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**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **Nurturing Empowering Perceptions: Exploring High School Girls' Perspectives on Gender Equity in Formal Educational Context and Factors Beyond**

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**| ABSTRACT**

The primary objective of this article is to conduct an in-depth analysis of multiple factors—cultural, religious, and educational—that shape the perceptions of gender equality among female high school students. Focusing specifically on this demographic sample enables a nuanced exploration into how adolescence interacts with these factors to influence their perspectives on gender roles and expectations. This study employs a mixed-methods approach, going beyond the traditional educational paradigms, to include a variety of external influences such as familial backgrounds, religious texts, sociocultural norms, and the overall school environment. The research aims to contribute to the scholarly discourse on gender equality by enriching our understanding of how societal attitudes permeate classroom walls to shape young girls' viewpoints. By doing so, this study aspires to unearth the implicit and explicit messages received by female students that sustain gender imbalances. This serves the dual purpose of not only highlighting these influencing variables but also leveraging this knowledge to develop targeted interventions. The ultimate goal of this research is to formulate insightful strategies that promote a more equitable and empowering perception of girls and, by extension, women in society. These strategies will be rooted in the findings, which delineate the complex relationship between culture, religion, and education in shaping these perspectives. Thus, the research provides practical insights that could serve as foundational elements for fostering a more inclusive and empowering socio-educational environment for female students and women in the future.

**| KEYWORDS**

Bullying, cultural influences, educational experiences, female attitudes, gender inequality, school context, religious beliefs etc.

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### **1. Introduction**

This research holds significant relevance within the global discourse on girlhood, gender equality, and women's empowerment. By placing the voices of high school students at the forefront, I aspire to contribute meaningful insights that inform educational policymakers, administrators, and stakeholders in the development of effective strategies and initiatives. The findings of this research will provide invaluable guidance for creating a supportive, inclusive, and empowering learning environment that not only promotes gender equity but also challenges and dismantles prevailing gender norms. It is my hope that by amplifying the experiences and perspectives of high school girls, we can bring about meaningful change in educational practices and policies to create a more inclusive and empowering educational landscape.

My ultimate goal in this research is to make a lasting impact in the lives of students by fostering an educational landscape where girls are valued, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential. By amplifying the voices of high school students, we can challenge traditional gender norms, break down stereotypes, and pave the way for a more equitable and inclusive future. Together, we can strive towards creating an educational environment that celebrates the unique strengths and talents of every individual, irrespective of their gender, ultimately paving the way for a brighter and more inclusive society.

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This research endeavors to explore the experiences, challenges, and aspirations of high school girls, shedding light on the factors that shape their perceptions and realities. By delving into their unique perspectives and amplifying their voices, I aim to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between societal norms, cultural expectations, and educational experiences that shape their perceptions of gender. Through this research, I hope to inform the development of targeted interventions, policies, and practices that empower girls, promote gender equality, and create inclusive learning environments. By addressing the specific challenges faced by female students, we can work towards a more equitable and empowering educational system that enables all students, regardless of their gender, to thrive and succeed. Together, let us embark on a transformative journey towards a future that celebrates and uplifts the limitless potential of high school girls, creating a society where their voices are heard, their contributions are valued, and their dreams are realized.

This research employs a mixed method approach research design involving numerical data, in-depth interviews and observations to explore the experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by high school girls in relation to gender equity within the educational system. The article is structured to present the research findings in a logical and coherent manner. The introduction highlights the importance of the study within the gender studies discipline, while the literature review critically examines existing research and the gap in tackling the discourse from high school female students perspectives. The methodology section outlines the research design and data collection techniques. The findings section presents the thematic analysis or rather the examination of some factors which may affect girls' perspectives on gender equity, and the discussion section interprets the findings within the broader and local context. The conclusion synthesizes the key findings and discusses their implications. Overall, the research design and article structure provide a comprehensive understanding of gender perceptions in high school settings. In this article, I seek to answer the following questions:

1. How do female high school students in Morocco perceive and experience societal expectations and challenges related to their gender roles and status within the educational context?
2. What are the most influential factors on the attitudes and beliefs of Moroccan female high school students regarding gender equality, women's empowerment, and their societal aspirations?

