



**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

**FACULTY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

**Culture, institutional policies and gender equity in physical education: a case study of  
one teacher training college in the Kingdom of Eswatini.**

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of a Master of Science  
Education in Curriculum Studies.

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I, Temalangenzi Zandile Rejoice Dlamini declare that;

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(Dr. Y. Mudavanhu)

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work as a living testimony to God that He lives. This work is also dedicated to my mom, my husband, children. THANK YOU!!!!

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

My heartfelt gratitude goes to God Almighty for affording me the opportunity to be a testimony of the impossible. To me this is a testimony that there is absolutely nothing impossible with God. I would also like to acknowledge the unwavering support and guidance of my supervisor Dr. V Matswetu, YOU ARE THE BEST! Thank you so much Dr. for all your patience throughout this journey, you have truly shown me what it means to be an educator. My sincere gratitude goes to my husband Babe Madvonsela, thank you so much love for allowing me the opportunity to temporarily destabilize our family operations just so that I can climb a step further in the academic world, thank you for your unwavering support and for believing in me the way you do. I would also like acknowledge my babies for allowing mommy to sometimes be unavailable for them, this has been a journey, thank you bo Vusamuti. My sincere gratitude similarly goes to Dr B.B Dlamini, Nkhosi, thank you so much, you have been a pillar of support in this journey from the day I started, Nkhosi thank you. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the students and lecturers who allowed me to invade their time to gather information from them, your contribution to this work does not go unnoticed, you made this study possible, thank you.

## **Abstract**

This qualitative study investigates cultural and institutional factors that promote or hinder gender equity in physical education. It focuses on a case study of a teacher training college, situated in the Manzini region of the Kingdom of Eswatini. The qualitative case study approach was used and the interpretive paradigm. The study used the Gender Equality Framework by CARE and Critical Pedagogy Framework. Participants for this study consisted of eleven (11) students, five (5) of which were females and six (6) were males, these students were conveniently selected as well as two (2) physical education lecturers who were purposively selected. The data was collected using document analysis, interviews with lectures and questionnaires with students which were supplemented with telephonic interviews for further exploration of the matter. The findings of the study suggested that cultural norms and beliefs profoundly hindered gender equity in physical education. The study further unearthed other themes that promote or hinder gender equity in physical education in the college namely; lack of resources, curriculum, advocacy and policies. The study recommended that the provision of resources, integration of gender equity topics to the curriculum, diversifying physical activities for variety, advocacy and awareness programs, professional development of lecturers as well policy implementation and measurement would help promote gender equity in the physical education programme in the college. The research explores cultural norms, beliefs and institutional policies shaping gender roles in physical education, aiming to uncover barriers. The study will contribute insights into how cultural and institutional dynamics impact physical education practises, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to promote gender equity in the teacher training college.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

CSTL: Care and Support for Teaching and Learning

MoET: Ministry of Education and Training

CBE: Competency Based Education

TSC: Teaching Service Commission

PE: Physical Education

ESSP: Education Sector Strategic Plan

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## **Chapter 1**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Gender equity in education is a critical aspect of fostering an inclusive and just society. Despite significant strides towards gender equality worldwide, disparities persist, including physical education. This study investigates the cultural and institutional factors that promote or hinder gender equity in physical education within a teacher training college in the Manzini region of the Kingdom of Eswatini. This chapter will delve into the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, aim of the study. It also looks into the research questions as well as the objectives of the research. The chapter further delves into the location of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study and end by define key terms then summary of the chapter.

### **1.1 Background of the study**

Guerrero and Puerta (2023) elucidate that physical education plays a crucial role in the holistic development of students, contributing to their physical, mental, and social well-being. However, gender disparities in physical education can hinder this development, particularly for girls and women. Davis (2024) defend that these disparities manifest in various ways such as leadership opportunities within sports teams, gender stereotypes and biases, research and scholarships, health and safety, representation and access to facilities. Physical education at teachers' colleges in Eswatini is considered as a general education or support course. The college programme structure classifies courses in four (4) different categories namely; Group A which are professional courses or core courses which include education, special and inclusive education as well as teaching practise which is done in year 2 and 3 of training for a duration of six (6) weeks respectively. The second category is called Group B which are content majors, these are the subjects which form the course combinations in the college for specialisation. The third category is Group C which comprises of one course named Academic Communication Skills.

The last category is Group D which are the general education courses and these include music, physical education, information and communication technology, practical arts as well as psychosocial support. The general education courses or support courses are to be taken by all enrolled students up to their second year of training as part of the requirements in fulfilment of the teacher's diploma. According to the college regulations, the support courses

are to be taught for four (4) normal hours per week including lecture and practical hours of a semester which has a duration of thirteen (13) weeks including mid-term break. In the context of the college, a general education or support course is defined as a module that complements the specialisation or content modules which are offered in the college which include; English and siSwati, Mathematics and Science, Mathematics and ICT, English and French, History and Geography to mention a few.

Observations, to physical education in particular, display that the course has suffered impact in the past years in terms of the active, meaningful participation and performance of female students compared to that of male students. The subject requires that there be practical sessions which are done as part of the objectives of the course especially in the techniques of games and sports. Through informal observations by the researcher over the years, she noticed that during the practical lessons, the participation of female students was low compared to male students. The researcher discovered that most female students did not take any interest in practical sessions yet the male students would even go to the extent of participating in extracurricular sports activities. The female students on the other hand would show unwillingness to participate in physical activities expressing tiredness, occupation with other activities.

Efforts to make it a core course or a stand-alone programme in the college have been rendered futile in the past due to due political factors which include among others the halting of employment, replacements and promotions in the civil service according to the Circular No.3 of 2018. This move was implemented with an aim to curb the wage bill of the nation. The sting was mostly felt in the education sector where teachers have not been hired in the past five years. The college was also not spared from this predicament. Additionally, there is lack of local tertiary institutions offering majors in physical education, the few individuals that are in the country, received training outside Eswatini and have been absorbed by the civil service system in other departments apart from the education sector which makes it hard to divert them to teaching.

The Teaching Service Commission (TSC) is by virtue and authority vested to it by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), the body responsible for the management and oversight of the teaching profession. Guided by the TSC Act No.1 of 1982, the policy states that a teacher should hold a diploma or a degree with a combination of two subjects in sync with the guidelines of the commission to qualify to the teaching profession. The combinations

include among others; English and siSwati, Mathematics and Science, ICT and Science etc. However, subjects like physical education, expressive arts and music have had the most challenges since in the college, the personnel facilitating the subjects do not hold an undergraduate qualification to enable them to be fully employed on the post which then cripples the whole process of seeing physical education combined with any of the two subjects to form a major course.

As a result of the factors mentioned above, no local institutions offer majors in these subjects. Therefore, individual must pursue their qualifications in these fields by undergoing training abroad. The country's education system for employees does not offer opportunities for undergraduate qualifications if you are already in the system, one can only be afforded a study leave only if you look to advance yourself at Master's Degree programme or short courses. The personnel that is currently facilitating these courses is only doing so on college based knowledge which they received while they underwent training at college level.

Observations by the researcher who is also a lecturer for physical education at the college indicate that over the years, there has been a constant low participation of female students in practical lessons of the subject as well as interest in extracurricular sporting activities compared to male students. Male students' participation is noticeable high due to the active involvement in other recreational activities they individually engage themselves in their spare time such as football, volleyball and basketball. Tertiary institutions play a transcendental role in the holistic development of a teacher who will have direct impact with young learners who are on a journey to shaping up their future. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in conjunction with the Ministry of Sports, Youth and Culture has made significant strides towards inclusivity and participation in sports, however, the discrepancies are noticeable in tertiary institutions where gender equity in physical education remains a challenge. Anecdotal sources also indicate that the teaching of the subject at schools suggest that mainly male teachers show interest in teaching physical education due to their active involvement and interest in sporting activities as they actively become sports teachers in schools.

Physical education in the college plays a fundamental role for students as it places them on a better position for pursuing their studies as well integration to higher position in the education system as soon as they culminate their studies since there is still a deficit on the personnel. Active involvement also allows them to partake in the sporting world of the nation where

they get to enjoy benefits such as being incorporated in the panel of writers and designers of the material that is used in schools. Since the introduction of Competency Based Education (CBE), the subject (physical education) is now at Grade 7 at primary school level which is a moderated class, this means that it requires people who will set and mark the examinations at national level, this exercise comes with remuneration apart from the normal salary. It also offers opportunities to partner with other organisations which work simultaneously with programmes focusing on the development of the subject in the country, creating exposure to current themes and discourse not only for the subject. Since the subject is still at primary level and with the newly introduced curriculum, it offers opportunities for capacitation workshops which enhance their general teaching skills as well as in depth knowledge on the latest developments on the subject.

It is crucial for student teachers to rid themselves of any negative attitudes towards the subject to ensure that young learners in schools receive accurate information. To support this, information gathered from an oral interview from a member of the Health and Physical Education Association display that participation of female teachers in schools is low, therefore schools tend to shift sports activities to male teachers. He further mentioned that during sports activities, male teachers are given the role of sports teachers with an assumption that they understand the field better than female teachers. The gender disparities could be a result of traditional gender norms, lack of inclusive methods or other systemic issues. The research therefore aims to investigate what innovative approaches can be used to promote gender equity in physical education at a teacher training college in the Manzini region, Kingdom of Eswatini.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Despite the significant efforts by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and the Ministry of Sports, Youth, and Culture to promote inclusivity and participation in sports, gender equity in physical education remains a challenge in tertiary institutions in the Kingdom of Eswatini. The participation and performance of female students in physical education, which is currently taught as a supporting course in teacher training colleges in the Kingdom of Eswatini is noticeably lower than that of male students. Attempts to make physical education a core course or a stand-alone program have been unsuccessful over the years. These gender disparities could be a result of traditional gender norms, lack of inclusive methods, or other systemic issues.

Physical education is a key component of the education system because it promotes holistic development, enhances academic performance, fosters social skills, promotes lifelong health, fosters inclusivity and builds character. Gender equality as part of the global goals according to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 3 and 5, cannot be divorced from any form of education. The SDG3 which focuses on improving health outcomes and promoting well-being for all individuals, while SDG 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls. In support of this, the Swaziland National Curriculum Framework for General Education of 2018, embeds in its visions of the society and aims of general education, a gender equitable and healthy society. It further acknowledges in the structure of the curriculum, physical education as a subject under the health and well-being learning area. A learning area according to the curriculum framework of 2018, defines how the vision of the society, vision of the learner and the core skills are delivered. This study seeks to investigate cultural and institutional factors that hinder gender equity in physical education.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate cultural and institutional factors that promote or hinder gender equity in physical education innovative approaches within the context of physical education at a teacher training college in the Manzini region, Kingdom of Eswatini. This includes understanding the reasons behind the noticeably lower performance of female students compared to male students in physical education. It will also include looking at how the curriculum can be refined and evaluated over time to ensure it promotes gender equity.

### **1.4 Significance of the study**

This study could contribute significantly to promoting gender equity in physical education within tertiary institutions in the Kingdom of Eswatini. By identifying the challenges that contribute to gender disparities, the study could help ensure that all students, regardless of their gender, have equal opportunities to participate and succeed in physical education. The findings of this study could influence policy-making and teaching practices within tertiary institutions. By providing evidence-based recommendations for promoting gender equity, the study could inform the development of more inclusive and equitable physical education programs. Physical education contributes to students' physical, mental, and social well-being. Therefore, ensuring gender equity in this area could have a positive impact on the overall development of students to effectively fulfil the objectives of the subject. This study could

contribute to the existing body of research on gender equity in physical education. It could provide valuable insights and data for other researchers in the field, thereby advancing our understanding of this important issue. The study could have a global impact by demonstrating how physical education can be used to promote healthy gender norms and behaviours. The innovative approaches identified in this study could be applied in other contexts and countries, thereby contributing to the global effort to promote gender equity in education.

### **1.5 Aim of the study**

This study's main aim is to investigate cultural and institutional factors that promote or hinder gender equity in physical education program at teacher training college in the Manzini region of the Kingdom of Eswatini.

### **1.6 Research objectives**

1. Examine cultural norms and beliefs which influence gender roles in physical education at a teacher training college.
2. Analyse institutional policies and practises which:
  - a. contribute to gender equity at a teacher training college.
  - b. hinder gender equity in physical education.

### **1.7 Research questions**

1. How do cultural norms and beliefs influence gender roles in physical education at a teacher training college?
2. What institutional policies and practises:
  - a. contribute gender equity in the college's physical education program?
  - b. hinder gender equity in the college's physical education program?

### **1.8 Location of the study**

This study is conducted in the Manzini region, the hub of the Kingdom of Eswatini. Eswatini is a country well known for its rich cultural heritage and tradition. Consisting of various Nguni clans, who speak one language, siSwati and share the same cultural and traditional values, Eswatini is one of the few remaining absolute monarchies in Africa. This is a nation that respects hierarchy and patriarchal norms, this is evident in the political structure of the

kingdom where the King is the head of state and all power is centralised to his reign. Descending to the communities which have a set-up of chiefdoms. These chiefdoms reflect their ruling structures to homesteads whereby the patriarch of the family is named “umnumzane” meaning the absolute head of the family, he dictates, owns and fully decides what is to happen in the home. Though there are modern forms of government due to civilisation, Eswatini is still deeply rooted into culture and traditions

According to the Eswatini culture, a woman is responsible for household chores, child-rearing and caring for the elderly while men are seen as providers and leaders of the homes. These practises are also seen in marital power and traditions of primogeniture which reinforce male dominance. In the past, a married woman would not be considered a real wife until she births a boy child to ensure inheritance is passed on to him. A girl child was seen as somebody who will raise children such that the set up back in the day was in such a way that girls would be denied an opportunity to go to school because ultimately, she will stay home and be responsible for all household chores. Such practises were even experienced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century where women would be denied autonomy in terms of legal rights to assets. To date, though civilisation has taken over most of the daily lifestyle, however the staunch patriarchal customs are experienced which affect dress code, freedom of speech in some instances and legal rights to assets which is mainly experienced by widowed and estranged women from their husbands where it is often felt that she is a property of the man she married. To date, there are places where women are not allowed access if they are wearing pants, especially in government offices declaring that it is disrespectful to the country’s leadership.

### **1.9 Limitations of the study**

Creswell (2024) defined limitation of a study as a factor or condition that restricts the research scope, affects the accuracy of its findings, or impacts its generalizability. These limitations he further suggested that may arise from various sources, including methodological constraints, sample size, data collections methods, external factors that influence the study’s outcomes. The main limitation of the study is that it focuses only on the Swazi culture in the Kingdom of Eswatini. Therefore, the findings may not be transferable to teachers’ colleges in other cultural contexts.

### 1.10 Delimitations of the study

The study specifically focuses on gender equity within the physical education program such as participation disparities, cultural norms and beliefs influencing gender equity in physical education as well as institutional policies and practises which contribute to or hinder gender equity at a teacher training college, it neglects other issues of all possible gender inequalities. The study is limited to a teacher training college in the Manzini region of the Kingdom of Eswatini. Comparisons with other colleges or universities are not within the scope of this investigations. The study primarily employs qualitative research methods (interviews, questionnaires and document analysis). Quantitative data such as statistical analyses are not extensively explored. The study primarily considers the perspectives of students and lecturers; other stakeholders' viewpoints are not the central focus. The study operates within the cultural and linguistic context of Eswatini. Cultural nuances and language-specific factors may influence the findings.

### 1.11 Definition of key terms

1. **Gender equity:** fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women, men and all genders. It aims to eliminate gender-based discrimination and ensure equal access to opportunities. (Guerrero and Puerta 2023)
2. **Physical education (PE):** is a field of study and practice that promotes physical activity, health, and wellbeing through the implementation of movement-based curricula. It is often taught to children and adolescents in educational settings but can also be applied to people of all age groups. (Guerrero and Puerta 2023)
3. **Innovative approaches:** These are novel, creative and unconventional methods used to address challenges approaches. They can apply to problem-solving, processes organizational practises or business models.
4. **Gender stereotypes:** These are preconceived, usually generalized views about how members of a certain gender do or should behave, or which traits they do or should have. They are meant to reinforce gender norms, typically in a binary way (masculine and feminine). Heather (2022).
5. **Gender disparities:** in the field of education, it is characterized by the differences in educational opportunities, outcomes, and experiences between males and females. It encompasses disparities in enrolment, dropout, literacy, academic achievement, and access to tertiary education.

## **Summary**

This chapter provides a background of the study which gives an introduction to the existing gender disparities in the physical education program at a teacher training college in the Manzini region of the Kingdom of Eswatini. It also states the aim of the study to promote gender equity in physical education at the college. The study also delves into the statement of the problem which gives to detail the emanation of gender equity in the college. The purpose of the study is also another aspect highlighted on this chapter explaining the overarching objective of the research which is to investigate cultural and institutional factors that promote or hinder gender equity in physical education program at a teacher training college in the Manzini region of the Kingdom of Eswatini.

This chapter also looked into the significance of the study which explains the importance of the research. It outlines the potential contributions of the study to educators, policymakers and other stakeholders. The chapter also delves into the research questions as well the objectives of the study. The chapter also focuses on limitations and delimitations on the hand focus on potential constraints which include funds, time frame which may impact the validity, reliability or generalizability of the study. Lastly, the chapter elaborates on key terms to provide clarity, precision and consistency throughout the research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

Physical education plays a transcendental role in shaping individual's physical fitness, social skills and overall well-being (Biddle and Asare, 2011). However, despite significant advancements in educational practises, gender disparities persist within the realm of physical education, posing a challenge to achieving equitable opportunities and outcomes for students (Azzarito and Solomon,2016). In response to these challenges, educators, policymakers and researchers have increasingly turned their attention to innovative approaches aimed at promoting gender equity in physical education (Hickey and McGillivray,2014).

