

Awareness of public secondary high school teachers on gender and development: Basis for a proposed enhancement program

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Abstract

This study assessed the awareness of public secondary school teachers on Gender and Development (GAD) as a basis for an enhancement program in Kabugao District, Schools Division of Apayao, Philippines. Using a descriptive research design, data were gathered from sixty (60) public secondary school teachers through a researcher-made survey-questionnaire. Findings revealed that respondents demonstrated a high level of awareness of GAD concepts, policies, and institutional responsibilities; however, notable challenges were identified in terms of limited resources, insufficient training, budget constraints, and gaps in monitoring and implementation. These results indicate that while awareness is well-established, practical application remains hindered by systemic limitations. It is therefore concluded that strengthening institutional support mechanisms is necessary to translate awareness into effective gender-responsive practices in schools. Based on the findings, it is recommended to enhance training programs, improve resource allocation and utilization, and establish stronger monitoring systems. Furthermore, the development and implementation of a comprehensive GAD Enhancement Program is proposed to address identified gaps and sustain gender mainstreaming efforts in public secondary schools.

Keywords: Gender and Development; Awareness; Enhancement Program

1. Introduction

Gender and development (GAD) is globally recognized as an essential framework for promoting equality, inclusivity, and social justice in education. International organizations such as UNESCO and the World Bank emphasize that gender-responsive education improves learning outcomes, supports sustainable development, and empowers learners to challenge discriminatory norms (UNESCO, 2015; World Bank, 2012). Teachers play a crucial role in implementing these policies because their awareness and understanding influence whether gender-sensitive initiatives become meaningful classroom practices (Unterhalter, 2014; Ramos, 2020).

In Southeast Asia, governments have adopted gender mainstreaming policies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, yet implementation remains inconsistent due to uneven teacher preparedness and limited access to training, especially in rural areas (United Nations, 2015; ASEAN Secretariat, 2017). In the Philippines, gender equality is institutionalized through the Magna Carta of Women and the gender-responsive basic education policy of the Department of Education, which mandate the integration of gender perspectives in schools and require capacity-building programs for educators (Republic of the Philippines, 2009; Department of Education, 2017). However, studies indicate that many teachers still have limited understanding of GAD concepts, resulting in possible misconceptions and weak policy implementation (Torres & Balmores, 2021; Philippine Commission on Women [PCW], 2016).

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Despite national efforts, there is limited empirical research on teachers' awareness of GAD in Philippine public secondary schools, particularly in rural areas such as Kabugao. Geographic isolation, limited professional development opportunities, and cultural influences may affect teachers' understanding of gender issues (Dizon, 2019; Dulnuan & Bangaol, 2022). Observations in Kabugao suggest varying levels of GAD awareness among teachers, but no systematic study has confirmed these findings. Thus, this study seeks to assess teachers' awareness and perceptions of GAD implementation to provide baseline data for targeted interventions and enhancement programs. The research aims to support more inclusive and gender-responsive educational practices while contributing to policy, practice, and scholarly discussions on gender mainstreaming in education.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The study made use of mixed methods of research combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. Specifically, a descriptive survey method of research was used. Descriptive survey design focuses on systematically collecting information about subjects' characteristics and perceptions. It is therefore the best applicable study in assessing the implementation of gender and development in public secondary schools.

2.2. Locale of the Study

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2.3. Participants of the Study

The respondents of the study were composed of key stakeholders in the secondary schools of Kabugao, including the School Principal, School Heads, Teachers-In-Charge (TIC), secondary school teachers, and Presidents of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). In total, there were 60 participants drawn from both districts. This group consisted of 1 School Principal, 3 Head Teachers, 3 Teachers-In-Charge, 46 secondary school teachers, and 7 PTA Presidents. The distribution highlights that the majority of respondents were teachers, making up the largest portion of the sample, while school leaders and PTA representatives provided additional perspectives. This diverse composition ensured that the study captured insights from both administrative and instructional staff, as well as parent representatives, thereby offering a comprehensive view of Gender and Development (GAD) program implementation in the schools.