## **2. Literature Review**

In the context of secondary education, it is crucial to investigate the experiences encountered by female students, as they often face unique challenges and barriers that can impact their academic aspirations and overall well-being (Chisamya et al. 2012; Heise et al. 2019; Meyer 2015). These challenges have significant effects on the learners' self-confidence, self-image, and academic accomplishments, ultimately influencing their educational decisions and long-term goals.

Research has consistently emphasized the importance of understanding the distinctive perspectives and experiences of high school girls in order to promote their empowerment and create more inclusive educational environments. Aikman and Rao (2012) and Correll (2001) emphasize the need to recognize the societal expectations and cultural influences that shape girls' perceptions of their own abilities and roles. Girls often internalize societal norms and beliefs about gender, which can have a profound impact on their self-perception, academic choices, and career aspirations. By examining these perspectives, educational stakeholders can gain valuable insights into the factors that hinder girls' academic progress and work towards creating supportive and inclusive learning environments that cater to their specific needs.

Furthermore, the depiction of women in educational materials, such as textbooks, plays a crucial role in shaping girls' attitudes, beliefs, and aspirations. Healy (2010) argues that inclusive and balanced representations of women are essential for empowering girls and challenging traditional gender roles. Stereotypical and limited portrayals can restrict girls' aspirations, reinforce gender inequalities, and perpetuate societal biases (Nimer 2020). Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that educational resources provide diverse and empowering representations of women, showcasing their achievements and contributions across various fields. This can inspire and empower female students, helping them realize their potential and envision a broader range of possibilities for their future.

Additionally, the academic and emotional well-being of female secondary school students is a major concern that must be addressed within educational settings. Gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and bullying, poses a significant threat to girls' educational experiences and achievements (Badri 2014 and Gruber and Fineran 2007). To create safe and supportive environments, educational institutions must prioritize the implementation of policies and practices that protect girls from harassment, provide them with the necessary support systems, and promote a culture of respect and equality. Empowering girls and fostering their well-being not only benefits them individually but also contributes to a more inclusive and equitable educational system overall.

This study aims to contribute and build on the existing corpus of knowledge on gender equity in education by examining the experiences, challenges, and aspirations of female high school students. By gaining insights into the specific needs, perspectives, and barriers faced by girls, in this research I seek to inform the development of targeted interventions, policies, and educational practices that empower girls, promote gender equality, and create inclusive learning environments. By addressing the unique challenges faced by female students, we can work towards a more equitable and empowering educational system that enables all students, regardless of their gender, to thrive and succeed. Accordingly, exploring the experiences and perceptions of high school girls is essential for understanding the factors that shape their educational journeys and opportunities. By examining the challenges they face, the societal expectations they encounter, and the influence of educational resources, we can work towards creating a more inclusive, empowering, and supportive educational environment for all students.

Through qualitative interviews and observations, I gathered rich and nuanced data that captures the lived experiences of these girls, allowing their voices to be heard and their stories to be shared as the following section clarifies.

### **3. Methodology**

This section provides a detailed overview of the methodology employed in the study, which aims to gain insights into the perceptions of Moroccan high-school students, with a specific focus on girls' views regarding interactions among their fellow students within educational environments. The research design uses a mixed approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

To capture a diverse range of perspectives, structured questionnaires were developed, incorporating both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The use of closed-ended questions allowed for quantitative analysis, while the inclusion of open-ended questions enabled the exploration of unique viewpoints and individual experiences. The questionnaires were distributed electronically, utilizing an e-questionnaire format, and were administered to a sample of 200 female and male students from a Moroccan public high school after obtaining the administration's consent and theirs (students) as well. Students were informed that their answers are merely for academic concerns and will not be disclosed to third parties to align with the ethical side of the research.

The inclusion of open-ended questions in the survey was crucial in gaining deeper insights into the participants' attitudes and perceptions within their specific contexts. These open-ended responses provided valuable qualitative data, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the participants' perspectives and experiences.

In addition to the survey, classroom observations were conducted to further enhance the understanding of female students' perspectives during actual class sessions. These observations provided me with firsthand insights into potential gender-based differences in academic performance and extracurricular participation. The portrayal of women in the formal textbook was also critically analyzed to identify any potential influences from societal or religious factors.