The Kingdom of Eswatini, like many other countries, grapples with issues of gender equity in education, including physical education. Despite efforts to promote gender equity in various spheres of society, disparities persist, impacting access, participation and outcomes in physical education programs (Dlamini,2018). Drawing on a diverse range of theoretical frameworks and empirical studies, this literature review will examine the multifaceted landscape of gender equity in physical education, examining existing literature from different researchers with an aim of seeking to provide insights into the current state of gender equity within physical education, identify effective and innovative approaches that hold promise for advancing gender equity within the specific context of a teacher training college in Eswatini.

#### **2.1 Cultural norms, beliefs and gender roles in physical education**

Flintoff and Scraton (2019) defended that cultural norms often perpetuate traditional gender stereotypes that dictate appropriate behaviours, interests and roles for males and females. In the context of physical education, they stated that these stereotypes may manifest in expectations regarding the types of sports and activities deemed suitable for boys versus girls. For example, boys may be encouraged to participate in team sports that emphasise strength and aggression, while girls may be steered towards individual activities or aesthetic sports that prioritise grace and flexibility. Kirk and Penney (2021) believe that traditional gender stereotypes can also impact educational opportunities and career aspirations for students in physical education. In some cultures, teaching roles in physical education may be perceived as more suitable for males, reflecting broader societal norms regarding gender divisions of labour. This perception can create barriers for female students who aspire to pursue careers in

physical education, as they may face scepticism or resistance based on traditional gender roles.

Flintoff and Scraton (2019) suggested that traditional gender stereotypes are often reinforced through media representations and cultural narratives that perpetuate narrow and restrictive definitions of masculinity and femininity. Television, movies, advertising and other forms of media frequently portray gendered stereotypes in physical education activities and sports, reinforcing the idea that certain activities are more appropriate or desirable for boys and girls. This cultural reinforcement of gender norms can shape students' perceptions and behaviours from a young age, influencing their participation and engagement in physical education. Cale and Harris (2021) mentioned that exposure to traditional gender stereotypes in physical education can impact student's self-perception and identity development.

Girls, in particular, may internalise societal expectations regarding their physical abilities and appearance, leading to lower self-esteem or confidence in their athletic abilities. Boys may also experience pressure to conform to masculine ideals of athleticism and strength, which can contribute to issues of body image dissatisfaction and performance anxiety. Wright et al., (2020) suggested that cultural norms and beliefs can also shape educators' perception and behaviours towards students in physical education. Implicit biases based on gender stereotypes may influence teachers' expectations of students' abilities, behaviour and potential. Educators may inadvertently reinforce gendered norms and roles through their language, interactions and instructional practises, perpetuating inequalities within the classroom. In a nutshell, cultural norms and beliefs play a transcendental role in shaping gender roles and expectations in physical education, particularly within teacher training colleges. These norms influence perceptions of appropriate behaviours, career paths, body image ideals and implicit biases among educators, impacting the experiences and opportunities of male and female students alike. Addressing these cultural influences is essential for promoting gender equity and creating inclusive learning environments within physical education settings.

## **2.2 Institutional policies and gender equity in the college physical education programmes**

Institutional policies and practises play an essential role in either fostering or hindering gender equity within a college's physical education program. Culver et al., (2021) defended that colleges can contribute to gender equity in physical education by adopting inclusive

curriculum design practises. This involves selecting course materials, activities and assessments that reflect diverse perspectives and cater to the needs and interests of all students, regardless of gender. By offering a curriculum that challenges traditional gender stereotypes and promotes inclusivity, colleges can create a more equitable learning environment.

Oliver and Kirk (2019) suggested that colleges that offer gender-inclusive curriculum and programming in their physical education course can help promote gender equity. This involves selecting activities, sports and exercise that challenge traditional gender stereotypes and provide equal opportunities for male and female students to participate and succeed. By offering a diverse range of options that cater to the interests and abilities of all students, they stated that colleges can create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. Wright et al., (2020) postulated that colleges that lack gender-inclusive facilities and resources in their physical education programs can also hinder gender equity. If facilities such as locker rooms, restrooms or sports equipment are not designed to accommodate the needs of all students, regardless of gender, it can create barriers to participation and contribute to feelings of exclusion or discomfort among certain group of students.

Nelson et al., (2019) posited that implementing gender-sensitive policies and support services within the college environment can also contribute to gender equity in physical education. By acknowledging and addressing the unique needs of diverse gender identities, colleges can foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for all students. Kirk and Penney (2021) posited that colleges can promote gender equity in their physical education programs by implementing gender-sensitive policies and support services that address the unique needs and experiences of male and female students. This may include providing resources and facilities that are accessible to all students, regardless of gender and also, offering support services such as counselling or mentoring programs that address issues related to gender-bias discrimination or harassment. Ennis (2019) stated that colleges that fails to address gender-bias discrimination or harassment within their physical education programs can hinder gender equity. If incidents of discrimination, harassment or gender based violence are not taken seriously or adequately addressed by college administration, it can create a hostile learning environment and discourage female students from participating fully in physical education activities. This failure to address gender-bases inequities can perpetuate inequalities and undermine efforts to promote gender equity within the college.

Jones and Baker (2020) highlighted that offering professional development and training opportunities for faculty staff can contribute to gender equity in physical education. Workshops and seminars that focus on topics such as gender bias awareness, inclusive teaching practises and cultural competence can help educators create more welcoming and supportive learning environments for all students. By equipping faculty and staff with the knowledge and skills to address gender-related issues, colleges can promote gender equity in their physical education programs. Flintoff and Scraton (2019) suggested inclusive admission and enrolment policies; colleges with inclusive admissions and enrolment policies that actively encourage and support gender diversity in their physical education programs can contribute to gender equity. By ensuring equal access to opportunities for all students, regardless of gender, colleges can create a more inclusive learning environment that fosters diversity and promotes gender equity.

Cale and Harris (2021) also defended gender bias in recruitment and hiring practises that colleges which engage in gender bias in the recruitment and hiring practises for physical education faculty staff can hinder gender equity. If hiring decisions are influenced by stereotypes or biases regarding gender roles in physical education, it can perpetuate inequalities and limit opportunities for female faculty and staff members. This can create a lack of diversity in leadership positions and contribute to a culture that reinforces traditional gender norms. Gockinar et al., (2021) suggested that colleges must implement strategies to mitigate bias in hiring process and promote diversity and inclusivity within their faculty and staff. Institutional policies and practises have a significant impact on gender equity within a college's physical education program. Colleges that prioritise inclusivity, diversity and gender sensitivity in their policies and practises can contribute to gender equity by creating an environment where all students feel valued, supported and empowered to participate and succeed. Conversely, colleges that fail to address gender biases, discrimination or barriers to participation can perpetuate inequalities and hinder efforts to promote gender equity within their physical education programs.

### **2.3 Theoretical framework**

Gender equity in is often explored through various theoretical lenses that can help researchers understand and address to complexities of this issue. Several theoretical frameworks have been utilized to analyse and critique gender disparities within diverse settings. In this study, the following frameworks have been explored:

**Gender Equality Framework by CARE:** The Gender Equality Framework developed by CARE firstly in the year 2008 as a Women's Equality Framework (WEF) with an aim of inquiring the impact of CARE's work on women's empowerment and gender equality. It was later upgraded to the now Gender Equality Framework to capture learning that women and girls 'empowerment approaches need to be in sync with and complementary to how men, boys and people in their diversity are engaged in issues of gender equality. In the year 2022, the CARE teams globally, reflected on the future of the framework in sync with its vision 2030 to ensure that it accomplishes its intended goal to achieve gender transformation. This framework is basically a comprehensive approach to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment globally. It encompasses a range of principles, strategies and interventions aimed at addressing gender disparities and advancing gender equity, including in education. The framework recognises the complex and interconnected nature of gender inequality, emphasising the need for multifaceted solutions that address root causes and structural barriers.

Hargreaves and Tinning (2019) posited that the Gender Equality Framework by CARE highlights the role of structural barriers, such as unequal access to resources, discriminatory policies and gender stereotypes in perpetuating gender disparities. They further mentioned that researchers can use the framework to identify and analyse these structural barriers and advocate for reforms that promote gender equity. Brown and Martinez (2020) postulated that CARE's framework emphasises empowerment strategies that enable women and girls to challenge gender norms- and assert their rights within physical education settings. They also added that researchers can examine the effectiveness of empowerment interventions such as leadership programs and mentorship initiatives in promoting gender equity and empowering female students.

**Critical pedagogy:** Critical pedagogy offers a framework for examining power relations and promoting social changes within educational settings, including physical education (Ennis,2016). This approach emphasizes the importance of questioning dominant ideologies and fostering critical consciousness among students and educators. By encouraging critical reflection and dialogue, critical pedagogy seeks to challenge oppressive structures and promote equity and social justice within physical education. These theoretical frameworks provide valuable insights into the complex interplay of gender, power and social dynamics within physical education settings. By drawing on these theoretical perspectives, researchers

can develop innovative approaches and interventions aimed at promoting gender equity and creating more inclusive and empowering environments for all students.

#### **2.4 Current state of gender equity in physical education**

Gender equity in physical education remains a pressing issue worldwide as disparities persist in various aspects of participation, curriculum, instruction and policy implementation. Despite advancements in promoting gender equality in education, including physical education, significant challenges remain in ensuring equal opportunities and experiences for all students, regardless of gender. This study delved on the following aspects:

**Participation disparities:** Cale and Harris (2021) defined participation disparities in physical education as the differences in the level of engagement and involvement between different groups, particularly between males and females, leading to unequal opportunities for participation in physical activities, sports and exercise. Robinson and Randall (2019) postulated that participation disparities in physical education persist as a significant challenge despite efforts to promote gender equity. They added that research consistently shows that girls are less likely to engage in physical education activities compared to boys, resulting in unequal opportunities for skill development, physical fitness and overall well-being.

These disparities are influenced by various factors. Cale and Harris (2019) exposed that societal expectations and stereotypes often dictate gendered roles and behaviours, with physical activity traditionally perceived as more aligned with masculinity. This societal conditioning can lead to girls feeling less encouraged or valued in physical education settings, contributing to lower participation rates. They also added that girls may experience body image concerns that impact their willingness to participate in physical activities, particularly those that involve competition or being seen in athletic attire. Negative body image perceptions can lead to feelings of self-consciousness and reluctance to engage in physical education.

Robinson and Randall (2019) highlighted that peer pressure and social dynamics within physical education classes can also influence girls' participation. They mentioned that gendered expectations and peer interactions may create environments where girls feel excluded or marginalised, further discouraging their involvement in physical activities. Armour et al., (2020) exposed teacher practises and curriculum which are implemented by physical education teachers that they can play a significant role in perpetuating participation disparities. They stated that research suggests that teachers may unintentionally reinforce

gender stereotypes by allocating more attention and resources to boys' sports and activities, while overlooking girls' interests and needs. To address participation disparities requires comprehensive strategies that address the underlying factors, on this conception, Armour et al., (2020) posited that physical education programs should strive to create inclusive environments that challenge gender stereotypes, promote positive body image and foster a sense of belonging for all students. This can involve implementing diverse activities that cater to different interests and abilities, as well as adopting inclusive language and practises that validate students' identities and experiences.

Cale and Harris (2021) were of the view that teachers and school staff can play a fundamental role in supporting girls' participation in physical education. They posited that providing encouragement, mentorship and positive reinforcement can help girls feel empowered and motivated to engage in physical activities. Moreover, addressing bullying and discriminatory behaviour within physical education classes can create safer and more supportive environments for all students. Robinson and Randall (2019) theorised that female athletes and leaders in physical education can serve as positive role models for girls, challenging stereotypes and inspiring greater participation. Incorporating stories and examples of successful female athletes into curriculum can help girls envision themselves as capable and valued members of the physical education community.

Morgan and Kingston (2020) provide an intersectional analysis of gender disparities in physical education focusing on intersectional analysis where they stated the importance of adopting an intersectional approach to understanding gender disparities in physical education, arguing that focusing solely on gender overlooks the diverse experiences of students and address fails to address the intersecting forms of discrimination and inequality that shape individuals' lives. Their study also highlights the diverse experiences of students within physical education settings based on intersecting identities such as marginalised racial or ethnic groups may face challenges additional barriers and challenges compared to their peers.

They also advocated for inclusive approaches to physical education that recognise and address the intersecting forms of inequality faced by students. They highlighted that this involves creating learning environments that cater to the needs and interests of all students, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity or other identities. The inclusive practises may include curriculum adaptations, culturally relevant teaching strategies and the promotion of diversity and representation within physical education materials and resources. Their study

also calls for reforms within educational institutions to address systemic inequalities and promote equity in physical education.

**Policy initiatives and Advocacy:** Policy initiatives and advocacy efforts are crucial for advancing gender equity in physical education and sports at institutional, regional and national levels. These initiatives involve the development, implementation and enforcement of policies that address gender disparities, promote inclusive environments and create supportive environments for all students regardless of gender. Sanchez et al. (2019) defend that gender sensitive policies in physical education may encompass provisions for equitable access to facilities, gender-balanced sports teams, protection against discrimination and the inclusion of gender-sensitive content in curriculum. For example, schools may adopt guidelines ensuring equal access to sports facilities and equipment for both boys and girls. Additionally, policies may mandate the inclusion of gender sensitive content in the curriculum, addressing stereotypes and promoting inclusivity.

Warner and Dixon (2019) also defended that advocacy efforts may focus on equitable resource allocation and funding for sports programmes. They emphasised that it is important to lobby for investments in facilities, equipment, coaching staff and extracurricular activities to promote gender equity. The Eswatini Olympics, Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA) for example, may expand the establishment of scholarships for female athletes or grants to support initiatives promoting gender equity in physical education in collaboration with schools as opposed to focusing on elite athletes who are predominantly males. By securing financial resources, these efforts address disparities in access to opportunities and resources for girls and boys.

Hargreaves and Tinning (2019) highlight the issue of professional development and training as means of policy initiatives and advocacy. They elucidate that professional development and training for teachers and coaches are vital. Professional development programs aim to equip physical education teachers with gender sensitive teaching strategies. According to Armour et al. (2018), these strategies may include creating inclusive learning environments, challenging stereotypes and adapting instructional practises to meet diverse needs of students. Workshops for example, may provide teachers with tools to address unconscious biases and promote equitable participation among boys and girls in physical activities. Azzarito and Solmon (2016) also emphasised the importance of incorporating diverse perspectives and activities into the curriculum to address the interests and abilities of all students.

Naidoo and Joubert (2012) defended that professional development efforts prioritize creating supportive learning environments where all students feel valued and empowered. The role of teacher training is fostering positive relationships, communication and respect among students. Workshops may provide teachers with strategies for fostering cooperation, teamwork and mutual respect in physical education classes, thereby promoting gender equity and inclusivity. Cale and Harris (2018) revealed that training programs may also address issues of gender-based bias and discrimination in physical education settings. For example, teachers may receive guidance on recognizing and addressing instances of bias or discrimination based on gender. Teachers may be provided with tools for promoting respectful language, addressing stereotypes and creating inclusive classroom culture that values diversity.

Hylton et al. (2018) spoke of advocacy campaigns and awareness raising as part of policy initiatives and advocacy. They highlighted that awareness may be raised about gender disparities in physical education. These campaigns often have specific objectives, such as challenging stereotypes, advocating for policy changes and fostering a culture of gender equity within the institution. The target audience for advocacy campaign may be students, administrators, lecturers, support staff and other stakeholders involved in the delivery and management of physical education programs. By engaging these key stakeholders, advocacy campaigns seek to mobilize support and create momentum for change. Smith and Johnson (2019) defended that advocacy campaigns, organised educational workshops and seminars raise awareness about gender equity in physical education.

Brown and Martinez (2020) suggested guest lecturers and panel discussions where deliberations on gender equity in physical education are done to provide valuable insights and perspectives. This activity will allow interaction and engagement with experts and activists who can share research findings, personal experiences and advocacy strategies. White and Thompson (2018) mentioned awareness events and campaigns to host visibility and generate interest in promoting gender equity in physical education. Events such as sports inclusivity week or gender equity symposiums may include activities like film screening, art exhibits and interactive workshops to engage the institution. Jones and Williams (2017) spoke of advocacy initiatives and policy recommendations and opined that through lobbying efforts and policy recommendations, campaign organisers can influence university administrators to adopt gender-sensitive policies, allocate resources for gender equity initiatives and support diversity and inclusion programs.

**Curriculum and instruction:** The curriculum and instructional practises in physical education play a crucial role in shaping students' experiences and opportunities for participation, skill development and enjoyment of physical activity. However, gender biases and stereotypes embedded within the curriculum and instructional methods can inadvertently perpetuate gender inequities in physical education.

Wright et al., (2020) postulated that in recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of gender equity in physical education curriculum design. Researchers and educators have emphasised the need for inclusive and diverse curriculum content that challenges traditional gender stereotypes and provides equal opportunities for boys and girls to engage in physical activities. Ennis (2019) exposed that despite progress, disparities in curriculum implementation persist with studies highlighting gender biases in the selection of activities and sports. She added that girls in particular, may be steered towards activities perceived as more feminine or less competitive, limiting their exposure to a diverse range of physical activities.

Flintoff and Scraton (2019) posited that instructional practises in physical education are essential for promoting gender equity and inclusivity in the classroom. Educators play a critical role in creating a supportive learning environment that empowers all students to participate and succeed, regardless of gender. Hickey and Mooney (2019) stated that effective instructional practises include the use of inclusive teaching strategies that accommodate diverse learning styles and abilities, providing opportunities for student choice and autonomy, fostering positive relationships between students and teachers.

Cale and Harris (2021) mentioned that assessment practises in physical education should be designed to be gender-inclusive, ensuring that they accurately measure students' learning and progress regardless of gender. Research suggests that traditional assessment methods such as standardised tests or performance evaluations, may inadvertently favour certain gendered behaviours or skills sets over others. To promote gender equity, educators can use a variety of assessment methods that accommodate diverse learning styles and abilities, such as self-assessment, peer assessment and reflective portfolios. Kirk and Penney (2021) added that effective assessment practises in physical education should also include providing gender-sensitive feedback and support to students.