2.4. Research Instrument

The questionnaire adapted from DepEd's Gender and Development framework and PCW's monitoring tools, specifically tailored for respondents in Kabugao, Apayao, Philippines, including teachers, school heads, principals, and PTA presidents. It begins with Part I, which gathers respondent profiles such as sex (Female or Male), age, field of specification, rank or position (e.g., Teacher, Teacher-in-Charge, Head Teacher, Principal, PTA President), designation, and years of service. Part II, assesses the level of understanding and awareness on GAD using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Not aware) to 5 (Very aware), covering 8 items like familiarity with GAD concepts, school requirements for GAD programs, DepEd policies on gender-responsive education, budget allocations, existing projects, access to information, differences between sex and gender, and laws against gender-based violence. Finally, Part III addresses challenges and needs with the same 5-point scale for 5 statements, including lack of training, limited budget, cultural barriers, insufficient monitoring, and resource shortages. Finally, Part IV include open-ended question prompting brief responses on the school's GAD recommendations for improvement in public secondary schools. The questionnaire was adopted from actual GAD implementation in public secondary schools.

2.5. Statistical Analysis

The study used descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage to profile schools' Gender and Development (GAD) implementation, while frequency and ranking identified challenges encountered. A 5-point Likert scale measured respondents' awareness and difficulties, with scores ranging from 1.00 (Not Aware) to 5.00 (Highly Aware), indicating levels of agreement and awareness. Ethical considerations were strictly followed, ensuring confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the use of data solely for research. Necessary permissions were obtained, upholding the study's integrity and protecting participants' rights.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Profile of respondents

Table 1 Frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents' profile in terms of sex.

Sex	F	%
Male	46	76.70
Female	14	23.30
Total	60	100

As shown in Table 1, it shows that most are male, accounting for 76.70%, while only 23.30% are female. This indicates a male-dominated group of respondents, which may reflect the staffing composition in the selected public secondary schools. Despite this imbalance, research suggests that awareness of Gender and Development (GAD) programs is not inherently dependent on gender but is largely influenced by institutional exposure, training, and policy dissemination (UNESCO, 2019). Thus, while male respondents predominate, this does not necessarily imply disparities in awareness or understanding of GAD concepts.

Table 2 Frequency and percentage distribution of the respondent's profile in terms of age.

Age	f	%
20-25	3	5.00
26-30	31	51.67
31-35	7	11.67
36-40	4	6.67
41-45	6	10.00
46-50	5	8.33
51-55	2	3.33
56-60	1	1.67
61-65	1	1.67
Total	60	100

As can be gleaned from Table 2, the largest proportion of respondents belongs to the 26–30 age group, comprising 51.67%. This suggests that the respondents are generally young professionals who are likely at the early stages of their teaching careers. The presence of respondents across other age brackets indicates diversity; however, the dominance of younger educators may imply greater adaptability to contemporary educational reforms, including gender-responsive education. According to OECD [19], younger teachers tend to be more receptive to innovation and policy implementation, which can positively influence their engagement with GAD-related initiatives.

Table 3 Frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents' profile in terms of civil status.

Civil Status	f	%
Single	20	33.30
Married	40	66.70
Total	60	100

As can be seen in Table 3, it reveals that the most are married, accounting for 66.70%, while 33.30% are single. This distribution suggests that most respondents have established family roles and responsibilities, which may shape their perspectives on gender roles and equality. However, studies indicate that civil status does not significantly determine awareness or understanding of gender-related policies, as professional training and institutional frameworks play a more critical role Eagly & Sczesny [20]. Therefore, regardless of marital status, respondents are expected to demonstrate comparable levels of awareness of GAD programs due to standardized exposure within the educational system.

Table 4 Mean of the level of awareness of the respondents regarding gender and development programs.

Statement	Mean	DI
I am familiar with the concepts of Gender and Development (GAD).	4.25	Highly Aware
I am aware that the school is required to implement GAD programs and activities.	4.47	Highly Aware
I know that DepEd has policies promoting gender-responsive basic education.	4.60	Highly Aware
I know that a portion of the school budget may be allocated for GAD activities.	4.10	Aware
I am aware of our school's existing GAD-related projects (e.g. seminars, campaigns)	4.17	Aware
I know where to access information on GAD policies and guidelines in our school.	4.18	Aware
I understand the difference between sex and gender.	4.70	Highly Aware
I am aware of laws and policies protecting learners and personnel against gender-based violence and discrimination.	4.63	Highly Aware
Mean	4.39	Highly Aware

As shown in Table 4, it reveals that the overall level of awareness of respondents regarding Gender and Development (GAD) programs is high, with a grand mean of 4.39. This indicates that respondents are generally knowledgeable about GAD concepts, policies, and school-based initiatives. This high level of awareness reflects the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming in the education sector, as mandated by the Magna Carta of Women, which requires all government agencies to integrate gender equality principles into their programs and activities (Republic Act No. 9710) [21].

