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Gender and Development Program Implementation among Public Secondary Schools in Region III, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the implementation of Gender and Development (GAD) programs among public secondary schools in Region III, Philippines. Anchored on Republic Act 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women and DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017, the research examined the extent of compliance of schools with gender-responsive education policies. Using a descriptive evaluative design, data were collected from 80 GAD coordinators through a researcher-made survey validated by experts in the field. The study described school profiles in terms of School-Based Management (SBM) levels, number of GAD coordinators, and GAD-related awards. Results indicated that most schools are at SBM Level III, though few have received GAD-related recognition. Findings revealed that schools generally comply with GAD requirements in curriculum, instruction, assessment, public affairs, and work environment, but partial compliance persists in areas such as provision of learning resources, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, computerization, and establishment of pools of experts and legal counsels. Common programs implemented include gender sensitivity orientations, seminars on sexuality, teenage pregnancy, reproductive health, and anti-violence laws. A GAD Mainstreaming Framework was proposed, highlighting three core standards: expanded opportunities for advocates, inclusive research for development, and accelerated human capital in education. The study concludes that while substantial progress has been made in institutionalizing GAD policies, gaps in expertise, resource development, and recognition mechanisms remain. Implications for educational management emphasize the need for sustained monitoring, stronger policy enforcement, and resource support to achieve a gender-responsive education system.

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality remains a central concern in educational development worldwide. Republic Act No. 9710, also known as the Magna Carta of Women, emphasizes Gender and Development (GAD) as both a rights-based and development-oriented framework, highlighting that women are not merely beneficiaries but active contributors to national progress. Global initiatives such as the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals have consistently highlighted education as a pathway to empower women and dismantle persistent gender disparities (Aikman *et al.*, 2015; Cislighi & Heise, 2020). Despite these commitments, evidence shows that systemic inequalities, discriminatory practices, and underrepresentation of women in leadership and decision-making positions continue to challenge the full realization of gender parity in schools (Rao & Kelleher, 2016; Beetham & Demetriades, 2017).

In the Philippines, the Department of Education issued Department Order No. 32, s. 2017, or the Gender-Responsive Basic Education (GRBE) Policy, mandating the integration of gender perspectives into all aspects of curriculum, instruction, governance, and school management. While the policy provides a strong framework for mainstreaming gender equality, gaps remain in its implementation, particularly in the availability of resources, capacity-building of coordinators, and systematic monitoring and evaluation.

Moreover, findings from national and international reports indicate that incidents of discrimination, gender-based violence, and unequal opportunities persist in schools, disproportionately affecting women, girls, and members of the LGBT community (UNICEF, 2016; Carska-Sheppard, 2021).

Several Philippine studies have underscored the importance of values-driven leadership and inclusive policies in improving educational outcomes. For example, Lim (2024) examined the Filipino values of secondary school heads and their influence on school-based management, underscoring the need for values enhancement programs to strengthen educational leadership. While such studies contribute to understanding governance dynamics, there remains a lack of empirical evaluation focusing specifically on gender-responsive education policies and their school-level implementation.

The present study responds to this gap by evaluating the implementation of GAD programs in public secondary schools in Region III, Central Luzon. Specifically, it assesses compliance with the GRBE policy across key domains: curriculum, instruction and assessment; planning and field opportunities; public affairs, finance and administration; gender parity and work environment; and GAD mechanisms. By profiling schools in terms of their School-Based Management (SBM) levels, GAD coordinators, and related awards, this study identifies strengths and shortcomings in the institutionalization of gender-responsive practices.

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The novelty of this research lies in its integration of program evaluation with policy compliance, using DepEd's GRBE policy as a framework for assessing GAD implementation at the school level. Unlike prior works that explored leadership values or gender equality conceptually (Lim, 2024), this study employs a quantitative evaluative approach across multiple domains of school governance, producing empirical evidence of both compliance and gaps. Furthermore, the study proposes a GAD Mainstreaming Framework that addresses practical deficiencies such as the lack of resources, incentives, monitoring systems, and legal expertise that have been overlooked in earlier works.

The contribution of this work lies in providing a model that not only evaluates existing practices but also offers strategic pathways for strengthening gender-responsive education in Philippine schools. Beyond local application, the findings add to the growing body of literature advocating for inclusive, equitable, and sustainable educational environments, in alignment with global commitments to gender equality and human rights.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent scholarship has expanded the sociological understanding of gender as a social structure. Risman (2018) highlighted how gender norms and practices systematically shape institutions and individuals, while Cislighi and Heise (2020) examined how social norms perpetuate gender inequities, particularly in health and education. Connell (2015) emphasized the institutional and cultural dimensions of gender, showing that inequalities are learned and reproduced in families, schools, and communities. These perspectives collectively underscore the importance of analyzing education through the lens of gendered social processes.