This involves offering constructive feedback that focuses on students' efforts, progress and areas of improvement rather than on gendered stereotypes or expectations. Additionally,

educators can provide supplementary support and resources to students who may face barriers or challenges in their physical education participation, including girls who may experience confidence issues or social pressures related to gender norms. Overall, incorporating gender-inclusive assessment methods and providing supportive feedback and resources, educators can ensure that assessment practises contribute to promoting gender equity in physical education, fostering a positive and empowering learning environment for all students.

## **2.5 Importance of the research in promoting gender equity in physical education**

In contemporary educational settings, promoting gender equity in physical education has emerged as a pivotal objective for fostering inclusive learning environments and ensuring equal opportunities for all students. Gender disparities persist in various facets of physical education, ranging from participation rates and access to resources to societal perceptions and educational outcomes (UNESCO, 2020). Addressing these disparities is not merely a matter of fairness but is crucial for promoting holistic educational experiences and societal progress. WHO (2021) defended that gender equity in physical education is essential as it aligns with fundamental principles of equality and social justice, ensuring that all students, regardless of gender, have equitable access to physical activities that promote physical health, mental well-being and social development.

This study aims to bridge the discrepancies firstly by **challenging gender norms** to promote more inclusive and equitable practises. Dabell (2017) postulated that by the age of seven (7), girls are already less active than boys and this disparity widens as they move from childhood into adolescence. He supported the idea of making physical education relevant by designing activities that resonate with girls' lives and interests. Likewise, this study seeks to bridge the gap between the lack of interest of female students in physical education by connecting the program to real-world applications, emphasising skills beyond the classroom for example technology integration where the students will be exposed to other aspects of physical education beyond mere physical activity in the training field.

Additionally, the exploration of scientific aspect of the program where they can be encouraged to explore sports science, sports physiotherapy, sports psychology, sports nutrition or even sports administration which are in high demand not only in the Kingdom of Eswatini especially for females. The study will also look to address body image concerns by promoting positive body image and self-acceptance through discussions and activities. As the study is underway, the researcher will be able to ascertain views of female participants as to

what do they find engaging and meaningful according to their understanding. Furthermore, the study will encourage girls to participate in traditionally dominated sports. Harris (2024) posited that female athletes are normally faced by underrepresentation in leadership roles which impacts the aspirations and confidence of female athletes pursuing sports. She also highlighted body image pressures and societal expectations which lead to concerns about body image and societal acceptance. She further added that inadequate facilities and resources as well as limited exposure and recognition are hindrances to female athletes penetrating to the male dominated world of sports. This study seeks to encourage female participants that it all starts somewhere, by one person desiring to make a change, emphasising that as female students, they also have space in the male dominated world of sports, similarly to the changes that have been made in STEM to encourage females to participate and break barriers considering the fact that the whole world is in support of the initiative to delve into riches of the world.

In a nutshell, addressing gender disparities helps to promote health equity, enhances educational outcomes to support gender equality. UNESCO (2020) defended that the participation of girls in physical education and sports activities compared to boys, which can lead to long-term health consequences and reduced social inclusion. This initiative also plays a fundamental role in the education system of Eswatini as according to the National Curriculum Framework of 2018, a gender equitable society is crucial as part of the national goals supported by the Education Sector Policy of 2011.

Secondly the importance of this study is to **enhance teaching practises** which are essential for creating effective learning environments that promote skill development, engagement and inclusivity among students. Enhancing teaching practises in this study involves exploring how the institution can effectively implement inclusive pedagogy, leverage professional development opportunities, integrate technology, refine assessment strategies and cultivate supportive learning environments in physical education. By investigating these aspects, the study will aim to identify best practises and recommendations that promote gender equity and create inclusive educational experiences for all students. Focusing on these areas will also enable the research to contribute to advancing knowledge and understanding of effective approaches to foster gender equity and to inform policy development initiatives that support educators in promoting inclusive practises and achieving positive outcomes for all students.

The study also seeks to **contribute to social justice** by ensuring that all students have equal opportunities to participate, excel and benefit from physical activities, regardless of their gender. By addressing disparities and promoting inclusive practises, the study contributes to broader social justice goals which include lack of facilities, cultural norms, economic constraints and gender specific expectations. Through the data to be collected, the study will ascertain the barriers and be able to bridge the discrepancies by ensuring opportunities for all individuals, aligning with principles of human rights and social equity. Moreover, this study will promote inclusive pedagogical practises and creating supportive environments thereby dismantling stereotypes and discrimination based on gender. It encourages critical reflection on societal norms and promotes acceptance and respect for diverse experiences and perspectives. The research findings will also give insight and inform policy development and advocacy efforts aimed at institutionalising gender equitable practises in physical education curricula and teacher training programs. By advocating for policy changes that support gender equity, the study contributes to forming lasting systemic changes that promote social justice within educational institutions. It empowers stakeholders to enact meaningful reforms and ensures sustained commitment to inclusive practises.

This study is essential as it could contribute to the existing body of research on gender equity in physical education. It could provide valuable insights and data for other researchers in the field, thereby advancing our understanding of this important issue. The study could have a global impact by demonstrating how physical education can be used to promote healthy gender norms and behaviours. The innovative approaches identified in this study could be applied in other contexts and countries, thereby contributing to the global effort to promote gender equity in education.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, a comprehensive review of literature was conducted to explore cultural norms, beliefs and their influence in gender roles in physical education as well as institutional policies, practises, their contribution or hindrance to gender equity in the college's physical education program. The review also examined two main theoretical frameworks namely the Gender Equality Framework (GEF) by CARE and critical pedagogy. The chapter also provided insights into the current state of gender equity in physical education, highlighting disparities in participation, curriculum, instruction and policy initiatives and

lastly delving into the importance of the study in promoting gender equity in physical education.

Overall, the literature review underscores the importance of adopting a polygonal approach to promoting gender equity in physical education. By drawing Gender Equality Framework (GEF) by CARE and critical pedagogical perspectives, educators and policymakers can address systemic inequalities, challenge stereotypes and empower individuals to create positive change. Moving forward, it is essential to continue advancing innovative approaches, advocating for policy reforms and fostering collaborative partnerships to achieve gender equity in physical education and ensure equal opportunities for all students, regardless of gender.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of promoting gender equity in various aspects of society, including education. Within the realm of society, physical education (PE) serves as a critical domain where gender equity can be fostered or hindered. This chapter outlines the methodology employed to investigate innovative approaches to promote gender equity in physical education within the context of a teacher training college. The primary aim of this research is to explore investigate cultural and institutional factors that promote or hinder gender equity in physical education program at teacher training college in the Manzini region of the Kingdom of Eswatini. Additionally, the study seeks to delve into the challenges faced by male and female students in accessing and participating in physical education, with a particular focus on the cultural norms, beliefs and institutional policies that influence gender roles within this domain.

To achieve these objectives, a qualitative case study has been adopted as it allows for a nuanced exploration of gender equity issues within the college. It offers methodological framework to uncover rich, context specific data that can inform both theoretical understanding and practical interventions aimed at fostering gender equity The research paradigm guiding this study is grounded in interpretive paradigm which allows for a deep exploration of how gender equity is understood, practised and experienced within the college.

It allowed the study to uncover meaningful insights that can inform both scholarly discourse and practical initiatives aimed at advancing gender equity in physical education. The subsequent sections of the chapter detailed the population, sampling procedures and data generation. Additionally, considerations for ensuring ethical conduct throughout the research process were addressed. Through the rigorous application of appropriate methodology, this study aims to contribute valuable insights and recommendations for advancing gender equity in physical education at teacher training colleges and beyond.

### **3.2 Interpretive research paradigm**

Guba and Lincoln (1994) posited that a research paradigm shapes the researchers' approach to theory building and hypothesis testing, influencing the generation of new knowledge and the advancement of theoretical frameworks within a discipline. They further stated the research paradigms play a crucial role in driving theoretical development and innovation within academic disciplines. By adopting a particular paradigm, researchers contribute to the evolution of theoretical frameworks and paradigms within their field. This fosters intellectual growth and facilitates interdisciplinary dialogue, leading to new insights and discoveries that contribute to the broader body of knowledge.

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) suggested that research paradigms influences the researcher's stance on the role of values, ethics and social responsibility in the research process. They also mentioned that research paradigms provide researchers with a framework for navigating ethical dilemmas and ensuring the integrity and ethical conduct of their research. By grounding their work in a particular paradigm, researchers can articulate their ethical commitments and responsibilities, such as protecting their rights and well-being of research participants, promoting social justice and contributing to positive social change. They further declared that this fosters a culture of ethical conduct and social responsibility within the research community.

In this study, the interpretive paradigm was used which according to Nickerson (2024), it is a social science paradigm asserting that reality is subjective, emphasising understanding phenomena from the perspective of individuals. The interpretive paradigm focuses on subjective meanings that individuals attach to their experiences, actions and social interactions. This paradigm acknowledges that people's interpretations and perceptions shape their behaviours and relationships. It also acknowledges that human behaviour and social phenomena are embedded within social contexts, such as cultural, historical and situational

factors. The paradigm relies heavily on qualitative data focusing on understanding meaning as opposed to statistical procedures to build theory within specific context allowing for the development of new understanding and theoretical insights grounded in empirical observations.

This study looks to investigate how cultural norms and beliefs influence gender roles in physical education at a teacher training college as well analysing what institutional policies and practises contribute to or hinder gender equity in the college's physical education program. The interpretive paradigm explored how the students, lecturers and administrators within the college perceive and interpret gender equity initiatives in physical education. The researcher was able to unearth the diverse meanings, beliefs and experiences related to gender roles and equity. Since this paradigm recognises that gender is shaped by broader cultural, institutional and historical contexts, the study examined how these factors influence perceptions and practises related to gender equity in physical education in the college.

By prioritizing qualitative methods such as open-ended questionnaires, interviews to explore the nuanced viewpoints and the social dynamics influencing gender equity efforts and through document analysis, the researcher was able to analyse the institutional policies and curriculum materials to understand how formal structures and discourses shape gender equity practises within the college. This paradigm also allowed for an analysis of qualitative data to identify recurring themes, patterns and narratives related to gender equity. The paradigm allowed reflexivity to critically examine own assumptions, biases and interpretations that may have influenced the research process. This self-awareness enhanced the rigor and validity of interpretive findings by acknowledging the researcher's role in co-constructing knowledge.

The paradigm also generated insights that are specific to the teacher training college, considering the unique context, challenges and opportunities for promoting gender equity. The recommendations can inform tailored interventions and policies that resonate with the needs uncovered. The interpretive paradigm contributes to theoretical understandings of the gender equity in education by exploring how social constructions of gender intersect with institutional practises and individual experiences within the college. Overall, the interpretive paradigm in this study aimed to deepen the understanding of gender equity dynamics in physical education, highlighting the lived experiences of the participants and inform contextually relevant strategies for promoting inclusive and equitable educational

environments. This paradigm ensured that the study addresses complex issues through a lens that values subjective meanings, diversity of perspectives and contextual nuances.

### **3.3 Qualitative Case Study**

This study used the qualitative approach which aimed to provide a structured and systematic framework for engaging with stakeholders which are the college lecturers and students, developing evidence-based interventions and facilitating meaningful change in the promotion of gender equity in physical education. A qualitative case study according to YIN (2014) is the in-depth investigation of a phenomenon within its real-world context. It enables researchers to acquire a comprehensive understanding of intricate details that might not be apparent through other research methods. STAKE (1995) postulated that a case study is a qualitative approach where the investigator explores a case over time. It involves detailed, in depth data collection from multiple sources such as interviews, observations and documents and results in a case description and cased based themes

In this study, the qualitative case study was applicable by initially developing open ended research questions that explore how the participants (lecturers, students and administrators) perceive and experience gender equity in physical education. These questions included understanding how cultural norms and beliefs influence gender roles in physical education at a teacher training college and what institutional policies and practises contribute to or hinder gender equity in the college's physical education program. The researcher employed open ended questionnaires to students first and follow up with telephonic interviews to clarify patterns identified from the questionnaires. This process allowed in depth understanding of their views, beliefs and experiences towards the study. Semi structured interviews were administered to the college lecturers and ultimately engage the college administrators by facilitating the analysis of documents which included the college policies and curriculum materials on gender equity.

Investigating the institutional policies, cultural norms and educational practises ascertained how they influence the promotion of gender equity in physical education. The researcher purposely sampled the lecturers and college administrators because they are only ones available and conveniently sampled the students on availability basis since the college was closed for an academic year break. The data was collected electronically and telephonically, meaning that the questionnaires were administered electronically and the interviews conducted telephonically, while the document analysis was done in the college campus

because the administration office is always opened. The data was analysed using thematic coding technique to identify recurring themes and patterns related to gender equity. The researcher further explored participants' narratives to understand how gender identities and social interactions shape experiences within physical education.

The study was able to develop theoretical insights grounded in qualitative data that contributes to understanding the complex dynamics of gender equity. Recommendations for enhancing gender equity initiatives based on participants' perspectives and identified barriers were given. These recommendations can inform curriculum revisions, professional development programs and policy reforms within the college. The researcher ensured to obtain informed consent from participants, ensuring that they fully understood the voluntary nature of their participation and the confidentiality of their responses. The researcher also ensured to seek approval from the Ministry of Education and Training to undertake the study to ensure that research practises adhere to ethical guidelines and protect participants' rights.

The qualitative research method allowed for in depth exploration of complex social phenomena, providing rich descriptions and nuanced understanding that quantitative methods may not capture. It also focused on participants' lived experiences and contextual factors, qualitative research design generates contextually specific insights that are relevant to the unique challenges and opportunities within the college. This design also centred on participants' perspectives which promotes inclusivity and validates diverse experiences, enhancing the relevance and applicability of research findings to educational practise and policies. Though with merits, the qualitative research design presents limitations such as generalizability where the findings may not be easily generalizable to other populations due to the small sample size and specific context involved. It also presents ethical considerations where the researcher has to navigate ethical considerations especially because this study involved engaging with participants' personal experiences and sensitive topics mainly because the researcher is also a lecturer in the college therefore has to tread carefully and continue to maintain a healthy student teacher relationship with the students no matter the perceptions uncovered which may cause the researcher to be uncomfortable.

To mitigate the limitations, the researcher emphasised the diverse selection of participants on the students, sampling a representation from the various majors, for example, sampling two students from the ICT and Maths major, two from the ICT and Science major, two from the

English and SiSwati major, two from the Geography and History major as well as two from the English and Geography majors. These participants were both male and female students equally represented to ensure that the sample represents a range of perspectives and contexts relevant to the study. A detailed description of the research context, participants and data collection procedures is available (on the appendices) to allow transparency and future use. The researcher ensured transferability of findings. Lastly, the researcher emphasised on all aspects of ethical considerations ensuring that participants were comfortable and free throughout the process of data collection. In a nutshell, applying the qualitative research design in this study effectively explored the multifaceted dimensions of gender equity in physical education, unearthing insights that contribute to theoretical advancements and practical interventions aimed at promoting inclusive and equitable educational environments.

### **3.4 Study Area**

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) postulated that a study area refers to a specific geographical location, subject matter or field of inquiry that serves as the focus of a research study. It delineates the boundaries within which the research will be conducted and defines the context, scope and parameters of the study. The study area they defended that it also provides a framework for selecting research methods, gathering data and analysing findings to address research questions or objectives effectively. This study was conducted in the Manzini region of the Kingdom of Eswatini. The main reason for the Manzini region is that the researcher resides in this region and is also an educator in the said college, informal observations were done prior which led to the inspiration to do conduct the study. Another reason is that it will be easy to further monitor implementation and evaluation of the findings that will transpire to bring forth meaningful change in the physical education program of the college.

### **3.5 Population**

Creswell (2014) postulated that the population in research refers to the entire group of individuals, events or elements that meet the criteria for inclusion in the study. It represents the larger context or target group to which the research findings are intended to be generalised. Defining the population involves specifying the characteristics or attributes of interest and establishing the boundaries of the group under study. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) defined population as the entire group of individuals or elements possessing the characteristics of interest to the researcher. They emphasise the importance of defining the

population's scope and characteristics to ensure that research findings are applicable and relevant. Mertens (2014) argued that population is the group of individuals or cases that share common characteristics or attributes relevant to the research study.

She emphasised the need for researchers to consider the diversity and variability within the population when designing research studies and selecting sampling methods. The target population for this study was the college students, lecturers as well as administrators. The administrators in this case will be the principal of the college. According to the college's record, the total number of enrolled students is five hundred (500) and fifty-two (52) lecturers as well as two (2) administrators who are the principal and vice principal.

### **3.6 Sampling and sampling procedure**

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a subset of individuals or elements from a larger population to participate in a research study (Babbie,2016). Hassan (2024) defended that sampling refers to the process of selecting of data from a larger population or dataset in order to analyse or make inferences about the whole population. He further suggested that sampling involves taking a representative sample of data from a larger group or dataset in order to gain insights or draw conclusions about the entire group. McCombes (2019) postulated that when you conduct a research about a group of people, its rarely possible to collect data from every person in that group.

Hassan (2024) suggested that there are two types of sampling which are the probability and non-probability sampling. He added that probability sampling is the type of sampling which is based on the principles of random selection and it involves selecting samples in a way that every member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. Non-probability sampling on the other hand, Hassan (2024) argued that it does not rely on random selection and it involves selecting samples in a way that does not give every member of the population an equal chance of being included in the sample. This study based itself on the non-probability sampling methods focusing mainly on the convenience sampling and purposive sampling.

**Convenience sampling:** Bryman (2016) proposed that convenience sampling involves selecting participants based on their availability and accessibility to the researcher. Hassan (2024) added that this method is easy and convenient but may not be representative of the population. The study focuses on promoting gender equity in physical education,

convenience sampling was used to select participants from the teacher training college who were readily available and willing to participate in the research. This approach was practical given the limited time, status of the college that it was closed and the researcher could not access students on campus. This method of sampling in this study allowed for quick and efficient data collection, making it suitable given the time constraints. Additionally, it would have been challenging to access a random or representative sample of participants within the given timeframe, making convenience sampling a pragmatic choice.

