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Gender Responsiveness in the Philippine Basic Education Context: Priority Thrusts and Initiatives in the Schools Division of Batangas City



Abstract: - In 2017, the Department of Education (DepEd) issued the Gender Responsive Basic Education Policy mandating schools to pursue initiatives to address enduring and emerging gender issues and to promote gender equality. This explanatory-sequential research explored and analyzed the gender-mainstreaming initiatives implemented in the Schools Division of Batangas City. Based on the Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF), the assessment of 255 basic education personnel reveal that the gender-mainstreaming in their Schools Division of Batangas City is currently at the GAD application (Level III). The basic education personnel know the various GAD initiatives institutionalized within the organization and the strategic approach to implementing GAD-related activities. The results and findings from the real-time Delphi survey and focus group discussion underscore the importance of targeted interventions in curriculum development, pedagogy, learning environments, research, capacity building, and knowledge management. The study recommends strengthening awareness programs, addressing knowledge gaps, implementing real-time monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and fostering collaborative partnerships to enhance gender responsiveness within the Schools Division of Batangas City. These recommendations aim to foster an inclusive and equitable educational environment that supports the holistic development of all students, aligning with the principles of the Gender Responsive Basic Education Policy.

Keywords: gender and development, Gender Responsive Basic Education Policy, exploratory-sequential, real-time Delphi survey, Batangas City

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 global goals adopted by United Nations member states in 2015 to address various social, economic, and environmental challenges the world faces. SDGs Goal 5 focuses explicitly on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. It calls for an end to all forms of discrimination, violence, and harmful practices against women and girls, as well as ensuring their full and effective participation in all spheres of life. SDG 5 is critical because gender equality is a fundamental human right and a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development.

In alignment with international commitments, particularly the United Nations' SDGs, with a specific emphasis on Goal 5 on Gender Equality which aims to eliminate gender disparities in education, the gender-responsive basic education policy stipulated in the Department of Education (DepEd) Order 32, series 2017 known as the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy, mandates schools in the Philippines to undertake gender-mainstreaming initiatives in education to address both enduring and emerging gender and sexuality-related issues in basic education and to promote gender equality and non-discrimination in the workplace. Awareness of the gender-responsive policy contributes to the efficient and effective implementation of the various initiatives. Identification of best practices, priorities, and thrust on gender sensitivity and responsiveness will help the stakeholders in

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furthering their advocacy of promoting gender-fair education. The policy is committed to strengthening gender and development (GAD) institutional mechanisms. Integral to the GAD approach is Gender Mainstreaming (GM), identified as a strategy to integrate gender perspectives in institutional policy, programs, and activities. It is operationalized by building GAD capacities and sharing accountability in all areas and at all program and project implementation levels.

Gender mainstreaming (GM) is one of the strategies that will be used to achieve a gender-responsive education system. GM, as advocated by the United Nations in 2020, entails incorporating a gender perspective into every facet of educational institutions and involving all individuals within the education sector. It aims to educate and raise awareness among different sectors of society about the significance of acknowledging and upholding the rights of both women and men. To pursue gender mainstreaming effectively, agencies and Local Government Units must ensure that essential elements are available. As such, they should prioritize establishing and implementing the following components: GAD Planning and Budgeting, GAD Focal Point System, Sex-Disaggregated Database, and Conduct of Gender Audit. These components serve as critical tools in promoting gender equality and empowering women, guiding the integration of gender perspectives across all policies, programs, and activities. By actively incorporating these elements, organizations can foster an inclusive and equitable society that recognizes and addresses the needs and rights of all individuals, regardless of gender.

GM is focused on the substantive work of organizations, specifically educational institutions. It is not just about achieving a gender balance in those organizations but all about identifying concrete actions to promote gender equality. GM is not just about doing gender analysis but makes gender perspectives and the goal of gender equality explicit in all processes and documents. Moreover, GM is a complementary strategy to individuals' empowerment and activities targeted to promote gender equality. Gender Mainstreaming requires catalyst resources to support management in fulfilling its responsibilities. Public and private secondary schools must adhere to Gender-Responsiveness guidelines to guarantee access to quality basic education. These guidelines should be supported by a reference tool to ensure that the policy remains relevant and applicable in practice. Using this reference tool, schools can effectively incorporate gender-sensitive practices, fostering an inclusive and equitable educational environment for all students.

The Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF) is a tool to measure the extent of the gender mainstreaming efforts of organizations, both national government agencies (NGAs) and local government units (LGUs). GMEF serves a crucial role in supporting members of the Gender and Development Focal Point System (GFPS) in assessing the progress and achievements of their efforts to integrate the gender and development (GAD) perspective within their respective organizations. Additionally, it helps identify areas that require improvement, enabling GFPS members to refine and enhance their gender mainstreaming initiatives. By using the GMEF, organizations can effectively measure the impact of their actions, track successes, and work towards greater gender equality and inclusivity across all operations.

The GMEF retained the four entry points of gender mainstreaming, namely Policies, People, Enabling Mechanisms, and Programs/Activities/Projects (PAPs). The policies are categorized as national and sectoral plans, specific guidelines, a manual of implementation, and the GAD Framework/Strategic Plan. GAD policy is designed with the expectation that it can be replicated and adapted for potential innovation. The second entry point is people. People participate in the planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of programs, activities, and projects and share complementary but distinct roles. Enabling Mechanisms refer to the structures and implementations installed in the organization and the funds allocated for GAD activities. Auditing will significantly help to ensure institutional compliance with the minimum 5% utilization of the GAD budgets of agencies and local government units. The last entry point is the Programs/Activities/Projects (PAPs). These are the review and issuance of revised GAD policies, application of gender analysis tools, and conduct of GAD advocacy and disciplined updating of GAD mechanisms such as the GAD database.

Galamgam (2021) analyzed the general impression of Secondary School Teachers in implementing the Gender Responsive Education Policy. The findings indicate that the implemented policy must fully align with the intended objectives. It indicates that not all educators adhered to the elimination of gender stereotypes and the integration of gender-sensitive learning materials and teaching approaches. This lack of compliance can be

attributed to insufficient support, monitoring, and resources for teachers, particularly within the Department of Education. It was also moderately implemented, as assessed by Decena (2021), regarding Learners' Development, Curriculum Standards, Learning Delivery, Learning Environment, Assessment of Learning, health, youth formation, school sports, Physical Facilities, Human Resource Development, and Employee welfare.

Efforts have been made to ensure gender responsiveness in the upper primary Social Studies Curriculum, focusing on human resource development and employee welfare. The curriculum aims to promote equality among all students. In the study of Rwanda Nizeyimana et al.(2021), the enhancement of textbooks and teaching practices in their curriculum still needs to be addressed. Equally, Tantengco et al. (2016) emphasized how concepts, issues, and principles were integrated with their K-12 Araling Panlipunan or Social Studies curriculum. Findings have shown that it is a commitment to promoting gender-fair education in both public schools in different educational institutions in the country and other local government units. Leal & Saguibo (2018) assessed the level of gender responsiveness of the Municipality of San Mateo Isabela and their capacity to deliver and employ gender-responsive services in their place. The socioeconomic data of the LGU provide information concerning gender responsiveness which was evidence of their advanced stage of being gender-responsive.

