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Mainstreaming Gender Perspectives in Modular Instruction

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Abstract. Gender equality in education can be achieved through gender mainstreaming. Through gender-responsive practices, this transformation can be achieved. This study assessed the implementation of Gender and Development (GAD) perspectives in modular instruction at Mountain Province State Polytechnic College. It aimed to identify modular instruction practices that promote gender-fair learning and challenges in mainstreaming gender perspectives and suggest measures to address the challenges. The study participants were thirty-four (34) faculty members as module developers. A descriptive research method through document analysis of the syllabi and modules was utilized to identify the gender mainstreaming practices in modular instruction. An interview and focus group discussion were conducted to identify challenges and further clarify issues in the research. The data analysis showed that course facilitators considered gender-inclusive practices in module development, indicating an awareness of gender mainstreaming. However, only a few were able to integrate GAD concepts into their modules. Also, there are pressing challenges faced by the course facilitators in facilitating gender mainstreaming practices that have given rise to a lack of commitment towards advancing GAD programs. The gender-inclusive practices and the different challenges underscore the further need to intensify mainstreaming efforts in the following areas: enabling policy, human resources, material resources, and activities.

Keywords: gender equality; gender mainstreaming; gender perspectives; modular instruction; Gender and Development

1. Introduction

Gender equality is a global issue. Thus, advocacy campaigns are organized for gender equality as a human right empowerment of women and girls as well as gender-responsive laws and policies. Such aims are also integrated into the development framework of national government programs. However, gender equality is still far from being achieved in terms of education, access to opportunities, or presence in decision-making positions (Asadikia et al., 2021; Cuberes & Teignier, 2014; Edwards et al., 2019).

The COVID-19 pandemic has jeopardized the decade-long campaign to close the gender inequality gap (Smith, 2019). This could reverse the effort's slow progress in mitigating gender-based inequalities from health to society, including academia. The New Normal brought about significant changes in all aspects of society. While changes are being implemented, it is imperative to look into programs and policies and implement them without sacrificing or disregarding the efforts that have been made to improve those policy areas that deal with the needs of all people.

In light of the pandemic, education must not be sacrificed. Thus, educational institutions continuously craft programs to accommodate learning needs and address the issues brought about by the New Normal. The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic quickly necessitated a shift from face-to-face classes to alternative modes of instruction. As educators pay attention to the delivery of learning competencies to learners, gender equity should not be discounted in any aspect. Consequently, gender dimensions in research were also initiated. Shallaita et al. (2021) and Wafa (2021) analyzed teaching materials for gender representation. Aguilar-Delavin (2022) evaluated the manifestations of gender bias in DepEd Secondary English Modules during the pandemic. Such studies impressively reported gender imbalance practices; however, the area most focused upon was gender bias. A more systematic and substantive analysis of educators' understanding of gender mainstreaming is needed in order to gain a clearer sense of what these are and how they are practiced.

Mountain Province State Polytechnic College continues to cater to the welfare of its learners. In response to the new mode of preparing instructional materials, shifts in assessing learning, and managing the conduct of modular instruction, teachers prepare learning modules to ensure that the quality of education remains high. Still, the best interests of the learners continues to be a top priority. Organizing the lessons has become more challenging as the module developers need to ensure the required competencies are included, while taking the learners' backgrounds into consideration. Toquero (2020) stated that educational planning should guarantee continuous learning while preventing the spread of the virus. As educators prepare the modules for their learners, inclusiveness should still be emphasized. The materials should allow all students to realize that learning is for everybody. The approach in preparing learning materials should emphasize universal inclusion, especially of those often subject to discrimination, such as indigenous peoples, girls, women, LGBT, and persons with special needs.

Equality in gender needs to be mainstreamed, from the preparation of the syllabus content to its execution in the modules. It is important to consider that even at the planning stage, consideration for gender equality must be advocated. Research consistently shows a lack of awareness and implementation of gender mainstreaming practices (Gurung & Rajbanshi, 2020; Kitta & Cardona Moltó, 2022; Nurhaeni & Kurniawan, 2018). Given the increasing recognition in research that gender equity calls for a strong intervention (Psaki et al., 2022; Shih & Wang, 2021), this research aims to identify the mainstreaming of gender perspective practices and the challenges in modular instruction. Recognizing the challenges in promoting gender-fair practices was essential in proposing intervention measures for crafting the syllabi and modules.

Specific steps to end gender inequality will be needed in order to achieve gender equality. The measure proposed in this study has been developed to address the practices and attitudes that maintain gender inequality. The proposed gender equity measures should support inclusivity in education at all times, in any mode of instruction.

2. Related Literature

In an effort to tackle pervasive gender inequality, the United Nations (UN) established the global strategy of gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is the process of (re)organizing, enhancing, developing, and evaluating policy processes such that all parties involved in policymaking adopt an appropriate perspective on gender equality and incorporate it into all policies at all levels and stages (United Nations, 2002). This is seen as an approach whereby every policy formation promotes equality between men and women.