**Purposive sampling:** According to Patton (2015), purposive sampling involves selecting participants based on specific criteria that are relevant to the research. Hassan (2024) also added that in this method, the participants are selected based on specific criteria such as their expertise on a particular topic. This method is often used in qualitative research but may not be representative of the population. In this study, this method was advantageous as participants were selected based on their experiences or expertise gender dynamics in physical education such as physical education lecturers and administrators who is the college principal to provide access to the college's policy documents. This type of sampling allowed the researcher to target individuals or groups who possess the characteristics or experiences that are important to the research question. Selecting the participants purposefully permitted the researcher to ensure that the sample is relevant and representative of the population of interest. Together these sampling methods allowed researchers to gather diverse perspectives and insights on promoting gender equity in physical education within the constraints of the study.

### **3.6.1 Sampling size**

According to Creswell (2014), a sample size refers to the number of participants or observation included in a research study, representing a subset of the population under investigation. A sample size that is too small may yield unreliable or biased estimates, while a sample size that is too large may lead to unnecessary resource expenditures. For this study, the researcher purposely selected the two (2) physical education lecturers of the college because they deal with day to day instructional practises of the program. The college principal as the administrator who has in depth knowledge of the college policy documents.

Moreover, a convenient selection of a group of second (2<sup>nd</sup>) year students from the college from the different majors was done, reason being that they are familiar with the college environment, in terms of activities and have undergone a full semester of physical education,

they are also experienced with other extracurricular activities from the college. Additionally, when conveniently sampling the students, the researcher ensured to sample students with representation of equal male and female students from the different majors of the college which are: ICT and Maths, ICT and Science, English and SiSwati, Geography and History as well English and Geography majors. The main reason for this selection is that the students based on their academic context, they can give varied perceptions and experiences enriching the findings of the study. In total, the sample size consisted of thirteen (13) participants.

### **3.7 Data generation instruments**

According to Neuman (2014) data generation instruments refer to the tools, methods or techniques used to collect data in research studies. These instruments may include surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, observations and document analysis among others. Creswell (2017) posited that data generation instruments are the means by which researchers collect empirical evidence to address research questions or objectives. These instruments encompass a range of techniques from structured surveys and interviews to more qualitative approaches such as observations and document analysis. Bryman (2016) argued that data generation instruments refer to the specific tools or methods used by researchers to gather primary data in a research study.

These instruments are selected based on the research objectives, research questions and the nature of the data being sought. Researchers argue that data generation instruments are essential components by which researchers collect empirical evidence to address research questions, test hypotheses or explore phenomena of interest. As researchers appropriately select data generation instruments, researchers can be able to tailor data collection methods to the specific research objectives, questions and the specific nature of data sought for contributing to the overall rigor, validity and credibility of the study, fostering trustworthiness of the findings and conclusions drawn from the data collected by the researcher. Prior to administering the instruments, the researcher will conduct telephonic conversations with participants, soliciting permission for them to be part of the study, explaining the purpose of the study, confidentiality assurance and guidance on how the data will be collected. This is the stage where the researcher will ascertain convenient methods and time to administer the data collection instruments. For this study, the researcher selected the following data generation instruments:

**Open-ended questionnaires:** Open ended questionnaire is a qualitative research instrument that consists of questions designed to elicit detailed, narrative responses from participants. They encourage respondents to provide their thoughts, opinions and experiences in their own words. This approach allows for rich, descriptive data that captures nuances and complexities of participants' perspectives. This instrument was employed to the conveniently selected eleven (11) students from the college through email or WhatsApp because it is convenient, accessible and reliable. The questionnaires included the purpose of the study, confidentiality assurance and that they could respond through WhatsApp voice notes or easily download and print it out and respond to it and scan it back to the researcher. An option of availing printed copies for those in need of them was availed as per their need, convenience and choice.

The data was collected and the responses were recorded systematically to ensure data integrity and organisation. Since the researcher relied mostly on recorded voice notes on WhatsApp or the printed copies which will enabled the researcher to replay the voice notes to gather clear explanations. Telephonic interviews were conducted for further exploration of the matter and to allow participants to freely express themselves through an interrogation. Some participants seemed unable to articulate themselves properly when they are alone much as they did through an interrogation, yet these responses they gave were vital for the effectiveness of the study's overall findings. The open ended questionnaires were advantageous because they allowed participants to express their views in detail, providing rich, qualitative data that captures nuances and complexities of gender issues. It also allowed flexibility to the participants to respond in their own words allowing exploration of unexpected themes and they also enhanced participant engagement and encourage thoughtful responses. The researcher was careful to monitor data saturation to extract meaningful themes and findings.

**Semi-structured interviews:** According to Flick (2018), semi structured interviews are a qualitative research method characterised by a flexible interview format that combines predetermined core questions with opportunities for open-ended probing and exploration of participants' responses. Patton (2015) defended that semi structured interviews allow for a deeper exploration of participants' perspectives, experiences and insights related to gender equity in physical education. By providing a flexible format, semi-structured interviews enable participants to express themselves in their own words and elaborate on key topics of interest. In this study, semi-structured interviews will be used to gather rich and nuanced data from the lecturers and administrators. They will be administered also to the students in the

case where the researcher seeks to probe further the responses attained from the open-ended questionnaires and this will be done telephonically. They will share their views, perceptions, experiences and challenges related to gender equity in physical education.

Semi-structured interviews also allow participants to share their perspectives on the current physical education practises, cultural and institutional factors influencing access and engagement and the impact of policies and practises on gender equity within the teacher training college. By using the semi-structured format, the researcher was able to ask chore questions aligned with the research objectives while allowing flexibility to probe deeper into specific topics, clarify responses and explored emerging themes or any other issues raised by the participants. This instrument afforded the researcher an opportunity to encourage participants to share their stories, experiences and recommendations for promoting gender equity in physical education, providing valuable insights for informing future interventions, policies and practises within the college as per the aim of the study.

**Document analysis:** Krippendorff (2018) defines document analysis as a qualitative research method that involves the systematic examination and interpretation of textual, visual or audio-visual materials to uncover patterns, themes and meanings relevant to the research inquiry. Bowen (2009) elucidated that document analysis involves the examination of various types of documents, including but not limited to written texts, reports, policies, memos, emails, images, videos and audio recordings. The goal is to uncover patterns, themes and trends within the documents that can inform the research inquiry.

In this study, the documents included the current physical education curriculum, institutional policies and guidelines on gender equity, evaluations of the physical education program, existing guidelines on inclusive practises in the college which included the strategic plan for the college. The analysis gave insight to the researcher on prevailing norms, values and discourses surrounding gender equity in physical education within the college context. It also assisted in identifying areas of alignment or discrepancy between policy intent and actual implementation, as well as potential barriers or facilitators to promoting gender equity which will be discussed in detail in chapter 4 of the study.

### **3.8 Data collection procedure**

Firstly, the researcher clearly defined and articulated the research questions and objectives guiding the study which are to examine how do cultural norms and beliefs influence gender

roles in physical education at a teacher training college and what institutional policies and practises contribute to or hinder gender equity in the college's physical education program? The researcher proceeded to selecting the open ended questionnaires for students, interviews for lecturers and document analysis. The data collection captured the participants 'perspectives on gender roles, equity challenges and their insights institutional policies.

After sampling of participants, the researcher proceeded to the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) to solicit approval to conduct the study as well as distributing informed consents to all participants, explaining the study's purpose, confidentiality measures and voluntary participation. Data was collected through electronic open ended questionnaires to students and telephonic interviews with lecturers. Follow up telephonic interviews was conducted to students to probe the matter further. The interviews were recorded for easy transcription afterwards and the questionnaires were mostly responded over WhatsApp voice notes which were later transcribed for analysis. Document analysis was also conducted where a review of institutional documents, curriculum material was reviewed. A transcription of interview recordings and organisation of data from the questionnaires as well as findings from the document analysis was conducted. Accuracy and completeness was ensured in transcribing the data to facilitate thorough analysis. The data stored prioritising confidentiality. The participants were labelled using number system to anonymise participants e.g. student 1 or lecturer 2.

The data was then analysed using thematic coding techniques to identify recurring themes, patterns and categories that emerge from the participants' responses. The findings were validated by seeking feedback from the participants. The researcher also engaged in peer debriefing with colleagues to discuss interpretations, challenges and alternative explanation for findings. The qualitative findings were then presented using descriptive narratives, direct quotations and thematic summaries. The findings were linked to the research objectives to provide a coherent and insightful discussion.

### **3.9 Trustworthiness**

Shenton (2004) suggested that trustworthiness refers to the degree of confidence or trust that can be placed in the research findings and interpretations. It involves ensuring that the research process is conducted with integrity, transparency and rigor, thereby enhancing the credibility and validity of the study. This study demonstrated trustworthiness through credibility, transferability, confirmability, ethical consideration and dependability.

### **3.10 Credibility**

Graneheim and Lundman (2004) elucidated that credibility in research refers to the believability, trustworthiness and authenticity of the study findings. It is the extent to which the research process is perceived as reliable, valid and unbiased by the intended audience. They added that establishing credibility validates the research process, demonstrating that rigorous methodological procedures have been followed to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the findings. They further posited that credible research findings are more likely to be disseminated, implemented and integrated into practise, leading to positive changes and improvements in real-world contexts.

In this study, credibility was applied through ensuring transparency and rigor in data collection, analysis and interpretation of the findings. The procedures and methods used to collect data on the study were clearly documented. This transparency guaranteed that the research is open and accountable, enhancing the credibility of the study. The researcher also used systematic and rigorous analytical techniques such as thematic analysis or content analysis to interpret data collected from the open ended questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. The researcher ensured to validate the research findings by triangulating data from multiple sources used in the study. The researcher sought feedback and validation from participants on the accuracy and relevance of the research findings. Member validation ensures that the study's interpretation resonate with the experiences and perspectives of those involved. Reflexivity will be maintained throughout the research process by acknowledging and addressing research biases, assumptions and limitations. As the researcher openly discusses her positionality and its potential impact on the study, the researcher demonstrates transparency and enhances credibility.

### **3.11 Dependability**

According to Grbich (2013) refers to the consistency, reliability and stability of research findings over time and across different contexts. It involves ensuring that the research process is conducted in a manner that produces consistent and reproducible results. Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2019) postulated that dependability encompasses the ability of a study to produce results that are consistent and free from errors or biases. It involves establishing and adhering to standardised procedures and protocols throughout the research process to ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of the findings. Maxwell (2013) posited that dependability is the extent to which research findings can be replicated or confirmed by other researchers using similar methods and procedures. It involves establishing clear and transparent

documentation of the research process to facilitate replication and verification of the study's results.

In the study, dependability will be applied through documenting and describing all methodological procedures in detail, including data collection methods, sampling techniques and data analysis techniques. Consistent data collection protocols were followed to ensure uniformity in data collection for example, questionnaires and interview guides had clear instructions and prompts. Since the researcher was the only one collecting the data, uniformity and dependability was guaranteed minimising variations. In the document analysis as well the instruction and guidelines as to what is required or sort after was also clearly described. The study also ensured consistency in data coding and interpretation to attain reliability and reduce subjective bias and ensuring that the findings were grounded in consistent interpretations of the qualitative data. The researcher engaged in peer debriefing to discuss and validate data interpretations and coding decisions. This helped to support dependability in data analysis process, allowing critical reflection and validation of findings. Multiple data collection methods were used (open ended questionnaires, interviews and document analysis) as well as sources (students, lecturers and administrators) to validate and cross check findings as they all have different views and perceptions on the study which will enable robustness of conclusions. Lastly, the researcher validated findings by returning to participants to verify interpretations and ensure that their perspectives have been accurately captured. Implementing these strategies in the research strengthened the reliability and stability of the findings. They also ensured that the research produces consistent and replicable results, contributing to overall trustworthiness and validity of qualitative research in educational contexts.

### **3.12 Transferability**

Grbich (2013) defines transferability as the degree to which the findings of a qualitative research have relevance and applicability to other contexts or populations. It involves assessing the extent to which the study findings can be extrapolated or applied to similar situations or settings, thus enhancing the external validity of the research. Grbich (2013) cited the importance of transferability in research that it allows researchers to assess the extent to which the findings of a study can be generalised or applied to other contexts or populations. Tracy (2013) emphasised the significance of transferability in enabling the application of research findings to real-world, including informing policy decisions and guiding practical interventions. Maxwell (2013) highlighted the importance of considering transferability to

enhance the validity of qualitative research, as it demonstrates the relevance and applicability of findings across different settings or populations. Patton (2015) underscored the importance of transferability in qualitative research by emphasising its role in ensuring the practical relevance and utility of research findings for stakeholders and policymakers.

In this context of promoting gender equity in physical education, transferability was assessed by considering the similarities and differences between the study context and other educational settings or even institutions. The study examined the applicability of the study findings to diverse cultural or socio-economic contexts and lastly by exploring the potential relevance of the research outcomes for the selected participants involved in the study process across different educational contexts.

### **3.13 Conformability**

Morrow (2015) declared that conformability in qualitative research refers to the degree in which the findings accurately reflect the perspectives and experiences of the participants, without being unduly influenced by the biases or perspectives of the researcher. It involves ensuring objectivity and transparency in the research process to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the study findings. Creswell and Poth (2018) referred to conformability in qualitative research as the extent to which the researcher's interpretations and conclusions accurately reflect the perspectives and experiences of the participants, without being unduly influenced by the researcher's biases or preconceptions. It involves maintaining objectivity and transparency throughout the research process to ensure that the findings are trustworthy and credible. Morrow (2015) discussed that conformability is important in ensuring the trustworthiness and credibility of qualitative research findings. Maintaining objectivity and transparency enhances the reliability and validity of interpretations. Other researchers elucidated that conformability reduces bias in qualitative research by ensuring that findings accurately represent participants' perspectives rather than being influenced by the researcher's biases or assumptions.

In this research study, conformability was achieved by engaging in reflexive practises to critically examine and acknowledge the researcher's biases, assumptions and perspectives. Maintaining detailed documentation of the research process including decisions made, data collection procedures and analytical techniques and also seeking input from the selected participants and colleagues to validate the interpretations and conclusions drawn from the

data. Lastly, reporting with transparency the research process and findings including any limitations or challenges encountered by the researcher.

### **3.14 Ethical issues**

Shenton (2018) defined ethical issues in research as concerns or dilemmas arising from the moral principles and standards governing the conduct of research, particularly with regard to the treatment of human participants. These encompass considerations of informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, beneficence, no maleficence, justice and respect for participants. Tong et al., (2018) posited that ethical considerations in research involve the identification, assessment and management of potential ethical issues and dilemmas that may arise throughout the research process. This includes ensuring the protection of participants' rights, minimizing risks of harm or discomfort and upholding ethical standards of integrity, transparency and respect. Researchers argue that ethical issues play a transcendental role in safeguarding the rights, welfare and dignity of research participants. Adhering to ethical issues ensures that the participants are treated with respect, fairness and integrity throughout the research process. It has been highlighted that upholding ethical standards enhances the trustworthiness and credibility of research findings. A research that was ethically conducted, inspires confidence among participants in terms of reliability and validity of the study outcomes. Adhering to ethical guidelines and regulations helps researchers to fulfil their obligations to society, academia and the broader research community.

Since this study relied on virtual tools for the open ended questionnaires and interviews, the researcher ensured to obtain informed consent from all participants. The participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study, the interview process, their rights as participants and their data will be used and stored securely. The participants were at liberty to ask questions and provide voluntary consent before participating in the interviews and attempting the questionnaires, they were also free and allowed to ask questions on something they did not understand as they attempted the questionnaires. The researcher also warranted to do a follow up telephonic interview to the students to clarify unclear responses or to elaborate the requirement of the questions to attain in depth findings. This aspect was also crucial because some participants were not able to articulate themselves in writing. The use of pseudonyms was prioritised during the participation to identify participants during the questionnaires and interviews as well as in transcripts. The data collected is stored in a safe password protected device with restricted access.

A letter from the ministry of education and training through the college was solicited prior to collecting the data to adhere to the ethical guidelines and standards set by the by the college for individuals seeking to conduct a study in the college. The researcher remained vigilant for any potential ethical dilemmas encountered. The researcher ensured to obtain informed consent from all selected participants involved in the study. Confidentiality and privacy was warranted as well by protecting participants' identities and personal information. Harm or discomfort was minimised by conducting a thorough risk assessment and providing appropriate support and resources such as using WhatsApp a reliable, convenient and affordable method of communication instead of other expensive modes of communication. Cultural norms, beliefs and values were respected at all times by also ensuring inclusivity and sensitivity in research practises.

### **3.15 Informed consent**

Flory and Emanuel (2004) described informed consent as the process in research whereby individuals are provided with comprehensive information about the research study, including its purpose, procedures, potential risks, benefits, confidentiality measures and their rights as participants. participants are given the opportunity to ask questions and clarify any concerns before voluntarily agreeing to participate based on their understanding of the information provided. Informed consent upholds the principle of respect to autonomy, ensures participants' rights, welfare and dignity are protected throughout the research process. Informed consent is crucial in ethical research conduct and for maintain the trustworthiness and credibility of research findings.

The researcher in this study provided detailed information about the purpose, procedures, risks and potential benefits of the study for all participants written in English language. The researcher ensured that participants have the opportunity to ask questions, seek clarification and make an informed decision about the participation. Written consents from participants were sought which allowed clear documentation of their willingness to participate in the study and stating that they have the right to withdraw at any given point of the study. Since the researcher is also a lecturer in the college, she will continue to warrant not to subject the students under undue influence to participate. The researcher explained thoroughly what is expected of the participants during the questionnaires and interviews including mode of data collection, which was mainly through WhatsApp voice notes and telephonic interviews and also explaining that privacy by confirming that information communicated will not be shared in other platforms. The same procedure was applied on the analysed institutional documents,

where some of them consisted of official government policies which are used by the college as it translates government policies.

