

# Review of: "Exploring the Relationship Between Gender and Sustainable Development Competencies in Higher Education Institutions: Insights from a Zimbabwean University"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Review report:

## 1. Introduction:

- What is meant by goal number 5??? Is it about SDGs-5?? Need to make it clear. (page number 3/22)
- The research objectives have been clearly outlined, yet the research questions are absent. It is highly advisable to formulate research questions corresponding to each research objective, including the main research objective.
- There is a lack of description for each section at the conclusion of the introduction. Authors are urged to include a brief additional text for each section.

## 2. Theoretical framework:

- The author(s) opted for "Intersectionality Theory" as the theoretical framework for this research. However, other theories were not emphasized. It is essential to include a paragraph discussing alternative theories on the topic and their respective limitations. Certainly, it's important to acknowledge that Intersectionality Theory, while valuable, is not without its limitations.

## 3. Overview of gender equality in HEIs.

- Page number 5/22: "Despite this concern, little progress has been made in promoting females' active involvement in knowledge production within higher learning institutions on an international scale, as highlighted by Morley (2005)". This is a very old reference. About 19 years old. So, author needs to rethink about this statement.
- Page number 6/22: Unfortunately, female researchers face several challenges, including insufficient institutional and peer support (Cohn et al., 2014; Rice et al., 2007; Chen et al., 2006). Author is requested to check the latest research/publications on the issue/topic for example:
  - Kohtamäki, V., Zheng, G., & Jinia, N. (2023). Gender inequality in academic leadership: Bangladesh, China and Finland. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 00, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12447>
- Page number 6/22: Very old reference about 25 years old. More so, male academics tend to collaborate and publish

with other male researchers, leaving female academics with fewer opportunities for mentorship and often leading them to publish in isolation (Fisher et al., 1998, p. 36). At present this is not true.

- Page number 6/22: Again very old references: The literature also shows that women are underrepresented in PhD and master's programs globally, which has an impact on their employment and advancement to leadership and decision-making roles (Sax et al., 2002; Rice et al., 2007; Snell et al., 2009). Author(s) should check the latest publications on the field.

4. The Zimbabwean Context: This section is well written.

5. Methodology: This section needs a big revision for example:

- This section lacks scientific references. Why was a mixed-method approach chosen for this research? A thorough scientific explanation with appropriate references is needed. Similarly, references are required regarding qualitative and quantitative research. How were the participants selected and what sampling method was employed?

6. Findings and Discussions: This section is presented in a very well and scientific manner. This is the good part of this paper.

7. The conclusion, recommendations, and further research could be consolidated under a single heading, with recommendations presented in a numerical format.

#### **Overall comments:**

- i. The topic is extremely pertinent in the context of sustainable development and higher education institutions (HEIs) across both developed and developing nations. The authors have addressed a pressing issue through their extensive research within the Zimbabwean perspective. The findings of this research could substantially contribute to mitigating gender discrimination within the academic sphere.
- ii. Overall, the paper is skillfully composed with a standard use of the English language. Nevertheless, the feedback, comments, and recommendations mentioned above need to be addressed prior to publication.

Thank you for affording me the chance to review the paper. Undoubtedly, as a female academic within this intricate societal framework, I have gained valuable insights from this research.