IJMES

Research

"Integration of Gender-Fair Learning Approaches In English Instruction: A Phenomenological Study"

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July 2020

Abstract: The utmost aim of this study was to explore the "Integration of Gender-Fair Learning Approaches in English Instruction: A Phenomenological Study". The research answered the questions on instructional approaches implemented by teachers to address gender fairness, the perceived barriers that hamper the teachers' implementation of Gender-fair learning approaches in the classroom, and the intervention of the perceived barriers that were developed based on the findings of the study. This study was conducted among the intermediate teachers handling English Instruction in Kiblawan South District. In-depth interviews were conducted to get relevant result. Data revealed that the instructional approaches implemented by the teachers to address gender and development in English instruction are differentiated learning; blended learning; and cooperative learning. The perceived barriers that hinder the teachers in integrating gender-fair learning approaches in their routinely tasks are bullying/conflict and unsupportive family and community. The interventions developed based on the findings of the study are 1) Engaged to Class and School Activities; 2) GAD Orientation to Stakeholders. This study shows that gender is not binary, but rather a continuum. As such, it is essential that Gender and Development Policy is firmly implemented not only in the classroom but in the entire school community. Moreover, gender equality can be addressed through the implementation of gender-fair learning approaches in the classroom. Whatever the gender choices of the students are, they are entitled to their rights, resources, opportunities, and protections.

Keywords: Gender-Fair: Learning Approaches; English Instruction

1. Introduction

The widespread issue of gender identity has been beseeching the global village. This subject matter has been prevalently discussed not only in the social media, but this has been hounding the local communities, as well as, in the sanctity of the homes. This topic was closely connected to gender continuum. Along these perspectives, educators in the worldwide arena agreed that proper dissemination on issues of gender policy in learning institutions was imperative.

Subsequently, the United Nation's Human Equality Act introduced in 2006 ensured nondiscriminatory treatment and the elimination of prejudiced practices against individuals with varied gender affiliations. In recognition of the significant contribution of the government authorities towards equality for all, a gender equality duty was established within the Act and came into force in April 2007. This required government and public institutions to be vigilant in eliminating unlawful gender choice discrimination, bullying and harassment (Reeser, 2006). [1]

Gender and Development (GAD) Forum were to be established at the start of classes to remind students of their rights, as well as the rights of others. The key word was respect. Miscommunication on sensitive issues like gender continuum among students and parents lead to misunderstanding, confusion and conflict if not immediately settled.

Schools have a crucial role to play in creating environments that were gender expansive and fluid, where children, regardless of gender, can display their talents and abilities, without limitations set by rigid gender roles and prejudices – based on personal interests and capacities. A gender inclusive environment affirmed all individuals and allows them to behave within the context of the gender continuum.

The Department of Education issued a directive on the strict implementation of gender and development as stipulated in the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), specifically in Domain 3.1 on Diversity of Learners, which emphasized the central role of teachers in establishing learning environments that were responsive to learners' diversity inclusive of their gender, needs, strengths, interests and experiences. Teachers were to be at the helm of the implementation in promoting gender equality in terms of outcomes by providing equal opportunity and treatment and equal access to safe and healthy working environments. The right to education and gender equality were central to development objectives described both in the Education for All (EFA) agenda and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). GAD issues within and around schools has a significant impact on educational participation. Gender equality required particular attention in the continuing drive towards EFA and the achievement of the MDGs, and needs to remain firmly on the international agenda.

The utmost objective in implementing GAD in the different schools nationwide was to promote social harmony and equality. However, there were problems that need to be resolved at the school level in order to avoid further conflicts and clashes inside and outside the school campus which may result in higher occurrences of drop-outs. As observed, there were a number of barriers that prevent students from achieving and making most of their talents and skill because of issues on maltreatment, bullying, intimidating and harassment.

Based on these observations, the researcher explored into the integration of Gender-fair learning approaches in English instruction and find out into how the teachers in Kiblawan District exert efforts to address gender inequalities in their daily instructional routine, utilizing a phenomenological study.

2. Experiments and Methods

In the analysis of data, three steps were employed patterned after the study of Pillerin (2012)[2], namely, (1) data reduction; (2) data display; (3) conclusion drawing; and (4) verification. The data analysis involved taking out significant statements from transcribed interviews.

Since empirical study was exploratory in nature, this employed a constant comparison procedure (Strauss & Corbin, 2008)[3]. All interviews were transcribed and analyzed as they were collected. Initially, transcripts were read and re-read, and notes took as broad themes or concepts emerged. Subsets of concepts called categories were noted and gradually fell into the context of the broader themes. The significant statements were transformed into clusters of meanings according to how each statement fell under specific psychological and phenomenological concepts.

