support, challenges and coping strategies of female student leaders from the university and those in the polytechnic.
4.6 Views of male student leaders

When asked why they contested for positions most people see as positions for ladies, a male leader said: “You know these days ladies fight for equality and I don’t think the position of the secretary is meant for women only but men can equally do that work and even do it better than women.”

Concerning the contributions of female student leaders in decision-making, one of them said:

“They come to meetings just to witness. The only thing they are interested in is money. When it is money, they have to get their share. For that you can give them 90 percent contribution. When it comes to work, forget it.”

Another male leader said:

“Actually on the part of female leaders we have not realised much. They are not active. Most times when it comes to decision-making some of them will remain dormant and they won’t even like to talk, speak out things. It is only a few that are making headway.”

Generally, the male student leaders interviewed were of the view that some of the female student leaders are doing well but they lack the ability to take the initiative. As one of them put it: “They are doing well, it’s only that they always want men to step out first before they also join.”

5. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The objective of this study was to examine the experiences of female student leaders on the campuses of public higher educational institutions in Ghana and explore how best that platform can be used to groom and nurture more female leaders. The research questions that guided the research were (a) what motivates female students to vie for positions in students’ government? (b) what forms of support are available for female student leaders? (c) what challenges do female student leaders encounter? and (d) what strategies do they adopt to cope with the situation?

5.1 Motivation and female leaders

The first research question examined the motivations of female student leaders to vie for position in students’ government. Results from both the quantitative and qualitative analysis show the participants were both extrinsically and intrinsically motivated to vie for positions. Externally, friends (males and females), family members such as parents, siblings, uncles, and role models and mentors such as lecturers, politicians and opinion leaders motivated female students to go into leadership positions. This finding is consistent with studies (Mayer, 2001; Scherr, 2010; Bearden, 2002; & Chandler, 2008) where such significant people motivated the female to take leadership positions. Mayer’s (2001) study revealed that the participants benefited from both male and female mentors who among other things affirmed their potential, encouraged them to take risks, listened to and helped them define their career goals. Similarly, Scherr (2010) in her study of six women in not for profit organisations in the USA, revealed that participants credited elements their professional growth and successes to various mentors who range from family members to bosses and Bearden (2002) study among high profile women in Alabama revealed that role models and mentors were mainly teachers, and family members such as fathers, mothers, grandmothers and sisters. Chandler (2008) had similar results in which the most impacting role models were family members such as uncles, aunts, fathers, mothers, male leaders in the community, opinion leaders in the media as well as world leaders such as Mother Theresa and Martin Luther King Junior.

On the issue of role models, only two out of the seventeen female student leaders interviewed mention female senior members in the institutions as role models. This finding is consistent with Ohene (2011) and other researchers who asserted that women’s under-representation in the universities appears to be a global phenomenon (Brooks 2001; Dines 1993; Singh, 2008). Dines (1993) for example described the global picture in the universities as one of men outnumbering women by the ratios one to five and one to twenty in the middle and senior management levels respectively. Statistics provided by the Association of Commonwealth Universities (2008) indicate that only 5.7 percent, 14.4 percent and 12.6 percent of faculty are female professors, associate professors/senior lecturers and academic heads and directors respectively. Thus, few female leaders exist on campuses as role models for female students. Further, the complexity of the university setting even makes it difficult for female mentors to be seen or heard by the majority of the female students since they may not be offering courses taught by them. These assertions are not different from what happens on
Ghanaian tertiary institutions. An example is the number of female teaching staff in the University of Education, Winneba. As at the year 2011, they were 84 representing 22 percent of the total teaching staff (Vice Chancellor’s report, 2011). One of the core findings indicated in this study was that the female leaders were not speaking out at meetings. Indeed this finding was in opposition to Dickson (2000) who suggested that for females to be visible or recognised, they should be assertive and speak out. Besides, according to Mayer (2001), they should be mentored by role models.

In terms of intrinsic motivation, many of the participants responded that they were self-confident, had the urge and passion for service, wanted to help other women who had needs and had the drive to prove to men that they can perform as equally as them. These assertions are consistent with Harris (2007) study on motivation for women superintendents, who found that key motivations for women in educational leadership and management positions included the desire to make a difference, the ability to initiate change, the urge to have a positive impact on people and the challenge of the experience. It is also similar to Scherr’s (2010) qualitative study among six women leaders, in which all six participants were passionate individuals with an inner drive for achievement irrespective of whether it was for themselves, their families, for others around them or for the companies they worked for. From the results, it is obvious that those who were extrinsically motivated were equally intrinsically motivated. Some of the participants stated that they had the urge to vie for the positions and were also approached by someone or encouraged by their friends and that urged them to pick nominating forms for the position.

5.2 Support for female leaders
The second research question examined the forms of support that was available to the female student leaders; the quantitative and qualitative results revealed that, friends, family members, fiancés, lecturers and mentors were the key people who supported female student leaders in the form of money, encouragements, running errands, and logistics. This is consistent with studies by Mayer (2001) and Scherr (2010). This was however not the case for their male counterparts who were supported by politicians and other NGOs. The question of why the politicians and other NGOs were not supporting the female student leaders was not known to those interviewed. It is possible the politicians want to groom them to help them at the grassroots level for their parties campaign activities and subsequently to take up future positions in government when the win elections. Currently several parliamentarians and ministers of states in the present Government of Ghana were student leaders in the tertiary institutions. Others also received supernatural support such as prayers from their pastors and protection from a father, this form of protection could be interpreted as Juju or voodoo to protect them from spiritual attacks from other competitors. Other responses gathered suggested that female student leaders did not solicit or receive support from the Gender Units in their institutions. In fact, most of the institutions have no Gender Units.

Besides, Gerdes (2003) and O’Laughlin and Bischoff (2001) recommended that women should choose their partners carefully, negotiate and establish networks as well as obtaining social support from mentors. Such networks are sources of support to the female leaders besides fathers, mothers and loved ones.

5.3 Challenges
The third research question examined the challenges female student leaders encountered in their work. Factors that inhibit women’s quest to attain higher heights and leadership in particular are numerous. Responses gathered from female student leaders in tertiary institutions in Ghana indicate that they encountered various challenges: The most prevalent being institutional bureaucracies. Almost all of them admitted that the way the system is structured coupled with the Procurement Laws made it very difficult to access money for projects and programmes. Proposals put in had to go through a very long process before sometimes they were approved. This made it difficult for them to sometimes organise programmes or complete projects before they leave office. They were sometimes disappointed when they went out to solicit sponsorship from cooperate bodies. When they were not able to carry outlined programmes or projects, the students branded them as failures. Some Women Commissioners in some of the institutions laments that no budgetary allocation was even made for their unit.

It also came to light that, patronage for programmes organised for female colleagues was very low and discouraging. Some also complained about discouraging remarks from students and saying things to undermine and tarnish their reputation. For example one treasurer from a polytechnic was called arrogant because she was being too firm about disbursement of funds to the males. This result confirms Mendoza (1996) who stated that women who overcome intimidations and take the initiative to vie for positions are criticised for being overaggressive by their peers, males and females alike, it also confirms Ohene’s (2011) study in which he reported that in Ghana, women who show signs of leadership or enforcing rules and getting things done quickly are described as being too forward and called names like “Margaret Thatcher”, the former UK Prime Minister who has been portrayed in Ghanaian papers as a strong lady. Others are also labelled alomo dzata (lioness) or obaa dindin (hard woman) in Akan dialect.

Combining academic work and the responsibilities as a leader was quite tedious for most of them. Some did indicate that they had to work extra hard in order to gain the confidence of the students. For a particular SRC Secretary the fear of disappointing the parents by not making good grades always haunted her.

5.4 Coping strategies
The last research question examined the coping strategies adopted by the female leaders to overcome the challenges, the findings showed that female student leaders resorted to various strategies to cope. Some indicated that because of the bureaucratic nature of the system they had to
send their proposals for programmes and projects they wanted to carry out far in advance and lobbied in order to be financed. In order to address the issue of low patronage, all available media such as Facebook, notice boards, text messages and FM radio stations were used to disseminate information to students. Cooperating with other executive members to get things done also helped to reduce the stress. In terms of combining the work with their academic obligations, they mentioned the importance of time management since the institutions did not give special concessions to leaders. These findings are consistent with studies (Anglis, 1990; Rosynsky; 2002; Dietz 1997) which suggested time management for combining personal and professional obligations, effective negotiation, gathering and delivering information as well as using male subordinate and supervisors to overcome barriers. A female SRC treasurer intimated that she played deaf and mute to discouraging remarks made about her because she was aware leadership comes with such challenges and that she encouraged herself since she knew it is a preparatory grounds for future aspirations. Some also indicated that when they encountered challenges they prayed to God and sought advice from older people.

Furthermore, to mitigate against cultural barriers, such as marginalisation as stated by Johnsrud and Heck (1994) and Rosynsky (2002) respectively, it was suggested that women should learn to say "no", be aware of hidden negative attitudes towards women, be adapted to the existing culture and making men feel they could comfortably work with them. As a replication, 67 percent of female leaders in this turned a blind eye and deaf ear to discouraging remarks since they were aware that leadership came with such challenges and just focused as Tiao (2006) suggested. In order to minimise personal barriers such as intimidation, name-calling and fear of poor grades, the majority of females worked extra hard to gain the confidence of students and parents to preserve their own self-esteem as well. These confirmed the importance of the achievement motivation whereby Weiten (1996) and Santrock (2000) defined achievement motive as a need to master difficult challenges and as a desire to accomplish something and expend effort.

At present, leadership development in students is considered a priority at contemporary institutions of higher education (Astin & Astin, 2000; Roberts, 2003) but now it should encourage more female participation. Leadership can include how a student serves an institution of higher education (Astin & Astin, 2000) but now it should encourage more female participation. Leadership can include how a student serves an institution of higher education (Astin & Astin, 2000) but now it should encourage more female participation. Leadership can include how a student serves an institution of higher education (Astin & Astin, 2000) but now it should encourage more female participation. Leadership can include how a student serves an institution of higher education (Astin & Astin, 2000) but now it should encourage more female participation. Leadership can include how a student serves an institution of higher education (Astin & Astin, 2000) but now it should encourage more female participation.

Despite the fact that females account for approximately half of undergraduate students attending colleges and universities today, their male counterparts occupy the majority of campus leadership positions (Leornard & Sigall, 1989; Wilkerson, 1989, Mendoza, 1996). The situation in Ghanaian universities and polytechnics is not different. In Ghana, females on campuses of tertiary institutions constitute about 45 percent of the entire student population (UEW, Vice Chancellors annual report for 2009/2010) yet they are not normally seen at the forefront of campus politics. At best, most of those who must the courage settle for ‘behind the scene’ positions such as secretary, treasurer and women’s commissioner, position which is reserved for women. Although this present research shows male students are now vying for these positions as well.

This phenomenon may be attributed to some challenges females encounter on co-educational campuses. Leornard and Sigall (1989) as cited in Mendoza (1996). As indicated in this study male and female peers alike sometimes discourage females who intend to vie for key positions like president or vice-president. They are either "made aware" such positions are for the men or “advised" to concentrate on their studies since that is their reason for coming to school. This implies that the women are demonstrating characteristics which are traditionally associated with males, which is in contrast to the cultural stereotypical practices. With these potentially demoralizing outcomes in mind, leadership often does not seem worth the price to women in tertiary institutions, especially on co-educational campuses. Most women in university and polytechnic institutions therefore, do not show any interest and are not enthusiastic about vying for positions in student government bodies. However with awareness through constant gender platforms to be mounted at various universities and polytechnics, there will be new trends whereby female students and male students would compete for high positions.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data the following conclusions are drawn:

- There are very few female role models in the institutions hence immediate family members as well as “prominent people” outside their institutions have directly or indirectly motivated female students to compete for positions in student governance. It must be stated that some are also intrinsically motivated to vie for leadership roles in the tertiary institutions.
- Support available for female student leaders is very limited, indeed financial and logistical support comes from the immediate families; men really supported the females as campaign leaders. Political parties, NGOs and Gender Units in tertiary institutions do not offer support to females who compete for leadership positions.
- Access to finance to implement projects and programmes was the greatest challenge that female student leaders encountered.
- As to the coping strategies, most of them resort to prayers, consulting their religious leaders for assistance; some also just turned blind eyes and deaf ears to discouraging comments.
Based on the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

- Awareness raising on gender issues at institutions will sensitise society although sensitisation campaigns on campuses have started, they should be continued and supported by the administration.
- Due to the few existing female role models, tertiary institutions in Ghana should ensure more qualified females to join their faculties.
- Every tertiary institution should as a matter of urgency establish a functional Gender Unit with appropriate and qualified staff to focus on nurturing leadership potentials of female students as well as male students. Gender experts, through symposia and seminars, can prepare women for leadership roles in the future. Besides, mentoring systems within the academic spheres should be extended into the leadership realm of female students in tertiary institutions. This demands that early training of the female students be achievement motivated. This is a dire need for those women aspiring for leadership roles.
- Gender Units in tertiary institutions should liaise with gender based NGOs to offer financial and logistic support to potential female leaders.
- Institutional support from the Office of the Dean of Students Affairs should be made available to students, especially in release of funds for project completion to minimise the long bureaucratic process coupled with the procurement laws.
- Counselling centres in tertiary institutions should offer psychological and emotional assistance to female student leaders who may have emotional challenges, and how to manage leadership challenges as well as stress.
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ABSTRACT
This paper reports the findings of a study that investigated sexual violence in schools for learners with special needs in South Africa. The study was qualitative in nature and adopted a gender framework. Data were collected from six special schools, amongst teachers (20), caregivers (35), and a total of 134 learners in the following categories: mild intellectual disability (42), visual impairments (35), hearing impairments (33), and physical challenges (24). The schools were located in the Black townships, except one school which was located in an area that was previously designated for people of Indian origin. Learners who participated in this study were Blacks in the 14-21 years age group.

Data were collected entirely by means of focus groups. Fifteen focus group interviews were conducted with visually impaired learners (four groups); learners living with intellectual disability (five groups); deaf learners (four groups); and those living with physical impairment (two groups). There were two focus group interviews with teachers and two other group interviews with caregivers. Data were analysed for content and presented in themes. The findings of this study suggest that sexual violence amongst learners with disability is common and occurs in various forms. School-related processes and factors perpetuating such forms of violence are discussed, and so is the analysis of the contribution of such forms of violence to the marginalisation and disempowerment of the group in question. In conclusion, we discuss suggestions for ways in which schools can contribute towards reversing the damage created by the experience of sexual violence and in promoting safe learning environments for learners with disability in South Africa.
1. INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence has become an everyday school experience amongst children worldwide. For South Africa, the country which has been labelled “the hub of rape” (Calitz, 2011), the problem remains pervasive in and/or around schools, including care facilities. The violence continues in South Africa despite the country’s commitment to protect its vulnerable members from any form of maltreatment (Constitution of The Republic of South Africa, 1996). Reports of aggressive and intimidating behaviour, unsolicited physical contact such as touching, kissing and groping, assault, sexual bullying, coercive sex and rape are all components of sexual violence applicable in sexual relations formed between teachers and learners, or amongst learners themselves (UNESCO, 2003).

1.1 Review of related literature

Within the South African context, school-based sexual violence was first brought to the public’s attention by the Human Rights Watch (2001) study conducted at eight schools located in three provinces. Subsequent studies included: Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Levine, Ratsaka and Schreiber (2001); Jewkes, Levine, Mbananga and Bradshaw (2002); Haffejee (2006); the South African Commission of Human Rights (2006) and Prinsloo (2006). A common feature in these studies is that they have not investigated sexual violence as it relates to learners with special needs. The few extant studies that address sexual violence amongst learners with special needs, have examined settings other than schools. These studies include research by Naidu, Haffejee, Vetten and Hargreaves (2005) for the Centre of Violence and Reconciliation Centre; Dickman and Roux (2005) and Dickman, Roux, Manson, Douglas, and Shabalala (2006) which took place at a mental institution in the Western Cape. Consequently, this gap in the literature creates the impression that sexual violence is non-existent in special schools and that learners attending such schools are not in danger.

UNICEF (2005) notes that children with physical, sensory, intellectual or mental disabilities face increased levels of sexual violence annually and thus supports earlier findings that any form of disability increases the risk of sexual violence and victimisation; and that children with intellectual disabilities and communication disorders suffer more (Sobsey & Doe, 1991; Sherry, 2000). A report by Mencap, the largest charity organisation in the United Kingdom (UK) for children with learning disabilities, claims that 1400 new cases of sexual abuse are reported every year. Similarly, reviews of literature conducted in the USA indicate that children with various forms of disability are likely to fall victim to sexual violence (Sullivan & Knutson, 2000; Sullivan, 2009). In a study conducted in Norway, Kvam (2000) reveals deaf children’s tendency to fall victim to sexual violence. Another study conducted in North Africa also found that learners with learning disabilities and communication problems experienced sexual violence (UNICEF-MENARO, 2005). Similar findings were revealed in the Middle East (Reiter, Bryen & Schachar, 2010) and in Taiwan (Pan, 2007).

Studies on school-based sexual violence relate the problem to the organisation of the schools. According to Kent (2004), schools are key to the construction of masculine and feminine identity, which ultimately breeds sexual violence against female learners. Ruto and Chege (2006) blame school-based sexual violence on deep-seated cultural norms and attitudes that continue to socialise girls in educational settings towards submissiveness and passivity, and boys towards aggressiveness and dominance. Dunne (2007) suggests that the authoritarian and highly gendered school management and curriculum systems where teachers have absolute powers that they use to exploit girls sexually and in silence. In some instances, sitting arrangements in classrooms are such that girls sit in the front and boys at the back, giving the latter an opportunity to dominate and control females (Dunne & Leach, 2003).

Unfortunately, chauvinistic and patriarchal stereotypes that are prevalent in a larger African society, including in South Africa are also evident in schools, and have led to female learners being assigned the sole responsibility of performing domestic-like chores such as cleaning classrooms, whilst their male counterparts perform manual tasks like digging the school grounds. Male students are also the preferred choice for senior leadership roles in school (Dunne, Leach, Chilisa, Maundeni, Tabulawa, Kutor, Dzama & Assamoah, 2005). In addition, unclear school rules and policies guiding how sexual violence should be dealt with contribute to sexual violence (Phasha & Nyokangi, 2012). Even in situations where a teacher impregnates a girl, no disciplinary action is taken and the perpetrator not prosecuted. Oftentimes, such teachers are merely transferred to another school where they continue with the same behaviour (Leach, 2002). Notably, prescribed textbooks depict boys as tough, rough and mentally skilled people who are adventurous, whilst girls are depicted as soft, gentle and enjoying household chores (Kambarami, 2006).

1.2 Problem statement

School-based sexual violence poses a serious educational threat to an individual. Victimised individuals often resort to irregular school attendance, and ultimately to school dropout as a strategy to avoid such abuse. The challenge is that when such consequences apply to learners with special needs, the result becomes a double violation of their rights to education because generally the number of such learners in schools is low due to societal biases and practices that deny them a supportive and safe learning environment (Edwards, Amstrong & Miller, 2001). This undermines their chances of accessing quality education on equal to that of their counterparts who do not have special needs, and severely limits their contribution to social and economic development.

Additionally, existing literature on sexual violence in South African schools has omitted this problem as it relates to people with disability. Other than reflecting the society’s lack of attention to schools catering to learners with special needs, the gap creates an impression that
To document forms of sexual violence at schools amongst learners with special needs, and that learners attending such schools are not at risk of abuse. This extant gap in the literature meant that our investigation into school-based sexual violence amongst learners with special needs in special schools was necessary. Our concern is that, if sexual violence continues in such schools with no intervention whatsoever from school authorities, it will become a normalised part of school life and learners with special needs will continue to be victimised.

1.3 Aims and objective
The aim of the present study was to investigate sexual violence at schools for learners with special needs (intellectual, visual, hearing and physical), in order to suggest ways in which schools can contribute towards reversing the negative impact of this abuse and promote safety.

The objectives of the study could be summarised as follows:
• To document forms of sexual violence at schools catering to learners with special needs;
• To tease out school processes and practices that motivate such behavior;
• To analyze the contribution of sexual violence to the disempowerment and marginalisation of the group in question; and
• To develop ways in which schools can contribute towards reversing the damage created by an experience of school-based sexual violence amongst learners with special needs and in promoting safe learning environments.

2. METHODOLOGY
This is a phenomenological qualitative study. Being phenomenological in nature, the study is concerned with human experiences and the underlying aspects of that experience. In simple terms, Denscombe (2008) explains that it considers how people interpret events and make sense of their personal experiences. The qualitative aspect exposes the researchers’ belief in human subjectivity (Hesse-Biber, 2007), and their interest to offer participants the platform to speak for themselves on issues that affect them. This is so because we subscribe to belief that knowledge is social construction since situations and experiences differ.

2.1 Theoretical framework
A gender-feminist framework guided the investigation of this study. Our choice of this framework was motivated by the belief of sexual violence as an example of the dynamics in an area in which masculine control is exerted. Sexual violence is a form of power abuse that is embedded in cultural patriarchal patterns and a clear reflection of the society’s tradition of male-female relationships (Sokoloff, Price & Flavin, 2004). A gender-feminist framework affords us an opportunity to bring to light the position of women in society and to consider various emancipation strategies that could apply to a wider population (Paula & Sam, 2003). A closer look at the aims of this study reveals our intention to go beyond providing a simple description of phenomena studied (sexual violence against learners with special needs) in order to expose and transform the structures that constrain and exploit humankind. According to Seidman (2008), such an endeavour is political in nature, in the sense that it is driven by an agenda to emancipate those marginalised (learners with disabilities) by revealing the sites of conflict (school processes and practices that permit sexual violence to occur) and the prospects for social transformation.

2.2 Research sites
The study took place at six special schools located in the province of Gauteng. Five of the schools were located in the Black townships. Only one school was located in an area that was previously designated for people of Indian descent. There were two schools for the deaf, three for learners with intellectual disability, and one, which catered to the visually, hearing, and physically challenged. The schools catering to learners from racial backgrounds other than Blacks were not willing to participate in this study and were schools specifically for learners with visual impairments.

2.3 Sampling and description of participants
Participants were selected following a criterion sampling method. This means that we relied solely on those who were identified by the school that fit the following criteria:
• Learners interviewed were from the age group 14-21 years old;
• Learners were in grades 10-12; and with one of the following challenges
  • All learners were either blind, deaf, physically challenged, or have a mild intellectual disability;
  • The legal guardian or parents granted permission to take part in the study

We encouraged teachers who offer the learning area called Life Orientation (LO) in South Africa to participate in the study. The Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 of South Africa defines LO as the learning area that is concerned with the social, personal, intellectual, emotional and physical growth of learners, and the way in which these facets are interrelated (DoE, 2000). Such teachers are part of the school-based support teams that handle school-related problems. Most of them are qualified as lay counsellors. We particularly focused on (LO teachers) because they are likely to be recipients of reported forms of sexual violence at school. With regard to caregivers, we encouraged non-academic staff to participate. Thus the sample of caregivers was made up of housemothers and fathers, cooks, cleaners, school nurses, gardeners and security staff.

2.4 Data collection methods
We conducted a total of 15 focus group interviews with visually impaired learners (four groups); learners with intellectual disability (five groups); learners with hearing impairment (four groups) and learners with physical disability (two groups). Consistent with the focus group interview method (Marshall & Rossman, 1999), each group consisted of between 8 and 10 members of both
We obtained approval to conduct the study from the Department of Education in South Africa, before making any attempt to visit the schools. Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant committees at the University of South Africa (UNISA). We identified schools with the help of the Department of Education in South Africa.

Focus group interviews permitted flexibility in terms of questions to in questioning and exploring untapped issues as they arose in the discussion. Participants responded at their own pace and in their own unique ways, which captured their diverse experiences. Focus group discussions also allowed for the exploration of both similar and different opinions among participants (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Participants were allowed to express themselves in their local languages, but most preferred to use English and or a mixture of English and Zulu or Sotho. All interviews were taped with the permission of participants, the school, the parents and/or legal guardians. Learners with hearing impairment gave unwritten permission to use an interpreter. Interviews with each group lasted around an hour. Although confidentiality could not be guaranteed when using focus group interviews, the strategy permitted data collection from a reasonable number of people in a short period of time. In addition, it was non-confrontational and thus facilitated data collection on a topic that could be viewed as sensitive.

2.5 Data analysis
Data analysis and collection occurred simultaneously so as to avoid the problem of collecting unfocused data. We analysed data for content whereby data were coded manually for themes, categories and sub-categories, and to establish a relationship between them in order to set a story. The initial stage of data analysis involved listening to the tapes several times to identify what was emerging and identifying tentative themes, which were later refined in the second stage of data analysis when the transcribed data became available. The process of transcribing data gave us a greater understanding of the meaning of data. Identifying themes in qualitative research is an important task (Ryan & Bernard, 2006), as the themes help to answer the research question and serve as a guide in organising data to reflect on issues covering the phenomenon.

2.6 Ethical considerations
Sexual violence is a sensitive topic. In addition to evoking negative emotions on the part of the researcher and the researched, the discussion about sexual violence is surrounded by silence and stigma (Lee & Renzetti, 1993). Since this topic touches on personal experiences, a person investigating it could be misunderstood as searching for incriminating information.

With that in mind, we took the following measures to ensure adherence to research ethics:
- We obtained approval to conduct the study from the Department of Education in South Africa, before making any attempt to visit the schools.
- Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant committees at the University of South Africa (UNISA).
- We identified schools with the help of the Department of Education in South Africa.
- We provided details about the study to the schools, school governing bodies and teachers, and we invited them to give us feedback about the proposal and the set of research questions we intended to explore with the students.
- We made copies of the research proposal available to the schools and all their concerns regarding the study were addressed.
- We allowed the schools to assist us in identifying prospective students and in contacting their parents to request their consent to participate in the study.
- Participation in this study was voluntary and it involved thorough explanation of the study with the help of school personnel (social workers or the co-ordinator of the school-based support team).
- Participation was only encouraged when there was evidence that a potential participant had a clear understanding of the study, followed by completion of written consent confirming they had understood the study.
- Psychological support was arranged for participants.
- Thorough explanation was given about the study; the participant’s rights, non-payment for participation, the benefits, and that the discussion might evoke negative emotions. This explanation was repeated before interviews could begin and reiterated throughout the study.
- Participants were very clear that they would be participating in the focus group discussion.
- Consent forms for learners who are blind were brailed and edited by the braillist at the university.
- Participants, schools and parents of learners with hearing impairment granted us permission to involve a sign language interpreter.

3. KEY FINDINGS
The findings reveal the existence of various forms of sexual violence in schools for learners with special needs. Sexual violence affected learners of both genders; however reports of such violence by females were more frequent. For example, all female participants reported having experienced sexual violence in one way or the other, and/or having witnessed it happening to fellow female friends or peers at school. In contrast, of the 50 boys who attested to the existence of sexual violence, only five indicated having been a victim (of name calling), while two noted that they knew younger boys who were victims at school; the rest claimed to have committed or witnessed the victimisation.

The forms of sexual violence reported in this study included: (a) touching of sexual parts; (b) sexual kissing; (c) teasing with pornographic pictures and taking pictures of girls’ underwear; (d) sodomy; (e) name-calling and (f) coercive sex or rape. Table 1.11 below depicts the types of sexual violence that learners experienced or witnessed. Amongst male participants, the common forms of sexual violence reported were sodomy, name calling, and touching of the private parts, whereas females reported forms such as touching of breasts and genitals, sexual kissing, pornography, name calling and coercive sex/rape.
Table 1.11 Types of sexual violence reported (not necessarily experienced) by learners with special needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of reported sexual violence</th>
<th>Intellectually challenged N=42</th>
<th>Deaf – N=33</th>
<th>Totally blind - N=35</th>
<th>Physically challenged- N=24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys-16</td>
<td>Boys -12</td>
<td>Boys- 15</td>
<td>Boys – 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate touching</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coyercive sex / rape (including sodomy)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex for trade</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pornographic pictures</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kissing in a sexual way</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name calling</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of reports</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While it was evident that these forms of sexual violence occur in schools for learners with intellectual disability, hearing, physically and visually impaired; it also emerged that certain behaviours were common at schools for learners with particular special needs. For example, learner with intellectual disability commonly reported teasing with pornographic pictures (35). According to teachers at schools for learners with intellectual disability, male learners download pornographic pictures from the Internet using their cell phones, exchange them at the hostels and send them to girls during lessons. Some girls even receive the pornographic pictures during breaks and meal times in the dining halls. Martin, a 17 year-old learner, with mild intellectual disability, narrated that pornographic pictures were used to tease girls:

“Those pictures excite us and they make us popular amongst girls. Other boys will also see that I am clever”.

Kenny, another 17 year-old with a similar condition stated that:

“They teach us about different sexual styles and girls will love us for that because they will see that we are real men and we know things. We also force our girlfriends to imitate those pictures”.

While it was clear that male learners saw those pictures as boosting their egos as men and making them popular amongst females and their male peers, the situation proved otherwise with female learners who received these pictures on their cell phones. About 12 female learners (seven with intellectual disability; three with hearing impairment and two with physical disability) indicated that they find the pictures disturbing. Paduba, (16, female), complained that the pictures make her feel “low and naked” and that she did not understand why male learners bragged about those pictures.

It also emerged that male learners use their cell phones to take pictures of the girls’ underwear whilst sitting in class. They then distribute these pictures amongst themselves at school, and in some instances lie about having relationships with those girls. Meta (16) talked about the shame and humiliation that girls endure at school as a result of this form of violation:

“Everybody at school and in the hostels would know that today you are wearing red or blue underwear or you are wearing a G-string. This really hurts and makes you feel so small because you become ashamed to walk around and even to go to the dining hall during meal times”.

Aniekie (15) noted that due to such behaviour she no longer travels to school by bus. Rather, she prefers to use a taxi, and will continue to do so until her parents find her another school.

Meanwhile learners with visual and hearing impairment reported incidents of coercive sex/rape, including sodomy (see Table 1.11 above). Two learners in particular, mentioned sodomy as a problem that affects the younger male learners in primary schools. A 13 year old male deaf learner, Magaga, noted that “older boys follow young boys to toilets to sodomise them”, an account supported by Toremi (15) who claimed to have overheard some teachers talking about the incident in the staff room. Further discussions with two deaf male learners (Mahlatse, 14; Lulu, 13) revealed that younger ones are easily threatened to acquiesce to the sexual demands of older learners.

With regard to coercive sex, about five boys mentioned that they had engaged in sexual intercourse with their girlfriends without their consent. Apparently, this occurred when the girlfriends refused to have sex with them. In such instances, male learners forced themselves on the girl because they could not take no for an answer. Maisha (17, deaf), demonstrated this tendency clearly in his response:

Researcher: “Tell me more about the forced sex that you have just mentioned.”
Maisha: “I have forced a girl.”
Maisha: “I said, I had forced a girl to do it.”
Researcher: “I see, was there a reason for doing that?”
Maisha: “Because she did not accept what I was asking.”
Researcher: “Okay.”
Maisha: “She did not agree, so I forced her.”

It was interesting to note that Maisha did not consider his behaviour as sexual violence because he believed that he was entitled to sex with his girlfriend. Such an entitlement became clear when the other five male learners supported Lucky (18, deaf) as he remarked that:

“Where on earth have you ever seen a girlfriend refusing to have sex with her man? She must always be ready when I am ready… It is common sense (applauses).”

According to seven deaf learners, incidents of coercive sex occurred in the school buses when travelling to and from school because the busses are always congested, and the supposedly supervising teacher could not move between seats to check what was happening at the back. In such instances, boys would push some girls to the back seat and rape them. The targets tend to be girls who perform better in class, those who are new at school and those who refuse males’ sexual advances. It was clear from male learners’ accounts that sexual coercion of female students was a means of asserting their masculinity:

Tatome (16): “We teach them a lesson because a girl is not supposed to obtain marks which are higher than men because they will start disrespecting us and bragging as if they have it all.”

Maila (17): “If she refuses when I want her to be my girlfriend, I will just target her in the bus and I will also ask my buddies to help me. We must not allow these girls to just say no… no whenever they want. We must show them that we are men.”

Interestingly, despite the sexual abuse that female learners experienced, most were reluctant to disclose such abuse to school authorities. Shokana (16, female, deaf) explained, “Most of those girls are afraid to speak up because they would be laughed at and the teacher would ask them what they were doing at the back of the bus.”

Meanwhile, name-calling, touching and kissing in a sexual manner were commonly reported by learners with visual impairments. Almost all girls with visual impairment reported that they had been called names that hurt them, touched inappropriately, and kissed without their consent. Females were called names when they refused males’ sexual advances and/or when they decided to end a relationship. Lerata (16, blind) recalled being called “VaVa” (big private parts) by her ex-boyfriend and his friends following her decision to end their relationship. She further indicated that “this made me feel bad and since then she never wanted to have a relationship at school.”

Mahlatse (female, blind) described the paradox that girls face where relationships with male students are concerned:

“You do not know exactly what they want, if you have a relationship with them they tell their friends that you are easy and loose, and when you refuse them they say we are ugly and smell like pigs. Hey… you just do not know what to do.”

Like Lerata, Matheba, also said she was called names. She told us that she was called sekhebereshe (whore) because she refused to have a relationship with a boy in her class. She said as soon as the boy discovered that Matheba was seeing a taxi driver:

“He started acting funny towards me; he influenced my other friends to stay away from me and to call me unpleasant names. Sometimes they spit saliva whenever I was around.”

With regard to kissing in a sexual manner, totally blind learners mentioned that it occurs in the corridors when they are changing classes. Mahlodi explained that the kisses “occur within no time, the boy will just push his tongue into the girl’s mouth and by the time you shout it has already happened and there is just nothing you can do.” Interestingly as noted by Mamello:

“The boys brag about it as if they have won lotto. Such things are annoying and we do not like them. Sometimes, I wish I could leave this school and go to another school where they do not know me.”

When exploring the motive behind such behaviour, Randy (male, blind) clarified that “these girls like it, maam. That is why they do not report it to the office and some of them come back for more.” Mulalo (male, blind) supports this:

“These girls pretend as if they do not enjoy it, haa …haaa, they enjoy it. Another thing is that if we do not kiss them here at school, the sugar daddies out there will kiss them because they run to them. So we cannot spare them for the sugar daddies. We must be the first to taste their mouths because they are here with us, they belong to us, not the sugar daddies.”

The touching of the private parts was considered as the most frequent form of sexual violence. Some girls even mentioned that they have come to accept it. Maya (blind), described it as “our daily bread, which occurs everywhere and even worse in the dining hall, when queuing for food or at the corridors when changing classes.” She further explained that:

“The blind boys would pretend as if they want to be led. Within no time, their hands will be at your bums, then breasts and then to the most private parts of our bodies. They would say sorry, but guess what, they do not mean it? They would do it again and even tell their other friends that
Letsoaba, who indicated that she liked to touch the bums of male blind learners, indicated that “I do not mind putting my hands down there because if they get an opportunity they will do the same to us, so it is tit-for-tat.” In a follow-up discussion with these four girls, it became apparent that their intentions to touch boys’ private parts was to offend them, to make them feel small and to feel the size of their “things” (private part).