In 2012, 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were set in Rio de Janeiro during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The fifth goal was gender equality. The United Nations (UN) reported that in 2020, even with steps being made towards gender equality, such as increases in the number of girls attending school and the number of women taking a seat in government positions, as well as reformed laws for gender equality over the last decades, yet gender discrimination and unequal social norms are still experienced in many societies. Also, data shows that no country has fully achieved gender equality, and existing programs were proven to be inadequate, as a record number of 143 countries agreed to include gender equality in their constitutions. However, 52 other countries failed to do this (UN Women, 2015), showing that policy commitment to securing gender equity is a slow process.

In Philippine society, the concretization of gender-related laws and mandates is intended to translate into programs to address gender issues. The Magna Carta for Women, or RA 9710, declares, “the State affirms the role of women in nation-building and ensures the substantive equality of women and men.” This upholding of women’s rights seeks to eliminate discrimination against women, whereby the unequal treatment of women has hindered them from attaining their full potential. With this, the government has been painstakingly crafting policies and programs to empower women.

The Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development, 1995-2025, was crafted to address, provide and pursue gender equality. This demands that all governmental organizations take the necessary actions to guarantee that Gender and Development (GAD) is fully implemented and institutionalized.

The educational sector is instrumental in addressing gender constraints and expanding the policy for infusing women and all genders into its programs and policies. This development strategy uplifts women's roles and achieves gender equality.

Section 4 of the same CHED memo indicates that faculty must provide learning materials that are gender-neutral and employ language that is sensitive to gender issues. Thus, learning materials such as laboratory manuals, modules, teaching guides, teaching manuals, workbooks, operation manuals, as well as everything that teachers prepare, must exhibit the use of gender-sensitive terms in the texts. The fifth of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be successfully attained if gender perspectives are taken into account in the many development fields (David et al., 2018).

Language in culture and society is a powerful tool in shaping attitudes and values. Given this, gender-sensitive language in academia is crucial in promoting gender inclusiveness and eradicating gender bias. This means that all forms of productive communication, speaking, and writing should use terms that are non-discriminatory against any gender. This gender inclusiveness, however, is a persistent challenge with the continued vulnerability of gender identities. Despite these expanding commitments and investments in education, it is still a challenge to translate gender equality from policy to practice. Research demonstrates the need for more focused gender initiatives in education (Alegado et al., 2020; Pantaleon & Ison, 2020; Paz et al., 2016).

3. Conceptual framework

The mainstreaming strategy is defined as a process of including gender concerns and experiences as an integral consideration in any policy or program development and implementation. The United Nations (2002) clarified that mainstreaming strategy consists of different forms: research, policy development, program delivery, and other technical activities.

The Beijing Platform for Action serves as the study's defining framework. This study is also anchored on the concept that education is essential in changing attitudes toward gender equality by generating knowledge and providing learning opportunities. According to the Global Education Monitoring Report (2019), governments, schools, instructors, and students must ensure that schools offer a high-quality, gender-sensitive education that is free from violence and prejudice. Teachers are expected to follow industry standards for fair instruction and suitable disciplinary measures.

The Mountain Province State Polytechnic College aspires to be a preferred university for developmental culture and inclusive growth. Thus, the college is

committed to providing quality instruction for all, regardless of its learners' socio-cultural background or gender orientation.

The paradigm of the study is shown in Figure 1. Analysis of the syllabi and learning modules was conducted to identify the modular instruction practices that promote Gender and Development perspectives. Challenges were identified and intervention measures are consequently proposed to address the challenges in mainstreaming gender perspectives in modular instruction.

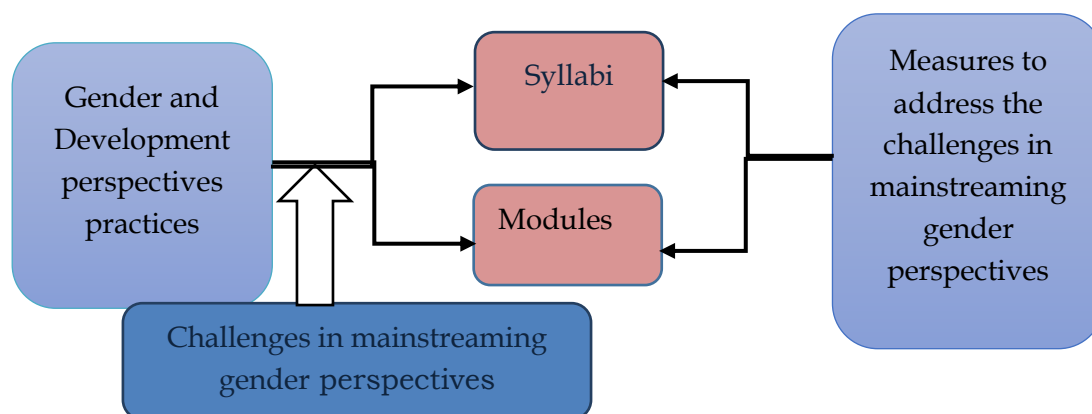


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

4. Objectives of the study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate how Gender and Development perspectives are mainstreamed in modular instruction at Mountain Province State Polytechnic College-Tadian Campus.

