

Exploring the Role of Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG) in Promoting Gender Sensitivity in Classroom Practices among Educators

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Date received: August 21, 2024

Date revised: September 2, 2024

Date accepted: September 8, 2024

Originality: 97%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 3%

Recommended citation:

Sicuan, S. (2024). Exploring the role of Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG) in promoting gender sensitivity in classroom practices among educators. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 2(10), 210-219. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2024.0427>

Abstract. This study explored the implementation of the Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG) in educational settings and its impact on student behavior, participation, and learning outcomes. Through a qualitative approach, 12 participants, including students, teachers, a Gender and Development (GAD) coordinator, and a campus executive director, were interviewed to understand their experiences with gender-sensitive practices. The study identified several key challenges in implementing HGDG, including gaps in professional development, insufficient resources, cultural resistance, and a need for clear institutional policies and administrative support. Despite these challenges, participants noted positive behavioral changes, improved student participation, and a greater sense of inclusivity, particularly among female and marginalized students. Gender-sensitive practices such as promoting respect, balanced participation in group activities, and reducing the rigidity of traditional gender roles have contributed to fostering a more inclusive classroom environment. The study further emphasized the need for continuous hands-on training and collaboration with gender sensitivity experts, as well as the improvement of access to gender-sensitive materials and digital resources. Additionally, participants called for stronger leadership involvement and clearer guidelines from school administrators to ensure the consistent application of gender equity principles. Regular monitoring and evaluation of gender-sensitive practices were also identified as essential for sustaining progress and identifying areas for improvement. The study concludes that while significant progress has been made, more efforts are needed to address existing challenges and further integrate gender-sensitive practices into educational institutions. By enhancing professional development, institutional support, and resource availability, schools can create a more equitable and gender-responsive learning environment that benefits all students.

Keywords: Inclusive education; Gender equity; Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG); Professional development; Student participation.

1.0 Introduction

Pursuing gender equity in education has gained increased global attention as educational systems recognized the need to address gender disparities that hindered equal access to opportunities for all students. According to Shen (2023), educational inequality persisted globally due to economic, geographical, and gender-based disparities, which impeded equitable access to quality education. These inequalities affected students' educational experiences and outcomes, disproportionately impacting female and marginalized students. As a result, countries developed frameworks, such as gender-sensitive educational curricula, that aimed to foster inclusive environments (Rogošić & Baranović, 2024). However, despite these efforts, the effective integration of gender-sensitive practices remained uneven, particularly at the classroom level, where teachers' roles were critical in implementing these frameworks (Neumann & Dean, 2024). The Philippines, known for its legislative efforts towards gender equity, faced challenges translating these policies into practice within the educational sector.

The Republic Act No. 9710, or the Magna Carta of Women (2009), reinforced the state's commitment to addressing gender disparities by mandating the integration of gender-responsive policies and practices in education, among other sectors. This law, along with the Department of Education's (DepEd) Gender and Development (GAD) Policy, established the legal groundwork for schools to incorporate gender equity into their operations and curricula. The Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG) developed by the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) provided further directives for ensuring that gender mainstreaming efforts were applied across educational institutions. Nevertheless, as Mendoza and Mendoza (2017) asserted, implementing these guidelines often faced barriers, including inadequate teacher training and insufficient monitoring of gender-sensitive practices.

Globally, similar challenges were observed as schools in countries like Croatia struggled to align teacher education curricula with gender sensitivity (Rogošić & Baranović, 2024). This indicated that while frameworks such as the HGDG were crucial, their success depended heavily on the educators' capacity to understand and integrate gender-sensitive practices into their teaching (Duma, 2022). Locally, schools in the Philippines were not exempt from these challenges. Despite the established legal frameworks, there was still a gap between policy and practice, particularly in the classroom environment. This gap necessitated further exploration of how gender-sensitive practices were being implemented at the grassroots level, particularly through the lens of educators tasked with applying these frameworks.

In the Philippine educational system, gender mainstreaming efforts were often met with practical barriers that hindered their full realization. Teachers, often at the forefront of these efforts, were crucial in applying gender-responsive pedagogy in the classroom, yet many faced challenges due to a lack of training or awareness of gender sensitivity frameworks (Khalil et al., 2023). Despite the existence of these frameworks, many classrooms still did not fully embody the gender-sensitive ideals they were meant to promote, leading to an uneven experience for students based on gender. These challenges were further complicated by the diverse socio-cultural contexts of schools nationwide and varying levels of institutional support for gender mainstreaming.