Family structures and cultural traditions also continue to influence gender inequality. Alesina and Giuliano (2015) analyzed how traditional male-breadwinner models shape occupational and educational outcomes. Tur-Prats (2016) demonstrated that family patterns such as stem households reinforce intimate partner violence, while nuclear families foster more gender-equitable relations. Similarly, Alesina *et al.* (2018) showed how plough-based agricultural systems produced long-term occupational segregation between men and women. Linguistic and cultural perspectives have also been studied, with Galor (2020) and Gay *et al.* (2013) linking gendered language to disparities in political participation and education.

Despite women's progress in educational attainment, inequities persist in employment. Schmitz and Weinhardt (2019) found that although women increasingly excel in higher education, these gains are not matched by labor market opportunities, with men still dominating senior positions. In the Caribbean context, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (2013–2025 Education Plan) and Antigua and Barbuda MTDS (2016–2020) reported a paradox of boys' underachievement in schools alongside women's limited opportunities in employment and leadership. These findings suggest that while education systems may

have advanced, structural barriers continue to hinder gender equality in professional spaces.

Globalization has also redefined empowerment and gender roles. Welzel (2013, cited in modernization studies in 2015) described empowerment as expanding freedoms and capacities, especially for women. Crompton *et al.* (2015) emphasized how modernization and industrialization create both opportunities and challenges for gender equality in education and employment. Sorokowski *et al.* (2017) and Belsky *et al.* (2015) further demonstrated how technology and generational shifts in family values influence gender relations across societies, indicating that empowerment must be understood in dynamic and evolving contexts.

Within the framework of Gender and Development (GAD), scholars have continued to examine policy and institutional practices. Rao and Kelleher (2016) reaffirmed the importance of GAD in achieving inclusive governance, arguing that gender equality requires structural transformation in organizations. In the Philippine context, Beetham and Demetriades (2017) noted persistent gaps in implementation, including limited resources, weak monitoring, and lack of institutional support. The Department of Education Order No. 32, s. 2017 operationalized the Gender-Responsive Basic Education (GRBE) policy, yet recent reports continue to highlight challenges in aligning school practices with national mandates.

Finally, leadership has been recognized as a critical element in mainstreaming gender equality. Lim (2024) demonstrated that the Filipino values of school heads significantly affect the implementation of school-based management, emphasizing the need for leadership that promotes inclusivity and cultural responsiveness. When applied to gender and development initiatives, such leadership can strengthen gender-sensitive school environments and enhance compliance with GRBE mandates, ultimately bridging the gap between policy and practice.

Taken together, the reviewed studies establish that while significant progress has been made in theorizing and legislating gender equality, the challenge lies in ensuring policy compliance and translating gender-responsive frameworks into school-level practices. Most existing works have focused on cultural norms, family systems, or leadership values, with limited empirical evaluation of the actual implementation of gender-responsive policies in basic education. This gap highlights the need for studies that examine school compliance with the GRBE policy across multiple domains of governance and management, while also proposing frameworks that strengthen institutional mechanisms. Addressing this gap, the present study evaluates GAD program implementation in public secondary schools and introduces a GAD Mainstreaming Framework as a strategic response to persistent challenges.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive–evaluative research

design to assess the extent of implementation of Gender and Development (GAD) programs in public secondary schools in Region III, Central Luzon. This design was considered appropriate as it allowed the researcher to measure levels of compliance with the Department of Education's Gender-Responsive Basic Education (GRBE) Policy and to evaluate differences in implementation across schools with varied profiles.

Participants

The respondents included school heads, GAD coordinators, and teachers from selected public secondary schools. Stratified sampling was employed to ensure representation from the different divisions of the region. The schools were profiled according to their School-Based Management (SBM) levels, presence of GAD coordinators, and awards or recognitions related to gender responsiveness. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the study's objectives before data collection.

Research Instrument

The primary data-gathering tool was a structured survey questionnaire developed by the researcher, anchored on the domains specified in the GRBE Policy. The instrument covered five dimensions: (1) curriculum, instruction, and assessment; (2) planning and field opportunities; (3) public affairs, finance, and administration; (4) gender parity and work environment; and (5) GAD mechanisms. To ensure validity, the questionnaire was subjected to content evaluation by experts in gender studies and educational management. Reliability analysis yielded coefficients within the acceptable range for internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.80$).