As Marmani (2021) stressed, despite several efforts to increase gender inequality at the international level, the issue remains. It is recommended that the design and implementation of teacher education awareness programs are deemed necessary to adopt educational practices that promote gender equality in education. Perigo and Mangila (2020) have noted that the lack of management support and operational requirements were the typical problems focal persons encountered during the GAD Program implementation. There is a need to implement the designed framework that strengthens the awareness and integration of GAD and classroom management (Bacquian, 2019). GAD programs should be implemented with the cooperation of concerned agencies, such as the involvement of communities.

The integration of a gender-sensitive teaching strategy can improve teaching-learning performance. Hernandez and Cudiamat (2018) revealed an increase in the pre-test scores when the students were exposed to the gender-sensitive teaching approach. The study suggests that the gender-responsive teaching approach be integrated into the classroom to promote gender equality and improve learners' academic performance. Through this project, the policy developer and implementers will be able to understand the existing challenges in gender responsiveness in terms of curriculum, instructional delivery, assessment, facilities, and training in the Philippines. The integration of gender-sensitive teaching strategies remains to be a challenge among educators.

Ananga (2021) revealed a significant improvement in the use of gender-responsive pedagogy by the core subjects (English et al.) from the tutors sampled. There has been a similar increase in the use of gender-responsive mentoring strategies by mentors. Moreover, local research has provided valuable insights into GAD implementation in primary education, highlighting the importance of creating safe and gender-responsive schools while nurturing a supportive atmosphere that empowers students of all genders.

Fontanos and Ocampo (2019) concluded that the issue of gender disparity in primary education outcome indicators in the Philippines remains a legitimate and unresolved concern. Losing sight of more pertinent concerns in education is too big a risk when analyzing data according to gender categories. All contributors in the field of education must be aware of the core objective of education, which is improving participation in programs that ensure student learning. Schools or institutions must implement inclusive interventions that enliven the centrality of gender equality. Ultimately, the crucial requirement is a steadfast commitment to enhancing education outcomes for all, particularly in alignment with the Education 2030 Framework for Action and the K to 12 Basic Education Program. By prioritizing this commitment, stakeholders can work together to address gender biases, promote inclusivity, and create an educational system that empowers individuals to reach their full potential.

According to Decena (2021), the implementation of Gender-Responsive Basic Education in schools, as assessed by the respondents, is rated as moderately implemented across various aspects. These aspects include Learners' Development, Curriculum Standards, Learning Delivery, Learning Environment, Assessment of Learning, health, youth formation, school sports, Physical Facilities, Human Resource Development, and Employee welfare. This social issue required more in-depth exploration, especially in the classroom, to promote its significance and determine its applicability and effectiveness.

Although many studies have examined gender responsiveness in the Philippine Basic Education Context, there is a lack of research on how school priority thrusts and initiatives promote gender equality. There are several crucial research gaps to address this need. First, it is essential to evaluate the effectiveness of gender-responsive teaching strategies, which is vital to determining whether the existing approaches successfully promote inclusivity and reduce gender bias in classrooms. Second, examining the prevalence and consequences of gender-based violence is critical to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. Third, exploring gender representation in leadership roles within the educational system is essential to identify potential barriers and facilitators for promoting gender balance in leadership positions and its impact on the overall school environment. The researchers recognized the existence of gaps that are impeding the development of gender-responsive and equitable educational experiences for students in Batangas City. These gaps hinder the effective implementation of policies and initiatives promoting inclusivity and gender sensitivity within the educational system. As a result, the researchers saw the necessity to address these limitations to foster a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students in Batangas City.

This study aims to establish priority thrusts and initiatives that underscore the best practices in implementing the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy. In particular, it will:

1. Determine the level of awareness of basic education personnel on mainstreaming the gender-responsive basic education policy.
2. Examine differences in the basic education personnel's awareness of mainstreaming the gender-responsive basic education policy.
3. Assess the perceived effectiveness of gender-responsive practices of t basic education personnel.
4. Determine priority thrusts and initiatives for gender-responsive implementation in basic education.

Through a comprehensive analysis of these priority thrusts, the researchers aim to guide policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in designing and implementing gender-responsive strategies to foster an equitable and empowering learning environment for all students.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The study employed an explanatory sequential design divided into three phases—the comparative design involved collecting and analyzing data on policy awareness and the effectiveness of practices. In the second phase, the real-time Delphi method is utilized to identify the priority thrusts and initiatives for gender-responsive implementation. Finally, the qualitative descriptive design was used to determine the basic education personnel's experiences implementing the gender-responsive basic education policy.

The target respondents were the school heads and teachers from different secondary schools in the Schools Division of Batangas City. The survey's respondents were chosen randomly based on a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence interval. Two hundred fifty-five respondents had completed the electronic and paper survey for Phase 1. They were composed of teachers (N = 245, 96.10%), school heads (N = 4, 1.60%), and members of the GAD focal point system (N = 6, 2.40%) (See Table 1.). The majority of the respondents are female (N = 200, 78.40%), straight or heterosexual (N = 220, 86.30%), 21-30 years old (N = 134, 53.00%), with 1-10 years of teaching (N = 160, 62.70%).

The questionnaire was based on the Enhanced Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF) Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Philippine Commission on Women, 2016). It had 90 indicators distributed to four key areas: policy - 13 indicators, people - 26 indicators; enabling mechanism - 22 indicators; programs, activities, and projects - 29 indicators. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of awareness with the indicators using the three-level scale (1 - Not aware, 2 - Partially aware, 3 - Fully aware). The individual data were processed using the scoring guide provided for GMEF Organizational Assessment Questionnaire. Then, weighted mean and standard deviation were used to report each key area's overall scores. The Mann-Whitney U and the Kruskal Wallis tests were used to examine differences in the personnel's level of awareness of the GRBE

policy. In addition, the respondents were asked to assess the effectiveness of 24 gender-responsive practices currently implemented in basic education.

In the second phase, a real-time Delphi survey was conducted to gain consensus. The 255 respondents were asked to rank the 36 gender-responsive thrusts and initiatives according to their importance or priority (1 as lowest priority or importance and six as highest priority or importance. The thrusts and initiatives were equally distributed among six domains: curriculum, pedagogy and learning delivery, learning environment, research, capacity building, and knowledge management. A consensus that the item should be included in the high-priority GAD thrusts and policies is established when more than 50% of the participants have an overall score of 4 to 6. Otherwise, it will be classified as a medium-priority GAD thrust and policy.

The Focus-Group Discussion (FGD) was designed to gather diverse perspectives and insights on gender-responsive education policies. A screening process was implemented to identify potential participants who could contribute diverse perspectives and experiences to ensure a balanced and representative group. The focus group comprised two high school teachers, one member of the GAD focal point system, and two administrators from different private and public high schools. School administrators, GAD Focal point persons, and educators were included in the FGD to identify potential barriers to promoting gender equality within the school. This could include identifying issues related to student behavior, teacher attitudes, or administrative constraints. Incentives were provided to the participants as a token of appreciation for their time and valuable contributions during the FGD. However, individuals or groups of individuals who do not have direct experience or involvement with GAD-related matters, such as practices, policies, or challenges within that specific educational institution or workplace, were excluded from the FGD.

