

CHAPTER 5: Moulding the Gender-Balance Frame for the Veterinary Industry

This chapter presents conclusions and recommendations of the study. These are derived from the previous chapter (chapter four) and presented as a review of the extent to that the objectives of the study were fully achieved. The study sought to investigate gender balance in the veterinary industry on University of Zimbabwe veterinary science graduates. The specific objectives of the study sought to establish fundamental reasons why females are fewer than their male counterparts in the veterinary industry, to examine whether there is gender balance in the veterinary industry, to find out how employers feel about gender balance in the veterinary industry and to suggest how gender imbalance can be improved in the veterinary industry. The study also provided an extensive literature review on gender balance in the veterinary industry. The study also sought to measure employers and graduates' perception on the gender balance in the veterinary industry.

This study clearly shows that most the respondents held very positive views about the importance of having gender balance in the veterinary industry. Although there are many organisations registered under the Council of Veterinary Surgeons of Zimbabwe that makes up potential employers for veterinary science graduates, most of them employ very few female veterinarians. Both employers and veterinarians agreed that female veterinarians were fewer than male veterinarians in the industry meaning that there was no gender balance in the veterinary industry.

The study revealed that the reasons for having few female veterinarians in the industry was due to few females who undertake science subjects in high schools due to myths and stereotypes and

these are factors that have discouraged female veterinarians from playing an active role in the industry.

Most of the respondents felt that female veterinarians were being left out in terms of managerial positions. Both employers and veterinarians agree that female veterinarians were not given the same treatment as their male counterparts in some areas such as recruitment and selection, supervision and monitoring, training and development, policies / procedures and benefits. The patriarchal nature of the society has shaped and perpetuated gender inequality to the extent of allowing male domination and female subordination in all areas including the veterinary industry.

Findings revealed that female veterinarians were occasionally stressed at work and the reasons being pressure of work, harsh working conditions, intimidation and harassment from their male counterparts.

Most respondents showed that little was being done to involve the female veterinarians to have access to decision-making involvement in the veterinary industry. Findings revealed that very few female veterinarians owned practice hospitals as compared to their male counterparts and there is need for gender mainstreaming to support the females in the veterinary industry. Both employers and veterinarians suggested that awareness campaigns to promote gender equality in workplaces should be held regularly and a quota system should be implemented to improve gender balance in the veterinary industry.

The researcher proposed that there was no gender bias in the veterinary industry in Harare, however, the findings of this research revealed that there was gender bias in the veterinary industry since there was differences in treatment between male and female veterinarians in terms of recruitment and selection, supervision and monitoring, training and development, policies and procedures and

benefits. Most organisations in the industry employed more male veterinarians than female veterinarians. However, the results revealed that the output numbers of female veterinarians from tertiary colleges were fewer than male veterinarians, this was due to the fact that female veterinarians had a series of problems since their early ages of schooling when sexual stereotyping of schoolgirls made it more difficult for them to choose sciences since it does not seem to be directly related to life that the African culture expects.

This study recommends that:

- The education system in the country should encourage more female students to do science subjects since results showed that stereotypes started at an early stage as primary school. There was need to increase awareness of the veterinary programme at high schools so that more female students will opt to enrol for the profession.
- The Faculty of Veterinary Science should put a policy and structure that would allow female students to enter into the faculty so that it produces a bigger number of female veterinarians.
- Policy makers should design policies that will favour the female veterinarians as a weaker vessel. It should be mandatory that all veterinary companies should have a gender policy.
- Awareness campaigns to promote gender equality in workplaces should be held regularly and a quota system should be implemented.
- Females should be encouraged to study veterinary science and career guidance in schools should be intensified as very few students are well informed about this area.
- There is need to promote awareness on the broad nature of the veterinary industry since it is not restricted to the treatment of animals.

- Practice owners should help the qualified veterinarians to stay engaged in the profession and have successful careers. Also, female veterinarians should be encouraged to apply for higher positions and even to start their own businesses.

This researcher being an employee of the University of Zimbabwe can be considered an in-house researcher. An external researcher is recommended to evaluate and further substantiate the findings of this project and increase credibility of the findings to eliminate possible bias. Generally female veterinarian graduates felt that the industry prefers their male counterparts. It would be interesting if another researcher further investigates why the industry prefer to absorb male veterinarians than females. There is need for someone to carry out a similar study where the perspective of a bigger sample of employers is sought since this research looked at veterinary organisations in Harare only.