This study aimed to explore the implementation of HGDG in educational settings and how educators incorporated gender-sensitive practices in their teaching. By assessing actual classroom practices and teachers' perceptions regarding the HGDG, the study sought to identify gaps and areas for improvement. The significance of this research lies in its potential to contribute to the body of knowledge on achieving gender equity in education, particularly within the Philippine context, and to inform ongoing efforts to enhance educational practices and promote inclusivity for all students.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This qualitative study utilized a thematic analysis approach to explore the implementation of the Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG) in educational settings. The study employed a descriptive qualitative research design, particularly well-suited for examining complex social phenomena like gender sensitivity in education. Thematic analysis was chosen to identify, analyze, and report recurring patterns or themes within the data collected from participants. Interviews were conducted with diverse participants, including students, teachers, a Gender and Development (GAD) coordinator, and a campus executive director. The data collected through these interviews were systematically coded, with each response categorized according to emerging themes related to gender sensitivity, classroom practices, and the challenges of implementing gender-responsive pedagogy. Thematic analysis facilitated a deep exploration of these themes, enabling the study to capture the nuances of how educators and administrators integrated gender-sensitive practices into their educational settings. This approach provided rich, detailed insights into the barriers and opportunities for advancing gender equity in education, contributing to a better understanding of the real-world application of the HGDG.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted at the Pangasinan State University (PSU) Binmaley Campus, one of the nine campuses of Pangasinan State University. PSU Binmaley Campus is renowned for its distinction as a Center of Excellence for Fisheries, reflecting its commitment to high-quality education and research. Located in the coastal town of

Binmaley, Pangasinan, the campus provides a unique learning environment that integrates academic rigor with practical, hands-on experiences, particularly in fisheries and aquatic sciences. This campus not only serves as a hub for aspiring professionals in fisheries but also offers a diverse range of programs, including a Bachelor of Science in Criminology, a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science, and a Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Science. The vibrant academic atmosphere, state-of-the-art facilities, and a strong emphasis on research and community engagement make PSU Binmaley Campus an ideal setting for this study on the attitudes towards mathematics among its students. This rich educational landscape ensures that the research findings are grounded in a context that values academic excellence and practical application, thereby providing valuable insights for enhancing mathematics engagement across various disciplines.

2.3 Research Participants

This qualitative study employed a purposive sampling technique to select 12 participants. Purposive sampling was chosen because it allows for the intentional selection of individuals who are most knowledgeable and experienced with the subject matter—in this case, the integration of Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG) in education. The participants were strategically selected to ensure diverse perspectives on gender-sensitive practices within the educational setting. The sample included five students from different educational levels directly impacted by gender-sensitive practices in the classroom. Five teachers were also selected, each with experience in or knowledge of gender-responsive pedagogy and HGDG implementation. Additionally, the study included a Gender and Development (GAD) Coordinator, who plays a crucial role in overseeing the institutional application of gender-related policies, providing valuable insights into the broader gender mainstreaming efforts at the campus level. Lastly, the Campus Executive Director was included to offer an administrative perspective on how the HGDG is integrated at the policy level within the institution. This purposive sampling approach ensured that the study captured a comprehensive and holistic view of gender-sensitive practices and the challenges and opportunities for advancing gender equity in education.

2.4 Research Instrument

This study will employ two instruments to gather qualitative data from the participants. The GAD Coordinator and the Campus Executive Director (CED) will be interviewed in a structured interview. The interview will consist of predetermined, open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses about the implementation of Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG) in their respective roles. These interviews will provide insights into the administrative and oversight perspectives of gender mainstreaming efforts within the educational institution.