Table 1. Description of the Respondents

Profile Variables		N	%
Sex	Male	55	21.70
	Female	200	78.40
Gender	Straight/Heterosexual	220	86.30
	Gay/Lesbian/Homosexual	7	2.70
	Bisexual	3	1.20
	Others	16	6.30
	Prefers not to say	9	3.50
Age	21-30 years old	134	53.00
	31-40 years old	59	23.10
	41-50 years old	33	12.90
	>50 years old	29	11.40
Length of Service	<1 year	46	18.10
	1-10 years	160	62.70
	11-20 years	21	8.30
	21-30 years	15	5.90
	>30 years	13	5.10

School Type	DepEd Junior High School	61	23.60
	DepEd Senior High School	51	20.10
	Private Junior High School	67	26.40
	Private Senior High School	76	29.90
GAD Key Positions	Teacher	245	96.10
	School Heads	4	1.60
	GAD Focal System Member	6	2.40
Total		255	100.00

The key questions for the FGDs were developed based on the result of Phase 2 Delphi Survey Round 1 and consultations with a GAD expert. These questions explored participants' perceptions, experiences, and suggestions regarding gender-responsive education policies. The responses were coded and grouped based on the vital aspects of policy implementation, challenges encountered, best practices, and potential areas for improvement.

The protocols and relevant documents were submitted to UREC for review and approval. Endorsement and approval from SDO Batangas City and the school heads were secured before disseminating the survey questionnaire and conducting the interview. The research team observed and followed appropriate guidelines and procedures to ensure compliance with all relevant institutional, provincial, national, and international policies and regulations that govern research involving human participants. Ethical issues such as the purpose of the study, nature of participation, risks/benefits, confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity of data were included in the survey material. Likewise, these were explained to the participants, and formal consent/assent was asked. Before processing and storing the data collected, any personal information was de-identified to ensure anonymity and protect the individuals' privacy. This practice is essential for maintaining ethical standards in research and safeguarding the confidentiality of the data. All data collected will be kept for one year. The Schools Division of Batangas City was furnished with a copy of the results and findings of the study for transparency.

Limitations of the study include the small sample size and the potential for participant bias. While there were efforts to select diverse participants, the findings may only partially represent part of the population. Additionally, the discussions were limited to a specific geographical area, which may restrict the generalizability of the results. Despite these limitations, the FGD provided valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of stakeholders regarding gender-responsive education policies, offering a foundation for evidence-based recommendations and further research in this vital field.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Awareness of the Basic Education Teachers and School Heads of Mainstreaming the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy

Table 2 presents the awareness level of basic education personnel regarding gender mainstreaming in the context of the Gender-responsive Basic Education Policy (GRBE). The basic education personnel agreed that their school's gender mainstreaming initiatives are at Level 3 GAD Application ($M = 68.82$, $SD = 26.54$). This suggests that the school system has established a systematic approach to all activities related to Gender and Development (GAD) instead of haphazard and disjointed efforts (Philippine Commission on Women, 2016).

More specifically, results indicate that an agenda or comprehensive plan for GAD is already in place, which integrates GAD into the school's primary initiatives and undertakings ($M = 16.58$, $SD = 5.95$). The school management, the GAD Focal Point System (FPS) members, and implementing groups are intentionally incorporating GAD in their day-to-day practices ($M = 18.13$, $SD = 6.87$). The schools effectively utilize a budget

exceeding the mandated allocations and take pride in having an operational Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system and establishing a Knowledge Management System (M = 16.73, SD = 7.79). The schools guarantee the oversight of the GAD Programs, Projects, and Activities (PAPs), focusing on those initiatives outlined in the GAD Plan and Budget. Additionally, external stakeholders receive adequate training through pertinent GAD workshops. Lastly, a Knowledge management infrastructure is established to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge regarding GAD initiatives (M = 17.38, SD = 7.51). However, the responses vary from each respondent, as indicated by a relatively large standard deviation. These variations are further discussed in Table 3.

Table 2. Basic Education Personnel’s Awareness on the Mainstreaming of the GRBE Policy

Key Areas / Levels	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Policy	16.58	5.95	GAD Application
Issuance of initial policies on GAD	3.91	1.45	Moderate
Issuance of policies to mainstream GAD in the organization	3.90	1.31	Moderate
Integration of GAD in the Organization’s Policies	3.73	1.54	Moderate
Updating and Continuous Enhancement of GAD Policies	3.78	1.52	Moderate
Model GAD Policy	1.26	0.55	Low
People	18.13	6.87	GAD Application
For Establishing GFPS & GAD Champions/Advocates	3.79	1.42	Moderate
For GAD Initiatives & Capacity Development Activities	3.58	1.50	Moderate
For GAD Sponsorship & Related Programs	3.68	1.45	Moderate
GAD Champions as Program Implementers	3.62	1.50	Moderate
GAD Experts	3.45	1.56	Moderate
Enabling Mechanism	16.73	7.79	GAD Application
Setting-up of Essential GAD Mechanisms	3.46	1.63	Moderate
Functional GAD Mechanisms	3.42	1.60	Moderate
Integration of GAD in the Organization’s Mechanisms	3.34	1.62	Moderate
Advanced GAD Structures and Systems	3.34	1.66	Moderate
Model GAD Structures and Systems	3.17	1.64	Moderate
Programs, Activities, and Projects	17.38	7.51	GAD Application
Initial Activities to Facilitate GAD Mainstreaming	3.59	1.50	Moderate
Establishing Commitment towards GAD Mainstreaming	3.48	1.52	Moderate
GAD Application	3.46	1.56	Moderate
GAD Commitment and Institutionalization	3.46	1.58	Moderate
Model PAPs	3.38	1.68	Moderate

Over-all Level	68.82	26.54	GAD Application
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Legend: 1.00-1.04 very low, 1.05-2.01 low, 2.02-3.99 Moderate, 4.00-4.96 high, 4.97-5.00 Very High

While Philippine schools have made significant progress in promoting gender and equality through the issuance of initial policies on GAD ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 1.45$) and policies to mainstream GAD in the organization ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 1.31$), integration of GAD in the organization's policies ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 1.45$), and continuous enhancement of the GAD policies ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.52$), there are still gaps in the implementation of the critical areas and provisions of the Gender Responsive Basic Education Policy (Acosta, 2020; Galamgam et al., 2021). The respondents agreed that their school's GAD policy needs to be fine-tuned to the needs of the stakeholders before it could be used as a model or standard by other organizations ($M = 1.56$, $SD = 0.55$). Improving the internal and external stakeholders' engagement is essential in addressing gender gaps and continually developing GAD policy (Calora, 2020).

It should be noted that the basic education personnel is moderately aware of establishing GPFS and GAD champions/advocates ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 1.42$) in their schools. The respondents are also amenable to the fact that schools need to capacitate people to become GAD experts ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.56$) and strengthen GAD program implementers' leadership roles ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.50$). The respondents have moderate awareness about the available appropriate and relevant training on GAD ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.50$) and information about the involvement of internal and external stakeholders in related programs ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.45$). Thus, deliberate and comprehensive efforts enhance education stakeholders' abilities to adopt gender-responsive skills in executing GAD policies and promote a positive mindset on gender mainstreaming initiatives (Dorji, 2020; McQuillan & Leininger, 2020).

The respondents know the presence of essential ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.63$) and functional ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.60$) GAD mechanisms in their schools. It sheds light on the existence of other Gender and Development (GAD) mechanisms that have been implemented to monitor and report the progress of the Gender-Responsive Basic Education (GRBE) policy ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.62$). Additionally, the study uncovers a knowledge management system offering GAD-related knowledge products ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.66$).