The study examined the use of gender-fair languages in the modules, gender equality teaching, learning enrichment and assessment activities, and the provisions for gender-fair learning accommodation. Specifically, it aimed to identify modular instruction practices that promote gender-fair learning, the challenges in mainstreaming gender perspectives in modular instruction, and the strategies to address the challenges in mainstreaming gender perspectives.

5. Materials and methods

5.1. Research design

This research study is descriptive. It focused on identifying and analyzing those modular instruction practices that promote gender-fair learning in MPSPC. The descriptive technique of research describes and interprets the relationships that are present, the prevalent norms, the beliefs, the processes, or the emerging trends (Calderon & Gonzales, 2018). The descriptive method is the appropriate design for this study since it is concerned with assessing the implementation of Gender and Development perspectives in modular instruction. With this method, problems and abnormal conditions are revealed so that remedial measures may be instituted.

5.2. Participants

The participants of this study were thirty-four (34) faculty members in Mountain Province State Polytechnic College-Tadian Campus, who crafted their syllabi with their modules. Due to COVID-19 protocol restrictions that applied to faculty members who had work-from-home arrangements, convenience sampling was used. The respondents were from the three departments teaching engineering, forestry, and teacher education.

5.3. Instruments

This research utilized an interview guide to elicit data on the challenges of mainstreaming gender. The interview and focus group discussion were utilized to validate the data gathered from the modules and identify challenges in mainstreaming gender perspectives in modular instruction.

5.4. Procedures

Data were collected using document analysis, interviews, and focus group discussions. A total of fifty-six (56) modules from the participants were collected for data analysis. After this, the interviews and focus group discussions with the thirty-four faculty members were conducted in different places to accommodate the convenience of the participants and in observation of the COVID-19 guidelines and protocols. Each participant's interview lasted approximately 30 minutes, while the focus group discussion took at least 30-45 minutes. After the interviews, the transcripts were organized and categorized in terms of similarities and differences in preparation for thematic analysis.

5.5. Data analysis

The thematic analysis is conducted to achieve pattern recognition within the data and to identify emerging themes. Therefore, the respondents' syllabi and modules were assessed to examine modular instruction practices that promote gender-fair learning.

The modules collected from the faculty members served as the materials for document analysis. The texts were thoroughly scrutinized to identify gender mainstreaming practices. The data gathered, including pictures and texts, were scanned as evidence. A total of forty-nine modules with syllabi were manually analyzed for thematic analysis. The texts were subsequently coded, categories were constructed, and finally the themes were disclosed.

After conducting the interviews and focus group discussions, the researchers transcribed the data and analyzed the categories and themes through a thematic-analysis approach (Clarke & Braun, 2013) using a coding process. To preserve anonymity, the participants were given codes such as T1 (teacher 1) and T2 (teacher 2).

6. Results and discussion

6.1. Modular Instruction Practices that Promote Gender-fair Learning

There is no denying that education is responsible for the holistic development of an individual. A person's mental development and education regarding societal norms and expectations for proper conduct are both greatly aided by attending school (Galangam et al., 2021). Consequently, educational institutions have a

significant impact on how students learn to socialize, posing more cognitive, social, and emotional obstacles (Durlak et al., 2011). Therefore, educators can address the challenge of gender disparities through gender-responsive mechanisms.

At such a critical time during the COVID-19 pandemic, drastic changes have increased the gaps in the education sector globally (Onyema et al., 2020). Due to this, teachers constantly search for ways to engage their learners in lessons while ensuring inclusivity, despite the absence of in-person classes.

The Mountain Province State Polytechnic College adopts the modular approach to instructional delivery. In adherence to CHED Memorandum Order No. 01, S. 2015, course facilitators as module developers need to craft gender-fair learning modules; several gender-inclusive practices to take into account the needs of all genders in the courses were considered in module development.

All teacher respondents are aware of gender mainstreaming as a strategy to promote gender-fair learning. As such, they are the key factors in counteracting gender inequality. According to Kollmayer et al. (2020), teachers are essential starting points for advancing gender equality in education because it has been demonstrated that their attitudes and methods of instruction have a substantial impact on students' motivation and performance.

Critical reflection on the collected modules resulted in the emergence of three themes.

6.1.1. *Communicating gender-friendly introduction*

Teachers indicated that mainstreaming a gender perspective in their modules should start right at the beginning of the modules. Thus, the following sentences can be read in the introduction to the modules.

"The activities throughout this module are designed for students of all gender and cultural backgrounds."

"Your module is designed for you to appreciate regardless of your gender and culture."

"The activities in this module are purposely designed/prepared for 4th-year Electrical Engineering students of any social and cultural background, gender, and religious affiliation."

"Experiments included in the modules must be done regardless of gender preference. No activities are intended for a specific gender."

"Basic gymnastics is not only for girls but for everybody. Boys also need to learn these activities, especially those who would be pushing through military endeavors in the future."