These transformations were tied up together to make a general description of the experience – both the textural description (of what was experienced) and the structural description (of how it was experienced). The researcher integrated her personal understanding of the experience here. Finally, the report was written such that readers were able to find meaning of the invariant structure of the experiences of teachers in their implementation of gender-fair learning approach in English instruction.

Procedure

The researcher needed a vast solid grounding in the philosophical precepts of empirical observation. The participants of the study were the school English coordinators who experienced the

implementation of the gender-fair learning approach in English instruction. The researcher needed to bracket her own experiences, which was difficult to do, hence, careful analysis was to be to done in order to incorporate relevant input and how and when his/her personal experiences was incorporated into the study.

Empirical study was being adopted as an appropriate way of exploring research questions which may lead to a different way of knowledge being constructed. This qualitative study was incorporated varied types of experience ranging from perception, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, desire, and volition to bodily awareness, embodied action, and social activity, including linguistic activity. The structure of these forms of experience typically involved what Smith (2005)[4] called "intentionality", that was, the directedness of experience toward things in the world, the property of consciousness that it was a consciousness of or about something.

Processes

The researcher utilized the following processes: first, the researcher secured a permit to conduct the study from the Schools Division Superintendent. This contained the endorsement letter allowing the researcher to conduct the study in the 5 schools in Kiblawan South District. The district supervisor furnished a signed endorsement letter in order to solicit her support and cooperation.

The participants were informed of the schedule of the conduct of the interview. Further, they were informed that the interview was recorded for purposes of proper transcription and analysis. To assume reliability, the participants were assured of confidentiality and that later all the data collected were destroyed to protect their identities.

On identifying the themes of the study, important phases that emerged from the transcripts and comments were identified as thematic statements. They were listed and grouped accordingly to determine patterns and connections between themes. The first round produced more than ten themes. Regrouping was done to reduce the essential themes or main themes into fewer items. The process was expected to generate the final essential themes. The process of numeration was adopted in the determination of thematic statements. Numeration was the number of items that thematic statement or emergent themes occur in the transcripts (Smith, et. al. 2009)[4]. In this study, a theme was notified by a particular idea or experience which was highlighted by at least four participants in the group, as concurred by Anderson & Kanunack (2003)[6]. Moreover, those statements that occurred only once were not to be included in the thematic statements.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in each statement refers to the dependability, reliability, and constancy of given ideas (Merriam, 2000)[7]. To establish the trustworthiness of the study, the following criteria, as suggested by Krefting (2001)[8] were closely followed: First criterion was truth value. To satisfy this criterion, the researcher took full engagement in the conduct of the study from the conceptualization up to the gathering, interpretation, and analysis of data. Second criterion was applicability. This was established with transferability, which was, allowing readers to be able to apply the findings of the study to their own situations. This was done by writing the findings of the study that was comprehensible, reliable, and acceptable to the scientific community. Consistency was the third criterion. This was done to ensure that the research method was faithfully done especially in the selection of the participants of the study. Finally, neutrality was fully observed by making sure that personal biases were removed in favor of the actual data and findings of the study.

Moreover, to ensure the trustworthiness of this qualitative study, the researcher strictly observed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability which were asserted by Morse et al. (2002)[9].

Credibility

Credibility was described as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings (Halloway & Wheeler, 2002; Macnee & McCabe, 2008)[10]. In order to ensure the credibility of this study, the following procedures and processes were strictly followed: First, the proposed guide questions were subjected to expert validation. Second, responses of the participants during the interview were recorded upon the consent of the participants. This was done to ensure that what were written were the exact narrations of the participants' lived experiences of the phenomena. Finally, after conducting the interview, the researcher conducted member-checking to the participants to review that what were recorded or noted were exactly the same with the participants' responses. In addition, the researcher requested the participants to sign the form to confirm the validity of the data gathered.

Transferability

Transferability referred to the degree in which the research can be transferred to other contexts and settings (Merriam, 1996). The researcher made sure that proper protocols and guidelines in the conduct of qualitative research were followed. Also, the researcher made sure that the delineation of the participants' experiences and insights were clear and understandable so that those who experienced the same phenomenon can relate with the experiences of the participants of this study.

Dependability

Dependability was described as the stability of findings over time (Bitsch, 2005). To ensure the dependability of this study, the researcher wrote a detailed description on the various procedures and processes that were used and employed in the study. Doing such readers to track down how the researcher implemented correct and acceptable practices that were aligned with research ethical standards. In addition, an expert auditor or research adviser was tapped to conduct inquiry audit and verify the consistency of agreement among data, research method, interpretation, and conclusions.