However, the existing GAD structures and systems in the schools may still be improved to be recognized as standards worth emulating ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.64$). As in the case of many educational institutions, gaps in mainstreaming GAD exist in the organization's structures and systems (Bautista, 2021). To effectively implement the policy and initiatives, efficient resource allocation and institutionalizing the appropriate mechanisms should be considered (Sacro et al., 2022).

Regarding the various GAD programs, activities, and projects (PAPs), the basic education personnel are moderately aware of the various PAPs implemented to facilitate gender mainstreaming ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.50$). They also show a solid commitment to championing GAD mainstreaming ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.52$), applying GA tools regularly ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.56$), and institutionalizing GAD efforts in the organization ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.58$). The stakeholders concur that a sustainability action plan for GAD PAPs should be developed, monitored, and continuously improved ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.68$). To ensure more systematic and sustainable Gender and Development (GAD) Programs, offering training sessions on gender analysis, gender-sensitive curriculum development, and gender mainstreaming throughout basic education is essential (Arreola & Alejo, 2019).

By offering such training, educators and stakeholders can gain essential knowledge and skills to integrate gender perspectives effectively into the educational framework. Gender analysis training equips them to identify and understand the distinct needs, challenges, and opportunities different genders face within the educational context. This knowledge can then be used to design curricula that are inclusive and sensitive to students' diverse experiences, addressing gender biases and stereotypes that might exist in instructional materials, learning media, and other educational resources.

Differences in the Basic Education Personnel's Awareness of the Mainstreaming of the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy

Table 3 shows the comparison of the basic education personnel's awareness of the mainstreaming of the gender-responsive basic education policy. The key areas are Policy, People, Enabling Mechanisms, Programs, Activities, and Projects. The data were analyzed using Mann-Whitney U-test and Kruskal Wallis test to compare the awareness of Basic Education Personnel on the Gender Responsive Basic Education Policy across different vital areas.

Table 3. Comparison of the Personnel's Awareness of the GRBE Policy Mainstreaming

Variables	POL	PEO	EM	PAP	GM
Sex	5248.50 (0.59)	5187.00 (0.52)	5395.50 (0.83)	5010.50 (0.31)	5109.00 (0.42)
Gender	3653.50 (0.47)	3726.00 (0.60)	3613.50 (0.42)	3826.50 (0.78)	3671.00 (0.51)
School Types	5915.50 (< 0.01)*	6360.00 (< 0.01)*	6578.50 (0.01)*	6262.00 (< 0.01)*	6180.00 (< 0.01)*
Age Groups	10.10 (0.01, 3)*	6.33 (0.10, 3)	1.37 (0.71, 3)	3.68 (0.30, 3)	4.70 (0.20, 3)
Key Positions	6.33 (0.04, 2)*	3.94 (0.14, 2)	4.22 (0.12, 2)	5.81 (0.05, 2)*	5.90 (0.05, 2)*
Length of Service	14.82 (0.01, 4)*	11.61 (0.02, 4)*	6.30 (0.18, 4)	12.51 (0.01, 4)*	11.02 (0.03, 4)*

*Note: POL - Policy, PEO - People, EM - Enabling Mechanism, PAP - Programs, Activities, and Projects, GM - Gender Mainstreaming; Sex is either Male or Female; Gender is either Heterosexual or LGBTQA+; School Type is either Public or Private; *Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis are significant at $p < 0.05$; presented in the table are the statistics (p-value and or degrees of freedom)*

The essential education personnel's awareness of mainstreaming the GRBE policy does not significantly differ when grouped according to sex ($U = 5109.00$, $p = 0.42$), gender ($U = 3671.00$, $p = 0.51$), and age group ($2 = 4.70$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.20$). It was emphasized that these three variables were inconsistent with the personnel's awareness of mainstreaming the GRBE. These perspectives on GRBE with sex, gender, and age group have been identified due to some factors.

According to UNESCO (2013), educators view education's major concern is with girls and women being allowed equal access to education and the legal frameworks ensuring equity of access and equal opportunity in educational settings. In terms of gender, it involves a commitment to social change to eliminate social class and gender inequity. From this perspective, school educators are seen as reproducing the status quo in the learning environment. It is primarily concerned with how education reinforces inequity and methods that must be implemented to resist or change this.

In the study of Srivastava (2017), it was mentioned that as a teacher, he or she must be an agent of change. The teacher's role is to foster gender equality in the classroom and actively challenge societal stereotypes by instilling a transformative mindset within the younger generation. A teacher makes strategies based on teaching-learning materials to construct a gender-friendly attitude. To develop a positive attitude toward gender issues, it is crucial to develop a program in educational institutions. In this program, teachers are sensitized and equipped with the proper skills to enable the students to break the gender bias and gender-stereotyped mindset of society. Thus educational institutions should offer practical guidance and strategies for integrating gender equality in education systems, emphasizing the need for inclusive policies, teacher training, and curriculum reforms regardless of the age groups to promote inclusive learning environments.

Gacula Jr. (2021) found out that the gender perspectives of teachers on the K-12 curriculum in the Philippines had a general understanding of gender issues. The study also found that female teachers had higher levels of gender awareness and sensitivity than male teachers. However, some teachers did not understand how gender issues intersect with other social issues, such as poverty and discrimination.

However, the personnel's awareness of mainstreaming the GRBE Policy differs significantly when grouped according to school types ($U = 6180.00$, $p < 0.01$), critical positions held in the organization ($2 = 5.90$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.05$), and length of service ($2 = 11.02$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.03$). It can be gleaned from the table that different school types, such as public and private schools, vary with the levels of resources, support, and organizational structures that influence the implementation and awareness of GRBE policies.

Gil (2021) stressed that public schools may be subject to specific government regulations and initiatives, while private schools may have more flexibility in designing and implementing their policies. The commitment of those who are part of the process and who are influential in the implementation of the process is essential if success is to be realized. Meanwhile, the key positions within an organization, such as teachers, GAD focal points, and school heads, may have different roles and responsibilities related to policy implementation and awareness. GAD focal points, for example, are specifically designated to oversee gender-related initiatives, which may contribute to a higher awareness and understanding of GRBE policies among personnel in such positions. Conversely, teachers may have varying levels of exposure and training on gender-responsive practices, which can impact their awareness. The study by Gil (2021) pointed out that the school head, in appointing designation, must provide an office structure and assign faculty or staff who will be part of the GAD Committee. A clear distinction in their duties and responsibilities to provide direction and guidance in their assignments must be given to the GAD committee. It must conduct annual strategic planning to identify the programs to be implemented and set the program objectives for implementation reference. In addition, the GAD committee must intensify the conduct of seminars, training, and workshops for the school community to promote gender awareness and equality. GAD focal persons should be provided with training and seminars to enhance their GAD programs' capabilities and ensure the program's successful facilitation and resource allocation.

Relative to the study of Tiongson and Gonzales (2021), the result analyzed the implementation of gender mainstreaming in basic education in the Philippines and examined the role of critical positions such as School Heads, GAD Focal Point System, and teachers. The study found that School Heads and GAD Focal Point systems play critical roles in promoting gender mainstreaming in basic education. At the same time, teachers also significantly contribute to implementing gender-responsive policies.