### **3.16 Privacy**

The World Medical Association (2013) postulated that privacy in research refers to the right of individuals to control access to their personal information and to maintain confidentiality regarding sensitive data. It involves protecting participants' identities, ensuring the confidentiality of their responses and minimising the risk of unauthorised access or disclosure of personal information. This is essential for upholding the participants' autonomy and dignity controlling their involvement in research and maintain their privacy rights. Privacy also builds trust between the researcher and participants by assuring them that their personal information will be handled confidentially and securely. Privacy also obliges researchers to adhere to protecting participants' privacy and confidentiality according to ethical guidelines in fulfilling responsibilities to respect participants' rights, welfare and dignity at all times.

The researcher in this study ensured that participants' personal information was collected, stored and used in a manner that protects their privacy rights. Anonymization was used to protect participants' identities when reporting or publishing research findings. Secure data storage was implemented and transmission protocols to prevent unauthorised access or disclosure of sensitive information. The researcher obtained explicit consent from participants regarding the use and sharing of their personal information for research purpose.

### **3.17 Harm to participants**

Harm to participants in research is described as any negative consequences, risks or adverse effects that participants may experience as a result of their participation in a research study. This includes physical injury, psychological distress, emotional discomfort, social stigma, loss of privacy or financial damage (National Institutes of Health, 2018). It is essential that researchers have a moral and ethical obligation to prioritise participants' welfare and ensure that they do not experience undue harm or risk as a result of their participation in research. Researchers are expected to be proactive in anticipating any potential harm and make means to mitigate potential risks through the research process. As researchers prioritise participants' welfare and safety, trust and respect is built which is fundamental for a smooth running of the research process. The researcher ensured that she conducts a thorough risk assessment to identify potential sources of harm or any form of discomfort from the participants for example, discussion of sensitive topics or traumatizing experiences related to gender equity.

Participants' behaviour and reactions was monitored during the research process to avoid causing harm by offending the participants.

## **Summary**

The research methodology chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the approach, design, instruments and procedures adopted for the study on promoting gender equity in physical education. The chapter begins with a detailed explanation of the research paradigm, highlighting the interpretive paradigm as the guiding framework for the study which offers a robust framework for a qualitative research that prioritises understanding subjective meanings and social context. It is ideal for this study as it enhances rich, nuanced insights into social phenomena in understanding diverse perspectives and experiences of gender equity in physical education. The study used the qualitative research design which provides a systematic approach to exploring gender equity in physical education in a college setting. It emphasises in depth understanding, contextual insights and participants' perspectives aiming to generate meaningful contribution to the field of gender equity in physical education.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Data presentation, interpretation and discussion**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The preceding chapter discussed the study's research design and methodology that was employed in generating data. This chapter presents the generated data as well as findings. The data presented and deliberated in this chapter goes towards answering the critical questions for this study, moreover this chapter also discusses concepts which emerged from the field. The questions which guided this study are:

2. How do cultural norms and beliefs influence gender roles in physical education at a teacher training college?
3. What institutional policies and practises:
  - a. contribute to gender equity in the college's physical education program?
  - b. hinder gender equity in the college's physical education program?

The previous chapter on research methodology states the primary aim of this research which is to investigate cultural and institutional factors that hinder gender equity in physical education. Additionally, the study sought to delve into the challenges faced by male and female students in accessing and participating in physical education, with a particular focus on the cultural norms, beliefs and institutional policies that influence gender roles within this domain. This qualitative case study, grounded itself on the interpretive paradigm which according to Nickerson (2024), is a social science paradigm asserting that reality is subjective, emphasising understanding phenomena from the perspective of individuals.

The study generated its data from three instruments namely interviews administered to physical education lecturers, document analysis as well as questionnaires administered to eleven (11) students followed by telephonic interviews for further exploration of the matter. These methods were used to collect data to ensure trustworthiness as well as minimising bias in the study through triangulation. The researcher has also used verbatim quotations from interviews with an aim to provide proof and enhance dependability of the study. Pseudonyms of participants have also been used to ensure ethical issues of confidentiality as well as anonymity. The lecturers are referred to as lecturer 1 and lecturer 2, the students as well are referred to as student 1 to student 11.

## **4.2 Data presentation and discussion**

This section presents the findings of the study which are presented in themes as well as themes that emerged from data generation which enforced the research questions as well supporting the importance of the study. The main themes that emerged from the study are cultural norms, resources, curriculum, advocacy and policies. These are going to be discussed below:

### **4.2.1 Cultural norms and societal expectations**

Smith (2022) defined cultural norms as the shared expectations and rules that guide behaviour within a cultural group, influencing what is considered acceptable and appropriate in various social contexts. The participants' views suggest that cultural norms affect gender roles in physical education in issues of sports suitable for males and females, dress code,

society's expectations towards activities suitable for each sex, career, media, influences on educators, self-perception and identity development

#### **4.2.1.1 Cultural norms and sport choice**

According to the data collected from the participants, cultural norms often channel specific sporting codes to specific sexes and often perpetuate traditional gender stereotypes that dictate appropriate behaviours, interests and roles for males and females. Contextually, males are expected to take on aggressive, competitive sports and physical activities.

*“In most traditional cultures, gender roles prescribe that males are to take on physical and competitive activities whilst females are encouraged to pursue nurturing and less demanding physical activities.”* (Student 2)

*“Yes, with regards to gender especially on females there are physical activities deemed not ideal for ladies.”* (Student 5)

Flintoff and Scraton (2019) defended that in the context of physical education, these stereotypes may manifest in expectations regarding the types of sports and activities deemed suitable for boys versus girls. For example, boys may be encouraged to participate in team sports that emphasise strength and aggression, while girls may be steered towards individual activities or aesthetic sports that prioritise grace and flexibility.

This study, however unearthed another different phenomenon on cultural norms and societal expectations which dictates that females are groomed for household chores and marriage while males are groomed for leadership and power or activities that require strength display which is also transferred to sport choices as well as roles in the society at large.

*“ .... The societal expectations do hinder greatly because society dictates that a female should get married and look after children which hinders the performance on somethings.... ”.* (Student 6)

*“.....Another norm is the belief that activities that should be done by females are indoors whereas sports are mostly done outdoors, yes there are sports done outdoors and culturally, it is believed that females should be indoors doing house chores whereas males are encouraged to play sports outdoors”.* (Student 3)

*“... The society is where live. So if the society is being guided by cultural norms so in our society we expect males than females to partake in physical activities, head families and lead available positions within the society”. (Student 9)*

*“In most cases our culture has hindered females from participating in physical activities all in the name of it’s a boys’ things, girls are meant to do home chores in order to prepare for marital purposes and that affects our social lives in the sense that we are bound to stay home and do home chores and for marriage of course. (Student 11)*

This aspect shows the staunch patriarchal structure influence in the society as well as strong cultural belief of the society which clearly spells out and labels women as a weaker specie who have to stay home and look after children and do house hold chores and males as the stronger specie who need to engage in activities of aggression and strength display. These cultural norms have always been there in the cultural context of African developing countries which have been challenged over the years though socio-economic, legal reforms and advocacy. Mikell (1997) supports that traditional African societies have often been patriarchal, with men holding primary authority in both public and private spheres.

He further said that this approach historically limited women’s role and opportunities in various domains. Though these cultural norms and societal expectations have been there historically, there is change seen gradually introduced to the society. noted that

*“..... The societal expectations do hinder greatly because society dictates that a female should get married and look after children which hinders the performance on somethings. Even on weekends you can’t do certain things. Even when you have an understanding partner, but the society does not accept, you cannot even jog wearing pants, you are perceived wrongly, worse when you have a sport where you compete. However, we see the changes incorporated slowly”. (Student 6)*

The data generated from this study also suggest that cultural norms contribute immensely on the type of sport or physical activity males and females can do. The data suggests that males need to do competitive and aggressive sporting codes. The study also unveiled that according to our culture, only males are allowed to participate in sports while females take on the back seat of being led which partly supports Flintoff and Scraton (2019) findings who posited that these stereotypes may manifest in expectations regarding the types of sports and activities deemed suitable for boys versus girls.

*“I cannot run away that there are societal and cultural beliefs which can be positive and negative and play a huge role towards gender roles in PE that is why as a female coach as well I sometimes face challenges when it comes to participation, even if you can try to give fair and equal opportunities, sometimes there will be these societal or cultural issues. To elaborate on this, unfortunately, I am living in a patriarchal country, the society is masculine based, there is this belief through socialization which says, as a woman you are weak, soft therefore you need to stay home, that is how we are being socialised whereas men are told that they are strong and they have to lead. That has gone out to the industry or the field of play, PE in this instance. Therefore, issues of being strong for males and soft for females has gone to the extent of affecting PE where you find female students pulling back and pushing males to take the lead role or these activities are not fit for us females, they opt for activities like refereeing in most times. In most cases, the ladies will take the back seat and the guys will lead. As we are also teaching different disciplines within the field of PE, the students have labelled some activities for females or males.” (Lecturer 1)*

*“Culture is stigmatising females participating in sports because sports is perceived to be a male activity. This is also evident on the fact that it took us time as females to partake in general education in school so cultural norms did influence females on whether or not they should participate in sports because our culture says we must stay indoors. Even if you can need time to do sports, there would be no time given to you. The societal expectations do hinder greatly because society dictates that a female should get married and look after children which hinders the performance on somethings. Even on weekends you can’t do certain things.” (Student 6)*

*“It has influenced participation since men and women believe there are things made for them and things not made for them”. (Student 7)*

*“The society has greatly influenced participation in physical activities based on gender. It is believed that man is entitled to heavy labour and long or enduring tasks. The society also believes that man are providers. They work very hard to have something on the plate. Women are entitled to light work because they believe that they have little energy. Women are believed to be caring since they are able to nurture a child from conception”. (Student 8)*

From this response, the researcher gathered that cultural norms in Eswatini manifest strong patriarchal structures which affected gender roles in the past and are still evident even in our dispensation. This data suggests that cultural norms disempower women by labelling them as weak and unsuitable for competitive sports. This advocates the necessity for initiatives that will build confidence and skills in women encouraging them to participate in physical activities. It displays that there is still lack of knowledge about the importance of equal opportunities to be offered to both men and women in sports as well as the purpose of sports in general. According to the Gender Equality Framework, it aims to build agency of people of all genders and life stages, change relations between them and transform structures so they can and be able to contribute equally to, and benefit equally from, social, political and economic development. Therefore, this study will base itself in the initiatives proposed by the GEF Framework as well as the Sports and Recreation Policy of 2023 to propose innovative approaches to promote gender equity in physical education.

#### **4.2.1.2 Dress code**

MacDonald (2016) defined dress code in sports as a set of guidelines or rules outlining appropriate attire and equipment for athletes participating in various sports or activities. Proper sports gear when doing physical activities is of utmost importance. According to Williams et al. (2012) they ensure comfort and safety during physical activity which can positively affect students' participation level. Kerr et al. (2018) suggested that they can enhance performance by providing better support and comfort. Through data collected, this study has further discovered that cultural norms on dressing have an influence in physical education lessons. Dress code is a major aspect in the teaching and learning of the physical education because certain activities require certain movements which cannot be done effectively when wearing a dress or any dress code that is anti-sport.

*“Another societal expectation is how you dress, mostly when you play sports your body somehow will be exposed yet the society doesn't accept that, it is societal expectation. For example, in tennis, women wear short skirts which might turn heads in the society yet it is no issue with males.”* (Student 3)

*“Firstly, I have noticed that females when it comes to sporting activities are not entirely free to wear sport gear that allows them to be free”.* (Lecturer 2)

*“Secondly culture comes in with issues of outfit, when you emphasise proper outfit for sports or physical activities which are sports gear like tights, the female students*

*shy away from that. Mostly you will find them dressed up in the tight underneath and put on a dress on top to cover up, they will tell you that the society does not allow a lady to dress up like that. Certain activities like abdominal exercises like sit ups are not acceptable to them or anything that will make them to stretch out their legs like splits they do not want to do those.” (Lecturer 1)*

*“Society does not allow females to wear pants even in working places.” (Student 9)*

In this case where students are not free to dress up according to the expectations of the sports or physical education during practical lessons, the students are not only under privileged to acquire the skills taught to the optimal level but it also affects the main aim of teaching overall because education aims to support personal development, impart knowledge and skills necessary for individuals to pursue careers, engage in lifelong learning and adapt to societal changes; this may not be the case. Ultimately some students sometimes opt to just sit and not engage in the activities prepared until the lecturer threatens them with low marks, which affects the fundamental aim of education because it should be smooth to transfer skills to the student teacher so that they may also acquire the skill to transfer to learners at school.

Therefore, this means that instructional strategies to teach the subject in schools is also compromised because if the students are awarded with the diploma in teaching without completely changing their perception on issues of dress code which directly affects optimal performance on students, justice will not be done. Firstly, because this means that they did not properly acquire the skills for teaching practical lessons on the subject, secondly because students are not supposed to be threatened by a grade to do certain activities but rather they should engage in all activities as an expectation as requirements to be fulfilled in the field they chose. Thirdly, this shows that cultural norms on career choices are still staunch in the sense that the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills seem to be neglected where the society still does not consider physical education and sports as professional career path especially in the society we live in which emphasised development of skills beyond white collar jobs as they are now saturated.

*“.... Culture does discourage yet when you think about it, it will be one of the main sources of income in the upcoming years. I therefore feel we need to reconsider our ways to enhance somebody else’s skill. At home, when you pursue a sports career, you are not taken seriously...”. (Student 6)*

This data suggests that societal norms dictate dress code suitable for women modestly, conflicting with sports attire requirements. Cultural beliefs also reinforce the idea that women

should not expose their bodies, as it is against the culture which ultimately affect their performance and learning. In a nutshell, the data accentuates the significant impact of societal expectations and cultural norms on female participations in physical education practical lessons and sports. It also shows that women still need to be empowered to challenge these norms, encourage dialogue to critically reflect on their experiences and challenge oppressive practises.

*“... I believe that I have to force certain things on them for example, I use myself to demonstrate that there is nothing that I cannot do, I encourage them to push themselves beyond their limits, tell them they can do these things, nothing is impossible. My main strategy is demonstration, live what I teach and encourage them”.* (Lecturer 1)

#### **4.2.1.3 Self-perception and identity development**

Self-perception is how individuals view and evaluate themselves. This includes their belief, attitude and feelings about their ability, appearance and overall worth which is mostly influenced by societal expectations and cultural norms. Identity development on the other hand is the process through which individuals form a distinct sense of self which includes values, beliefs and roles in society. A positive self-perception and identity development play a crucial role in an individual’s life especially on influencing behaviour and participation, mental health and well-being as well as navigating social and cultural implications. Cale and Harris (2021) mentioned that exposure to traditional gender stereotypes in physical education can impact student’s self-perception and identity development.

*“Ladies who play soccer as well go to the extent of behaving, dressing like guys, shave their hair like guys and even begin to talk like guys simply because they are trying to prove that they are strong.”* (Lecturer 1)

*“In our culture it is improper for a girl child to mingle with others because they may inherit bad behaviour from people out there and so if you participate in physical activities, it may seem like you are a bad influence to other girls because you have shifted from normal cultural expectation which grooms a girl child for marriage and house hold care.”* (Student) 11

These findings suggest that stereotypes in the context of Eswatini are in the extreme given the strong cultural belief which is different from other developed countries in line with UNESCO guidelines in ensuring respectful and discouraging any form of harassment and

discrimination. According to this data, it shows that female athletes may adopt behaviours and appearances traditionally associated with males to assert their strength and capability. This may include as suggested by the participants, shaving their hair like boys or even dressing up like boys as well as adopting masculine mannerism. Cultural norms according to this data, discourage girls from mingling and participating in physical activities, viewing such behaviour as improper and potentially harmful to their reputation as girls although they are bad influence since they have now gone out of what is culturally expected of them, to stay home and do house chores.

Initiatives that build confidence and skills in women and girls are crucial as supported by the GEF by CARE. By providing education and training, this study can empower them to participate actively in sports despite societal expectations. The critical pedagogy framework will come in handy by encouraging students to critically analyse societal norms and their impact on gender roles in sports to foster a more inclusive mind-set, for example, why certain dress codes are enforced and who benefits from them. This data underscores the need for a multifaceted approach to address the cultural and societal barriers that hinder female participation in sports by dictating appropriate behaviours and looks for certain sports or activities.

#### **4.2.1.4 Cultural norms and their influence on career**

According to data collected, it also transpired that cultural norms and beliefs have even gone to the extent of affecting career choices and labelling certain sports and physical exercises fit for males and some for females based on strength as activities. Kirk and Penney (2021) in their study displayed that traditional gender stereotypes can also impact educational opportunities and career aspirations for students in physical education.

*“It is mostly men who consider PE as a career or sports as a career. This is because it is a cultural norm that men can do it better than females because of their physical structure which require strength and energy which is stereotype. If I decide to pursue sports as a career, who would support me because you need the society to supports you.” (Student 3)*

*“Cultural norms do hinder our dreams and ambitions to explore some departments in sports. Similarly, when you choose a career with sport elements, your thought always come back to what am I going to do with it, when am I going to get married and how will you grow from that including your source of income. Culture does discourage yet*

*when you think about it, yet it be will one of the main sources of income in the upcoming years. I therefore feel we need to reconsider our ways to enhance somebody else's skill. At home, when you pursue a sports career, you are not taken seriously, they would rather have you do sciences and get to the point of being socially misinterpreted as if you do not know your place in the society. I may have no words to explain but culture does not allow for females to get into deep until you grow your passion and have family back up then it becomes better, but currently, it remains a struggle". (Student 6)*

This data suggests that cultural norms label certain sports and physical activities as suitable for males and other for females based on perceived strength and energy requirements. Traditional gender stereotypes influence educational opportunities and career aspirations with physical education and sports being predominantly considered male domains. Female students feel a lack of societal support when pursuing sports careers as these are seen as more suitable for males which ultimately hinders their participation as they are expected to pursue home duties. The study shows that initiatives that build confidence and skills in women are crucial as well as emphasis critical thinking and dialogue, praxis and challenging status quo are imperative in the recommendations as suggested by the GEF by CARE critical pedagogy framework.