Confirmability

Confirmability was an important requirement in conducting qualitative research. This refers to the degree to which the results of the study were meticulously confirmed or validated by other researchers (Baxter & Eyles, 2010). It was also concerned with establishing that the data and the interpretation of data were not figments of the author's imagination but were clearly derived from the collected data (Tobin & Begley, 2010). To fully satisfy this requirement, the researcher crafted the data, from which all interpretations were made available to all for inspection. This was done to allow any reader of the research report examine the data to confirm results and interpretations. Also, to enhance the confirmability of the study, the researcher provided an audit trail so that the readers may not have difficulty in tracing the exact descriptions of the participants in the interview transcripts. Finally, after writing the research report, the manuscript was presented to the participants for further validation of the transcripts and narrations integrated in the research report.

Ethical Considerations

Of prime importance in doing qualitative research, was strict compliance to ethical considerations (Creswell, 2010). Proper protocol was observed ranging from seeking the approval of the Schools Division Superintendent to conduct the study, to the district supervisor, and seeking the permission of all the school heads. The researcher informed the participants of the schedule of the conduct of the interview. Proper etiquette and decorum were observed during the interview process. The participants were informed that all data where be recorded for purposes of proper transcription and analysis. They were informed also that anytime during the interview, they may opt not to answer the question or may even decide to stop participating in the interview. After the interview,

the recorded responses were played to give participants the time to listen and to decide whether to remove or extract portion or portions of the interview. Finally, to assume reliability and validity of the data, the participants were assured of confidentiality of their answers and that at the most proper time, all the data collected were destroyed to protect their identities. Transcripts and the translated versions were on the file and shall be made available upon request. This access to the inquiry's paper trail gives the readers and other researchers the ability to transfer conclusion of this inquiry to other cases, or to repeat, as closely as possible the procedures of this study.

3. Results

This chapter highlights the details of the qualitative research which served as the catalyst for the data provided by the informants. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the informants, resulting in several pages of transcribed texts and analysis of data were generated. The process involved making several decisions about which data fit together and useful for the study, and which data were unusable because they were unrelated to the research questions.

In determining the themes of the study, essential phases that frequently emerged from the transcripts and comments were identified as thematic statements. They were noted down and grouped accordingly to determine patterns and connections between themes. The first round produced more than ten themes. Regrouping was done to reduce the essential themes or main themes into fewer items. The procedure finally generated essential themes. The process of numeration was adopted in the determination of thematic statements.

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Instructional Approaches Implemented by Teachers to Address Gender-Fairness

- Differentiated learning
- Blended learning
- Cooperative learning

3.1.2. Perceived Barriers that Hamper the Teachers' Implementation of Gender-Fair Learning Approaches in the Classroom

- Bullying/Conflict
- Unsupportive family and community

3.1.3. Intervention of the Perceived Barriers Developed from the Findings of the Study

- Engaged to Class and School Activities
- GAD Orientation to Stakeholders

3.2. Figures, Tables and Schemes

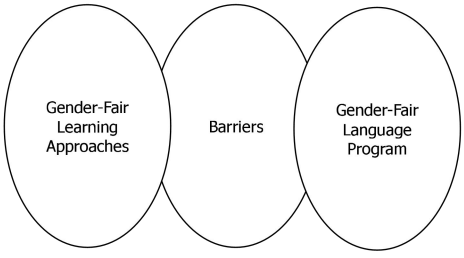


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

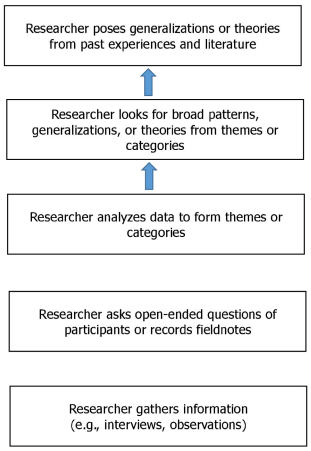


Figure 2. Creswell Framework

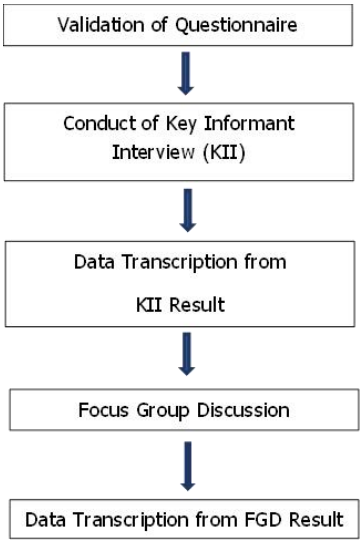


Figure 3. Analytical Framework of Data Collection

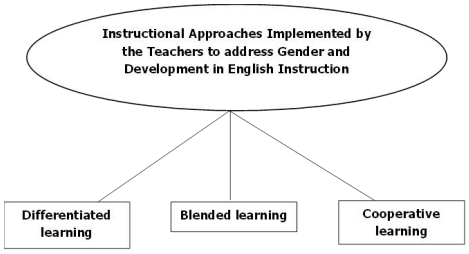


Figure 4. Three Essential Themes on the Instructional Approaches Implemented by the Teachers to address Gender and Development in English Instruction