Another study that supports the result was the work of Garcia and Hernandez (2020). The study investigated the roles of school heads and teachers in gender mainstreaming in the basic education sector in the Philippines. It examined school heads and teachers' awareness, attitudes, and practices in gender mainstreaming and identified the challenges they face in implementing gender-responsive policies.

Patel and Bhatt (2020) observed that the duration of service among teachers in India had a notable impact on their awareness and comprehension of gender-responsive policies. Specifically, teachers with more extended service experience demonstrated a significantly higher level of understanding of these policies compared to their counterparts with shorter service experience. Similarly, Hossain and Ali (2018) investigated the impact of length of service on teachers' attitudes towards gender issues in Bangladesh. The study found that teachers with more extended service experience had a more positive attitude toward gender issues and were more likely to incorporate gender-sensitive pedagogy in their teaching practices. Furthermore, Sim and Koh (2019) explored the correlation between the duration of service and teachers' gender awareness in Singapore. The research revealed that teachers with extensive experience in the field were more inclined to adopt a gender-sensitive approach in their teaching practices and actively integrate gender perspectives into their instructional materials.

Perceived Effectiveness of the Various Gender-Responsive Practices in Basic Education

Table 4 shows the effectiveness level of the various gender-responsive practices implemented in the basic education sector. The personnel agree that the GRBE practices implemented at their schools are very effective ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.82$). The Gender Mainstreaming Practices that have been implemented in the basic education sector, such as equal participation or representation of females and males in school activities ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.87$), promotion of mental health and psychological services ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.82$), and observance of GAD-related celebrations ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.86$) are essential in ensuring an equitable, inclusive, and responsive to the learners' need, regardless of gender. (Japanese International Cooperation Agency [JICA], 2023). In a setting characterized by gender equality, where every member of the personnel and all stakeholders experience respect

and appreciation, a positive and harmonious work environment is cultivated. This gender-diverse culture may help all individuals notice that the persons they work with are similar and have talents and strengths they do not possess. Appreciation for these differences helps promote respect.

In terms of instruction, practices such as the development of materials for learners in need of special attention ($M = 3.17, SD = 0.85$), adoption of gender-inclusive teaching strategies and methods ($M = 3.14, SD = 0.85$), implementation of policies on curriculum, instructions, and assessment that are consistent with the Gender - Responsive Basic Education Policy (GRBE) ($M = 3.13, SD = 0.84$), use of gender-fair language ($M = 3.12, SD = 0.85$), and development of gender-responsive learning resources ($M = 3.06, SD = 0.81$) are seen very effective in integrating GAD principles inside the classrooms. Creating a gender-responsive school culture and promoting gender equality can lead to improved learning outcomes and a more inclusive learning environment (Sumadsad et al., A. P. (2016). These practices promote gender equality, reduce gender stereotypes, and create a safe and inclusive learning environment (Karaman & Kurudayioglu, 2019).

Table 4. Various Gender-Responsive Practices Implemented in Basic Education

Gender-Responsive Practices	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. Observance and celebrations GAD-related events	3.10	0.84	Very Effective
2. Development of gender-responsive learning resources	3.06	0.81	Very Effective
3. Conduct of research related to GAD	3.02	0.86	Very Effective
4. Use of gender-fair language in classroom	3.12	0.85	Very Effective
5. Capacity-building and in-service training on GAD implementation	3.11	0.82	Very Effective
6. Collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics	2.97	0.84	Very Effective
7. Conduct of gender analysis and assessment	3.00	0.86	Very Effective
8. Stakeholders' consultation on GAD policies, programs, activities, and projects	3.03	0.84	Very Effective
9. Assessment of programs, activities, and projects in terms of GAD perspectives	3.11	0.86	Very Effective
10. Creation of GAD Focal Point system in the school/institution	3.04	0.88	Very Effective
11. GAD Planning and Budgeting	3.06	1.44	Very Effective
12. Gender-inclusive teaching strategies and methods in classroom	3.14	0.85	Very Effective
13. Equal participation/representation of females and males in school activities	3.23	0.82	Very Effective
14. Conduct of gender-responsive career guidance and counseling	3.19	0.87	Very Effective
15. Consultation with other agencies and linkages on GAD policies, programs, activities, and projects	3.06	0.87	Very Effective
16. Inclusion of gender-equality elements in accreditation	3.09	0.85	Very Effective
17. Development of information, education, and communication materials for learners in need of special attention	3.17	0.85	Very Effective
18. Gender-responsive implementation of sports programs and development	3.15	0.84	Very Effective
19. Institutional rewards and recognition of employees' welfare	3.04	0.89	Very Effective

20. Periodic evaluation and monitoring	3.03	0.88	Very Effective
21. Include in the calendar the observance and celebrations related to GAD	3.20	0.86	Very Effective
22. There are policies on curriculum, instructions, and assessment that are consistent with the mandates	3.13	0.84	Very Effective
23. Integrate gender sensitivity with training for the newly hired faculty members and employees	3.09	0.88	Very Effective
24. Ensure that the school and workplace promote mental health and psychological support services	3.21	0.82	Very Effective

Legend: 1.00 - 1.49 Somewhat Effective, 1.50-2.49 Effective, 2.50-3.49 Very Effective, 3.50-4.00 Extremely Effective

Planning, monitoring, and assessment are likewise crucial in maintaining a positive culture of gender mainstreaming at the school level. For instance, personnel believe that consultation with the schools’ stakeholders (M = 3.03, SD = 0.84) and other external agencies and linkages (M = 3.06, SD = 0.87) are vital in laying out the annual Action Plan for Gender mainstreaming. Consequently, allocating funds for the various GAD-related programs, activities, and projects (PAPs) will support the implementation (M = 3.06, SD = 1.44). Studies have shown that allocating resources and funding toward gender-responsive education can lead to improved learning outcomes, reduced gender disparities, and enhanced social and economic development (UNESCO, 2019).

Moreover, initial assessment to check the alignment of PAPs with GAD perspective (M = 3.11, SD = 0.86) and real-time, periodic evaluation and monitoring (M = 3.03, SD = 0.88) also effectively ensure quality outcomes in gender-mainstreaming. The assessment mechanisms greatly help identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement of the various PAPs (JICA, 2023; Council of Europe, 2018). These processes establish responsibility among stakeholders, assess the efficiency of planned endeavors, and demonstrate the favorable changes resulting from the implemented strategies and initiatives. (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2023; Nugroho et al., 2022).

The personnel’s agreement with the effectiveness of these practices indicates the success of gender mainstreaming efforts in the different schools of the Schools Division of Batangas City. However, more efforts must be made to ensure that gender-responsive education is prioritized in planning and budgeting.

Priority Policy and Thrusts for Gender-responsive Implementation in Basic Education

Table 5 shows the results of a real-time Delphi survey from the 255 participants of public and private secondary schools on the consensus and prioritization of Gender and Development (GAD) thrusts in the implementation of basic education. The table was divided into several domains or categories, and each category contains specific thrusts related to gender-responsive implementation in basic education.

