

Effect of Boyhood Construction on Children Roles in Gender Dynamics in Rwanda 'A case study of Kimisagara sector.'

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ABSTRACT

Studies show that gender identity is one of the greatest significant controllers of the societal lifecycle.

It shapes a large part of children's identity development, and consequently, boys and girls are socialized to develop differently during childhood and adolescence. Additionally, in some circumstances, this can lead to negative results. Gender socialization starts at birth, increases throughout puberty, and contributes to gender differences in social and economic activities. Furthermore, gender socialization is a key determinant of boys to approve conventional attitudes associated with maleness.

To explore the boyhood construction and its effects on children roles in gender dynamics in Rwandan society, the sample of 100 people was drawn in the Kimisagara sector, including boys, girls, parents, local leaders, teachers, and people from government institutions and Non-Government institutions including boys/men project managers, children right promotion and protection program coordinators/managers were selected by chance for this study. The study refers to the theoretical paradigms of New Sociology of Childhood and Post Structural Feminist theoretical framework that act as an analytical tool to know the complex behaviors of how boys conceptualize sense for themselves as gendered beings. Mixed-methods data collection techniques, including quantitative surveys and Focus Group Discussions with students and out of schoolgirls and boys, interviews with Key Informants, and

researcher observation, were applied. The study found that 97% of the respondents believe that parents have a preference for a son at conception, 96% of the respondents believe that boys learn to become men from a young age, while 95% of the respondents believe that boyhood construction is reinforced through gender discrimination and gender inequality. Furthermore, the study shows that the effects of boyhood construction to children roles in gender dynamics are girls' discrimination (96%), emotional violence (95%), suicide (95%), sexual violence (94%), physical violence (90%), economic violence (90%), overconfidence (87%), and gender inequality (87%). The regression analysis techniques have shown that boyhood identity construction has a negative effect on gender dynamics in Rwanda. Thus, boyhood construction does negatively affect children's roles in gender dynamics in Rwanda. Moreover, the study reveals that all stakeholders should actively aim to address this situation: parents should raise through children using processes that enhance gender equality in families; teachers should create a gender-responsive environment for students, and the Government of Rwanda should work through an education program with girls and boys themselves to reduce patriarchal system in Rwanda.

Keywords: Boyhood, construction, children, roles, gender, dynamics

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explore the effect of boyhood construction on children's roles in gender dynamics in Rwanda. This study pays special attention to boyhood construction among schoolgirls and boys and out of schoolgirls and boys aged 13-18.

A person's identity can only be constructed once they are born, and thus are to learn what is expected of them from their world around them (Meet and Laxmi Narayan, 2017). In this context, Boyhood is a socially constructed identity that establishes boy's and men's characteristics, actions, and duties. Parents, siblings, peers, teachers, and community leaders play the biggest role in bringing about such ideas of what men should be or look like, which then leads to boys to grow up playing an active role in incorporating information about gender norms and roles (UNICEF Report, 2018).

In the Rwandan culture, boys are expected to be active, dominant, physically strong, tough, controlling of their emotions, and protectors. While girls are expected to wash clothes and mop the house, boys are expected to take charge of other jobs such as carrying luggage, fetching water (Thorne, 1993). Moreover, when men lose their power and respect, they tend to commit different forms of violence as an attempt to regain their 'identity.' Consequently, violence happening in homes influences boys to see violence as a normal thing, which they tend to copy. The boys/men's belief in committing violence as a normal thing is communicated from one generation to the next, and as a result, females are considered inferior to males (Brian Heilman and Gary Barker, 2018).

Historically in Rwanda, womanhood is associated with being responsible for household chores while manhood is associated with leading the household and making final decisions. As such, boys are attributed more value than girls. Therefore, the role of children in a family is affected,



especially on how they form their identities, how they entertain with their peers, and strengthen their friendship. Therefore, gender inequality was considered normal and fair in society (E.A.C. Secretariat, 2018).