A written interview will be administered as a survey for the students and teachers. This instrument will contain a series of open-ended questions that allow participants to reflect on their experiences and perceptions of gender-sensitive practices in the classroom. The written format allows for a broader and more flexible participation while ensuring that the respondents can express their thoughts without time constraints or verbal communication. Both instruments are designed to gather rich qualitative data to contribute to the thematic analysis of gender sensitivity in educational settings.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The data-gathering procedure for this qualitative study involved three phases, with interviews lasting 15-20 minutes per participant. First, preliminary meetings were held with the GAD Coordinator and Campus Executive Director (CED), followed by structured face-to-face interviews focusing on their roles in HGDG implementation. Next, written interviews in the form of surveys were electronically distributed to students and teachers, featuring open-ended questions on gender-sensitive classroom practices. Finally, all responses were transcribed, anonymized, and systematically organized for analysis, ensuring a thorough understanding of the integration of HGDG in educational settings while maintaining participant confidentiality.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the study to ensure the protection and dignity of all participants. Informed consent was obtained from each participant before data collection, ensuring they fully understood the study's purpose, procedures, and rights. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, with all data securely stored and personal identifiers removed during transcription.

and analysis. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed they could withdraw from the study without any consequences. Additionally, the study adhered to all institutional and legal guidelines concerning research with human subjects, ensuring that ethical standards were maintained at every stage of the research process.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Familiarization and Implementation of HG DG

Table 1. Familiarization and implementation of HG DG

Participants	Themes	Sub-theme/s
P1, P2, P7, P10, P11, P12	Inconsistent Implementation	Policy enforcement, Need for improvement
P2, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12	Resource Challenges, Lack of Training and Support	Insufficient support, Need for follow-up training
P3, P5, P6, P8, P10, P11, P12	Positive Impact on Student Engagement	Inclusive participation, Mixed-gender activities
P4, P6, P9	Cultural Resistance	Lack of commitment, Conventional teaching methods

Inconsistent Implementation

Participants (P1, P2, P7, P10, P11, P12) reported inconsistencies in implementing HG DG across educational settings. This theme was characterized by issues in policy enforcement and the need for improvement in applying gender-sensitive practices uniformly. Some educators found that while the guidelines were in place, their application varied significantly between schools and classrooms, leading to uneven student experiences. This finding aligns with Mendoza and Mendoza (2017), who pointed out similar challenges in integrating gender equity principles in Laguna's development plans, where policy implementation often lacked consistency and effectiveness. The study suggested that stronger enforcement mechanisms and continuous monitoring were necessary to bridge the gap between policy and practice.

Resource Challenges, Lack of Training and Support

Participants (P2, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12) highlighted the insufficient support and the need for follow-up training as significant barriers to effective HG DG implementation. Many educators expressed the need for more accessible gender-sensitive materials and continuous professional development opportunities to sustain their efforts in promoting gender equity. This challenge was also observed by Duma (2022), who emphasized that the lack of resources and ongoing training hinders the successful application of gender-responsive pedagogy in schools. Additionally, Khalil et al. (2023) noted that higher education institutions face similar struggles, where inadequate training and support undermine the integration of gender sensitivity in teaching practices.

Positive Impact on Student Engagement

Participants (P3, P5, P6, P8, P10, P11, P12) observed a positive impact on student engagement, particularly regarding inclusive participation and mixed-gender activities. Educators reported that students, especially those from marginalized genders, became more engaged when gender-sensitive practices were implemented in classroom discussions and activities. This finding corroborates Neumann and Dean's (2024) study, which found that integrating gender equity in teaching led to increased participation and more inclusive classroom environments. Implementing HG DG helped foster a more welcoming and equitable learning space, encouraging students of all genders to participate more fully.

Cultural Resistance

Participants (P4, P6, P9) identified cultural resistance as a significant challenge in implementing gender-sensitive practices. This resistance was often rooted in a lack of commitment from some educators and the persistence of conventional teaching methods that did not prioritize gender equity. The resistance encountered by participants mirrors the findings of Shen (2023), who discussed the difficulties of overcoming deep-seated cultural norms that resist changes toward greater gender equity in education. Similarly, Omercajic (2022) highlighted how institutional and cultural barriers can hinder the adoption of gender-sensitive practices, particularly in environments where traditional views on gender roles are deeply entrenched.

Overall, the study underscored the complex interplay of factors influencing the implementation of HG DG in educational settings. While there were notable successes in enhancing student engagement and fostering

inclusivity, challenges related to inconsistent implementation, resource limitations, and cultural resistance remained significant obstacles. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including stronger policy enforcement, continuous professional development, and efforts to shift cultural attitudes toward gender equity in education.

