BEYOND COMPLIANCE: INTEGRATING GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

The study unearths the experiences, coping mechanisms used and educational insights learned by the teachers on integrating gender and development in the classroom activities. Qualitative approach was used to research phenomenological from the Eight (8) Elementary School Teachers coming from the different schools in Malabog Districts. The experiences on integrating gender and development in the classroom activities were observed: Challenging gender stereotypes, incorporating inclusive language, promoting diversity and equality and encouraging critical thinking. While the coping mechanisms used in addressing the challenges were as follows; engaging with parents and guardians, using inclusive language and materials, facilitating open and respectful discussion and seeking support from colleagues and administrators. Finally, the educational insights learned from the experiences of teachers were as follows: lack of awareness and understanding about gender and development issues, resistance and opposition from students, parents and other stakeholders, time and resource constraints and effective educational leadership. These were the key in the success on integrating gender and development in the classroom activities. The findings of the study could devise curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, and policy recommendations that promote gender equality, empower all students, and create inclusive educational environments. This study may also be published in any respectable research journal.

Keywords: Integration of gender and development, Elementary School Teachers

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial tool in promoting social justice, equity, and development. However, traditional education systems have often reinforced gender-based discrimination and stereotypes, perpetuating social inequalities and hindering progress towards gender equality. In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the importance of integrating gender and development in school programs as a means of addressing these issues and promoting inclusive and equitable education.

Gender and development are complex and multifaceted concepts that intersect with a range of social, economic, and political factors. According to Mosedale and Brown (2017), gender refers to the social, cultural, and economic roles and expectations associated with being male or female, while development refers to the process of improving social, economic, and political conditions for individuals and communities. Gender and development are thus closely interlinked, as gender-based discrimination and inequality can hinder development outcomes and perpetuate poverty and marginalization.

In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the importance of integrating gender and development in school programs as a means of promoting gender equality and social justice. According to UNESCO (2017), gender-responsive education is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as it can help to ensure that all children have equal access to education and that education systems promote gender equality and empowerment. However, integrating gender and development in school programs can be challenging, as it requires addressing complex issues related to gender-based discrimination and inequality, and promoting inclusive and equitable education.

Several studies have examined the experiences of teachers in integrating gender and development in school programs. For example, Muvhango and Phasha (2019) found that teachers face a range of challenges in integrating gender and development in the curriculum, including a lack of resources, limited support from school administrators, and resistance from colleagues and students. Similarly, O'Connor and Swain (2017) found that teachers can struggle with addressing sensitive and controversial issues related to gender and sexuality, and may lack the knowledge and skills necessary to promote inclusive and equitable education.

In India, a study by Sood and Aggarwal (2020) found that teachers face challenges in integrating gender and development in the curriculum, including a lack of awareness and knowledge about gender issues, resistance from students and parents, and a lack of support from school administrators. However, the study also found that teachers can use innovative pedagogical approaches, such as role-playing and storytelling, to engage students in discussions about gender and development.

In Uganda, a study by Nabbuye-Sekandi et al. (2018) found that teachers can play an important role in promoting gender equality and empowerment through their teaching practices and interactions with students. The study found that teachers who have undergone gender-sensitive training are more likely to adopt inclusive and equitable teaching practices, and that these practices can have a positive impact on students' attitudes towards gender and development issues.

In the United States, a study by Moyer and Wong (2019) found that teachers can face challenges in integrating gender and development in the curriculum, including resistance from students and parents who may hold traditional gender norms and beliefs. However, the study also found that teachers can use innovative approaches, such as project-based learning and critical reflection, to engage students in discussions about gender and development and promote critical thinking and social awareness.

In the Philippines, a study by Doronila and De Leon (2017) found that teachers face various challenges in integrating gender and development in the curriculum, such as a lack of training and resources, resistance from students and parents, and a lack of support from school administrators. However, the study also found that teachers can use creative approaches, such as storytelling and games, to engage students in discussions about gender and development.