An introduction establishes the scope and context of the module. It highlights the potential learning that can be acquired through completing the module. According to the respondents, including the above statements provides a positive impression that the material prepared for the students engages learners from various backgrounds, gender included. This, in a way, builds rapport and encourages the learners to continue. Although it is interesting to note that there were no females enrolled in industrial courses such as Automotive Technology

and Electrical Technology, the accommodation of all genders is nevertheless indicated. Teachers handling these subjects reasoned that they also used this introduction to make their students aware that the course is very inclusive, in the hope of increasing the participation of women in male-dominated courses. One issue that is continuously given attention in education is expanding access to technical and vocational education and training, especially regarding the increased participation of female learners. Simui et al. (2017), in a study of distance learners' perspectives on user-friendly instructional materials, recommend that instructional modules be designed with learners' needs in mind; materials should be user-friendly for the learners, and this principle should apply to all disciplines and levels of learners. This shows that teachers are aware that consideration of factors such as age, ethnicity and gender is of paramount importance in designing and developing modules.

In the facilitation of the modules, further instructions through online communication platforms (SMS, phone call, and Messenger) also observe gender sensitivity. Therefore, they were allowed to submit their module outputs personally or online. Furthermore, since some students had young children, they were given the option to submit their modules online.

6.1.2. Adopting gender-fair language and visuals

The respondents agreed that language is a powerful tool to lessen gender inequality. For them, certain words elicit consciousness in avoiding implicit and explicit discriminatory language against women and men. In their own comprehension of gender-fair languages, the use of the pronouns "you" and "we" is inclusive. The respondents remarked, "When I use the pronoun "you" in conversing with my students in the modules, I meant 'All of you regardless of gender preference.'" A module in Mathematics consistently uses the pronoun "we" to maintain a conversational tone. With the stereotyping of Math as a challenging subject, a friendly tone not only addresses gender inequity but also encourages all learners to have a positive attitude toward the course. Freeman (2004) advocates for using the active voice, such as "we" and "you," as well as short phrases to keep the tone approachable. Kintanar and Tongson (2014) suggested that first and second-person pronouns such as "we" and "you" may be used when appropriate in non-sexist writing.

A module presenting concepts about entrepreneurship consistently used the term "business owner" instead of "businessman" throughout the module. This clearly indicates an awareness of gender-fair terms. Several studies have proven that the use of gender-fair language can greatly contribute to a gender-fair attitude. Kollberg (2015) posits that the language used in learning materials can influence the way in which students perceive their surroundings. After being introduced to the reasons for using gender-fair language, speakers changed their language use to favor gender equality, according to Sczesny et al. (2016)'s study. According to Vizcarra-Garcia (2021), this specific language caused a "domino effect with far-reaching effects" since people are more likely to use gender-fair forms the more often they read them and become aware of them.

Visual facilitation of the lesson helps learners to easily recall key concepts. The use of visual graphics is a great way to communicate information about gender perspectives in a manner that appeals to learners. Visual material is said to be biased if only a particular gender is predominantly shown. The UNESCO (2009) checklist cited that in the materials, all genders must be represented equally in terms of frequency, respect, and potential (for example, when talking about jobs, or the future). Several images from the modules exemplified this aim. For example, a Physical Fitness and Self-testing Activity module shows images of both males and females executing gymnastic stunts. In the motivation part of a module in Foundations of Special and Inclusive Education, there was an equal number of female and male cartoon illustrations. In a business course, to exemplify price-quality relationships in an Entrepreneurship subject, the module employed both male (George's Store) and female (Juana's Store) names of store owners. These instances demonstrate that some modules exemplify gender balance portrayals. According to Lomotey (2020), these strategies are significant in developing learners' comprehension of their own and others' gendering styles and are ultimately necessary for embedding gender equality and equity as basic human ideals.

6.1.3. Gender integration in lessons

With gender perspectives being explicitly incorporated into the lesson, there is a greater chance of advancing equitable development possibilities for both men and women. However, the integration of gender-sensitive teaching strategies remains a challenge among teachers. Despite this, efforts are being made to incorporate elements that acknowledge the problems connected with gender equality in their instructional courses. For example, in a Teaching Science in Elementary Grades course, the pre-service teachers enrolled were required to prepare a lesson plan integrating Gender and Development. The module developer confirmed that the pre-service teachers could integrate GAD perspectives into their objectives and narrate the activities to be undertaken in their lesson plans. According to Powell and Ah-King (2013), increased understanding of gender perspectives in teaching, support for individual teachers who had developed an interest in these issues, and a forum in which to discuss teaching-related topics were all facilitated by incorporating gender perspectives in subject content and teaching at a natural science university. The course evaluation and follow-up interviews showed that the participants appreciated the project.

Social Sciences modules also emphasized equity in gender. Given the nature of the subject, the course objectives sought to clarify the relationship between sex and gender, cited laws on equal rights for all genders, and discussed social issues surrounding them. Thus, we cannot disregard gender as a social category that constructs identities, roles, preferences, behavior, and practices in teaching social sciences and law. Stevens Kaylene (2016)'s findings in an analysis of teachers' understandings, curriculum, and classroom practices about gender equity in social studies courses revealed that social studies teachers with gender equitable beliefs did adjust the curriculum and intentionally designed it to be inclusive. Furthermore, these teachers changed their behavior both within and

outside of the classroom, in accordance with their convictions about gender parity.