Furthermore, Rwanda remains a highly patriarchal society (G.M.O., 2019). Therefore, this study is an opportunity to explore the issue of the patriarchal system in Rwanda that accords opportunities and privilege to boyhood identity construction in comparison to girls and how it has an impact on children's roles in gender dynamics. The main objective of this study is to explore the boyhood construction and its effect on children's roles in gender dynamics in Rwandan society. More specifically, the study seeks to understand how boyhood identity is constructed through gender norms in Rwanda and assess how boyhood construction affects children's roles in gender dynamics in Rwanda. Furthermore, the key research question that the study seeks to answer is how does the process of performing masculinity contribute to the patriarchal system? More specifically, the study seeks to provide answers to how Boyhood is constructed through gender norms in Rwanda? And how boyhood construction affects children's roles in gender dynamics in Rwanda.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *How boyhood identity is constructed in society*

A family is considered as the foundation of gender inequality because a child is born, raised, and learn about the external world from people around her/him (Crespi, 2004). Parents play a big role in gender inequality because they instill the idea of a boy different from a girl into their son's and daughters' minds by discouraging their children from behaving in a way different from what society approves right for a girl and a boy. Illustrations from Marks, Lam, and McHale (2009) explain how a family eases the spread of gender role messages and influences children to copy and apply female and males behaviors observed in their home from siblings and parents. For instance, in Ghana, everyone at home is given roles for contributing to the development of the family; therefore, males are given economic-related activities such as harvesting and bringing their harvest to the market because they are afraid that if females access money or are involved in economic-related activities, they will become stingy and they will no longer respect and rely on men. Furthermore, females are given social-related activities such as preparing food for the family members and taking care of everyone at home (Zitha Ngulube, 2018). The culture of Ghana has similarities with what is happening in Rwanda because nowadays, different studies show that girls oversee home chores while boys are independent or busy supporting their fathers in income-generating activities.

Penelope and Mc Connel Ginet (2013) in their study about how family members play a big role in constructing gender role among children; they found that until the age of two, children's behaviors are kinder the same, but when they

grow up, they start to differentiate their toys (guns for boys and dolls for girls) and parents congratulate the children for selecting gender-appropriate toys. In addition, parents are the children's role models because their behaviors in the household, which are considered gender-appropriate behaviors, are observed, copied, and applied by their children. Consequently, as time passes, children's knowledge of gender is maintained and passes to the next generation (Martin, 2004). In this context, when children become adults and form their own families, they will agree and support the process to perform masculinity to their sons; therefore, the patriarchy will remain a burden to society.

Marks, Lam, and MacHale (2009), based on the data for their studies on parents in the United States of America, found that when children are exposed to the household tasks early, they will apply the skills gained when they will form their families by doing the exact work done either by the mother or the father. Thus, boys tend to apply what their fathers did while girls apply their mother's behaviors. The family is not the only influential element in the cycle of boyhood construction. There are other educational institutions that are defined in the next section.

Schools are agents of socialization because children are taught everything about their culture and how to behave in their society. Schools use different ways to communicate with boys and girls how to differ they are. For instance, the position of power at school is held by males, including headteachers, accountant while the less status and power positions are held by women, including the cafeteria, clean up, and librarian (Kilroe, M. (2009). Furthermore, teachers' behaviors toward male students are different from how they interact with female students. A study by Spender (1982), as cited in (Kilroe, M. (2009).) found that teachers ask boys to move furniture as they are considered physically strong while girls are asked to clean up as they are considered weak. In addition, teachers encourage boys to study science-related courses as they are considered intelligent and determined, while they encourage girls to pursue social-related courses as they will provide knowledge and skills that will have an impact on their future wife roles. Consequently, girls always believe that boys are blessed creatures, clever and able to achieve whatever goal they can set in their lives, and girls will not be heard, always considered as weak, and they can't achieve anything without support from people around them.