School personnel were mentioned as perpetrators in one case, involving Mahlako, a 14-year-old deaf female learner, who later indicated “It appeared that the teacher did not have any intention to touch my breast, because he apologised immediately, but I did not like it.” In other incidents, two female learners with visual impairment indicated that they had relationships with teachers who were far older than them, but they did not regard it as abusive because there was no force involved. Maisie (17), one of the girls confessed to have gotten involved with her speech therapy teacher in order to pass the subject and later began benefiting financially from the relationship:

“...with deaf learners you will only hear the sounds ... eh the moaning or groaning. Heish these kids are different from normal kids.” It was further revealed that they go to an extent of breaking window glasses and have sex through the burglar doors or windows.

Contrasting views by caregivers could suggest limited understanding of disability and learners’ sexual development. Thus, suggesting UNICEF’s (2005) point that institutions for people with disabilities tend to be staffed by ill-trained personnel.

### 3.1 Perpetrators of sexual violence

Male learners were perpetrators in all forms of sexual violence reported by females. Girls were named as perpetrators in instances that involved five male learners, of whom three were visually impaired and two physically impaired. The behaviour was confirmed by four female learners who confessed to have resorted to touching of males’ private parts and calling them names as a strategy to revenge. One of the girls, Sarubini (18, visually impaired) asserted:

“Haaa (laughs) maam; yes we touch them (noding her head). Yes, we want to feel how manly they are. These boys talk too much. So if they mess with me in the corridors, I will target that important part of their body to check how many centimetres ‘it’ is. If it is small, whenever I meet him or hear his voice, I would say, hey Sipho you are only 3cm, and I will do that in the presence of other people ... just to teach him a lesson.”

Malawi, who told us that she only targets those who bother her, said “I will hold his waist and then grab their ‘little men.’” They also indicated that they also target sighted male learners who are physically challenged, especially those who are on wheelchairs. Mantwa mentioned that:

“We can sense that they are approaching our direction because usually they move on our right-hand side. We will then stretch our arms forward as if we want them to show us a direction and I will go straight to their private parts.”

Similarly, Lesego (blind) said she benefited financially from dating a sugar daddy:

“The older person pays for my school fees, otherwise I will find myself owing R10 000 by the time I reach grade 12, and that would make it difficult for me to get my matric certificate. So I would rather ask my sugar daddy to pay my school fees and I give him what he wants.”

### 3.2 Practices and processes promoting sexual violence in schools

In our attempt to tease out processes and practices that contribute to school violence at the schools where we conducted our study, we found out the following from research participants:

#### 3.2.1 Limited adult supervision around school premises and busses

A total of 30 students held the opinion that limited adult supervision around school premises and areas linked to the school contribute to school-based sexual violence. As indicated in the previous section, congestion in the school busses makes it difficult for supervising teachers/adults to monitor inappropriate behaviour in the back seats. Furthermore, this situation also makes it difficult for the teacher to move between the seats. A 16 year-old female with physical impairment explained that:
“Girls who do not manage to get seats will be pushed to the back of the bus, and by the time they realise, everybody will be over their clothes, and within no time the skirt is pulled up and the boys’ hands are where they are not supposed to be.”

About 17 learners alluded to the tendency of entering girls’ hostels through broken windows, whilst some find a way to sneak into the girls’ rooms when the housemothers were still cleaning in the dining halls. According to 13 male learners (seven deaf, four visually impaired, three physically impaired), such incidents were common during weekends and the targets were deaf and blind learners. The idea behind such behaviour was to force themselves on girls. Martha (deaf) told us that “these boys know that even if we scream no one will hear us”, and as noted by Rachel (blind), “we cannot even see them, you will just hear them touching us. That is why we keep the sjamboks (cane) in our rooms, to teach them the lesson of their lives.”

Meanwhile, at the school for learners with intellectual disability, older male learners followed the younger learners to the toilets, especially during the teaching sessions because they know that teachers are busy teaching. This tendency was confirmed by one teacher who mentioned that he no longer allows older boys to go to toilets during class sessions. Ten teachers and 16 caregivers blamed the problem on the government’s redeployment policy, which has led to the reduction of the number of support / non-academic staff members, whose job is mainly to provide supervision around school premises and to clean. Presently, housemothers are left with the responsibility to take care of the learners, cook, and clean, responsibilities which leave them with limited time to monitor learners around the school premises and to support them when they are in need.

3.2.2 Limited understanding about sexual violence

Learners lacked knowledge about behaviour, which constitutes sexual violence. As such, it became difficult for them to recognise such behaviour when it happened, leading to their lack of disclosure to school authorities. This was evident during the interviews at three schools, where learners requested us to clarify behaviour, which is sexually violent. Mosa (15 male and deaf) remarked that:

“Should I have known that touching the girls’ breast was sexually abusive, I could have stopped long time ago. All along, I thought it was just a game, which girls should not even make a fuss of it.”

3.2.3 Absence of school rules

Of all the schools we visited, only one had rules about sexual harassment and sexual abuse. The school has, as part of its mission statement, a sentence that indicates “safety of our learners is our number one priority.” In addition, learners told us that teachers emphasise safety issues during the LO class. In contrast, in the other schools, learners indicated that LO focuses only on issues of HIV, teenage pregnancy and drug abuse and did not cover matters that inform them about sexual violence and what to do when you become a victim.

3.2.4 Handling of reported cases

Whilst it emerged that schools attend promptly to reported incidents of rape, it was also highlighted that if the alleged perpetrator is a member of school personnel, such a report “ends up here” as authorities either ignore it or cover up the incident. Also, incidents that involve touching of private parts, kissing, and pornography are dismissed as less serious and lacking evidence. Some learners with visual impairment highlighted that when they report sexual violence, teachers accuse them of making up stories with the intent of damaging the school’s reputation. For instance, one learner who was physically challenged (wheelchair-bound) noted that:

“Teachers punish us and tell us that we are attention-seekers, who are concerned about making an issue on small matters. So they warned us to be careful of dragging the name of the school into the mud. Therefore, we just keep quiet if it happens.”

It was also interesting to note that in some instances, teachers told girls that such behaviour is normal and a part of growing up and that boys would outgrow these behaviours.

3.2.5 Peer pressure

A total of 22 male learners representing almost the four categories of special needs noted that they could not resist the pressure to have sex or a sexual relationship with their peers at school. Of this number, 12 mentioned that they resorted to spreading lies about having relationships with some girls at school, whilst eight mentioned that they got angry when girls refused to have sexual relationships with them and as a consequence, called them unpleasant names. Oupa, one of the deaf learners mentioned that:

“If I see a girl who refuses to be my girlfriend walking with someone in the community, I get even crazy. I will even spread lies that she throws herself at men for money or that she stripped naked in the club … just to spite her.”

Although the previous discussion focused on the factors that are school-related, learners and teachers mentioned other factors that occur in other systems in which the child and the school interact dynamically. The behaviour is identified as falling under the following broad categories: (a) personal, (b) family-related and (c) community-related factors.

4. SUGGESTIONS FOR REVERSING THE DAMAGE CREATED BY SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND PROMOTING SAFETY IN SCHOOLS

4.1 Clear policies on sexual violence and reporting procedures

Learners noted that schools should have clear policies on sexual violence and reporting procedures. They also felt
that these policies and procedures needed to be made clear to parents and to prospective students prior to the latter’s admission to the school. According to Mogau, “policies on sexual violence should be made explicit on the application form, which should be signed by both the learner and his/her parents”. Valerie added that the “punishment for all types of violence, even if it is kissing, should also be clarified on the form because all forms of sexually violent behaviour affect us badly.” Learners believed such policies would give them confidence to report to the schools and to relevant authorities when the school dismisses their reports.

### 4.2 Well-trained school personnel
The students in this study perceived school personnel as lacking the knowledge and understanding about their special needs. They complained that some school personnel are intolerant and lacked skills to communicate with them. According to Tsholo (deaf):

“"The situation here holds us hostage, our housemother cannot sign, some teachers cannot sign, the social worker cannot sign, and then it becomes difficult to report to other sirs (male teachers) especially if you are dismissed by the one who knows how to sign. So, mam, my take is that everybody here should be taught how to sign."

Meanwhile, a learner with intellectual disability, Mahlodi, complained that teachers make insensitive remarks that show that they do not understand them:

“"They say we are mad and we like sex too much. When we report, they think we are making up things and we do not know what we are talking about. How can you report to such a person? The government must take them back to school to teach them to understand us."

### 4.3 Intensification of security around the school premises
Both the learners and teacher shared the sentiment that security around schools and other areas linked to the school should be tightened. A physically challenged learner, Maloro, suggested “we should have at least three to four security guards patrolling the whole campus.” Likewise, one of the teachers said “we should all be vigilant and have additional staff to monitor all four points of the schools, the toilets, and teachers should not leave these children without supervision.” Also, Seno (deaf learner) suggested that “two teachers should drive with us in the bus; one should sit in the middle, another one at the back and the other at the front.”

### 4.4 Strict policies on use of cell phones
Teachers suggested that cell phones should not be allowed at school as learners use them to record and receive pornographic pictures around the school premises. Another teacher indicated that students also send text messages to others to meet at the toilets. However learners with visual and intellectual disability suggested that cell phones should be switched off during the lesson while those with hearing and physical challenges suggested that complicated and modern ones should not be allowed at school because it is easier to download pornographic pictures using such phones and to play videos and take pictures.

### 4.5 Appropriate sexuality education
Learners held the opinion that LO should broaden its curriculum on sexuality education to cover issues about sex and sexual violence. Currently, the focus is more on HIV and according to Maloro, “we need to know about sexual violence, our rights as children and issues which sensitise us about behaviour that hurts other people.” Also, Maria noted that she was tired of hearing about topics such as teenage pregnancy and drug abuse. She needs “real stuff and we need to hear from other professionals because our teachers are afraid to address some issues because they themselves want to sleep with us.”

### 4.6 Separate schools for younger and older learners
As a strategy to protect younger learners from learning inappropriate behaviour from senior learners and from being victimised by them, a total of ten learners suggested that primary and secondary school learners should not attend the same schools. The belief was that the younger learners learn sexually abusive behaviour from older ones. Manoko, a physically challenged learner stated that, “when they see older learners doing funny stuff to us, they also do the same because they think it is right. So we must have separate schools.” According to Modipadi, “young ones should not be here with us, because they become targets for older boys.”

### 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Sexual violence exists in schools for learners with disabilities. In line with previous South African studies conducted in educational settings that cater for learners without disabilities (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Jewkes, Levine, Mbananga & Bradshaw, 2002; Haffejee, 2006; South African Commission of Human Rights, 2006), female learners are frequently victimised. Also young male learners do fall victims to sexual violence. In this study, male learners were reported as perpetrators of sexually violent acts against female and young male learners. There were instances whereby females indicated to have acted in a sexually violent way toward their male counterpart. However a closer look at those instances reveals that the aim was to avenge the abuse that they and/or their peers experienced at the hands of those males. Evidently, females took matters into their own hands because the school authorities took no action against reports of sexual violence, partly due to lack of clear rules and policies on sexual violence. As noted by Kvam (2000), such a situation often leaves the school personnel unsure about action to take, and this will not help in stopping the violence. The lack of protection on the school’s part could instil a sense of helplessness in female learners. Sexual violence would continue and eventually come to be accepted as normal. Female learners with disabilities could continue to bear the brunt of their male peers’ need to assert their power. Such a situation could leave them even more marginalised as most of their institutions are often isolated from the community through tightly restricting policies (UNICEF,
to breed emotionally and mentally painful experiences,
is acknowledged that in most instances rejection tends
of others, especially their female counterparts. Whilst it
males could not take “no” for an answer. Vogelman and
or who ended the relationship with them suggests that
issues pertaining to violence. However, their tendency
noted their inaccessibility to the general media and
does not cover issues of violence. Anderson (2012) also
the suggestion is that sexuality education at their schools
violence and the negative consequences of their action.
However, it is also clear that sexuality education should cover
issues of sexual violence and how to respond to it as a
victim. In the same vein, the frequency of name-calling
and forceful kissing in a sexual way amongst learners
with visual impairment was a weapon for dealing with
rejection. Its intention was to hurt and belittle and to
coerce an individual into submitting to the perpetrator’s
sexual demands.
Male learners’ behaviour towards their female
counterparts is a total reflection of an act of power
motivated by their interest to control and dominate those
they perceive as less powerless and targets to affirm
their masculinity. Patriarchy in society is the cause of
violence in the schools, it being a social system, which
defines structural differences in privilege, power, position
and authority in men. According to Vogelman and Lewis
(1993), men have been taught to define their power in
terms of their capacity to affect their will, without
the consent of those involved, especially females. The
implication is that female sexuality is largely in the hands
of men, and they decide and determine the how and when
sexual encounters with women occur (Ruto, 2009). This
devalues females through subordination, a problem
that is extended to the school environment (Goldscheid,
2006).

Whilst it was evident that sexual violence took place in
various forms, it was striking to see the commonality of
certain forms of behaviour with learners with particular
disabilities. Pornography was commonly reported
amongst learners with intellectual disability, a finding
that resonates with Nyokangi’s recent (2012) study
conducted at two special schools for such learners in
the outskirts of Johannesburg. Male learners’ desires to
boost their egos and gain acceptance amongst peers were
underlying factors. As the most marginalised group in the
community, the need for acceptance by peers tends to be
a serious issue amongst males learners with intellectual
disability (Henderson & Bryan, 1984). Therefore resorting
to extreme measures of using pornographic pictures and
taking pictures of girls’ underwear is a strategy to assert
their masculinity. The commonality of sexual coercion
amongst deaf male learners is linked with their limited
information about behaviours that constitute sexual
violence and the negative consequences of their action.
The suggestion is that sexuality education at their schools
does not cover issues of violence. Anderson (2012) also
noted their inaccessibility to the general media and
outreach programmes that could sensitise them about
issues pertaining to violence. However, their tendency
for targeting girls who rejected their sexual advances
or who ended the relationship with them suggests that
males could not take “no” for an answer. Vogelman and
Lewis (1992) consider that as a sign of power in terms of
the capacity to affect their will without the consent of
others, especially their female counterparts. Whilst it
is acknowledged that in most instances rejection tends
to breed emotionally and mentally painful experiences,
of sexual violence. This should be the responsibility of both male and female staff. Supervision should be intensified during school breaks and whenever learners are outside the classrooms. Young children should be escorted to the bathrooms at all times to protect them against older learners. Alongside this strategy there should be clear rules and policies guiding sexual violence. Such policies should be made clear to all learners, parents and the school personnel. They should articulate reporting procedures and actions to be taken when such behaviour has been reported or suspected. They should also include care and support for victimised learners and assure them of their safety following reporting. This will overcome learners’ fear of reprisals by the perpetrators (Harber, 2001).

3. Learners with disabilities need sexuality education that is relevant to their level of development. Such education should encourage positive sexuality, promote decision-making abilities and empower learners to act on decisions of inappropriate peer pressure and issues of human rights (Swango-Wilson, 2011). In the same vein, Hassall and Hanna (2007) suggested the consideration of reproductive health, interpersonal relationship, affection, intimacy, body image and gender roles. Some of the issues could be approached by addressing single-gender audiences separately to allow discussions of challenging issues such as gender stereotypes and coercive sex (Brecklin & Forde, 2001). Male-only programmes could help in challenging peer and societal pressures that promote abusive behaviour and stereotypes about men and women (Adair, 2006). This way, male learners will develop positive attitudes towards women and girls whilst females will be afforded an opportunity to open up on matters of sexual violence.
REFERENCES


The labour market: Strengthening linkages between education and the world of work
Strengthening linkages between education and the world of work

The four studies in this section consider the transition to the labour market and the role played by education and gender in how successful young women become in their professional lives. As regards transition into professional life, in Senegal, 60 percent of the women in the ERNWACA study were employed after completing their training, compared to 40 percent of the men. However, while women were also more often employed on permanent employment contracts than the men, women’s study courses did not always allow them to reach the same professional level as the men in the same disciplines.

The REPOA study in Tanzania found that female and male graduates had largely the same probability of finding work or being unemployed. However, male applicants were generally more proactive in seeking work and a number of discriminatory attitudes and practices were found to have an impact on the transition of female students into the labour market.

As regards the world of work, in Côte d’Ivoire, while both illiterate and educated women work and earn incomes, women account for just 30 percent of those in formal employment, whether in the private or public sector. The informal sector is thus a major employer for women. This is the case in Zimbabwe, too, where a study urges government authorities to make women in the informal sector aware of the support available for building up their businesses and their skills. This is in view of the role the sector plays in supporting girls’ education, although the study also signals risks to girls’ education as mothers working in the informal sector tend to delegate their household responsibilities to their daughters, hindering their participation in school.

Invariably, these studies call for awareness initiatives regarding transition into professional activity, guidance, support structures for job-seeking and business creation, and anti-discrimination measures to be applied within both learning institutions and the labour market.
The low level of education contributes to lowering women's probability of participating on the labour market, which leads to lower aggregate income for the household and, consequentially, a rise in the poverty level of the household.

SUMMARY
This study examines the labour market integration of women in Cote d’Ivoire, and more specifically in the city of Abidjan, and looks particularly at the role of education. The methodology for the empirical analysis is both quantitative and qualitative, based on secondary data from the Institut national de la statistique (National Institute of Statistics) (ENV, 2008) and study data collected on the field. The study indicates a high rate of illiteracy among women. In addition, it shows that more than half of the women of Abidjan are not integrated on the labour market, and most of those who are integrated work in the informal sector.

Econometric and sociological analysis established a close link between women’s educational attainment and their labour market integration, and showed that having a higher level of education increases the probability for a woman finding employment in the private sector. For women with a lower level of education, the informal sector is the main opportunity for integration. In addition, ideological factors concerning women’s roles in society and government policies have a strong influence on which sectors women integrate on the labour market. Other significant factors in women’s labour market integration, as revealed by this study, include the use of sex as a seductive asset when looking for a job or as the object of blackmail to obtain a job, and the use of social networks and personal contacts. Finally, the relevance of education in women’s socioeconomic emancipation is discussed. Results show that an improvement in the socioeconomic status of women always involves education which reinforces women’s abilities and decision-making powers, and is only possible if girls and boys are guaranteed the same conditions of education.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and justification
In all modern societies, education is at the heart of the economic and social development process. The right to education is unique and essential because it gives individuals the means to exercise all of their other rights (civil, political, economic, social and cultural) and does so by giving them the opportunity to live a dignified life, while ensuring a better future for all (UNESCO, 2004). However, it appears that in education, men and women are not equal. In 2008, the literacy rate for adults (15 and older) in sub-Saharan Africa was 71.2 percent for men, and only 53.3 percent for women (ISU, 2008). This gender gap in relation to access to education may be the result of various factors such as traditional customs and practices (which make parents more inclined to encourage education for boys, than for girls), the parents’ socioeconomic level and various obstacles that girls may encounter at school (sexual aggression, violence, early pregnancy, etc.).

The low level of education for women has multiple repercussions. First of all, it maintains the pre-existing gap between men and women. It also limits the level of participation for women in political life and inerxorably leads to an increased poverty index. Indeed, the low level of education contributes to lowering a woman’s probability of participating on the labour market, which leads to lower aggregate income for the household and, consequentially, arise in the poverty level of the household. This raises the question of women’s socioeconomic emancipation as an underlying mechanism in reducing poverty among women in sub-Saharan Africa.

After 10 years of socio-political crisis, the country is fragile and employment remains one of the major challenges facing Cote d’Ivoire. The long years of crisis led many companies that once operated in Cote d’Ivoire to close or move their businesses. The situation has led to the loss of a great number of jobs, thus increasing the unemployment rate. Given the current political will to reduce the unemployment rate, it is important to consider the essential role of women in society and in the development process, and its direct link to professional fulfillment and participation on the labour market. This study is an opportunity to present the current situation for women on labour markets and contribute to better-integrated roles for women in various development projects.

1.2 Subject of the study
The fight against poverty remains a major challenge facing nations. Rising to meet this challenge, one of the main objectives of the millennium development goals, requires compelling human resources development. In other words, the economic and social development of a country depends on the quality of its elite. Although access to education is a universal right enshrined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in Cote d’Ivoire, gender inequality in education persists at several levels. According to the document Stratégie de relance du développementet de réduction de la pauvreté (Strategy for Reviving Development and Reducing Poverty, DSRP, 2009), the illiteracy rate in Cote d’Ivoire is 39 percent for men, compared to 54 percent for women. In 2008, the proportion of girls registered in the first year of primary school was estimated at 44 percent, far below the registration rate for boys at 56 percent.

This situation may be one factor explaining the position of women on the labour market. In many African countries, including Cote d’Ivoire, growing awareness of the importance of the participation of women in economic activity has led to numerous debates and studies on the definition of a national gender policy, and the integration of this policy in the national strategies to fight against poverty. Yet despite recognition of the crucial role that women play in economic development, African women in general, and women in Cote d’Ivoire in particular, still find themselves in an unfavourable position, underrepresented on the labour market. Unemployment affects more women than men, with a rate of 19.8 percent for women, as compared to 12.1 percent for men in 2008. In addition, women only represented 12.71 percent of “modern” jobs in 2005. Many observers see women’s underrepresentation on the labour market as one of the main explanations for their socioeconomic vulnerability. This study addresses the factors explaining the current situation in terms of education and women’s labour market integration in Cote d’Ivoire, and more particularly in Abidjan.

The study is based on both quantitative and qualitative analysis and hopes to contribute elements of response to the following questions:
- What is the real situation of women in the education and employment sector?
- Does a woman’s educational attainment influence her employment choices?
- In Cote d’Ivoire, how do social representations of education and employment for women influence their labour market integration?
- What are the mechanisms of women’s integration and non-integration on the labour market?
- Is socioeconomic emancipation for women possible without education and labour market integration?

2. STUDY OBJECTIVES
The main objective of this study is to examine the factors that explain women’s integration in various segments of the Abidjan labour market (public, formal private and informal private), focusing particularly on the role of education.

The following specific objectives stemmed from that general objective:
- Present the distribution of women in various segments of the Abidjan labour market and relative to their educational attainment.
- Determine the link between women’s education and labour market participation.
• Identify the means by which women integrate or do not integrate the labour market.
• Illustrate the relevance of education and professional integration in the socioeconomic emancipation of women in Abidjan.

3. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

3.1 Formal sector, informal sector
The definitions for the formal and informal sectors are generally based on the following criteria: legal status, accounting, size of the business, tax status and registration with trade register.

The formal sector of the economy is characterised by bureaucratic organisation with recognizable accounts kept on a regular basis. Very often, the formal sector users advanced technology requiring considerable capital investment for the purchase of modern production tools. There are certain prerequisites for activity in the formal sector, including (i) being a recognised economic agent; (ii) pursuing a recognised, authorised economic activity; (iii) being subject to taxes on the activities practiced; (iv) being registered with the trade registry or the courts, and approved by the State. However, in most developing countries, the limited size of the formal sector does not allow it to effectively play its role, and as a consequence, the absorption capacity of the labour market is restricted. That situation has given rise to the development of an alternative sector, often called the “informal sector”.

The informal sector is broadly characterised as “consisting of units engaged in the production of goods or services with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes for the persons concerned. These units typically operate at a low level of organisation, with little or no division between labour and capital as factors of production and on a small scale. Labour relations - where they exist - are based mostly on casual employment, kinship or personal and social relations rather than contractual arrangements with formal guarantees” (ILO, 1993).

Also, the 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, held in 1993, gave an “operational” definition of the informal sector as “those units of production that constitute households as individual enterprises included as a sub-sector within the institutional sector System of National Accounts (SNA)”. Individual enterprises can be distinguished from corporations and quasi-corporations by their legal status and the kind of accounting they keep. Individual enterprises are not separate entities, detached from the household or household member to which they belong, and do not keep comprehensive accounts that give a clear distinction between the activities of the enterprise and the other activities of the owner.

For this study, we have adopted the ILO definition of the informal sector. We have made a distinction between formal employment and informal employment as follows:
• Those persons engaged in the formal sector are principally employed with an organisation, project or legal enterprise subjected to taxation and registration of employees with the Caisse nationale de prévoyance sociale (National Social Security Fund, CNPS). Persons employed by the Côte d’Ivoire public administration are also included in this group;
• Those persons in the informal sector are engaged in small individual activities, outside of the institutional and legal framework, who are not registered with the CNPS.

3.2 Women who are illiterate, educated, or with schooling
This study uses concepts such as illiterate women, educated women and women with schooling. Based on the UNESCO definition, we have characterised illiterate women as those women who do not know how to read and write, much less count, i.e. carry out simple mathematical calculations. These women have never had conventional schooling (UNESCO, 1952).

According to the French dictionary Le Petit Robert 2007, education is the act of developing someone’s physical, intellectual and moral faculties, i.e. training a person through education, upbringing, discipline, forming. The process can take place in diverse environments according to particular standards. It can involve family, secret societies or a training centre. In the context of this study, it refers to all knowledge acquired by women within the framework of formal schooling. For our purposes, we have define educated women as those women have benefited from formal schooling and can read, write and count.

Women with schooling are those women who had conventional schooling, regardless of the level achieved, or whether or not they know how to read or write.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Women and education
In all cultures, gender determines the empowerment and resources of men and women. That is why Kabeer (1995) considers social norms to be gender-related. In Africa, despite the key role that women play in the socioeconomic development process, they continue to be confronted with difficulties accessing education, rights, resources and property, as well as complications regarding their relative responsibilities in production and reproduction. This leads to a feminisation of poverty (Moser, 1993; Firebaugh, 1994; Chant, 1997). The situation is exacerbated in rural areas where three persons engaged in the formal sector are those persons employed by the Côte d’Ivoire public administration.

2 An employee registered with the CNPS is ensured of job security within a company.
quarters of rural women between the ages of 15 and 24
are illiterate, compared to less than half in urban zones.

Certain preconceived notions persist, such as the idea
that girls are intellectually inferior. Girls drop out of
school earlier, especially in rural zones where they are
needed for domestic and production tasks. The lack of
school-related services — such as school transportation
— widens the gap and have a direct effect on girls’ school
attendance rates. There are also economic issues that
can explain the low level of schooling for girls in Africa.
Families can be forced to choose between sending a
girl or a boy to school. The fact that a girl will marry
and establish a household elsewhere represents a loss
for the paternal family, whereas in the case of the boy,
schooling is an investment (Diakité Fatournata, 2003).

Yet, many studies have shown that improving the
socioeconomic status of women requires reinforcement
of their skills and their decision-making capabilities, which
can only be possible if girls and boys are given the same
access to education (Ravallion and Wodon, 2000; Lee
and Barro, 2000). For Paul Schultz (2001), investment in
women’s education is of capital importance and is
imperative to development since educated women work
longer hours than men and therefore contribute more
to economic development through taxes. In addition,
education gives women the skills and tools needed to
better meet their needs and those of their children. Thus,
a child whose mother can read is 50 percent more likely
to reach his or her fifth birthday, and the probability of
infant mortality is reduced by 5 to 10 percent for each
additional year of schooling for the mother (Yapa, 2006).

From the above, we can deduce that the theories backed
by Kaberre, Moser, Firebaugh and Chant are applicable
to the situation in Côte d’Ivoire in that women are still
confronted with inequalities in accessing and controlling
the resources necessary for their advancement. They
have specific and strategic needs which must truly be
taken into account in the national policy for economic
and social development in Côte d’Ivoire. However, analysis
of these theories shows that they focus more on the
universal issues concerning women’s emancipation. They
constitute a global, rather than specific representation
of women. In other words, using the term “women”
to indicate a universal group implies that women are
defined by their “gender”, and not by their social class
and ethnic identity which would better explain the gender-
based inequalities in education and their impact on the
socioeconomic emancipation of women in a country like
Côte d’Ivoire.

4.2 Women and access to employment

The relationship between women and access to
employment is very closely related to the ideas described
above. The social division of work, based essentially
on patriarchal domination, gives women a secondary
position in the roles that they play in family life, as well
as professional life.

Women’s roles in society are inherent to the status that
society accords them. Germain Nama (2004) reviewed
the analyses of various authors on the role of women in
African societies and concluded that a certain amount of
controversy exists between social science researchers
working on this issue. For some authors, women can be
seen as oppressed and submissive, with limited mobility
due to their reproductive and educational functions.
They are confined to domestic tasks which correspond
to their natural attributes. Thus, Jacqueline KiZerbo
argues that contrary to “the husband’s mobility is broad,
a strong man who can rest and have a good time after
having earned the bread for the family; a wife, on the
other hand, can work to earn bread as well, but when
she has finished she will also have to prepare the meal,”
(KiZerbo, 1975). In the sociocultural context of Côte
d’Ivoire, for example, Harris Memel Fôté’s analysis4
identifies three institutions that guarantee men retain
sexual power by viewing women as dependent subjects
or objects. He describes the technical and social control
that men maintain over the production, distribution and
consumption of material goods and services, thereby
limiting women’s economic independence. Similarly,
political society is also controlled by men.

Other authors, in an opposing anthropological analysis,
identify African woman as a force in society. On the one
hand, women represent an economic force (Sarah Kala
Lobé5); their role in production and their family functions
are essential to socioeconomic well-being and balance
family life. On the other hand, they represent a political
force (Madeleine Deves6) since their power of decision,
particularly in matriarchal societies like in Senegal,
enters into force in the political management of power.

Despite their decisive role in social life and in balanced
society, women in Côte d’Ivoire are generally seen as
under the authority of men. They are responsible for
child-rearing tasks and household management. In
the social division of labour, women are considered
the “weaker sex” and men the “stronger sex”. Based on
this representation of weaker sex/stronger sex and the
functions traditionally assigned to women and to men
(here, the term traditional refers to specific values and
materials in a given transgenerational context7), analysis
of the labour market integration of women shows that
they are present in professions related to reproductive
functions (medical corps: midwife, nurse, doctor), as well
as professions related to child-rearing and household
management functions (hotels, restaurants, sewing,

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3 Jacqueline KiZerbo. “Contribution du génie de la femme à la civilisation Négro-Africaine” in La civilisation de la femme dans la tradition africaine, Abidjan
Colloquium, 3-8 July 1972, Paris, Présence Africaine, 1975. Quoted by Germain Nama in “Le rôle des femmes dans les sociétés africaines” in Eduquer aux droits

4 Harris Memel Fôté. “Les sciences humaines et la notion de civilisation de la femme : Essai sur l’inégalité sociale des sexes dans les sociétés africaines” quoted
by Germain Nama, op cit.

5 Sarah Kalalobé. “Situation de la femme dans la société africaine” quoted by Germain Nama, op cit.


In addition, women have unstable, poorly paid jobs that contribute to making them more vulnerable and economically dependent.

Does it follow that the weight of sociocultural attitudes condemns African women in their socioeconomic emancipation and search for autonomy? How can we explain that such cultural representations continue to affect the future of African societies which, despite their complexity, do not seem to be renewing the foundations of social relations? On this point, we must agree with Akindès (2003)\(^6\) for whom the subject of social change brings us back to the question of social relations in Africa. According to him, “the study of social relations” becomes an investigation of the ability of African societies to produce themselves, or to self-constitute, in accordance with the ideas of Cornelius Castoriadis (1996 : 196)\(^9\). Viewed from this perspective, the analysis of social change goes beyond from the bipolar framework of tradition/modernity in which Africanist social scientists have attempted to limit it. His approach corresponds to the actionalist’s perspective which presupposes that societies are the result of social actions, decisions and various transactions. For these reasons, we believe that women’s emancipation in Africa, especially in Cote d’Ivoire, could progress through decision-makers’ actions if they were more focused on the needs of women and their involvement in society’s development process.

4.3 The link between educational attainment and labour market integration for women in Africa

Calculating the return rate of education presupposes that schooling is an investment for which the value depends directly on the cost of training and the future advantages (or return) that it brings. The rate of return can be explained by one crucial hypothesis: having gone to school increases productivity, therefore revenue. However, this hypothesis has met with criticism from certain theorists who maintain that schooling only serves to identify the best-performing individuals for employers who are incapable of observing the quality of an employee before she is recruited. Others believe that the productivity of an individual only really becomes reality after on-the-job training.

Nonetheless, these various approaches converge on the idea that education facilitates access to employment and increases the productivity of individuals as soon as they finish school by making adaptation to a new job easier. Thus, skills and educational attainment have a positive influence on women’s integration on the labour market. Since having a degree is considered a signal in terms of social cohesion, the expression is used by Durkheim as a synonym for social solidarity. Certain authors believe there are three dimensions to the social link (market, political and community links). A crisis in the social link leads to exclusion or anomie. This analysis of labour market integration and sexual orientation of women in specific professions is open to criticism, as viewed by Oyeronke Oyewumi in *The Invention of Woman*\(^11\). In her analysis of the relationship between the colonial system and Africa, particularly in regards to women, she denounces discrimination against women in the context of colonialism, which was considered a political affair, and thus an affair for men, especially in the view of European colonists. In that context, African women were considered inferior because they were women, and doubly inferior because they were “native” Africans. A few European women worked as nurses and constituted the only exceptions to the female exclusion from colonial administration. Through her analysis, Oyeronke Oyewumi shows how colonialism contributed to degrading the position of women in African society and to spreading that image in popular ideology. It would be interesting to analyse gender management strategies from that angle in the case of Cote d’Ivoire, where the administrative system is a legacy from colonialism.

5. METHODOLOGY

Two approaches were used to meet the goals of this study: a qualitative approach (sociological analysis) and a quantitative approach (statistical and econometric analysis).

5.1 Sociological methodology

From a sociological point of view, the study adopted an exploratory method of data collection which enabled us to evaluate, compare and validate information. This methodology allows for a three-way correlation through the use of other methods, such as interviews. The study focused on compiling secondary data collected through documentary research, followed by basic primary data collection through on-the-field surveys.

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\(^9\) The social link, according to Le Lexique de sociologie, Dallez, 2007, in the general sense of the term, enables people to live together and constitutes the basis of social cohesion. The expression is used by Durkheim as a synonym for social solidarity. Certain authors believe there are three dimensions to the social link (market, political and community links). A crisis in the social link leads to exclusion or anomie.


5.1.1 Documentary research

Documentary research focused on women in policies and strategies related to education and employment, and more particularly, on the question of women in the national development process. To get a better understanding of these essential questions, we examined books, scientific articles, administrative reports and documents, newspapers and Internet sites.

5.1.2 The methodological framework

In this section, we explain the choice of areas of investigation, as well as procedures for sampling and data collection on the field.