#### **4.2.1.5 Cultural norms, influence on educators' perception**

In the literature review of this research, the researcher quoted the findings of Wright et al., (2020) who suggested that cultural norms and beliefs can also shape educators' perception and behaviours towards students in physical education. When collecting the data, ten (10) out of eleven (11) students voiced that they have never experienced any implicit biases from the educators provoked by traditional gender stereotypes. The participants were probed to further explain the extent of these biases in affecting their personal and academic lives.

*"Yes, my educator was too lenient with girls when we were doing physical exercises. It affected my academic life since I scored less while most girls scored more. My emotions were hurt." (Student 1)*

*"Fortunately enough, I have never experienced any implicit biases promoted by gender stereotypes". (Student 3)*

Similarly, all the other students responded to the negative to experiencing implicit biases from educators provoked by traditional gender stereotypes. This suggests that though

researchers posit that implicit biases may be provoked by traditional gender stereotypes by educators, in this context, it has not been a main issue, suggesting that since the lecturers of the module in the college are females as well, could have contributed immensely to the improvement and that they are now aware of these biases and are advocating for change to see a better world in the world of physical education.

#### **4.2.1.6 Traditional gender stereotypes and media**

Flintoff and Scraton (2019) conclusions suggest that traditional gender stereotypes are often reinforced through media representations and cultural narratives that perpetuate narrow and restrictive definitions of masculinity and femininity. This study unearthed both positive and negative influence of media in physical education or sports activities unlike the negative influence suggested by other researchers. The data collected suggests that three (3) out of the eleven (11) students support the negative influences who suggested that it nails and promotes certain activities portrayed for males or females. Seven (7) out of the eleven (11) perceive a positive influence and one (1) student declared that he has no clue.

*“Media often portrays certain activities as suitable over one gender to the other. For example, an advert of a deodorant, they will decide to use a male, they will show the male participating in physically demanding sports but if they use a female, she will be doing either dance or any less demanding sport. Automatically, when people see their role models in those highlights, their minds are channelled that some sports are suitable for a certain gender while other sports for the other gender”.* (Student 2)

On the positive influences:

*“Media does change the perception of people that they may also partake by promoting that we may also want to see females as the directors and sole mind-set behind a specific sport. E.g. there is a lady in golf, yes she was stigmatised here and there but the media promoted and notified the public of her success so that way, they are encouraging us to have more females partaking in sports to increase the number. They also encourage and promote that one does not need to have a well-polished skill to participate but you can play and grow while playing. It is no longer a recreation activity. The media does contribute positively to the community. And we are also expected to participate in the sporting activities because it could turn out to be good financial opportunity. Females should not discourage themselves before trying but try it out because we are all capable of doing something”.* (Student 6)

*“Social media has exposed us to stars and best performing athletes who are males and females which gives us the affirmation that sport is not just for males but for everyone who has talent and one may realise that it is taking him or her places”.*  
(Student 11)

This study was also able through data collected, to gather a different notion of media in traditional stereotypes which is contrary to other researchers that media, has evolved and positively influenced traditional stereotypes. It was gathered that media has changed perceptions of people from labelling certain physical activities, careers or physical education fit for males and some for females. Instead, there has been sports that have been introduced through the impact and influence of media

*“The media has played a pivotal role in changing gender stereotypes. Today we have ladies’ soccer which we copied from other countries. Some females grow up willing to participate in sports because of what they see from the media”.* (Student 8)

In a nutshell, cultural norms, beliefs and societal expectations play vital role in influencing gender roles in physical education. The literature from this research suggests that this manifest itself in media influences, career choices, sports and physical activity choices where there are some physical activities that are labelled or deemed for males and some for females based on physical capabilities. This study was able to unearth critical elements not suggested by other researchers which affect not only the student participation in the classroom but lecturers’ instructional strategies whereby cultural norms and societal expectations affect the way students dress in physical education classes especially for practical lessons.

This study will therefore be able to challenge, through the critical pedagogy and Gender Equality Framework(GEF) by CARE suggested in chapter 2 of this study, the staunch, impeding cultural norms and advocate for equity for female students as well as empower them. Through these theoretical frameworks, the study was able to identify and analyse these structural barriers and advocate for reforms that promote gender equity, as it is the main emphasis of the GEF by CARE (Brown and Martinez 2020).

#### **4.3 Resources**

Hattie (2012) defined educational resources as tools and materials used to support teaching and enhance student learning outcomes. He emphasises that these resources include not only physical materials like textbooks and technology but also human resources such as skilled educators that contribute to effective education. The research literature quoted Wright et al.,

(2020) who postulated that colleges that lack gender-inclusive facilities and resources in their physical education programs can also hinder gender equity. If facilities such as locker rooms, restrooms or sports equipment are not designed to accommodate the needs of all students, regardless of gender, it can create barriers to participation and contribute to feelings of exclusion or discomfort among certain group of students. On the data collected, the researcher highlighted three (3) main themes physical(facilities) resources, human resources and students' misconceptions on the programme.

#### **4.3.1 Facilities**

This study discovered that physical resources which include sports ground, locker rooms and equipment such as balls, cones have played a major role in hindering gender equity in the physical education programme of the college. The students and lecturers voiced that the absence of these basic resources hinders not only gender equity but the general participation of students in physical education and enthusiasm to partake in other physical activities in the college. Worth noting is that this has been a burning issue in the college because currently, the college does not have a sports ground within its boundaries. The college uses a sports ground located outside the college premises which is about four (4) to five (5) kilometres away from the college. The walking distance is approximately fifteen (15) to twenty (20) minutes away considering the fact that there are students who are not physically fit so they van not walk faster.

The college has a by-pass road which is used by a lot of cars therefore, there is often traffic along the road (William Pitcher Road). The students are therefore expected to walk on the pavement yet they are usually a group of approximately eighty (80) students and such scenarios are deemed not safe as students tend to behave wildly when outside the classroom. According to the Situational Theory of Behaviour, students may act differently based on the context and situational factors. Outside of the classroom, where there are fewer formal rules and greater freedom, students might exhibit more exploratory or disruptive behaviours (Lewin,1947). Deci and Ryan (2000) also supported the self-determination theory that is influenced by the fulfilment of basic psychological needs-autonomy, competence and relatedness. During practical activities, if students feel more autonomous and less constrained by rules, their behaviour may reflect greater freedom and creativity, sometimes resulting in more energetic or less controlled actions. This therefore, signifies that the students are also in danger of getting involved in car accidents and failure to ensure safety for students much against the expectations of an educator to students.

This issue further expose female students in more danger as  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the sports ground is surrounded by a thick bush and the  $\frac{1}{4}$  which is exposed to the main road. This therefore means that they cannot be able to partake in physical activities without a supervision of authorities as they may become prey to perverts increasing the number of victims of Gender Based Violence (GBV) which is already skyrocketing in the country. Worth noting is that at some point, a lecturer for PE in the college had an incident where she had a confrontation with the local community soccer team when she wanted to conduct a practical lesson, found the team playing and was told to back off. From that moment, the lecturer desisted from going to the sports ground in fear of her safety as well as the students because as an educator, when you take students outside the school premises or even in class, the students are assumed to be under your full custody hence safety precautions need to be in place. This has further affected her teaching because she cannot fully engage the students for practical lessons outside the college premises.

Data collected from the questionnaire administered to students where they were asked to suggest support or resources they think could enhance gender equity within our college's physical education curriculum, six (6) out of the eleven (11) students mentioned that the provision of facilities like sports ground in the college could bring about a major role in promoting gender equity and meaningful participation in the physical education programmes of the college. The aspect of resources came as a daring aspect of even when the researcher made a follow up interview to the students probing the causes of lack of interest on the students' part to participate in physical education. All the students including the lecturers highlighted lack of resources as a main and discouraging factor for them not to be enthusiastic to participate meaningfully in physical education.

They also mentioned that for female students it was even worse because there are no locker rooms, the sports ground available is next to the main road leading to town and therefore made it difficult for them to have privacy hence the discouragement in willing to participate.

*“... the college need to provide proper sports grounds to ensure that all learners get the opportunity to participate in any activity they may want. There are no sports grounds and equipment in the college yet they are needed to implement some activities, this contributes greatly to gender equity. These facilities can widen the opportunity for both males and females to participate in all physical activities done in PE practical without limiting a certain group. For instance, males may wish to do*

*netball only to find that there are limited facilities for that field which may compel the educators to compromise neglecting that area. They may find themselves focusing on one group”.* (Student 1)

*“.....PE is a very good subject to refresh especially so the inclusion of the practical is also key, go as far as involving other colleges if need be but explore the practical sessions as they really help with depression and take our minds off things from the usual business we do in class. We could also have reduced amount of subscription in gyms around the college so that learners can enjoy physical fitness from the gym as we explore the different types of equipment provided at the gym”.* (Student 6)

*“Having all the necessary equipment in our college can enhance gender equity by that if there are gym equipment some learners won't be lazy to participate, it's better than going to the road and having to travel long distances just for physical activities.”.* (Student 11)

*“Lack of proper training tools and proper outfit to carry out the exercise during practical lessons thus making the students to lose interest on the subject since they will be required to take their money to make some of the sacrificing tools/instruments to use during their practical lessons which is time consuming and the resources are scarce”.* Lecturer 1 said *“the lack of proper facilities in the college has been of great disappointment because you find that the basic structure needed which is a playground is not available, now we just use any open space available which is not properly and clearly marked therefore it is discouraging to engage in practical lessons because the basic infrastructure is not available”.* (Student 8)

#### **4.3.2 Human resources**

Hattie (2012) mentioned that resources can be in a form of textbooks or infrastructure and in human resources, meaning the skills educators for the programme. The college has hired two (2) female physical education lecturers of the through the government channels. It transpired during the data collection that the students viewed this as bonus and a great initiative to promote gender equity. However, there were students who disclosed that more need to be done to equip the lecturers.

*“...The presence of the 2 female lectures conducting the course is also a bonus compared to the past”.* (Student 8)

This supports the findings of Robinson and Randall (2019) who theorised that female athletes and leaders in physical education can serve as positive role models for girls, challenging stereotypes and inspiring greater participation.

*“...Teachers may also cause students not to take part in PE. Ineffective teaching methods or uninspiring PE instructors can fail to engage students effectively. (Student 7)*

*“I think learners need to be motivated to start enjoying PE practical lessons. PE lecturers need to be patient with learners. They also need to keep motivating students so that they could get rid of any negative attitude they have towards physical education practical. For an infertile soil to become fertile needs fertilizers and manure likewise motivation is needed to make these learners start enjoying and loving practical lessons in PE”. (Student 1)*

*“Giving learners more understanding on why physical education is part of the lessons they should take can help. The government, more especially the ministry of education should do something on emphasising about learning physical education I think then learners will look at it with a different perspective”. (Student 4)*

This therefore means that lecturers have a huge role to encourage, promote and motivate students to participate in physical education, meaning that there is room for improvement expected from the lecturers in promoting gender equity and the programme holistically to support John and Baker (2020) findings that by equipping faculty and staff with the knowledge and skills to address gender-related issues, colleges can promote gender equity in their physical education program.

Cale and Harris (2021) were of the view that teachers and school staff can play a fundamental role in supporting girls’ participation in physical education. This initiative can eradicate existence of implicit biases provoked by educators or any other act which discourages students from participating freely or encouraged by educators as it is supposed to be the case in education.

*“Yes, my educator was too lenient with girls when we were doing physical exercises. It affected my academic life since I scored less while most girls scored more. My emotions were hurt”. (Student 1)*

From this perspective provided by the participants, this study was able to discover that the physical education discipline needs to develop an assessment instrument to constantly assess lecturers and programmes' effectiveness to ensure that the needs of the students are met through instructional strategies and curriculum relevance. The college entirely, currently has no such instrument in place. This study, in a nutshell also seeks harmony with other researchers' findings on the importance of resources which play a major role in the teaching of physical education as well as unearthing talents of learners in the college as it is the main aim of the curriculum as supported by Pinar (1975) who defined curriculum as a "currere" which is a concept or approach to understanding curriculum that focuses on the lived experiences of students and educators, emphasising the process of self-discovery and personal growth as also suggested by the views of

*".... engaging activities like refereeing so that we may also be able to discover our talents that can help me survive or one that I can pursue". (Student 6)*

#### **4.3.3 Students' misconception**

This study was also able to discover that beyond resource provision, the learners themselves still have misconception and a negative attitude towards the subject, the aims and desired outcomes. When probed further about their lack of interest in participating in physical education practical lessons, this is what transpired:

*"I think they are just lazy when it comes to academic work more especially PE, they take it as a playing subject, as if it is just for fun". (Student 11)*

*"I think the background/nature of the learners cause the learners to be less motivated when doing practical lessons, for instance some learners are book oriented yet some enjoy practical lessons. That is the reason why some learners become less motivated when doing practical lessons in PE". (Student 1)*

This response reflects the lack of knowledge to challenge the misconceptions and attitude of the students to be conversant about the subject.

*"I would say some of the students you find that they don't know what to do or they are not active, they do not do any physical activities so they find these very challenging, especially because a majority of them are females. (Student 4)*

*“Another issue is the lack of confidence, from a personal level, people with bigger bodies either male or female are not confident in playing sports or taking part in practical lessons in PE”.* (Student 5)

This information is much against the overall aims of the subject which is crucial for all students, especially those who are not physically active. Researchers suggest that physical education improves physical health, mental health benefits, enhance academic performance, social skills development, increased confidence, self-esteem, stress relief and lifelong healthy habits. The World Obesity Federation suggest that Eswatini has a high risk score of 7.5 out of 10, hence the decision from the Ministry of Education and Training to enforce the teaching of physical education in schools to curb such prevalence from deteriorating.

#### **4.4. Curriculum integration and advocacy**

Curriculum is all the learning experiences planned and directed by the school to achieve its educational goals (Tyler,1949). Pinar (2004) introduced the concept of “currere” where he defined the currere as a process that involves four steps: the regressive, the progressive, the analytical and the synthetical. This method encourages educators and students to reflect on their past experiences, envision future possibilities, analyse the present and synthesize these insights to understand their educational journey. The participants (both lecturers and students) in this study viewed curriculum as a method that could be used to integrate change and promote gender equity in the physical education programme. Supporting Culver et al., (2021) who defended that colleges can contribute to gender equity in physical education by adopting inclusive curriculum design practises. This involves selecting course materials, activities and assessments that reflect diverse perspectives and cater to the needs and interests of all students, regardless of gender. By offering a curriculum that challenges traditional gender stereotypes and promotes inclusivity, colleges can create a more equitable learning environment. Oliver and Kirk (2019) suggested that by offering a diverse range of options that cater to interests and abilities of all students, colleges can create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment.

The data collected from this study suggested that indeed curriculum can play a huge role in challenging gender stereotypes and cultural norms by empowering and advocating for change through education by incorporating seminars and involving well known people and some Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who advocate for gender equity to sensitise students on gender equity. The data also shows that a wide range of activities such as adding

more sporting activities from the common sporting codes (basketball, soccer, netball) to adding sports like table tennis and inclusion of gender equity topics in the physical education curriculum can play a transcendental role in the programme. This notion supports the findings of Smith and Johnson (2019) defended that advocacy campaigns, organised educational workshops and seminars raise awareness about gender equity in physical education, as suggested in chapter 2 of this research.

*“I think the college need to have gender equity awareness day, where people (learners and lecturers) will be taught about gender equity. This need maximum patience since it cannot be achieved overnight. (Student 1)*

*“I think students can raise campaigns such as gender GBV campaigns which will bring a change of attitude and the stereotypes made against females as well gender roles. If they can embark on that one, it would be much better”. (Student 9)*

*“Diversify from the curriculum to engaging activities like refereeing so that we may also be able to discover our talents that can help me survive or one that I can pursue”. Student 6 mentioned that “Introducing a variety of physical activities and sports to cater to different interests and abilities among students. (Student 7)*

When lecturers were asked about their views on the resources or support they believe are necessary to enhance gender equity gender equity efforts within the physical education curriculum and activities both lecturers’ responses supported advocacy and curriculum integration;

*“Advocacy, have males take up the initiative to advocate for gender equity, this goes a long way to empower both males and females as you are empowering the boy child to listen to a girl child. We also need inclusion in curriculum as it can play a huge role, have a topic or maybe not even a topic because gender issues are very sensitive but somehow it has to be taught in the curriculum, teach them while they are young (catch them while they are young)”. (Lecturer 1)*

*“I think advocacy can go a long way because this affects not only the PE curriculum but the entire functioning of the society. (Lecturer 2)*

The suggestions of awareness days and campaigns align with the framework’s focus on building agency. These initiatives can empower students by raising awareness about gender equity and challenging stereotypes. The data also suggests diversifying the curriculum to

include activities like refereeing to help students discover and develop new skills, contributing to their overall empowerment. The critical pedagogy framework in this study will be able to suggest and recommend innovative approaches to promote gender equity in the college grounding itself mainly on the outcomes of the data collected on gender norms to be guided on the depth and angle at which the advocacy and awareness should be directed avoiding at all costs any form of resistance since the researcher understands the sensitivity of this matter, especially because the contextual factors of culture cannot be eradicated or undone in one day, however, understanding that change is gradual. This framework supports empowerment through education, social justice and equity.

The data collected also suggests that currently the curriculum is praised for inclusion of all students, meaning it accommodates and is available for everyone in the college. Physical education as a general course, is taken by all students in the college until the second year of their study which ensures that everybody is able to freely participate in the activities provided by the curriculum. When asked to suggest any specific challenges related to gender equity that they perceive in the physical education program in the college; these were some of the participants' views:

*".... the curriculum is given to everybody in the institution. Meaning every learner has equal chances to participate, the curriculum is open to all learners without discriminating anybody by gender especially". (Lecturer 1)*

*"...., another thing that contribute to gender equity in PE it is that taking part in PE activities it is a mark so failing to take part results to failure. (Student 10)*

*"Having PE compulsory is a great initiative because few students would participate due to the cultural norms". (Student 11)*

*"Not at all, as I had mentioned before that we were all treated equally, it was based on the person's choice that I do not want to partake in a particular sport by choice or cultural norms otherwise we were treated equally". (Student 4)*

*"On my side, there were no challenges at all because everyone was treated with dignity and respect, everyone was given opportunities, everyone was recognised, so there were no challenges". (Student 5)*

*"Not all apart from being intrigued to do something new and exploring something new which grows to a passion because you work as a group collectively so if I will pin*

*point any challenges, I would be lying. I didn't see or meet any challenges so far".*  
(Student 6)

This data suggests that the college is on the right track by having physical education as a compulsory program in the college. This further suggests that as the college embarks on designing a programme for specialisation in the physical education section where students will major on the program, it should not be removed as a general course but rather have that group that will specialise on the program but still provide it as a general course. Findings from document analysis also suggest that there is no topic that specifically addresses gender equity in the PE curriculum, therefore there is need to include topics on gender equity to enrich the PE curriculum so that it may address such issues as gender because it is also one of the key points in the nation's curriculum framework of 2018.