By employing a mixed approach and utilizing various data collection methods, including questionnaires and classroom observations, I aim to provide comprehensive and in-depth insights into the perceptions of high-school students in Morocco. The integration of qualitative and quantitative data allowed for a more holistic understanding of the topic, ensuring that the findings and conclusions are well-grounded and representative of the participants' experiences and viewpoints.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Family Background**

The exploration of family background provides valuable insights into the intricate dynamics that shape students' attitudes towards the status of women. In this section, we delve deeper into the findings to uncover the nuanced relationship between patriarchal attitudes, educational levels, and familial ties, and their impact on students' perceptions and beliefs.

The results reveal that a significant percentage of the fathers of male students are employed in the private and public sectors, with 39 % holding a bachelor's degree and 17 percent possessing a high school diploma. These numbers indicate a relatively high level of educational attainment among fathers. Conversely, most of the mothers of female students are housewives, while a notable portion (30%) are university graduates. This contrast in the employment and educational profiles of parents is reflective of prevailing gender norms and traditional gender roles within Moroccan society.

The educational background of parents plays a crucial role in shaping students' perceptions of gender roles and expectations. Students who grew up with highly educated parents are less likely to adopt patriarchal attitudes and exhibit discriminatory beliefs. The exposure to higher education among parents offers a broader perspective and promotes more egalitarian values within the family. It emphasizes the importance of educational opportunities in fostering gender equality and challenging traditional gender norms.

Moreover, the study reveals the influence of familial relationships on students' attitudes. The findings demonstrate strong and positive relationships between male students and their female family members, including mothers, sisters, and other relatives. These close bonds contribute to a supportive environment where mutual respect and gender equality are fostered. Similarly, female respondents reported positive relationships with their male siblings and other male relatives, indicating a sense of inclusivity within their family dynamics.

While the family background provides valuable insights, it is important to recognize that it is not the sole determinant of students' perceptions and beliefs. Factors such as societal influences, peer interactions, and exposure to media also shape students' attitudes towards women's status generally and their female peers specifically. However, the findings highlight the potential of familial relationships and parental education in influencing students' perspectives on gender equality.

Overall, the results underscore the complex relationship between family background, educational levels, and students' attitudes towards women's status. They emphasize the need for comprehensive interventions that address gender-related issues within the family setting and promote inclusive educational opportunities. By engaging families in discussions on gender equality, challenging traditional gender norms, and providing support and resources, we can create a more equitable and empowering environment for students.

#### ***4.2 Students' Perceptions and Religious Influences***

Transitioning from our examination of family background, where we explored the influence of familial factors on students' perceptions, we now delve into the significant role of religious perspectives in shaping their beliefs and attitudes. Religion holds a powerful sway over individuals' worldview, including their views on gender roles and relationships. In this section, we aim to elucidate the religious influences expressed by the students in response to the open-ended questions and explore how these influences impact their perceptions of girls and women.

The mindset exhibited by some boys who cite the Qur'anic verse " الرجال قوامون على النساء بما فضل الله بعضهم على بعض وبما أنفقوا " (Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because God has given the one more (strength) than the other and because they support them from their means) (Ali 2022: 34) to assert male superiority can have a profound impact on girls in high school. It is deeply concerning when male students employ this verse as a justification for promoting gender inequality or asserting their superiority over girls as male students' responses reveal in the open-ended questions. Such attitudes contribute to discriminatory practices and hinder the opportunities available to girls, thereby marginalizing their voices and reinforcing harmful gender stereotypes. These beliefs perpetuate a cycle of psychological harm, where girls may experience harassment or have their leadership roles undermined based solely on the perception of their inferiority compared to boys. The pervasive influence of these beliefs can lead to the internalization of harmful perceptions, where some female students disclosed their views of themselves as inherently lesser or limited in their academic achievements, resulting in feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem.

