

Effects of Gender Responsive Pedagogy in Promoting Learning Equality in Public Elementary Schools

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of gender responsive pedagogy (GRP) in promoting learning equality in public elementary schools in Pililla District, Schools Division Office of Rizal, during the School Year 2025–2026. The study focused on nine public elementary schools, including Bugarin, Halayhayin, Hulo, Malaya, Matagbak, Niogan, Pililla Central, Quisao, and Virgilio B. Melendres Memorial Elementary Schools. Using a descriptive survey research design, the study involved 151 teachers, representing 50% of the total population, selected through random sampling. Respondents were profiled according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, position title, length of service, and in-service training participation. Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire-checklist covering five dimensions: gender-sensitive curriculum, inclusive teaching and learning materials, equitable classroom interaction, gender-responsive language use, and supportive learning environment. Findings revealed that teachers were mostly 30 years and above, female, married, and pursuing graduate studies, with positions ranging from Teacher I to III and more than ten years of service. Results indicated that gender responsive pedagogy has an extreme effect on promoting learning equality across all dimensions. No significant differences were observed in teachers' perceptions based on their demographic or professional profiles. Teachers reported challenges in implementing GRP, particularly the lack of training and learning materials. The study concluded that GRP positively influences learning equality regardless of teacher demographics or professional background. It is recommended that schools and teachers sustain gender-responsive practices, address systemic biases, and provide inclusive resources to enhance learning outcomes. The proposed action plan may guide implementation, and future research may explore additional variables to further strengthen GRP in elementary education.

Keywords: gender responsive pedagogy, learning equality, public elementary schools, inclusive education, teacher practices

1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental avenue for learning, whether obtained formally or informally. It shapes individuals by imparting knowledge, fostering critical thinking, and promoting personal growth. Beyond acquiring information, education empowers learners to influence and lead others while promoting innovation for human welfare. It is a lifelong journey, emphasizing curiosity, wisdom, and purposeful knowledge acquisition. As enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article XIV, Section 2: "The State shall establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society. "This constitutional mandate underscores the government's responsibility to ensure an educational system that is comprehensive, high-quality, and accessible at all levels. Education must be adequate in resources and standards, integrated to facilitate smooth transitions across levels, and relevant to societal needs. It should equip learners with knowledge and skills to address real-world challenges while promoting personal, professional, and national development. In line with this, the Department of Education (DepEd) has implemented policies to strengthen inclusivity and responsiveness within the educational framework, including the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy (DepEd Order No. 36, s. 2017). The Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy emphasizes equality, non-discrimination, and empowerment within the learning environment. It aims to eliminate gender stereotypes, promote inclusive classroom practices, and transform social relations to support gender equality. Through this policy, DepEd seeks to create safe and nurturing environments where learners, regardless of gender or identity, have equal opportunities to access quality education. Teachers play a critical role in implementing this policy, ensuring that instructional strategies, learning materials, and classroom management practices are gender-sensitive and inclusive.

Despite these policy efforts, research indicates persistent challenges in effectively mainstreaming gender-responsive pedagogy. Traditional teaching methods may unintentionally reinforce gender stereotypes, limiting learners' potential. Observations in the elementary schools of Pililla District reveal that, while programs and training exist to address gender biases, gaps remain in teacher preparedness, resource allocation, and community engagement. There is a need for

