

An Analysis on the Implementation of Gender Responsive Basic Education Policy

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ABSTRACT

Gender inequality in society is a genuine issue of concern. The paper describes the general impression of secondary education teachers in the implementation status of the Gender Responsive Basic Education (GRBE) Policy. There were 77 participants who answered the survey. The paper revealed that out of the five areas of the GRBE policy, only two areas were fully implemented. These are learner's development with an average weighted mean of 4.48 and learning delivery with an average weighted mean of 4.56. The three areas, namely learning environment, learning resources, and assessment were found to be moderately implemented. The result showed that there was an implementation of the GRBE policy but the activities focused on two areas leaving the three areas not fully implemented. In the survey, there was evidence of not fully implementing the GRBE policy in three out of its five areas. The strength of the policy lies in all five areas. It is hoped that the findings of this study will serve as a guide in reassessing the GRBE policy leading to its full implementation.

Keywords: *Gender and Development, gender-responsive basic education policy, implementation, descriptive design, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental process that shapes the holistic development of an individual, particularly their personal and social development. It serves as the most important tool for empowerment and to be actively involved in the social, economic, and political affairs of his/her community and the country as a whole (Tantengco & Maramag, 2016).

A school plays a significant role in developing the people's minds, and educating each individual about the norms of society and the standards on how each person should act and behave. It also contributes to how individuals look upon themselves (Lorber, 2008; Bowles & Gintis, 2009).

Thus, gender identity is being molded in the teaching-learning process the school provides. If there is an unequal footing in defining and shaping such identity, it will result in gender bias. Moreover, such thinking will develop expectations and gender stereotyping. It will perpetuate differentiated functions and training for male and female from early stages of life to adulthood (Weis & Fine, 2005).

The Department of Education (DepEd) issued Gender-Responsive Basic Education (GRBE) Policy in line with its Gender and Development mandate as stipulated in the 1987 Philippine Constitution to eliminate all forms of

discrimination against women and on the rights of a child among others (DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017). The Philippine government recognizes and strongly supports GRBE. Through the GRBE policy, DepEd commits to integrating the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination in the delivery of basic education.

Gender responsive refers to a recognition of the varying needs of girls and boys, or men and women, followed by actions that address these varying needs and that prevent gender bias or gender-related discrimination. Moreover, when gender inequality and bias is confronted, gender responsiveness promotes gender equality.

According to Bloom, Owen, and Covington (2003), gender responsiveness means understanding and taking account of the differences in characteristics and life experiences that women and men bring to the criminal justice system, and adjusting strategies and practices in ways that appropriately respond to those conditions.

Hernandez and Cudiamat (2018) reiterate that the gender-responsive teaching approach should be integrated into the classroom to gender equality and contribute to improving the learners' academic performance. Aikman et al. (2005) stressed that unless a focus is made toward the system of education itself, not only the number of girls compared to the number of boys in school, but what is taught and how it is taught to the two groups considering gender equity in instructional supervision.

UNGEI explains that policies affect girls and boys, that is why it is important to analyze the educational policies concerning gender. A gender analysis of education policy enables these differences to be brought to light to come up with appropriate actions. (Johnson et al., 2016).

Talon et al. (2020) found out that there is a need to implement the GRBE in school to benefit all the learners in work immersion not be discriminated in their future careers.

Gender-responsive education programs that promote increased access to, and completion of, quality education for both girls and boys yields multiplier effects. Research has shown that girls' access to education results in positive intergenerational outcomes in health, nutrition, infant mortality, and income generation, among other benefits.

Academic institutions like the Department of Education play a vital role in addressing gender disparity in the country. It should offer institutional support to both sexes in academics making gender equality an essential element in its strategies. The secondary schools in Urdaneta City Division have established their mechanisms in compliance to DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017. Hence, this study was conducted to find out how well and how far these schools have

gone in the implementation of the GRBE policy. This is to determine the level of implementation of the gender responsive policy as part of the institutions' advocacy to promote gender-fair education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study focused on the analysis of the implementation of the GRBE policy of the Department of Education. Generally, it aimed to determine the level of implementation of the gender-responsive policy provided by the Department of Education in the Philippines as part of the institutions' advocacy to promote gender-fair education. Specifically, it sought to identify the problems encountered in the implementation and what common plan can be proposed to enhance the GRBE policy.

METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive analysis with a survey questionnaire as the tool in data gathering. The questionnaire was patterned on the DepEd's basic education strategic framework, the key principles of gender equality programming in education from Gender Equality In and Through Education (INEE 2010). The main objective is to describe the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of the study and to explore the causes of a particular phenomenon. The document that was used in this study is the Gender-Responsive Basic Education (GRBE) Policy released by the Department of Education (DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017).

The analysis involves describing the implementation status of the five areas of the GRBE policy using descriptive statistics particularly the weighted mean. In selecting the participants of the study, the researchers used convenience sampling and reached a total of 77 participants. Their willingness to take part in the study made it easy for the researchers to disseminate the survey questionnaire despite this time of the pandemic. However, the lack of availability of the participants has caused this paper prone to significant bias. Thus, to reduce this to happen, the researchers used a random selection in the entire public high schools in Urdaneta City Division. The researchers used the Google form in collecting the data needed for analysis. There were no interviews conducted due to its primary method which is the implementation status analysis.

The different variables were identified, described, and analyzed. The respondents' evaluation of the implementation status in the five areas of GRBE policy was determined and summarized using each indicator's weighted mean.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Summary of evaluation on the learner's development

Area	Weighted Mean	Adjective Description
Advocate gender equality in all aspects of development	4.56	Fully Implemented
Include in the school calendar the observance and celebrations related to GAD	4.63	Fully Implemented
Support policies on curriculum, instruction, and assessment	4.26	Fully Implemented
Average Weighted Mean	4.48	Fully Implemented

Table 1 shows that the average weighted mean of 4.48 with an adjective description of fully implemented. The three learner's development criteria has a rating of 4.56, 4.63, and 4.26 which was described by the respondents as fully implemented. This means that the support of the administrators, guidance counselor, and teachers to the policy was evident and significant to bring about changes in the learner's development making it gender-responsive.

Table 2. Summary of evaluation in the learning delivery

Area	Weighted Mean	Adjective Description
Design gender-responsive models of instruction	4.44	Fully Implemented
Formulate enabling policies and guidelines	4.67	Fully Implemented
Average Weighted Mean	4.56	Fully Implemented

Table 2 shows the average weighted mean of 4.56 with an adjective description of fully implemented. The two learning delivery criteria has a rating of 4.44, and 4.67 which was described by the respondents as fully implemented. It revealed that the administrators and teachers collaborated to design gender-responsive models of instruction for basic education appropriate for all types of learners. It is also shown that they were able to formulate enabling policies and guidelines for the implementation of gender-responsive innovative teaching and learning approaches and assessment models for basic education aligned with curriculum standards. The established models of instruction, policies, and guidelines were instruments in the achievement of gender equality in the learning delivery.

Table 3. Summary of evaluation in the learning environment

Area	Weighted Mean	Adjective Description
Ensure a gender-responsive physical or social learning environment	3.90	Moderately Implemented
Ensure that DepEd personnel are properly oriented and trained	4.38	Fully Implemented
Ensure that development and capacity building, through in-service training are aligned	3.44	Moderately Implemented
Promote the institutionalization of gender-responsive teaching learning plans	3.93	Moderately Implemented
Provide adequate and responsive capacity-building activities for teachers	3.66	Moderately Implemented
Strengthen and sustain the capacity of administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers	3.71	Moderately Implemented
Average Weighted Mean	3.84	Moderately Implemented

It can be gleaned in the Table 3 that among the six (6) criteria under learning environment, the second criteria were fully implemented, "Ensure that DepEd personnel are properly oriented and trained" (4.38). However, the five (5) remaining criteria were under the adjective description of moderately implemented shows that not all the employees of DepEd are not thoroughly implementing the policy. Respondents may attend some trainings concerning to GAD, but when it comes to implementation, others are not totally observing the GRBE Policy especially in their classroom setting since other aspects like teaching learning plans and activities were under the description of moderately implemented. A gender responsive school is one in which the academic, social, and physical environment and its surrounding community consider the specific needs of both girls and boys. This implies that teachers should be aware of and practice gender equality.