Addressing the impact of boys who hold such beliefs is paramount in the pursuit of gender equality and the creation of a safe and inclusive environment for girls in high school. It necessitates the implementation of educational interventions that challenge harmful gender norms, foster respect, and empathy, and encourage boys to recognize and value the rights and capabilities of girls. By cultivating an atmosphere of equality and mutual respect, we can establish an empowering and supportive environment where girls can thrive and reach their full potential in their educational journey.

To combat these deeply ingrained beliefs, it is crucial to engage in critical discussions and provide alternative interpretations of religious texts that emphasize gender equality and justice. Incorporating religious education that promotes inclusive and egalitarian values can help challenge the misinterpretation of religious teachings and foster a more nuanced understanding of gender dynamics. Furthermore, educators play a pivotal role in promoting dialogue and facilitating critical thinking among students, encouraging them to question existing norms and biases. By instilling values of empathy, tolerance, and respect, we can cultivate a generation of students who embrace gender equality and challenge discriminatory beliefs.

Overall, the religious influences on students' perceptions of girls and women cannot be overlooked. The negative impact of misinterpretations and rigid beliefs poses a significant obstacle to achieving gender equality. By addressing these influences through educational interventions and open discussions, we can work towards dismantling harmful gender norms, promoting inclusive religious interpretations, and creating a more inclusive and empowering educational environment for all students.

### 4.3 School Life

Regarding the preference for studying in mixed-gender classes, the findings indicate that many male students (83%) expressed their preference for coeducation, providing various justifications for this preference. Some of their selected responses include:

*Single-sex schools/classes represent some sort of psychological complexities.*

*Society is mixed, so the classroom should follow suit.*

*For the sake of diversity of ideas and perceptions.*

*Their presence means competition for us.*

*I feel female students are more rational.*

*I feel there is no difference between male and female students. They have their ideas and qualifications we may benefit from them.*

*For the sake of equality.*

*Learning in single-sex classes during the age of puberty may result in complexities against the other gender at some moment in the future, let alone the communicative competencies.*

*Most of the hardworking students are girls, being in mixed class makes me feel the level is higher.*

*For avoiding being introverted.*

On the other hand, most female students (92%) also expressed a preference for studying in mixed gender classes. Their opinions on this matter include:

*For the sake of coexistence of the two genders.*

*For social integration since our society is mixed.*

*As long as I am going to interact with them in society, workplace, it is better to start learning how to do so in school as it helps me build a strong personality.*

*For the sake of competition.*

*To understand their mindset.*

*To open up for society and make communication easier.*

*God created male and female; I don't imagine studying in single sex classes. In mixed classes, we learn how to coexist with each other.*

*For the sake of getting used to the presence of each other far from any discriminatory beliefs.*

The opinions expressed by female students regarding their preference for studying in mixed gender classes highlight the significance they place on coexistence, social integration, and preparation for future interactions in society and the workplace. They value the opportunity to build a strong personality through exposure to different mindsets and competition. The belief in learning how to coexist and communicate with both genders, in line with the idea of God's creation of male and female, reinforces the importance of inclusivity and rejecting discriminatory beliefs. These opinions underscore the students' recognition of the benefits of mixed gender classrooms in fostering understanding, equality, and a broader perspective in their educational journey.

To further support the positive perceptions of male students towards their female peers, other statistics indicate that over 95% of male students reported having a positive relationship with their female classmates, with many considering their interactions to be either good or partially good. Furthermore, over 63% of male students view female students as being either equally or more hardworking than male students, believing that they are more dedicated to their studies and more caring. Interestingly, over 70% of male students (and 78% of female students) do not see any difference between being taught by a male or female teacher, focusing more on the teachers' competencies than their gender. Similarly, 55% of male students do not see any difference in school management between male and female school directors, compared to 42% of female students.

One particularly noteworthy question in this section, students were asked, if they agreed with implementing a unit dedicated to women. Over 85% of male students responded with a "yes," offering some repetitive justifications such as:

*Women are unfortunately still socially marginalized.*

*To discard ignorance and patriarchal authority as we have mothers and sisters.*

*For the sake of equality.*

Students' positive reactions were further supported by their responses to open ended questions about the Revised Moroccan Family Code of 2004 which granted many rights to women than before. A significant number of students, particularly female students, admitted having little knowledge about the revised Family Code and its new provisions on issues such as polygamy, age of marriage, and equality before the law, etc. Additionally, over 72% of female students expressed their support for including a unit about men in the curriculum.