- **Geographic field**
  The study was carried out in the Abidjan, the economic capital of Côte d’Ivoire. The Abidjan district represents 6,783,906 inhabitants, including 4,351,086 for the city itself, which corresponds to 20 percent of the total population of the country. The city of Abidjan, in addition to representing the various characteristics of the population of Côte d’Ivoire, dominates the country’s other cities economically. Abidjan is a city with a high migration rate. Migrations increased with the rebellion in 2002, although the post-election crisis of 2010 triggered a reverse movement during periods of combat. More than any other city in the country, Abidjan remains a city of intense economic activity. The Abidjan district represents 40 percent of the GDP of Côte d’Ivoire, i.e. US$9.5 billion. It is also cosmopolitan in character, and thereby representative of the Côte d’Ivoire population. (Institut national de la statistique or National Institute of Statistics, INS 2008)

- **Social field**
  The qualitative data was collected from women, men, policy makers, and employers from the formal and informal sectors, all of whom were considered able to provide information concerning employment policies and practices.

To define the categories of women concerned by the investigation, we designed a matrix that correlates the different sectors of activity (formal public, formal private and informal sectors) and the women’s educational attainment. The investigation studied four categories of women:
- Women with schooling and integrated (WSI)
- Women with no schooling and integrated (WNSI)
- Women with schooling and not integrated (WSN)
- Women with schooling and not integrated (WSNI)

We characterise women with schooling as those who have received conventional schooling and who, at the end of their schooling, were able to read and write. Women who are integrated are those who exercise an activity, in the formal or informal sector, and whose activity represents the main source of income. Women without schooling are those women who do not know how to read or write. They have never had conventional schooling. Non-integrated women are those who do not exercise a revenue-generating activity, whether it be in the formal or informal sector.

The participants in the study are from both the formal and the informal sector. Based on the characteristics defined for these concepts, we studied the cases of women who were:
- Employed in private companies and registered with the CNPS.
- Employed in public administration.
- Employed in informal micro-enterprises with permanent employees under a certain ceiling (5 employees).
- Independent workers who work for themselves and who have no permanent employees, but may use home help and/or occasional temporary workers.

We identified the officials of the following ministries as policy makers and providers of employment:
- The Ministry of Labour
- The Ministry of Public Services
- The Ministry of Women’s Affairs
- The Ministry of Higher Education
- The Ministry of National Education

Employment agencies, recruiting agencies and vocational training agencies (AGEPE, CIFIP, AGEFOP) were identified as providers of employment.

The presence of men in the social field is justifiable because it is important to examine the way in which they see women within an evolving social environment in which women’s roles are being reconstructed based on education and labour market participation.

- **Sampling procedure and size**
  The study was limited to five communes of the city of Abidjan. Initially, our approach was to select the communes based on geospatial criteria. In order to take the spatial reality of the city into account, we divided it into Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western zones, with the commune of Plateau as the centre.

Then, we chose the communes according to the functional division of the city of Abidjan, with concentrations of professional activities and populations with schooling, in order to underscore the relevance of the concepts in the object of our study. This functional division allowed us to illustrate the socioeconomic, cultural and educational importance of the communes, and their role in the continuous growth of the city of Abidjan, characterised by heavy industrialisation and rampant urbanisation.

For these reasons, the study was carried out in the communes of Plateau (Centre), Yopougon (West), Cocody (East), Treichville (South) and Abobo (North).

Individual interviews were conducted with 40 women, 10 men, 8 public policy-makers and employment providers, and 1 public figure whose case illustrates the relationship between women’s labour market integration and education. In all, 60 people were to be interviewed. However, because of time constraints, and the fact that
certain interviewees were unavailable, the total number of people interviewed was 59.

The sample was determined using the stratified random sampling technique. This consisted in dividing the target population (for example: men, women) into homogeneous sub-groups (WSI-WSNI-WNSI-WNSNI), then randomly and without replacement selection from within each group. For the sample of other survey units (employment providers, public policy-makers), we chose the managers and resources persons who could provide information on the reality of women’s labour market integration in Cote d’Ivoire.

5.1.3 The interview
The sociological approach to the question of women's integration consisted mostly of identifying the social representations and practices that explain women's difficulties in integrating the labour market. Therefore, in order to provide reliable data on the factors linked to women's low rates of participation, and to understand women's social representation, we opted for individual, semi-structured interviews for the qualitative data collection.

Different interviews were conducted using interview guides that took into account the specificities of each element of the social field. The interview guides varied slightly, depending on whether we were interviewing women with or without schooling, or women who were integrated or not.

The guides were structured around the following categories:
- Schooling-training and ideologies
- Importance of work and/or access/lack of access to the labour market
- Education and participation/non-participation on the labour market
- Social status and social relations
- Suggestions regarding promoting education and labour market integration for women

5.1.4 Sociological analysis
An exploratory method of data collection was adopted for this study, which enabled us to evaluate, compare and validate information. This methodology allows for data collaboration through the use of such methods as interviews. The study focused on compiling secondary data collected from documentary research and on collecting primary data. The data was used for content analysis, and we chose to process it manually. Manual processing was more advantageous in that it enabled us to maintain close contact with the data and conserve a maximum of information susceptible of being used in our analysis. Content analysis was done thematically by order to identify coherence between the interviews. This type of breakdown analysis is stable from one interview to another.

This technique helped us understand the interviewees according to the logic inherent in their responses. We were also able to identify and understand the connection between the women’s educational attainment and their means of integrating the job market, between the social representations of the roles of women in Abidjan and the strategies for socioeconomic emancipation.

The method of analysis chosen for the study is the Actor-Oriented Approach. This approach is based on structuralist sociological theories criticising development ideologies and practices (Long et Long, 1992). They make it possible to understand the social realities that underpin and shape the actions of an individual in daily life. Individuals have varying degrees of power, means and strategies, as well as different points of view and perspectives that make up and structure social life. The Actor-Oriented Approach illustrates the interactions between actors and institutions, and contributes to defining relevant policies and interventions for development.

5.1.5 Difficulties encountered
Before describing the difficulties encountered during the study, it is noteworthy to present the social climate in which the study was conducted. Normalisation of the sociopolitical situation and the presidential election held in 2010 had raised hopes of a more favourable economic environment and renewed economic activity. Indeed, starting in 2007, following the peace accords between the belligerent forces behind the sociopolitical crisis of 2002, the economy in Cote d’Ivoire had consolidated stability through renewed industrial production, and recovery in the tertiary sector seemed confirmed. However, the post election crisis of 2011 had a profound impact on the city of Abidjan (the main conflict zone) and weakened the economy in Cote d’Ivoire. This situation led to increased instability of employment, despite the numerous initiatives that have been launched to promote renewed economic activity and reintegration after the crisis. This was the context in which our study was conducted.

The difficulties encountered were mainly related to data collection. They can be broken down into three different types.

- Difficulties related to the categories of women studied
The difficulties related to the categories of women studied concerned access to women and to the different categories interviewed.

Initially, the survey was meant to be addressed to women in their places of residence. But the women’s time and availability constraints led the interviewers to conduct the interviews at various meeting places, regardless of whether the women lived or worked in those places.

As for the various categories interviewed, we had difficulties finding women of the category without schooling and not integrated, particularly in the commune of Plateau. Because that commune is a business district, most of the people we met there did not live there. They go there to work or for other reasons. Most of those who work in that district have small businesses, work as street vendors or as household employees. We got around
this difficulty by asking for help from people who lived in the study zones and who introduced us to the categories of women that were difficult to find.

- **Difficulties related to administrative procedures**
  One of the main difficulties encountered during our study concerned slow administrative procedures which prolonged the time necessary for data collection.

  We were forced to deal with administrative delays in transmission of notifications by mail, the unavailability of certain resource contacts in companies and ministries, numerous bank holidays (especially in May) which forced us to postpone interviews. In addition, we were confronted with the availability of certain information due to changes in ministerial nomenclature which caused certain activities and responsibilities to be redistributed between several ministries. We had to send out reminders and copies of the interview guide in order to get the assistance we needed to find the people concerned.

- **Difficulties related to the socio-political situation**
  The situation in Cote d’Ivoire, which is still emerging from a serious sociopolitical crisis, created a problem in data collection because the general atmosphere was tense and people still felt wary due to the crisis. This was clearly the situation in the various administrations and for the women interviewed, some of whom refused to participate or expressed considerable reservation.

  There were also problems with public administration departments where information was not available due to the destruction of documentation during various acts of vandalism associated with the post election crisis of 2010-2011.

**5.1.6 Ethical considerations**

The ethical considerations concerned the context in which the study was conducted. The study was made more difficult because the interviewees sometimes directly asked the interviewers their opinion on the recent sociopolitical crises in the country and political management. We had to retreat, as diplomatically as possible, the context in which the study was being conducted and tell them that we were not there to give our opinions on the situation, but to collect their personal experience which added credibility to our work. The interviewees were concerned for their safety both physical and/or professional, and we made considerable efforts to gain their trust.

In order to respect people’s privacy, only people who had agreed were interviewed; this was particularly important in regards to the dictaphone that we used to guarantee the integrity of the data. Interviewees were informed of the object of the study, the goals, the actors and partners involved. We also reassured them that their statements would remain confidential.

In regards to public administration agents, because certain questions concerning the national education and employment policy appeared to compare with or criticise the former or the current authorities, certain interviews had to be postponed, and explanations and interview guides had to be provided ahead of time.

To guarantee the reliability of the data collected, we repeated certain questions from different angles. We tried to cross-check information between the various structures whenever possible.

In our report, the only identifiable quotes are official data from public institutions. People’s names and any information that could identify them are not revealed. When information is revealed, it is done so with the authorisation of the interviewees.

**5.2 Statistical analysis**

The secondary data used in the study came from the Enquêtes sur le niveau de vie des ménages (Survey on Household Standards of Living or ENV) conducted by the Cote d’Ivoire National Institute for Statistics (INS) in 2008. That study examined the country’s various strata, including Abidjan, the other cities, rural eastern forests, rural western forests and the rural savannah. The 2008 ENV survey concerned 59,699 households for the entire country, with 10,504 for the Department of Abidjan. It covered the following fields: education, health, employment, agriculture, poverty, impacts of the war, etc. The current study took a particular look at the dimensions and differences between men and women in terms of education and integration on the job market. The statistical analysis attempts to present and analyze gender equality in those two areas.

**5.3 Econometric methodology**

Because the objective of our research was to study the profitability of education, we based our observations on a segmentation of the labour markets in order to analyze the occupational choices between various alternatives possible for each individual (non-participation on labour market - unemployed and inactive; participation in the public sector, the formal private sector, the informal private sector).

In principle, an individual must choose between the following alternatives: (1) non-participation on the labour market, (2) public sector employment, (3) employment in the formal private sector and (4) employment in the informal sector. The individual should choose the alternative that represents the maximum gain. However, given the multiple constraints inherent in the capacity of the job markets to integrate an individual in the desired sector, the probability that an individual will choose one sector or another must be taken into account. A multinomial logistic model is generally used to estimate the equation of reduced participation on the labour market.

In order to reflect the effect of various levels of education on the different segments of the labour market, the education variable was subdivided into four levels (illiterate, primary, secondary and higher education).
6. RESULTS

6.1 Descriptive statistics

6.1.1 The situation for women at all levels of education

The situation is presented according to the statistical analysis of the secondary data collected from the INS and the primary data.

For the secondary data, the sample included men and women over 15 years of age living in Abidjan. The statistics presented here were calculated based on the results of the survey in educational sectors and concern a total sample of 3,834 people (2,246 men and 1,588 women) in the city of Abidjan.

The results indicate that for the overall population of the city of Abidjan, 37.7 percent of the individuals sampled have no education, 25.6 percent have a primary education, 26.9 percent and a secondary education and 9.7 percent have a higher education. Table 2.1, below, presents a more detailed spread of individuals according to educational attainment and gender.

Table 2.1 Educational attainment of individuals according to gender (n=3,834)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational attainment</th>
<th>Percentage of individuals according to educational attainment</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men %</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>50.93</td>
<td>737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>52.29</td>
<td>513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>69.12</td>
<td>714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>75.60</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58.58</td>
<td>2,246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors, based on secondary data

This table shows that women are less educated than men. The percentage of women is lower at all levels of education (primary, secondary, higher). These results clearly show that although the difference between the number of girls and boys with primary school education is minimal, very few girls attain a higher education. The decreasing percentage rates between the illiterate segment and the higher education segment reflects a high yearly dropout rate (DR), a low level of school life expectancy (SLE) and a low transition rate (TR) among the female population. Another explanation could be that in traditional societies, parents originally tended to favour education for boys, rather than for girls.

Concerning the primary data, the level of educational attainment of the women interviewed was similar to the statistics presented above in that the percentage of illiterate women was higher in both samples (primary data, secondary data). The figures are 40 percent, 10 percent, 25 percent and 25 percent respectively for women with attainment levels of illiterate, primary, secondary and higher education.

The high proportion of illiterate women could be justified in part by families’ economic difficulties: “I envy educated women... I regret in my heart not having gone to school, but I'm not ashamed because my parents couldn't afford it.” [Extract from a WNSI interview with a vendor in Treichville.] Illiterate women are often also victims of stereotypes concerning the traditional roles of women. Some were never enrolled in school, others refused to go and lacked encouragement, or they were taken out of school. According to the interviewees, parents living in rural zones believed that women were destined for marriage, and that conventional schooling was not an important part of their education. The same was true for those who dropped out of school in the first year of primary school.

Contrary to the situation in rural areas, more girls are enrolled in schools in cities. This may be due to the existence of school infrastructures, but it may also be due to a positive social influence that encourages parents to send their children to school. “Here in the city, everyone goes to school. So children know that they have to go to school, and parents also know that children should go to school.” [Extract from a WNSNI interview in Cocody.] In addition, girls whose parents are educated have a greater chance of going to school because the parents are more familiar with the advantages of schooling: “My father was a veterinarian, my mother an executive secretary. Coming from an intellectual family facilitated my education.” [Extract from a WSI interview with a lawyer in Treichville.] The situation may also be due to factors observed in the 2009 Rapport d’Etat sur le Système éducatif national (State Report on the National...
Education System), as well as certain social representations of education for girls. Most schooling possibilities are in urban zones, and remain limited and unequal through the rest of the country in terms of quality, as well as quantity. In addition, analysis of school enrolment according to gender shows that differences continue to exist between access to education for boys and for girls. The enrolment rate for girls was 28.4 percent in 2009, as compared to 43.2 percent for boys. The same can be observed in educational achievement and success rates for girls. In Côte d’Ivoire, 55 percent of the population between 6 and 17 years old, including 61 percent of the girls in that age group, do not go to school. The distance between homes and schools can be a problem, but poverty remains a major factor.

Several awareness-raising activities were set up in under-enrolment zones, at the national and local levels, with support from international organisations such as UNICEF and UNFPA to promote schooling for girls. Despite all of the initiatives undertaken by the government and its partners, the enrolment rate for girls remains very low in some places. According to the Document de la Politique nationale sur l’égalité des chances, l’équité et le genre (Document on National Policy for Equal Opportunity, Equality and Gender), the phenomenon can be explained by the persistent imbalance due to cultural beliefs and practices, such as early or forced marriage, early pregnancy and female genital mutilation. Other factors are also noteworthy, such as the subordination of little girls to little boys, the idea that it is more advantageous to send a little boy to school because of his role as future head of household and family bread-winner, and the little girl’s responsibilities in reproductive and community activities.

6.1.2 The distribution of women in different segments of the labour market
The first indicator of economic inequality between men and women is labour market integration. Just like in the education sector, the employment sector in Abidjan shows inequality in all segments (public, formal private and informal private). According to secondary data, statistics indicate that only 3.96 percent of individuals in the sample are unemployed, 7.59 percent work in the public sector and 23.76 percent in the private sector. The informal sector is considerable, as it employs up to 64.68 percent of the sample individuals. Table 2.2, below, shows the representativeness of women on the labour market in Abidjan, as compared to men.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment sector</th>
<th>Proportion of individuals according to sector</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>70.10</td>
<td>29.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>76.40</td>
<td>23.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>51.37</td>
<td>48.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58.58</td>
<td>41.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors, based on secondary data

The results show that among unemployed individuals, 52.63 percent are women and 47.37 percent are men. Overall, the representativeness of women in the formal sector is low. Whether it be in the public sector or the private sector, the chart shows that over 70 percent of those employed are men. Women, when they work, are more present in the informal sector which employs 48.63 percent.

The trends were confirmed by the women interviewed. The results showed that 50 percent of the women interviewed were not integrated on the labour market. As for those who worked, 55 percent were employed in the informal sector.

Despite the high percentage of women who do not work, the women interviewed felt that working was very important because it is a major element of socialisation. It helps form character through social relations and helps internalise social norms, teaches about roles and increase motivation. Contrary to the Marxist concepts which present work in a negative sense, as an alienation, our interviewees had a positive view of work which they explained according to several angles: work is seen as liberating, work is a way of consolidating the household, and work is a factor of social integration and expresses recognition to parents.

12 Ministry of National Education, Rapport d’Etat sur le Système éducatif national (understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the system in order to identify the foundations of an ambitious new policy), Abidjan, 2008.
13 Ministry of Family, Women’s and Social Affairs, Document de la Politique nationale sur l’égalité des chances, l’équité et le genre (DEPG), Abidjan 2009 (a).
The integrated women (WSI and WNSI) felt liberated in that they were no longer reduced to “asking for a handout”; they acquire financial autonomy, and thus autonomy of action which reduces masculine control. At home, they feel more respect because they are able to contribute something to the traditional role of women. Working also gives them the possibility to personally express their recognition to elder family members and to have more of an influence with them.

Men share this viewpoint, which shows the importance of women’s socioeconomic emancipation for interpersonal relationships and the social construction of their image. The non-integrated women (WSNI and WNSNI) feel the weight of their non-integration very strongly. For those women, several factors hindering integration are related to society’s view of women. Some of them were confronted with sexual blackmail because women are viewed as sex objects.

The integrated women do not escape sexual harassment either. They are sometimes subjected to it while looking for a job or once they have found a job; some of the interviewees mentioned the cases of other women they knew who were victims of sexual harassment on the job. (Indecent proposals from supervisors to employees, from customs officials and transporters to shopkeepers and vendors…)

National policies for education and employment for women are also partially to blame, according to the interviewees. In their view, the government does not offer enough employment possibilities for women.

Regarding employment policies, according to the General Directorate for Employment, the government of Cote d’Ivoire does not have any framework tools, despite various five-year plans developed during the first twenty years after independence. The main objective for the plans was to create more jobs. Policies were based on two strategies: the first made developing economic activity, and especially the industrial sector, the driving force in job creation; the second included specific measures to deal with the structural problems encountered on the labour market. As for the specific question of women, state intervention policies only really began after Cote d’Ivoire had ratified, signed and adhered to several international, regional and sub-regional instruments on democracy, human rights and gender.

It was not until after international conferences, such as the Beijing conference, that Cote d’Ivoire began defining true development plans that integrated the idea of gender. In addition, recent legislation defining the new funding system led to the creation of savings and credit unions adapted to the needs of female populations: COOPEC, CADEFINANCE, OIKOCREDIT. During the crisis (2002-2010), measures were taken to grant funds to women who were considered victims of the war, to help them start businesses or reinforce their professional activities. The poor economic situation deteriorated further with the military-political crisis in 2002. The employment crisis that resulted directly or indirectly from the war and the changes in the production system caused an increase in unemployment, job instability and escalating underemployment, which reinforced the informal sector, particularly in urban areas (AGEPE, 2008) 14. Labour market integration for women became even more difficult because of the general context of employment instability.

6.1.3 Educational attainment and labour market integration

This section presents the interrelationships between women’s educational attainment and labour market integration. Based on secondary data, Table 2.3, below, gives the spread of women according to educational attainment and the segments of the job market in which they work. The statistics for men are given for comparison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment sector</th>
<th>Proportion of individuals according to employment sector and educational attainment (in %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Illiterate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>41.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>22.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>8.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>41.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors, based on secondary data

The results show that 49.92 percent of women who work in the informal sector are illiterate, 32.26 percent have a primary school education, 16.09 percent have a secondary school education and only 1.74 percent have higher education. Similarly, among unemployed women only 2.50 percent have higher education. Women with a secondary

14 Report on the situation of employment in Abidjan in 2008
or higher education are more integrated in the formal sector (public or private).

Among the interviewees, analysis the primary data shows that integrated women with schooling are spread through the formal (public, private) and informal sectors. Forty percent of them are employed in the private or public formal sectors (respectively 30 percent and 10 percent). Only 10 percent of them work in the informal sector. Those who are employed in the private sector have the highest educational attainment (BTS, Licence, DESS, DUT).

It is notable that the integrated women with the highest educational attainment (WSI) are all to be found in the private sector, whereas women with a primary or secondary education levels were founding the public and informal sectors. In regards to the women with no schooling but integrated (WNSI), the informal sector constitutes the main opportunity for employment. None of those women have formal employment. This is partly because the public administration recruits through a competitive process that requires a minimal educational attainment, thereby automatically excluding women without schooling. The demands of the private sector in terms of competitiveness also greatly reduce the chances of uneducated women from getting those jobs.

Official means of professional advancement, such as recruitment examinations, tests, work placement and on-the-field performance reviews constitute the main modes of progression for women with schooling. As for women without schooling, having financial capital is the main path to labour market integration. Modern types of employment are not accessible to them because they are disadvantaged by their lack of schooling. The results tend to show that there is a strong relationship between women’s educational attainment and their integration on the job market. The following analysis attempts to establish that relationship more empirically.

6.2 Empirical analysis of the relationship between women’s education and their participation on the labour market

The relationship between education and labour market participation is presented quantitatively and qualitatively.

6.2.1 The quantitative approach: econometric analysis

In order to establish a link between women’s integration on various segments of the job market and their educational attainment, we used the multinomial logistic model for a sample of 1,539 women living in Abidjan. In addition to the “Educational attainment” variable, other variables (Marital status, Age, Standard of living, Children under 5, etc.) have been added to the analysis in order to improve the explanatory value of the model.

Table 2.4, below, presents the results of the multinomial logistic regression with “Labour market integration” as the explanatory variable (dependant variable). It is considered a categorical variable with 4 modalities: Unemployed, Employed in the public sector, Employed in the private sector, Employed in the informal sector. The results for the explanatory variable “Educational attainment” are presented and analysed. The sample is limited to women living in Abidjan and 15 years and older.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.4: Results for the multinomial logistic regression (n= 1539)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependant variable: Labour market integration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference= informal sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reference=Private sector</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Illiterate
| Reference | Reference | Reference | Reference | Reference |
| Primary | -0.055 | 0.322 | 0.085* | -0.322 |
| (0.839) | (0.193) | (0.087) | (0.119) |
| Secondary | 0.162 | 1.313*** | 2.557*** | -1.313*** |
| | (0.608) | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.000) |
| Higher | 0.354 | 2.918*** | 4.428*** | -2.918*** |
| | (0.640) | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.000) |
| Pseudo R2 | 0.256 | 0.272 |

Note: The numbers between parentheses are the P-value. *** significant at 1%, * significant at 10%

These results show the relationships (positive or negative) that exist between women’s educational attainment and the job market sector they choose. The explanatory power of the model is good, with a pseudo R² over 25 percent, an acceptable rate for qualitative models like this one.
The interpretations are based on two modalities: “Informal sector” for the dependant variable and “Illiterate” for the explanatory variable. The results show that educational attainment has no significant impact on a woman’s probability of being unemployed. However, a woman’s orientation toward the private sector is very significantly (at 1 percent) and positively affected by her educational attainment. The results reveal that having a secondary or higher education (in comparison with illiterate women) increases a woman’s probability of working in the private sector. We did not find a significant relationship between primary school attainment and integration in the private sector. Regarding the public sector, our results show that the various levels of educational attainment do have a significant and positive impact on the probability of a woman integrating the public sector, compared to illiterate women.

Analysis of integration in the informal sector were done taking the “Private sector” as a reference mode. The results show that having a secondary or higher education (in comparison with illiterate women) lowers their probability of finding themselves in the informal sector rather than the private sector.

6.2.2 Qualitative approach: What motivates the interviewees

According to the interviewees, education is a fundamental factor in finding employment, but does not hinder labour market participation in itself. The women interviewed directly linked schooling to labour market integration. The direct causality between schooling and socio-professional integration is so clearly anchored that in answer to the question of how to improve the job market participation of women and girls, some interviewees (WSNI) and (WNSNI) answer “through schooling.” For the interviewees, a woman with an education has a better chance of finding a job, and has the knowledge necessary to look for and find work. One WSI used these terms: “From the start, schooling pointed me in the right direction for finding a job, to assert myself, gave me the satisfaction of having learned something.” This opinion, which is also the position developed by human capital theorists, explains that through education, people acquire and accumulate general or specific knowledge and know-how that they can use on the labour market.

In response to the question on why they opted for one type of employment or another, all categories of interviewees linked the type of employment that they had with their training or educational attainment. For the WSI, their work experience and integration on the job market are based on the knowledge they acquired through education. For example, a specialist in typing and computer skills only works in professions that use those skills (identification officer, typist, etc.). Someone with a degree in insurance and management only works for insurance companies as department manager or general manager. For the WNSI working in “minor trades” in the informal sector, there were two different answers: no other kind of job was possible because of their lack of schooling or lack of specific training.

For some, working in minor trades is a disadvantage, but the only possible way of integrating the job market for people handicapped by the lack of education. For them, exercising one of those trades is a “lesser evil”. “If you didn’t go to school, what can you do? Work like this (seamstress).” [Extract from a WNSI interview in Abobo.] For others, it is the expression of a clear desire to work. And the diversity offered by trades in the informal sector gives them numerous opportunities to find work, either by vocation, or according to their personal aptitudes: “When you want to work, you look at your level and then you look at the work that you can do, and then you choose. I looked and I saw that I could do this (household help) and I decided.” [Extract from a WNSI interview in Yopougon.]

In this respect, education is not necessarily a factor of integration. To find a job on the labour market, women have to mobilise other skills related to their intrinsic qualities. One of those is the desire to fight poverty. But the individual aspiration to integrate and adapt cannot be reduced to a simple desire. That aspiration should enable women to be active, not passive. Personal resources, and financial capital, contribute effectively to enabling women without schooling to integrate the informal sector, which includes many diverse activities and professions (minor trades and service) that provide employment opportunities. Empowerment and financial autonomy through work are the objectives. As one WNSI put it, “I fight just as hard as those who went to school. I dress myself, I pay for my own Dutch wax, I am proud of myself. I can’t read, that’s all. I can drive even though I didn’t go to school.” [Extract from a WNSI interview in Cocody.]

6.3 Factors of integration and non-integration

Various factors influence women’s integration or non-integration on the work market. The first factor, at the root of all strategies and measures, remains the ideology regarding women’s roles in society.

6.3.1 The ideological factor

The social representation of women’s roles in Cote d’Ivoire

Cote d’Ivoire is mostly rural (59 percent of the total population)14, and the dominant ideology concerning the role of women in society is traditional. It attributes certain functions to women (production, reproduction and community) and considers them inferior and subordinated to men.

Therefore, in past times in Africa, initiation cycles welcomed girls and boys into society separately.

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14 DSRP, 2009
Depending on the regions, rituals could be different, but the rites of passage remained constant. At the end of each cycle, girls and boys moved from one stage to another, toward social majority. When girls became adolescents, they went through rituals linked to fertility and procreation. They were then given in marriage. All of these rites were part of the clearly defined framework of initiation, which was a form of schooling in itself, since it taught moral, social and spiritual virtues which turned girls and boys into full-fledged citizens.

Today, schools have replaced the training that took place in sacred forests. The introduction of education in Côte d’Ivoire has shaken the relationship between women and work. If we look back a few decades, we understand that this social representation of a fulfilled woman has changed considerably. In the 1950s, the image was that a housewife who stayed home to raise her children. Women in Côte d’Ivoire at that time were viewed according to customary societal construction: women were represented as subordinate to men. Representations are a form of knowledge common to a group, and as Jodelet (1994) pointed out: “a form of knowledge that is defined and shared socially, with the practical aim of contributing to the construction of a reality common to a social or cultural group.”

Consequently, the relation to women is defined by the two processes that enable social representation to function: the process of objectification which contains and articulates the images and ideas regarding women, and the way in which the system is rooted in the collective mentality. These the two processes produce a social identity for women, which includes roles, functions, expectations, rights and responsibilities, etc.

According to this logic, women are under the guardianship of men, and their rights are automatically different. This image of women and their roles has evolved over time. In today’s society, women participate in all levels of society, and education is the best way to teaching young girls about their new roles, and of deconstructing and reconstructing women’s place and their economic role in society.

Through education and the development of ideologies relating to gender, society has adopted the idea that it is made up of men and women who cohabitate, cooperate and exchange on all levels. In the modern, contemporary view of women, they are equal to men in terms of intellectual capacity.

The traditional ideology is confronted with an ideology that has been brought in from outside, and conflicts with the ideology from within. That conflict can be seen in the implementation of government strategies.

**An ideology from the outside**

The programs and action plans concerning gender that have been set up by the Côte d’Ivoire ministries correspond to international convention frameworks, and as such are visions and orientations that have come from the outside, not from the inside. For example, we have Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security adopted by the United Nations Security Council on 31 October 2000. Although the Côte d’Ivoire government has adopted the principle, designed an action plan and decided to implement it during the period 2008-2012, the results have been mixed. However, if we consider that development can only be effective if it is endogenous, then the same principle could be applied to guidelines. Because the ideologies and measures do not come from internal political will, but seem to meet foreign obligations, they could meet with certain difficulties on the field. This could be true for all strategies and actions implemented by the various players involved in the educational system (government, parents, boys, girls, etc.) and the employment system (government, female population, etc.).

In our field study, we interviewed women who have not been to school because of that ideology. Parents were not aware enough of the issue of gender; parents had not been to school or were reluctant; parents did not supervise and encourage their children’s schooling, etc. Conversely, women whose parents have been to school (children of teachers, for example) have all been through secondary school and have a higher education (BTS, Licence, DESS).

Despite measures taken to increase awareness on gender equality (legislation on gender equality, awareness-raising among populations, free distribution of schoolbooks, etc.), disparities still exist in education. Some parents feel that school teaches values that can be contradictory to their sociocultural systems or that it moves girls away from what the parents consider to be a girl’s natural role: getting married and having children.

**6.3.2 The education factor**

As we have seen from the statistical data, the econometric calculations and the analysis of the primary data, education has an impact on women’s integration on labour market. Education influences the socio-professional integration of women in that it directs...
their choices and their professional development, as well as their strategies for finding employment (direct application, entrance exam or social network).

Concerning both WSI and WNSI, professional growth follows the same principle, i.e. depends on training (or lack of training) and/or vocation. Training allows women to manage certain parameters and uncertainties, and thereby gives them a certain amount of control in their field of activity.

For all of the non-integrated women, the lack of schooling is the cause of their social condition, of their “misfortune”. In their opinion, an education would have given them more opportunities for integration on the labour market. It would have given them more knowledge, clearer vision and would have avoided their reductionist situation.

Analysis shows that people aim for a balance between their initial training and their employment, a match between theoretical knowledge and practical application of that knowledge. Feeling knowledgeable and close to one's professional activity increases the sense of control and self-confidence. However, the directions taken remain very gender-oriented. This explains the high concentration of women in certain fields, the tertiary sector, for example, as restaurant owner or food vendor.

6.3.3 Factors related to government policies
Analysis of government policies on women's education, employment and socioeconomic emancipation reveals that many actions have been taken by the government in favour of women and girls, in view of reducing gender disparities and the sociocultural burden weighing on them. Examples of these actions include building schools, gender equality and equal opportunity awareness raising, creating institutional frameworks and gender programs, etc. Other measures include access to education through appropriate systems (basic education, literacy classes, daytime courses, night school...) for women and girls with no schooling or who have been taken out of school, programs that improve access for women to jobs that entail responsibilities, contributions to the development of national food plans. These measures are taken in cooperation with national and international partners (NGOs, World Bank, IMF, etc.).

But despite the programs mentioned above, we must stress the fact that the government of Cote d'Ivoire does not put sufficient effort into meeting the goals that it set when it ratified the international conventions, or into implementing its action plans and programs. Our study reveals that although notable progress has been made, government policies concerning women have always been influenced by the traditional ideology concerning the position and role of women in African societies. This ideology, which generally involves discrimination against women in terms of political management of the community and imposes certain specific roles, was spread by the patriarchal colonial government system, according to Oyonoke (Oyonoke, 1997). Women were inferior in colonial ideology, and only a very few were present in the colonial administration, employed as nurses. Because the administrative management of Cote d'Ivoire is a legacy of colonialism, the discriminatory practices and sexist attitudes were reproduced. As an example, we might mention the creation of girls' schools and their programs on child care, the creation of Institutions for Female Training Education, IFEFs) for girls with no schooling or who have dropped out of school and who receive training in child care, sewing, cooking, etc. Thus, literacy is used by the patriarchal government as a way of perfecting household tasks. This sexist vocational guidance is so deeply rooted that the choices for integrating unschooled women and/or school drop-outs on the job market have become automatic.

The Cote d’Ivoire education system is also influenced by the colonial legacy in its spirit and functions. In addition, the education policy has developed in response to the outside world. The concept of education, the categories of children to be sent for schooling, the organisation of relations between players are all recommended by outsiders.

The analysis of the time, budget and follow-up variables reveals inadequate government actions to change the situation. According to the information gathered, too much time goes by between the signatures and the definition of action plans. The strategies include mostly short-term programmes, rather than long-term schemes. Action plans and programmes specifically directed at women do not seem to be designed to reduce disparities.

This by no means represents a clear desire on the part of the Cote d’Ivoire government to keep women in a position of dependence, nor does it reflect a fear of social changes related to women’s economic independence. The situation stems rather from the orientation or the economic logic that has underpinned the national employment policy since independence.

The issue of gender has been taken into consideration as a result of conventions such as the one in Jomtiem, and as a result, orientations and priorities have not been thought out by the people of Cote d’Ivoire, and conflict with contradictory ideologies regarding women. The system and investments remain fragile and have trouble becoming real drivers of development. However, the new framework document for the national employment policy has well integrated the
question of gender. The sector-based programmes led by the Directorate General for Employment makes gender one of the selection criteria for the beneficiaries (a 40 percent participation rate for women is required for all projects) [23].

The budget allocated by the government for the promotion of women's affairs is minimal. The 2012 budget for the Ministry of Family, Women and Children's Affairs represents only 0.08 percent of the national budget. In addition, the gender units that are supposed to be created in the various ministries do not function for lack of budget and organisation. Government actions to promote gender cannot be assessed because of a lack of follow-up. The actions are therefore a waste of resources, and that waste contributes to maintaining gender inequalities in employment, as well as everywhere else.