A module in an assessment subject was found to have the following statement:

The preparation of a test is one we should be careful as teachers. There is no perfect assessment type since learners are of varied backgrounds. Therefore, a multitude of assessment tools should be known to the test implementer to cater to different types of learners.

Essay questions in the assessment part of the Teaching Math in Intermediate Grades module were:

“Considering your female and male students, do you think there should be a different strategy in teaching each? Why?”

“Do you think there is a strategy more suited for male or female students? Why?”

These examples illustrate that assessment can also address equity by fostering the learners’ identities, including gender and cultural practices from their communities. Teachers can receive support from coaches and instructional leaders as they evaluate data to suggest and test strategies for enhancing the equality of participation, and they should examine participation and interaction quality for inequities related to race or gender (Shepard et al., 2020). Despite this, there are still gaps that need filling in. For example, in an examination of novice teachers’ perceptions of the connections between instruction and student evaluation in various classrooms by DeLuca and Lam (2014), the teacher candidates readily expressed responses to students from a variety of cultural backgrounds, as well as varying English language proficiency and different learning styles and abilities. Despite this, they showed little empathy or understanding for pupils of other genders, sexual orientations, socioeconomic backgrounds, religious affiliations, or other aspects of diversity, such as body image and interests.

While it is true that gender-based learning styles exist, it is more likely that various factors contribute to achievement inequalities between men and women. As a result, teaching practices and theories are critical components of effective instruction. Therefore, seeking to understand the needs of each student by considering physical characteristics, intelligence, perception, gender, ability, and learning styles is likely to achieve an effective and productive learning-teaching process (Kubat, 2018).

Language-related subjects take on the role of clarifying issues on gender. These are manifested in subjects such as Language, Culture, and Society and Teaching and Assessment of Grammar. A language module has an objective to ‘promote gender-fair languages as an important concern in integrating the role of language, culture, and society through information campaigns.’ Thus, in the assessment section of the module, the activity indicated was to promote the use of gender-fair language through an informative pamphlet. This clearly indicates that modular instruction does not hamper the campaign toward gender equity. The British Council (2017) opined that gender-neutral language is a matter of

awareness. Accordingly, if people are aware that phrases and expressions used regularly have the potential to offend because they tend to denigrate women and girls and their contributions and roles in society, we must endeavor to avoid them. As a result, people will have more respectful attitudes, and we may be able to develop a more tolerant and equal society. In her study of teachers' impressions of gender-inclusive language in the classroom, Vizcarra-Garcia (2021) found that most teachers responded favorably to gender-inclusive terminology. They were enthusiastic about using it in their classrooms because it fosters gender equality and sensitivity in their students. The study demonstrated that students' awareness of gender issues is aided by language.

An article aiming to further discuss the concept of 'grammaring' and 'degrammaticalization' in a grammar module refers to 'They' As the Word of the Year. The module required the learners to survey ten people of various ages and genders to present their views regarding pronoun use. In addition, they should refer to a single person whose gender identity is nonbinary. Activities such as this provide authentic responses on gender issues since the interviewer can judge the spontaneity of the respondents through their verbal and non-verbal expressions.

6.2. Challenges in Mainstreaming Gender Perspectives in Modular Instruction

The shift toward gender awareness poses issues for teachers. Even with face-to-face classes, the respondents agreed that obstacles prevent or limit the spread of such practices. These educators may struggle to incorporate notions of gender-fairness language in their fields. Still, they recognized the usefulness and advantages of incorporating gender-equality principles into their instructional practices. Studies have demonstrated that issues remain regarding gender-responsive and sensitive curricula, instructional delivery, evaluation, facilities, and training (Hernandez & Cudiamat, 2018). In advancing toward gender parity, the Philippines is still a long way from attaining gender equality and diversity in education (Paz et al., 2016). Study findings have shown that the majority of students encountered gender inequity in their basic education from K to 12. Despite having most successfully narrowed the gender gap compared to other Asian countries (Philippine Commission on Women, 2019) and being one of Asia's most gender-equal nations (*2019 Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia | Community Business*, n.d.), difficulties persist. Some educators continue to feel that sexist attitudes are inherent or part of Filipino culture (Evangelista, 2017). The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) have yet to succeed in removing the recurring misogynistic themes that 'naturally' hide in textbooks (Curaming & Curaming, 2020). Interestingly, although most teachers have inserted a gender-friendly introduction into their modules, some of the subsequent content does not reflect this due to the following challenges.

6.2.1. Differences in views

Although all of the respondents agreed that it is everyone's responsibility to implement gender mainstreaming, they also revealed that gender viewpoints are not universally understood or interpreted. One teacher commented that over 32

years of service, there have always been conflicting views on gender integration in the classroom. They further testified that syllabi were returned several times due to differences in one's perspective or point of view on GAD integration. Teachers vehemently expressed:

"With too much theory and different understanding to practice in gender integration, how about accepting and respecting other's ways of integrating GAD according to their good intentions for all kinds of learners."[T11]

"This is a concept that I find difficult to operationalize, and I believe that its interpretation is up to the individual."[T26]

"There is no monitoring scheme which is why I am not sure whether I am doing it right. Honestly, when I ask my colleagues for help, they have different perceptions regarding mainstreaming. Then until this moment, I am not clear about what it is. Thus, I am not confident in applying it."[T9]

Lualhati (2019) discovered that Filipino teachers are now incorporating gender sensitivity into their educational approaches. However, Tarrayo et al. (2021) remarked that the report seems to be optimistic at best. According to them, the study concentrated on categorical questions, such as whether teachers utilize gender-neutral terminology in their conversations or lesson plans, rather than assessing the teachers' knowledge of Gender and Development. This somehow does not truly measure the knowledge of teachers.

