

When women cheat: DNA Testing and discourses of Femininity in the Closure DNA Show Zimbabwe

Authors : Shingirai Mandizadza

Abstract : 'The Closure' DNA Show is a publicly hosted program on Youtube, the brainchild of a private citizen, Tinashe Mugabe, who started uploading episodes of the Show in 2020. The Show captures the paternity confirmation journeys of different families who approach the Show to share their stories and have the paternity results aired. Since the show started, a discourse on women's sexuality has circulated in Zimbabwe, with cases of misattribution of paternity revealing social anxieties as well as a discursive space in which to think through a range of issues that include gender and sexuality. When paternity results are negative, they show misattribution of paternity by women, who, in most cases, are seen to have cheated. Men and women in Zimbabwe have traditionally been subjected to different 'rules' guiding sexual behavior. Gender roles in heterosexual intimate relationships frame different expectations for physical intimacy, including sexual and non-sexual touch, emotional intimacy, and commitment. This paper seeks to analyze discourses of femininity and sexuality engendered by negative paternity results. It analyses how sexuality and femininity are produced, reproduced and contested using the textual forms and communicative practices in the comments section of episodes of The Closure DNA Show. A Feminist Critical Discourse (FCDA) is used to review how language is used to frame the sexuality and femininity of the women on the show and Zimbabwean women in general.

Keywords : gender, sexuality, paternity, discourse

Conference Title : ICGS 2025 : International Conference on Gender and Sociology

Conference Location : New York, United States

Conference Dates : June 03-04, 2025