Among the indicators, the highest level of awareness is observed in understanding the difference between sex and gender (mean = 4.70), awareness of laws protecting individuals from gender-based violence and discrimination (mean = 4.63), and knowledge of policies promoting gender-responsive education (mean = 4.60). These findings suggest that respondents have a strong grasp of the core principles and legal foundations of GAD, which are essential for promoting gender equality in schools. This is supported by the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy, which emphasizes the integration of gender concepts, rights-based approaches, and inclusive practices in education (Department of Education) [22].

Furthermore, respondents demonstrate a high level of awareness of institutional responsibilities, such as the requirement for schools to implement GAD programs (mean = 4.47) and familiarity with GAD-related projects (mean = 4.17). This indicates compliance with national mandates and reflects the role of government agencies in promoting gender mainstreaming. The Philippine Commission on Women highlights that all government institutions must ensure awareness and participation in GAD programs as part of institutional accountability.

However, relatively lower mean scores are observed in areas related to implementation and access to information, such as awareness of GAD budget allocation (mean = 4.10) and knowledge of where to access GAD policies and guidelines (mean = 4.18). Although these are still interpreted as high, they indicate a comparative gap in operational awareness, particularly in financial and administrative aspects. According to national GAD budgeting policies, all agencies are required to allocate at least 5% of their budget for GAD programs; however, awareness of this requirement may not be as emphasized at the school level (Philippine Commission on Women) [23].

Table 5 Significant difference on significant difference between the respondents' level of awareness regarding GAD program and their profile in terms of sex and civil status.

Sex	Mean	df	t-tabular	P-Value	Decision
Male	4.46	58	1.574	0.135	Accept H _o
Female	4.16				
Civil Status					
Single	4.25	58	-1.506	0.137	Accept H _o
Married	4.46				

Table 5 presents the test of significant difference in the respondents' level of awareness regarding Gender and Development (GAD) programs when grouped according to sex and civil status. The findings revealed that there was no significant difference in the respondents' level of awareness regarding GAD programs based on sex, as reflected by the computed p-value of 0.135, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. Although male respondents obtained a slightly higher mean score ($M = 4.46$) compared to female respondents ($M = 4.16$), the difference was not statistically significant. This implies that both male and female respondents demonstrated comparable levels of awareness regarding GAD programs.

Similarly, no significant difference was found in the respondents' level of awareness regarding GAD programs when grouped according to civil status, with a computed p-value of 0.137, which is also greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. Married respondents obtained a slightly higher mean score ($M = 4.46$) than single respondents ($M = 4.25$), yet the difference was not statistically significant. This indicates that awareness regarding GAD programs is relatively similar regardless of respondents' civil status.

The findings suggest that GAD-related information, seminars, trainings, and advocacy activities may have been equally disseminated among stakeholders in public secondary schools regardless of sex and civil status. This supports the provisions of Republic Act No. 9710, otherwise known as the Magna Carta of Women, which mandates government agencies and educational institutions to promote gender equality and gender responsiveness among all individuals without discrimination (Republic Act No. 9710, 2009). Likewise, DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017 or the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy emphasizes the institutionalization of gender-responsive education and the promotion of equal participation and awareness among all stakeholders in the education sector (Department of Education, 2017).

The findings are supported by the study of Torres and Luzon (2021), which revealed that awareness of GAD programs among educational stakeholders did not significantly vary according to demographic characteristics because gender-related initiatives were commonly integrated into school activities and orientations. Similarly, Alvarado et al. (2020) found that continuous exposure to gender mainstreaming programs and institutional advocacy contributed to a generally uniform level of awareness among teachers and school personnel regardless of personal profile variables.

Table 6 Significant difference on significant difference between the respondents' level of awareness regarding GAD program and their profile in terms of age.

Indicator	df	F	P-Value	Decision
Between Group	24	1.425	0.166	Accept H _o
Within Group	35			

Table 6 presents the test of significant difference in the respondents' level of awareness regarding GAD programs when grouped according to age. The analysis revealed a computed F-value of 1.425 with a p-value of 0.166, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted, indicating that there was no significant difference in the respondents' level of awareness regarding GAD programs across different age groups. This implies that respondents from various age groups possessed relatively similar levels of awareness regarding GAD programs. The result may indicate that schools consistently implement GAD orientations, seminars, and awareness campaigns among all personnel and stakeholders regardless of age. The consistent dissemination of GAD-related information may have contributed to the uniformity of awareness among respondents.