According to Maccoby, E.E. (1998), as cited in Penelope and Mc Connel Ginet (2013), school is a place where children meet with a large number of their peers. In their study about children's choice of playmates in a preschool setting, they found that children aged four years and a half liked to play with the same sex, but when they grow up, they tend to like playing in the mixed group. Thus, the choice of a group of members of the same sex is a way to ensure safety as they are looking for children with a familiar playstyle and putting girls and boys in separate playgroups influence gender theorists to suggest a view that when they are separated, girls and boys are trained

into different peer culture while in the same sex group they develop different manners, a different understanding of the external world which strengthen gender inequality among men and women.

Religion is an important factor that provides traditional knowledge to influence the way a person perceives gender and its importance in the community (Kilroe, M. (2009). Interestingly, believers apply what they have been taught by their priests, pastors, and imam thinking that they are fulfilling the key requirement to enter the heavenly paradise.

In his study, Angela A. Aidala (1985), as cited in Kilroe, M. (2009), reveals that religion gives comprehensive and specific procedures of how men and women should behave and interact. Priests use different scriptures to emphasize on the way a woman has to be dutiful, passive, and always agree with what her husband thinks and behave while a man has to be a family lead, never rely on woman's opinions, applies what the society approves as right for a real man, and nothing could be executed in his family without his decision. Thus, boundaries between men and women on informally acceptable tasks are formed. As an example, in Islam and Judaism, females and males must pray in a separate group. In addition, nuns in the Christian convents are provided less opportunity to perform the social position.

Clark (2015) perceives that television programs and shows form young people's identity due to their social and political showcases. This is the case of different movies and youth programs where boys and men are given positive images, value and their opinions are always considered as the best. Boys watching those images are inspired, the dream to become like their idols and become the world hero of all the time that will never be forgotten in the world history.

In addition, culture is more important than education in children's daily lives. Therefore, the masculine status is shown via a televisual medium, and as a result, boys can understand boyhood experience and put into action messages that reinforce masculinity. Moreover, television is reported to create an awareness of gender differences among adolescents because messages conveyed through television are viewed as showcasing an important role in reinforcing gender inequality among adolescents.

In his research about children and masculinity, Doyle, J. A. (1989) as cited in wood (1994), highlights how television showcases different traditional qualities of men, including being adventurer, dominant and get involved in socially acceptable masculine activities from which they get congratulated by their peers for their male achievements. Thus, the traditional qualities of man are instilled in boys. Therefore, they always want to prove their strengths and heroism. Consequently, girls become submissive, fear boys, always agree, and respect boys/male's decisions.

Studies show that television program describes men as thoughtful, self- assured, intelligent, influential, and in

high-status positions. In addition, highly known movies are recognized to star men who represent the wrong ideas of risky maleness. Thus, media strengthens the cultural belief about masculinity. Doyle, J. A. (1989) emphasizes that men and boys are not often introduced taking care of others, and they are represented as unconcerned in-home chores, preparing food, and child-rearing activities. They believe that those are women's and girls' duties that need to be performed on a daily basis. Furthermore, when boys become adults and form families, they show their sons those movies as evidence-based to justify their masculinity but also to sustain masculinity believes from one generation to the next.

B. Effect of boyhood identity construction on boys and girls

Society plays a key role in transforming the way girls and boys think and behave. The social belief about gender differences between boys and girls reinforces the wrong ideas in many ways via communication (Our Watch, 2015). Thus, girls and boys live in a society where gender disparities are normalized, and as a result, boys are encouraged to get involved in unsuitable activities for their gender that will have a direct or indirect negative effect on girls' lives. Parents, other family members, teachers, and peers strengthen gender differences among boys and girls through messages and behaviors. Boys are told by the community members that a real man never fails in whatever he does, he is a defender of the family, friends, and country, and he must always be a hero. Those messages are installed in boys' memory, and the fact of growing in a community where boys are valued than girls influence boys to think and believe in work, manners, and qualities that the society approves as right (WHO, 2014). Moreover, those social believe influence the boys' personality, which in most cases lead to a negative effect on girls and women social and economic empowerment.

