OVERCOMING GENDER BASED DISCRIMINATION PRACTICES IN EDUCATION. A BIOGRAPHY OF THREE SELECTED WOMEN.

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ABSTRACT

Disparity in access to educational opportunity is a pressing gender equity issue (World Bank, 2003). Several studies have focused on gender issues affecting women. Relatively few studies have focused on obtaining the viewpoints of women who experience this phenomenon. To hear the voices of these women regarding the strategies they employed to overcome gender discrimination in education and the lessons that can be drawn from these various strategies in the Zimbabwean context, three participants were recruited for this phenomenological qualitative study.

Review of relevant literature focused on the three great women who surpassed gender norms and are very successful and how they played out with gender disparities that affect women’s success. The primary method for collecting data was individual, face-to-face in-depth interviews. Utilizing the qualitative approach, the interviews focused on “generating useful information about lived experience and its meanings, as well as to understand how, through experience, the phenomenon being studied appears to the consciousness of the participant” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003).

Significant themes that emerged for the participants indicated that despite gender roles that impede women’s education, self-actualization, resilience, courage, self-confidence accounted for women’s empowerment and success. Other findings and implications for practice and research were discussed.