more intentional strategies, such as gender-sensitive language, equitable task distribution, and inclusive instructional materials, to foster self-esteem, mutual respect, and academic achievement among all learners. Studies abroad provide insights into implementing gender-responsive pedagogy. Ananga (2021) in Ghana highlighted that initial teacher training incorporating gender-sensitive strategies significantly improved teaching practices. However, the study included both student teachers and tutors, while the present research focuses solely on elementary school teachers, showing a need to explore context-specific applications. Similarly, Alamayehu (2023) found that gender-responsive practices in Ethiopian higher education faced challenges in applying the Gender Receptive Praxis dimensions, revealing gaps in lesson planning, classroom interaction, and policy implementation. Khalil (2023) in Palestine noted that misconceptions about gender-responsive pedagogy decreased motivation to apply such practices despite interest in professional development. These studies collectively illustrate that while gender-responsive pedagogy can be effective, challenges persist in awareness, training, and practical implementation. Pedrajas et al. (2023) demonstrated that, even with policies ensuring equal opportunities, gender disparities continue due to stereotyping, discrimination, and lack of awareness. Zhang et al. (2022) emphasized that leadership and relational dynamics affect the implementation of inclusive strategies, while Rarieya et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of tutor preparation, professional development, and reflective practices in mitigating gendered stereotypes. These findings underline the necessity of intentional, systemic approaches to gender equality in education and inform the present study's focus on the practical strategies of elementary teachers in fostering inclusive classrooms. In the Philippines, local studies echo similar findings. Sebastian (2022) noted gender imbalances in elementary teaching, with female teachers dominating, and recommended gender-responsive policies for equitable roles. Madriaga (2023) emphasized that English teachers in Marinduque need to integrate gender sensitivity in classroom practices to increase awareness and access. Villanueva (2023) reported effective implementation of the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy in Bukidnon, but highlighted the need for budget support for learning resources. Ballado (2022) identified gaps in faculty understanding of gender concepts despite high sensitivity, emphasizing the need for knowledge alongside awareness. Canuto (2023) demonstrated the benefits of gender-responsive strategies in science classrooms but limited to qualitative data, showing a gap for quantitative assessment in elementary settings. Mendizabal (2024) found limited research on senior high school gender equality, signaling a need for continued studies across educational levels. Lopez and Andal (2024) confirmed that gender-responsive pedagogy and teacher attitudes significantly relate to fostering inclusion in basic education.

Although foreign and local studies highlight the benefits of gender-responsive pedagogy, gaps remain in its consistent and measurable application in elementary classrooms. Many studies focus on higher education, specific subject areas, or qualitative assessments, while limited research quantitatively examines how elementary teachers implement inclusive strategies in practice. Additionally, resource availability, teacher training, and community involvement are often underexplored in ensuring gender equality in the classroom. The present study aims to address these gaps by assessing the extent of gender-responsive pedagogy among public elementary school teachers in Pililla District, evaluating its impact on classroom inclusivity, and identifying practical strategies to enhance learning equality for all genders. Given these gaps, the present study aims to assess the competencies and work performance of beginning reading teachers in public elementary schools in Baras District, Division of Rizal. By examining the relationship between teachers' competencies and their work performance, this study seeks to provide evidence-based insights that can inform the development of targeted professional development programs, improve instructional practices, and ultimately enhance learners' reading outcomes.

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study applied the descriptive method of research specifically, the survey design.

2.2 Research Setting

The study was conducted in public elementary schools in Pililla District, Schools Division Office of Rizal. These schools include Bugarin Elementary School, Halayhayin Elementary School, Hulo Elementary School, Malaya Elementary School, Matagbak Elementary School, Niogan Elementary School, Pililla Elementary School Central, Quisao Elementary School, and Virgilio B. Melendres Memorial Elementary School. These schools offer complete elementary education program from kindergarten, primary, and intermediate level. Some schools offer Special Needs Education (SNED) Quisao Elementary School and Quisao Integrated National High School offers Special Program for Arts (SPA) and Alternative Learning System (ALS).

2.3 Respondents

The respondents of the study considered 50% of the total population of teachers in public elementary schools in Pililla District. This consist of 151 teachers out of 301. They were chosen utilizing simple sampling technique. They were be described in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, length of service, position title, and in-service trainings attended.

