

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

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The article is highly relevant as it provides a good insight into the concrete challenges for more gender equality at a Higher Education Institution (HEI) in Zimbabwe and embeds this in the larger context of the discussion on how to achieve not only more gender equity in the HEI sector, but also more prosperity and sustainable development.

The empirical basis is solid and the mix of methods appropriate, even if one would have wished that more face-to-face interviews had been conducted in view of the very good selection of quotations. However, the rationale why this was not possible (Covid19 pandemic) is very comprehensible.

A particular strength of the contribution, apart from the quotations already mentioned, are the recommendations formulated at the end, which are very topical and relevant.

The presentation of the state of research is somewhat unusual, but it certainly contains the central findings regarding a better representation of women in science. In the empirical part, it is then also very well traced how a lack of access to resources (research funding, but also targeted training) significantly prevents women from building up the necessary competences. New and thus very informative is the aspect of how difficult it is at the selected university to conduct research at all. Also very revealing in terms of content are the relationships with external stakeholders, which are primarily male-dominated, which is attributed to the cultural context, among other things. Equally important is the insight into how difficult it is to sustainably implement a national framework, which is certainly committed to the goal of equality, down to the level of organisations.

However, some points could further improve the article. For example, definitions would help to better understand some of the central constructs used, such as what exactly is meant by gender mainstreaming, but especially what exactly is meant by "sustainable development competencies". In the following text, I understand these competencies to be generally about research and innovation competencies, but not necessarily explicitly about a specific type of research and innovation, namely sustainability research or sustainability innovations.

For the presentation of the link between gender equality and SDGs, further literature references would have been helpful, for example Fiho et al. 2022 (Promoting gender equality across the sustainable development goals, Environment,

Development and Sustainability, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-022-02656-1>) . This also applies to other points such as the contribution of more diversity to economic performance.

A minor comment, due to my lack of knowledge of university structures in Zimbabwe, concerns the question of why other leaders above the level of deans (e.g. chancellor, university president) were not interviewed. However, this may be an option for future research. And finally, I wondered on what basis Table 1 on women in leadership positions is based, on the surveys or on internal statistics? In my opinion, internal statistics would have been the more appropriate source here