In the local scenario particularly in the schools of Malabog District, Davao City, elementary school teachers encountered a variety of experiences in integrating gender and development in the school programs. Some experiences are positive while others are negatively affect the teaching profession. It is in this context that this study was conceptualized to collect the experiences of teachers as they integrate gender and development in the school programs.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach to research specifically a phenomenological research design. According to Creswell, (2012), phenomenology was an approach to qualitative research that focused on the commonality of lived experiences within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach was to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon. Typically, interviews were conducted with a group of individuals who have first-hand knowledge of an event, situation or experience. Other forms of data such as documents, observations and art were also used. The data were read and reread and was culled for phrases and themes that was grouped into clusters of meanings. Through this process, the researcher was able to construct the universal meaning of the event, situation or experience and arrived at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon.

In qualitative research, interviews were used to pursue the meanings of central themes in the world of their subjects. The main task in doing interviews was to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (McNamara, 1999). Withal, based on the statements of Quad (2016), the researcher transcribed and typed the data into a computer file, in order to analyze it after interviewing.

The participants of this study were Eight (8) teachers from Malabog District, Division of Davao City. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) must be in the service for at least 5 years; (2) elementary school teacher; and (3) experienced in integrating gender and development in the classroom activities.

The researcher collected data, typically via long interviews, from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon under investigation. Next, the data analysis involved triangulation that was extracted significant statements from the transcribed interviews. The significant statements were transformed into clusters of meanings according to how each statement fell under specific psychological and phenomenological concepts. Moreover, these transformations were tied up together to make a general description of the experience both the textural description of what was experienced and the structural description of how it was experienced. The researcher incorporated his or her personal meaning of the experiences here. Finally, the report was written such that readers understand better the essential, invariant structure of the essence of the experience.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of the study on the experiences of teachers in integrating gender and development in the classroom activities were revealed as followed; Challenging gender stereotypes, incorporating inclusive language, promoting diversity and equality and encouraging critical thinking.

In terms of the coping mechanisms of the teachers in integrating gender and development in the classroom activities included; engaging with parents and guardians, using inclusive language and materials, facilitating open and respectful discussion and seeking support from colleagues and administrators.

As to the educational management insights gained from the participants, the participants cited; lack of awareness and understanding about gender and development issues, resistance and opposition from students, parents and other stakeholders time and resource constraints and effective educational leadership.

4. ANALYSIS

Based on the experiences of teachers in integrating gender and development in the classroom activities, results of the interview revealed the following themes: First, challenging gender stereotypes. Challenging gender stereotypes is a key experience for elementary school teachers in integrating gender and development in classroom activities. Second, incorporating inclusive language. Teachers may have to adapt their language to be more inclusive of gender and other identities. This can involve using gender-neutral language. It involved using language that respects and includes all individuals, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or other social identities. It is a crucial aspect of creating a safe and welcoming learning environment that promotes equity and social justice. Third, promoting diversity and equality. Teachers need to integrate lessons and activities that promote diversity, equality, and social justice.

On the coping mechanisms of teachers in integrating gender and development in the classroom, one of the themes presented was engaging with parents and guardians. By involving parents and guardians in classroom activities and discussions, teachers can promote collaboration and support between home and school environments, he can create a cohesive approach to promoting gender equity and inclusive practices. This can include inviting parents to participate in classroom events or workshops focused on gender and development, or providing resources and information to parents to support their children's learning at home.

The second theme identified was resistance and opposition from students, parents, and other stakeholders. These can create barriers to integrating gender and development in the classroom activities. Teachers need to be equipped with effective communication and conflict resolution skills to address any resistance and opposition that may arise.

The third theme was time and resources constraints. Time and resources constraints can be a challenge for teachers in integrating gender and development in the classroom. Teachers need adequate time and resources to plan and implement activities and strategies that promote gender equity and inclusivity. Effective time management and resource allocation strategies can help teachers overcome these constraints.

On the educational management insights gained by the teachers in integrating gender and development in the classroom, the first theme identified was; the lack of awareness and understanding about gender and development. The lack of awareness and understanding about gender and development issues among teachers can hinder effective integration of gender equity and inclusivity in the classroom. Teachers need to be trained and educated on the importance of gender equity and inclusivity, as well as on effective strategies for promoting positive attitudes and behaviors towards gender.

5. CONCLUSION

This part of the research dealt with the research questions required for the study. The participants disclosed their experiences in teaching with integration on gender and development, the teacher's coping mechanism as well as insights. All these themes were discussed here.