#### **4.5 Policies**

Hood (2007) defined a policy as a deliberate system of guidelines to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. It involves a set of principles or procedures designed to address particular issues and provide consistent decision making. As suggested by Kirk and Penney (2021) who posited that colleges can promote gender equity in their physical education programs by implementing gender-sensitive policies and support services that address the unique needs and experiences of male and female students. This study therefore delved into the existing policies and support services within the college environment to verify if they contribute to gender equity in physical education and the extent to which they are implemented. It also questioned the existence, implementation and effectiveness of inclusive admission and enrolment policies that actively encourage and support gender equity. The study further interrogated professional development and training opportunities for faculty staff that contribute to gender equity in physical education and how are they implemented. Moreover, it enquired about historical documents that reveal shifts in policies, practises or attitudes towards gender equity.

##### **4.5.1 College's existing policies**

Data collected from the document analysis reveals that the college is a government entity, therefore, translates and interprets policies drafted by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) according to the needs and skills desired as per the times. The policies guiding all government institutions in the education sector include the Education Sector Policy, Education Sector Strategic plan 2022-2034, multi-year plan 2022-2025 as well as the

curriculum framework for general education of 2018. According to the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2022-20234, programme 2.3 which addresses providing assistance to learners at risk of dropping out, section 2.3.2 suggests that the government aims to promote gender equity and leadership skills among girls and boys through career fairs/days and job shadowing (internships) and 2.3.5 declares that the government aims to train all relevant educational staff on key Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) issues (e.g., social behaviour change communication, life skills education, gender issues) and career guidance.

As means of verification on 2.3.2 school reports are suggested to be used and for 2.3.5 no means of verification have been suggested. While the Education Sector Analysis Report of 2021 does not reveal any report on gender equity issues, the Multi Year Action Plan for 2022-2025 reveals actions that promote gender equity issues in sync with the exact strategies suggested in the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2022-2034. Section 2.2.4 of the goals and visions of the national Curriculum Framework for General Education, 2018 elucidate that the Swaziland government embraces gender equity and as such it strictly prohibits any discrimination, exclusion or restriction which has the purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by any person of the educational rights and fundamental freedoms of a person or persons of any gender. The aim is to provide equal opportunities and access to general education by women, men, girls and boys.

The Swaziland National Gender Policy of 2010, declares that it is aimed at redressing the inequities between women and men. It provides a vision to improve the living conditions of women and men including practical and forward looking guidelines and strategies for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the related constitutional provisions. The objectives and strategies proposed in the policy will be implemented in line with all other policies. However, throughout the policy, none of the thematic raised address physical education or sports. It suggests that the government's concern is that although the enrolment of both boys and girls is about the same at primary level, statistics show a significant decrease in the number of girl children at higher levels of education particularly in the science related fields. The high attrition rate among girls at higher levels of the education system can be attributed partly to behavioural practices such as early marriage of the girl child and high levels of unplanned and unsupported pregnancies. This statement supports the findings of the study explained above on staunch patriarchal structures of the country.

The strategic plan for William Pitcher College 2017-2022 on goal A8.0: embrace diversity, gender and inclusive education for sustainable development, highlights inadequate support for special needs students' disabilities. The college strategic plan does not suggest any strategic issues on gender equity or gender roles. Supporting Jones and Baker (2020) who highlighted that offering professional development and training opportunities for faculty staff can contribute to gender equity in physical education, *section 4.8 it reads "The institution has special interest in preparing professionals who model and advocate gender equitable and inclusive education. gender imbalance in subject specialisation is of particular concern to the institution. Furthermore, the institution aspires to ensure gender balance in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).*

*Though the desire to promote equity is there,* this study discovered that the strategic objective to curb this issue is only directed to support for special needs for students with disabilities leaving out the other issues of gender equity. Therefore, this means that gender, diversity and inclusivity are areas of concern in the college however, there are no means to implement recommendation or strategic solutions. Similarly, the findings discovered from the national curriculum framework of 2018 which only states the strategic issues without suggesting the action to fulfil or implement ways to solve the issue raised. This study exposed that the government policies are in place and have highlighted gender equity as a strategic issue to be actioned in the upcoming years, however, the college strategic plan for example is lagging behind in terms of fully translating the government policies entirely as per the order. The strategic plan is due for review and this study suggests inclusion of gender issues among other current themes in the education sector. The findings from the college strategic plan reveal that the college does have a desire to implement the strategic issues however, the actions to implement remain a problem.

This study also unearthed that these policies are general for education and not specific for any discipline, therefore, there is a dire need to develop guidelines on gender equity per specialisation or department in the college to promote gender equity according to subject areas mainly because the challenges faced in each discipline differ. Other disciplines like physical education, STEM subjects as suggested by the college's strategic plan, encountered much more imbalances compared to the other disciplines which calls for advocacy and awareness supported by policies based on real findings. This study, has not only discovered gender equity discrepancies in physical education programme but will recommend strategies which can be used by other disciplines in the college.

In a nutshell, this data highlights the importance of both policy and institutional efforts in promoting gender equity in the education sector as it was mentioned that the college interprets policies by the government through the ministry of education as it is a government entity. The education sector strategic plan's focus on promoting gender equity through career fairs, job shadowing and training educational staff is a positive step, however, the lack of verification measures for the initiatives suggests a need for more robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The national curriculum framework as well emphasises on gender equity and prohibition of discrimination which is commendable. However, the absence of specific strategies for physical education and sports indicates a need to fill in the gap, similarly to the national gender policy of 2010. The college's strategic plan' focus on diversity, gender and inclusive education is paramount. However, the lack of specific strategies for gender equity in physical education suggests a need for more targeted efforts. Professional development for faculty can play a crucial role in addressing this gap. Training faculty to model and advocate for gender equitable and inclusive education can help create a more supportive environment for all students. This aligns with the findings of Jones and Baker and also supports the broader goals of GEF by CARE and Critical Pedagogy.

#### **4.5.2 Enrolment and recruitment (hiring) policies**

The research also quoted Flintoff and Scraton (2019) who suggested inclusive admission and enrolment policies; colleges with inclusive admissions and enrolment policies that actively encourage and support gender diversity in their physical education programs can contribute to gender equity. This study viewed the findings in two manifolds; admission of lecturers(hiring) as well admission of students to the college(enrolment). Findings from the admission policy suggest that hiring of lecturers in the college is not directly done by the college but rather done by the Teaching Service Commission(TSC) according to the TSC Act of 1982, Act No.1 of 1982, section 4 which states that “ *Every person employed or intending to be employed as a teacher in Swaziland and who on or after the coming into operation of the Act : a) has successfully completed a course for teachers and has been awarded a qualification approved by the director for purposes of teaching :or b) is in possession of a University degree, diploma or other similar qualification approved by the Director for teaching purpose :or c) holds an honorary teachers certificate or has been awarded an honorary teachers certificate by the Minister :or d) Is a teacher to whom the Unified Teaching Service Act, 1962 applies in terms of section 3 of the said Act: shall, on application to the Director and upon being registered as such, become a member of the service.*

Therefore, this means that all lecturers are appointed by merit by the TSC. Secondly, findings from the document analysis suggest that all students are admitted on merit according to their performance not on gender, hence the justification the strategic plan of the college that there are visible concerns on gender imbalance especially in the STEM subjects which also remains a concern to the nation at large. Further analysis suggest that the languages department is not spared as it usually admits more female students compared to male students.

The data suggests that the merit based hiring process conducted by the TSC ensures that lecturers are appointed based on qualifications and experience. The data also highlights that though admitting students based on performance is important, it is also crucial to address gender imbalances in certain departments. Implementing targeted recruitment strategies and support programs can help encourage more balanced enrolment.

#### **4.5.4 Professional development and training opportunities policies**

Interrogating professional development and training opportunities for faculty staff that contribute to gender equity in physical education and how are they implemented, the study discovered that there are no policies in place to promote professional development on gender equity. However, through the ministry of education in collaboration with the ministry of public works, the government offers opportunities for civil servants to further their studies whereby a civil servant is allowed to apply for study leave to pursue further education. This leave can be with or without pay, depending on the nature of the studies and the approval from the authorities which is mainly through the dire need of the field applied for. Meaning that this policy does not necessary address gender equity but encompasses general professional development. This study has unearthed this discrepancy mainly because it falls under the seven (7) main goals and visions guiding education in the country which were drafted by year 2018, yet to date minimal efforts have been done to address the issue.

#### **4.6 Summary**

Through data collected from participants who included a total of eleven (11) students who were conveniently sampled as well as two (2) lecturers who were purposively sampled and document analysis of policies, curriculum of the PE programme as well instructional strategies, the study was able to unearth the following: cultural norms in physical education

remain a huge influence in hindering gender equity in the college's physical education programme. These cultural norms, societal expectations, gender stereotypes and gender imbalance ultimately affect students' choice to physical education and sports careers, affect their perception on gender roles where the society defines and labels certain activities fit for males and some for females. The data revealed that males are expected to take lead positions and participate in sports of aggression and competitive nature while females are expected to partake in more nurturing activities like dance or better yet stay at home and look after children or household chores.

This study also discovered that staunch patriarchal structures contributed immensely to these gender issues to the point of dictating what a female should or should not wear. The study further unearthed that resources played a fundamental role in hindering gender equity in the physical education programme. As a result, curriculum integration and advocacy were hailed to be the solution to this issue where gender equity topics will be integrated to the curriculum as well as awareness to sensitise the society about gender equity and its effect on the society at a large, more especially because it is part of the main goals and vision of the education sector for the nation. The study hailed the admission policy of the college as they were fair because they admit on merit however, initiatives need to be taken to curb the already existing gender imbalance in some disciplines in the college apart from physical education.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Summary and recommendations**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the study, reflecting on the key themes and insights uncovered through the research. It also draws conclusions based on the findings and offers recommendations for addressing the challenges identified.

## **5.2 Summary of the study**

The study investigated how cultural norms and institutional policies influence gender roles in physical education, focusing on both the contributing and hindering factors that impact gender equity with trying to understand the reasons behind the noticeably lower performance of female students compared to male students in physical education. The purpose was to investigate strategies that can effectively promote gender equity in physical education programme in the college. The study was guided by two main research questions which are:

4. How do cultural norms and beliefs influence gender roles in physical education at a teacher training college?
5. What institutional policies and practises:
  - a. contribute to gender equity in the college's physical education program?
  - b. hinder gender equity in the college's physical education program?

The summary of the findings will be provided below. The study used an interpretive paradigm, emphasising subjective realities and individual's perspectives. Data collection methods included interviews with physical education lecturers, document analysis, questionnaires with students and follow-up telephonic interviews. Triangulation was employed to ensure trustworthiness and verbatim quotations were used for dependability. Participants' pseudonyms protected confidentiality. From the data collected, various themes emerged as discussed in chapter 4 of the study. These themes are:

1. Influence of cultural norms on gender roles through sports suitability, societal expectations, dress code, career paths, media influence, influence educators' perceptions of educators, self-perception and identity development.
2. Resources' influence to gender equity
3. Influence of curriculum integration and advocacy to gender equity
4. Influence of policies to gender equity

## **5.3 Summary of findings**

### **5.3.1 Cultural norms**

The data suggested that cultural norms influence gender roles through sports suitability, societal expectations, dress code, career paths, media influence, influence educators' perceptions of educators, self-perception and identity development. On sports suitability, the findings unveiled that contextually, cultural norms suggest that males can participate in

competitive and aggressive sports while females do more aesthetic activities. Flintoff and Scraton (2019) defended that in the context of physical education, these stereotypes may manifest in expectations regarding the types of sports and activities deemed suitable for boys versus girls. For example, boys may be encouraged to participate in team sports that emphasise strength and aggression, while girls may be steered towards individual activities or aesthetic sports that prioritise grace and flexibility.

This study also uncovered another different phenomenon on cultural norms and societal expectations suggesting the staunch patriarchal structure influence in the society which dictates that females are groomed for household chores and marriage while males are groomed for leadership and power or activities that require strength display which is also transferred to sport choices as well as roles in the society at large. This finding clearly spells out and labels women as a weaker specie who have to stay home and look after children and do house hold chores and males as the stronger specie who need to engage in activities of aggression and strength display.

Mikell (1997) supports that traditional African societies have often been patriarchal, with men holding primary authority in both public and private spheres. He further said that this approach historically limited women's role and opportunities in various domains. this study will base itself in the initiatives proposed by the GEF Framework as well as the Sports and Recreation Policy of 2023 to propose innovative approaches to promote gender equity in physical education whose main aim is to build agency of people of all genders and life stages, change relations between them and transform structures so they can and be able to contribute equally to, and benefit equally from, social, political and economic development.

The study also unearthed that cultural norms in physical education also influence issues of dress code which are a major aspect in the teaching and learning of the subject because certain activities require certain movements which cannot be done effectively when wearing a dress or any dress code that is anti-sport. societal norms dictate dress code suitable for women modestly, conflicting with sports attire requirements. Cultural beliefs also reinforce the idea that women should not expose their bodies, as it is against the culture which ultimately affect their performance and learning. In a nutshell, the data accentuates the significant impact of societal expectations and cultural norms on female participations in physical education practical lessons and sports.

Another finding from this study that was discovered is that stereotypes in the context of Eswatini are in the extreme given the strong cultural belief which is different from other developed countries in line with UNESCO guidelines in ensuring respectful and discouraging any form of harassment and discrimination. According to this data, it shows that female athletes may adopt behaviours and appearances traditionally associated with males to assert their strength and capability. This may include as suggested by the participants, shaving their hair like boys or even dressing up like boys as well as adopting masculine mannerism. Cultural norms according to this data, discourage girls from mingling and participating in physical activities, viewing such behaviour as improper and potentially harmful to their reputation as girls a though they are bad influence since they have now gone out of what is culturally expected of them, to stay home and do house chores. This study supported Cale and Harris (2021) who mentioned that exposure to traditional gender stereotypes in physical education can impact student's self-perception and identity development.

The study also unveiled that cultural norms and beliefs have even gone to the extent of affecting career choices and labelling certain sports and physical exercises fit for males and some for females based on strength as activities. Kirk and Penney (2021) in their study displayed that traditional gender stereotypes can also impact educational opportunities and career aspirations for students in physical education. Traditional gender stereotypes influence educational opportunities and career aspirations with physical education and sports being predominantly considered male domains. Female students feel a lack of societal support when pursuing sports careers as these are seen as more suitable for males which ultimately hinders their participation as they are expected to pursue home duties.

In light of the findings of Wright et al., (2020) who suggested that cultural norms and beliefs can also shape educators' perception and behaviours towards students in physical education, this study discovered that (10 out of the 11) students were of the view that they had never experienced any implicit biases from the educators provoked by traditional gender stereotypes. Data from the one (1) student who expressed that he suffered implicit biases from educators, suggests that the effect was not only academic but personal as well as it affected his emotions. The isolated incident highlights the importance of addressing any form of bias to ensure a fair and supportive educational environment. By implementing proactive measures and promoting inclusive practises, educational institutions can work towards

achieving gender equity and supporting the academic and personal development of all students.

This study was also able to gather different views from the influence of media in traditional norms. This study unearthed both positive and negative influence of media in physical education or sports activities unlike the negative influence suggested by other researchers. The data collected suggests that three (3) out of the eleven (11) students support the negative influences who suggested that it nails and promotes certain activities portrayed for males or females. This finding supports Flintoff and Scraton (2019) conclusions who suggested that traditional gender stereotypes are often reinforced through media representations and cultural narratives that perpetuate narrow and restrictive definitions of masculinity and femininity. Seven (7) out of the eleven (11) perceive a positive influence suggesting that media has changed perceptions of people from labelling certain physical activities, careers or physical education fit for males and some for females. One (1) student declared that he has no clue. This suggest that the participants viewed media as a powerful tool that has altered the society's views and their traditional gender stereotypes. The presence of some negative perceptions though suggests that there are

### **5.3.2 Resources**

The concept of resources in this study is in two manifold; the human resources and physical (facilities which include locker rooms, sports ground, balls etc.). Findings from the students and lecturers suggested that the absence of these basic resources hinders not only gender equity but the general participation of students in physical education and enthusiasm to partake in other physical activities in the college. The college does not have any of the listed facilities or equipment which are basic for any physical education lesson. This has not only discouraged the students but has also demotivated the lecturers in conducting practical lessons. The availability of these resources can go a long way in boosting gender equity as well as meaningful participation in physical education lessons. The findings suggested that this scenario was even worse for female students because there are no locker rooms, the sports ground available is next to the main road leading to town and therefore made it difficult for them to have privacy hence the discouragement in willing to participate. These findings support Wright et al., (2020) who postulated that colleges that lack gender-inclusive facilities and resources in their physical education programs can also hinder gender equity.

The findings also suggested that human resource in the college was not much of a problem since the college has hired two (2) female physical education lecturers of the through the government channels. It transpired during the data collection that the students viewed this as bonus and a great initiative to promote gender equity. However, there were students who disclosed that more could still be done to equip the lecturers, meaning that the lecturers could still employ other means to promote gender equity and the programme holistically to support. John and Baker (2020) also suggested that by equipping faculty and staff with the knowledge and skills to address gender-related issues, colleges can promote gender equity in their physical education program. Resources, both physical and human, play a major role in the lives of students as part of the main aim of curriculum as supported by Pinar (1975) who defined curriculum as a “currere” which is a concept or approach to understanding curriculum that focuses on the lived experiences of students and educators, emphasising the process of self-discovery and personal growth. Some students suggested that through physical education, they can discover other talents they were not aware of.