2.4 Research Instruments

The study utilized a researcher-made questionnaire-checklist to gather data on public elementary school teachers' practices and experiences with gender-responsive pedagogy. The instrument was divided into three parts: the first part collected respondents' demographic information, including age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, length of service, position, and in-service trainings attended. The second part measured the extent of gender-responsive pedagogy in promoting learning equality, focusing on five areas: gender-sensitive curriculum, inclusive teaching materials, equitable classroom interaction, gender-responsive language, and supportive learning environment, with 10 items per area for a total of 50 items. Respondents rated each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Not Effective at all") to 5 ("Extremely Effective"). The third part assessed the challenges faced by teachers in implementing gender-responsive pedagogy, also using a five-point scale ranging from 1 ("Never Encountered") to 5 ("Always Encountered"). To ensure validity, the instrument underwent content validation by experts, including the thesis adviser, professors, a statistician, and the Dean of the Graduate Studies Program. Additionally, it was reviewed and validated by the school head, Gender and Development coordinator, master teacher, faculty president, and grade leader. Feedback from these reviewers was incorporated to refine and finalize the questionnaire for the study.

2.5 Data Collection

The researcher was guided by the Gantt Chart of Activities in the conduct of the study. This includes developing research concerns and some reading for inclusion in the review of related studied and literature up to the revision of the manuscript and submission of the final copy. The research instrument was content validated by experts in the field of research. After the validation of the instrument, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent. The final questionnaire-checklist was administered to the respondents through Google survey form and Questionnaire checklist. The researcher was guided by the Data Privacy Act of 2012 in gathering the needed information. Upon retrieval, the information were encoded and treated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data were analyzed and interpreted in accordance with the subproblems. A summary of results, conclusions, and recommendations were formulated. The suggestions made by the panel members were incorporated. The manuscript was also subjected to anti-plagiarism test at the statistical center. Revision followed, then the final copy of manuscript was presented to the panel members for approval and signatures. Finally, hardcopies were submitted to the Graduate Studies Program and other concerned offices.

2.6 Data Analysis

For the analysis and interpretation of data, the study employed several statistical tools. Frequency, percentage, and rank distribution were used to describe the respondents' profile based on selected variables. Weighted mean was applied to determine the extent of the effects of gender-responsive pedagogy in promoting learning equality, as well as the challenges encountered by respondents in its implementation. Additionally, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized to examine significant differences in the perceived effects of gender-responsive pedagogy across respondents' profiles.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

The study ensured the protection of the rights and welfare of all respondents. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study. Confidentiality and anonymity of all information provided were strictly maintained, and data were used solely for research purposes. The researcher ensured that the respondents were treated with respect and that no harm, whether physical, emotional, or psychological, would result from their participation in the study.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Selected Variables

As shown in the table, out of 151 respondents, majority (44.4%) are between 30-39 years old, followed by 40-49 years old (24.5%) and the age range with the lowest frequency is 60 and above (1.3%). The majority of respondents (86.1%) are female, while 13.9% are male. In terms of sex, 72.2% are married, while 23.8% are single. In terms of educational attainment, 47.7% have a Master's degree while 26.5% have MA units, 19.2% are Bachelor's degree holder, 4 % have Doctorate units and only 2.6% have a Doctorate degree. As to their position title, the majority of respondents (41.1%) are Teacher I, followed by Teacher III (33.1%), while 16.6% are Teacher II, 7.3 % are Master Teacher I and only 2.0% are Master Teacher II. The majority of respondents (25.2%) have 5-9 years of service, followed by 10-14 years (22.5%) and 15-19 years has the lowest percentage (16.6%). The majority of respondents (35.8%) have attended trainings at the school level, followed by division level (30.5%). Only 0.7% have attended trainings at the international level.