Respondents commented that they question themselves in terms of whether they are doing things right. This aligns with Muyomi's (2014) findings, which revealed that most of the respondents were not confident in introducing gender issues at work, followed by those who were not sure whether they had the confidence. This was due to the knowledge gap in gender mainstreaming. It must be noted that in order to catalyze visible impacts of gender mainstreaming, unified organizational support is needed. This necessitates a common understanding of the learning gaps in gender mainstreaming.

6.2.2. *Lack of aggressive gender advocates and practitioners*

Gender advocates are expected to work with various institutions and groups that deal with women's and gender issues. Their activity includes campaigning and public participation as well as (research and teaching/learning) materials and access. Additionally, GAD practitioners need to have specific competences in specialized fields and be capable of engaging in responsive policy making, planning, budgeting, and administration (Quezada-Reyes, n.d.).

The field of Gender and Development (GAD) is essential to higher education. It is mainstreamed by way of the focal individuals. The respondents unanimously agreed that there is a need for more gender advocates and GAD practitioners. Though there is a full-time officer overseeing the gender concerns of the college, the transfer of practice to the instructional level is lacking. Respondents attested to this with the following responses:

"Teachers maybe are gender campaigners but we also teach, do research, and extension works which means we are busy. We also face other tasks

such as attending meetings and training or doing our administrative tasks.” [T3]

“No one took the role of teaching how to integrate gender in my lessons. There is a lack of awareness on advocating gender sensitivity inside the classroom. Thus, it becomes more difficult to translate into the modules.” [T8]

“It is not enough that we attend a day of training for awareness purposes. We need more contextualized training. We need a committed gender focal person at the instruction level to also transfer this knowledge to the students for implementation and practice, especially since we are training future educators.” [T2]

Respondents recognized the need for more gender focal persons to guide them in implementing gender mainstreaming. To make each program more gender-responsive, the support for the implementation process could make the teachers more committed. Esteban (2016) revealed in her study that the commonly implemented Gender and Development (GAD) Programs in SUCs in Region III Capability due to the lack of manpower and inadequacy of material resources to facilitate the implementation process. Because of a lack of financial and human resources, the focus on gender is frequently not extended through to the implementation and monitoring of interventions, even when gender equality and analysis are integrated at the design stage (La & Todd, 2012). dela Rosa & Castro, (2021) averred that it is everyone’s responsibility to fully implement gender mainstreaming, which could address several issues in the school organization. This could only be possible with the help of a gender specialist who can guide them on all the premises of gender awareness and sensitivity. Likewise, a monitoring and evaluation committee may help address the issues of mainstreaming Gender and Development. According to Villegas (2021), the continuous assessment and monitoring of gender mainstreaming ensures sustainability.

The shortage of human resources is a pressing challenge that demands attention to integrate gender mainstreaming successfully. According to the respondents, they need to be provided with the necessary skills to assist in designing and implementing GAD awareness. They believe that channeling these skills builds teachers’ capacity in gender mainstreaming. All of these issues require the intervention of more gender advocates. Thus, policy gaps in certain programs may also arise from a lack of human resources and monitoring, which would widen the distance between policymaking and practice.

All respondents recognize the need for gender advocates to provide the necessary skills in gender integration through contextualized trainings. However, an analysis finding by Muyomi (2014) showed that employees lacked the necessary abilities to influence the gender mainstreaming implementation process.

6.2.3. Restrictions in the curriculum

While there has been progress in gender mainstreaming in the modules, more curriculum-related gaps and challenges tend to impede effective implementation. For example, Talon et al. (2020) discovered significant gender inequality in curriculum, instructional materials, physical facilities, programs, and initiatives. Teachers handling different subjects shared the following:

“Most resources are gender-biased. In fact, there are only a few pictures showing females as automotive or mechanical workers. Thus, more males are used in the modules. Especially since there were no females enrolled in my class.” [T16]

“In teaching English, gender is appropriately identified. Moreover, textbooks still use insensitive grammar rules, for instance, in the use of the gendered pronoun in pronoun-antecedent agreement. I can repeatedly teach the use of gender-fair languages in my English major classes, but it would be good if we had reference materials ready for such. It is difficult to find the latest literary pieces in my literature class that infused gender sensitivity.” (T29)

“We lack contextualized resources to mainstream gender awareness that fit the learning needs of our students. In addition, the subject I handle is highly technical. To look for a way to integrate that into my topic is difficult. I wish we [had] been instructed on how to do it before we developed our modules.” [T11]

“When it comes to discussing social roles, learners’ outputs still exhibit stereotyping of female and male roles to reflect the community’s values and norms. Again, I can observe this in my class when I require field activities.’ [T30]