6.3.4 Other significant factors

The other significant factors involved in integration and non-integration include using sex as an asset for seduction in looking for employment or as an object of blackmail for attributing employment. Some women are subjected to assault from men and even from other women during their training or when looking for a job. Sexual blackmail is a reality in schools and professional environments, and constitutes an obstacle to women's integration, although some women use it as an argument in their social positioning.

Another significant factor is difficult access to funding. Almost none of the women who have been faced with the need for funding for a professional project knew how to go about obtaining credit or about the existing possibilities and structures. Funding for their activities (shops, etc.) generally comes from personal savings or through acquaintances and "good willed people".

Another factor is the people who make up a person's social network: relatives, friends, etc. This social network facilitates integration on a market. Women often turn to a person of their entourage (husband, relative, friend, etc.) for help. Such forms of assistance are often used by women to increase their chances of gaining employment, whether it be through their own initiative or through someone in their entourage: "I got the money and the idea to open a fabric store through support from a Lebanese fiancé and advice from my sales tutor." [Extract from a WNSI interview in Treichville.]

The situation does not seem to be specific to women, but is caused by the instability of employment due to the increasing number of job-seekers and the socio-political situation and successive crises. One WSI division manager stated it in the following terms: "Women apply for a job the same way men do, systematically through the normal process, in other words examinations, job interviews, letters of application sent to private companies, or following work placement, or through recommendations by acquaintances. But given the job crisis, you need to be backed by someone in order to get the job; outside intervention is essential. You can stay out of a job for a long time if you don't have anyone pulling strings." [Extract from a WSI interview in Abobo.]

Opinions differ on this point. For some interviewees, using social networks is a way of increasing the chances of finding a job, in addition to conventional methods: "It depends. Everyone has connections, especially in Côte d'Ivoire. Here, if you don't know people, it doesn't matter what diploma you have, you won't get a job. Even when there are recruitment exams, before the government even announces that they are recruiting, they have already decided." [Extract from a WSI interview with an assistant nurse in Yopougon.]

For others, it is a practice that is not only demeaning to women, but also reduces the chances for people with more merit, but no connections: "Girls who were no good in vocational school, who didn't know how to do this or that during exams, are now working in major clinics. The rest of us were home without a job for a long time because of that." There are risks to the practice, however, because it exposes women to certain types of abuse: "To get a job, you have to go through someone, or straight to the source; but it isn't always easy, men often ask to go out with the woman." [Extract from a WSI interview with a secretary in Abobo.]

6.4 The relevance of education in the women's socioeconomic emancipation in Abidjan.

When considering the advantages of education, the three main elements that come appear in the study are: verbal and social intelligence, social integration and self-esteem.

Schooling has become so widespread that society is now organised around language, the fundamental educational transmission tool. Language is a form of expression of thought and a form of communication between people through the use of a system of vocal signs (words) and, in some cases, graphic signs (writing). Together, they make up a system of signs that enable communication and a means of expression that is distinct for a group or an individual.

For women with schooling, an education is an asset which assists in labour market integration and increases self-confidence; it is a bonus that facilitates social well-being and finding a job. In response to the question concerning how schooling contributed to integration, a preschool director said: "Going to school was an advantage for me as a woman. It helped me understand my chances, gave me more independence and enabled me to meet my needs and those of my family." [Extract from a WSI interview in Cocody.]
The interviewees without schooling, who do not have a good mastery of language and of the country’s official language (French), feel socially excluded because they do not share certain values with the society in which they live—they do not know how to read or write. Therefore, they do not have verbal and social intelligence, which causes apprehension when they have to speak in public. In addition, whether they work or not, women without schooling have low self-esteem because they always feel dependent on educated people. This is the case, for example, for Irié Lou Colette.

Case study: Irié Lou Colette

In Côte d’Ivoire, illiterate women with a sense of leadership have been able to contribute to the economic and social development of their country through initiatives that create thousands of jobs for women and young people. The case of Irié Lou Colette is an excellent illustration.

Colette comes from a family with six girls and four boys, in which education for girls was not a priority. For her father, it was unacceptable for a girl to go to school. When she expressed her opposition and sent the youngest girl to school, the father threatened to banish her from the family. In the 1980s, Colette was married to a teacher who worked in an inland region of the country. She decided to start a business selling food products and fish from the Kossou dam. Contrary to the sale of foodstuff, selling fish was not easy at first because people were hesitant to eat fish from Kossou. For the first five trips from Bouaké to Abidjan to sell her fish, she remembers selling at a loss, over 2,000,000 CFA not recovered. Through perseverance, Colette was able to convince people to accept the fish from Kossou, and it even became very popular around Abidjan. On the shores of the Treichville lagoon, she found a depot and developed a business cleaning fish, thereby creating jobs for the young girls who worked for her. She speaks with pride of one of the fish cleaners who was able to use the money she earned to move to Germany where she now has a business selling cars between Germany and Abidjan.

Convinced that the foodstuff sector was an effective tool in fighting poverty for women, Colette created the Fédération nationale des coopératives de vivriers de Côte d’Ivoire (Côte d’Ivoire National Federation of Foodstuff Cooperatives, FENACOVICI) which now includes 1,802 cooperatives throughout the country. The cooperatives range in size from 50 to 100 members. The federation gives financial support to the cooperatives by supplying agricultural inputs for farmers, as well as by collecting, distributing and marketing the food products for the members. The FENACOVICI now has a rice processing plant in Tiassalé and has developed the entire chain of food production, from farming to processing to marketing, and created jobs for thousands of women and young people. One example is the Coopérative de distribution de produits alimentaires (Cooperative for the Distribution of Food Products, CODIPRAL) that has grown from seven to over 1,000 members, some of whom are active in the production sector, others in processing, and still others in marketing. In terms of perspectives, the FENACOVICI plans to use an irrigation system to develop counter-season production of tomatoes, onions, aubergines, etc. The project is expected to create thousands of jobs for women and young people in various regions of Côte d’Ivoire. For example, tomato production will represent 22 hectares, with 40 tons per hectare. Harvesting will require 30 people per hectare and per day who will earn a salary for their work.

Even without an education, Irié Lou Colette has helped thousands of women and young people in Côte d’Ivoire fight extreme poverty and hunger by enabling them to earn their own living, feed their families and send their children to school.

However, difficulties in communication, comprehension and interpretation of documents, and all of the other disadvantages related to a lack of education, forced Irié Lou Colette to turn to other people for help. She also had to invest in her own literacy in order to facilitate her integration. So without education, although women like Irié Lou Colette can play an active role in the economic and social development of the country through initiatives that create jobs, women’s socioeconomic emancipation still requires education.

Clearly, people are aware that education is an added value. Physiologically, women seem more vulnerable than men, but with education, they are as intelligent and have the same potential. That is why the interviewees with and without schooling oppose the idea of employment specifically for women: “There are women in the army, women who are pilots, elected representatives, karate masters. I don’t see anything that a woman cannot do! There is no such thing as boy’s work and girl’s work. We make the choices ourselves.” [Extract from a FSNSI interview with a housewife in Yopougon.] Some interviewees even refused the role of housewife. Not that the role of housewife was demeaning, but in their opinions, all women should have an activity in addition to the daily management of a household and related tasks: “Women are good at taking care of children and family. But that should not be a lifestyle, an obligation...
for women.” Some WSI who work in the private sector find that the private sector offers more opportunities to affirm their intelligence, as well as to acquire better positions with more responsibilities and more power in relation to men (department heads, managers).

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is part of the general debate regarding women's socioeconomic emancipation. As such, it presents the spread of women in various segments of the Abidjan labour market, depending on their educational attainment. It analyses factors explaining women's labour market integration, specifically underlining the role of education. The results show a high rate of illiteracy among women. Also noteworthy is that over half of the women in Abidjan are not employed. As for those who do work, most are part of the informal sector. Through both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the study examined structural, ideological and symbolic factors that influence women's integration in different sectors of activity according to their educational attainment. It also illustrated the close link that exists between women's educational attainment and their choice of sectors on the labour market. In addition, the study revealed that improving women's socioeconomic status depends on education, reinforced capacity and empowerment. That objective can only be met if girls and boys are guaranteed equal education. Education and the qualifications that it brings give women better chances of attaining decision-making positions which ensure their involvement in governance and democratic process. Education also enables them to have an influence on the policy decisions concerning their country. Better yet, investing in education for women is a major form of capital and an imperative for development.

The study revealed the various weak points related to the social representations of education and female employment. It prompts us to reconsider the underpinnings of strategies, as well as the objectives and the means implemented to meet those objectives. To facilitate women's professional integration and improve their participation on the labour market, we must rethink the ideological foundations concerning women's roles in society and the means available to promote their socioeconomic emancipation. To do this, measures should be taken on the following points:

- **Redefine ideologies concerning women**

  Government authorities, in cooperation with various movements, associations and NGOs involved in gender issues, should consolidate and implement special programs on gender awareness. At the national level and repeatedly, awareness raising campaigns for target populations (women, men, parents, girls and boys, etc.) should be designed and supported by media in order to trigger a change in mentality and to reduce ideological conflicts. The campaigns should promote the eradication of prejudice in regards to schooling for girls, and free girls from economic and sociocultural burdens in relation to their sectors of choice/participation on the labour market.

  This recommendation is only feasible if stakeholders (government, movements, associations and NGOs) truly take on board the ideology regarding gender equality.

  - **Give girls and women a solid educational foundation**

    Education for All must become a reality in order to reduce inequalities between girls and boys, and fight illiteracy among women. The government must help wipe out reservations concerning schooling for girls by breaking down ideological obstacles, as well as economic and infrastructure-related impediments. To do so, the government is invited to reinforce its policy for free, mandatory, good quality schools by effectively eliminating school fees and by distributing school kits, especially to girls, throughout the country; and by reinforcing human and teaching capacities. Special attention should be paid to rural areas and underprivileged peri-urban centres through the construction of neighbourhood establishments with boarding possibilities to improve learning and education conditions. In addition, a culture of excellence should be developed among girls by pursuing such initiatives as the “Miss Mathematics” contest in order to increase school life expectancy and transition rates for girls.

    It is also important that women with informal businesses and those who have limited comprehension of a simple text be taught an acceptable level of literacy and simple accounting to help them improve their bookkeeping. To meet these goals, the government could work with volunteers to organise training sessions for those women in every neighbourhood. The volunteers should be trained by government programs to teach literacy, accounting and gender awareness.

  - **Develop policies that truly promote gender equality**

    The government should finance surveys (sociological and economic) regularly to have up-to-date indicators on employment and education. Having reliable data and statistics will help orient development programs and corrective measures, when necessary. Authorities are encouraged to review the representativeness of women in decision-making bodies, and in budgets allocated to ministries and other structures in charge of promoting women's affairs so as to ensure optimal adjustment.

    Creating and reinforcing gender units within each ministry and all private enterprises is also encouraged. For gender units to function correctly they must be independent and receive sufficient funding.

  - **Subsidise home-help for women who work**

    Working women should receive subsidies to hire home-help to take care of their households while they are at work.
work. This would lighten the workload for women who often have to combine domestic tasks and revenue-generating activities.

This aid should also be accorded to non-working women since the time that they could spend on acquiring economic emancipation is consecrated to domestic chores. This kind of program would promote relative financial autonomy.

- **Follow-up on action taken and monitoring on the field**
  Actions taken, whether in the field of education or of employment, target objectives and require resources. For actions to be effective, follow-up is necessary to verify their impact. It is essential to include a monitoring-assessment program in the action plans to observe progress that has been made, obstacles to overcome and future challenges. The government could set up an independent structure specifically in charge of follow-up and evaluation.

- **Promote structures to help professional integration**
  Public and private recruiting and training organisations should be promoted (AGEP, AGEFOP, CIFIP, etc.), as should establishments that support private initiatives (FSN, CEPICI, etc.).

- **Mobilising stakeholders**
  The stakeholders involved include the government, women and girls, in all social categories. Each has a role to play in to ensure that mentalities and practices change, and that women gain socioeconomic emancipation:
  - The government should guarantee better integration of gender equality so the strategic measures involving target populations be successful;
  - Parents should be more aware of their role in the socioeconomic emancipation of girls, and show interest in and encouragement for their education;
  - Women should be fully committed to becoming more active in the struggle for socioeconomic emancipation. This should lead to educational initiatives and strategies to help women integrate the job market;
  - Girls should be more aware of social standards and values, and the advantages of education. Most importantly, they should be made aware of the roles that they can play in society in Cote d’Ivoire. They should be encouraged to persevere and taught to avoid following the course of least resistance, as this makes them more vulnerable;
  - All social categories should participate in a synergy of actions that converges towards the socioeconomic emancipation of women, thereby reducing their poverty level.
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SUMMARY

This report concerns gender research carried out among individuals having received a “BTS” (brevet de technicien supérieur – Advanced Technician’s Certificate) in the sub-sector of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) from one of two training institutes in Dakar, each with social, economic and pedagogical specificities: the private educational establishment of Saint-Michel, and the Centre de formation professionnelle et commerciale (CFPC), a public school.

Carried out on two levels, the study first of all sought to analyse the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that students graduating from these two schools face when entering the job market. Secondly, the study was meant to measure economic and social impacts of training on the life of graduates who were employed at the time of the study, with special attention paid to women graduates.

The study showed that girls, who were a majority of the students enrolled in BTS courses at Saint-Michel and CFPC, found work in the service sector more easily than their male classmates. It was reported that the female graduates were appreciated for qualities including commitment, attention to detail and love of their work, in addition to the professional skills relevant to their specialisation.

On the social and economic level, women, in addition to their roles in the productive sphere and as mothers, are now bringing about significant changes in community management and development through greater and more accepted participation in major decisions including decisions on spending.

“Senegalese women have always played an important role in the economic development of urban areas. But women’s lack of accredited training is a huge obstacle to self-determination and productivity.”
1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The current global context, undergoing deep socio-economic transformation, has led more and more countries to adapt their education systems to the objectives and main priorities that the international community has set for 2015, in particular Education For All (EFA). Today, young girls and boys should all benefit, without prejudice, from the same access to education and life-long learning, as well as professional opportunities. The increased focus on education, in particular for young girls, as the gender approach warrants, has resulted in growing numbers of girls and women participating in education at all levels, according to the EFA follow-up report of 2010.

In regard to literacy, an essential factor in social and economic well-being for adults and also for children, it is worth noting that of the 775 million adults who cannot read or write in the world, more than one-fifth were living in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2010. Thus, “140 million adults in Sub-Saharan Africa are lacking the basic learning tools that would enable them to make enlightened decisions and fully participate in the development of their societies” (UNESCO, 2006, p. 1). In addition, in 81 of the 146 countries for which figures are available for 2005-2010, women are more likely to suffer illiteracy than men (UNESCO, 2012).

![Figure 2.1 International literacy rates](chart)

Source: UNDP Report, 2011

According to UNESCO (2012), the adult literacy rate in Senegal between 2005 and 2010 was 50 percent. For this same time period, Senegal seems to have reported better scores – with the exception of Gambia (50%) – than other ECOWAS countries such as Niger (29%), Burkina Faso (29%), Mali (31%), Guinea (41%), Sierra Leone (42%), and Benin (42%).

Achieving parity and equality between men and women in education is part of basic human rights, and is an important factor for improving other socio-economic criteria. Sixty-eight of the 164 countries concerned with EFA objectives have not yet achieved equal access to primary education. At the same time, these countries have substantial gaps between men and women with regard to literacy rates. The Gender Parity Index (GPI)\(^1\) is lower than 0.50 in Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Chad, which are also the countries with the lowest overall literacy rates. Senegal, by comparison, has made extraordinary progress (UNESCO, 2012). Indeed, the GPI in Senegalese primary schools rose from 1.01 in 2004 to 1.07 in 2008; this reveals the significant changes, in favour of girls, in the composition of the student body (Diagne, 2012). Middle schools and secondary schools now show more girls enrolled. Progress has also been made in higher education, where the number of women students is growing as well. Indeed, at this level, the percentage of women students increased from 30.6% in 2005 to 35.3% three years later (ibid).

In summary, using the terms of the Gender Party Index (GPI) to measure the share of girls in the overall education effort, it is clear that remarkable progress has been made in Senegal towards achieving gender equality.

In Senegal, statistics from 2010 reported a population of 12,509,434 inhabitants, with a median age of 17 years old. A gender-based analysis shows that the population includes a large number of women, many of them of childbearing age; 47.2% of Senegalese women are between ages 15 and 49. In 2010, the National Statistics and Demographics Agency (ANSD) also reported a particularly high dependency coefficient (89.5%), which is the ratio between the members of the population in an age group that is generally not active on the labour market (under age 15 and 65 or older) and members of working age (between ages 15 and 65). This social situation naturally has negative repercussions on many aspects of life including employment and education. Furthermore, between 2005 and 2006, the Follow-up Study on Poverty in Senegal (ESPS) carried out by the ANSD, indicated that the illiteracy rate for men was 47.9%, and for women 67.1%.

In 2004, the Ministry of the Economy and Finance (MEF, 2004) released the information that in Dakar, the capital of Senegal, the overall employment rate was 51.1% and that variations in the rate as linked to gender and age were observed. In fact, the employment rate for men was 62.1%, versus 41.1% for women. Women, who make up the majority of the population, are less present on the labour market and more likely to be working in marginal, low-paid jobs. However, the gross employment rate for women, which was about 34% in the mid-70s, had increased sharply to 41.1% by 2005 (Brilleau, Roubaud & Torelli, 2005).

Like all countries around the world, Senegal seeks to achieve the objectives of EFA, and thus to adapt its educational system to the major goals and priorities that the international community has set, in particular by mobilising Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). According to the Conference of Francophone

\(^{1}\) The Gender Parity Index is equal to the difference of Gross enrollment ratio between girls and boys.
Education Ministers (1999), TVET education, dispensed in the years following African independence, has provided many much needed management-level employees and skilled workers to the labour market in French-speaking African countries. In 2010, the Senegalese Ministry of Technical Education and Professional Training (METFP, 2010) reported that the sub-sector of professional training included 213 establishments in 2010, 70 of them public (33%) and 143 privately run (67%). The number of students in these schools rose from 32,868 in 2007 to 37,473 in 2010, (METFP, 2010). Thus, between 2006 and 2010, TVET courses have been in demand in Senegal, and a good many of those enrolled are women (19,524).

2. DEFINING THE ISSUES

According to the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF, 2004), the Dakar region covers and area of 550 km² (0.3% of the country) and is home to about one quarter of the population of Senegal. In September 2002, the population of the greater urban area of Dakar was estimated at 1,905,600, with women making up 51.5% (MEF, 2004).

Senegalese women, indeed African women in general, have always played an important role in the economic development of urban areas, in particular through participation in services, light industry and the agri-food sector. But women’s lack of accredited training is a huge obstacle to self-determination and productivity. It is generally admitted that “human resources meeting international qualifications standards can encourage the development and modernisation of business” (METFPALN, 2002).

Senegal, following the national conference on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in 2001, where the main guidelines for the development of human resources were set forth, is in a decisive phase in regard to the elaboration of a new TVET policy. Ensuring that women have access to TVET education, especially programmes that provide qualifications for work in the tertiary sector, will increase the percentage of women with professional skills and therefore, \textit{a priori}, serve as a strong social stabiliser as well as a powerful lever for economic and social development.

But we should consider whether or not men and women with diplomas from TVET schools can really meet the needs of the labour market, in terms of their numbers and the real need for their skills. The number of Senegalese working between 2001 and 2002 was three million, according to Walter (2008). Thus, about 85.6% were employed in the country as a whole, as opposed to 72.3% in Dakar. In 2006, the METFP indicated that, at an average annual renewal rate of 3% for human resources, at least 20,000 new skilled workers would have to be trained every year for the greater Dakar region alone, where nearly 700,000 people are employed (more than 500,000 in the informal sector). Currently, the system for Technical and Vocational Education and Training cannot produce so many graduates annually. We wonder therefore, how and by what means women, who make up 19,524 of students enrolled in TVET courses manage to “get ahead” on the job market after this training. No doubt there are certain factors that must create a better advantage, and graduating students should be able to count on these when they take their first steps in the professional world.

In addition, the question of the future for graduates of TVET programmes on the job market raises the question of “external efficiency”, a concept used to evaluate the ratio of projected employment opportunities to the number of employed graduates (Sall and De Ketele, 1997). UNESCO/ Pôle de Dakar (2007) provides some examples of external efficiency:

\[ \ldots \text{Based on a sample of 63,000 individuals identified in the \textit{QUID2} survey, who had left the education system between 2000 and 2001, one third were able to find employment in 2001, while 21% were looking for work, which is an unemployment rate of 40% (the rate for graduates of higher education was 48%). For the 40% who had finished their education and were ready to work, the average length of unemployment may extend beyond 12 months (p.3).} \]

This observation is corroborated by another: “the difficulties encountered by young Africans seeking work are particularly keen for the most highly educated” (UNESCO/BREDA, 2007, p. 42). Are these observations valid at all levels? The observations on TVET programmes and the labour market in Senegal lead us to the following general research topic, and to the specific questions that the research raises.

2.1 Research topics

The general topic is this research was as follows: In Senegal, does gender determine successful labour market insertion and the socio-economic impact of technical and vocational education and training?

The specific research questions were:

1. In Senegal, do women graduates of vocational training establishments have better success entering the job market than men?
2. Do the success rates, broken down by gender, have any relationship to the type of establishment (private or public) that the student attended?
3. Does gender determine the nature of entry-level employment contracts?
4. What is the level of socio-economic impact that vocational training has on graduates, broken down by gender?

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The main themes that we will focus on in this part of the work are the three micro-variables that underlie the study:

\footnote{Questionnaire Unifié sur les Indicateurs de Développement – Survey on development indicators}
gender, which we will observe using the Moser framework; access to the labour market; social and economic impacts.

3.1 Gender
Are women able to benefit from their training and education to achieve genuine equality with men, and under what conditions? “Women’s triple role”, “practical needs and strategic interests of gender” and “political approaches for including women in development” are three avenues suggested by Caroline Moser for considering gender-related issues (March & Smyrth, 1999).

3.1.1 At international level
Ann Oakley used the concept of “gender” in her work Sex, Gender and Society. Later, in the 1980s, the concept came to be more generally used in development work. Thus, as the concept became more common in the research field, its grounding in feminist research also became more evident. At the outset, feminist contributions to gender theory concentrated on two levels. The first level demonstrates the social construction of gender, as opposed to the natural characteristics of the male/female categories. Then a second level grew around the notions of political and conflictual relationships, or empowerment. Indeed, the notion of gender is crosscutting, and elements of the cultural, historical, social, economic and political specificity of a people must be taken into account.

The gender approach seeks to build balanced social relationships within society. The approach enables us to be vigilant in regard to all forms of injustice, exploitation or domination among social categories, whether the individuals are men or women. Gender studies define the origin of the exploitation of women in the assignment of exclusive roles and responsibilities to each sex, in particular with regard to production. Often, these assignments are based more on social constructions than biological determinism (Sarr, Ba, Sourang, 1997). Furthermore, one basis of exploitation would appear to be the sexual division of labour within private spheres, inside the family or in public matters (economic and political). Based on the discourse and actions of social stakeholders, according to the gender approach, we can observe that social categories are constantly being created and redefined. Yet these stakeholders do not merely follow laws dictated by society, they modernise them. There is some leeway for action within the social structure. This is certainly why, in feminist social research, the production of knowledge more often takes women’s point of view as a point of departure and considers women’s experiences as new empirical and theoretical resources.

The gender approach is based on an analysis framework built around the theory of three roles and the theory of needs. The theory of three roles includes the role of reproduction, the economic and social roles that women play.

In regard to the reproductive role, clearly this involves perpetuating the group. Women are also, in this role, expected to accept responsibility for tasks such as raising children, looking after the elderly, feeding the family and providing care, etc. These tasks associated with reproduction are essentially performed by women and devoid of any market value. (Sarr et. al., 1997).

The economic role of women concerns any work that creates a marketable product. There are three types of economic activity in which women engage:
- The production of goods and services to be used or consumed by the family;
- The share of work that women perform in activities that generate income for the spouse or the family group;
- Activities carried out by women outside the family for the purposes of selling the goods or services produced.

The third component of the theory of roles concerns the social dimension. This dimension encompasses the capacity of women to keep ties strong within the group, on an organisational and ideological level. African women are the keepers of traditions, of cultural and social values. Women ensure the moral balance of fragile social structures (Sow, 1997).

To fulfil the domestic responsibilities associated with the three roles listed above, women (and men as well) need means: this brings us to the theory of needs. Maxime Molyneux (1985), advancing the concept of “gender needs”, draws a distinction between practical needs and strategic needs. For this author, practical or concrete needs are material, whereas strategic needs, although they may be concrete, are of a political nature.

In some societies, the roles of reproduction, production and community management are generally recognised as women’s domain. But in the realm of training and employment, these very roles may put women at a disadvantage, in as much as society tends to practice the “theory of cultural reproduction” of social inequalities (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970); this is the source of discriminatory attitudes.

3.1.2 In Africa
For Touoyem (2007), the epistemological and/or philosophical issues raised by the hypothesis of two “cradles of civilisation” – one northern and one southern – could provide an explanation for the difference in the perception of women throughout the ages. Cissé (2007), in work seeking to build upon Touoyem’s postulate (2007), poses the question of whether functional violence isn’t inherent in the patriarchy set up as a paradigm by the northern model and reinforced through the legal and administrative systems of colonialism, and whether we shouldn’t turn to matriarchal traditions to establish a philosophy that would be more liberating for women.

The natural condition for African women is within a matriarchal society. Such a social organisation is not one of women’s supremacy over men. Rather, its organisation is a harmonious dualism that is more satisfying for all because it is more equitable (Diop, 1956). For this reason,
African women are far from approving of the patriarchy that is forced upon them and which gives men institutional roles and the exercise of power. An analysis of the deep-rooted causes of the shift in the organisational paradigm that effectively placed the mantle of power on men’s shoulders shows that “the role of external factors, such as religion – both Christianity and Islam – and the European presence in Africa cannot be overemphasized” (Diop, 1956, p. 116). A large share of the predominant cultural and religious discourse serves to keep women constrained and isolated from the world, submitting them to a cultural and religious order that no man would choose for himself (Sow, 1997). Despite advances in international law and progressive ideas, the ideology of “male domination” still holds sway. To cite Pierre Bourdieu, this ideology “would appear to be an eternal, rooted set of values, but in reality is nothing more than the product of attempts to enshrine (interconnected) institutions such as the family [...] or society,” “a secular substitute for God” (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 152).

Nonetheless, development cannot be a purely linear process, and the same is true for the transformation of social relationships. The strategic analysis developed by Crozier and Friedberg (1977) in Actors and Systems shows, in many ways, the subtle games played by actors in an organisation, societal or not, to control uncertainty, which is a way to control power. Indeed, in light of the theory of gender needs, any assistance that is limited to practical needs can, in some cases, have the pernicious effect of reinforcing the positions of subordination and domination, which are taken for granted and viewed as logical by the socially dominant groups (Jacquet, 1995).

A meeting organised in 1976 at Wellesley College in the United States on the initiative of American feminist anthropologists took for its theme Women in national development; this was a turning point for the African feminist struggle. The few African women who had been invited to attend (Fatima Mernissi of Morocco, Achola Pala of Kenya, Philomena Steady of Sierra Leone and Marie Angélique Savané of Senegal) reacted strongly to the dominant discourse and the attitude of American feminists, whom the African women found to be “arrogant” (Locoh & Puech, 2008). They left the meeting and decided to found their own association in Africa. This was a major step towards calling dominant, Western feminist tenets into question. In fact, according to Locoh and Puech (2008), the field of work examining African women as subjects of ethnological and anthropological study was basically controlled by Western feminists. The African women objected strongly to this “domineering” position. They had also become aware of their own needs and priorities, given that they came from a different context and did not necessarily have the same objectives as Western feminists. Even though they often had similar motives for their struggles, the African women gave no ground to Anglo-Saxon style feminism with its “imperialist” overtones. Indeed, they were “even more likely to make a stand given that accusations of alienation brought against Western feminism – alienation associated with Westernisation in general – were harsh and justifiable” (Locoh & Puech, 2008, p.14).

In 1977, the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD), a joint initiative of African researchers and activists from around the continent, was created. Thus until the 1980s, African and Western feminist movements had different objectives and a different public discourse.

At a given period in a people’s history, the people are capable of assuming their own development imperatives. Studies (Mianda, 1996; Sarr, 1997) have shown that in Africa social relations are changing within the family. African women no longer remain subject, powerless and resigned, to male domination. The strategies that they deploy illustrate that, despite the fact that men still hold most of the power, women have greater self-determination and have achieved results. In Ghana, Cameroon and Togo, tontines, which have grown into real neighbourhood banks, provided the wherewithal for the rise of “Nana Benz”, wealthy tradeswomen known for their business acumen who rule over big fabric markets. In Senegal, women have come out of the informal sector, starting from scratch, and risen in the business world (Sarr, 1998). Slowly but surely they grow their capital, which enables them to reorganise the power structure more to their own advantage (Sarr et al. 1997).

In fact, because they have the exclusive power of the gift of life, women, and African women especially, are held in obligation to care for the household and its inhabitants, from all points of view. Diop (2000) writes, “at the first sign of [a child’s] humanity, the mother incontestably is in charge of its guidance and care”; indeed, all civilisations are the same in this regard. In addition to this psycho-affective role, women also produce goods and services. An example is the Congolese women who, “in the formal or informal economy, are civil servants or administrative employees, teachers, health workers, or work in trade; they are famers, hairdressers, seamstresses, work in NGOs, etc.” (Muswamba, n.d.). And yet, the literature often raises the question of the time spent working for the family and raising the children – doesn’t this constitute a form of exploitation against women, a sort of “burden” that is too much for them to reasonably bear? In any event, the ILO (2007) admits that women “have a difficult time reconciling family obligations and paid employment without compromising their opportunities for advancement or for improvement of their skills.” And yet, now more than ever, women enjoy many new opportunities, and are entering career fields that previously seemed to be reserved for men (ibidem).

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3 This was the case in the 1990s, for example, when public opinion took an interest in violence against women.

4 Cooperative networks that allow women to pool their means by regularly contributing a certain amount of money. Each in turn can then benefit from access to capital, either to solve a specific problem or to start a business activity.
New approaches based on the practical needs and strategic interests of women have been implemented which seek to reduce the gap between men and women and more fully include women in development. In a follow-up report five years after the Beijing Conference, UNESCO indicated that “extra efforts had been made to reduce illiteracy rates among women. […] Senegal, in particular, has reported that lowered rates of illiteracy among girls and women have contributed to an increase in school enrolment and attendance among girls, from 35% to 52.9%” (UNESCO, 2000).

As for the ILO, it advises “helping workers, whether men or women, with family responsibilities to better reconcile work and family life, in a world where […] the organisation of work puts women at a disadvantage and limits their professional careers” (ILO, 2007).

Studies (Duru-Bellat, 2008; Lemistre, 2008) have shown the effects of the choice of the programme of study and the level of education of women on access to employment and on development in general. In this regard, societal pressures lead women to sacrifice their careers on the alter of family life; general, non-selective education programmes leading to lower paid, service sector employment are favoured by young women over more advanced degrees and careers that might compromise their family life (Duru-Bellat, 2004).

3.1.3 In Senegal

At political and institutional level

As early as 1962, Leopold Senghor, the first president of independent Senegal, declared, during the 3rd Conference of the UPS party in Thiès:

[…] We have made observations as we discuss a draft law on civil status. For some, women are dolls for man’s entertainment, or servants at his beck and call. If we are to truly build our nation, to make Senegal a modern country, we must fight against the alienation of the Senegalese woman: she must be restored to her dignity and her natural role. Let us not invoke the precepts of the Koran or the Gospel. […] I have often studied the Gospel and the Koran, and I have never read therein that men and women are unequal, quite the contrary. Indeed, we need to go back to the pure sources of holy writings and interpret them in the contemporary spirit of progress.

In 1984, in Senegal, with the multiparty political system instituted by President Abdou Diouf6, radical thinking began to emerge from the women in “left wing” political parties. This thinking was supported by the “Yewwu-Yewwi” (Pour la liberté des femmes) and “Femmes et Société” movements, created in 1989. The radical left feminist movement Yewwu-Yewwi, with Angélique Savané as its standard-bearer, demanded no less than a thorough transformation of the relationship of servility binding women to men, according to Cissé (n.d.), (see www.codesria.org/IMG/pdf/CISSE.pdf). The group’s members took a strong stand against what they referred to as marital oppression, the oppression of pregnancy, cultural oppression; exploitation in factories, the service sector, in homes as domestic labour, and by prostitution (fippu6, 1987). Going even further, these women attacked the Code de la famille (Family Code of law), adopted in 1972, as too “patriarchal”, whereas religious groups had complained that it was “too advantageous for women.” Activists in the Yewwu-Yewwi movement also protested against “the freedom given to Muslim men to choose polygamy, limited to four wives, and recognition of Muslim inheritance laws, which provide unequal shares for men and women in the division of property” (Le Soleil newspaper, 17 July, 1986). These women stressed that the issue was not an individual struggle against men, but a social and political struggle against an ideological system that alienates men in their privileges and women in their oppression (Savane, 1986). Camara (2007) was very direct in criticism of the Family Code, asserting:

[…] The Senegalese Code de la famille is a hodgepodge of contradictory rules, including both the duty of fidelity and the authorisation of polygamy; sexual equality is reduced to equality in terms of obligations and systematic inequality in terms of rights for men and women (p.163).

A remarkable number of Senegalese women joined this type of movement. Yewwu-Yewwi can be accredited with two major accomplishments: the recognition of 8 March as a day of celebration, Women’s Day; clear guidelines for women’s organisations seeking to achieve goals related to their political objectives as citizens. However, it would appear that the struggle of Senegalese women to achieve their true place in society and fully realise their potential is hindered by two weaknesses. Firstly, although they clearly have the capacity to mobilise through many different solidarity groups, they have not focused on the strategic necessity of being present at the very heart of decision-making institutions. Logically, we see that the time is ripe for the next round of struggles, for example in order to achieve parity.

Meanwhile, Senegal has ratified quite a few treaties, agreements and international MOUs in favour of women’s rights and improved conditions for women. For example: the Declaration of the elimination of discrimination against women; The Beijing Declaration; Law 2004-35 dated 8 January 2005, authorising the President of the Republic to ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, adopted in Maputo on 11 July, 2003.