The finding aligns with the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy, which promotes equal access to gender-sensitive programs, activities, and learning opportunities for all members of the educational community (Department of Education, 2017). Furthermore, the Philippine Commission on Women emphasized that GAD mainstreaming mechanisms in institutions are intended to strengthen awareness and participation among all sectors and age groups through continuous advocacy, training, and education programs (Philippine Commission on Women, 2016).

The result is also supported by the study of Navarro and Santos (2022), which found that age did not significantly influence stakeholders' awareness of GAD programs because institutional gender advocacy activities were regularly conducted and accessible to all personnel. Similarly, the study of Garcia and Mendoza (2021) revealed that consistent implementation of gender sensitivity trainings and GAD-related policies in schools contributed to a common level of understanding and awareness among respondents from different age brackets.

Table 7 Mean of the challenges encountered by the respondents in the implementation of GAD programs in public secondary schools.

Statement	Mean	DI
Lack of training on GAD concepts is a challenge for teachers and school heads.	4.08	Agree
Limited budget affects the school's ability to implement GAD programs.	4.15	Strongly Agree
Community or cultural beliefs make it difficult to fully implement GAD initiatives.	3.93	Agree
There are insufficient monitoring and evaluation of GAD activities in the school.	3.90	Agree
There is a need for more GAD-related materials and resources in the school.	4.33	Strongly Agree
Mean	4.08	Agree

Table 7 shows that respondents strongly agree that several challenges are encountered in the implementation of Gender and Development (GAD) programs, as reflected by the overall mean of 4.08. This finding suggests that while awareness of GAD is high, its practical implementation in schools remains constrained by systemic and institutional limitations. This aligns with the intent of Republic Act No. 9710, which mandates gender mainstreaming across all government institutions but also recognizes the need for adequate support systems to ensure effective implementation.

The most significant challenge identified is the lack of GAD-related materials and resources with a mean of 4.33. This implies that schools may not have sufficient instructional materials, modules, and advocacy tools necessary to integrate gender-responsive education into teaching and school activities. Under Republic Act No. 9710, government agencies, including educational institutions, are mandated to provide mechanisms and resources to support gender equality programs. However, the persistence of this issue suggests gaps in resource allocation and distribution at the school level.

Another major concern is the limited budget for GAD programs with a mean of 4.15. Although national policy requires agencies to allocate at least 5% of their total budget for GAD, as stipulated in the General Appropriations Act [25] and reinforced by the Philippine Commission on Women guidelines, schools may still face challenges in accessing, planning, and utilizing these funds effectively. Reports from the Commission on Audit highlight those issues in GAD fund utilization often stem from weak planning, limited technical capacity, and competing institutional priorities.

The lack of training on GAD concepts shows a mean of 4.08 further emphasizes the need for continuous professional development among educators. While policies are in place, effective implementation requires that teachers and school heads possess not only awareness but also the necessary competencies. The DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017 mandates the integration of gender-responsive education and the conduct of capacity-building programs; however, the findings suggest that training opportunities may not yet be sufficient or consistently delivered across schools.

In addition, community and cultural beliefs with a mean of 3.93 are identified as barriers to GAD implementation. This reflects the influence of deeply rooted societal norms that may resist gender equality initiatives. The Republic Act No. 9710 acknowledges the need to address cultural biases and stereotypes that hinder gender mainstreaming. In many local contexts, traditional beliefs about gender roles may limit the acceptance and effectiveness of school-based GAD programs.

Lastly, the issue of insufficient monitoring and evaluation of GAD activities (mean = 3.90) highlights weaknesses in accountability and program assessment mechanisms. Effective implementation of GAD requires systematic monitoring to ensure that programs are properly executed and aligned with national goals. The Commission on Audit [26] has consistently emphasized the importance of strengthening monitoring systems for GAD programs, noting that weak evaluation frameworks can lead to fragmented and less impactful implementation.

Table 8 Significant difference (Mean of the challenges encountered by the respondents in the implementation of GAD programs in public secondary schools and their profile in terms of sex and civil status.)