Our Watch (2018) conducted research about the influence of female and male parents on instilling gender inequality in their children. The research found that female and male parents are involved in the reinforcement of wrong ideas about how boys and girls can be treated. The research found that parents whose daughters did not react and agreed to see their daughters involved in male-related games such as acting as a soldier, building houses, and collecting firewood for cooking while parents whose sons were uncomfortable to see their sons involved in female related games such as acting as a mother, taking care of children and everyone else in the family and cooking. In this way, girls and boys grow up believing in wrong ideas about the difference between girls and boys, and these societal beliefs affect their communication, their ways of working and living.

The effect of gender norms negatively affects adolescent girls, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where adolescent girls face education, nutrition, and social-related challenges, including inadequate access to school, malnutrition, early marriage, and low social status (Mayeza, 2015).

Penelope and Mc Connell Ginet (2013) perceive that the way different culture separates both sexes enhance the misunderstanding between girls and boys, men, and women. Thus, if girls and boys are always separated, the expectation is that they will adopt different behaviors and different understandings of the world. In addition, Penelope and Mc Connel Ginet (2013) argue that the sex difference is enhanced by the separation of children's Play where girls are requested to play in girls' groups and boys in a boys' group. In addition, girls who decide to play with their male peers are accepted, while boys who play with their female peers are neglected. These behaviors adopted in childhood are reinforced with the masculinity identity during the adolescence stage. Consequently, the masculinity identity influences the superiority complex that leads boys to believe in the social norms that consider girls weak.

III. METHODOLOGY

This research uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Therefore, mixed methods research is a way to deal with a request, including gathering both qualitative and quantitative data. The total population of the study was 14, 026 made by girls and boys aged from 13-18 years old who reside in the Kimisagara sector. Thus, they make a total of 14,026 (NISR,2012).

In sampling, following Yamane's (1967) 's formula, the sample size for this study is determined as n : is the sample size, N : is the total population, e : is the margin of error. In this case $N= 14, 026$ people taking the certainty level of 90% that is with a reasonable blunder of 10%, $e=0.1$ Thus, $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} = \frac{14,026}{1+14,026(0.1)^2}$ this gives $n = \frac{14,026}{1+140,026(0.01)} = \frac{140,026}{141.26} = 99.29$ which are unevenly equal 100 participants.

The foe in schoolgirls and boys, we requested their list where we randomly selected girls whose name starting with G, and for boys, we randomly selected those whose initial names are starting with B. For out of schoolgirls and boys, we got their list from local leaders, and we randomly selected them. After calculating the sample size for our targeted population, we have added 14 key Informants that include people who work in ministry, government institutions, non-government institutions that deal with children/boys and men related issues. In addition, there are 2 teachers, 2 local community leaders and 4 parents of some of the girls and boys we met who have been selected in the Kimisagara sector.

IV. FINDINGS

A. How boyhood identity is constructed through gender norms in Rwanda

The findings indicate an average of 4.02 and a standard deviation of 0.62034857. Table 17 indicates that Boyhood is influenced by culture (100%), Boyhood is influenced by gender norms (100%), Boyhood is influenced by the

To collect data, a guide that contains quantitative and qualitative questions was used to gather primary data from respondents. The desk review was conducted by the researcher in order to have existing data related to the effect of boyhood construction on children's roles in gender dynamics in Rwanda before going into the field. Thus, the researcher read reports, articles, journals, and visited different websites. The Key Informant Interviews targeted parents, teachers, and staff from different organizations and ministries that participate in the execution of the projects that target boys/men. We also spoke to policy implementers and local community leaders. The objective was to explore the effect of boyhood construction on children's roles in gender dynamics in Rwanda. In addition, the observation technique was also used by a researcher to verify if respondents provided trustworthy information; therefore, the researcher herself observes the reality on the field on how boyhood construction affects children's roles in the gender dynamics in Rwandan society in Kimisagara Sector.