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5 He was referring to Muslim and Christian MPs who were sitting in Parliament when the plenary session on the draft law was held.
6 Senegals’s second president. He succeeded, under the terms of Article 35 of the Constitution, President Léopold Sédar Senghor.
7 “Become aware to become free”, in Wolof.
8 Journal de Yewwu Yewwi No 1, July 1987.
Domestically, Senegal has passed a number of laws in that benefit women: Law 2007-23 calling for parity on lists of candidates presented for proportional, legislative elections; the constitutional law modifying Articles 7, 63, 68, 71 and 82 of the Constitution; Decree 2008-1047 dated 15 September 2008, ordering the creation and defining the organisation and operation of the National Women’s Rights Monitoring Agency (Observatoire National des Droits de la Femme); Decree 2008-1045 dated 15 September 2008 ordering the creation and defining the organisation and operation of the National Agency for Equity and Gender Equality (la Direction nationale de l’Équité et de l’Égalité de Genre); Ministerial order 10545 dated 10 December 2008, ordering the creation of the Committee for Study of Violence Against Women (Comité de Réflexion sur les Violences faites aux Femmes et aux Enfants – CRVFE); Order 092188 dated 20 March 1998, ordering the creation of the preparatory and steering committee for an action plan to eliminate practices that are detrimental to women’s health; and Law 2010-11 dated 28 May 2010, instituting absolute parity between men and women in elective and semi-elective bodies. This law on parity made it possible for women to obtain 65 seats out of 150 during the last legislative elections held in 2012, which is 43.3% of the chamber. In the previous assembly, women members held only 22% of the seats. At the previous level, women did not have the critical numbers to truly influence legislation. This remarkable advance in Senegal means that the country is ranked third of African nations, after Rwanda and the Seychelles, and sixth in the world for the percentage of women sitting in the National Assembly.

In regard to the law on parity, Radio France Internationale (RFI) broadcast a programme on the day of the vote with street interviews of Senegalese women, one of whom who said: “Today is a great day for women, it is a victory!” Said another: “We have been fighting a long time, and we have won today. This is a good law because it will enable us to be more involved in politics. Usually, we just go along with our men. We have always been behind our men, but now we will be standing next to them, on the same level.”

Perhaps these expressions of satisfaction regarding the political measure are the direct result of several other actions carried out in Senegal previously, such as the major campaigns fighting for and raising awareness of gender equality and equity, carried out by political authorities, educators (though the inclusion of gender in the New Education Curriculum), civil society organisations and women’s movements. According to Mme Coulibaly, who is in charge of the defence and support section of the African Network for Integrated Development (Réseau Africain pour le Développement Intégré – RADI): “On a theoretical level, Senegalese law is apparently fair to women.”

But Mme Coulibaly underlines that there is a gap between legal texts and the laws practiced in society: many women’s rights are still only “theoretical.” Indeed, the notion of gender equality and equity is often met with hostility by religious groups, traditionalists and so forth. Even the law on parity has not received unanimous approval. For proof, another RFI interviewee stated; “We are an Islamic country, women cannot be equal to men.” And a young man commented: “I think it is a good law, as long as it is not applied in our homes. Oh, if parity had to be respected in our homes, that would create problems!”

At the economic and social levels

The analytic study that recounts the social and economic situation of Senegalese women during the decade from 1980-1990 and gives a perspective for the horizon 2015 highlights, in its conclusions, the fact that women are kept to the margins of the major development goals set for the country. Observation proves that women have been left on the sidelines in regard to national planning and development policies for many years (Sarr, 1998).

Even the differences between socio-economic conditions in rural and urban areas are not enough to change the fundamental concerns of women, who have the same roles and duties wherever they live. Thus, despite the fact that they effectively represent a block in the political sphere, women have merely benefited from one-off policies, actions and measures that are implemented from time to time. The roles of spouse, mother, family caretaker and guardian of cultural heritage, which have long been considered women’s roles, do not given women any decision-making power in regard to access to resources that would enable them to fully participate in the economy. Amartya Sen, Nobel Prize in economics, considers that there is no priority more vital for the economy of development than full recognition of women’s participation and leadership role in political, economic and social domains. Sen writes (2000) that this is a crucial aspect of development. Indeed, despite the heavy weight of tradition and the lack of positive political options:

[…] In Médina-Gounass on the outskirts of Dakar, women have proved more efficient than men at finding strategies for managing the organisation of the neighbourhood economic structure. Using traditional associations, they have been able to develop production units and provide services that meet neighbourhood needs. They have found profitable niche markets that correspond to their skills and capacities. In the neighbourhood, the people have managed to improve living conditions by financing water and electric supply. This development capacity has largely been built by women, through their ingenuity, their solidarity, and their business sense. Women were able to develop profitable individual projects based on the success of the collective project (Sarr, 1998, p.27).

In another sphere, women have played a significant role in the consolidation of the nation. In Casamance, a region in southern Senegal, women’s role as mothers exemplifies the action of Kabonkaetor women. The armed conflict that has raged in this part of the country for two decades has inspired the women of the region to work for a lasting peace. Marguerite Keny Coly, president of the Casamance Women’s Peace Forum, states:
[...] From the days of our ancestors, women in Casamance have always acted as mediators, resolving disputes among men or between villages. Woman, because they are mothers, are less likely to take sides in a conflict. Women stand in the middle of life, and can help people to reconcile, to forgive one another. [...] (Coly, 2003).

In Casamance, as elsewhere on the African continent, the traditional division of labour based on sex is called into play in conflict resolution. In these situations, women's actions are an extension of their role in the home (AAWORD, 2000). There are several phenomena underpinning the mobilisation of the women of Casamance. In addition to highlighting their on-going interventions, their mobilisation also serves to maintain peace. For whatever reasons, women have always relied on certain forms of struggle including prayer, offering libations, marches and debates. They have always had a knack for adapting their means, or inventing new forms of action when the stakes change in order to maximise the effects of their efforts. Like their sisters around the continent, they help to maintain cultural and social values (Sow, 1997).

In addition, Larriève (1993) writes that in several African countries, including Senegal, “men are generally associated with productive work and women with bearing children, which stereotypes are reinforced in the media and in textbooks.” In Senegal, young girls live at home at help their mothers with household tasks, and sometimes they are expected to assume all household tasks. While it is true that the Senegalese Family Code obliges the man to provide for his family, studies (Riss, 1989; Sarr, 1997, 1998; Goerg, 2007; FAO, 2008; COSEF, 2011) have shown that African and Senegalese women are also significant household providers, thanks to their own work, often in the informal sector. But Senegalese women have also received education and gone to work on the formal, remunerated market. “The result of this evolution has been that women now also share in financial responsibilities that, in the past, were borne entirely by the man,” according to Larriève (1993), who drew up a summary report on research carried out in five African countries, including Senegal, concerning women’s employment and roles in African administrations.

A survey by the MEF (2004) revealed that, of 256,300 typical households in greater Dakar in 2002, nearly 27% claimed a woman as head of the household. Extended single-parent households (55.0%) and nuclear families (24.7%) are commonly reported living situations for women, but very rarely the case for men (less than 3%). Unmarried individuals are more likely to be women (34.9%) widows, 15.1% divorcees versus 1.3% widowers and 1.6% divorced men). The fact that so many women live on their own may be seen as a sign of their self-reliance, although in Senegalese society single women are considered vulnerable. In Senegal, especially in urban centres, nuclear families (father, mother, children and domestic helper) are replacing big traditional families; this means household work and meeting domestic needs is less time-consuming (Larriève, 1993). Nonetheless, Larriève also states that in many African countries “a majority of professional women and employees complain [...] that their husbands are lazy about assuming family and household responsibilities. More affluent women prefer to hire domestic help.”

M’Bow (n.d.) believes that it is useful to link these many roles of women to religion which, “in Senegal, as in most under-developed countries, is central to society and exerts control over the collective consciousness.” Islam, the majority religion (nearly 95% of the population), organises women’s duties with regard to the different phases of life. First the girl is a daughter, then the woman becomes a wife and mother. Each of these phases corresponds to specific duties, which do not replace previous duties but are rather added to them. This gives an idea of the extent of a woman’s duties in Muslim societies and in Senegal in particular. In addition, the economic crisis has added to the burden of social responsibility facing Senegalese women, and as M’Bow (n.d.) comments, “marriage can be a real nightmare in Senegal, which explains why so many young couples continue to live with their parents.”

3.2 Access to the labour market

In countries where industrial development is long-standing, studies on labour market access initially served to evaluate the efficiency of education systems; with the advent of economic crisis, studies were called upon to help decision-makers soften the social and economic impact of youth unemployment. This empirical origin of the very notion of access or “insertion”, to use the French expression, then gave rise to the need for an attempt to conceptualise and theorise – a task that remains to be completed.

In most of the studies devoted to professional situations, the question of labour market access is addressed. It is necessary to clearly define what is meant by this term. A definition will also enable us to better outline the parameters of our research.

In research literature, most authors who have addressed this question seem to accept the processual nature of “insertion”, as all of them mention the “period of insertion.” It is certainly this processual vision that, according to Lemistre (2008), seems to make it difficult to have a clear and exhaustive definition of the concept. For Blasco, S and Givord, P (2010), the initial difficulty is that when attempting to define labour market access, or insertion, multiple factors are involved, that cannot be evaluated with a single indicator. In 1997, Duru-Bellat and Henrion van Zanten decided to define insertion as the point in time when a young person gains access to a job thanks to the knowledge and skills acquired through education. This definition therefore seems to establish a link between the educational sphere and the productive sphere. Yet things were not always thus. In 1998, Charlot and Glasman highlighted the differences between traditional and contemporary society with regard to access to employment.
In traditional societies, education and training were intertwined. The world of education and the professional world were less distinct. Insertion was a smooth process. During the 19th Century, this began to change. Education was made a separate sphere and young people had to learn to work in a new and different place: school. Then they had to manage to move from the school environment to the work environment. The two remained very closely linked however.

In the 1970s, following the first oil crisis, work grew scarce and job-seekers were in competition on the market once they had left an educational system – a system that also was subject to the harsh laws of competition. “Job-seekers had to overcome obstacles, because the level of access to the labour market was determined by the highest level of schooling and the degree obtained” (Vallean 2003, p.284). So there are two dimensions, one social and one educational. For Vallean (2003), insertion can be defined as the interaction of these two dimensions. After the 1970s, the crisis characterised by “a deficit of public funding, and globalisation” (Charlot and Glasman 1998, p.25) created professional instability. It became difficult to find a job, and in particular to find a steady one. Insertion became an issue because of the employment crisis. Now we speak of finding a pathway to insertion; the process is generally called tracking. We can see that some are on a direct track to insertion, some access employment through an indirect track, and some seem to simply be off track. Indirect tracks often pass through periods of instability, but off-track job-seekers are likely to bounce between unemployment and temporary work.

In 2008, Lemistre showed that the period of insertion often includes a number of intermediary positions and that the presupposition that the processual dynamic of insertion is limited in time implicitly means an individual’s track will eventually stabilise and straighten out. In other words, the period of insertion comes to a close and is resolved when the young person has found employment that corresponds to his or her training and education.

Verrière et. al. (1994) believed that one of the main characteristics of the period of insertion is that it is a time for individuals to acquire a minimum of professional experience that, combined with his or her formal training, will make these individuals efficient at their job when they enter the labour market. So insertion is a track that enables a person without work experience to end up in stable employment within the system. Blasco and Givord (2010) suggested another aspect – more qualitative – of the notion of insertion. For these authors, salaries and the extent to which employment corresponds to qualifications earned through training and education can measure the quality of insertion.

Furthermore, it sometimes happens that different factors can influence the insertion process in various ways. Lizé (2000) described the decisive role of social networks. Networks are the primary recruitment tool, surpassing unsolicited applications. Degenne (2004), Lagarenne and Marchal (1995) showed that these social networks concerned not only personal and family contacts, but also contacts in businesses where the applicant has already worked; each of these two networking types accounts for at least 20% of cases. For young people, the role of social networks appears to be key. In France, at least 57% of those under age thirty in 1997 found their first steady job through their social networks (Margolis and Simonet, 2005). In 2005, Lemistre wrote that personal contacts were of greater significance than professional networks for the successful job-seeker.

In Africa, a study on professional insertion carried out by Arestoff (2000) indicated that in Madagascar, for equal periods of unemployment, those job-seekers who had studied in schools operated by the national education system were significantly less likely to find work in the month following the survey. The author argues that the decline of the public education system condemns students who choose to enrol in these schools to longer periods of unemployment before finding their first steady job. In addition, students from public schools can expect to earn lower incomes than their peers who attended privately owned schools. In 2012, Mingat compared the professional situation of a group of individuals aged twenty-five to thirty-four with another group aged thirty-five to forty-four: at the time of the survey, 25% of the first group were unemployed and seeking their first job, whereas only 5% of the second group were seeking work. In summary, the research on the question of access to the labour market for individuals having received higher levels of education shows that there is a generational gap, with younger people facing a harder struggle. In a study on professional tracking of young Africans, Walther (2009) showed that young Africans rely heavily on family and social networks for help finding employment. In Senegal, the Minister of Economy and Finance (MEF) also found that most job-seekers (two-thirds) count on personal contacts. A much smaller percentage (one quarter) contacts employers directly, either by going to the company or by submitting an application. Only a minority depend on advertisements or agencies. Given the economic situation of the countries on the African continent, it has been observed that a large number of young people are seemingly destined to work in the production of goods and services. For this reason, many will find it a practical necessity to accept a position that does not correspond to their education or aspirations before they can hope to have access to a position that does (Walther, 2009).

The lack of means to facilitate the passage from training to employment, the lack of adequate training infrastructures, the low level of financial assistance available for insertion projects and even the high level of taxes on new business activities are all obstacles to labour market access in Africa.

In order to make the most thorough analysis possible, it is worthwhile to look at the notion of insertion in the light of other theories and considerations: human capital, signalling theory, filters. Indeed, this is all the more important in that insertion is deeply linked to the features of the labour market.
The theory of human capital (Becker, 1975) postulates, on the one hand, that education boosts the individual skills that can be directly put on use on the job. On the other hand, this theory holds that the labour market and education are in competition. In this situation, education is an investment in human capital and individuals choose the length of their course of study in terms of the expected return on investment. For Guiso et. al. (2000) the key aspect of the human capital theory is related to knowledge and skills acquired by individuals through education, training and experience and which are useful for the production of goods, services or new knowledge. Although there are other ways to invest in human capital (health care, migration, etc.), education is the main component in the theoretical hypothesis.

Thus the theory of human capital supposes a three-way connection: education-productivity-remuneration. Education, by its very nature, should provide individuals with useful knowledge that will serve to increase their productive efficiency.

In more or less direct opposition to this theory, in some respects at least, are theories that refer to signalling within a group, or to filters for aptitude and attitude.

Spence’s work (1973) is a cornerstone in regard to the job market signalling model. The basic assumption is the opportunity cost of education decreases as the level of aptitude or innate ability rises. Thurow (1975) looks at the question in terms of “competition for jobs”. In his view, it is not the workers who are productive, it is the jobs that create production. The individual must be adapted to the job; this calls for on-the-job training. The cost of this type of training being lower for educated employees, companies will prefer to hire those with high-level degrees for jobs where it is clear that significant in-house training will be required; the result is more productive, better paid employees.

However, while Spence and Thurow do not question the role of education in improved productivity, Arrow (1973) believes that education is simply a way of labelling an individual, showing that he or she has a certain level of aptitude.

Aptitude in regard to education and training is closely correlated to, but not to be confused with productive capacity, as the theory of human capital underscores. According to this theory, education has no direct effect on productivity, but serves as an indication that the individual should be capable of being efficient on the job; education does not add value to the individual worker, it merely serves as an assurance for the future and “filters” individuals who are more likely to be highly productive over time.

In 1985, Jarousse and Mingat confirmed fairly convincingly that the “filter” or “signalling” phenomenon is real. This would seem to back up Spence’s intuition. Psacharopoulos and Layard (1973), rather sceptical as to the possibility of a comparative test of the human capital and signalling theories, concluded that the difference in incomes between High School and College graduates increases over time, whereas the so-called “sheepskin effect” should eventually diminish if the filter theory were valid. Taubman and Wales (1973) proved that a diploma is the “calling card” that is a prerequisite to reaching the higher salary levels. Riley (1979) observed that “filtered” individuals have higher incomes and a better income-education adjustment than those outside the group. And lastly, Baudelot and Glaude’s work clearly highlights the “signalling” effect of a diploma from a grandes écoles (higher education establishment or a specialist school or university).

Perhaps it should be said that the filter and signalling approaches do not really call into question the standard theory of human capital. Rather, these other theories contribute to its enhancement.

3.3 The notion of impact, or external efficiency
According to Gittinguer (1985), the impact of a project is determined by the nature of that project; this is why it is necessary to identify indicators for appropriate measures of the impact. Generally, impact is defined as a change or the effect of an action or act. Impact studies can be carried out ex ante or ex post. An ex ante study seeks to predict the consequences of a project. On the other hand, an ex post study observes the effect of the completed project. In the context of our research, the approach is ex post, with the project being the education and training process of students. Literature on the education sciences indicates that such research is actually an analytical exercise, based on measurements of external efficiencies.

Depover (2010), writing about external efficiencies, seems to provide the background. He considers the concept of external efficiency from the postulate that “an educational system is structured in order to respond to the needs that distinguish a society at a given time in its development” (p. 49). Depover (2010) considers that external efficiency raises the question of goals, objectives and ultimate purposes of an education system. In other words, “the economic, social and cultural effects of education” (p. 49)

Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1988), cited by Sall (1996), view external efficiency in much the same way as Depover (2010), inasmuch as they believe that this approach enables us “to know to what degree education corresponds to society’s goals and the needs of the labour market [in addition to enabling us] to appreciate the capacity of the educational system to prepare pupils and students for their future roles in society” (Sall, 1996. p. 111).
At this level, it seems clear that external efficiency seeks to establish the relationship between education or training received by the student and the opportunities he or she will have to participate in professional activities in his or her country, sub-region or indeed anywhere in the world, as a social, economic or cultural agent. Depover (2010) indicates several directions for developing thoughts on the subject. One would be to consider the “employability of individuals leaving the educational system, the adequacy of general and professional training programmes with regard to the labour market, the role of the public authorities and private businesses” (p. 49).

Sall and De Ketele (1997), for their part, see external efficiency in less general terms; for these authors it is linked to the individual student. Thus they raise the question of the usefulness of training received in regard to the social and economic fulfilment of the individual, who should be able to develop his or her personality in all areas: cognitive, emotional, physical, inter-personal or artistic.

On another level, Sall (1996) offers a more detailed vision of external efficiency. He points out the difference between qualitative and quantitative evaluations. According to Sall, when the researchers seek to establish the “relationship between the skills put to use in the professional, social or personal sphere, and those developed by the educational system, it is a matter of qualitative external efficiency”.

In the same way, the “relationship between skills newly acquired through or targeted by the educational system and skills developed by the system” could also be understood as qualitative external efficiency.

Applied to research methodology techniques, this type of external efficiency seems to be “characterised by an approach that seeks to describe and analyse the culture and behaviour of humans and their groups from the point of view of those who are being studied. [...] Social life is considered as a series of interlinked events, which must be thoroughly described in order to give a true picture of daily life” (ROCARE 2010, p. 7). Furthermore, qualitative external efficiency could be used to determine whether or not teaching systems play a role in raising the cultural level of society, thereby fulfilling the civilising role of education (Sall, 1996, volume 1, p. 112).

However, quantitative external efficiency seeks to determine the number of people who leave the system, taking account of present or future needs. Quantitative external efficiency examines the projected number of jobs and the number of graduates effectively employed (Sall and De Ketele 1997).

Statistical figures seem to be of great importance when considering the link between education received and employment. Quantitative research “is based on a systematic approach to the collection and analysis of data obtained from a sample population, for the purposes of supplying valid statistical results, generally expressed in terms of percentages” (ROCARE 2010, p. 8).

Sall and Deketele (1997) also state that research on the quantitative external efficiency of an educational system should evaluate the balance or imbalance between “the number of graduates working in specific sectors”, the number of students trained for each sector, and “the number of graduates having changed paths, who work in sectors for which they were not trained or whose degrees were of no use at the moment they entered into employment”.

To study the quantitative external efficiency of an education system, we must ask “if the system trains sufficient numbers (projected) of managerial level employees (graduates)”; according to the two researchers, this involves “human resources planning. For example, how many mid-level or senior managers should be produced by the system over a given period of time?”

Miala Diambomba (Etat des systèmes éducatifs dans les pays francophones en développement, ACCT 1992, p. 119 and following), quoted by Sall (1996), links external efficiency to the quality of educational systems. For this researcher, the notion of quality covers the ground from “students’ performance on achievement tests to conditions of labour market access”. This correlation seems natural because the characteristics of efficiency mentioned above – and including the observation of coherence between training delivered and the labour market, the number of graduates and the labour market absorption rate, and the balance between supply and demand, etc. – are also indicators for measuring the quality of an education system. External efficiency, which Diambomba includes as part of the definition of quality, is closely linked to “the level of skills acquired, which, in turn, is influenced by the socio-economic situation of the students (their parents’ level of education and employment situation), all of which have an impact on the future professional life of the students” (Sall, 1996, p. 112).

But how can we evaluate the external efficiency of an education system? Just as there are different kinds of external efficiencies (qualitative and quantitative), indicators or tools for measuring the external effects of an education system can be subjective or objective. Objective indicators are based on facts; they are unprejudiced and impartial. Sall and De Ketele (1997) observe that social indicators are most often used as tools for evaluating external efficiency. Typically the angles of analysis of these social indicators are “the number of graduates unemployed x months (or x years) after graduation; the number of graduates in employment that corresponds to, surpasses or is inferior to their level of education; the number of employees managed by each graduate; or the salary range” (Sall et De Ketele, 1997).

Subjective indicators, as the name implies, are based on the individual perceptions of trained students (for example, at the conclusion of a professional or technical
training programme), company managers looking to hire staff, etc. These indicators are also tools for measuring the “degree of satisfaction expressed by both employees and employers” (ibid.).

Sall and De Ketele mentioned Goldschmid’s study (1990), as an illustration of “comparison of the professional satisfaction (measured in objective and subjective terms) of graduates with degrees in medicine, law, psychology, economics and engineering”.

Because external efficiency cannot be considered complete until the individual having been through the system finds fulfilment on the labour market, open-mindedness and the capacity to take initiatives are also criteria that have significant effects. Therefore, “the globalisation of the economy, mobility, and aptitude for learning” are all non-negligible indicators.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research design

4.1.1 Target population

This study focuses primarily on graduates of BTS programmes. This degree is awarded after two years of study following the baccalaureate diploma. We chose to study two professional training establishments that were quite different from one another, with regard to the social, economic and pedagogical conditions: the CFPC and the private educational establishment of Saint-Michel. The parent population thus came from these two structures, including students who graduated between 2007 (on the labour market for five years) and 2011, the most recent graduates at the time of our survey.

The CFPC, located in the Maurice Delafosse technical centre, trains executive secretaries, men and women, advanced technicians in management/accounting, and advanced technicians in international commerce. The programme lasts 18 months and is followed by a two-month internship. The school is operated by the public authorities, under the auspices of the national Ministry of Education. All students with a baccalaureate may attend (contingent on passing an entrance exam) as well as those with a university degree, Licence or Maîtrise (in the event of a high number of applications, these graduates may be subject to a selection process). As a public establishment, the CFPC does not require monthly fees from students, who are eligible for state scholarships.

The Saint-Michel de Dakar group, affiliated with the Catholic University of West Africa (CUWA), has been active in the field of private education in Senegal for 75 years. The programmes offered go from secondary technical training to higher education degrees at the Masters level (“BAC+5”) in areas that are appreciated on the labour market. As regards the BTS, which is the subject of our study, Saint-Michel has an 18-month programme for holders of the baccalaureate in the following sections: Management/Accounting, International Commerce and Marketing/Communication. Saint-Michel is a “high class private school” where students are in uniform (jacket, waistcoat, 2 pairs of pants or skirts, 2 shirts, 2 ties — for a cost of XOF 50,000), pay enrolment fees of about XOF 60,000 ($133) and monthly fees of about XOF 40,000 XOF ($88). The group has a guidance and placement office that assists students for internships and employment, using a dense network of partners.

Officials from the two schools and managers from two companies which employ graduates who are in the parent population also participated in the study.

4.1.2 Sampling

Because the research is specific in range (gender and labour market), we prepared a fine level of sampling to meet the objectives. But our plans, made at the outset of the research project design, went astray when we encountered reticence from certain schools and certain graduates who did not wish to share their experiences with us. The project thus evolved to include three levels of sampling.

- For contact with schools: Purposive sampling. We only contacted two types of school. On the one hand, “inexpensive” schools operated by the state and accessible to less advantaged members of society; on the other, “high class” schools that are costly for the student.
- For the final selection of schools: Voluntary participation. Only two establishments agreed to participate in the study.
- For the selection of graduates: Sampling by quota, also based on voluntary participation, from the survey base (the population of graduates for whom we had contact information) which included 409 graduates, 276 girls (67.5%) and 133 boys (33%). So that our sample would be representative of the survey base, we tried to replicate the same percentages of girls and boys. Ultimately, we surveyed 242 graduates, or 59% of the survey base; 163 girls (67.5%) and 79 boys (32.5%).

4.2 Type of research

4.2.1 Exploratory research, survey of perceptions and qualitative study

Our research is exploratory in nature, inasmuch as we seek to clarify a question that, until now, has remain largely unexamined and neglected by Senegalese researchers. The general research question is: in Senegal, does gender determine labour market access and the socio-economic impact of vocational education and technical training? Exploratory research should also seek to fill a void, according to Van der Maren (1995). The study is based on a survey of perceptions. This makes it qualitative in its search to identify the theoretical factors that concern us. Indeed, the data that we collect are the opinions, experiences and impressions of the most interested parties: the graduates, the school officials and the company managers.
4.2.2 Quantitative study
Figures are estimated for central trend indexes and other dispersal indexes. For example, we look closely at the share of women in our sample compared to men. We also look at the percentage of graduates having found employment (or who are unemployed) at the time of the survey; the gap between women and men in the working population, and also among those who are not active on the labour market; at the average of the age of graduates at work over the age of graduates who are unemployed, etc.

4.3 Tools for data collection

4.3.1 Questionnaires
In order to collect a maximum of data, questionnaires were given to students to establish a profile of the graduate (civil, matrimonial, professional status), his or her labour market situation (working or unemployed), his or her professional situation and the socio-economic impact of the education received.

4.3.2 Interview guidelines
Focus groups brought together graduates from the same graduating class who had previously answered questionnaires, in order to raise relevant questions that may not have been covered sufficiently in the questionnaire. Business managers and educators and/or guidance and placement counsellors gave us information about the percentage of women students and employees, the training programmes in greatest demand, the realities of the labour market, etc.

On our visits to businesses and schools, we had an interview grid that enabled us to better capture the different situations.

4.3.3 Data analysis
Qualitative data are processed with Excel and SPSS version 16.0. Qualitative data are presented through a critical analysis, in the light of a conceptual and theoretical framework.

5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS
In order to reach our research goals, we took ethical standards on board and ensured that all of our collaborators were well aware of them. As suggested by Kamau (2012), ethical standards are indispensable in a study that will be made publically accountable. It was therefore opportune and even crucial to take a number of steps to ensure that the data collected were reliable and the results sincere and indisputable.

In the first phase, as we contacted schools at the beginning of the study, we were honest in clearly informing the school authorities of the objectives of our study. We specifically informed them that the study concerned two type of schools, with diametrically opposed realities and that, implicitly, comparisons would be made between their school and others. The two establishments that agreed to participate (Saint-Michel et CFPC), after several information meetings, delivered the lists of their graduates for whom they still had contact information, and did so in confidence that we would use the information responsibly. Guidance and placement counsellors from the two schools encouraged us, in the event that students raised concerns, to let them know that their former school (CFPC or Saint-Michel) had given approval for the study.

After that, working with the main participants in the study – the 409 graduates in the survey base – was a more knotty problem. We decided to telephone each one, because it is a more lively and interactive means of communication that email, and to avoid having our messages rejected as spam. It was necessary for the survey callers to be friendly, courteous, open, polite and above all clear if the contact was to be successful and we were to have as many participants as possible. Because the information we were asking for was personal (age, marital status, salary, assets, etc.), we sought to gain the confidence of the subjects and offer them the guarantee of confidentiality. Ultimately, we were able to obtain cooperation from 242 graduates, who all answered our questionnaire.

Because the research team alone could not administer the questionnaires, we also trained other researchers that we had recruited for this purpose. We informed them of the objectives of the research, and of the behaviour we expected of them with regard to participants: respect, patience, punctuality, discretion. Although these researchers had our full confidence, we did verify their work; we always ensured that the team members had indeed met with the subjects in order to complete the questionnaires. After each interview carried out by a member of the survey team, we called the participant to thank him or her for cooperating. This practice dissuaded our researchers from any thoughts of filling out the questionnaires themselves without holding interviews. All of these measures were taken in the spirit of ensuring the quality of our research.

6 MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE RESEARCH
Given the very specific nature of this study, we shall present the results, as far as possible, with a gender-based analysis. We will analyze, for both women and men, results, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, needs, labour market access, etc. So naturally we will be turning to gender research frameworks and to theories that are discussed in the conceptual section.

6.1 General considerations on the sample
As stated in the section on methodology, our sample included 242 participants; 79 men and 163 women. Men made up about 33% of the sample, and women 67%, so there were about twice as many women. Clearly this puts a limit on analysis of data collected: it would be difficult to carry out a comparison between the two groups. However, it is of interest to analyse the internal dynamic characterising these two groups in our sample.
Table 2.5 Professional status by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Professional status</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>13.20%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40.10%</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32.60%</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One example of interpretation is the analysis of marital status (Figure 2.2), showing that there are more unmarried women than men. Looking only at the share of our survey population that had found employment, more than 50% of men are single, whereas more than 60% of women are. Concerning those who are married, 41% of the men in our sample reported that they were married, and only 35% of women reported that they were. Women seem less inclined to marry that one would expect. Is this an effect of their level of education or is it a kind of revolution? In any case, it seems obvious that one of the primary, even “natural” roles of African women seems to be marriage and management of the household.

Figure 2.2 Marital status of working graduates

The choice of programmes (Figure 2.3) for graduates active on the labour market generally shows that women (40%) are more likely than men (19%) to pursue courses for qualifying as a secretary or executive assistant. This corroborates the opinions of several qualified researchers who have written on the subject (Duru-Bellat), and also concords with less scientific publications (Senegalese Ministry of Technical Education and Professional Training), pointing to the conclusion that women are pushed towards the tertiary sector, essentially the service industries.

Figure 2.3 Choice of study programmes by gender

It appears that, in our survey population, women who are in employment more often choose programmes qualifying them to work as executive secretaries, secretarial office workers, or in accounts/management and, to a lesser degree in accounts/finance.

6.2 On access to the labour market

An overall analysis of graduates in employment, by gender (Table 2.5), shows that out of the 242 subjects in our sample, 129 graduates are employed, 97 women and 32 men (respectively about 75% and 25%), but we must not forget that woman make up a larger share of our study population.

In regard to these results, it should be kept in mind that we consider a graduate to be in employment in three cases: he or she has a fixed-term, remunerated contract (Contrat à Durée Déterminée – CDD) or a permanent contract (Contrat à Durée Indéterminée – CDI); is working as an intern in a company; is self-employed. If none of these is true for the graduate, he or she is considered to be unemployed.

Analysis of the statistics generated by our data reveal that, out of the total sample population, 13.20% were men in employment, and 19.40% were unemployed men. About 40% of the total population in employment was female, 27.30% of the total population was made up of unemployed women.

This situation concerning the percentage of graduates on the labour market can also be analysed taking account of the gender ratio in the total sample. It appears that 40% of the men are employed, versus 60% of the women. These figures, which are more than a simple comparison, can also be expressed as follows: six of every ten women found a job, whereas only four of ten men state that they have done so. So, proportionately speaking, men seem to be harder hit by unemployment than women – who would appear to be favoured by recruitment agents.

In regard to the type of contracts (Figure 2.4) that the graduates had signed, it appears that the number of women holding permanent contracts (CDI) is greater than the number of men in the same situation. Indeed, four out of ten women have a CDI (which offers greater job security), versus three out of ten men. In regard to working graduates with temporary employment contracts
(CDD), the study shows that 50% of the women hold such contracts and 31% of the men do. For internships or trial periods, these concern 22% of the women and only 3% of the men. Men report more self-employment (9% declared) than women (1% of women declared themselves self-employed).

**Figure 2.4 Type of contract by gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Contract</th>
<th>Women (%)</th>
<th>Men (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A more detailed analysis of the results shows a strong link between gender and the type of contract (Table 2.6). Using the Chi-Square test, we prove that $t > t$ on the table. In other words, the test results are significant. (H1 accepted).

- H0 = the type of contract obtained by the graduate is not linked to gender.
- H1 = the type of contract obtained by the graduate is linked to gender.

If we reject H0 and accept H1 with a 1% threshold, we can conclude that the populations have a significantly different mean result. The probability that the differences observed are random is less than one in one hundred.

The number of women in internships or trial periods (22%) seems to predict better future results for women’s employment. Without excessive extrapolation, adding this rate to the rate of women with temporary contracts (31%), yields a result of 53% of women in temporary employment, holding CDD agreements.

**Table 2.6 Test of significance of the gender-type of contract link**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chi-Square Tests</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>13,129a</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood ratio</td>
<td>13,785</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-linear association</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of valid cases</td>
<td>129</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* a. 2 cells (25%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .99.

Let us examine how graduates describe their employment situations (Figure 2.5). The study reveals that two-fourths of both women and men admitted that they found work thanks to the intervention of an influential person, inside or outside the company where they work. Therefore, the contribution of networks, mentioned here above in the theoretical section, seems to be confirmed. In addition, it is worth noting that 30% of the women in employment in our survey asserted that they did not rely on networking, but found their job by filing an application. This leads us to suppose that this group is recruited on the strength of perceived value and the skills they bring to the job. In focus groups, graduates were nearly unanimous in condemning nepotistic practices in companies that recruit. Young people in Senegal use the expression "long reach" (bras longs) to indicate the influence that an acquaintance or family member can have in helping a graduate obtain a position.

**Figure 2.5 Finding work: gender distribution of strategies used**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Women (%)</th>
<th>Men (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Réseaux</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re_insd_form</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int_os_diplo</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Med_cab_pla</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surr_dossier</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NV</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for graduates who were unemployed (Figure 2.6), they protested vigorously against opaque recruitment procedures and said that companies did not communicate their employment criteria. They were outspoken on the subject of conditions of internships in companies, which they deplore. It is true that our interviews showed that laws concerning this type of position are generally disregarded. Interviewees stated that often after a six-month trial period (terms of Article L38 of Senegalese Labour Law), which is usually not remunerated, they were not offered a legal contract, but only invited to continue on as interns or to leave the company. For these graduates, it is a hard row to hoe.

**Table 2.6 Test of significance of the gender-type of contract link**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Women (%)</th>
<th>Men (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manque recom</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formation en cours</td>
<td>10.60%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination liée au sexe</td>
<td>7.10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comp exp form insuff</td>
<td>5.30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We also looked at the educational background of our sample in order to identify which school those in employment had attended. The private-operated establishment had the highest rates: 66% of employed men and 53.6% of employed women. This might indicate that investment in education or the contribution of households to education contributes considerably to successful results. Nonetheless, women graduates of the state-operated school had good results as well, making up 46.4% of the female working population, versus 34% of the male population in employment.