The issue of bullying also emerged in the questionnaire, with nearly 74% of male students claiming that they had never bullied their female peers. However, almost 48% of female students acknowledged being bullied, with three percent reporting

experiencing it sometimes. The discrepancy in percentages between male and female students is striking, as it suggests a significant mismatch in perceptions. In the open-ended questions, some boys justified their bullying of girls to being based on factors such as their girlhood nature, physical appearance, or lack of conformity to societal norms. Conversely, it was found that nearly 48% of female students reported experiencing school bullying in the form of verbal abuse. They provided various accounts to support their claims, including:

*because of the patriarchal mindset.  
rearing problem," "weak personality.  
disrespect to women's image instilled in the patriarchal mind.  
some still think girls' place is the kitchen.  
bullying acts depend on girls' beauty and their attractive bodies.  
false strength and authority over girls.*

The findings regarding bullying in the questionnaire shed light on an alarming disparity between male and female students' experiences. While most male students claimed to have never bullied their female peers, a significant percentage of female students acknowledged being subjected to bullying, primarily in the form of verbal abuse. The justifications provided by some boys for their bullying behavior, such as physical appearance, conformity to societal norms, or the perpetuation of patriarchal authority, reveal concerning attitudes and beliefs. On the other hand, female students attributed their experiences of bullying to factors like the patriarchal mindset, rearing problems, and the perpetuation of disrespect towards the critical women's image as common inculcated practices of boyhood and manhood as well which align with falsehood interpretation with religious verses of the Quran as clarified above. These contrasting perspectives highlight the existence of gender-based bullying and the urgent need for interventions and educational efforts to address these issues and foster a safe and inclusive school environment for all students.

To further explore the issue of discrimination within the educational setting, the questionnaire included a question asking students whether they have ever experienced any form of discrimination by educators or administrators. Interestingly, more than 72% of female students reported never having experienced any discriminatory acts. In contrast, nearly 59% of boys reported witnessing acts of discrimination and subjectivity in the treatment of girls, such as the bestowing of privileges to females at the expense of boys. Some of the specific aspects of discrimination that boys complained about include:

*Girls are allowed to enter school without uniform whereas boys are treated with severity.  
Girls can get the admission sheet easily while boys are asked to bring their parents.  
Some administrators are suspected for their personal grooming by girls' inducement.  
Girls are treated with exaggerated flexibility in contrast to boys.  
Some educators favor girls and this is vivid in their treatment.  
Some teachers punish boys and turn a blind eye for girls.  
Unjustified leniency by some administrators and teachers towards girls at the expense of boys.*

The responses provided by the students shed light on their perceptions of discrimination within the educational setting. Interestingly, most girls (72%) reported having not experienced any acts of discrimination, indicating that they perceive fair and equal treatment by educators and administrators. In contrast, a significant percentage of boys (59%) admitted witnessing acts of discrimination and subjectivity towards girls, suggesting their awareness of gender biases in the treatment of their female peers. The specific examples given by boys, such as differential treatment in uniform enforcement, admissions, and perceived favoritism towards girls, indicate their concerns about biased practices within the school system. These findings highlight the importance of addressing and rectifying any perceived inequalities or biases to ensure a supportive and equitable learning environment for all students.

#### ***4.4. Socio-Political Factors and Girls' Perceptions***

Among the narrow-minded ideas expressed by some male students regarding girls and women's potential to succeed in higher positions were the following perceptions:

*Minister Rmili was appointed as the Minister of Health and retreated.  
Women can't bear huge responsibility.  
Women have responsibilities inside their houses.  
Women are oversensitive.  
Men are more prone to leadership than women.  
Women are underrepresented in parliament.*

*Social and political restrictions affect women's performance badly.*

*Girls are likely to suffer the same fate as other women.*

*Girls are weak. They can't succeed in higher positions as men do.*

These insights highlight the presence of gender biases and societal norms that shape students' perceptions of women's and girls' capabilities and roles in leadership and decision-making. The beliefs expressed by some students reflect traditional and patriarchal views that undermine women's and girls' potential for leadership positions.