3.2 Applied or Observed Gender-sensitive Practices or Policies in the Classroom

Table 2. Applied or observed gender-sensitive practices or policies in the classroom

Participants	Themes	Sub-theme/s
P1, P2, P6, P7, P9, P11	Effective Practices	Equal participation, Avoiding stereotypes
P3, P6, P9, P10, P11, P12	Positive Impact	Inclusive content, Comfort, Engagement
P4, P7, P8, P10	Implementation Gaps	Inconsistent application, Need for reinforcement
P5, P12	Mixed Effectiveness	Student engagement challenges, Comfort issues

Effective Practices

Participants (P1, P2, P6, P7, P9, P11) reported the successful application of effective practices such as promoting equal participation and avoiding stereotypes in classroom activities. These practices were crucial in creating an inclusive environment where all students, regardless of gender, could participate fully and feel valued. The emphasis on avoiding stereotypes in teaching was particularly important in challenging traditional gender roles and fostering a more equitable learning atmosphere. This aligns with the findings of Rogošić and Baranović (2024), who noted that when teacher education curricula are aligned with gender sensitivity, educators are better equipped to implement practices that promote equity and inclusivity. The study demonstrated that these effective practices significantly improved classroom dynamics and ensured all students had equal opportunities to engage and succeed.

Positive Impact

Participants (P3, P6, P9, P10, P11, P12) observed a positive impact on students due to implementing gender-sensitive practices, particularly inclusive content, increased comfort, and enhanced engagement. Educators noted that when lessons included content that was sensitive to gender issues and inclusive of diverse perspectives, students responded positively by participating more actively and feeling more comfortable in expressing themselves. This observation is supported by Neumann and Dean (2024), who found that inclusive teaching practices lead to better student engagement and a more supportive classroom environment. The positive impact of these practices highlights the importance of integrating gender sensitivity into the curriculum to foster a learning environment where all students can thrive.

Implementation Gaps

Participants (P4, P7, P8, P10) identified implementation gaps as a significant challenge, noting the inconsistent application of gender-sensitive practices across different classrooms and the need for reinforcement to sustain these efforts. These gaps were often due to variations in how teachers understood and applied gender sensitivity, leading to uneven student experiences. The study by Duma (2022) similarly identified challenges in maintaining consistency in gender-responsive pedagogy, emphasizing the need for ongoing support and training to ensure these practices are applied uniformly. The findings suggest that to close these implementation gaps; there needs to be a stronger emphasis on professional development and institutional support.

Mixed Effectiveness

Participants (P5, P12) reported mixed effectiveness in integrating gender-sensitive practices, with challenges related to student engagement and comfort issues. While some students responded well to these practices, others struggled to engage fully or felt uncomfortable with the changes. This mixed effectiveness highlights the complexity of implementing gender sensitivity in diverse classroom environments, where students may have different readiness levels or acceptance of these practices. Shen (2023) discussed similar challenges in promoting gender equity in education, noting that deeply ingrained cultural attitudes can affect how students respond to gender-sensitive initiatives. The findings underscore the need for tailored approaches that consider different student groups' specific needs and contexts to enhance the effectiveness of gender-sensitive practices.

In conclusion, the study revealed successes and challenges in implementing gender-sensitive classroom practices—effective practices such as promoting equal participation and avoiding stereotypes positively impacted student engagement and inclusivity. However, implementation gaps and mixed effectiveness in some contexts highlighted the need for ongoing support, training, and tailored approaches to ensure all students benefit from these initiatives. Addressing these challenges is essential for advancing gender equity in education and creating a more inclusive learning environment.