### **5.3.3 Curriculum integration and advocacy**

Curriculum integration and advocacy were viewed as the most important aspects of promoting gender equity by including themes of gender equity as well as diversifying the sporting codes offered in the college curriculum for advocacy and education purposes. Culver et al., (2021) defended that colleges can contribute to gender equity in physical education by adopting inclusive curriculum design practises. This involves selecting course materials, activities and assessments that reflect diverse perspectives and cater to the needs and interests of all students, regardless of gender. By offering a curriculum that challenges traditional gender stereotypes and promotes inclusivity, colleges can create a more equitable learning environment.

The data collected from this study suggested that curriculum can indeed play a huge role in challenging gender stereotypes and cultural norms through empowerment, advocacy for change through education by incorporating seminars and involving other organisations who advocate for gender equity to sensitise students on gender equity as supported by the findings of Smith and Johnson (2019) who defended that advocacy campaigns, organised educational workshops and seminars raise awareness about gender equity in physical education. The data also highlighted that a wide range of activities such as adding more sporting activities from the common sporting codes (basketball, soccer, netball) to adding sports like table tennis in the physical education curriculum can play a transcendental role in the programme.

The data also revealed that the college is on the right track by having physical education as a compulsory program in the college. When probed further on the lack of interest to participate in physical education and sport activities in the college, some participants suggested that study was also able to discover that beyond embracing curriculum the learners themselves still have misconception and a negative attitude towards the subject, the aims and desired outcomes. On the same note of the curriculum, it also transpired that there were students' misconceptions on the subject curriculum and what it aims to achieve. The study was also able to discover that beyond embracing the curriculum, the learners themselves still have misconception and a negative attitude towards the subject, the aims and desired outcomes. With some students who suggested that physical education was just for fun, some suggesting that they do not know what to do, they lack confidence due to their body structures, they are book oriented and do not like practical as well as not having the energy to do sports because they are females. The findings suggest that the students are not conversant of the subject because researchers suggest that physical education improves physical health, mental health benefits, enhance academic performance, social skills development, increased confidence, self-esteem, stress relief and lifelong healthy habits.

#### **5.3.4 Policies**

This study interrogated existing policies and support services within the college environment to verify if they contribute to gender equity in physical education and the extent to which they are implemented. It also probed the existence, implementation and effectiveness of inclusive admission and enrolment policies that actively encourage and support gender equity. The study further interrogated professional development and training opportunities for faculty staff that contribute to gender equity in physical education and how are they implemented. Moreover, it enquired about historical documents that reveal shifts in policies, practises or attitudes or attitudes towards gender equity. The findings from the document analysis reveal that the college is a government entity, therefore, translates and interprets policies drafted by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) according to the needs and skills desired as per the times. The policies interrogated were the ESSP 2022-2034, multi-year plan 2022-2025, the curriculum framework for general education of 2018, Swaziland National Gender Policy of 2010 and the strategic plan for William Pitcher College 2017-2022.

The education sector strategic plan's focus on promoting gender equity through career fairs, job shadowing and training educational staff is a positive step, however, the lack of verification measures for the initiatives suggests a need for more robust monitoring and

evaluation mechanisms. The national curriculum framework as well emphasises on gender equity and prohibition of discrimination which is commendable. However, the absence of specific strategies for physical education and sports indicates a need to fill in the gap, similarly to the national gender policy of 2010. The college's strategic plan' focus on diversity, gender and inclusive education is paramount. However, the lack of specific strategies for gender equity in physical education suggests a need for more targeted efforts. Professional development for faculty can play a crucial role in addressing this gap. Training faculty to model and advocate for gender equitable and inclusive education can help create a more supportive environment for all students.

Findings from the admission policy suggest that hiring of lecturers in the college is not directly done by the college but rather done by the Teaching Service Commission(TSC) according to the TSC Act of 1982, Act No.1 of 1982, meaning that all lecturers are appointed by merit by the TSC. Cale and Harris (2021) postulated that if hiring decisions are influenced by stereotypes or biases regarding gender roles in physical education, it can perpetuate inequalities and limit opportunities for female faculty and staff members. This can create a lack of diversity in leadership positions and contribute to a culture that reinforces traditional gender norms. In this instance however, the hiring process suggests that it is on merit, qualification and experience with no gender biases involved. Secondly, findings from the document analysis suggest that all students are admitted on merit according to their performance not on gender. It also transpired that though admitting students based on performance is important, it is also crucial to address gender imbalances in certain departments as it is highlighted on the college strategic plan of 2017-2022. Implementing targeted recruitment strategies and support programs can help encourage more balanced enrolment.

The study also unearthed proceedings on professional development policy where the study discovered that there are no policies in place to promote professional development on gender equity. However, through the ministry of education in collaboration with the ministry of public works, the government offers opportunities for civil servants to further their studies whereby a civil servant is allowed to apply for study leave to pursue further education in any area but there are no specific programmes for gender equity.

## 5.4.Recommendations

- 1. Invest in Facilities:** The data collected suggested that the lack of facilities such as sports ground, locker rooms, equipment such as balls caused the lack of interest to participate meaningful in physical education and sports to both lecturers and students. The study therefore recommends that the college through the ministry of education engage the ministry responsible and relevant for the construction of sports facilities in the college to be used for academic and recreational purposes. The sports facility should include locker rooms which accommodate the different sexes to ensure comfortability and easy access. The facility should also be within the college premises to ensure safety of both the students and lecturers as well as easy access at any time which will facilitate realisation of the practical lessons.
- 2. Professional Development for Educators:** The study suggests that educators be equipped with gender equity programs so that they may be acquainted with inclusive teaching practises that cater to the needs of all students, regardless of gender. When the lecturers are conversant with the inclusive practises as well current themes in physical education, they will also be able to handle misconceptions from students using relevant and up to date information. This recommendation is so that there could be no traces of implicit biases in the program. This practise can also be adopted by the college at large to conform with strategies suggested by the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2022-2034 as well as the vision of education according to the curriculum framework of 2018.
- 3. Curriculum Integration:** The study also suggests that there be topics in the curriculum that tackle gender equity. These could also be done by diversifying the curriculum to explore other sporting activities to ensure variety so that students may have a pool of activities to choose from. Furthermore, the study recommends technology integration to the curriculum which will enable students to keep up with the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills which are incorporated in the education sector as well. These could be done by introducing mobile applications where students will explore training applications on the phone because part of the aims of physical education is to develop long life healthy lifestyle.
- 4. Advocacy and Awareness Programs:** The study suggests that there be awareness programs in the college challenging gender stereotypes and cultural norms as well as promoting gender equity for both lecturers and students to understand the need to eradicate any form of implicit biases in physical education as well as education at large since it is a burning issue. The researcher believes that it takes one person to advocate for

change, educators have a wide platform to address such issues so if advocacy and awareness is done at this level, many people in the nation will be impacted causing positive transformation.

- 5. Policy Implementation and Monitoring:** one of the major discoveries of this study was the lack of monitoring and evaluation tools on the policies guiding the institution. The study therefore recommends that the college begins by updating the strategic plan of the college which should also include monitoring and evaluation measures for the proposed strategies. The study also proposes that the college develops an assessment tool for physical education as well as other courses offered in the college to evaluate effectiveness of both the program and lecturers. This tool will assist in identifying any upcoming weaknesses of the courses and address them to improve the curriculum. The development of monitoring and implementation measures within the college as it translates policies from the ministry of education.

### **5.5 Suggestions for further research**

The researcher suggests the following studies to be explored to in the future:

1. Conduct longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of current policies and support services on gender equity in physical education. This study should also suggest strategies on how these can be implemented as well evaluative measures to gauge the impact of the policies.
2. Examine the specific cultural norms and beliefs that influence gender roles in physical education in different regions of Eswatini as findings from this study unearthed that there are still staunch patriarchal structures. Compare these findings with other countries to identify unique challenges and potential solutions.
3. Investigate the root causes of student misconceptions and negative attitudes towards physical education. Develop and test interventions aimed at changing these perceptions and increasing participation.
4. Study the impact of resource availability (both human and physical) on gender equity in physical education. Evaluate how improvements in facilities and equipment can enhance participation and performance especially in developing countries like Eswatini where teaching and learning resources prove to be scarce.

5. Evaluate the effectiveness of advocacy programs and educational workshops in promoting gender equity in physical education. Identify best practices and areas for improvement.

### **Summary**

This chapter summarised the main aim of the study by reflecting to the background of the study, why it was done. It further summarised the research questions that guided the study. It also discussed how the study was carried out, highlighting the research paradigm, data instruments used to collect data. The study further summarised the findings of the data collected. Moreover, suggestions for further research were stated as well as recommendations of the study based on the findings of this study.

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## Appendix 1



P Bag 1020  
BINDURA  
**ZIMBABWE**  
Tel: 0271-7531 ext 1038  
Fax: 263-71-7616

**CEMS DEPT**

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### **BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

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Date: 03-07-2024

#### **TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

NAME: **TEMALANGENI ZANDILE REJOICE DLAMINI** REGISTRATION: **B231218A**

PROGRAMME: **Master of Science Education in Curriculum Studies** PART: **2.1**

This memo serves to confirm that the above is a bona fide student at Bindura University of Science Education in the Faculty of Science Education.

The student has to undertake research and thereafter present a Research Project in partial fulfilment of the **Master of Science Education in Curriculum Studies** programme.

The research topic is: **Culture, institutional policies and gender equity in physical education: a case study of one teacher training college in the Kingdom of Eswatini.**

In this regard, the department kindly requests your permission to allow the student to carry out his/her research in your institutions.

Your co-operation and assistance is greatly appreciated.

Thank you

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(PHD) Y. Mudavanhu

**CHAIRPERSON - CEMS**

## **Appendix 2**

The Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini



Ministry of Education & Training

Tel: (+268) 2 4042491/5  
Fax: (+268) 2 404 3880

P. O. Box 39  
Mbabane, ESWATINI

04 July 2024

The Principal

William Pitcher Teacher Training College

Dear Madam

**RE:REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FOR FROM  
WILLIAM PITCHER COLLEDGE-MS TEMALANGENI ZANDILE  
REJOICE DLAMINI.**

1. The Ministry of Education and Training has received a request from Ms. Temalangeni Zandile Rejoice Dlamini a bona fide student at Bindura University of Science Education in the faculty of Science Education in order for her to fulfill her academic requirements at the College she has to collect data (conduct research) and her study or research topic is: **“Innovative approaches to promote gender equity in physical education A case study of one teacher training college in the Manzini Region, Kingdom of Eswatini.** Data will be collected from the Principal, Lecturers and Students at William Pitcher Teacher Training College. All details concerning the study are stated in the participants’ consent form which will have to be signed by all participants before Ms Dlamini begins her data collection.
2. The Ministry of Education and Training requests your office to assist Ms Dlamini by allowing her to use the College as his research site. Data collection period is **one month.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Dlamini', written over a horizontal line.

**RICHARD DLAMINI**  
ACTING DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION

Appendix 3

**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

## FACULTY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION



### Participant Consent Form

**Research title: Culture, institutional policies and gender equity in physical education: a case study of one teacher training college in the Kingdom of Eswatini**

**Name or researcher:** Temalangi Z. Dlamini

I am conducting a research as part of fulfilment requirements for a Master of Education in Curriculum Studies at Bindura University of Science Education. The purpose of the study is to explore cultural and institutional factors that affect gender equity in physical education at a teacher training college. Your participation in this study will involve engaging in an oral interview where I will be asking questions on cultural norms and beliefs shaping gender roles in physical education, aiming to uncover barriers. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. By signing this form, you confirm that you understand the following:

- You have been informed about the purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits of the study.
- You have the right to refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.
- Your responses will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Any personal information collected will be anonymised and stored securely.
- Your participation or decision not to participate will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the college.
- If you agree to participate, you will partake in an oral interview with the researcher engaging you in questions with an aim to achieve the purpose of the study. The interview will take approximately forty-five (45) minutes. If you have any questions about the study or the participation, please do contact the researcher on +268 7650 2273.

**Participant's consent:** I have read the information provided above and understand the nature of study. I agree to voluntarily participate in this research.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher's statement:** I confirm that I have explained the nature and purpose of the study to the participant, answered any questions they may have had and provided them with an opportunity to ask questions. I believe that the participant understands the study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

Signature: T.Z.R Dlamini

Date: 11-07-2024

**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

**FACULTY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**



**Semi-structured interview guide for lecturers**

**Instructions**

My name is Temalangi Z. Dlamini and I am conducting a study with an aim to explore innovative approaches to foster gender equity in physical education. Please note that all responses given on this interview will be kept private, no one else will access this information except for the researcher. You are free to withdraw from this research at any time you desire to and you are also allowed not to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. The oral interview is aimed to take not more than forty-five (45) minutes of your time.

1. Can you describe your perspectives on gender roles within the context of physical education at our college?
2. How do you perceive cultural norms and societal expectations influence gender roles in physical education?
3. In your experience, how do cultural beliefs about gender affect your teaching strategies and interactions with students in physical education classes?
4. Are there specific cultural norms or beliefs that you find particularly influential in shaping how students participate in physical activities based on their gender? Explain.

5. What challenges do you encounter when trying to address or challenge traditional norms in physical education classes? Culture, outfit,
6. Can you share instances where cultural beliefs have:
  - a. Hindered efforts to promote gender equity in physical education? in class when choosing teams, the females will just rely on the girls, they discourage themselves, they even tend to behave like men with dress code and
7. Promoted gender equity in physical education? How familiar are you with the institutional policies related to gender equity in our physical education program?
8. Briefly explain the possible impact of these policies with regards to equal opportunities and treatment for students of all genders?
9. Could you describe how these policies are implemented in practise within our physical education department?
10. Have you observed any specific practises or initiatives that contribute positively to gender equity in our physical education program? Conversely, are there practises that seem to hinder progress?
11. What resources or support do you believe are necessary to enhance gender equity gender equity efforts within our physical education curriculum and activities?
12. Are there any innovative approaches or strategies you believe could be effective in fostering greater gender equity in physical education? advocacy, if we have male advocates for gender equity, allow the males to advocate for females.

**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

**FACULTY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**



**Questionnaire for students**

**Instructions**

My name is Temalangi Z. Dlamini and I am conducting a study with an aim to explore innovative approaches to foster gender equity in physical education. Please note that all responses given will be kept private, no one else will access this information except for the researcher. You are requested not to write your name on the questionnaire for privacy purposes. You are free to withdraw from this research at any time you desire to and you are also allowed not to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable. Please note that the researcher may do a follow up telephonic interview for any clarity on the responses provided. You are kindly requested to return the questionnaire with responses by the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2024

**Please indicate whether you are male or female**

1. According to your understanding:
  - a. what cultural norms might influence participation and performance in physical activities based on gender?
  - b. societal expectations might influence participation and performance in physical activities based on gender?

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2. Based on your observations and experiences in our physical education program, what differences, if any, have you noticed in how male and female students are:
- a. encouraged to participate in specific types of physical activities?
  - b. expected to participate in specific types of physical activities?

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3. In your understanding, what influence do you think the media has in promoting traditional gender stereotypes in:
- a. physical education (the subject which promotes development of physical skills)
  - b. sports activities (games like soccer, netball, basketball etc.?)

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4. What is your perception on cultural norms and their influence on career choices especially in:
- a. physical education

b. sports?

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5. Are there specific challenges related to gender that you perceive in the physical education program at our college?

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6. From your experience in our physical education program, can you provide specific examples of policies, guidelines or initiatives that you believe contribute to gender equity within our physical education curriculum?

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7. In your opinion, how effective are these policies in ensuring fair treatment and opportunities for all students regardless of gender?

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8. What support or resources do you think could enhance gender equity within our college's physical education curriculum?

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9. Have you experienced any implicit biases from educators provoked by traditional gender stereotypes? If yes, to what extent has it affected your personal and academic life?

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10. What role do you believe students can play in promoting gender equity within our physical education program?

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11. Based on your experiences and observations, what suggestions would you make to enhance gender equity practises in physical education at our college?

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**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

**FACULTY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**



**Follow-up interview guide for students**

**Instructions**

My name is Temalangi Z. Dlamini and I am conducting a study with an aim to explore innovative approaches to foster gender equity in physical education. Please note that all responses given on this interview will be kept private, no one else will access this information except for the researcher. You are free to withdraw from this research at any time you desire to and you are also allowed not to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. Please note that the researcher has these two basic questions but will also seek clarity on responses provided on the questionnaire as requested on the questionnaire instrument. The oral interview is aimed to take not more than fifteen (15) minutes of your time.

1. What makes students not to be enthusiastic to participate in PE practical lessons. Explain.
2. What measures do you think can be taken to curb this issue?

## Appendix 7

### **BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

#### **FACULTY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**



#### **Document analysis guideline**

1. What aspects of the policies available are gender-sensitive?
2. To what extent can these policies and support services contribute to gender equity in physical education?
3. What specific goals or objectives do these policies aim to achieve in terms of gender equity?
4. How is gender equity represented or addressed in the physical education curriculum?
5. Are there specific learning outcomes related to gender equity or inclusive practises in physical education?
6. What resources or facilities (sports ground, locker rooms, rest rooms) in the college are in place or mandated to promote gender equity?
7. Does the college have inclusive admission and enrolment policies that actively encourage and support gender equity?
8. Are there professional development and training opportunities for faculty staff that contribute to gender equity in physical education and how are they implemented?

9. Have there been any assessments or evaluation of gender equity efforts in the physical education program?
10. What are the findings or conclusions of these assessments regarding gender disparities or achievements in equity?
11. Are there historical documents that reveal shifts in policies, practises or attitudes or attitudes towards gender equity?
12. What practises or initiatives have been documented to support gender inclusivity in physical education activities?
13. Are there examples of successful practises or challenges faced in implementing gender equity policies?