On the other hand, the recognition of social and political restrictions affecting women's performance suggests an awareness of the systemic factors that contribute to gender inequalities. It is crucial to address and challenge these perceptions to promote gender equality and create an inclusive environment that empowers girls to fulfill their potential in all areas of life.

The results demonstrated a complex matrix of perspectives and attitudes. Positively, a sizeable proportion of students demonstrated strong support for coeducation and favorable attitudes toward gender equality. Answering our first research question, these perceptions contribute to the formation of a promising environment of girlhood in which girls are perceived as equals and competent learners.

However, the second research question revealed a concerning issue: gender-based harassment and discrimination. There was a significant difference between the experiences of boys and girls, with many female students reporting verbal abuse. This phenomenon poses a grave threat to the status of female students, producing an atmosphere of fear and discomfort that could negatively impact girls' self-esteem, academic performance, and wellbeing.

In addition, male students in this study identified instances in which they believed educators and administrators gave girls preferential treatment. This may contribute to a complex situation involving the perception of discrimination in the school environment. The implications of these perceptions may influence how girls view their own capacities and selves. Even though this favorable bias may appear advantageous for girls on the surface, it can potentially lead to a distorted self-perception in which girls either experience an illusory sense of superiority or perceive themselves as inferior and therefore in need of special treatment. This social restriction needs careful consideration to ensure healthy development and growth among female students.

To address the concerns identified in this study, several recommendations have been proposed. These recommendations seek to counteract the negative influences of societal norms and stereotypes on young girls. For instance, we can work towards redefining girlhood in a more empowering and positive light by constructing a pedagogically sound unit on the topic of "Women and Power," discussing notable Moroccan women throughout history, and cultivating a balanced understanding of gender roles in Islam.

Furthermore, it is crucial to ensure that the language used in official school documents and communications is competency-based and free of gender biases. This will foster an environment in which girlhood and womanhood are synonymous with strength, potential, and equality.

Even though schools play a significant role in promoting gender equality, it is evident that the challenge of redefining girlhood extends far beyond school boundaries and requires a society-wide effort. We envisage a future where girlhood is characterized by self-assurance, resilience, and limitless potential.

By addressing the perceptions and experiences of Moroccan high school students, particularly regarding gender equality, discrimination, and the roles of women and girls in society, we can work towards creating a more equitable and inclusive educational environment where all students can thrive and fulfill their potential.

## **5. Recommendations and limitations**

In this study, I delved into high school students' views regarding female students' perceptions on gender equity within an academic environment and factors beyond the school setting, which provided some invaluable insights for future educational policy decisions. However, it is important to acknowledge a few significant limitations within our research methods. The use of Google Forms for data collection, while convenient and inexpensive, may come at a cost with reduced analytical precision compared to more sophisticated options available today. Additionally, relying solely on questionnaires and classroom observations might not capture the full domain of student beliefs or attitudes towards educational opportunities provided to girls adequately. Addressing such limitations by employing newer techniques will enhance the results of such studies for improved comprehension regarding female students' policies to enhance academic performance.

To address the limitations identified and promote a more comprehensive and inclusive educational approach, several recommendations emerge from the findings. One crucial recommendation is to create a pedagogically sound unit on the topic of "Women and Power" that goes beyond empirical learning. This unit should aim to challenge and debunk misconceptions, rather than simply presenting successful women figures. By engaging students in critical discussions, interactive activities, and diverse perspectives, this unit can foster a deeper understanding of gender equality and empower students to challenge traditional gender norms.

Furthermore, clarifying terms such as "female" and "girls" is crucial to enhance students' comprehension of the distinctions and implications associated with gender. Many students may lack knowledge about these terms and their broader implications. Providing clear definitions and explanations can help foster a more nuanced understanding of gender identity, equality, and the challenges faced by girls within the educational system.

Expanding teaching practices to include a variety of techniques and technologies is another important recommendation. By utilizing multimedia resources, guest speakers, and real-life case studies, educators can create a more dynamic and engaging learning environment that addresses the experiences and obstacles faced by girls. This approach promotes empathy, understanding, and critical thinking among students, while also encouraging them to actively challenge gender stereotypes and biases.