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent	Rank
20-29 years old	21	13.9	4
30- 39 years old	67	44.4	1
40 - 49 years old	37	24.5	2
50- 59 years old	24	15.9	3
60 years old and above	2	1.3	5
Total	151	100.0	
Sex			
Male	21	13.9	2
Female	130	86.1	1
Total	151	100.0	
Civil Status			
Single	36	23.8	2
Married	109	72.2	1
Widow/er	4	2.6	3
Separated	2	1.3	4
Total	151	100.0	
Educational Attainment			
Doctorate Degree	4	2.6	5
With Ed.D./Ph.D. Units	6	4.0	4
Master's Degree	72	47.7	1
Master's Degree Units	40	26.5	2
Baccalaureate Degree	29	19.2	3
Total	151	100.0	
Position Title			
Master Teacher II	3	2.0	5
Master Teacher I	11	7.3	4
Teacher III	50	33.1	2
Teacher II	25	16.6	3
Teacher I	62	41.1	1
Total	151	100.0	
Length of Service			
Below 5 years	26	17.2	4
5 -9 years	38	25.2	1
10 - 14 years	34	22.5	2
15-19 years	25	16.6	5
20 years and more	28	18.5	3
Total	151	100.0	
In-service Trainings Attended			
International Level	1	0.7	6
National Level	8	5.3	5
Regional Level	13	8.6	4
Division Level	46	30.5	2
District Level	29	19.2	3
School Level	54	35.8	1
Total	151	100.0	

3.2. Extent of Effects of Gender Responsive Pedagogy in Promoting Learning Equality in Public Elementary Schools as Perceived by the Respondents with Respect to the Different Aspects

As gleaned from the table, all aspects are interpreted Extreme Effect with an overall mean of 4.54. Equitable Classroom Interaction and Supportive Learning Environment have the same mean of 4.56, while Gender Responsive Language Used obtained a mean of 4.54. Last in rank are the aspects Gender Sensitive Curriculum and Inclusive Teaching and Learning Materials both with weighted mean of 4.51. It could be deduced from the results that gender responsive pedagogy has an extreme effect in promoting learning equality across all aspects, with the highest effects seen in creating supportive learning environments and promoting equitable classroom interactions. Teachers believe that gender responsive pedagogy is effective in promoting gender sensitivity, inclusivity, and equity in various aspects of teaching and learning.

Findings imply that gender-responsive pedagogy promotes learning equality by creating a more inclusive environment, which boosts student confidence and learning outcomes for both girls and boys. It involves adapting teaching

methods to address the specific needs of all learners, using gender-inclusive materials, and providing equal opportunities for participation in class activities and group work. This approach challenges gender stereotypes, empowers students to reach their full potential, and prepares them for success by building essential life skills. This conforms with the ideas of Cameron (2021) that stereotypes abound in any society and people in diverse societies try to tolerate differences is to make generalizations that categorize individuals into groups. Some of these stereotypes are negative while others are positive. The early gender bias experiences that children encounter can shape their attitudes and beliefs related to their development of interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, access to education equality, participation in the corporate work world, as well as stifling their physical and psychological well-being.

Table 2: *Extent of Effects of Gender Responsive Pedagogy in Promoting Learning Equality in Public Elementary Schools as Perceived by the Respondents with Respect to the Different Aspects*

Aspects	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Gender Sensitive Curriculum	4.51	Extreme Effect	4.5
Inclusive Teaching and Learning Materials	4.51	Extreme Effect	4.5
Equitable Classroom Interaction	4.56	Extreme Effect	1.5
Gender Responsive Language Used	4.54	Extreme Effect	3
Supportive Learning Environment	4.56	Extreme Effect	1.5
Overall Mean	4.54	Always (Extreme Effect)	

3.3. Significant Difference on the Extent of Effects of Gender Responsive Pedagogy in Promoting Learning Equality in Public Elementary Schools as Perceived by the Respondents with Respect to the Different Aspects in Terms of their Profile