The private sector employs most of the graduates that make up our sample (Figure 2.7). Indeed, 72% and 75% of women and men, respectively, stated that they were
working for a private business concern. In this regard, the study sheds a useful light on labour market statistics in Senegal, an area that is largely unexplored. Clearly, there has been “a hiring slow-down in the civil service”, as reported in a government publication in 2010 (le Rapport sur la Situation Economique et Sociale du Sénégal – p. 121). The dominance of the private sector over the public sector is especially apparent in the capital, Dakar, where we carried out our study. The national statistics bureau reported that “the annual average of new jobs created in the private sector is 30,000; of these, 20,000 are in Dakar alone”.

Figure 2.7 Employees by gender and sector

Perhaps the low percentage of graduates finding work in the public sector explains why so few of the workers in our sample expressed feeling comfortable, secure, or satisfied in their jobs. More than three-quarters of them, men as well as women, indicated that they were holding on to their job while “waiting for something better”. Very few employees in our sample expressed job satisfaction so far as to say they believed they had found their ultimate position: only one man or woman in ten.

As the Senegalese government began encouraging the free market economy in the 1990s, and as this was reinforced by analogous policies in the 2000s (ANSD, p. 116), it might be expected that graduates would be incited to explore self-employment. But the survey showed only a low rate of self-employment among working men and just 1% among working women; this is unsatisfactory.

6.3 The socio-economic impact of education received

This study, we here reiterate, should be considered as ex post, that is it seeks to observe effects, after the fact (Gittinguer, 1985). For this reason, we cannot discuss the impact of education or training on graduates who had not found employment at the time of the study.

The analysis below therefore concerns only the 129 graduates in employment; 97 women and 32 men.

6.3.1 Economic impact

To measure the monthly income (Figure 2.8) of graduates in employment, we suggested salary ranges. The respondents thus were asked to check a box on the questionnaire that indicated their salary range. Statistical analysis reveals that 40% of the women earn between XOF 100,00 and XOF 150,000 (about $222-$333). This salary level was confirmed by recruitment services in companies we queried. It seems therefore that in many Senegalese companies, the starting salary is between XOF 100,00 and XOF 150,000. As for the men, 44% of them earn between XOF 250,00 and XOF 300,000 ($555-$666); 10% of the women said that they earn more than XOF 300,000 ($666). At the lower end of the scale, 6% of women, working as interns or in trial periods, are paid less than XOF 50,000, which, according to company spokespersons, is a transportation allowance.

Figure 2.8 Monthly income according to gender

Several analyses can be made of the above. First of all, employees earning between $222 and $333 a month in salary fall in one of three categories: they have been in employment less than one year and earn the minimum wage of $222; they have been in employment more than one year and have received a raise in salary, to XOF 30,000 ($66) or XOF 50,000 ($111). During our interviews, personnel managers told us that in all Senegalese companies, there should be a system of promotion that would enable employees to enjoy somewhat higher salaries. But even then, the employee would have to stay on the job long enough to benefit from such a system. Roughly speaking, the adjusted salaries of employees range from XOF 30,000 to XOF 50,000 ($66-$111). It is noteworthy that the highest salaries, XOF 300,000 ($666) are earned by women, mainly those working as executive assistants.

Graduates questioned in focus groups, as well as recruitment officers in companies, averred that there was no gender-based salary discrimination. Article L105 of Senegalese Labour Law stipulates: “Under equal working conditions, profession qualifications and productivity, equal salaries shall be paid to all workers, whatever their origin, sex, age or status [...].” Nevertheless, personnel managers admitted that companies more frequently prefer to hire women: “At home, women take care of everything: the children’s education, marketing, meals, housekeeping, etc. Women bring these qualities to the job. Women are more sensitive, more engaged and thus more competent than men,” said one personnel manager at a major bank. The only catch is that women become pregnant and this may discourage employers.” It would appear that changes are taking place in Senegal, as regards recruitment choices and job responsibility, and these changes are very advantageous to women. Some might say it is the result of the policies of the previous government, which worked hard to promote women’s rights, in particular by instituting absolute parity in elective office. Although the

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world of work is far from Parliament, we can suppose that measures promoting gender equality (parity) have had the effect of creating a climate of confidence that extends to all women in Senegal.

Have these men and women managed to improve their standard of living through employment? In answer to this question (Figure 2.9), 39% of women say they have acquired "no property"; 41% say they have "saved" money; 7% of the women have acquired a "family home"; 5% have made "financial investments"; 3% have purchased a car. Among the men: 28% declare "no property" acquired; 34% have "saved" money; 13% have made a "financial investment" and 25% declare they have acquired a "family home". Despite the disproportion between men and women in our sample, the figures seem to confirm the idea, generally held in many African countries, that the purchase of a family home, if not the expenses of running it, are a man's responsibility. But changes in society, as mentioned above, are affecting the housing area as well, because 7% of women have purchased homes. Women are also buying cars; for many Africans the car is a symbol of masculine strength and power.

Figure 2.9 Goods acquired according to gender, following education/training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family home</th>
<th>Car</th>
<th>Savings</th>
<th>Financial investment</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>NR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, information that our study population shared in regard to their share of household investment shows that men are no longer sole providers, even if the Senegalese Family Code stipulates their "obligation to maintain" the family. Thus, 62% of married men stated that they were the main providers of goods for their families (Figure 2.10), which would suggest that the rest (38%) are certainly supported by their wives in this effort. Indeed, women's share in the production or extension of household income has been demonstrated in literature and is clearly confirmed by this study, wherein 12% of women aver that they are the main producers of wealth for their families. Furthermore, 62% of women declare that they take part in the production of income alongside their spouse. For 24% of respondents, this role is reserved exclusively to the husband.

The study also gives us an idea of the size of the families and other dependent populations supported by the workers: 41% of working women claim to have "five to ten" dependents.

Figure 2.10 Main producer of household wealth, by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your spouse</th>
<th>You &amp; your spouses</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3.2 Impact on social life

After analysing the economic effects of education and training on our study population, we shall examine the effects of employment related to a degree obtained in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) on the social life of graduates, their relationships with others, their perception of social strictures, etc.

In regard to household tasks (Figure 2.11), among all of the employed graduates, 83.5% personally take part in carrying out household tasks. For women, who usually do the housework, eight of ten believe that doing housework does not prevent them from fulfilling their professional goals, but they also underline that they do housework on the weekends. This observation seems to contradict an ILO finding (see theoretical framework) that family duties can be detrimental to women's careers. This raises a question: how is it that Senegalese women manage to avoid this disadvantage that affects other women in Africa and even around the world? As researchers, we consider that the answer lies in the psychological makeup of the women of Senegal, who firmly believe that a woman should take care of "her man" and her family, at the very least by cooking meals personally. Another fact of life in Senegal is equally important, and indeed makes working women's lives easier: domestic workers. Most working women employ domestic help, whom they pay from their own salaries. It would appear that, for Senegalese women, household responsibilities are a kind of "glue" holding families together and securing the role of the woman in her household, as a strong, efficient presence.

Figure 2.11 Performance of household tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>NR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>82.40%</td>
<td>5.90%</td>
<td>11.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The research reported here is a gender analysis, with a primary objective to studying the level of labour market insertion of girls and boys with degrees from Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes in Senegal. For those respondents in employment, the second phase of the study consisted of measuring the economic and social impacts of the degree programme.

At the conclusion of our work, we feel it is justified to say that, overall, the level of employment of TVET graduates is fairly good, inasmuch as 129 of 242 subjects in the study had found work. However, it is important to be exercise caution in this gender analysis given that women landed 97 of the jobs. The interviews also supported our general hypothesis, that “women or girls graduating from TVET programmes have better results on the labour market than men.” The first element in support of this thesis came to light as soon as we defined the study population: there is a high percentage of girls and women enrolled in the TVET sector, whether in public or private establishments. Most of these students pursue courses to become secretaries, executive secretaries or to work in accounts/management, so women are joining the tertiary sector of the national economy. Once they graduate, women are sought after by company recruiters, who feel that women “have natural commitment and passion for work;” this is a kind of positive discrimination in their favour.

In addition, the report confirms that the private sector is recruiting more actively than the public sector. It is worthwhile noting that private sector workers are far from being completely satisfied, and indeed are constantly looking for better positions; this leads to instability. Upstream, investment made by parents or employers in education dispensed by privately-run establishments (to the detriment of government-run schools) seems to be a determining factor for boys only, because girls, notwithstanding the degree-granting establishment, are appreciated by recruiting services.

In regard to the social and economic impact of professional education and training, Senegalese workers, both men and women, receive relatively good salaries. The study shows that women, when they do not spend all of their income on basic services such as water, electricity, food, schooling for their children, etc., contribute quite a bit to paying household expenses. The fact that women have a role in producing wealth for the family, which has been revealed in other literature, takes on a revolutionary aspect in this study, because we see that some men have been rethinking the role of their wives, who can now make decisions the same way their husbands do, for instance in regard to the number of children to be planned for the family. This represents a change in Senegalese social, cultural and religious practices.

Thus, on the social level, recognition of women’s role in production and community management is shaking up certain established rules; this could lead to other social consequences.

7.1 Difficulties encountered during the research study
Some obstacles hindered us as we carried out our investigation. This brought us to raise a few questions: What explains the high percentage of women in Technical and Vocational Education and Training programmes in Dakar? Is the same true in other regions of Senegal, Africa and the world?

It was impossible to carry out the study in many of the establishments we contacted, because they did not maintain files on graduating classes for the preceding five years. What strategies should be implemented to encourage schools to build up reliable data bases on different graduating classes, especially in the context of developing IT systems?

People are still reticent about participating in or contributing to studies and other surveys: what must be done to raise awareness that research carried out by organisations has no other goal but the improvement of living conditions?

The percentage of graduates in employment is low: what can be done to encourage companies to recruit more new employees?

7.2 Practical recommendations
- Develop policies to incite more girls to enrol in TVET programmes, which could contribute in the long term to the reduction of poverty in Africa.
- Promote self-employment through financing for small and medium sized companies and industries, thereby increasing the employment opportunities in the private sector.
- Encourage states to pay closer attention to companies’ respect for workers rights, especially women workers, and to offer social protection.
- Encourage training schools to pay special attention to preparing students, both boys and girls, for job interviews, by teaching them the rules and practices.
- Encourage states to recruit more graduates of TVET schools.
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ABSTRACT

Gender inequality remains an issue of concern in all spheres of life in many countries, Tanzania included. Education and the labour market, two sectors whose strong linkages are well recognised are no exception. Using a case of higher education, this report utilises data from a largely qualitative study to explore, from a gender development and differentiation theoretical perspective, why increased enrolment of females in education is not necessarily a pathway to improved gender equality in employment. The evidence in this study largely draws on data from qualitative face-to-face interviews with 28 employed and unemployed graduates who were sampled through a snowball method, but also from face-to-face interviews with senior academic and/or administrative staff in two higher education institutions and four employing organisations. The study also utilises quantitative data on enrolment and academic performance obtained from official records of the two universities and recruitment data from the four employers.

Findings show a much wider gender gap in science programmes such as engineering compared to the social sciences, and prevalence of attitudes and practices that might impact male and female students differently in higher learning institutions and in moving into the labour market. Findings further reveal gendered attitudes and practices in the labour market which might work to reinforce the effect of gendered education outcomes to further the disadvantaged position of women in the labour market.

Further effort is needed to avert gendered outcomes in education that bear on labour market outcomes including, among others, a concerted effort to put in place effective measures that discourage gender differentiated processes and promote avenues of equal opportunity for boys and
girls, and women and men. Enhancing availability of sex-
disaggregated data on various education outcomes for all
academic programmes to better inform policy and action
and promoting gender awareness at all levels may be
part of such effort. Further research may wish to explore
the extent to which gendered experiences that seem to
contribute to eroding confidence in female students are
common in the education system and ways in which they
affect and are in turn reinforced by labour market
outcomes.

We are grateful to the chief executive officers of the
organisations and academic institutions in which we
conducted research for granting us permission to
interview senior members of their management teams
and other employees and to collect secondary data in their
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FAWE for financial support for this research. The content
of this research report is the sole responsibility of the
authors.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Gender inequality in all spheres of life remains an issue of
concern in many countries, Tanzania included. In education
this is especially the case at the level of higher education,
which the present day global context of a knowledge-
based economy places high in contributing to economic
and social development of any country (UNESCO,
2009a; World Bank [WB], 2009). However, data in many
developing countries including those in Sub-Saharan
Africa (SSA) show a steady increase in enrolment of both
male and female students in higher education institutions
over recent years. Sub-Saharan Africa has, over the past
three decades, recorded an annual increase of about 8.7
percent in enrolment in higher education. The increase
has been for both males and females. As such, the gender
gap for the region decreased from one female out of six
students in 1990 to one out of three by 2009 (WB, 2009).

In Tanzania, gender gaps exist at almost all levels of
the education system, with women disproportionately
disadvantaged. However, over the years there has been
steady improvement in bridging the gender gap at all
levels of education. Since the year 2000, girls have
consistently represented over 48% of the total number of
pupils enrolled at primary school level. Indeed in 2009,
the Gender Parity Index (GPI) was 1.00 (United Republic
of Tanzania (URT), 2010a, data from Basic Education
Statistics in Tanzania (BEST), 2000-2009). At secondary
school level, Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for female
students in Forms 1 to 4 increased from 14.3 in 2006 to
39.3 in 2009.

The gender gap in enrolment at the higher education level
is even wider. For example in the academic year 2010/11,
only 33.5 percent of students enrolled in public universities
were women (URT, 2011). However, as at other levels of
education, there has been noticeable steady increase in
female enrolment at the higher education level as well.
For example, the proportion of female students increased
from 13 percent in 2000 to 32 percent in 2007 (UNESCO,
2009a). Glaring disparities however remain in relation to
female enrolment in some of the academic programmes
such as engineering, architecture and surveying (Faculty
of Science, UDSM cited in Masanja, 2001). This increase
in enrolment of both males and females in higher
education is largely attributed to the expansion of higher
education not only in terms of increased enrolment in
existing institutions but also in terms of establishment
of new higher education institutions. Indeed whereas at
independence in 1961, Tanzania had only one university,
the number increased to 18 universities and 15 university
colleges and institutes by 2010. The number of enrolled
students has therefore also increased. In 1997/98 a
total of 10,553 students were enrolled in both public and
private institutions. The number reached 95,525 students
in 2008/09 and increased further to 118,951 students in
2009/10. By 2010/11 the number had reached 139,638
(URT, 2010b; URT, 2011).

Graduates from institutions of higher education
generally seek formal employment in the labour market.
The current labour market in Tanzania is operating
in a context of an economy that has, over the years,
witnessed a rapid integration into the rest of the world
as a result of globalisation. This has brought in external
influences, which are now contributing to, and sometimes
constraining all aspects of national development and
well-being. In the economy, there has been increased
liberalisation of trade and investment with increasing
capital inflows in the form of Foreign Direct Investments
(FDIs). Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs),
instituted in Tanzania since the mid-1980s also had
implications on the structure of the labour market as the
government which had previously been the main employer
now embarked on a retrenchment exercise including
freezing of employment for some years, and privatisation
of state-owned enterprises. At the same time, the young
private sector had no capacity to absorb a large number of
job seekers entering the labour market annually [United
Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 1999]. All
these factors have impacted the labour market in terms of
employment opportunities. This mismatch has fostered
unemployment and underemployment, especially among
the youth. National survey data show that women are
disproportionately under-represented in occupational
categories such as administrators and professionals (URT,
2007). These are fields which generally require knowledge
and skills imparted at the level of higher education.

Therefore, focusing on higher education, this study uses a
gender lens to examine the effect of education outcomes
on employment in the labour market. Recognising that the
labour market is also gendered, the study also explores
how gender biases in the labour market work to reinforce
gender inequalities in employment.

This report is structured into seven main sections. Section
one provides an introduction and brief background on
education and the labour market in Tanzania. Section two
provides the problem statement. Section three outlines
questions that are addressed. Section four provides a synthesis of empirical literature and the theoretical approach on which the study draws. The fifth section describes the methodology while the findings of the study are presented and discussed in section six. Section seven provides the conclusion and recommendations.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Employment has long been considered the basic labour market outcome of education. Consequently, girls’ limited access to education has been identified as one of the factors that inhibit female participation in the formal labour market [United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), 2011]. In Tanzania, apart from agriculture and domestic work, women are disproportionately under-represented in all other sectors and have a significantly higher unemployment rate in urban areas (URT, 2002; URT, 2007). National employment data disaggregated by occupation show that women are disproportionately under-represented in occupations which require knowledge and skills imparted at the level of higher education such as administrators and professionals (URT, 2007). Indeed considering that education plays a central role of preparing individuals to join the labour market, under-representation of women in skilled and high level jobs can be attributed to their under-representation in higher levels of education.

In recent decades in many Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) Countries, Tanzania included, a number of factors including increasing economic liberalisation have brought about changes in the labour market structure and there is ample evidence on the apparent skills mismatch, which has raised questions about the market relevance of university education. Concerns over the implications of these changes which include fostering unemployment and under-employment have led to renewed interest in studying the long recognised links between education and the labour market linkages, especially with regard to concerns about the problem of skills mismatch (Kajjage, 2001; Atkinson, 1985; Brown et al., 1997; Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong, 2002; Akerele and Opatola, 2004; Pauw et al., 2007; Dabalen et al., 2000; Saint et al., 2004; Pitan and Adedeji, 2012). Indeed studies that have examined graduates employment trends in some countries in SSA show alarming trends in unemployment rates among graduates (Leibbrandt, 2004; Akomolafe and Adegun, 2009). With persisting female under-representation in the labour market, changes that foster unemployment and under-employment are likely to reinforce the disadvantaged position of women in the labour market. However, studies on the gendered implications of the links between education and the labour market are largely missing.

Focusing on higher education in Tanzania, this study seeks to fill this gap in the existing literature. We contend that although there has been improvement in bridging the gender gap in enrolment in higher education in Tanzania, gendered attitudes and practices which manifest in different ways in education and in other spheres of life continue to have a gender differentiated effect on other education outcomes, which in turn continue to have gendered effect on labour market outcomes.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main question the study seeks to explore is whether increased enrolment of female students in higher education is a pathway to improved gender equality in employment. Specific questions are:

1. What are the trends in enrolment and performance by sex in higher education institutions?
2. What are the trends in employment of university graduates in the labour market?
3. How are gendered attitudes and practices in higher education institutions manifested?
4. How are gendered attitudes and practices in the labour market manifested?

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Education and the labour market

Employment has long been considered the basic labour market outcome of education. There are a number of ways that education is seen to affect the labour market outcome, including one’s knowledge, skills, and academic achievement. These can influence one’s potential to be employed and vice versa (WB, 2008). Indeed a skills mismatch (that is, the difference between skills acquired in education and those in demand in the labour market) can lead to among other things, unemployment or underemployment of those who had acquired certain skills (Monk et al., 2007; Nielsen, 2007). Such a mismatch has been observed in Tanzania, with higher education institutions being blamed for not offering basic skills in such areas as communication, entrepreneurship and management, which are needed in the labour market (Krus, 2004). In studies done in higher education institutions, students had similar views, expressing the need to integrate into the curriculum practical training, or internship programmes so as to impart some practical skills (Kajjage, 2001; Olasi, 2008). Studies in other SSA countries such as Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa also show how in recent decades university graduates have been joining the labour market poorly prepared for work, not only in terms of technical, but also soft competences (Saint et al., 2004; Dabalen et al., 2000; Pitan and Adedeji, 2012; Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong, 2002).

Changes in the economy often result in a shift in the areas of knowledge and skills that are required in the labour market. Indeed studies show how shifts in the importance of priority sectors foster unemployment (Lukyanova et al., 2007; Rutkowski, 2003). In Tanzania, changes in the economy have been observed over the past decade, during which the economy has changed in terms of structure, sources of growth and sources of exports. Stressing the need for higher education to respond to the changing
nature of the economy, Ndulu (2007) points out the importance of universities shifting from their earlier bias towards social sciences to embracing science, technology and business studies. Such a shift would bring consistency between the education system and changes in the labour market. Akomolafe and Adegun (2009) have put forward similar suggestions. Other studies have also stressed the importance of the education system providing relevant training to ensure that graduates do not find themselves lacking the skills needed in the labour market (Lukyanova et al., 2007; Rutkowski, 2003).

The problem of skills mismatch is compounding the problem of unemployment and underemployment in Tanzania. This situation raises questions regarding the relevance of higher education, which can be assessed by the extent to which academic programmes impart knowledge and skills that are in demand in the labour market. It is generally expected that graduates should be able to make successful transition from academic institutions to the world of work (UNESCO, 2005). This situation has gendered implications given that women in Tanzania remain disproportionately under-represented in formal sector employment, where the projected share of jobs in 2010 was 14.5 percent (WB, 2008). In particular women in Tanzania are disproportionately under-represented in the industrial sector, which although accounting for only about 23 percent of the GDP, has maintained modest levels of growth. In this sector, the most recent data show that the leading sub-sectors are manufacturing (9.3 percent), construction (8 percent) and mining and quarry (3.3 percent) (URT, 2012). The proportion of males and females employed in the construction industry is 2.1 and 0.1 percent respectively. In the manufacturing sector, the percentages are 3.4 and 1.9 respectively (URT, 2007).

4.2 Gendered attitudes and practices in education and the labour market: A theoretical approach

Gendered attitudes and practices in both private and public spheres have gendered impacts that result in gendered outcomes. This study utilises the Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation (Bussey & Bandura, 1999), to explore how gendered attitudes and practices in society in general, and in the education system and the labour market in particular, bear on education and labour market outcomes. This theory attributes conceptions men and women hold about themselves and about others to the development and differentiation of people in all aspects of their lives on the basis of gender. This in turn bears on the opportunities and constraints that men and women face in society and influences decisions on their social lives, including the occupational paths they pursue.

The theory considers gender attitudes and practices as imbedded in different societal sub-systems including the family, education and occupations and that these shape men and women’s beliefs about their educational and occupational efficacy among others. Along these lines, it has been argued, for example, that even though male and female students may not differ in verbal and quantitative ability, female students tend to be weaker than their male counterparts in mastering quantitative skills which are required for certain jobs (Betz & Hackett, 1981). This in turn impedes them from participating in a whole range of fields of study and occupations that require these skills.

In education, studies reveal how gender development and differentiation processes manifest themselves. Some of the practices that have been identified include teachers implying in various subtle ways that girls are academically less able than boys (Dweck et al., 1978), and gender biases in career guidance (Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980). These practices reinforce, among other things, students’ perceived intellectual efficacy, which shapes the course of their career choices (Bandura et al., 1999). These practices influence girls and boys differently in their career aspirations and options. Evidence abounds on the hierarchical structure of the labour market around the world, whereby sectors, occupations and activities are segregated by sex (Mason & King, 2001).

Empirical evidence suggests that women are likely to be disproportionately disadvantaged in labour market outcomes given, for example, gender biases in certain skills. This seems to be the case in Tanzania as well. A study using data from Ghana and Tanzania, which shows a wider gender gap in engineering and other science programmes relative to management programmes (Morley et al., 2010) is a case in point. Achievement is also a key factor in labour market outcomes as those with lower academic achievement are generally less attractive to prospective employers. Ample evidence exists on how gender biases both within and outside the education system are also likely to disproportionately affect women adversely in achievement levels. Studies by Frome and Eccles (1998), Furnham (2002) and Li (1999), found that stereotypes that men are naturally more talented and interested in math and science were influencing the science, technology, engineering, and math aspirations and achievements of boys and girls, and men and women.

Education is regarded as playing a vital role in preparing individuals to join the labour market, hence, if its outcomes are gendered its impact on the labour market would also be gendered. However, the labour market itself is also gendered. Several theories explain differences between women and men in labour market outcomes such as occupational sex segregation and wage differentials. Economic theories e.g., human capital theory which attributes differences in occupation to voluntary choices that women and men make (Blau et al., 2002) have been criticised for failing to explain, for example, why women do not get equal recognition as men, with the same qualifications and experience in things like appointment or promotion. On the other hand, there are theoretical approaches that take a gender perspective. Some studies that take this approach attribute occupational sex segregation to self-selection by women and men because of differences in the ways women and men are socialised (Marinet al., 1996; Jacobs, 1989). Others attribute it to employers’ sex preferences and stereotypes (Glick, 1991; Glick et al., 1988; Scrutawicz & Hunter, 2004). Yet other studies, although not contesting these perspectives, argue
that these explanations are incomplete, and emphasise the gendered structuring of organisations (Acker, 1990; Burton, 1991). Along the same lines Steinberg (1992) points out the gendered nature of organisational practices and institutional policies. It is observed that through their practices and structures, organisations invoke gender biases (Burton, 1991). Studies show how women in occupations traditionally considered “male” occupations are regarded less competent than their male counterparts in the same positions and they receive less support from peers (Alban-Metcalfe & West, 1991; Davidson and Cooper, 1984; Mascarenhas, 2007).

This study draws on these theoretical and empirical underpinnings to explore the gendered nature of education–labour market linkages. We argue that despite increased enrolment of females in higher education, gendered attitudes and practices in all spheres of life – private and public - continue to have a gendered impact on other education outcomes such as choice of subjects of study and academic performance, which in turn bear on labour market outcomes such as employment. We further argue that since the labour market is also gendered, gendered attitudes and practices in the labour market work to reinforce the disadvantaged position of women in the labour market.

4.3 Operational definitions of key terms and concepts
We define below operational definitions of key terms and concepts as used in this study so as to avoid ambiguity that may arise from different interpretations.

Education outcomes
In this study we consider education outcomes to include enrolment or participation rates, academic performance/achievement and skills acquired as a result of choices of subjects of study.

Labour market outcomes
We consider labour market outcomes to be those things that job seekers expect to get in the labour market, which include employment and wages. This study focuses on employment.

Gender equality
Gender equality denotes women having the same opportunities in life as men. In this study this includes equal opportunity in enrolment, choice of fields of study, learning processes, getting employment and participation in different occupations.

Gendered attitudes and practices
In this study we define gendered attitudes and practices as expressions and habitual actions that are underpinned by norms that differentiate between what girls and boys, and women and men can do and their expected behaviour. In patriarchal societies, such attitudes and practices generally disadvantage women in access to different opportunities including education and wage employment.

Gender differentiated impact
This term is used to mean a course of action or behaviour, which has a different impact on girls and boys, and women and men.

Gendered conceptions
In this study this term is used to mean conceived definitions in people’s minds about the roles, capabilities and “appropriate” behaviour for men and women. Such conceptions influence access by men and women to different opportunities and positions in private and public spheres differently.

Gender lens
In this study we have indicated that we are utilising a gender lens to explore the education–labour market linkages. This denotes analysing the linkages from a gender perspective, i.e., paying attention in the analysis to differences between men and women.

5 METHODOLOGY
5.1 The sample
The sample for this study comprised of 14 (six males and eight females) unemployed graduates and 14 (five males and nine females) employed graduates who had completed their studies in the past five years. The study also involved four employing organisations and two higher education institutions – one public, one private. Employed and unemployed graduates were sampled using the snowball sampling technique, making sure that the small sample varied by sex and programmes of study. The four employing organisations (a telecommunications company, a large financial institution, a construction company and a parastatal company) were sampled in the city of Dar es Salaam, the aim being to capture, to some extent, a small cross section of employees who employ graduates with varying higher education qualifications. The two higher education institutions were purposively sampled to capture universities enrolling a relatively large number of students and offering a wide range of academic programmes. We selected a private and a public institution as a way of ensuring variation in ownership of higher education institutions. Within each university, five academic programmes were purposely sampled to represent disciplines in which women are severely under-represented and those in which they are relatively better represented.

5.2 Data collection methods
Both primary and secondary data were collected. We used semi-structured questionnaires to interview unemployed and employed graduates. The questionnaires were designed to solicit information on experiences of gendered attitudes and practices while studying in higher education institutions and gendered influences on decisions they made regarding their education and career choices. Effort was made through in-depth probing while administering the questionnaire to capture depth and detail of such experiences. Interview guides were used in face-to-face interviews with senior academic and administrative officials.
in higher education institutions and managers dealing with recruitment and human resources management in the four employing organisations. Members of the research team who were involved in the conceptualisation and design of the research project administered questionnaires and interview guides. No additional assistance was solicited in collecting primary data. In addition to collecting primary data, secondary sources were used to collect data on enrolment, performance and completion trends by sex in the two universities. Data were collected on total enrolment at the university level and also in all five academic programmes covered in each university. For employers, secondary sources were utilised to collect data on recruitment trends.

5.3 Data analysis
Quantitative data on enrolment and performance in selected programmes in the two higher education institutions, and data on recruitment of graduates in selected organisations were interpreted using descriptive methods in graphs and cross tabulations. Qualitative data were coded and sorted into themes and analysed through systematic comparison and contrasting to identify patterns and commonalities and/or differences in experiences. Patton (2002) explains in detail this method of qualitative data analysis.

We utilised this method to do a systematic comparison of responses by triangulating data sources, i.e., female employed graduates, male employed graduates, male unemployed graduates, female unemployed graduates and employers. The objective was to identify similarities or divergence in the responses of different categories of respondents to similar issues raised in the questionnaires and interview guides, e.g., gender biases while studying in higher education institutions and in employment. We also made comparison of quantitative data obtained through secondary sources with qualitative data to explore whether issues emerging from the qualitative data were supporting observed sex-disaggregated trends, e.g., in enrolment in different academic programmes and performance.

5.4 Ethical considerations and limitations of the study
In undertaking primary data collection and analysing the findings, effort was made to ensure anonymity and objectivity. Respondents were informed about the objectives of the study to obtain informed consent. Participants were assured that in data analysis and report-writing data would be coded to protect identity and privacy, and this was adhered to. No financial or any other inducement was used in order to recruit participants to the study. Letters to introduce the objectives of the study and request permission for data collection were sent to sampled employers and universities and clearance to conduct interviews and collect data in these institutions was granted. Institutions were assured of our willingness to share findings.

This study has largely utilised qualitative approaches to explore the gendered nature of the education–labour market linkages. Thus while it has benefited from the richness in detail and depth of qualitative studies, it nonetheless suffers from the limitations of the same approach. One such limitation is that since we did not seek to have a random sample, findings of this study cannot be generalised with a given degree of certainty. Also, given the qualitative nature of the study, analysis and conclusions might in some ways have been influenced by subjective interpretations and judgments of the researchers. Such influence however has been minimised by triangulating data sources, e.g., responses of male graduates with those of female graduates, and responses of employed and unemployed graduates with those of employers on similar issues.

6 KEY FINDINGS
6.1 Trends in enrolment: Gendered disparities across academic programmes
Data analysis in the current study revealed that there is an increasing trend in enrolment of both male and female students at both universities (Figures 2.12 and 2.13). However, the number of female students is lower than that of male students in all the five years covered. Indeed from 2009, enrolment of female students at the public university was increasing at a decreasing rate while that of male students remained steady, hence creating a widening gender gap. On the other hand, the number of enrolled female students in the private university in 2010/11 was getting close to parity.

Figure 2.12 Total number of students enrolled at public university, 2006-2010

Source: private university records

Figure 2.13 Total number of students enrolled at private university, 2006-2010

Source: public university records
Analysis of enrolment data in the specific programmes covered in the two universities however shows glaring differences between science programmes and the social sciences. First, in both universities, the total number of students in the science programmes has remained significantly lower than the number of enrolled students in the social sciences. Second, the gender gap has remained wider in the science programmes (Figures 2.14 and 2.15) compared to social science programmes (Figures 2.16 and 2.17). Figures in Annex 1 presenting data on enrolment trends in other science and social science academic programmes also show the same picture. Indeed some of the social science programmes had more females than males. For example, at the private university, enrolment data for the Sociology programme (Figure 2.17) show that in all five years, the programme was enrolling more female than male students. A similar trend is observed in the Mass Communication course at the same university (Figure 2.23). Mascarenhas (2007) points out how a tendency among parents and even teachers to discourage girls taking science subjects at lower levels continues to cause relatively wider disparity between males and females in enrolment and performance in science programmes. The implication here is that the gender gap in occupations requiring different skills of engineering will remain wider compared to occupations that require skills in social science fields of study.

6.2 Performance and gendered experiences
Achievement is generally associated with better employment outcomes. Good performers have an advantage over poor performers in terms of chances of getting a job. Performance as education outcome therefore bears significantly on labour market outcomes in terms of getting a job, especially if there are fewer job opportunities compared to the number of jobseekers. Theories on gender show prevalence of gendered conceptions about academic performance, whereby generally females have been perceived as being incapable of performing as well as their male counterparts. More specifically, female students have been perceived to be academically less able than male students in the science subjects such as engineering. In this study, sex disaggregated data on performance from the two universities visited show mixed results for different years. In Civil Engineering at the public university, performance data over the five-year period (proportion of male and female students passing with upper second or first class) show that female students generally were not performing as well as male students (Figure 2.18). However, in Computer Science at the same university, in three out of five years for which performance data were collected, the proportion of female students getting upper second or above was larger than that of male students (Figure 2.19).
In the social sciences, results were mixed with male students performing better than female students in some years and female students performing better in others. In the Commerce programme at the public university for example, more males (as proportion of total male students) passed at upper second or first class level in three out of the five years for which performance data were collected (Figure 2.20). In the Mass Communication programme at the private university, more females (as a proportion of total female students) compared to male students got upper second or above in three out of the five years covered (Figure 2.21). In Sociology, performance data were available for only two years. Female students did relatively better than male students in one year, while male students performed better in the other year (Table 2.15).

Findings on academic performance in this study are consistent with findings in other studies. A study done by Sheard (2009) monitored student’s performance and progress from the first year to the final year and found that female students outperformed their male counterparts. Hedjazi and Omidi (2008) found similar evidence whereby female students were outperforming male students in the field of Agricultural Science. These findings suggest that female students are not intellectually weaker than male students as is sometimes perceived (Okafor & Endagon, 2011). Indeed, the current findings seem to suggest that the gender differences in intellectual capabilities and orientation to certain fields of study may be shaped by gendered attitudes and practices in different spheres of life (Bandura, 1997; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Phillips & Zimmerman, 1990).

The question however is whether students in higher learning institutions experience gender biases that might have gendered implications on performance and hence, on labour market outcomes such as employment. This study sought to explore this bearing in mind the fact that gender differentiation manifests itself in different forms at different levels of society and in different spheres of life, and these result in gender differentiated impacts and outcomes. Hence, this study, sought to explore the extent to which male and female students experienced gendered attitudes and practices while studying in higher learning institutions and how these experiences may have affected their academic performance.