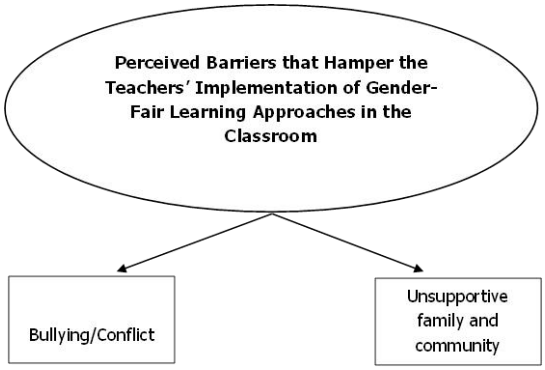


Figure 5. Perceived Barriers that Hamper the Teachers' Implementation of Gender-Fair Learning Approaches in the Classroom

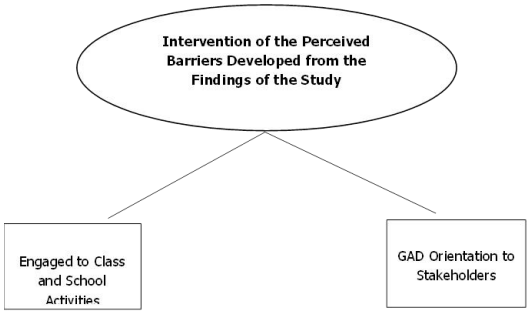


Figure 6. Intervention of the Perceived Barriers Developed from the Findings of the Study

4. Discussion

Authors should discuss the results and how they can be interpreted in perspective of previous studies and of the working hypotheses. The findings and their implications should be discussed in the broadest context possible. Future research directions may also be highlighted.

5. Conclusions

With the above stated themes generated from data analysis, it can be concluded that:

The instructional approaches implemented by the teachers to address gender and development in English instruction are differentiated learning; blended learning; and cooperative learning.

The perceived barriers that hinder the teachers in integrating gender-fair learning approaches in their routinely tasks are bullying/conflict and unsupportive family and community. The interventions developed based from the findings of the study are 1) Engaged to Class and School Activities; 2) GAD Orientation to Stakeholders.

As a learning insight, the researcher acknowledged the importance of enforcing Gender and Development Policy in the entire school community. Moreover, gender equality can be addressed through the implementation of gender-fair learning approaches in the classroom. Whatever the gender choices of the students are, they are entitled to their rights, resources, opportunities, and protections.

6. Future Directions of the Study

As based on the authentic findings, the following are recommended.

1. The School heads may obtain relevant information from this study on gender-fair learning approaches and focus on creating environments that are gender expansive and fluid in their respective departments.

2. The teachers who are at the helm of instruction are expected to continuously implement Gender and Development policy into the fiber of class undertakings by enforcing gender-fair learning approaches in all subject areas.

3. This study is valuable to students as they develop their gender identity principally in learning institutions. Their gender choices profoundly affect how they act and how they relate to one another. Whatever inclinations students have, it must be respected, hence it is fundamental that Gender and Development be firmly implemented in all learning institutions.

4. The literature on gender-fair learning approach will serve as learning resource for future researchers.

Acknowledgments: Immeasurable appreciation and deepest gratitude for the help and support are extended to the following individuals who are in one way or another contributed in making this study possible.

Foremost, I want to offer this endeavor to our God Almighty for the wisdom He bestowed upon me, the strength, peace of mind and good health to finish this research.

My Family and siblings, husband Kim, my children Nyethan, Kiann and Baby Kim, for the encouragement and support which helped me in the completion of this paper. Kuya Jaboy for extending financial support to make this thesis.

My adviser and editor, Dr. Siverlyn M. Camposano, for her valuable comments, suggestions, and guidance. Sharing her expertise and endless help to finish this manuscript.

Distinguished members of the panel headed by Dr. Zandro P. Ibañez together with Dr. Amelie T. Bello and Dr. Cindy B. Rosil for the approval of my work and exemplary recognition.

My mentor, Dr. Joy A. Bariquit, for sharing her knowledge, untiring support, and words of encouragement.

My BNES and CBES family for their help and giving considerations just to finish this study.

To my respondents who spare time and effort in answering the questions.

Anna May Borja-Dumdum

Appendix A

REQUEST LETTER TO THE SCHOOLS DIVISION SUPERINTENDENT

Appendix B

ENDORSEMENT LETTER OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL CHAIRMAN

Appendix C

REQUEST LETTER FOR EVALUATION OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Appendix D

VALIDATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Appendix E

SURVEY QUESTIONS

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