To facilitate a comprehensive analysis to arrive at practical recommendations of the boyhood construction to children's roles in gender dynamics in Rwanda, field research involving Focus Group Discussions (F.G.D.s) was carried out in Kimisagara sector.

Efforts were to target and engage boys and girls living in the same sector. We conducted Focus Group Discussions (F.G.D.s) to facilitate a comprehensive analysis to arrive at practical issues prevention recommendations. Therefore, the selection of boys and girls was random within the selected sector. The selection criteria were based on education (both in school and out of school), geographical location (urban sector within Nyarugenge district), and the age (13 to 18) to meet the study objective by exploring the effect of boyhood construction on children roles in gender dynamics in Kimisagara sector. The study used nine Focus Group Discussions in the Kimisagara sector, and it was comprised of 9-10 people maximum, which is the total number of 86 people for the F.G.D.s. 3 F.G.D.s for boys aged 13-15 and 2 F.G.D.s for girls. In addition to this, there were 2 F.G.D.s for boys aged 16-18 and 2 F.G.D.s for girls. After all, to analyze data, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software package version 22.0 that includes the mean and the standard deviation, was used; therefore, descriptive statistics were utilized. Furthermore, themes were utilized to provide meaning to qualitative information.

school (7%), Boyhood is influenced by religion (95%), Boyhood is influenced by social media (95%), Boyhood is influenced by family (98%) and Boyhood is influenced by peers influence (93%). From these results, the respondents believe that the most three factors that influence boyhood construction are culture (100%), gender norms (100%), and family (98%).

Table 17: The factors that influence boyhood construction

Items n = 100	Responses											
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Statistics	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Mean	Std. Deviation
Culture	0	0	0	0	0	0	52	52	48	48	4.4800	.50212
Gender norms	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	50	50	50	4.5000	.50252
School	26	26	59	59	8	8	7	7	0	0	1.9600	.79035
Religion	0	0	0	0	5	5	47	47	48	48	4.2500	.70173
Social media	0	0	0	0	5	5	57	57	38	38	4.3300	.56951
Family	0	0	0	0	2	2	53	53	45	45	4.4300	.53664
Peers influence	0	0	5	5	2	2	52	52	41	41	4.2900	.74257
Overall											4.02	0.6203

Source: Primary data, author's computation using SPSS 22.0. June 11th-17th and July 11th, 2020

The study found that the culture, gender norms, and family work together to influence behaviors and practices in Rwanda. Therefore they set acceptable and unacceptable norms and beliefs for community members. Thus, parents' sense of belonging in a culture and gender norms informs what they inspire into their children.

A parent confirmed that culture and gender norms play a key role in boyhood construction.

'Boyhood is socially constructed, not biologically born with. Parents (within a family) in each society influenced by its culture and gender norms (values, beliefs, and customs, etc...) attribute gender roles to boys different to girls. Traditionally a girl would not eat meat from goats while a boy was allowed. Likewise, when it comes to a family decision -making over any given issue, a boy was privileged to be consulted while a girl was not, no matter who is older than the other, and today it is still the same case in some conservative families'. **Educated male parent, Kimisagara sector**

a) Culture

According to the findings from different respondents we interviewed, some of them agree with the Rwandan culture that deals with boys superior and different to girls.

'We are different; everyone is aware that's why boys are more respected and treated differently with girls. How can I cook or mop the house if my sister is round? No boy can do that when there is a female around!' **Boy 4 in a Focus Group Discussion with boys, 16-18 years old, in school, Kimisagara sector.**

A Key Informant confirmed that culture is one of the main factors that influence boyhood construction

'In Rwandan culture, boys or men are supposed to carry people who are ill on a stretcher, and it is taboo for a girl or a woman to do the same.' **An employee 1, RWAMREC**

Another Key Informant added that:

'Our culture is playing a big role in our lives, let's take an example of the wedding, for example, we all know that nowadays even though we are talking about development when we go to a wedding, we find in some places that according to their culture women are not allowed to sit together with men, they are not allowed to share drinks or anything else. In addition to that, it is hard to find a Master of ceremony who is a female! I have never seen any at a wedding because our culture gives value to males than females. **An employee 2, RWAMREC**

One of the girls we met shared her family experience of how conceiving a boy is key in the Rwandan culture.