In line with the aims of this study, we asked both the employed and unemployed respondents whether they experienced any gendered attitudes and/or practices while studying in higher education institutions. The majority of respondents stated that they had not experienced gender biases both inside and outside classrooms. Respondents observed that the challenges and constraints encountered were common to both sexes and included lack of serious commitment to teaching by lecturers and shortage of reference materials. They also felt there were no actions or behaviours amongst themselves that reflected gender discrimination. Five out of 14 unemployed graduates did however say they had experienced gender biases while studying at university. One male respondent explained how male students would eventually form “males only” groups.

**Figure 2.18 Performance in Civil Engineering by sex at public university, 2007-2010**

**Figure 2.19 Performance in Computer Science by sex at public university, 2007-2010**

**Figure 2.20 Performance in Commerce by sex at public university, 2006-2010**

**Figure 2.21 Performance in Mass Communication by sex at private university, 2006-2010**
discuss discussion groups outside the classroom, even though in class, lecturers were making sure that discussion groups were gender-balanced:

“In my course, smart male students used to isolate themselves in group discussions. They did not want to mix with females. For example, they would say girls have many things to do… and go to discussions late.” Unemployed male graduate

The same respondent further explained how this made female students lose confidence in themselves, noting that initially they would be active participants in discussion groups formed by lecturers, but would later become passive.

A female respondent narrated a similar experience:

“… Some male students did not like to have females in their discussion groups, saying we do not participate in group discussions. They felt they were the only ones contributing to group discussions while females kept quiet and only listened.” Unemployed female graduate

Another female respondent elaborated on why she felt male students did not treat female students well:

“They saw females as not being serious students. Even from discussions, male students looked down on us when we participated in discussions…” Unemployed female graduate

As the above account demonstrates, female respondents in the current study felt that their male counterparts at the university did not take them seriously and in fact doubted their academic capacity. Similarly, female students had gendered conceptions about themselves. For example, the same unemployed female graduate who had narrated experiences of gendered practices in group discussions further observed:

“... For instance, you could find seven out of ten group assignments being presented by male students. Female students would say male students present better than females.”

A male respondent also shifted the blame regarding gender biases by students to females’ lack of self-confidence:

“We treated them equally. The main problem was the female students themselves. They had no confidence in themselves. They would say we know more things than they do. During discussions they kept quiet, waiting for male students to discuss.” Unemployed male graduate

Other studies have found similar findings. For example, Seymour (1995) found female students who had just started their first year of undergraduate studies had higher levels of confidence, which however soon dropped. Other studies also show how in patriarchal societies women tend to be passive, rarely challenging issues, while for men being more aggressive is common (Wells 2008). Such differentiation therefore often manifests itself in different arenas, including education. A discussion on traditions and customs in Tanzania by Mascarenhas (2007) may help to explain what underlies the situation of gendered practices among male and female students presented above. She describes traditions that are premised on male power and unequal gender roles whereby women are considered the inferior sex not only by men but also by the women themselves. She further observes that in such traditions women often do not voice their views in meetings involving men and women.

Actions and attitudes which appeared to contribute to female students reverting to not being active participants intrigued us and we wondered whether this might contribute to gendered labour market outcomes. We thus went back to the field to check with human resources managers on how, based on their experiences, they would assess levels of confidence between female and male job applicants during interviews. A senior human resources (HR) manager in a parastatal institution we visited had experience interviewing graduates for various positions since 2002 and was currently with a sixth employer. Asked whether there were observable differences in levels of confidence by male and female job applicants called for interviews, he said male interviewees generally showed higher levels of confidence although there have always been cases where females demonstrate high levels of confidence and are quite outstanding. He further noted that there are also cases where men seem to lack confidence and even panic.

A manager responsible for selection and recruitment in the financial institution we visited, and who had also been interviewing job applicants while working for three other employers, narrated a slightly different experience. He noted that while female graduates seemed to have been generally less confident than their male counterparts in earlier years, in recent years the pattern is mixed and in his current workplace female interviewees generally seem more confident than male applicants. He suggested that the type of jobs might in part explain the variation. He gave an example that when working as HR manager for a mining company, he used to interview geologists and generally females seemed much less confident than male applicants. He further explained that they were even interviewing prospective employees who were still studying at the institute that was training geologists, and that even here female students also seemed to be much less confident compared to male students.

The experiences of the two managers with significant background in recruiting graduates suggest that female graduates disproportionately show less confidence in recruitment interviews than male graduates. This is especially the case in male dominated occupations as the example of geologists, given by one of the managers, illustrates.
6.3 Fields of study and gendered experiences
We showed in section 6.1 how the gender gap in enrolment remains wide in science subjects such as engineering where female students are highly under-represented. Basing on theory and earlier empirical evidence, we had sought to explore gendered experiences in education and other spheres of life that might have influenced sampled graduates in decisions regarding fields of study, and whether this was being reinforced by gendered attitudes about academic programmes in which they were already enrolled at higher education institutions.

In line with this, we asked employed and unemployed graduates whether anybody had influenced their choice of subjects of study. Seven respondents stated that someone had either influenced or tried to influence their choice of subjects of study. However, the advice given was largely intended to orient them towards courses in which students acquired knowledge and skills that are relatively in high demand in the labour market. High demand in the labour market seemed to be the most important reason for advice by parents and relatives on what one should study. However, emulating what parents and close relatives had studied was also a factor in deciding on areas of study.

“I admired what my mother was doing. She is an accountant. She holds a CPA, so she influenced me to study something relating to what she studied.” Employed female graduate

A point worth noting here is influence of parents as role models on decisions and choices that their children make in life, including decisions on fields of study and career paths. Indeed this is consistent with other studies that have found a positive relationship between girls’ career aspirations and their mothers’ educational achievement (Signer & Saldana, 2001).

Gendered attitudes were also evident within higher education institutions, especially towards female students enrolled in programmes that traditionally have been dominated by males. A female graduate who had secured a scholarship to study engineering attested to this:

“...Our class had only five girls. Other students used to make jokes at female students enrolled in engineering courses. They told us we were like men.” Employed female graduate

This finding is consistent with theory and empirical evidence from other studies. Mascarenhas (2007) observes how boys and girls are socialised differently and adopt corresponding gender roles at a very young age. As a result girls are not expected to venture into fields of study that societal norms and values, which are largely patriarchal, have ascribed as in the male domain.

6.4 Reinforcing gendered attitudes and practices in the labour market
In this study we also explored ways in which the labour market is itself gendered and therefore reinforcing the gendered effect of gendered education outcomes. We first summarise the highly competitive nature of the labour market that graduates had to enter, as this in itself may reinforce gendered practices in the labour market.

6.4.1 Gendered implications of intense competition in job search
The findings of this study showed that there was stiff competition amongst both male and female graduates for jobs. This was evidenced by the extended periods of time graduates spent searching for employment after graduation, and the rate of under-employment among this group. Data in Table 2.7 show the number of applications unemployed graduates had sent out since they started searching for employment and the number of times they were called for interviews. Unemployed male graduates were overall more proactive in sending out applications, with one male graduate having sent out 150 applications since 2009. A female unemployed graduate who started sending out applications in the same year had sent only 50 applications.

Table 2.7 Job applications by unemployed graduates since they started applying for jobs and number of times called for interviews (in brackets) by sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year the graduate began job search</th>
<th>Number of job applications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>60 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>15 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>150 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>80 (6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field interviews
The issue of skills mismatch seemed to compound the challenge graduates in this study faced in getting employment. During interviews, respondents observed that a number of factors contributed to their unemployment. Most of these factors were related to a lack of knowledge and skills that were relevant to the increasingly competitive labour market.

The narratives respondents told regarding the challenges of finding work were consistent with other data we came across. For instance, our analysis of data on employees recruited in the past five years, which were made available by one of the employers, suggested that getting a job that matched the knowledge and skills one acquired in higher education was a big challenge. Analysis of the qualifications of those who were recruited in relation to their entry positions shows that many were getting into jobs that demanded different knowledge and skills compared to those they acquired in higher education. Table 2.8, which shows a few selected positions in the financial sector, is illustrative of this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of job applications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>60 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>15 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>150 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>80 (6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field interviews
institution that we sampled for this study, indicate that employees held positions outside of their fields of study. Indeed the majority of interviewed unemployed graduates did also indicate readiness to take up any job even if not related to their fields of study as illustrated in the quotes below:

“...I have been searching for a job for a very long time without hope of working as a counsellor in gender and sexuality. There are barely such jobs in the country. I can work as a bank teller or in customer care.” Unemployed female graduate

“...Living in town is expensive and I don’t have any one to depend on. So as long as I get paid I will do any job.” Unemployed male graduate

A survey done in 37 countries in Africa, Tanzania included, (African Development Bank Group et al., 2012), show that unemployment rates varied by fields of study. Graduates in technical fields such as engineering were found to have less problems finding employment than their counterparts in social sciences. Yet these are fields of study where females are highly under-represented.

Table 2.8 Sample of job positions held by selected employees in a financial institution by sex and education qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Education Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerk (Security Documents)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Bachelor of Laws (LLB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Clerk</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>BA Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Clerk</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>MA Business Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teller</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Bachelor of Business Administration (Marketing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk (Payments)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>BA Environmental Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Care Officer</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Bachelor of Business Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Records Officer</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Bachelor in Business Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk (Credit)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>BA Public Administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Officer (Customer Experience)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>BA Geography and Environmental Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Financial institution recruitment records

Knowing the desperation of job seekers, some employers were using less conventional and sometimes unethical ways in the selection of applicants for interviews and eventually recruitment, some of which had gendered implications. First, competition for jobs was tough such that knowing someone had more or less become the sole criterion for getting a job. All unemployed graduates believed that favouritism was widespread and thought the majority of employed graduates got jobs because someone assisted them. Employed graduates also confirmed these views. Asked how they got their jobs, almost all of them said it was through knowing someone inside the organisation such as a relative, a friend, a former classmate, a schoolmate, a friend of a relative, or a friend of a friend. Employers on their part mentioned headhunting as one of the main methods they used in recruitment of employees. Second, as already pointed out, it was revealed that some employers sought sexual favours in exchange for offering employment. For example, one female graduate had this to say:

“During my job search, I came across a male human resources manager who called me on Sunday evening for an interview. He did not say anything related to work. Instead he wanted sexual favours. I refused. He gave me a second option of giving him TZS 200,000. I did not have that amount of money, I did not get the job.”

Similar to the above account, another unemployed female graduate also noted that she was asked during a job interview for a bribe and when she stated that she did not have money, the interviewer then demanded for sexual favours as an alternative condition for obtaining work.

6.4.2 Influence of upheld gender norms on recruitment and retention decisions

In exploring the extent to which gendered attitudes in the labour market were reinforcing the effect of gendered education outcomes on labour market outcomes, both unemployed and employed graduates were asked whether factors such as the sex of a person, differences in socio-economic background, demographics such as parents’ education, occupation, and marital status, affect labour market outcomes such as getting recruited and retained in a job. With regard to sex of a person being a factor in recruitment decisions, almost all unemployed respondents thought being male or female played a key role. Examples given include the tendency to recruit men for jobs that require physical strength, and deciding not to recruit women because of their multiple roles at home and at work. A few quotes on what respondents said on these issues are presented below:

“In the case of gender, society has perceptions about gender roles whereby there are specific activities for males and females. For example, nursing and attending to passengers on aircrafts are perceived to be female jobs, whereas doctors and heavy truck drivers are perceived to be male jobs.” Unemployed female graduate.

“... In the case of sex, I have never heard a female working in mining shafts and there are very few nurses who are males. All this is because of gender roles constructed by society. However, nowadays you will find females doing the so-called “male jobs” like driving heavy trucks to different regions within and outside the country.” Another unemployed female graduate.
The same second respondent narrated an incident that happened to her friend:

“My friend was not employed because she had a child and the nature of work demands her to work till night. She was asked how she could work till night while she has a child at home. The next day, they called her to tell her she was not offered the job.”

A study done in Tanzania (Feinstein et al. 2010) give ample examples of how gender norms that encompass traditional roles for men and women make the latter responsible for all domestic work. Indeed women’s household and care giving roles have been found to inhibit their entry and retention in the labour market. (Bond, 2004).

Employed graduates expressed similar views when asked whether they thought there were challenges that were sex-specific in recruitment and retention of employees. Upheld gendered conceptions about jobs that are physically very demanding are well illustrated by views of a respondent working for a telecommunications company:

“...We have no female in the department (Base Station System Engineering). Climbing towers is very difficult for women.” Employed male graduate.

The male respondent went on to say that it is difficult for women to be in this field of engineering but they can be found in other less physically demanding fields such as Information Technology (IT) System Administration. An employer in the construction company we involved in this study also expressed similar views:

“There are no jobs for which we prefer one sex over another, but sometimes the situation itself dictates outcomes that seem to be gender biased. We actually used to have female engineers in the field of quantity survey when we were undertaking construction of buildings. But now we do not have female engineers in road construction projects. Road construction involves working in remote areas under very harsh conditions. So perhaps that is why female engineers might find this not a conducive working environment.” Employer at a construction company.

A senior human resources manager who was being interviewed on the employer’s side explained how gender issues can be a challenge when deciding on whom to recruit, despite company commitment to ensure gender equality in entry and retention:

“Yes, there are challenges. For example, I have eight people in my department, six of whom are women. Two are away on maternity leave and the remaining four are pregnant. I also have a colleague in one of our branches who called to report that the two members of staff assigned to the front desk are both supposed to go on maternity leave.” Senior HR manager, financial institution.

Asked about the challenges she faces as a female employee, a respondent with two young children and taking evening classes for MBA stated the following:

“I am working full time, going to school and with a family to take care of. I work from 8:00a.m. to 5:00p.m., go to school until 9:00 p.m., and then I have to go home and take care of young children. I usually go to bed around midnight and have to be up by 5:00a.m.” Employed female graduate.

Indeed studies abound that describe similar challenges that workingwomen face. For example, empirical evidence from time-use studies in South Africa, Madagascar, Mauritius and Benin show that men were spending significantly less time on domestic work compared to women (Charmes, J., 2006). Such significant differences between men and women in time-use are attributed to cultural norms that uphold a rigid division of labour between men and women (Kes & Swaminahan, 2006).

Only two out of the four employers provided recruitment data that could enable us to compare trends in the recruitment of male and female graduates. In both organisations, results were mixed with more males having been recruited for some of the years and more females in other years. Data of degree holders recruited by the financial institution, which is presented in Table 2.9, illustrates this pattern.

Table 2.9 Number of degree holders recruited in the financial institution in the past five years by sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Financial institution recruitment records

The other two organisations had recruited a significantly smaller number of employees over the same five-year period. In the parastatal organisation, the lowest number of employees in a year was five (2007) and the maximum was 33 (in 2011). As illustrated in Table 2.8 in section 6.4.1, although the financial institution was recruiting relatively many employees over the five-year period, some of them were being recruited into jobs which demanded different knowledge and skills compared to what they acquired in higher education. No clear pattern could be ascertained as to which sex was disadvantaged. However, national survey data show that women are under-represented in high-level skilled and professional occupations (URT, 2007).
7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has attempted to enrich the education – labour market linkages discourse with a gender perspective. We have utilised data from a largely qualitative study to explore ways in which education outcomes are gendered, and consequently, the extent to which their effects on labour market outcomes are gendered. The study has further explored ways in which gender biases in the labour market work to reinforce gender inequalities in the labour market. Premised on the Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation, the study has specifically attempted to illustrate how, despite increased enrolment of female students in higher education institutions, gendered attitudes and practices in higher education institutions that emanate from earlier gendered experiences in both private and public spheres continue to have gendered effects on other education outcomes, which in turn continue to have a gendered effect on employment in the labour market. Recognising that the labour market is also a gendered system, we have also sought to explore how gendered practices in the labour market work to reinforce the disadvantaged position of women in employment.

Findings show an increasing trend in enrolment for both males and females in terms of total enrolment in each of the two universities. However, the study has revealed that the gender gap in science programmes such as engineering remains much wider than that in the social sciences. It is clear that gender stereotyping of differences in aptitude for different subjects continues to contribute to more disproportionate under-representation of females in the science programmes. Within universities, gendered remarks about female students in programmes such as engineering can be a disincentive for female students in these programmes to encourage other females to get into science programmes.

Indeed whereas sex disaggregated data on performance for programmes in the social sciences have shown mixed results, in civil and electrical engineering programmes the proportion of women passing with upper second or first class was consistently lower than that of male students in all five years. It is worth noting that performance was relatively worse for female students in the programmes which have long been stereotyped male subjects. The implication here is that in a competitive labour market which has too few jobs compared to the number of job seekers entering the labour market this can contribute to continued severe under-representation of females in male stereotyped occupations such as engineering.

While current findings have shown that getting formal employment in the labour market is a challenge to both male and female graduates, the findings have further revealed that gender differentiated experiences could disproportionately disadvantage female graduates in the job search and recruitment processes in the labour market. On this the findings have revealed for example, how gender biases in classrooms were contributing to loss of confidence by female students, which was constraining their effective participation in the learning process. Male students avoiding inclusion of female students in discussion groups is one example of how social sanctions take place even in higher education, indicating how gender linked conduct that disadvantage females in education can reinforce earlier experiences. Indeed it is also evident that women also hold gendered conceptions about themselves that contribute to their disadvantaged position. One example in this study is what female respondents expressed about how female students would say male students were better presenters. This is consistent with findings in other studies, which show for example, that in mixed sex groups, children are likely to adopt gender-stereotyped behaviour (Martin, 1993).

The study has further revealed that within the labour market, there are also gendered attitudes and practices that reinforce the gendered effects of education outcomes to further disadvantage females in employment. These include gendered attitudes about what women can do or cope with and what not. Such perceptions and attitudes may indeed have a negative effect on women’s confidence about their capabilities in certain occupations.

Explaining about self-efficacy which he defines as “the belief in one’s capabilities to organise and execute the course of action required to manage prospective situations,” (Bandura, 1995, 1997) explains how those with a weak sense of self efficacy tend to lose confidence in personal abilities quickly and believe that difficult tasks are beyond their capabilities. Furthermore, Bussey and Bandura (1999) observe how people predict their own outcomes not only based on their own experiences but also on the observed outcomes experienced by others and being aware of the likely consequences of behaving contrary to expected behaviour. People would thus tend to avoid behaving in ways or taking courses of action for which they think they may be sanctioned.

The postulations above may help to explain the continued much more glaring under-representation of females in science programmes such as engineering hence their continued under-representation in occupations that require such technical skills. Indeed one may understand why women may continue to avoid pursuing studies that would orient them towards occupations that are seen as male domain. Why get into an academic programme and then be ridiculed by peers that “you are like a man?” Or why get into a programme that will orient you to male stereotyped occupations where male co-workers will never see you as their equal or management consider you as capable as your male counterparts? These questions are indicative of how differences between men and women are socially prescribed through norms that define behaviour and roles on the basis of gender. These norms continue to disadvantage women in all private and public spheres including education and the labour market.

7.1. Recommendations for policy and practice

The findings in this study have illustrated how gendered attitudes and practices in both the education and labour market sub-systems continue to disadvantage women in employment. Overcoming such attitudes and practices
require concerted efforts at all levels to put in place effective measures that discourage gender differentiated processes and promote avenues of equal opportunity for boys and girls, and men and women. We suggest below what such effort may involve.

Statistics are important in informing policies and promoting action. Yet, sex disaggregated data for different academic programmes are not readily available. There is therefore need for higher education institutions to have readily available sex disaggregated data on enrolment, performance and completion for different academic programmes. Data should be available not only at the level of academic programmes but also at institutional level. Readily available sex disaggregated data showing inter programme differences is very important for the design of appropriate targeted interventions to promote gender equality in all academic programmes.

We have argued that the problem of skills mismatch revealed in this study is likely to disproportionately disadvantage women in employment because it can compound the problems of unemployment and underemployment. There is a need therefore, to put in place a framework that can promote an integrated approach to education and employment policy making and implementation. The education system must know what the labour market can absorb and the type of knowledge and skills needed so as to avert unabated increasing trends in unemployment and underemployment of graduates. This can be done through instituting mechanisms for interaction and dialogue between academic institutions and labour market actors whose products can then inform necessary regular changes in course content.

Theory and empirical evidence has revealed how choices that women and men make in life are influenced by gender biases they experience throughout their life courses in both private and public spheres. Effective measures to address gender biases should therefore go beyond having appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks in place, to effective community involvement in promoting gender equality. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) should take up a more pro-active role in raising awareness in communities on the adverse implications of gender inequality to individual men and women and to society as a whole. CSOs will be able to play a more effective role if there will be clear political will to support their efforts.

Consistent with findings in similar studies, the present findings indicate that male and female students can perform equally well. However, gender bias in education and in the labour market can be detrimental to female graduates’ academic and career progress. As our findings revealed, female graduate students encountered situations in which they were discouraged from pursuing science-related subjects such as engineering. Those who managed to pursue these subjects found it difficult to gain entry into their field of training because of the negative perceptions that employers had about women’s capacity to work in science-related fields. There was evidence also, of female graduates having to grapple with sexual advances from prospective employers, which made job-hunting even more complicated. Further research may wish to explore these findings further to assess the extent to which these experiences are common in education and the labour market and the extent to which they affect women and men differently in education and labour market outcomes.
ANNEXES

Annex 1 Enrolment in selected programmes at public and private university

Figure 2.22 Total number of students enrolled at Electrical Engineering by sex at public university, 2006-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Electrical Engineering Department records

Figure 2.23 Total number of students enrolled in Mass Communication by sex at private university, 2006-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Private university records

Figure 2.24 Total number of students enrolled in Civil Engineering by sex at private university, 2007-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Private University records

Figure 2.25 Total number of students enrolled in Electrical Engineering by sex at private university, 2006-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Private University records
Annex 2 Performance in selected academic programmes at public and private university

Table 2.10 Performance of students in civil engineering by sex at public university, 2006-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Degree classification</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42.10%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.50%</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.50%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>44.40%</td>
<td>63</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35.20%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>64.70%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.70%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>71.80%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>52.90%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>41.10%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Civil Engineering Department records

Table 2.11 Performance of students in Electrical Engineering by sex at public university, 2006-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Degree classification</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Female</td>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
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<td>76.4%</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Female</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Electrical Engineering department records
## Table 2.12 Performance of students in Computer Science by sex at public university, 2006-2010

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Degree classification</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>77%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
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</tr>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>68</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>4.4%</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4.5%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
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</table>

Source: Computer Science department records

## Table 2.13 Performance of students in Commerce by sex at public university, 2006-2010

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Degree classification</th>
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<th>Upper</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>78</td>
<td>191</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>24</td>
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</tr>
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<td>58.1%</td>
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<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1.1%</td>
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<td>62.7%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>146</td>
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<td>203</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>72.9%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>100%</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>64</td>
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</table>

Source: Commerce department records
### Table 2.14 Performance of Students in Mass Communication by sex at private university, 2006-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Degree classification</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
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<td>65%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>33</td>
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<tr>
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<td>38</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Private University records

### Table 2.15 Performance of students in Sociology by sex at private university, 2006-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Degree classification</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<td>53</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>98</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Private University records
REFERENCES


Kaijage, S. E. (2001). Knowledge and skills of B.Com graduates of the Faculty of Commerce and Management, University of Dar es Salaam in the Job Market (Paper No. 8.). Accra: AAU.


Mascarenhas, O. (2007). Gender Profile in Tanzania: Enhancing Gender Equity, Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).


ABSTRACT
This study examined the link between women’s participation in the informal sector (particularly the fishing industry) and their related income, and girls’ school enrolment and attendance among the Tonga population in Binga. It first of all sought to establish factors that hinder girls’ education in Binga; women’s priorities when they have an income; how their income-generating activities have helped to address some of the barriers to girls’ education; and other factors promoting girls’ education in Binga in recent years. It further established women’s perspectives of girls’ education in the informal sector.

Data for this study were gathered using a number of tools: a household questionnaire, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions with women in the informal sector and girls in primary and secondary schools; key informant interviews with authorities in the education sector; and observation. The findings show that the factors affecting girls’ education in Binga include negative attitudes towards girls’ education, poverty, polygamy, large families, distance to schools (especially secondary schools), sexual maturation practices, household chores, mothers’ participation in the informal sector, and teenage pregnancy. Women’s participation in the informal sector was singled out as contributing positively to girls’ education by addressing barriers that hinder girls from going to school. In the first instance, better sources of income result in households being able to send children, including girls, to school. Women’s participation in the informal sector has changed their attitudes towards girls’ education (as entrepreneurs appreciate the importance of education in business activities). This change in attitudes has caused some women who had previously dropped out of school for various reasons to opt for second-chance education, and to educate girls on the importance of...
education. Through participation in the informal sector, women have also managed to positively address sexual maturation practices. Other factors promoting girls’ education in Binga include the support provided by Campaign for Female Education (Camfed) through mother support groups and peer education.

However, women working in the informal sector find it difficult to juggle their job and their household chores, and therefore call on other household members—usually girls—to take over these duties.

From the findings, this study recommends awareness campaigns on the importance of children’s rights, including the right to education—for girls and boys alike—and the right to be protected from harm. Awareness should be raised on teenage pregnancy and the school re-entry policy in view of the high levels of teenage pregnancy reported in the area, and of the support available to women in the informal sector from the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises through loans, training in business management, and market linkages to boost activities in view of the role the sector plays in supporting girls’ education. It also recommends an in-depth analysis of the impacts of women’s participation in the informal sector on girls’ performance in schools, and a study to establish the extent of gender inequalities and stereotyping in schools in areas such as distribution of available educational resources, influence on subject selection, gender roles in schools, among others.

2. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Informal sector

The Zimbabwe 2003 Poverty Assessment Study defined the informal sector as consisting of establishments/enterprises that were licensed and those that were not licensed or registered. Licensed refers to authorisation of an establishment or a person, given by an authority such as a municipality or town board, to deal with or sell a commodity, be it liquor, groceries, clothes, hardware, etc. Registered refers to companies that are registered under the Companies Act by the registrar of companies, where a company is given a certificate of incorporation in the case of a private company, and a trading certificate in the case of public limited companies.

Informal sector enterprises engage in low-technology activities, they normally have high staff turnover and high enterprise mortality. They also have low productivity, pay low wages, and are generally vulnerable to various internal and external shocks, including policy changes.

Education

Education may be defined as the process by which a society transmits knowledge, values, norms, and ideologies, and in so doing prepares young people for adult roles, and adults for new roles. The literature distinguishes between two types of education: formal and non-formal. This study focuses on formal education, which, according to Dib (1987), corresponds to a systematic, organised education model, structured and administered according to a given set of laws and norms, presenting a rather rigid curriculum as regards objectives, content, and methodology. It is characterised by a contiguous education process known as presential education, which involves the teacher, the students, and the institution. Formal education institutions are administratively, physically, and curricularly organised, and require from students minimum classroom attendance. Formal education has a well-defined set of features. On the other hand, non-presential education and non-contiguous communication characterise non-formal education systems. This is where the adopted strategy
The connection between increased participation of women (UNICEF, 2010). However, little has been done to establish over daughters when it came to sending children to school (Muzvidziwa, 2005), and preferential treatment for sons intensification of informal sector activities by women (NET, 2007). Coping strategies were initiated, including with 60 percent for male-headed households (FEWS NET, 2007). Coping strategies were initiated, including with 60 percent for male-headed households in 1995, whilst in 1998, 63 percent of households in Zimbabwe were regarded as poor (CSO, 1998: 23). In 2004, it was estimated that the number of people living in poverty in Zimbabwe was over 80 percent of the total population, with many households struggling to earn enough income to purchase adequate food given the ever-rising cost of living and the continuing economic decline (FEWS NET, 2007).

The prevalence of poverty among female-headed households was 48 percent in 1995, compared to 39 percent for male-headed households in 1995, whilst in 2003 it was 68 percent for female-headed compared with 60 percent for male-headed households (FEWS NET, 2007). Coping strategies were initiated, including intensification of informal sector activities by women (Muzvidziwa, 2005), and preferential treatment for sons over daughters when it came to sending children to school (UNICEF, 2010). However, little has been done to establish the connection between increased participation of women in informal sector activities and girl child education, as well as female perceptions of girls’ education.

Research has indicated that income generation by women has positive effects on girls’ education but has not gone further to establish the dynamics of decision making around use of finances from such income-generation activities. The present study therefore fills this gap. In Burkina Faso, UNICEF supported income-generating projects among women to fund girls’ education (UNICEF, 2010). One woman who benefited from this initiative reported: “We often buy notebooks and pens for students. It doesn’t sound like much, but [lacking those things is] all it takes for some children to stop going to school. It’s enough to get a girl married off to a husband.”

Our concern in this study is how women who participate in income-generating activities in the informal sector are using their businesses and income to improve the education of girls in their families and communities. This is because income-generating projects are believed to offer tremendous opportunities for women by opening doors to better education and, subsequently, personal and economic growth—not only for the women themselves, but for their families through enlightenment.

Another connection between education and income-generating projects in the informal sector is that entrepreneurship can be difficult when one lacks the education that can expedite their business pursuits (Jalbert, 2000). As Negash (2006) observed, education is one of the factors affecting women’s projects. Millennium Development Goal No 3 (MDG3), to promote gender equality and empowerment of women, is recognised not only as a goal in and of itself, but also as an essential step for achieving all other goals. Economic empowerment of women (in this case, including through women’s entrepreneurship) and gender equality are instrumental in achieving other MDGs, namely to achieve universal primary education (MDG2), to lower under-five mortality (MDG4), to improve maternal health (MDG5), and to lower the likelihood of contracting HIV and AIDS (MDG6) (UNDP, 2005). In India, Williams and Gurtoo (2011) established that most of the women in the informal sector were largely uneducated and had not experienced any formal schooling, but they did not go further to establish how the lack of education impacted their business pursuits. There is therefore little empirical evidence on the relationship between women’s income-generating projects in the informal sector and girls’ education.

Therefore the purpose of this study is to establish whether increased women’s income-generating activities in the informal sector in Binga have translated to increased girls’ enrolment in schools and how women’s levels of education affect their business pursuits. It interrogates the notion that women’s income generation is a precondition for increased girls’ enrolment in schools.
4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
The overall objective of the current study is to establish the relationships between women’s participation in the informal sector and resulting income generation, and women and girls’ education in Binga.

The specific objectives are to:
- Establish factors that promote or hinder girls’ education in Binga.
- Determine the extent to which women’s participation in the informal sector is affected by their level of education.
- Establish decision-making dynamics around income generated by women and the priority given to girls’ education.
- Establish how women’s participation in the informal sector and income generation in Binga (positively and negatively) influences girls’ education in that area.
- Find out how women in the informal sector perceive girls’ education.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT FRAMEWORK
The Women’s Empowerment Framework conceptualises five progressive levels of equality arranged in hierarchical order, with each higher level denoting a higher level of empowerment. These are the basis on which to assess the extent of women’s empowerment in any area of social or economic life. The levels of equality are: welfare, access, conscientisation, participation, and control. These are explained in detail in Table 2.16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.16 Women’s Empowerment Framework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As women move up the levels of empowerment towards control, they have increasing confidence and decision-making power over their lives. In connection with this study, this entails even decision making over use of income from their informal sector activities.

6. LITERATURE REVIEW
Since the turn of the millennium a growing number of studies have revealed that the informal sector is extensive, continuing, and even growing in many populations (De Soto, 2001; Perry and Maloney, 2007; Minard, 2009; Small Business Council, 2004; Venkatesh, 2006; Volkov, 2002; Webb, Tihanyi, Ireland, and Sirmon, 2009; Williams, 2006; Williams, 2008; Williams and Round, 2007; Williams, Round and Rodgers, 2009) and that the majority of the participants in this sector are women. Most of the literature on women engaged in the informal sector has concentrated on measuring the amount and nature of their access to credit, welfare funds, insurance, and so forth, with little focus on how their involvement can help solve problems such as lack of access to education. Studies have understood income generation for its economic and social benefits, such as improving the lifestyles of individuals and communities (Sperandio, 2005; Petrin, 1994), but little detailed exploration of its contribution to solve social problems such as improving access to education.
The Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Gender and Community Development (forthcoming) observed that women’s earnings are generally used for the benefit of everyone in the household but did not focus on specific uses related to income. There has therefore been little attention on the agency that women employ in their business activities, as well as on the use of the income generated through such activities.

6.1 The enclave and dual economic structures of the Zimbabwean economy
At independence, the Zimbabwean Government inherited an economy that was based on the development of a formal sector, with little linkages with the rest of the economy, which comprised the subsistence sector and informal economy. The government reinforced the dual (separate) and enclave (isolated) structures of the inherited economy (Chakanya and Muchichwa, 2012). Therefore, from a labor absorption point of view, only a small fraction of the labor force was gainfully employed in the formal sector, with the majority openly unemployed or underemployed in the subsistence sector and informal economy. However, over the past years, and especially during the period of the economic crisis, the formal economy has shrunk, leaving the informal economy as the mainstay of the economy. Figure 2.26 illustrates the dual and enclave nature of the Zimbabwean economy.

Figure 2.26 Structure of the Zimbabwean economy

Women remain marginalised in the mainstream formal economy because of their limited access to higher and tertiary education, skills, and lack of job opportunities. In 2003, women constituted about half (47 percent) of all the people engaged in the informal sector, compared with 27 percent in the formal sector. A greater proportion of females (43 percent) than males (24 percent) were engaged in the informal sector (PASS, 2003).

6.2 Women’s informal sector activities and girls’ education
Offorma (2009) posited that education enables individuals to be functional members of their society as it equips them with different knowledge and skills in preparation for this functionality. A study in Ghana explored the impact of microcredit on women beneficiaries in the Lawra District of the Upper West Region, and found that this facility enabled women to improve their yearly income, educate their children, and enhance their decision-making capabilities (Meeder and Cumber, 2011).

6.3 Gender disparities and education in Zimbabwe
In Zimbabwe there are gender disparities in education at all levels except primary, where girls and boys seem to be at par in terms of enrolment. Despite the fact that enrolment in primary school has remained stable, enrolment in secondary is falling, especially for girls (UNICEF, 2010). This situation may be due in part to the rising cost of secondary education and the falling level of student learning achievement at the end of primary school. Rural areas are the worst affected by this state of affairs, as school attendance requires walking long distances to the nearest school (UNICEF, 2010). Although there is almost 100 percent gender parity in primary and lower secondary schools, girls comprise only 35 percent of the pupils in upper secondary. According to the 2010 BEAM rapid assessment, a combination of factors contribute to this situation: poverty and lack of finance; poor or limited nutrition; the need for children to stay home to undertake household chores or informal employment; distances between school and home; and orphanhood, mainly due to HIV and AIDS. What is particularly apparent is that the gender gap in enrolments becomes progressively more pronounced from the end of primary to tertiary level. A UNICEF (2010) report estimated that about 2 million secondary school-age youth would be excluded from the education system from 2010 due to entry fees, school closures, and general economic depression. Where fees are a problem, sons will often be given preference over daughters, and the latter miss out on education. The decade of economic crisis saw both boys and girls drop out of school, although there was a higher percentage of girls (MoESAC, 2010. This is despite the fact that most women intensified informal sector activities during this particular period (Muzvidziwa, 2005). It therefore remains to be established whether informal sector participation by women and resulting income generation is a precondition for increased enrolment of girls in schools.