Sex	Mean	df	t-tabular	P-Value	Decision
Male	4.03	58	-0.955	0.343	Accept H ₀
Female	4.23				
Civil Status					
Single	3.87	58	-1.763	0.083	Accept H ₀
Married	4.19				

As can be gleaned from Table 8, the test revealed that there was no significant difference in the challenges encountered based on sex, as indicated by the computed p-value of 0.343, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Likewise, no significant difference was found when respondents were grouped according to civil status, with a computed p-value of 0.083, which is also greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypotheses were accepted.

Although female respondents obtained a slightly higher mean score (M = 4.23) compared to male respondents (M = 4.03), and married respondents obtained a higher mean score (M = 4.19) than single respondents (M = 3.87), these differences were not statistically significant. This implies that the respondents generally experienced similar challenges in the implementation of GAD programs regardless of sex and civil status.

The findings suggest that the challenges affecting the implementation of GAD programs are more institutional and operational in nature rather than influenced by demographic characteristics such as sex and civil status. These challenges may include limited resources, insufficient trainings, inadequate dissemination of GAD policies, lack of stakeholder participation, and limited administrative support. The result supports the provisions of Republic Act No. 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women, which promotes equal participation and shared responsibility among all stakeholders in advancing gender responsiveness and gender equality in institutions (Republic Act No. 9710, 2009).

Similarly, DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017 or the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy emphasizes that all members of the educational community should actively participate in addressing gender-related concerns and implementation barriers within schools (Department of Education, 2017).

The finding is supported by the study of Reyes and Dizon (2021), which revealed that stakeholders in educational institutions encountered similar challenges in implementing GAD programs regardless of demographic characteristics because most barriers were associated with institutional limitations and organizational support. Likewise, Santos and Villanueva (2020) found that issues related to insufficient funding, inadequate gender sensitivity training, and weak dissemination of GAD policies commonly affected stakeholders regardless of sex and civil status. These findings indicate that effective implementation of GAD programs requires strengthened institutional support systems and continuous capacity-building activities for all stakeholders.

Table 9 Significant difference (Mean of the challenges encountered by the respondents in the implementation of GAD programs in public secondary schools and their profile in terms of age.)

Indicator	df	F	P-Value	Decision
Between Group	24	1.996	0.031	Reject H ₀
Within Group	35			

As shown in Table 9, the test revealed a computed F-value of 1.996 with a p-value of 0.031, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that there was a significant difference in the challenges encountered by the respondents when grouped according to age.

This finding implies that respondents from different age groups perceived and experienced the challenges in implementing GAD programs differently. Variations in age may influence respondents' exposure to GAD-related trainings, adaptability to gender-responsive practices, level of participation in advocacy activities, and understanding of gender mainstreaming initiatives. Younger respondents may be more exposed to contemporary gender-related discussions and educational trends, while older respondents may encounter challenges in adapting to newer gender-responsive approaches and institutional policies.

The result is aligned with the Philippine Commission on Women's advocacy on gender mainstreaming, which emphasizes the importance of conducting continuous and age-responsive capacity-building activities to strengthen awareness and participation among stakeholders from different sectors and age groups (Philippine Commission on Women, 2016). Likewise, the Magna Carta of Women mandates institutions to ensure inclusive and participatory implementation of gender-responsive programs and initiatives (Republic Act No. 9710, 2009).

The finding is also supported by Cruz and Ramos (2021), who found that age significantly influenced respondents' perceptions of challenges related to GAD implementation, particularly in terms of awareness, participation, and acceptance of gender-related initiatives. Similarly, Mendoza and Flores (2020) revealed that differences in age contributed to variations in the perceived effectiveness and implementation challenges of GAD programs in educational institutions. These studies suggest that stakeholders' experiences and perspectives regarding GAD implementation may vary depending on their age, exposure, and familiarity with gender mainstreaming concepts.

4. Conclusion

Awareness of GAD programs among respondents is high, effective implementation remains constrained by institutional, operational, and resource-related challenges. Hence, there is a need to strengthen support mechanisms, capacity-building activities, resource provision, and policy implementation strategies through a comprehensive GAD Enhancement Program to improve the delivery and sustainability of GAD initiatives in public secondary schools.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests OR non-financial interests OR personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper

Statement of ethical approval

The study was conducted with approval and in accordance with the standards of the college. No ethical approval was required, as the research followed all applicable ethical guidelines, ensuring respect for the respondent's privacy and confidentiality.

Statement of informed consent

I affirm that the respondents voluntarily agreed to participate after being fully informed about the purpose, nature, and potential implications of the study. Their responses have been collected with utmost respect for their privacy and confidentiality, in accordance with ethical research guidelines.

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