'Boys are more valued than girls even though we continue to hear about gender equality, I have an aunt who has 7 children (my nieces), and they are all girls, but you can't understand how other women and men are criticizing them, they are saying that instead of giving birth to 7 girls, I would prefer two boys because if those girls misbehave due to the poverty in their family, their mother would even decide to commit suicide because she will feel useless. In addition to that, people said that they continue to give birth to many children because they were expecting to get a boy. I think the source of all of these is our culture that values boys'. **Girl 8 in a Focus Group Discussion, 16-18 years old, out of school, Kimisagara sector**

A parent emphasized on the role of culture believes in boyhood construction:

'When I say this, people always laugh at me but let me tell you the truth, it will be a bit difficult to change the culture believes instilled in the people's memory about men superior to women or boys superior to girls because men will not accept to be disobeyed by women or girls and I know that women and girls have lots of love instead of losing a man they love, they would prefer to be

submissive, to be inferior and everything else that is not pleasant to conquer the heart of a man and therefore, boys and men will continue to get the advantage of that and dominate women and girls. ' **Educated male parent, Kimisagara sector**

A teacher also confirmed that culture is among other factors that influence boyhood construction

'There is evidence in our history that continues to influence men and boys feel superior to girls and women, something surprising is the way mothers who have seen the effect of negative masculinity continue to support the male behavior that makes uncomfortable women and girls.' **Female teacher, Kimisagara sector**

Another Key Informant added that:

'We know that our government is doing everything so that girls and boys see each other as the same people, however when it comes to practice, it is where you realize that our culture is still dominating. A boy and a man are valued.

We can take the example of the child naming ceremonies. You find that until now, women would love to take their husband's names, the name of the girl child is similar to the one of their father, and parents have a preference for a son when it comes to conception because they are afraid that their daughters might get impregnated by a person they don't know, and her future is no longer bright'—**an employee of the National Commission for Children.**

b) Gender norms

The findings show that gender norms play a key role in sustaining problematic practices; they contribute to the continuation of gender disparities between females and males.

'A boy has to behave like a man, and he is not allowed to behave like a girl or a woman, if he does, he might be punished, this is why boys are independent while girls are tired with home chores and their voices are not heard.' **Girl 7 in a Focus Group with girls, 13-15 years old, out of school, Kimisagara sector**

One of the boys we met emphasized on the norms that influence boyhood construction.

'Girls are not allowed to milk cows; instead, they can prepare milk and serve people. I have heard my grandfather saying that if a girl does it, she might die because she is breaking the rule of the Rwandan god called Bingo and nowadays, I have seen girls milking cows, and I

am afraid they might die soon as they are breaking one of the gender norms' rules'. Boy 1 in a Focus Group Discussion with boys, 13-15 years old, out of school, Kimisagara sector.

A parent added that gender norms are the causes of boyhood construction

'The thing is, women' and men's problems are rooted in some of the gender norms. For instance, a woman is not allowed to provide dowry; instead, her partner is the one who does it before the wedding happens, and once they are married and a woman is confident to share her concerns, then her husband reminds her that he has provided dowry to her family and she is not allowed to insult him in that way. You can imagine what might follow with that disagreement; from my understanding is all form of violence, including sexual violence, physical violence, emotional violence, and economic violence. Another example is that girls are not allowed to look after cows because that is a man's

job, and women /girls were not allowed to work outside their homes'. Educated male parent, Kimisagara

c) Family

Table 18 shows all assertions and different perceptions of boys and girls in separate Focus Group Discussion about the main family activities and roles of a boy. The general perception of respondents has a mean of 2.95958 and a standard deviation of 0.67582818. The mean is interpreted as neutral (Saunders, 2008). The standard deviation is interpreted as Heterogeneous (dispersion of data)' because it is greater than 0.5 (Saunders, 2008). This means that the respondents' points of view are different, and some family activities and roles are mostly attributed to boys or girls. The insights from our study reveal that a family is the most important agent of boyhood construction because it serves as the center of the boy's and girls' lives. Thus, Boyhood is mainly constructed during childhood. This has been also confirmed by Crespi (2004), who theorized that family influences sex differences.