Moreover, teachers and administrators must observe guidelines in following the gender-responsive based education policy to ensure the equality environment among the learners.

Table 4. Summary of evaluation in the learning resources

Area	Weighted Mean	Adjective Description
▪ Develop and provide gender-responsive Learning Resources (LRs)	3.68	Moderately Implemented
▪ Ensure that writers, editors, evaluators, layout artist, illustrators, and focal persons of LRs are well-trained	3.70	Moderately Implemented
▪ Provide orientation for prospective publishing and development teams	3.38	Moderately Implemented
▪ Provide GAD learning resources	3.61	Moderately Implemented
▪ Update and align the quality assurance of the learning resources	3.71	Moderately Implemented
▪ Gather and upload quality-assured GAD learners' and teachers' resources	3.46	Moderately Implemented
Average Weighted Mean	3.59	Moderately Implemented

Table 4 shows the weighted mean and adjective description on the evaluation of Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy as perceived by the teacher-respondents in terms of Learning Resources. Teacher-respondents perceived “Moderately Implemented” on indicator 5, “Update and align assurance of the learning resources” with a weighted mean of 3.71 (rank 1), followed by indicator 2, “Ensure that writers, editors, evaluators, layout artist, illustrators, and focal persons of LRs are well-trained” with a weighted mean of 3.70 (rank 2), indicator 1, “Develop and provide gender-responsive Learning Resources (LRs)” with a weighted mean of 3.68 (rank 3), indicator 4, “Provide GAD learning resources” with a weighted mean of 3.61 (rank 4), indicator 6, “Gather and upload quality-assured GAD learners’ and teachers’ resources” with a weighted mean of 3.46 (rank 5), and indicator 3, “Provide orientation for prospective publishing and development teams” with a weighted mean of 3.38. The overall weighted mean in terms of Learning Resources was 3.59 which interpreted as “Moderately Implemented.”

Table 5. Summary of evaluation in the assessment

Area	Weighted Mean	Adjective Description
▪ Ensure that formative and summative assessments	4.58	Fully Implemented
▪ Include GAD core messages and key concepts in the test development process	3.44	Moderately Implemented
▪ Conduct a GAD orientation for test-item writers	3.61	Moderately Implemented
Average Weighted Mean	3.88	Moderately Implemented

Legend: (4) 4.00 – 4.99 Fully Implemented; (FI) (3) 3.00– 3.99 Moderately Implemented; (MI) (2) 2.00 – 2.99 Less Implemented; (LI) (1) 1.00 – 1.99 Not Implemented (NI)

Table 5 shows the weighted mean and adjective description of the summary of the evaluation of the implementation status of the Gender-Responsive Basic Education (GRBE) Policy in terms of assessment as perceived by the respondents. Ensure formative and summative assessments with a weighted mean of 4.58 with an adjective description of fully implemented. Include GAD core messages and key concepts in the test development process with a weighted mean of 3.44 moderately implemented when interpreted. Conduct a GAD orientation for test-item writers with a weighted mean of 3.61 and adjective description of moderately implemented. The average weighted mean of 3.88 with moderately implemented when interpreted.

Results shows that awareness of the teachers on the GAD concepts and principles needs and test-item writing needs more enhancement for them to be able to integrate gender perspective in their test development process. According to the study of A.Q. Villaroman (2017), on one hand, the implicit integration entails GAD's embeddedness in the given topics. As such, the integration is dependent upon the teachers' initiative. It is worth mentioning that for most of the faculty members who were able to integrate gender and development, they were able to do so because of the previous background that they had. For most regular faculty members, they had participated in the Gender Sensitivity Trainings. For part-timers, it was done through seminars and the integration of GAD in their tertiary education. Thus, the capability to mainstream solely depend if the faculty is well equipped and ready to embrace the mainstreaming in the existing curricula.