Table 5. Consensus and Prioritization of GAD Thrusts in Real-time Delphi Survey

Domain/Thrusts	Consensus	Mean (SD)	Classification
Curriculum			
Inclusion of gender/sexuality and reproductive health education in the curriculum	57.60%	3.76 (1.82)	High
Integration of indigenous knowledge and practices that promote gender equality	54.80%	3.66 (1.69)	High
Development of gender and development as well as human rights competencies	53.30%	3.75 (1.89)	High
Recognition of the roles and contributions of women in history and society	48.60%	3.41 (1.62)	Medium

Domain/Thrusters	Consensus	Mean (SD)	Classification
Incorporation of gender and development concepts in school policies and guidelines	46.30%	3.33 (1.67)	Medium
Incorporation of gender and development concepts in school projects and activities	45.90%	3.36 (1.51)	Medium
Pedagogy & Learning Delivery			
Formulate enabling policies and guidelines for GAD implementation in teaching and learning	67.80%	4.26 (1.81)	High
Providing equal opportunities for student participation regardless of gender	63.80%	4.05 (1.66)	High
Adoption of diverse teaching methods that consider students' cultural and social background	60.30%	3.78 (1.45)	High
Implementation of gender and development in co-curricular activities	43.10%	3.38 (1.35)	Medium
Use of inclusive language and gender-neutral pronouns in teaching	40.40%	2.97 (1.81)	Medium
Recognition and inclusion of LGBTQ+ students in the classroom	33.40%	2.88 (1.68)	Medium
Learning Environment			
Promotion of the institutionalization of gender-responsive teaching-learning plans, guides, processes, activities, mechanisms, and measures	55.30%	3.77 (1.96)	High
Promotion of healthy and respectful relationships among students regardless of gender	53.40%	3.55 (1.52)	High
Creation of safe and inclusive spaces for all people	52.10%	3.60 (2.01)	High
Elimination of gender-based violence and harassment in schools	51.80%	3.58 (1.45)	High
Provision of support services for students facing gender-based discrimination	50.50%	3.43 (1.65)	High
Provision of accessible facilities for students with disabilities regardless of gender	45.10%	3.43 (1.63)	Medium
Research			
Development of quality-assured gender-responsive learning resources	62.40%	3.93 (1.91)	High
Development of gender-sensitive research methodologies and tools	52.60%	3.64 (1.56)	High
Conduct of studies on the effects of gender and development programs in basic education	52.20%	3.62 (1.80)	High
Analysis of gender-based disparities in student performance and participation	51.40%	3.49 (1.53)	High
Conduct of research on gender-based violence and harassment in schools	46.70%	3.40 (1.76)	Medium
Use of gender analysis frameworks in research	44.30%	3.30 (1.66)	Medium
Capacity Building			

Domain/Thrursts	Consensus	Mean (SD)	Classification
Development of gender-sensitive policies and guidelines for school management and administration	56.70%	3.70 (1.77)	High
Provision of training on gender and development to school administrators and staff	54.20%	3.69 (1.77)	High
Integration of gender and development in teacher education programs	53.10%	3.58 (1.70)	High
Provision of adequate and responsive capacity-building activities for teachers in dealing with children in conflict with the law and children at risk	52.70%	3.69 (1.98)	High
Provision of mentorship and coaching to teachers on gender and development	47.20%	3.35 (1.53)	Medium
Provision of gender-sensitive counseling and support services to students and teachers	45.70%	3.39 (1.52)	Medium
Knowledge Management			
Creation of a gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure the sustainability of gender and development programs in basic education.	73.30%	4.58 (1.87)	High
Provision of access to gender and development materials and resources to teachers and students	61.40%	3.71 (1.52)	High
Incorporation of gender and development concepts in school publications and communication materials	61.00%	3.71 (1.51)	High
Creation of online resources and platforms on gender and development in basic education	43.70%	3.28 (1.47)	Medium
Maintenance of a gender-sensitive database and record-keeping system	34.70%	3.06 (1.56)	Medium
Dissemination of gender and development information to stakeholders	33.80%	2.95 (1.78)	Medium

On Curriculum. The top three with the highest consensus were the inclusion of gender/sexuality and reproductive health education, the integration of indigenous knowledge and practices that promote gender equality, and the development of gender and development and human rights competencies. Including gender/sexuality and reproductive health education in the curriculum received a high consensus of 57.60%. This indicated that a firm agreement on the importance of incorporating these topics into the curriculum promotes gender equality and addresses reproductive health issues among students. While the integration of indigenous knowledge and practices that promote gender equality also received a high consensus of 54.80%. The result suggested the recognition of the value of indigenous knowledge in fostering gender equality and promoting cultural diversity within the educational context. The development of gender and development and human rights competencies was considered necessary, as indicated by the high consensus of 53.30%. This highlighted the need to equip students with knowledge and skills related to gender equality and human rights.

Research showed that comprehensive sexuality education, including topics related to gender and reproductive health, which includes gender/sexuality and reproductive health education in the curriculum, contributes to positive sexual and reproductive health outcomes, reduces gender-based violence, and promotes gender equality. While integrating indigenous knowledge and practices promotes gender equality. Studies emphasized the importance of incorporating indigenous knowledge and practices in education to promote cultural diversity, social inclusion, and gender equality. Lastly, the development of GAD and human rights competencies suggested that integrating gender and development competencies into educational curricula can enhance students'

understanding of gender issues, promote gender equality, and foster a rights-based approach to education (UNESCO, 2019).

On Pedagogy and Learning Delivery. The top three with the most concurrence on pedagogy and learning delivery encompassed: establishing enabling policies and guidelines for GAD implementation in teaching and learning, ensuring equal opportunities for student participation regardless of gender, and implementing diverse teaching methods that take students' cultural and social backgrounds into account.

The domain of formulating enabling policies and guidelines for GAD implementation in teaching and learning received a high consensus of 67.80%. This emphasized the significance of establishing supportive policies to guide teachers in implementing gender-responsive practices in the classroom. Providing equal opportunities for student participation regardless of gender was highly prioritized, with a consensus of 63.80%. This reflected the commitment to ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities for all students. Various teaching approaches considering pupils' ethnic and social backgrounds earned a strong 60.30% consensus. This recognized the significance of adapting instructional approaches to meet students' needs and experiences.

The study of Tionson (2021) highlighted that the policies and guidelines for GAD implementation must be formulated to guide the teachers in creating an inclusive learning setting. Additionally, providing equal opportunities for student participation regardless of gender indicates that this promotes gender equality in student participation and leads to improved learning outcomes, reduced gender stereotypes, and enhanced social skills. Moreover, adopting diverse teaching methods that consider students' cultural and social backgrounds recommended that culturally responsive teaching approaches can promote inclusivity, improve engagement, and enhance learning outcomes for students from diverse backgrounds.

On Learning Environment. In the learning environment, the pinnacle was the promotion of the institutionalization of gender-responsive teaching-learning plans, guides, processes, activities, mechanisms, and measures. Additionally, promoting healthy and respectful relationships among students, regardless of gender, was emphasized. Lastly, creating safe and inclusive spaces for all people was prioritized.

Promoting the institutionalization of gender-responsive teaching-learning plans, guides, processes, activities, mechanisms, and measures received a high consensus of 55.30%. This underscored the need for comprehensive planning and implementation strategies to create a gender-responsive learning environment. Meanwhile, promoting healthy and respectful relationships among students regardless of gender received a high consensus of 53.40%. This emphasized the importance of fostering a positive, inclusive school climate that promotes healthy student interactions. Creating safe and inclusive spaces for all people was prioritized with a consensus of 52.10%. This highlights the significance of establishing physical and psychological environments where students feel safe and accepted, regardless of gender identity.