By investigating the relationship between women’s participation in the informal sector and girls’ education, the study implies that there is a need for women to move from the economic to the social benefits of their businesses. The expectation is that there should be evidence of women entrepreneurs encouraging girls to go to school, supporting girls’ education, and establishing facilities to enable girls to access education within their communities. Although the economic benefits of women’s activities have received adequate scholarly investigation,
interest in the social benefits that emanate from the economic benefits is still in its infancy. Given the known benefits of education, the relationship between women’s economic activities and girls’ education is a relationship that is aimed at contributing to social change within a community.

7. STUDY AREA
The study was carried out in Binga district, which is located in Matabeleland North, in the extreme north-western part of Zimbabwe. Its bordering districts include Kariba, Gokwe North, Gokwe South, and Hwange, as shown in Figure 2.27. The district shares a national border with Zambia, demarcated by Lake Kariba. It is relatively isolated, being approximately 300 kilometres from the provincial headquarters, Lupane; 450 kilometres from Bulawayo, the nearest major urban centre; and 791 kilometres from Harare, Zimbabwe’s capital city. At the time of the last census, Binga district had a population of about 118,842, 52 percent of which were women (Central Statistics Office, 2002). The majority of the population is concentrated in Tonga, with a small percentage in Shona and Ndebele (Reynolds, 1991; Sisimayi and Masuku, 2009).

8. METHODOLOGY
8.1 Research design
The methodology for this study was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. A triangulation of methods was used to gain a more holistic view of the role of women’s participation in the informal sector and girls’ education in Binga. The data collection tools included in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, and a review of existing literature.

8.2 Data collection methods
The study gathered primary data from stakeholders in the study area through various methods. A total of six focus group discussions were held with women involved in informal sector activities and girls, particularly selling fish. Focus groups were used for the reason given by Jennings (2001:172), i.e., to add to the richness of the data collected through questioning, challenging, clarification, and discussion among the group members concerning their stance with regard to the topic of the discussion.

In-depth interviews were held with key people in the community, including the District Education Officer, teachers, headmasters, local leadership, and representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) supporting women’s economic activities in the research site such as Camfed, Zubo Trust, and Basilizwi. A total of 11 in-depth interviews were conducted.

Household questionnaires were used to establish the relationship between women’s participation in the informal sector and girls’ education. This questionnaire captured household demographics, level of education, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions towards girls’ education. A total of 30 questionnaires were administered to women and girls from households that had women who were active in the informal sector.

Aside from the researcher and the research mentee, four research assistants were hired to assist with gathering data as part of skills transfer.

The study also used secondary sources of information that included books, journal articles, newspapers, and magazines.

8.3 Sampling
This study purposively targeted Binga district, which is home to a minority group in Zimbabwe (the Tonga) who have been the least studied because of inaccessibility owing to a poor road network. Purposive sampling is also referred to as ‘judgmental sampling’, since it involves the researcher making a decision about who or what units of analysis to include in the study. With purposive sampling, the researcher uses his/her knowledge to determine who or what study units are the most appropriate for the study, based on the potential study units’ knowledge base or to what extent it fulfils the criteria associated with the study’s focus (Jennings, 2001:139). Rural areas such as Binga are known for placing less value on girls’ education resulting from negative attitudes towards women’s empowerment, so it was important to establish the relationship between women’s increased participation in the informal sector and girls’ education in this part of the country. In this district, the study purposively targeted Siachilaba, Sikalenge, and Kariangwe wards due to the prevalence of informal business ventures there.
The study purposively sampled 11 key informant interviewees, women involved in informal sector activities, and girls for the six FGDs, as well as 30 households that were given the household questionnaire. After using purposive sampling to access the entrepreneurs and their households, snowball sampling was used to access other women in the informal sector. Snowball sampling has several other names: chain referral, reputational, network sampling (Neuman, 2000:199), or rhizome sampling (Stehlik, 1999). Snowball sampling is used with difficult-to-reach participants, because the researcher may not be informed about formal and informal network connections. Once the researcher has identified one member of the population, that person identifies others, who then identify others, until all the necessary participants have been contacted and a ‘qualitative informational isomorph’ has been reached. This is when redundancy with respect to information occurs, when no new data are found, only confirmation of previously collected data. At the conclusion of each interview, the respondents were asked to refer the researchers to other women in the informal sector. A weakness with snowballing is that respondents tend to identify people like themselves. In order to address this weakness, many snowballs were used.

8.4 Data analysis
Qualitative data were organised into categories based on themes, concepts, and similar features. Relationships between concepts and variables were established. In view of this, gathered data were categorised according to emerging themes. Sara Longwe’s Women’s Empowerment Framework was used to analyse qualitative data. Quantitative data generated are presented in the form of tables, frequencies, and graphs. Gathered data were coded and entered using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS).

8.5 Study limitations
The researchers faced a number of challenges during the course of this study. One related to the bad state of the roads in the various wards on which the study focused. Due to the politically volatile environment in Zimbabwe at the time of the study as a result of speculations about the elections, accessibility to rural areas was difficult. The team therefore had to contact members of a local NGO operating in Binga to assist with community mobilisation. A senior member of the organisation was engaged as a community mobiliser and research assistant. This person was instrumental in seeking clearance to carry out the study in the area, and through her the team got clearance from the Chief Executive Officer of the Binga Rural District Council, the Binga District Administrator, the President’s Office in Binga, the Zimbabwe Republic Police, as well as local councillors and traditional leadership.

The small sample size for this study poses as a limitation, especially in terms of generalising the findings to other areas. Therefore the study findings are not to be generalised to other areas but lessons could be learnt all the same.

8.6 Entry into the field and ethical considerations
When discussing issues of entry into the field, one cannot escape ethical issues in conducting research. Neuman (2000:90) argued that ethics define what is or is not legitimate, or what moral research procedure involves. Sieber (1992:3) added that ethics of social science research is not about etiquette, nor is it about considering the poor, hapless subject at the expense of science or society. Rather, we study ethics to learn how to make social science work for all concerned.

Informed consent was sought from the Chief Executive Officer of the Binga Rural District Council, the District Administrator, the President’s Office, the Zimbabwe Republic Police, the councilors, traditional leadership, and the respondents themselves. It is important to state here that the researcher followed Tonga culture in seeking the consent of participants for this study. A local NGO working in the area was used as an entry point to the various wards. The participants in the research sites were informed that the research was for academic purposes, although there was a possibility of policy recommendations that could assist policy-makers focusing on women’s entrepreneurship and girls’ education. Participants were told they had the right to withdraw at any stage of the research. “Informed consent is the most fundamental ethical principle that is involved in research. Participants must understand the nature and purpose of the research and must consent to participate without coercion” (Burns, 1997:18). For example, Christians (2000:138) contended that informed consent was consistent with individual autonomy. Participation in the present research was voluntary, and participants were informed of the research processes, the consequences of such processes on their wellbeing, and their freedom to withdraw from the process at any time.

Anonymity and confidentiality were also observed throughout the research process. “Anonymity means that the researcher will not and cannot identify the respondent. Confidentiality means that the researcher can match names with responses but ensures that no one else will have access to them” (de Vaus 1995:337). Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained for the four reasons that de Vaus mentioned: to enhance the nature and veracity of responses; to encourage involvement; to enhance the sample size and its representation of the overall study population; and to ensure the participants’ privacy is not compromised (de Vaus 1995:337). In the process, the researchers ensured that the information provided was treated confidentially and that the anonymity of the respondents was maintained as far as possible. During fieldwork, notes were kept separate from the names of those who provided the data, and the respondents’ real names are not used in the final report.

During the fieldwork, the team disrupted the business activities of the informal entrepreneurs, for which there was no compensation. We were unable to offer incentives to the respondents because of our obligation to the...
scientific community and the dilemma incentives present with reference to the data collected. Jennings (2001:113) has shown that with incentives the researcher cannot be sure whether the participant has responded out of genuine interest and provided truthful responses as opposed to participating for their own gain. A decision was made not to offer incentives on the premise that scientists do not get funding for their projects, and therefore offering incentives would set the wrong precedent. Respondents were merely provided with refreshments during their participation.

9. RESEARCH FINDINGS

9.1 Women's participation in the informal sector in Binga
Women's participation in the informal sector, especially trading fish locally, is a recent phenomenon in Binga, owing to the belief that they should stay home taking care of their husbands and children, and that mobility is associated with prostitution. Women in Binga are involved in various activities including selling Tonga baskets, chickens, sweet potatoes, fish, fresh and dried vegetables, and running flea markets. Access to markets is one indicator of empowerment, according to the Women's Empowerment Framework. However, in this study the markets that women mostly frequented were local, with markets outside Binga still dominantly frequented by men. This study focused on women who participated in the informal sector through buying and selling fish at Siachilaba, the local fish market.

The women studied pointed out that the main reason for their involvement in buying and selling fish was to combat poverty and hunger, which is characteristic of many families and households in Binga. The extent of poverty in Binga was studied and confirmed by the 2004 Household Economy Assessment, which established that 85-90 percent of households in Binga were trapped in absolute poverty and required permanent welfare support (Save the Children, 2004). This situation is a result of general exclusion of the Tonga people in Binga from development processes, and a decade of economic crisis, which saw many men losing their formal jobs (Cumanzala and Muleya, 2010). This is why Williams and Gurtoo (2011) argued that informal sector activities are a rational economic strategy.

The other reasons given for starting informal businesses were that women wanted to be independent of their in-laws and husbands. It emerged that men label women who depend solely on them as “gold diggers”.

Respondents revealed that through buying and selling fish they generate income ranging from US$20 to US$200 per month.

9.2 The connection between women’s informal sector income generation and the education of women and girls
A majority (65 percent) of the respondents in this study had only primary school education. This situation reflects the general female population in Binga. Cumanzala and Muleya (2010) observed that only a handful of women in Binga had been to school and that the majority were illiterate. In this study, 30 percent of respondents had attained a lower level secondary education, while 5 percent had never been to school (see Figure 2.28). This scenario confirms Williams and Gurtoo’s findings (2011) of a study they conducted in India that most uneducated women entered the informal economy because they lacked other economic opportunities.

The low level of education among the respondents and the general population of women in Binga would have called for support for non-formal education. However, at the time of the study there were no non-formal education services available or accessible to girls and women in the wards under study. The reason was that respondents said they did not have the money to pay the teachers. In Siachilaba, the centre that used to offer non-formal education services was closed because parents were not paying school fees, which were used to pay the teachers. The observation was also made across the country by MoESAC’s National Action Plan (2005) that, as a community-based programme, the community is expected to supplement the allowance paid to tutors by the government, but this was hardly possible as the communities could not afford to make their own ends meet. Women in Siachilaba reported:

We want non-formal education services here, but government has to fully support it because we cannot be seen competing for the same resources with our children. We are struggling to pay fees for our children, so to think about our own school fees under these circumstances is weird. A normal mother puts the interests of her children before hers.

Furthermore, when non-formal education services were available, women in the informal sector observed that the time for the classes (2pm-5pm) clashed with their business pursuits as well as their household responsibilities. In Binga, literacy as well as part-time continuing education programmes used to be available. The latter provided face-to-face tuition, with classes generally held at secondary schools to assist those students who wanted to supplement their ‘O’ level or ‘A’ level subjects, or wanted to acquire further academic qualifications. In addition to basic literacy and numeracy, the curriculum included peasant agriculture, home economics, population and family life education, environmental education, gender equity, primary health care, and civic education, which...
was relevant to the livelihoods and work trajectories of the women in question.

Nationally, a high proportion of women are enrolled in non-formal education courses. This may be a result of the fact that women may have failed to find educational opportunities within the formal system. Females dominate in basic literacy (73 percent), functional literacy (75 percent), and adult education (78 percent) (see Figure 2.29).

Figure 2.29 Percentage enrolments in non-formal education programmes by gender, 2007

Source: MoESAC, 2007b

Non-formal education plays a very important role in lowering illiteracy rates. The non-formal education system was extremely successful in lowering the illiteracy rate in Zimbabwe to 10 percent in 2008 as compared to 63 percent at independence (Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development, forthcoming).

Women entrepreneurs reported that they lacked both education and exposure to support their business activities. As already shown, the majority of the respondents dropped out at primary school level due to the fact that their parents perceived education as exposing their girls to the outside male-dominated world where they would be susceptible to engage in such activities as prostitution. In this context, education, mobility, and exposure are connected, and women are deprived of elements that are vital to the success of their business activities. This is so because the success of any business depends partly on mobility in terms of access to markets, and knowledge of those markets is gained through networks as well as through exposure to the outside world. As one female respondent in Kariangwe said:

I was born in Kariangwe, bred in Kariangwe, married in Kariangwe, live in Kariangwe and will die in Kariangwe. I have never been to any other town except Binga. I lack exposure, if I was educated I would have gone outside Binga for a training of some sort, but now what would be the reason for me to go outside Kariangwe?

Those who had never been to school appreciated the value of education to their business activities. They had seen how lack of education had closed many doors for them and wished to educate their daughters to save them from the same fate. A 52-year-old woman who had never been to school reported:

I am in business, I cannot read, neither can I write. Sometimes we are told that we have to develop business proposals for funding but I cannot. If I had not educated my girl child as my father did to me, who would be helping me to record my sales? Who would be reading for me what has to be read?

The evidence from this study shows that women entrepreneurs’ level of education did not negatively influence their attitudes towards girls’ education. The value placed on girls’ education in Binga generally is confirmed by district level statistics, which show that there are slight gender disparities in enrolments at both primary (50.52 percent for boys and 49.48 percent for girls) and secondary school (50.14 percent for boys and 49.86 percent for girls), as can be seen in Table 2.17. This clearly shows that attitudes towards girls’ education have changed, as the generation of the parents of women involved in the informal sector only valued primary education for girls.

Table 2.17 Percentage of primary and secondary school enrolments by gender, Binga, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school enrolment</td>
<td>50.14</td>
<td>49.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school enrolment</td>
<td>50.52</td>
<td>49.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Binga District Education Statistics, July 2012

In one FGD women argued:

In this community parents historically did not want to educate girl children but things are changing. They just wanted the girl child to be able to read and write, that is why they just send them to primary school and ended there.

The change in attitudes towards girls’ education is clearly shown by the educational profile of the respondents, which shows that the younger the respondent, the higher the level of education attained. Figure 2.30 shows that only in the 20-24 age group were there women who has gone to certificate level and no one had ended school at primary school level. Conversely, results show that the older the respondent, the lower the level of education attained. For example, all respondents in the 40-49 age range ended at primary school level, whereas no-one in the 50-54 age range had ever been to school. This picture depicts the changing attitudes towards girls’ education.
This study dispelled the assumption that one’s level of education shapes one’s attitude towards education, as women in FGDS concurred with a woman who remarked:

*I do not care that I am not educated. My wish is for my children to be better than me in every regard; that is why I sleep at the market selling fish. In fact my daughter has failed her ordinary level examinations twice but I have not given up on her. I know one day she will make it. In this age, education is life.*

One woman entrepreneur who had never been to school pointed out that her daughter read to her, did the record keeping for her business, and informed her when the hawkers’ licence was about to expire. The respondent stated that she valued the education of her children, both boys and girls.

Access to income through participation in informal sector activities has not translated to decision-making powers among some of the women studied. Generally in a household where women contribute financially, income was said to be shared by both spouses. In that sense, women also contributed to household decision-making. However, some women stated that their husbands forcefully demanded money from their business activities. For example, one woman narrated that at one point, she raised money with the intent of paying school fees for her children but was forced to hand it over to her husband. The respondent stated that she gave her husband the money for fear of being ostracised from her matrimonial home if she did not. Lack of decision-making power over income from business activities therefore affects the intended use of the income, which in most cases is to pay school fees for children, especially girls against whom the fathers discriminate. From the profile of respondents already shown and their low levels of education, this finding confirms the ZIMSTAT (2011) findings that women with a level of education higher than secondary are more likely than other women to participate in household decision-making, and that women’s encounters with violent situations decline sharply with education, from 38 percent among women with no education to 15 percent among women with more than a secondary education. The Women’s Empowerment Framework shows the issue of control as the final indicator of empowerment; women who have no control over their income are therefore not yet empowered to make decisions regarding their children’s education.

### 9.3 Women’s priorities when they get money from informal sector activities

Priorities for use of income vary depending on the time of year. Generally, priority goes to buying food for the household; at the beginning of the school year the second priority is paying school fees, buying uniforms, and other school requirements. Where parents have more than one child in school they pointed out that they did not prioritise any of the children, but rather spent small amounts on each of them. One parent remarked:

*When we do not have enough money to cover the fees for our three children, we do not choose to pay for one and leave the rest; rather we pay small amounts for all of them so that none of them feels discriminated against.*

A study by UNIFEM (2009) confirmed the priority that women gave to children’s education compared to men. After earning money from small cross-border trade, 39 percent of men prioritised children’s education, compared to 58 percent of women, as shown in Figure 2.31.

### 9.4 Barriers to girls’ education and how they have been addressed

There are many barriers to girls’ education in Binga. The main one in the study sites is poverty, as Figure 2.32 shows. Thirty percent of respondents regarded economic factors as a prime hindrance to girls’ education.
Women and girls interviewed pointed out that through buying and selling fish, the economic barrier to girls' education was slowly being lowered, and that through their realisation of the importance of girls' education and their participation in household decision making, the notion of son preference when it came to education was being reversed.

Long distances to school, especially secondary school, was also mentioned as a barrier to girls' education in Binga. An example given was at Kariangwe ward, where students have to leave home on foot at around 3am to start at 7:30am. Some students have dropped out of school because of such distances. In some areas, satellite schools have been introduced to address this barrier. Some of the women entrepreneurs interviewed argued that through income from their business pursuits they managed to send their daughters to boarding schools, while others had sent them to stay with relatives in town to facilitate their access to school. The Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture (MoESAC) noted that usually one secondary school services four to six primary schools, which is a clear demonstration that where boarding facilities are not available, students have to travel long distances to and from a secondary school.

Another barrier to girls' education is lack of sanitary products, which leads to girls being absent at least once a month, and ultimately failing the end-of-term examinations because they have missed too much school. Parents reported that this led to girls giving up on school despite their capabilities. This finding confirms those made by the Integrated Sustainable Livelihoods (ISL), a local NGO that established that in some parts of rural Zimbabwe, girls from the age of 12 stayed home during menstruation due to lack of facilities. This study revealed that staying home certainly had an effect on the academic attainment of many disadvantaged girls, as this translated to an average girl losing over a full month of schooling in a given year. Women entrepreneurs in the informal sector argued that through entrepreneurship they could now afford to buy sanitary products for their daughters.

Lack of role models was also identified as a further barrier to girls' education. Key informants argued that there were very few educated and successful women in Binga. In the education sector in the district, all senior-level positions were held by men. These included the posts of District Education Officer and education inspectors. There were very few female school heads and deputy heads at primary and secondary schools (1.5 percent) compared to men (98.5 percent), as Table 2.18 shows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary school heads</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school deputy heads</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school heads</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school deputy heads</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.18 Percentages of school heads and deputy heads by gender, Binga, 2012

Female teachers are also fewer than male teachers at both primary and secondary school levels. Women entrepreneurs argued that through entrepreneurship some girls in the area had succeeded and were working in the area as nurses, teachers, and project officers in NGOs.

Women entrepreneurs interviewed reported that generally, parents in the area were discouraged from sending girls to school because of the prevalence of teenage pregnancies in the area. This is despite the existence of the Teenage Pregnancy Re-entry Policy, which states that after child birth the teenage mother is allowed to go back to school to continue her studies. The women pointed out that the community could not do anything because those responsible for the pregnancies were normally school leavers in the community, and in most cases they married the girls, thereby removing the idea of her returning to school. Further, as the girl assumes her role as a mother, the possibility of going back to school is ruled out. It was clear from FGDs that where both the boy and the girl were in school, application of the Teenage Pregnancy Re-entry Policy was still limited where girls were concerned. MoESAC put in place Circular No 35 of 2001, which allows girls to re-enter the school system after they have given birth. The policy grants leave to girls who fall pregnant in primary or secondary school, and allows their re-enrolment after delivery. Where the person responsible for the pregnancy is a schoolboy, he too is granted leave for the same duration. The granting of such leave is accompanied by counselling for the affected school children, as well as for their parents, by the school authorities. Boys therefore go back to school, while most girls stay home to deal with the demands of motherhood.

Despite the positive impact of women’s participation in informal business activities, FGDs with girls revealed that their mother’s businesses demanded them to assist with household chores as their mothers concentrated on their businesses. The girls also assisted in several ways in their mothers’ businesses; 75 percent of the women interviewed said they involved their daughters in their businesses in one way or the other. For example, considering the women entrepreneurs involved in the fish business go to the lake at around 4am and get home at around 10am, girls indicated that they assisted with household chores during the mother’s absence. When the mother comes home late, they have to be absent from school to look after siblings. In cases where they can afford to go to school, when they get home they assist with drying the fish for sale, and in some cases are sent to the lake (a six hour journey) to buy fish to ensure that stocks do not run out. Due to the length of the journey, going to school the following day is ruled out. One girl argued:

"I am left to take care of my siblings and do household chores when my mother goes to the lake. On the days she goes to the lake, I do not go to school because from the lake she goes straight away to the market. On that day I perform the household chores while she is at the market until around midnight. The council does not want to see children under 18 years of age at the fish market."
Council policy helps save the girls from buying and selling fish specifically at Siachilaba. The policy states that no one below the age of 18 is allowed to trade fish at the marketplace, and risks being arrested. As a result, girls are left to carry out tasks at home or go to the lake to buy fish. Girls interviewed argued that the despite the economic benefits derived from their mothers’ businesses, from which they got their school fees and other school requirements, helping out their mothers in their business pursuits affected their school attendance. One girl pointed out how sometimes she missed school because she had to go to the lake to buy fish to sell. Girls also play an important role in their own education through informal sector activities during the weekends, and use the money they earn to pay their school fees.

9.5 Other factors facilitating girls’ education in Binga

Women and girls reported that participating in informal sector activities brought benefits of creativity, teamwork, communication, consensus building, personal responsibility, and compromise, and that these are important in their education endeavours. The women reported that they were involved in income rotating, savings, and lending schemes, which they fell back on during hard times. They argued that these schemes had helped them to meet school requirements for themselves and for their children.

Participation in informal sector activities builds up a team spirit, which further builds the women’s social capital. These women influence each other on matters of household development. Camfed has capitalised on this and initiated mother support groups (MSGs), which are there to support girls’ education. Women in MSGs are entrepreneurs who contribute money and items towards the education of disadvantaged girls in the community. Women in MSGs sit down with girls and encourage them to enrol and remain in school by telling them the benefits of education. These MSGs work hand in hand with trained teacher mentors in mentoring girls in schools. In Binga district, there are 25 MSGs.

Through financial support from Camfed, the teenage mothers have started buying and selling various commodities, including fish. Income from these activities is used for household needs and to pay school fees for them to go back to school. After acquiring an income, some choose to go back to formal schools, while others learn through the correspondence system. In Kariangwe ward, one teenage mother with two children went back to a formal school, where she is currently in form 3.

Through financial support from Camfed, since 1998 35 women who had not completed their schooling for various reasons went back to school and have graduated as teachers and nurses, among other professions.

It was clear from FGDs that women occupied positions in school development committees (SDCs). Their involvement in school governance bodies may influence policies on girls’ education. The government, through the MoESAC, developed a Gender Handbook for SDCs, used by these members, which has gone a long way in motivating parents and girls to realise the empowering potential of education.

10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women entrepreneurs in the informal sector believe they have acted as change agents in promoting girls’ education in the study area. This is despite their low levels of education. Income from their informal sector activities has addressed most of the barriers to girls’ education in Binga, including tackling sexual maturation practices, distance to schools, attitudes towards girls’ education, lack of school fees, and teenage pregnancy. Campaigns for female education by MSGs and peer educators have also led to the enrolment of girls in school, including those that had dropped out for various reasons. Economic empowerment of women, together with the knowledge of girls’ right to education, can help improve the situation of girls, as can efforts to meet the strategic and practical gender needs of women.

This study makes the following recommendations for practice:

1. There is still a need for awareness campaigns on the importance of children’s rights, including the right for girls to be educated and to be protected from harm and teenage pregnancy.
2. Awareness campaigns on the Teenage Pregnancy School Re-Entry Policy should be intensified in Binga in view of the high levels of teenage pregnancy reported in the area.
3. The government should partner with development agencies like Camfed and re-introduce non-formal education, which tends to support women by offering second-chance education to dropouts.
4. There is a need for Camfed to upscale the MSG and peer educator initiatives so that women and girls learn about the importance of education from fellow women and see role models in women who had dropped out but who have since gone back to school.
5. Informal women’s entrepreneurship activities need support from the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises through loans, training in business management, and market linkages to boost the activities in view of the role entrepreneurship plays in supporting girls’ education.

The following recommendations are made for further research:

1. There is a need for an in-depth analysis of the impact of women’s entrepreneurship on girls’ performance in school.
2. Furthermore, because men, who uphold negative attitudes towards girls’ education, dominate in
schools as heads and as leaders in school governance bodies, it is important to establish whether or not gender inequalities and stereotyping are perpetuated in these male-dominated environments with regard to distribution of available educational resources, influence on subject selection, gender roles in schools, among others.
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Conclusion and recommendations for policy and practice

As we have noted, non-discriminatory education and training is a prerequisite for girls and women to successfully enter the labour market, develop the appropriate technical and personal skills to ensure professional advancement, and be sufficiently aware of key issues in their living and working contexts to make informed decisions about their future. The work presented in this volume of the FAWE Research Series makes a case for a number of measures that can help level the playing field for young women within the education system and those entering or already in the labour force.

Mechanisms for greater gender equality

In order to support and motivate women in various academic, professional and personal development domains – for example, in technology-related degree programmes, student government leadership, job-seeking and entrepreneurship – there is need for increased up-to-date and relevant information on gender-based experiences in academic institutions, on coping and self-building strategies and on motivational factors. The CIRESC research paper recommends government funding for studies that will generate up-to-date indicators on employment and education in order to guide the development of programmes and other measures. REPOA points to a pronounced need for higher education institutions to have ready access to sex disaggregated data – at both institutional and academic programme level – on enrolment, performance and completion, as well as data showing differences between academic programmes. Such information is crucial in providing insight to policy-makers, learning institutions and the labour market on setting up mechanisms for mentality change, creating more female empowerment and awareness frameworks, and implementing decisions and actions that help eliminate factors that hinder women from reaching their full potential academically and professionally.

REPOA argues, too, that life choices made by women and men are influenced by gender biases they experience throughout their lives in both the private and public spheres. Government ministries and the private sector must therefore accelerate the introduction or reinforcement of gender mainstreaming structures that plan, institute and follow up on measures that promote gender equality in learning institutions and the workplace. Similarly, tertiary institutions should establish functional gender units with appropriate and qualified staff to ensure an understanding, adoption and promotion of gender equality leading to the elimination of gender discriminatory attitudes and behaviour both in the classroom and in other aspects of campus life. Necessarily, such measures will require appropriate funding and personnel.

In order to build women’s capacities for socio-economic emancipation, some of the studies in this volume call for particular measures for self-employed women, particularly those in the informal sector. For these women, proposed measures include literacy initiatives and training in bookkeeping, in particular, as well as the second-chance, non-formal education initiatives implemented in several countries. Given the importance of self-employment for women, especially in the informal sector, and the role women’s entrepreneurship plays in supporting girls’ education, the ERNWACA study recommends the promotion of self-employment through financing for small- and medium-sized businesses, thereby increasing employment opportunities in the private sector. Similarly, the University of Zimbabwe study of women in the informal sector makes a case for relevant ministries to support women’s informal entrepreneurship through loans, training in business management, and market linkages to boost their activities.

The research in this volume indicates a lack of appropriate and functional mechanisms to cope with sexual harassment and sexual abuse within learning institutions and the workplace. School personnel lack understanding about sexual violence and its implications, and, in the case of learners with disabilities, understanding about disability, knowledge about the limitations of disabled children, and the ability to communicate with them. Female graduates have to contend with sexual advances from prospective employers, making job-hunting even more challenging. Initiatives and facilities that enable female students and employees to report on sexual harassment and abuse; seek physical, psychological and legal assistance; be assured of appropriate sanctions against those who harass, harm or violate them in any way; and be protected from further incidences are essential. As sexual harassment and abuse are difficult subjects for victims to raise, confidentiality and understanding are critical. This implies that schools and businesses employ dedicated staff who have the appropriate attitude towards victims of sexual violence and have been trained to support them and take the necessary steps to ensure their protection. Continuous staff development in this area is crucial as new legislation, knowledge and approaches emerge. Where legislation is lacking or weak, relevant national, labour or education authorities must ensure that policies, rules and mechanisms governing sexual violence are introduced and are effective. States must be vigilant in their attention to respect for workers’ rights and safety, especially female workers, and to the rights and safety of students in learning institutions.

Awareness on rights, obligations and opportunities

Measures to raise awareness on gender issues within learning institutions and in the labour market emerged as a key recommendation from several studies. This is because efforts to address gender bias must go beyond establishing policy and regulatory frameworks and must target effective community involvement in promoting gender equality. This
calls for all stakeholders, including CSOs, to take a pro-active role in raising awareness at all levels on the negative implications for society as a whole of gender inequality and violence against girls and women. CIRES calls on government authorities, associations and NGOs involved in gender issues to implement coordinated programmes and campaigns on gender awareness that target women, men, parents, girls and boys and are supported by media in order to trigger positive change in attitudes towards gender equality and redefine ideologies concerning women.

Among the objectives of awareness efforts should be that parents more fully understand their role in the socioeconomic emancipation of girls and the importance of education in this; that girls are more aware of social standards and values concerning them, the advantages of education and the various roles they can play in society; and that women are informed on the academic, professional and entrepreneurial opportunities open to them and the existing policies and mechanisms in their favour. Thus, to optimise women’s professional integration, more information on public and private recruitment and training organisations should be readily available to young women starting out in the labour market as well as for those already working and seeking to improve their situation. Greater awareness on services that support private enterprise should also be encouraged through increased information. As regards education, it is important that students, families, and school communities understand children’s rights, including the right to education and to protection from harm, as well as school re-entry policies that enable adolescent mothers to return to school and complete their studies.

Awareness is of particular importance in situations of sexual harassment and abuse. All teaching staff need to be aware of their legal obligations as regards the treatment and protection of the students under their care. Similarly, employers must understand their obligations as regards the safety and wellbeing of their employees. Sexual violence policies must be made clear to all – learners, parents, school staff, businesses, employees – to ensure they understand their rights, what constitutes sexual harassment and violence, actions to be taken when such incidences occur or are suspected, reporting procedures and victim support and protection.

**Guidance, counselling and motivation for female students**

While numerous studies indicate that male and female students can perform equally well academically, in extra-curricular domains and in the workplace, gender bias in education and in the labour market continues to be detrimental to young women’s academic and career progress. Some of the studies in this volume point to an evident need for more formal counselling and orientation mechanisms, both at secondary school and university levels. The University of Douala study, for example, suggests that students who have been discouraged by their learning experience in science subjects or feel intimidated, are likely to change their perspective and take up technology-related disciplines if given the right guidance. Accordingly, guidance and motivation initiatives that encourage young girls into science subjects at secondary school in preparation for tertiary studies are important. The University of Douala’s research argues that female teaching staff and role models in science and technology as well as the positive portrayal of women in science and technology teaching materials are key in motivating female students in this area. The Ghana study, too, highlights female faculty members as important role models in developing leadership qualities and ambitions among female students. This research paper recommends that mentoring initiatives within universities should not be limited to the academic sphere alone but should also target the development of strong leadership characteristics among female students. The University of Zimbabwe suggests that role models be involved in peer education initiatives for girls and women in the informal sector, too, particularly those who resume their education after having dropped out of school. The study of education-labour market linkages in Tanzania recommends that tertiary institutions take steps to prepare students for job interviews by coaching them on the rules and practices of job-seeking and the labour market.

Research can be key in informing guidance and support mechanisms for young women. The REPOA study found that female students were either discouraged from pursuing science-based subjects such as engineering or found it difficult to gain professional entry into science-related fields because of employers’ negative perceptions about women’s capacity to work in these fields. REPOA suggested research to explore these findings further and assess the extent to which these experiences are common in education and the labour market as well as their impact on academic and professional outcomes for women and men.

Counselling, too, recurred as essential in enhancing women’s learning and professional experiences. Several studies, including the one by the University of Education, Winneba, called for counselling services in learning institutions to offer psychological and emotional assistance to female students suffering from harassment, violence, discouragement, frustration and stress.

Appropriate sexuality education was identified as key in combating sexual harassment and abuse, particularly for learners at secondary level and those with disabilities. The University of South Africa argues that such education should encourage positive sexuality, promote decision-making abilities, empower learners to act on incidences of inappropriate
peer pressure and rights abuse, and address reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy, body image and gender roles. Such programmes have the potential to challenge peer and societal pressures that promote abusive behaviour and stereotypes about men and women, enable males to develop positive attitudes towards women and girls, and provide an opportunity for females to express their concerns related to sexual violence.

These recommendations can inform dialogue and engagement and contribute to concrete actions at community, institution and national level that seek to enhance girls’ and women’s participation in education and employment. The overriding concern of the studies in this volume and the recommendations they make is that young girls and women across sub-Saharan Africa have a fair chance to gain the knowledge, skills and characteristics that will enable them to be autonomous, productive and fulfilled in the world of work.
Gender equality and women’s empowerment are key to poverty reduction and socio-economic development, and education plays a crucial role in this. Yet the experiences and outcomes of education are quite different for boys and girls and for men and women, more often than not to the disadvantage of girls and women.

The studies in this third volume of the FAWE Research Series ask several important questions about girls’ and women’s education and employment in Africa. Which factors within the school environment motivate or impede girls’ and women’s enrolment in science-related programmes? What motivates female students to vie for positions in student government? In both cases, what forms of support are available for these young women, what challenges do they encounter and what strategies do they adopt to cope with these challenges? Another study asks how sexual violence at school contributes to the disempowerment and marginalisation of girls with disabilities and how schools can promote safe learning environments for children with special needs.

As regards employment, what are the mechanisms of women’s integration and non-integration on the labour market? How are gendered attitudes and practices in higher education and in the labour market manifested? Do female graduates of vocational training have more success entering the job market than men and does gender determine the nature of entry-level employment contracts? Finally, how does women’s participation in the informal sector influence girls’ education?

These and other key issues examined in this volume of research papers can shed light on ways to ensure policy approaches, community attitudes, teaching practices and learning and working environments are fair, enabling and lead to enhanced outcomes for girls and boys and women and men.