3.3 Challenges Encountered in Integrating Gender Sensitivity in Teaching or Administrative Services

Table 3. Challenges encountered in integrating gender sensitivity in teaching or administrative services

Participants	Themes	Sub-theme/s
P1, P3, P7, P8, P9	Professional Development Gaps	Insufficient training, Lack of continuous training
P2, P5, P7, P10, P12	Cultural Barriers	Resistance from students and colleagues
P3, P4, P6, P9, P11	Resource Challenges	Gender bias in materials, Lack of resources
P7, P9, P10, P12	Institutional Barriers	Lack of support, Absence of policies
P4, P6, P11	Curriculum Integration Challenges	Time constraints, Lack of curriculum guidelines

Professional Development Gaps

Participants (P1, P3, P7, P8, P9) frequently highlighted professional development gaps, particularly insufficient training and continuous training opportunities. Many educators felt inadequately prepared to effectively implement gender-sensitive practices due to the limited professional development provided by their institutions. This aligns with the findings of Duma (2022), who emphasized that continuous professional development is crucial for sustaining gender-responsive pedagogy. Without ongoing training, educators may struggle to keep up with best practices in gender sensitivity, leading to inconsistent application and potential setbacks in promoting gender equity in the classroom.

Cultural Barriers

Participants (P2, P5, P7, P10, P12) reported encountering cultural barriers, including resistance from students and colleagues. These barriers often stemmed from entrenched cultural norms and traditional views on gender roles, making it difficult to implement gender-sensitive practices. This resistance reflects the broader societal challenges discussed by Shen (2023), who noted that cultural resistance to gender equity initiatives is a significant obstacle in educational reform. Overcoming these cultural barriers requires changes in teaching practices and broader efforts to shift societal attitudes toward gender equity.

Resource Challenges

Participants (P3, P4, P6, P9, P11) identified resource challenges as a major hindrance, particularly the gender bias in materials and a general lack of resources necessary for implementing gender-sensitive practices. The presence of gender-biased educational materials complicates efforts to promote gender equity, as these materials may reinforce stereotypes rather than challenge them. Neumann and Dean (2024) highlighted the impact of resource limitations on the effectiveness of gender-sensitive teaching, emphasizing the need for educational materials that align with gender equity goals. Addressing these resource challenges is essential for ensuring educators have the tools to foster an inclusive learning environment.

Institutional Barriers

Participants (P7, P9, P10, P12) also reported institutional barriers, including a lack of support from school leadership and the absence of clear policies on gender sensitivity. These institutional barriers often left educators without the necessary guidance or backing to implement gender-sensitive practices effectively. Omercajic (2022) discussed similar challenges, noting that without strong institutional support and clear policies, efforts to promote gender equity can be fragmented and inconsistent. Institutional commitment is crucial for creating an environment where gender sensitivity is prioritized and supported across all levels of the educational system.

Curriculum Integration Challenges

Finally, participants (P4, P6, P11) pointed to curriculum integration challenges, such as time constraints and the lack of curriculum guidelines for incorporating gender sensitivity into teaching. These challenges made it difficult for educators to balance the demands of the existing curriculum with the need to integrate gender-sensitive practices. Rogošić and Baranović (2024) identified similar issues in their study, where the lack of clear guidelines

on gender sensitivity in teacher education curricula hindered the effective integration of these principles into everyday teaching. To overcome these challenges, it is important to develop comprehensive curriculum guidelines that support the integration of gender sensitivity without overburdening educators.

In conclusion, the study revealed various challenges in integrating gender sensitivity into educational practices, including gaps in professional development, cultural and resource barriers, institutional obstacles, and difficulties in curriculum integration. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that includes ongoing training, resource provision, institutional support, and clear curriculum guidelines. By tackling these issues, educational institutions can create a more supportive environment for gender-sensitive practices, ultimately advancing gender equity in education.

3.4 Impact of the Implementation of HG DG on Student Behavior, Participation, or Overall Learning Outcomes

Table 4. Impact of the implementation of HG DG on student behavior, participation, or overall learning outcomes

Participants	Themes	Sub-theme/s
P1, P4, P6, P10	Positive Behavioral Changes	Respect, Collaboration, Group dynamics
P2, P8, P11	Increased Engagement	Female engagement, Marginalized engagement
P3, P7, P9, P10	Positive Shifts in Learning Outcomes	Awareness, Breaking gender roles
P5, P7, P12	Mixed Outcomes	Resistance, Traditional views
P2, P4, P6, P8, P10	Gender Parity in Participation	Balanced participation, Mixed-gender collaboration

Positive Behavioral Changes

Participants (P1, P4, P6, P10) observed positive behavioral changes in students, particularly regarding increased respect, collaboration, and improved group dynamics. These changes were most evident in mixed-gender settings, where students exhibited greater respect for one another and worked more effectively together. This finding aligns with the observations of Rogošić and Baranović (2024), who noted that gender-sensitive practices contribute to more harmonious and productive student interactions by challenging traditional gender norms. The positive behavioral shifts suggest that implementing HG DG helps create a more inclusive and cooperative classroom environment, benefiting all students.