The table indicates that the null hypothesis is accepted at 5 % level of significance for all aspects in terms of their profile as all computed F-values are accompanied by p-values greater than 0.05. Conclusively, there is no significant difference in the extent of effects of gender responsive pedagogy in promoting learning equality in public elementary schools as perceived by the teachers with respect to gender sensitive curriculum, inclusive teaching and learning materials, equitable classroom interaction, gender responsive language used, and supportive learning environment in terms of age, sex, civil status, position title, educational attainment, length of service, monthly family income and in-service trainings attended. The results show that there are no significant differences in the perceptions of respondents regarding the effects of gender responsive pedagogy across different aspects (Gender Sensitive Curriculum, Inclusive Teaching and Learning Materials, Equitable Classroom Interaction, Gender Responsive Language Use, and Supportive Learning Environment) in terms of their profile variables such as age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, position title, length of service, and in-service trainings attended. This is similar with the findings of Villanueva (2023) that the extent of the respondent's assessment on the implementation of the gender responsive basic education policy is "well implemented" and the overall, the respondents' profile showed no significant relationship on their assessment on the gender-responsive basic education policy.

Table 3: *Significant Difference on the Extent of Effects of Gender Responsive Pedagogy in Promoting Learning Equality in Public Elementary Schools as Perceived by the Respondents with Respect to the Different Aspects in Terms of their Profile*

Age	F-value	p-value	Null Hypothesis	Verbal Interpretation
Gender Sensitive Curriculum	1.186	0.320	Accepted	Not Significant
Inclusive Teaching and Learning Materials	0.644	0.632	Accepted	Not Significant
Equitable Classroom Interaction	1.369	0.248	Accepted	Not Significant
Gender Responsive Language Use	0.557	0.694	Accepted	Not Significant
Supportive Learning Environment	1.114	0.352	Accepted	Not Significant
Sex				
Gender Sensitive Curriculum	0.647	0.423	Accepted	Not Significant
Inclusive Teaching and Learning Materials	0.016	0.900	Accepted	Not Significant
Equitable Classroom Interaction	0.029	0.866	Accepted	Not Significant
Gender Responsive Language Use	0.471	0.494	Accepted	Not Significant

Supportive Learning Environment	0.524	0.470	Accepted	Not Significant
Civil Status				
Gender Sensitive Curriculum	0.417	0.741	Accepted	Not Significant
Inclusive Teaching and Learning Materials	1.318	0.271	Accepted	Not Significant
Equitable Classroom Interaction	0.632	0.595	Accepted	Not Significant
Gender Responsive Language Use	0.612	0.608	Accepted	Not Significant
Supportive Learning Environment	0.697	0.555	Accepted	Not Significant
Educational Attainment				
Gender Sensitive Curriculum	0.354	0.841	Accepted	Not Significant
Inclusive Teaching and Learning Materials	1.195	0.316	Accepted	Not Significant
Equitable Classroom Interaction	0.652	0.626	Accepted	Not Significant
Gender Responsive Language Use	1.675	0.159	Accepted	Not Significant
Supportive Learning Environment	0.582	0.676	Accepted	Not Significant
Position Title				
Gender Sensitive Curriculum	0.239	0.916	Accepted	Not Significant
Inclusive Teaching and Learning Materials	0.455	0.769	Accepted	Not Significant
Equitable Classroom Interaction	0.691	0.600	Accepted	Not Significant
Gender Responsive Language Use	1.077	0.370	Accepted	Not Significant
Supportive Learning Environment	1.315	0.267	Accepted	Not Significant
Length of Service				
Gender Sensitive Curriculum	0.723	0.578	Accepted	Not Significant
Inclusive Teaching and Learning Materials	0.778	0.541	Accepted	Not Significant
Equitable Classroom Interaction	1.847	0.123	Accepted	Not Significant
Gender Responsive Language Use	2.271	0.064	Accepted	Not Significant
Supportive Learning Environment	1.719	0.149	Accepted	Not Significant
In-service Training Attended				
Gender Sensitive Curriculum	0.499	0.776	Accepted	Not Significant
Inclusive Teaching and Learning Materials	0.446	0.816	Accepted	Not Significant
Equitable Classroom Interaction	1.100	0.363	Accepted	Not Significant
Gender Responsive Language Use	0.815	0.541	Accepted	Not Significant
Supportive Learning Environment	1.421	0.220	Accepted	Not Significant