B. Effect of boyhood identity construction on boys and girls in Rwanda

The findings from Table 20 indicate that the average is 4.34375, and the standard deviation is 0.59967. It indicated that the effects of boyhood identity construction to boys and girls are economic violence (90%), physical violence (92%), sexual violence (94%), emotional violence (95%), suicide (95%), overconfidence (87%), girls' discrimination (96%) and gender inequality (87%).

Table 20: The effect of boyhood identity construction on boys and girls

Items n = 100	Responses											
	Strongly disagree		disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Statistics	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Mean	Std. deviation
Economic violence	0	0	0	0	10	10	50	50	40	40	4.3000	.64354
Physical	0	0	0	0	8	8	55	55	37	37	4.2900	.60794

violence												
Sexual violence	0	1	0	0	5	5	55	55	39	39	4.3100	.66203
Emotional violence	0	0	0	0	5	5	47	47	48	48	4.4200	.53522
Suicide	0	0	0	0	5	5	57	57	38	38	4.3300	.56951
Overconfidence	0	0	0	0	3	3	55	55	42	42	4.3900	.54855
Girls discrimination	0	0	0	0	4	4	52	52	44	44	4.4000	.56854
Gender inequality	0	0	0	0	11	11	47	47	42	42	4.3100	.66203
Overall											4.34375	0.59967

Source: Primary data, author's computation using SPSS 22.0. June 11th-17th and July 11th, 2020

From these findings, boyhood construction has negative social and economic effects on boys and girls.

'The effect is on both boys and girls even if girls are more affected. You find that boys can't talk, they want to play alone, they don't want to share their problems, and in worse scenario, they commit suicide. For girls, if they are not treated well, sometimes they are traumatized, they face emotional violence, they don't feel happy, and this might lead them to drop out of school, to marry early in order to escape to problems.' **An employee 1, RWAMREC**

The findings were also confirmed by another Key Informant Interview:

'When boys grow in the environment where they are valued than their female peers, they apply everything they have learned when they become adults such as feeling that they can always have sex with their wife, any time, everywhere they want. When men behave in this way, they commit sexual violence because there is no agreement between a woman and her husband. In some cases, women are afraid to report what is happening in their household because they don't want to lose their partner who is perpetrators and for the benefit of their children. Consequently, children observe everything happening at home, and they normalize them. Thus, you will always see that Gender-Based Violence is increasing every day'. **An employee 2, RWAMREC**

One of the boys we met confirmed the following:

'Rwandan culture, gender norms, and religion enhance girl's discrimination, overconfident, and gender inequality. It is not easy to change the culture that has existed for many years, plus the beliefs, and it finally brings violence in a family, community, and everywhere else'. **Boy 2 in a Focus Group with boys, 16-18 years old, in school, Kimisagara sector**

A teacher we met confirmed the existence of economic violence as an effect of boyhood construction

'There is still a problem of economic violence as girls in different families are economically disadvantaged. This is found most times in resource distribution within girls and

boys in families. This is also found in differentiating remuneration'. **Male teacher, Kimisagara sector**

A parent also confirmed that violence is among the effect of boyhood construction

'Identity construction is detrimental to boys' development and exposes them to different forms of violence. For example, boys are confined to report sexual violence when they experience it while they feel entitled even to force girls into sexual violence. Through identity construction, boys undergo emotional torture of denying being/expressing themselves rather than be/show what the society wants them to be or show. The resultant effect of all this early initiation is perpetual discrimination against girls and gender inequalities.' **Educated female parent, Kimisagara sector**

A local leader confirmed that violence happens because society values boys than they do for a girl.