Engaging in dialogues about girls' rights within the context of Islam is a vital step to combat extremist interpretations and foster a more balanced understanding of gender roles. By encouraging open discussions and promoting inclusive interpretations of religious teachings, educators can challenge discriminatory beliefs and stereotypes, fostering an environment that respects and values the rights and contributions of girls within their faith.

Revising official documents to reduce gender-based language and emphasize competencies is another crucial recommendation. By moving away from gender stereotypes and biases in official communication, educational institutions can create an environment that values the capabilities and potential of all students, irrespective of their gender. This inclusive language can help foster a sense of belonging, equal opportunity, and empowerment among students.

Addressing the underrepresentation of women in positions of power, particularly in parliament, is a critical aspect of promoting gender equality and dismantling gender stereotypes. Highlighting the importance of female representation and leadership can inspire young female learners to challenge traditional norms and aspire to leadership roles. By showcasing the achievements of women in positions of power, educational institutions can encourage students to actively engage in activities and initiatives that promote gender equality and advocate for more inclusive governance.

Conducting awareness campaigns, particularly in rural areas, is instrumental in challenging and altering perceptions regarding the education of female students. These campaigns should aim to eliminate common stereotypes, raise awareness about the importance of girls' education, and address the violation of female students' civic rights. By actively engaging with communities, educators and stakeholders can work together to promote a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for girls, irrespective of their background or geographical location.

Ultimately, the focus should be on establishing a school environment that empowers students with a fair and unbiased understanding of the capabilities and contributions of girls. This can be achieved by integrating these recommendations into educational policies and practices. It is important to involve diverse perspectives and engage all stakeholders, including educators, administrators, parents, and students, in the process of promoting gender equality in education. By collectively implementing these measures, we can work towards creating a more equitable and inclusive educational system that nurtures the growth, development, and full potential of all students, regardless of their gender.

These recommendations were derived from several discussions with both female and male students, highlighting the importance of involving diverse perspectives and engaging stakeholders in the process of promoting gender equality in education. By collectively implementing these measures, we can foster a more inclusive and supportive educational system that empowers all students to thrive and contribute to a more egalitarian society.

## **6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, my research has provided significant insights into how high school students perceive the status of females and women in Moroccan society. The findings demonstrate a mix of positive attitudes toward female students as well as persistent



stereotypes and obstacles that hinder their empowerment. These insights have important implications for promoting gender equality and creating an inclusive educational environment.

Based on the research findings, several recommendations have been proposed to address the identified obstacles and foster a more inclusive and empowering educational experience for all students. One key recommendation is the development of a comprehensive pedagogical unit focused on girls, which goes beyond empirical learning and incorporates discussions on notable women from Moroccan history. This unit can help challenge stereotypes and promote a more balanced understanding of girls' capabilities, achievements, and potential. Moreover, it is crucial to address misperceptions that are rooted in religious interpretations. By engaging in open and informed discussions about the rights and roles of women in Islam, students can develop a more nuanced and balanced understanding of gender equality within the context of their religious beliefs. This can help combat extremist interpretations and promote a more inclusive and egalitarian view of gender roles. Additionally, the revision of official documents and language is essential to reflect competency-based approaches and eliminate gender stereotypes. By using inclusive language and emphasizing competencies rather than gender, educational institutions can create an environment that values the abilities and talents of all students, irrespective of their gender.

The research findings also highlight the need for targeted awareness campaigns in rural regions to challenge societal attitudes and underscore the importance of females' education. These campaigns should aim to eliminate common stereotypes, promote the value of education for girls, and emphasize the potential contributions of females to society. By raising awareness and challenging deeply ingrained attitudes, rural communities can be empowered to support and prioritize girls' education. Educational institutions have a pivotal role to play in creating a new generation that recognizes girls as equals and actively works towards achieving gender equality. To achieve this, it is crucial for educational institutions to prioritize and integrate students' perceptions and experiences into their policies and practices. By actively involving students in shaping the educational environment, institutions can ensure that their voices are heard, and their needs are met.

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