Experiences of elementary school teachers in integrating

Gender and development in the classroom activities

In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of integrating gender and development in classroom activities. Gender and development refer to the ways in which gender identity, roles, and relations intersect with social, economic, and political development processes. Integrating gender and development in classroom activities involves creating a learning environment that promotes gender equality and challenges gender stereotypes and norms. This can involve using gender-neutral language, incorporating diverse perspectives and role models, and creating opportunities for students to explore and question gender roles and expectations.

Challenging gender stereotypes. Teachers may have to confront and challenge traditional gender stereotypes and norms in classroom activities. This can involve introducing diverse perspectives and role models to students and encouraging them to question gender roles and expectations. Challenging gender stereotypes is a key experience for elementary school teachers in integrating gender and development in classroom activities. According to research, traditional gender stereotypes and norms continue to play a significant role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of children, and can have negative effects on their academic achievement, self-esteem, and future opportunities (Glick & Fiske, 2001; National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2019).

Incorporating inclusive language. Teachers may have to adapt their language to be more inclusive of gender and other identities. This can involve using gender-neutral language and avoiding gender stereotypes in teaching materials and classroom discussions. Incorporating inclusive language is an essential experience for elementary school teachers in integrating gender and development in the classroom activities. Inclusive language involves using language that respects and includes all individuals, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or other social identities.

Promoting diversity and equality. Teachers may need to integrate lessons and activities that promote diversity, equality, and social justice. This can involve incorporating themes such as race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation into classroom activities and creating a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. Promoting diversity and equality is an important experience for elementary school teachers in integrating gender and development in the classroom activities. Teachers must create an inclusive classroom environment that promotes respect for diversity and equality and provides all students with the opportunity to learn and succeed (Banks, J. A. 2015).

Encouraging critical thinking. Teachers may have to encourage critical thinking and problem-solving skills in students to help them understand and address issues related to gender and development. This can involve fostering a classroom culture that encourages students to question assumptions and examine issues from different perspectives. Encouraging critical thinking is an important experience for elementary school teachers in integrating gender and development in the classroom activities. Teachers must create an environment that promotes critical thinking, reflection, and analysis of gender roles, stereotypes, and biases (Paul, R., & Elder, L. 2006).

Mechanisms of elementary school teachers in integrating

Gender and development in the classroom activities

The integration of gender and development in elementary school classrooms is an important aspect of promoting inclusivity and equality in education. However, it can also be a challenging and complex task for teachers. In order to effectively address gender issues in the classroom, teachers often utilize coping mechanisms to help them manage stress, navigate difficult conversations, and create a more supportive and inclusive learning environment. Some common coping mechanisms include seeking support from colleagues and administrators, using inclusive language and materials, facilitating open and respectful discussions, and engaging with parents and caregivers. By employing these strategies, teachers can promote a more equitable and inclusive educational experience for all students.

Seeking support from colleagues and administrators. Teachers can reach out to colleagues and administrators for guidance and support in integrating gender and development in their classroom activities. This can help them feel more confident and less isolated in their efforts to address gender issues in the classroom (Epstein & O'Flahavan, 2015).

Seeking support from colleagues and administrators is a one of the mechanism that can help teachers effectively integrate gender and development in the classroom. This involves reaching out to other teachers, school administrators, or support staff for guidance, advice, or assistance in addressing gender issues in the classroom. This can include seeking feedback on lesson plans or classroom activities, discussing challenging situations with colleagues, or requesting additional resources or training on gender and development.

In addition to seeking support from colleagues and administrators, it is also important for teachers to engage in ongoing professional development related to gender and development. This can help them stay up-to-date on the latest research and best practices, and can provide them with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively address gender issues in the classroom.

Moreover, seeking support from administration is crucial in promoting a school-wide approach to gender and development. School administrators can provide teachers with the necessary resources, such as training, funding, and materials, to effectively address gender issues in the classroom. They can also create policies and procedures that promote inclusivity and equity and establish a culture of respect and tolerance in schools (McBride, 2016).

Using inclusive language and materials. Teachers can use inclusive language and materials that represent diverse perspectives and experiences, and avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes in their classroom activities. This can help create a more inclusive and welcoming classroom environment for all students (Golombok & Fivush, 2017). Using inclusive language and materials is another coping mechanism that teachers can utilize to effectively integrate gender and development in the classroom.