Increased Engagement

Participants (P2, P8, P11) reported increased engagement among students, particularly among female students and those from marginalized groups. These students were more likely to participate actively in class discussions and activities when gender-sensitive practices were applied, feeling more comfortable and valued in the classroom environment. Neumann and Dean (2024) also found that gender-sensitive teaching practices significantly boost engagement among previously marginalized students, indicating that such practices play a crucial role in leveling the playing field and promoting inclusivity in education. The increased engagement underscores the importance of creating a supportive environment where all students feel empowered to contribute.

Positive Shifts in Learning Outcomes

Participants (P3, P7, P9, P10) noted positive shifts in learning outcomes, with students demonstrating greater awareness of gender issues and a willingness to break away from traditional gender roles. These shifts reflected students' ability to think critically about gender norms and engage in discussions that challenge conventional perspectives. Duma (2022) highlighted similar outcomes in their study, where integrating gender-responsive pedagogy significantly improved students' critical thinking and understanding of gender dynamics. The positive shifts in learning outcomes indicate that HG DG implementation affects behavior and enhances students' intellectual engagement with gender-related topics.

Mixed Outcomes

Participants (P5, P7, P12) experienced mixed outcomes in implementing HG DG, with some students resisting or holding onto traditional views. While many students benefited from gender-sensitive practices, others struggled to accept or adapt to these changes, reflecting the deep-seated cultural attitudes that can hinder progress in gender equity. Shen (2023) discussed similar challenges, noting that cultural resistance remains a significant barrier to successfully implementing gender equity initiatives in education. The mixed outcomes suggest that while progress has been made, ongoing efforts are needed to address resistance and support all students in embracing gender-sensitive practices.

Gender Parity in Participation

Participants (P2, P4, P6, P8, P10) observed greater gender parity, more balanced participation and improved mixed-gender collaboration in classroom activities. Implementing HGDG helped ensure that both male and female students participated more equally in discussions and group work, fostering a more inclusive classroom environment. This finding is supported by Khalil et al. (2023), who found that gender-sensitive practices lead to more equitable participation among students, helping to break down gender barriers and promote collaborative learning. The achievement of gender parity in participation is a significant indicator of the success of HGDG in promoting equity and inclusivity in education.

In conclusion, the study demonstrated that implementing HGDG has positively impacted student behavior, participation, and learning outcomes, particularly in promoting respect, engagement, and gender parity. However, mixed outcomes due to cultural resistance highlight the need for ongoing support and reinforcement of gender-sensitive practices. Addressing these challenges is essential for sustaining progress and ensuring that all students benefit from a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

3.5 Recommendation on Additional Support, Resources, or Training to Further Enhance Gender Sensitivity

Table 5. Recommendation on additional support, resources, or training to further enhance gender sensitivity

Participants	Themes	Sub-theme/s
P1, P3, P5, P10	Professional Development	Hands-on training, External collaboration
P2, P6, P8, P11	Resource Improvement	Access to materials, Digital resources
P4, P7, P9, P12	Administrative and Policy Support	Clear guidelines, Active leadership
P7, P9, P12	Cultural and Institutional Support	Supportive culture, Ongoing priority
P8, P9, P12	Monitoring and Evaluation	Regular assessments, Continuous improvement

Professional Development

Participants (P1, P3, P5, P10) strongly recommended increased professional development opportunities, emphasizing the need for hands-on training and external collaboration with gender sensitivity experts. Participants believed that practical, experiential learning and insights from external specialists would better equip educators to implement gender-sensitive practices effectively. This recommendation aligns with the findings of Duma (2022), who emphasized the critical role of continuous professional development in sustaining gender-responsive pedagogy. Khalil et al. (2023) also highlighted the value of external expertise in enhancing the depth and breadth of gender sensitivity training, reinforcing the importance of collaborative learning.