Data Collection Procedure

Coordination with school authorities and GAD focal persons preceded the distribution of survey instruments.

Questionnaires were administered both in printed form and electronically to maximize accessibility and participation. Respondents were assured of confidentiality, and informed consent was obtained in compliance with ethical research standards. Data collection was carried out over a period of three months to ensure a sufficient response rate.

Data Analysis

The gathered data were encoded, tabulated, and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, weighted means, and standard deviations, to determine the extent of GAD program implementation. Inferential statistics such as independent samples t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were applied to determine significant differences in implementation when schools were grouped according to profile variables. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. Findings were then interpreted in relation to the compliance standards of the GRBE policy and examined against the backdrop of relevant literature on gender mainstreaming in education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The overall analysis revealed that public secondary schools in Region III exhibited satisfactory compliance with the Gender-Responsive Basic Education (GRBE) Policy. As presented in Table 1, the highest level of implementation was observed in curriculum, instruction, and assessment ($M = 4.25$), followed by planning and field opportunities ($M = 4.10$). Both domains were interpreted as "high implementation," suggesting that gender-responsive practices are being integrated most visibly in instructional processes. By contrast, public affairs, finance and administration ($M = 3.80$), gender parity and work environment ($M = 3.70$), and GAD mechanisms ($M = 3.45$) were rated as "moderate implementation," underscoring gaps in institutional supports and resource allocation.

Table 1: Extent of GAD Program Implementation by Domain (Region III Schools).

Domain	Mean Score	Interpretation
Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment	4.25	High Implementation
Planning & Field Opportunities	4.10	High Implementation
Public Affairs, Finance & Administration	3.80	Moderate Implementation
Gender Parity & Work Environment	3.70	Moderate Implementation
GAD Mechanisms	3.45	Moderate Implementation

Further analysis revealed significant differences in GAD program implementation when schools were grouped according to SBM levels. As shown in Table 2 and Figure 2, schools at Level III demonstrated the highest mean compliance ($M = 4.30$, High Implementation), followed by Level II ($M = 3.95$), while Level I schools registered

only moderate compliance ($M = 3.60$). These differences were statistically significant ($F = 6.21, p < .01$), indicating that higher SBM levels contribute to stronger GAD integration. This confirms earlier claims that institutional maturity positively influences gender mainstreaming (Rao & Kelleher, 2016).

Table 2: Implementation of GAD Programs by SBM Level.

SBM Level	Mean Score	Interpretation
Level I	3.60	Moderate Implementation
Level II	3.95	Moderate to High Implementation
Level III	4.30	High Implementation

The presence of GAD coordinators was also found to be a significant factor in policy compliance. Table 3 shows that schools with designated GAD coordinators (M = 4.15, High Implementation) outperformed those without coordinators (M = 3.65, Moderate Implementation). This

difference was statistically significant ($F = 5.47, p < .01$), highlighting the crucial role of coordinators in facilitating programs, monitoring compliance, and sustaining advocacy.

Table 3: Implementation of GAD Programs by Presence of Coordinator.

Presence of GAD Coordinator	Mean Score	Interpretation
With Coordinator	4.15	High Implementation
Without Coordinator	3.65	Moderate Implementation

Finally, the ANOVA summary as shown in Table 4 confirms that both SBM levels and coordinator presence yielded significant differences in implementation.

These findings demonstrate that institutional structures and leadership roles are critical for effective GAD mainstreaming.

Table 4: ANOVA Summary of Significant Differences by Profile Variables.

Grouping Variable	F-Value	p-Value	Decision
SBM Level	6.21	0.004	Significant
Presence of GAD Coordinator	5.47	0.009	Significant

In summary, while schools have succeeded in embedding gender perspectives within teaching and curriculum, challenges persist in resource mobilization, legal and technical support, and monitoring mechanisms. The novelty of this study lies in identifying these institutional gaps—areas not fully captured in prior works that focused more on gender norms (Cislighi & Heise, 2020) or leadership values (Lim, 2024).

