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The impacts of culture and gender in HIV/AIDS lived experiences in education workplaces : case study of selected public schools in Gauteng Province of South Africa.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis represents an attempt to capture the complex life experiences of various members of the education sector of Gauteng Province, including those involved in public school governance, teaching, policy design and implementation. The intention was to investigate how elements of culture and gender may be influencing the motivations, abilities and ways in which members of the education sector are (or are not) putting HIV/AIDS policies into action through their lived experiences. A modified case study approach was applied utilizing qualitative and ethnographic techniques to conduct research in five public schools in the Johannesburg area with an array of relevant participants including school principals, governing board members, adult learners and educators. Focusing on attitudes, knowledge, beliefs and practices of the participants, the researcher identified particular aspects of 'world views' and/or perceptions, popular discourses and non-biomedical disease explanatory models that impact on the implementation of HIV/AIDS policies in the education sector. The researcher demonstrates the insufficiency of official discourse and Western biomedical constructs for understanding and responding to HIV/AIDS, and concludes that the hybrid nature of perspectives and understandings means that no single approach to the AIDS crisis in education institutions will be effective for addressing the epidemic and its challenges.

WitsETD