In this study, respondents clearly indicated gender stereotyping as an issue in reference materials. Talon et al. (2020)’s study of Gender and Development in the classroom revealed that despite the gender-responsive basic education policy, there still exists gender disparity in the graphics of Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) and Technical Vocational Livelihood (TVL) instructional modules and media that focus on one gender only. The most common element of gender inequity is gender-based stereotyping; for instance, the notion that men should be strong, whereas women should be soft or weak. This is observed not only in school, but it could be reflected in the family and society. Reference materials even portray such outdated ideals. This situation makes the teacher the most important element in gender mainstreaming. If this is translated and students are made aware, they develop healthy attitudes. Teachers should avoid situations, texts, and visual aids that perpetuate stereotyped roles. All instructional resources, including textbooks, handouts, and workbooks, should be scrutinized to see whether they have gender bias, are gender-neutral, or are gender-responsive (UNESCO, 2015).

Some aspects of grammar promoted sexist language in the English language. These were found in the pronouns "he/him/his" and the generic masculine man,

which are used to refer to people of both sexes, as well as the use of suffixes like -ess, such as hostess and poetess (Kintanar & Tongson, 2014). This is one concern posited by a language teacher respondent. The instructor noted that gender stereotypes of both men and women still exist in reference books, as do the generic terms "man" and "he/him/his," as well as the use of the suffixes "man," "ess," and "ette," in occupational nouns and job titles. Triyaswati and Emaliana (2021) examined equal gender representation in English instructional materials during emergency remote learning and found gender bias in transactional interpersonal texts and pictures in every chapter. This shows that the textbook has a gender bias.

Tarrayo et al. (2021) found a shortage of relevant and acceptable instructional resources that incorporate gender mainstreaming in ELT and apparently insufficient gender perspective training due to the lack of a framework for integrating the gender factor in teaching. Additionally, some textbooks continue to encourage sexism. In a study of gender mainstreaming in General Education and Professional Education Courses, Villaroman (2017) discovered a similar problem. One of the challenges faculty members face in integrating GAD is the limited availability of GAD resources, particularly in Professional Education Courses.

6.2.4. *Lack of theoretical knowledge and skills in gender mainstreaming*

Although the teachers acknowledged that they have academic freedom in choosing the materials for their courses, including gender concerns, they also acknowledged that it requires a lot of work to incorporate the gender viewpoint into their modules. They may lack the necessary expertise and knowledge in gender mainstreaming. They are not trained for this orientation. The interview statements below prove this point.

"I lack sufficient knowledge due to a lack of training, and if there was, it was not sustainable. No training needs analysis was conducted to have a more focused and gender-contextualized lesson. Additionally, teachers or managers who were sent to GAD-related trainings/seminars should conduct echo seminars to update us." [T18].

"There is no proper information about gender-fair activities which can be accommodated in the virtual classroom." [T25]

"I really wanted to be creative in amplifying the empowerment of all genders, but I am not familiar with ways by which specific gender-fair objectives and activities can really be identified in the lessons." [T8]

"I find it difficult on how do I cater to gender perspectives in mathematical calculations." [T14]

"Although I have suggestions for how to include gender in the discussion, I do not claim to be an expert on gender as a discipline. In all honesty, I have not been directly guided by anyone in integrating a gender perspective in my module." [T7]

Appropriate training is the most common approach to educating non-gender specialists. Ilagan (2019) posits that teacher training is vital because they serve as examples and change agents in the community and at school. Procedures such as training can be efficient if reflected in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the intervention. Monitoring and evaluation activities are used to ascertain whether gender mainstreaming policies, programs, and initiatives in the institution are being implemented and affecting gender relations inside the organization (UNESCO, 2015). In one study, Albaladejo (2016) found that one of the top three problems met by the educational managers and faculty members in the implementation of GAD programs was the inadequacy of training, seminars, workshops, and conferences related to GAD. Similarly, Theresa and Arellano-Hernandez (n.d.) suggested that members of the gender focal points system be encouraged to attend GAD capability building trainings or seminars sponsored or organized by other agencies as they are comfortable discussing sex and gender concepts but lack knowledge of gender mainstreaming and GAD planning and budgeting.

Ilagan (2019) revealed in a study of gender mainstreaming in a Higher Education Institution (HEI) that administrators have had more opportunities to participate in trainings and seminars on Gender and Development; as a result, they are more knowledgeable about the current problems, legislation, and government programs, particularly in the university. However, the entire academic community, particularly the faculty, must enhance its awareness to help improve gender mainstreaming in the whole university system. Teacher education institutions are important parts of educational systems and have a positive reputation. As change agents in society, they have an impact beyond their walls. To achieve positive change, teachers must first completely comprehend the issue. Respondents stressed the need for a comprehensive training needs assessment. The investment in preparing training should be adapted to the specific context of its participants. When both training needs assessment and monitoring are lacking, there is no basis for developing a foundation for gender mainstreaming learning or intervention activities. However, as noted, monitoring is almost non-existent. Examining all of the institution's policies, operations, and work plans via a gender lens is possible with gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation (UNESCO, 2015). Galamgam et al. (2021) proposed that a monitoring and evaluation technical working group should carefully observe and assess the classroom and school's Gender and Development initiatives to ensure ongoing improvement.