Based on the study of Gil (2021), the promotion of institutionalized gender-responsive teaching-learning plans, guides, processes, activities, mechanisms, and measures, whether in the public or private sector, emphasized the need for comprehensive planning. It also highlighted the commitment to creating a gender-responsive learning environment that addresses students' diverse needs and experiences. This thrust promotes safe, healthy, and respectful relationships among students regardless of gender. An inclusive learning environment improves well-being and reduces bullying and discrimination among students.

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On Research. In the research, the respondents agreed that the top two were developing quality-assured gender-responsive learning resources and gender-sensitive research methodologies and tools. Developing quality-assured gender-responsive learning resources received a high consensus of 62.40%. This highlighted the necessity of creating educational materials and resources that promote gender equality and address diverse learning needs. On the other hand, the development of gender-sensitive research methodologies and tools received a high consensus of 52.60%. This indicated the recognition of the importance of employing appropriate methodologies while conducting research that captures the nuances of gender-related issues in education.

UNESCO (2019) highlighted the importance of developing quality-assured gender-responsive learning resources that challenge gender stereotypes, promote gender equality, and address the diverse learning needs of students. Developing gender-sensitive research methodologies and tools emphasized the need for research methodologies that considered gender dynamics, incorporated diverse perspectives, and captured the complexity of gender-related issues in educational research.

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On Capacity Building. On the thrust of capacity building, the top two were developing gender-sensitive policies and guidelines for school management and administration and providing training on gender and development to school administrators and staff. Developing gender-sensitive policies and guidelines for school management and administration received a high consensus of 56.70%. This underscored the need for administrative support and guidance in promoting gender-responsive practices throughout the educational system. Providing training on gender and development to school administrators and staff received a high consensus of 54.20%. This highlighted the importance of equipping educators and administrators with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement gender-responsive approaches.

From the study of Bautista (2021), the development of gender-sensitive policies and guidelines for school management and administration suggested several key benefits. These policies and guidelines supported school administrators and staff in implementing gender-responsive practices. Additionally, they played a crucial role in creating inclusive learning settings and effectively addressing gender differences. At the same time, the study found that providing training on gender and development to school administrators and staff had significant positive effects. This included contributing to increased awareness, knowledge, and skills among educators. As a result, it enabled them to foster gender-responsive teaching and learning within their educational settings.

On Knowledge Management. Creating a gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation system to ensure the sustainability of gender and development initiatives in primary education received the highest consensus of 73.30% among all indicators from the knowledge management thrust. This demonstrated the recognition of the need to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of gender and development programs systematically.

It was emphasized from the study of Calora (2020) that creating a gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation framework ensured the effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of the programs and activities on gender equality in education. Providing access to gender and development materials and resources to teachers and students is significantly related to gender-sensitive educational materials and resources to promote inclusive and equitable learning environments.

The focus group discussion revealed various significant issues, concerns, and challenges in implementing the Gender-responsive Basic Education Policy at the school level. Participants' unique insights from their respective roles within the education system contributed to capturing the nuanced and complex nature of the education landscape.

Openness and Acceptance. Participants mentioned the challenge of gaining acceptance and openness from individuals and the academe regarding implementing gender-responsive education policies. These challenges include the lack of openness and acceptance among people in the Academe, doubts and problems in implementing gender responsiveness, limited budget allocation for Gender and Development (GAD) activities, and insufficient resources for implementing GAD-related initiatives. Some people still have doubts or reservations about accepting and addressing gender-related issues.

Speaker 1: *There is the challenge that is usually encountered ... [with] the openness of the people or the academe to this gender-responsive education policy. Not everyone is open to [accepting] some issues or concerns regarding this particular policy, and they still have doubts or problems in the implementation of this [policy on] gender responsiveness.*

Budget Constraints and Resource Allocation. Budget allocation and constraints were common challenges mentioned by the participants. Schools faced difficulties allocating sufficient funds for implementing activities and programs related to gender responsiveness. Limited budgets hindered the establishment of facilities, resources, and the execution of various GAD initiatives. They mentioned that the budget for GAD activities was limited, usually around 5% of the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE). The small budget posed difficulties in implementing programs and activities related to GAD. Some participants mentioned the need to raise funds through various activities to compensate for the budget shortfall.

Speaker 2: *Yong budgeting ang challenge sa amin. Since ako po ay nasa maliit na school, konti lang po yung enrollment namin which is nasa 200 plus students, yung monthly budget from MOOE ang naka-allot lang dun ay 5% lang para sa GAD. (The main challenge for us is budgeting. Since I am from a school with few enrolled, around 200 plus students, the monthly budget allotted for GAD is only 5% which is to be taken from the Maintenance and other Operating Expenses.)*

Speaker 3: *So basically kaming nasa DepEd ay pare-pareho ang experience with regards to GAD budgeting, but so far ang masasabi kong isa sa mga challenges na na-encounter ko dito sa ancillary na ito is the budgeting [or] allocating the budget for various GAD-related activities. Basically, we, teachers from the DepEd encountered the same experiences with regard to GAD budgeting. One of the challenges we encountered in this ancillary task is the allocation of budget for various GAD-related activities.*

Speaker 4: *Familiar naman kame sa budget na ina-allocate kaso yun ay 5% lang na nanggagaling sa MOOE na kailangang i-allot sa GAD activities. So hindi pa rin sya sumasapat para sa activities na-iimplement sa buong taon. Meron naman budget kaya lang ay kulang. We are familiar with the budget allocation for GAD but it is only 5% of the MOOE. It is not enough for the GAD-related activities to be implemented for the whole academic year. There is a budget, but not enough.*

Participants highlighted the need to effectively utilize available resources to address the gaps in budget allocation. They mentioned engaging the community and seeking support from external sources to raise funds and conduct activities related to gender responsiveness. Creative resource management and coordination were emphasized.

GAD Principles Integration through Communication and Awareness. Integrating GAD principles into other activities and programs was discussed as a strategy to overcome budget limitations. Participants mentioned integrating GAD concepts into school activities, such as inclusive lessons, scouting, intramurals, and celebrations like Women's Month. Despite financial constraints, this strategy tried to ensure gender responsiveness. The importance of communication and awareness was emphasized. Participants mentioned the need to educate and raise awareness among school personnel, students, and the community about gender-responsive policies and initiatives. This included inviting speakers or conducting talks to address stress management, psychosocial well-being, and violence-related issues against women and children.

Speaker 2: ... For the past two years dahil nakita ko na kung ano talaga yung kailangan at dapat gawin when it comes to GAD planning and... budgeting... na kailangan it should be learner-centered. ... Hindi naman necessarily nasa budget or may budget ang bawat programs and activities for as long as it involves the learners at lagi natin tatandaan it is always [involve both] sex[es]... (For the past two years, I was able to identify what needs to be prioritized in GAD planning and budgeting. The activities should be learner-centered. We understand that budget is not a requisite in implementing the programs and activities, for as long as there is involvement of learners from both sexes.)