According to Fontanos (2019) "If reports aggregated learners according to what they have learned & what else they need to learn, then underachievement of learners would be seen as an issue that can be addressed through education

interventions & learning solutions at the level of schools and classrooms". One way to ensure success of implementation is through capacitating the competency of the teachers in test development process with a gender perspective. This can be done through training, workshop, seminars and the like.

Furthermore, research findings of the Mirriam College found that teachers' capacity to promote women's and children's rights can be boosted by helping teachers build institutional linkages with government and nongovernmental advocates. No amount of training will do any good if the trained people are unable to regenerate themselves and find support from co-advocates.

CONCLUSIONS

The result shows that the policy being implemented were not totally adhering to the expected outcomes. The aims of the GRBE Policy is to address gender-based barriers and the different forms of discrimination as a result of being exposed to gender inequality suffered by vulnerable and marginalized groups. However, after conducting the survey regarding the policy, it is very clear that not all educators were observing the elimination of gender stereotypes and the integration in learning curriculum such as learning materials and teaching methodologies due to lack of support, monitoring, and projects and services from the agencies to the teachers especially in the Department of Education.

Lack of programs, projects, and services of school health, youth development, and sports development aligned with GRBE, lack of cooperation and partnership with agencies, organizations, and individuals for purposes of education and other GAD support services, lack of monitoring and evaluation and research in aid of learner support policy development and service delivery, and lack of career guidance and counseling programs and activities that give learners career choices and options aligned with GRBE were rated by majority of the respondents as very serious. The identified problems and concerns must be fully implemented to provide support to the efforts of the Department of Education in the promotion and attainment of gender-responsive basic education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need to revisit the curriculum which is more shared responsibility of contextualizing the curriculum suitable for gender and development program practices particularly in the delivery of instructional materials and approaches to diverse learners. The monitoring and evaluation technical working group

should strictly monitor and evaluate the gender and development activities in the classroom and in the school as a whole for continuous improvement. Gender parity should be established consistently in the classroom to eliminate gender discrimination regardless of gender preferences of every learner. To find out the impact of gender and development program design in the classroom with regards to program differentiation in relation to gender equality and equity can be conducted for future research including other variables and triangulation method in relation to impact to academic performance, existing challenges in the attainment of gender equality and equity which will support all efforts in promoting gender inclusivity in school programs, projects and activities.

Table 6. Proposed common plan to enhance the implementation of the GRBE policy

Area of Intervention	Proposed Activity
1. Lack of programs, projects, and services of school health, youth development, and sports development aligned with GRBE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engendering the curricula embedding youth and sports development • Required gender sensitivity seminar for all the students • Integrate school health programs and services in the curriculum most especially under the areas of sexuality and reproductive health • Review the curriculum and integrate human rights competencies such as responsible parenthood, equal opportunities, and equal representation in public affairs • Capacitate teaching and non-teaching personnel in the implementation of school health services
2. Lack of cooperation and partnership with agencies, organizations, and individuals for purposes of education and other GAD support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen cooperation and partnerships by creating a 2-year or 3-year MOA • Ensure enforcement that all partners are compliant with the implementation of the program and services • Conduct regular monitoring and focus group discussions or forums to address immediately issues and concerns
3. Lack of monitoring and evaluation and research in aid of learner support policy development and service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regular monitoring and evaluation and research • Develop information, education, and communication materials for all • Conduct capacity building aligned with GRBE

Area of Intervention	Proposed Activity
4. Lack of career guidance and counseling programs and activities that give learners career choices and options aligned with GRBE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance counselor must formulate, recommend, and implement policies and frameworks consistent with the principles of the GRBE • Continuous capacity building activities for focal persons and coordinators • Formulation of standard evaluation mechanism for all counseling programs and activities • Rigid information dissemination through the use of different media

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