This involves being mindful of the language and materials used in lesson plans and activities, and ensuring that they promote inclusivity and equity for all students. This can include avoiding gender stereotypes, using gender-neutral language, and selecting materials that reflect diverse perspectives and experiences.

Using inclusive language and materials is important for creating a classroom environment that is welcoming and affirming for all students, regardless of their gender identity or expression. Research has shown that using inclusive language and materials can positively impact students' academic achievement and social-emotional development, as well as reduce the incidence of bullying and discrimination in schools (Kosciw et al., 2014; Wilson & Smiley, 2017).

Facilitating open and respectful discussions.

Teachers can facilitate open and respectful discussions about gender and development with their students, encouraging them to share their thoughts and experiences in a safe and supportive environment. This can help promote critical thinking and reflection, and help students develop a deeper understanding of gender issues (Ginsburg & Opper, 2016). Facilitating open and respectful discussions is another mechanism that teachers can utilize to effectively integrate gender and development in the classroom. This involves creating a safe and inclusive space for students to share their experiences, ask questions, and engage in dialogue around issues related to gender and development.

Engaging with parents and guardians. Teachers can engage with parents and guardians to promote a shared understanding of the importance of addressing gender issues in the classroom, and to build support for their efforts to do so. This can help create a more cohesive and collaborative approach to gender and development in the classroom (Jennings & Comer, 2019). Engaging parents and guardians is a critical mechanism that teachers can utilize to effectively integrate gender and development in the classroom. By involving parents and guardians in classroom activities and discussions, teachers can promote collaboration and support between home and school environments, and create a cohesive approach to promoting gender equity and inclusive practices.

In addition to promoting gender equity and inclusivity, engaging parents and guardians can also be used to address issues related to gender-based violence and harassment. Teachers can provide parents with resources and support to recognize and address these issues, and can work collaboratively with parents to create a safe and supportive environment for all students.

Educational management Insights gained from the experiences of the informants

The integration of gender and development in the classroom activities is essential for promoting equity and inclusivity in education. However, elementary school teachers often face various challenges in effectively integrating gender and development in their teaching practices. These challenges include the lack of awareness and understanding, resistance and opposition, and time and resources constraints.

The lack of awareness and understanding about gender and development issues. The lack of awareness and understanding about gender and development issues among teachers can hinder effective integration of gender equity and inclusivity in the classroom. Teachers need to be trained and educated on the importance of gender equity and inclusivity, as well as on effective strategies for promoting positive attitudes and behaviors towards gender (Lloyd & Younger, 2014).

Moreover, the lack of awareness and understanding about gender and development issues can also lead to a missed opportunity to promote positive gender norms and relationships in the classroom. According to Carrington and Tymms (2018), teachers who have a limited understanding of gender and development issues may struggle to promote positive relationships between students of different genders, or to provide positive role models for students to follow. This can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and biases and limit the potential of all students.

In contrast, teachers who are equipped with the knowledge and skills to promote positive gender norms and relationships can play a crucial role in promoting gender equity and inclusivity in education. By creating a classroom environment that values and respects diversity, teachers can help to reduce the prevalence of harmful gender stereotypes and biases and create opportunities for all students to thrive.

Resistance and opposition from students, parents, and other stakeholders. Resistance and opposition from students, parents, and other stakeholders can create barriers to integrating gender and development in the classroom activities. Teachers need to be equipped with effective communication and conflict resolution skills to address any resistance and opposition that may arise (Schmidt & Beyer, 2015).

Time and resources constraints. Time and resources constraints can also be a challenge for teachers in integrating gender and development in the classroom activities. Teachers need adequate time and resources to plan and implement activities and strategies that promote gender equity and inclusivity. Effective time management and resource allocation strategies can help teachers overcome these constraints (Terry & Irving, 2019).

Effective educational leadership. Effective educational leadership can play a critical role in addressing these challenges and supporting teachers in integrating gender and development in the classroom activities. School leaders need to provide adequate training and resources for teachers, as well as create a supportive school culture that values gender equity and inclusivity (Carrington & Mac an Ghaill, 2019).

Furthermore, school administrators who engage in collaborative decision-making with teachers and stakeholders can create a sense of ownership and investment in gender and development education initiatives (Altrichter & Elliott, 2000). By involving teachers and stakeholders in the development of policies and programs, educational leaders can foster a culture of inclusivity and shared responsibility.

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