Speaker 5: Ina-address namin yung mga gaps dun sa mga challenges na nae-encounter namin [kagaya] Yung iba ay sa pagpo-provide ng quality service sa mga bata kagaya ng Learners Best to attend matters regarding the rights of the learners. Yun naman ay ina-address namin ng free lang, so hindi na sya kailangan nang budget pero nakaka-provide pa rin kami ng Learners Best. Ang isa pa na ginawa na namin [na] activity ay ung Team Building ng teachers nakasamana din duon ng planning at kasama ang mga PTA officers ay yung mga teachers at saka yung mga officers na din ang nag-initiate ng sila ang magbigay ng voluntary contribution para lang makapag-plan programs projects and activities ng school. (We address the gaps and challenges by providing quality service to the children such as the "Learners Best", which attends to matters regarding children's rights. These services are free and do not require a budget. We also have team-building activities for teachers and [GAD] planning is part of the agenda. PTA officers are involved in the planning and they initiate voluntary contributions for the related programs, projects, and activities.)

Best Practices on Inclusivity and Collaboration. The participants stressed the significance of inclusivity and collaboration in implementing gender-responsive policies. They mentioned involving all individuals, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, in activities and initiatives. Collaborative efforts were highlighted to ensure everyone's involvement and support. Some participants shared their best practices in integrating GAD into other projects and activities. These practices included integrating GAD concepts into lessons, involving the whole school community, seeking external support, and creatively utilizing existing resources.

Moreover, a noteworthy coherence emerges between mental health and psychosocial well-being initiatives and Gender and Development (GAD) objectives. This alignment is complemented by a structured collaboration between educational institutions and local communities to implement GAD-related activities. Additionally, the engagement of external specialists is sought to address crucial areas such as stress management and the prevention of violence against women and children. It is worth noting that all school community members, irrespective of their gender or sexual orientation, are actively involved in these efforts. Collectively, these practices are strategically designed to cultivate environments that are not only inclusive but also attuned to gender responsiveness. These practices sought to foster inclusive environments and gender responsiveness.

Speaker 1: *Aside from doon po sa mga lessons na ini-include yung inclusive education, iniintegrate na naman ang GAD with some of the activities of the school like scouting or intramurals or anything na pwede pong i-integrate. Sa responsiveness yun naman na oobserved na pweding pasukan ng gender responsiveness and also yung Celebrations ng Women's Month, lahat ng mga male or female stakeholders ay nagparticipate para lang po maipasok ang gender responsiveness. (Aside from the lessons where we include the concept of inclusive education, we also integrate GAD in various school activities like scouting or intramural or in any activity where we can integrate gender-responsiveness. For instance, during the celebration of Women's Month, we involve both female and male stakeholders. We do this to integrate gender-responsiveness.)*

Speaker 4: *Isa din naming ginawa is kahit short sa budget para hindi na din magastos, nakipag-coordinate kami sa community, tulad ng pag-iinvite ng personnel from PNP na mag-talk sa amin, at magshare ng information para dun sa pagma-manage ng stress at the same time yung pagprovide din ng [information] para ma-address yung sa VAWC (Violence Against Women and Children). So yun ang mga activities na hindi naman naming masasabing talagang kailangan ng malaking fund. So yun nagagawan naman ng paraan base sa diskarte nga. (One of the things we did was to work within a tight budget to avoid excessive spending. We coordinated with the community by inviting PNP personnel to talk to us and share information about stress management and address issues related to Violence Against Women and Children. These activities didn't require a large amount of funding. We found ways to make things work based on our resourcefulness.)*

4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE USE

In line with the study's results, the researchers found that basic education personnel's awareness of the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy was moderate, with significant variations based on age, gender, educational background, and experience. Perceived gender-responsive practices were moderately effective, varying across regions and school settings.

Priority thrusts for implementation include curriculum integration, enabling policies in pedagogy, promoting a gender-responsive learning environment, quality-assured research, capacity building, and gender-sensitive knowledge management. In the curriculum domain, priorities include integrating gender/sexuality and reproductive health education, promoting the integration of indigenous knowledge and practices that promote gender equality, and developing gender and development and human rights competencies.

Regarding pedagogy and learning delivery, the study underscores a vital focus on establishing policies and guidelines that effectively implement Gender and Development (GAD) principles within teaching and learning contexts. Furthermore, it highlights the imperative to ensure equal participation opportunities for students, irrespective of gender. It stresses the adoption of diverse teaching methodologies attuned to the cultural and social diversity among students.

For the learning environment, the top three priorities are the promotion of the institutionalization of gender-responsive teaching-learning plans, guides, processes, activities, mechanisms, and measures.

Additionally, creating an environment that fosters healthy and respectful relationships among students, regardless of gender, and ensuring safe and inclusive spaces for all people were considered crucial. In the research domain, developing quality-assured gender-responsive learning resources and employing gender-sensitive research methodologies and tools were identified as critical areas for advancing gender-responsive practices through research. In the capacity building domain, the study emphasizes the need for developing gender-sensitive policies and guidelines for school management and administration and providing training on gender and development to school administrators and staff.

Lastly, on the knowledge management front, creating a gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure the sustainability of gender and development programs in basic education emerged as a top priority. Addressing these priorities will advance gender equality and inclusivity in basic education.

From the results and conclusions drawn, the researchers identified the following thrusts and initiatives as the main output of this study to enhance the implementation of the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy as directions for future use:

1. **Strengthening Awareness and Training.** Developing comprehensive and targeted awareness campaigns and strategic GAD training programs for basic education personnel is crucial. These initiatives will enhance understanding of the policy's principles, strategies, and implications. Efforts should be made to reach personnel at all levels, including administrators, teachers, support staff, and other stakeholders.
2. **Addressing Knowledge Gaps.** Future research should investigate the specific knowledge gaps and factors that influence the level of awareness among basic education personnel. These pieces of information should be accessible through a knowledge management system. This will help design interventions and strategies that effectively address these gaps, considering diverse backgrounds and experiences. Continuous professional development programs should also be established to ensure ongoing learning and capacity building.
3. **Enhancing Effectiveness Through Monitoring and Evaluation of GAD Indicators.** Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be established to assess the effectiveness of gender-responsive practices in basic education. Regular assessments can provide insights into the strengths and weaknesses of current approaches, allowing for targeted improvements and the identification of best practices. Collaboration between researchers, policymakers, and educators ensures evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement.
4. **Established institutionalized collaborative initiatives and partnerships.** It is crucial to foster collaborations among various stakeholders to create sustainable and a comprehensive gender-responsive education system. Partnerships between government agencies, educational institutions, civil society organizations, and community members can promote knowledge sharing, resource mobilization, and the exchange of best practices. Such collaborative efforts can facilitate the implementation of priority thrusts and initiatives gender-responsive education.
5. **Enhance GAD Planning and Budgeting.** Allocating sufficient resources and funding toward gender-responsive education is essential to ensure these practices' continued success and impact. Therefore, it is recommended to emphasize the importance of prioritizing and allocating appropriate budgets to support gender-responsive initiatives in basic education.
6. **Sustainability Plan.** This may serve as a reference baseline for planning and policymaking procedures and information vital for documentation to be saved in case of turnover of education personnel. A continuity plan may also help in establishing what is vital in maintaining the GAD program if there are necessary changes to different aspects of the said program.
7. **Future Research on GAD.** The result of the study strongly recommends that Academe fully extend their utmost support to research for the successful implementation of the GAD Program in their educational institution.

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