

# 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.

The manuscript "Exploring the Relationship Between Gender and Sustainable Development Competencies in Higher Education Institutions: Insights from a Zimbabwean University" sheds light on a crucial issue: the underrepresentation and unfair treatment of female academics in higher education institutions (HEIs), which has an effect on the development of sustainable competency. The study's thorough mixed-method methodology, which included in-person interviews and online surveys, demonstrates its resilience.

The manuscript successfully addresses a global issue — gender inequality in academia — while being firmly grounded in its Zimbabwean university context. The results highlight the widespread gender-based discrepancies in program participation, resource allocation, and competency acquisition, which are primarily due to the institutionally predominately male power structures.

The manuscript's realistic suggestions for systemic change are what make it significant. The manuscript suggests practical ways to reduce gender inequities by promoting affirmative policies, gender mainstreaming, and a radical change in institutional culture and leadership mindset. These suggestions show promise for the investigated university as well as for HEIs worldwide, providing a road map for creating a more welcoming and equal atmosphere. However, more research into such obstacles would be beneficial for the study.

The manuscript's design and data gathering procedure are thoroughly described in the methodology section. The mixed methods technique used to investigate how gender affects the growth of sustainable skills in a Zimbabwean university is accurately captured. For rigor and clarity, there are a few gaps and areas that might be further developed:

**1. Sampling Rationale and Representativeness:** A more detailed justification for choosing the particular university and the academic staff there as the study's subject matter could be provided. It should be explained why 43 academics were selected and how it was concluded that this sample size was representative of the whole academic staff.

**2. Data Collection Instruments:** Although the semi-structured online questionnaires are only briefly explained, it would be helpful to include more information regarding the structure and content of these surveys. Detailing the standardized inquiries, the types of questions posed, and the degree to which participants were permitted to elaborate on their

responses are all part of this.

**3. Data Analysis Procedures:** A clear and thorough explanation of how the acquired data, both quantitative and qualitative, were processed is missing from the methodology section. Any statistical analysis carried out on the quantitative data, as well as the procedure for coding, categorizing, and extracting themes from the qualitative data, should be thoroughly described.

**4. Triangulation of Data:** It would be beneficial to go through how the mixed methods data were combined or compared to give a more thorough knowledge of the research topic in order to increase the study's robustness and validity. This could entail describing how the Deans' viewpoints (from in-depth interviews) were combined with those from the online surveys.

The study's design and execution would be more transparent, clear, and solid if these gaps were filled and more thorough information was provided in the methodology section.

Moreover, to improve the organization and presentation of the study design and procedure, the methodology section might benefit from the inclusion of clear titles. Readers could get an organized summary of the study's numerous components from these headings. The methods section could include the following headings:

## **Methodology**

### **1. Research Design**

This includes the overall approach in this study.

### **2. Participants and Sampling**

In this section, you can include a detailed explanation of how participants were chosen and the reasoning behind selecting this sample size. Is there a particular criterion for this selection?

### **3. Data Collection Methods**

- **3.1 In-Depth Interviews with Deans**
- **3.2 Online Semi-Structured Questionnaires**

### **4. Data Analysis Method**

#### **4.1 Qualitative Data Analysis**

#### **4.2 Quantitative Data Analysis**

### **5. Ethical Considerations**

### **6. Limitations**

Describe any potential biases or limitations related to the selected research design, methodologies, and sample.

Overall, the study makes a significant contribution to the fields of gender studies, sustainable development, and educational policy thanks to its well-structured approach, contextual relevance, and concrete recommendations. The paper's influence is extensive, touching on both academia and the more general goal of building a sustainable and just future.