6.3. Measures to Address the Challenges in Mainstreaming Gender Perspectives

Gender mainstreaming in the Campus under study complied with the mandates of gender mainstreaming. However, at the instructional level, teachers still face some challenges. Thus, there is a need to strengthen its implementation. Some of the proposed measures are identified in Table 1 based on the challenges experienced by the teachers in their effort to mainstream gender perspectives in their modules.

Table 1. Proposed measures to address the challenges in mainstreaming gender perspectives

Areas	Proposed Measures
Evidence-based Enabling Policies	Replicable programs and practices to support the gender mainstreaming effort of the institution
Human Resources	Designation of a GAD focal person and GAD coordinators on the campus to coordinate all gender-related activities Composition of monitoring and evaluation committee to monitor and evaluate gender mainstreaming in the campus
Material Resources	Provision of GAD office on the campus Provision of updated GAD mainstreaming resource materials in the library
Activities	Continuous capability building activities for gender focal persons, GAD Coordinators, and teachers to (re)evaluate their gender notions Engendering the curriculum and subjects during curriculum review through inviting inputs from community gender advocates and LGBTQ Contextualizing the instructional materials to promote an inclusive and supportive learning environment Research activities on current methods and policies in gender integration Workshop on concrete integration of gender perspectives in the syllabus and updating of modules for gender-fair education Concrete signages within the campus that support equality of all genders. Creation of a networking site for mainstreaming efforts Review the examples and wording used in current tests, exams, and assessments to see if they contain any gender prejudice or stereotypes. Integrate gender awareness components into pre- and in-service teacher training Strengthen linkages with partner institutions for benchmarking to identify best practices in gender mainstreaming

Evidence-based reform in education refers to measures that permit or promote the implementation of programs and practices that have been successfully tested

via in-depth analysis (Slavin, 2019). Evidence-based means a program or practice that can be implemented with a set of procedures to allow successful replication (WSIPP, 2020).

According to Slavin (2019), for evidence-based reform to prevail, three conditions must exist: there must be a broad range of proven programs in every area of education, every subject and grade level, appropriate for use in a given country or region; trusted, impartial, educator-friendly reviews of research must be available, to enable educators and policymakers to know which specific programs and practices have been proven to work in rigorous evaluations; and government agencies must provide resources to schools to enable them to adopt proven programs.

In the context of the study setting, an evidence-based policy requires specific replicable programs and practices to be implemented. Thus, the proposed measures spell out contextualized programs and activities specifically befitting to MPSPC based on the challenges identified by the respondents. It is the hope of the study that initiatives from the policy-makers could be solicited to ascertain active participation leading to measurable results.

7. Conclusion

The data analysis revealed that course facilitators as module developers considered gender-inclusive practices in module development, such as explicitly communicating a gender-friendly introduction, adopting gender-fair language and visuals in the modules, and gender integration in lessons, indicating awareness of gender mainstreaming. However, only a few were able to integrate GAD concepts into their modules. Though the college has complied with the mandate of gender mainstreaming in its policies, plans and programs in instruction, research, extension and production, a strong commitment from the faculty members is needed. In addition, strengthening the college's gender mainstreaming requires strong commitment and support from the administrative officials, faculty, and staff. Pressing challenges such as differences in views, lack of aggressive gender advocates and practitioners, restrictions in the curriculum, and lack of theoretical knowledge and skills in gender mainstreaming have given rise to a lack of commitment toward advancing GAD programs. These underscore the further need to intensify mainstreaming efforts in the areas of enabling policy, human resources, material resources, and activities.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed. The campus may adopt the suggested measures to ensure the active involvement of all stakeholders to be fully equipped with the desired competencies to implement the GAD programs effectively and efficiently. Moreover, gender-based analysis as an approach in research may also be conducted to examine the impact of the tasks in the module on different genders. This paper aimed to present a broader discussion of gender mainstreaming practices in modular instruction as well as the proposed intervention; however, the area of study is new in the context of modular

instruction. It is hoped that more researchers may be motivated to focus on gender mainstreaming efforts to capture a wider perspective.

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Appendix 1

Intro Script: Thank you for taking time to participate in this interview. Our group is conducting research entitled Mainstreaming Gender Perspectives in Modular Instruction. In this regard, we humbly implore your cooperation in responding to the following queries. Your responses are highly solicited for the completion of the said study. Thank you. Before we begin, may I know how long have you worked for this institution? What is your current position?

Interview Proper

1. What is your personal view of Gender and Development (GAD)?
2. In your ____ years of experience as a teacher, what is your understanding of gender mainstreaming?
3. Which programs/activities are put in place which you have participated to ensure implementation of gender mainstreaming in school?
4. Were you trained on implementation of gender mainstreaming in education?
5. How many learning modules have you prepared so far?
6. What are the subjects you handle?
7. Were you able to practice the mainstreaming methods you have acquired in crafting your modules?
8. What are the challenges you have encountered in mainstreaming gender perspectives in modular instruction?
9. What recommendations would you make to the College to strengthen gender mainstreaming efforts?