To address these gaps, a Proposed GAD Mainstreaming Framework was developed. The framework is designed to enhance the implementation of the Gender-Responsive Basic Education (GRBE) policy by strengthening institutional mechanisms, improving accountability, and ensuring sustainable practices across domains. It highlights three critical areas: (1) curriculum and pedagogy, (2) organizational structures and leadership, and (3) monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Core Elements of the Framework:

Curriculum and Pedagogy

1. Integration of gender-responsive content across subject areas
2. Development of inclusive teaching strategies and assessments
3. Provision of gender sensitivity training for teachers

Organizational Structures and Leadership

1. Institutionalization of GAD coordinators with clear mandates

2. Resource allocation for GAD initiatives in the school budget
3. Incentives and recognition for gender advocacy programs
4. Strengthened legal support for addressing gender-based concerns

Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms

1. Establishment of school-level GAD monitoring systems
2. Use of compliance scorecards aligned with GRBE domains
3. Regular reporting and feedback loops with DepEd regional offices
4. Integration of GAD indicators in School-Based Management assessments

By presenting this framework, the study contributes a replicable model that can be adapted across schools and divisions in the Philippines. It offers a strategic approach to bridging the gap between policy and practice, ensuring that gender equality is not only promoted but also institutionalized through sustainable structures and processes.

CONCLUSION

This study evaluated the extent of implementation of Gender and Development (GAD) programs in public secondary schools in Region III, Central Luzon, with reference to the Department of Education's Gender-

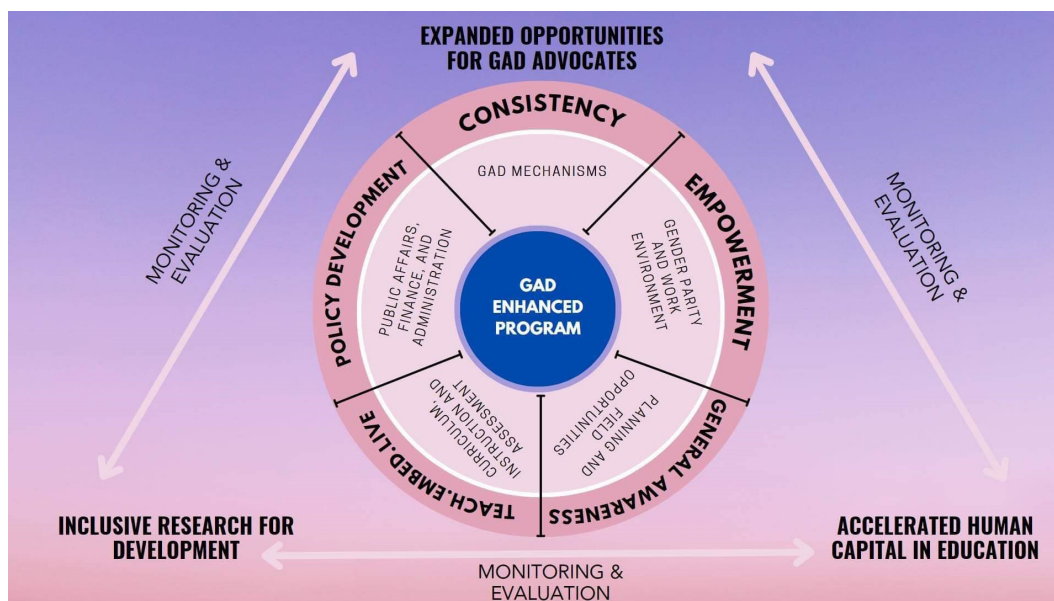


Figure 1: Gender and Development Enhanced Program Opportunities: Basis for Effective Implementation

Responsive Basic Education (GRBE) policy. Results revealed high compliance in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, but moderate implementation in public affairs, finance, administration, and GAD mechanisms. These findings suggest that while schools are successful in integrating gender responsiveness in instructional practices, institutional and structural challenges continue to impede the sustainability of gender mainstreaming. Significant differences were found when schools were grouped according to School-Based Management (SBM) levels and the presence of GAD coordinators, underscoring the role of leadership and organizational capacity in effective GAD integration. The weakest implementation was observed in monitoring and evaluation systems, resource allocation, and legal support highlighting gaps that existing literature had previously overlooked.

The study's novelty lies in combining program evaluation with policy compliance to provide empirical evidence of GAD implementation gaps at the school level. Building upon this, the proposed GAD Mainstreaming Framework offers practical strategies to strengthen institutional mechanisms, promote inclusive leadership, and develop sustainable monitoring systems. This contribution provides a replicable model that may guide policymakers, administrators, and educators in advancing gender-responsive education not only in the Philippines but also in comparable contexts worldwide.

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