Resource Improvement

Participants (P2, P6, P8, P11) identified the need for resource improvement, particularly regarding better access to materials and digital resources that promote gender equity. The lack of readily available and culturally relevant gender-sensitive teaching materials was seen as a significant barrier to effective implementation. Neumann and Dean (2024) also underscored the importance of providing educators with high-quality, gender-sensitive resources to support their teaching practices. The call for improved digital resources reflects the growing recognition of technology's role in education and its potential to facilitate more inclusive and equitable learning experiences.

Administrative and Policy Support

Participants (P4, P7, P9, P12) emphasized the need for stronger administrative and policy support, including developing clear guidelines and active leadership involvement in promoting gender sensitivity. The participants pointed out that without clear policies and visible commitment from school leadership, implementing gender-sensitive practices could be inconsistent and lack the necessary institutional backing. This recommendation is consistent with Omercajic (2022), who stressed the importance of institutional leadership in driving and sustaining gender equity initiatives. Clear guidelines and proactive leadership are essential for creating a cohesive and supportive environment where gender-sensitive practices can thrive.

Cultural and Institutional Support

Participants (P7, P9, P12) also highlighted the importance of fostering cultural and institutional support for gender sensitivity, advocating for establishing a supportive school culture where gender equity is an ongoing priority.

The need for a positive institutional culture that prioritizes gender sensitivity is crucial for the long-term success of these initiatives. Rogošić and Baranović (2024) pointed out that a supportive institutional culture is key to embedding gender sensitivity into the everyday practices of educators and students alike. By prioritizing gender equity at the cultural level, schools can create a more inclusive environment that supports the sustained implementation of gender-sensitive practices.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Finally, participants (P8, P9, P12) recommended regularly monitoring and evaluating gender-sensitive practices to ensure continuous improvement. They emphasized the importance of regular assessments to track these practices' effectiveness and identify areas that require further development. Duma (2022) highlighted the role of ongoing evaluation in maintaining the momentum of gender equity initiatives, ensuring that they remain effective and responsive to the school community's needs. Regular monitoring and evaluation provide the feedback necessary to refine and enhance gender-sensitive practices, contributing to their long-term success.

In conclusion, the study's recommendations underscore the need for comprehensive and sustained efforts to enhance gender sensitivity in educational settings. Professional development, resource improvement, administrative and policy support, cultural and institutional backing, and regular monitoring and evaluation are all crucial components of a successful strategy to promote gender equity. Addressing these areas will help to ensure that gender-sensitive practices are effectively implemented and sustained, creating a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students.

4.0 Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that while implementing the Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG) has led to positive changes in student behavior, participation, and learning outcomes, several challenges remain in ensuring its full integration into educational settings. Key challenges identified include gaps in professional development, insufficient resources, cultural resistance, and the need for clearer institutional policies and administrative support. However, the study also highlights the positive impact of gender-sensitive practices, particularly in fostering respect, inclusivity, and gender parity among students. To further enhance the successful implementation of HGDG, continuous professional development, improved access to gender-sensitive resources, stronger institutional commitment, and regular monitoring and evaluation are necessary. Addressing these areas will help sustain progress and create a more gender-responsive educational environment that benefits all learners.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

This study was conducted solely by the author, who was responsible for all aspects of the research. The author independently carried out the findings' writing, editing, data gathering, coding, and interpretation. The author meticulously managed every stage of the research process, from conceptualization to final reporting, to ensure the study's integrity and coherence. This comprehensive involvement underscores the author's dedication and expertise in the subject matter.

6.0 Funding

All expenses related to this study were financed solely by the author. No external funding or financial support was received for this research.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author indicated that there are no conflicts of interest in the publication of this paper.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The researcher would like to express their deepest gratitude to Almighty God for His guidance, strength, and blessings throughout this research journey. Heartfelt thanks go to the researcher's parents, Mr. Ramonchito N. Sicuan and Mrs. Emilia R. Sicuan, for their unwavering support and encouragement. The researcher is also immensely grateful to their brother, Prof. Symon Sam R. Sicuan, for his invaluable advice and assistance. Special thanks to the researcher's boyfriend, Mr. Joshua C. Paringit, for his patience, understanding, and constant motivation. Sincere appreciation is extended to friends, family, and relatives whose love and support have been instrumental in completing this study.

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