'Effects are many, including economic violence, sexual violence, and emotional violence. They happen because the society gives privileged to boys and value fewer girls, therefore when a boy growing up in the same community, become a man, he will adapt and do what he had seen for a long time since the time when he was young. In addition, when children are still young, their parents treat them. Differently, they might give school fees to a boy while a girl is requested to stay home to help her mother on the farm, taking care of young siblings, fetching water, going to the market to sell vegetables, or to buy salt to use home.

If one of the children is not going to school, for instance, while her family has the ability to do it, they are committing economic violence, and in most cases, you find that they are talking to their daughters, and she feels uncomfortable'. **Local community leader, Kimisagara sector.**

A parent thinks that the violence starts early when children are still young

'Girls and boys grow up believing that they are different, and this has lots of negative impact on how they play, they communicate, they approach each other for seeking advice. It starts the time when they are still young, and it continues

the time when they become adults and affect their relationship as parents. I think this is where violence will

V. RECOMMENDATION

The primary recommendations of this study are that all stakeholders must actively aim to address this situation

as without the concerted efforts of all parties' positive gender dynamics could not be achieved.

- **To parents**

Parents are the most important agents of change, and therefore, I have started with them. The more immediate changes that can be made are in terms of addressing unequal gender norms is by encouraging parents to equally distribute tasks and resources. This can be further reinforced through discussion with their children around existing gender dynamics, why they exist, and their negative impact.

- **To students, boys, and girls**

The female students should be exposed to positive female role models in order to get inspired and increase their self-confidence while male students should always demonstrate positive values.

- **To teachers**

The teachers should enhance inclusiveness in classrooms and gender sensitivity in the perception and expectation of both males and females. In addition, teachers should be trained about gender dynamics to be aware of gender issues.

- **To school administration**

The school administration should ensure and empower gender clubs in secondary schools. In addition, the school managers should distribute responsibilities to the boys and girls equally.

- **To the Government**

The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with Rwanda Education Board, should set up a gender-related program at the primary to university level as a way of promoting gender dynamics for equal treatment of boys and girls in the family.

VI. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study are made of primary data collected from our respondents from the questionnaire from Focus Group

Discussions and interviews with stakeholders. Furthermore, there are data we got from the desk review. The approaches and procedures we used are methodically known. Therefore, we consider the results of the study reliable. The focus of the study is to analyze the contribution of gender norms in shaping gender dynamics by examining specifically how boyhood identity is built and finally at adult age how this construction influences

start even though it is rooted in childhood.' **Non educated male parent, Kimisagara sector.**

some man attitudes such as frustration, violence, discrimination, superiority complex, and other harmful forms. This study is important because gender norms among children are not well or widely studied, and yet they play a huge role in shaping gender dynamics between adolescents as well as adults that involve violence, discrimination, and other forms of harm. The review of the literature before embarking on this study showed that no comprehensive study exists on the boyhood identity construction and its effect on children's roles in Rwanda. It is in this context that the study filled a gap in the literature, and therefore as to the significance for policymaking, this study is an eye-opener about how to prevent a patriarchal system that is harming society. Policymakers will be inspired by the study to reformulate informed policy regarding family life and mechanisms to prevent gender inequality. This study contributes to the scientific knowledge in the field of gender and family promotion.

The study reveals that boyhood construction starts at an early age, and culture, gender norms, and family play a big role in boyhood construction.

All the facts from the findings indicated that boyhood identity construction is a challenge to gender dynamics in Rwanda. As a matter of fact, it is very true to say that there is a negative relationship between boyhood identity construction and gender dynamics in Rwanda.

Moreover, the study reveals that all stakeholders should actively aim to address this situation in order to reduce the patriarchal system in Rwanda. It would be useful to balance future research on boys'/men's views of anything considered feminine in order to consider their involvement in promoting gender equality.

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