3.4. Extent of the Challenges Encountered by the Respondents on Gender Responsive Pedagogy in Promoting Learning Equality

The table depicts that the top 3 challenges encountered by the respondents on gender responsive pedagogy in promoting learning equality are: Lack of training on gender responsive pedagogy, Lack of gender-sensitive teaching materials and Curriculum does not fully support gender equality concepts with weighted means of 4.12, 3.91 and 3.86 all interpreted Often Encountered. Two more challenges are interpreted Often Encountered while five items are interpreted Sometimes Encountered. Last in rank is “Girls hesitate to participate in activities perceived to be male dominated” with a weighted mean of 2.81. Findings reveal that teachers often encounter challenges related to lack of training, resources, and curriculum support in implementing gender responsive pedagogy. Some pupils often face gender bias, including bullying, discrimination, and a general lack of acceptance of diverse sexual orientations. This can lead to feelings of alienation, low self-esteem, and reduced academic performance. Findings imply that teachers encounter various challenges in implementing and promoting learning equality through gender-responsive pedagogy, primarily rooted in deeply embedded societal stereotypes, inadequate teacher training, and a lack of clear institutional support and resources. Many teachers lack a clear understanding of gender issues and concepts, having received insufficient or fragmented training in gender-responsive pedagogy. This knowledge gap makes it difficult for them to identify and address gender biases effectively in the classroom. This is in relation with the findings of Mendizabal (2024), that despite equal educational opportunities for men and women, issues of gender inequality still exists in different educational setting. Challenges to implementing gender-responsive pedagogy include systemic issues like a lack of policy and resources, teacher resistance or lack of training, gender-biased curricula and institutional cultures, and broader societal factors such as cultural norms and stereotypes that discourage girls' participation. These challenges create barriers to creating inclusive and equitable classroom environments.

Table 4. Extent of the Challenges Encountered by the Respondents on Gender Responsive Pedagogy in Promoting Learning Equality

Challenges Encountered	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Textbooks and learning materials contain stereotypes.	3.79	Often Encountered	4
2. Difficulty in addressing gender-based bullying or discrimination.	3.75	Often Encountered	5
3. Lack of training on gender responsive pedagogy.	4.12	Often Encountered	1
4. Learners hesitate to participate in because of gender expectations.	3.40	Sometimes Encountered	6
5. Lack of gender-sensitive teaching materials.	3.91	Often Encountered	2
6. Curriculum does not fully support gender equality concepts.	3.86	Often Encountered	3
7. Unequal participation of boys and girls inside the classroom discussion.	3.19	Sometimes Encountered	7
8. Stereotypical expectations of boys and girls roles in school activities.	2.96	Sometimes Encountered	8
9. Boys tend to dominate classroom task or leadership roles.	2.84	Sometimes Encountered	9
10. Girls hesitate to participate in activities perceived to be male dominated.	2.81	Sometimes Encountered	10

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that teachers' perceptions of the effects of gender-responsive pedagogy in promoting learning equality in public elementary schools are consistent across various aspects, including gender-sensitive curriculum, inclusive teaching and learning materials, equitable classroom interaction, gender-responsive language use, and supportive learning environment. These perceptions do not significantly differ based on demographic or professional characteristics such as age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, position title, length of service, and in-service trainings attended. This indicates that teachers uniformly recognize the importance and impact of gender-responsive pedagogy in fostering equitable and inclusive learning environments.

In light of the findings, it is recommended that the promotion of gender equality in education be continuously supported through collaborative efforts of teachers and educational institutions to address systemic biases, challenge stereotypes, and foster inclusive learning environments where all students feel valued and respected. The implementation of gender-responsive teaching approaches should be sustained to enhance learners' academic performance and overall development. Additionally, the proposed action plan for promoting gender-responsive pedagogy is recommended for implementation, and parallel studies may be conducted in the future considering other variables to further strengthen research on gender equality in education.

Compliance with ethical standards

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