

Review of: "Exploring the relationship between gender and competencies development in higher education institutions: Perspectives from a university in Zimbabwe"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Dear author(s),

Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper. I agree that this is an important and pertinent topic. Although the idea is a good one, unfortunately, the way in which the study is operationalized holds back its potential contribution. There are a few areas where I would encourage the authors to give further thought, as follows:

- Theoretical literature has not been considered and reviewed. It's better to observe the connection between the contents. Try to explain everything except the topics in order to establish the necessary coherence.
- Theoretical Development: The literature review must engage in the constructs of your analytical framing in a meaningful way. The literature review section could be improved by being more analytical. In other words, building on the existing literature to highlight what is missing and what is yet to be done and in so doing outline the theoretical puzzles or debates to which this work contributes. I have concerns related to theoretical development, and note the need for a more rigorous critique of the literature to help deepen the theoretical underpinnings of the study.
- Some sentences are without reference. This means that the statements were made by the authors themselves and are not scientifically valid.
- The discussion section needs to highlight what is new in your findings and what we can learn from a study conducted in this interesting and understudied context. Whilst the introduction sets the stage for the study by justifying the relevance of the study, the discussion is the most important section as it is in the discussion that it is all brought together, and the authors illustrate how and why the study findings advance the literature. Therefore, the discussion needs to illustrate the new insights—the contributions—in a clear and compelling manner. In other words, illustrate what we know now that we did not know before or, in effect, to clearly illustrate the contribution of the study to the different bodies of literature. Furthermore, what are the future research directions based on this new framework?
- Theoretical Contributions: Addressing all the points mentioned above will lead to a more in-depth presentation of your data which has a clearer theoretical contribution. What is the theoretical contributions?