

Gender Schemas Within Secondary Agricultural Classrooms

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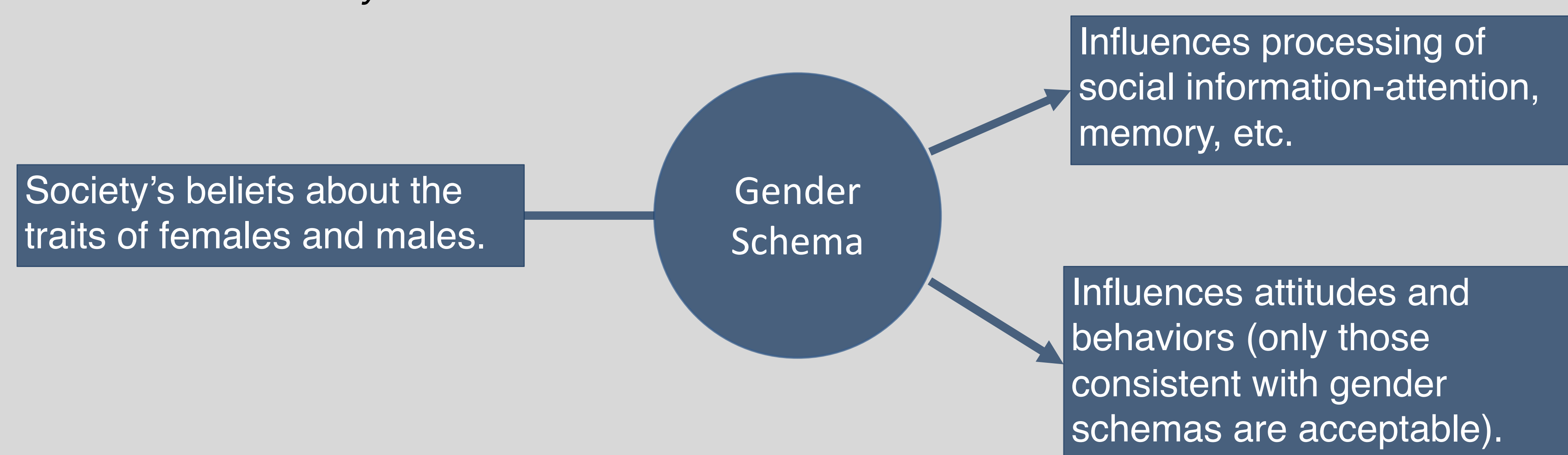
INTRODUCTION

Since No Child Left Behind in 2001, over 1,000 school districts across the United States have implemented some degree of single-sex education (Klein, Lee, McKinsey, & Archer, 2014). Changes in educational reform resulted in a desire to determine if same-sex classrooms are optimal in public education (Pahlke, Hyde, & Allison, 2014). Differences among girls and boys enrolled in school-based agricultural education programs were noted in motivation (Velez, Lambert, & Elliot 2015), leadership development (Rosch, Simonsen, & Velez, 2015), and interests in career development events (Ricketts, Osborne, and Rudd, 2004).

THORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1

Gender Schema Theory



Note. Gender schema theory (Bem, 1981). Adapted from *Educational psychology* (13th ed.) by A. Woolfolk and E. L. Usher, 2018, p. 241. Copyright 2018 by Pearson.

METHODOLOGY

CHARATERISTICS

- The research described in this study was a part of a larger research program that included teachers ($n = 8$) and students ($n = 211$).
- The primary method of investigation was a multi-site, collective case study (Yin, 2012). Data were collected over two weeks in September, 2019 at four sites.

DATA COLLECTION

- Preliminary data included observations, photographs of classrooms, documents available at the site, and researcher field notes. Teachers and students were observed during instruction.

DATA ANAYLSIS

- Data were organized by typing field notes, cataloguing all visual material, and sorting data by collection type. Emergent coding was employed and themes were cross- referenced with each site (Yin, 2012).

VALIDITY

- Data from multiple sources were used to achieve triangulation. Peer debriefing was used to enhance the accuracy of accounts. A peer examiner, unfamiliar with the research project, validated accuracy of themes.

RESULTS

Three themes emerged relating to differences in same-sex classrooms: *warmness*, *humor*, and *instructional design*.

- Female teachers who instructed the all-girl classes were observed to be warm in their greetings and encounters with students.
- Photographs revealed more vibrant colors and more displayed student work in all girl-classrooms.
- One male teacher said, "we all know this class is 'uglier' than normal." Another male teacher told jokes to transition between learning objectives.
- Male teachers and female teachers demonstrated differences in *instructional design*. Female teachers used collaboration more often while male teachers used competition in instructional design.
- During an activity, one male student said to his classmates, "Imma beat you so bad!" Other male students said, "you're so slow," "you're weak," and "no one can do this as good as me."



CONCLUSIONS

The findings suggest how teachers enact differences when teaching homogenous classrooms. This supports Pahlke et al. (2014) claim that teachers are responsible for observed gender differences in classrooms. As such, our findings are reinforced by the gender schema theory whereas teachers serve as a social influence on students understanding of gendered behavior and attitudes. While this study presents preliminary findings on *how* teachers enact differences in homogeneous classrooms it does not address *why*. Future research is needed to more thoroughly address these questions. Qualitative interviews are recommended to investigate these qualitative inquiries (Yin, 2012).