



International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation.

Awareness and Implementation of Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy

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Article Info

ISSN (online): 2582-7138

Volume: 06

Issue: 01

January-February 2025

Received: 10-11-2024

Accepted: 11-12-2024

Page No: 65-77

Abstract

This study examines the awareness and implementation of the gender-responsive basic education policy (GRBEP) in public secondary schools in Cabuyao City, Philippines. Additionally, this research aims to identify areas for improvement in GRBEP implementation and practice within public secondary schools in Cabuyao City, ultimately contributing to the development of a roadmap for optimization of improvement plan. Utilizing a quantitative, descriptive, and correlational research design, we assessed GRBEP integration through a two-part questionnaire administered to 380 students and 280 employees (teaching and non-teaching staff).

The questionnaire evaluated their awareness and implementation of GRBEP principles across six key areas: learner development, curriculum standards, learning delivery, learning environment, learning resources, and assessment. Statistical analysis, including mean, standard deviation, Mann Whitney U test for significant differences, and Spearman Rho for correlation, was conducted. The findings reveal a significant relationship between the level of awareness and the level of GRBEP implementation among students and employees. Thus, when students and employees were more aware on GRBEP, the policy is well implemented.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54660/IJMRGE.2025.6.1.65-77>

Keywords: Awareness, Continuous Improvement Program, Gender and Development, Gender-responsive basic education policy, Implementation, Improvement plan

1. Introduction

Education is the cornerstone of individual and societal progress. It empowers people with knowledge, skills, and opportunities to reach their full potential. However, this ideal becomes elusive when gender disparity persists within educational systems. Unequal access to educational resources and opportunities based on gender hinders the academic and personal development of both girls and boys. This disparity can have far-reaching consequences, limiting social mobility and perpetuating gender stereotypes in the workforce and broader society. For instance, girls in developing countries may be pulled out of school early to help with household chores or get married young, hindering their educational attainment and future career prospects. Boys from low-income backgrounds, on the other hand, might be pressured to leave school early to enter the workforce and contribute to the family income. This not only limits their educational opportunities but also reinforces the notion that certain professions are more suited for one gender over the other.

The fight for gender equality in education is not solely about girls' access to education. Boys' education is equally important. Research by UNESCO (2018) suggests that boys from low-income backgrounds in Europe and Latin America are also pushed out of educational institutions due to the belief that they can easily find work in the unskilled labor market. Schools that uphold traditional gender norms may also contribute to boys' disengagement from education. This lack of educational attainment can put boys at a disadvantage when it comes to developing the human capital needed to lead productive lives.

The issue of gender equality in education extends beyond the binary of girls and boys. LGBTQIA+ individuals also face significant challenges within the educational system. These challenges can include discrimination, harassment, and a lack of understanding of their diverse needs. A recent report in the Philippines highlighted the case of four transgender women who

were prohibited from participating in their graduation marches due to their long hair, which violated the schools' dress code. These experiences underscore the need for a more inclusive approach to education that respects and affirms the identities of all students.

The Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines has recognized the importance of gender equality in education. In 2017, DepEd issued Order No. 32, which established the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy (GRBEP). This policy promotes fairness and equal opportunity in education and emphasizes gender equality and equity. It aims to ensure that all students, regardless of gender identity, can participate and succeed in school. The GRBEP outlines guidelines for integrating gender-responsive practices across various aspects of basic education, including curriculum development, teaching methodologies, and classroom environments. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of creating safe and nurturing learning spaces for all students.

Despite the existence of the GRBEP policy, disparities in access, participation, and academic achievement between genders persist. Studies indicate a need to delve deeper into how effectively schools are addressing these imbalances. There is a possibility that a lack of awareness or inadequate implementation of the GRBEP within schools could be contributing factors.

This research employs the Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework established by the Philippine Commission on Women (2016). This framework provides a structured approach for organizations to assess their progress in promoting gender equality. It helps identify areas for improvement within an organization's efforts to achieve this goal. While comprehensive, the framework is designed for a broader organizational evaluation. This research tailors the framework to focus specifically on the implementation of DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017 (GRBEP) within schools. It concentrates on the "Programs/Activities/Projects" (PAPs) entry point of the framework, which aligns closely with the research objectives. PAPs represent the concrete actions taken in schools to implement gender-responsive practices, directly impacting both students and school personnel, particularly in terms of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. By focusing on PAPs, the research seeks to understand how DepEd Order No. 32 translates into tangible actions that promote gender equality in the school environment.

Furthermore, this research builds upon the work of Manalang (2023) ^[57] who also utilized the Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework. However, the current study differs by specifically focusing on awareness and implementation of DepEd Order No. 32 within the "Programs/Activities/Projects" domain. This targeted approach allows for a more granular analysis of the policy's impact on schools and how effectively it is being translated into action.

The Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy (GRBEP) aims to create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students in the Philippines. However, the effectiveness of this policy hinges on its successful implementation within schools. This study investigates the current state of GRBEP awareness and implementation within the City Schools Division of Cabuyao. Specifically, the problem lies in the potential gap between the intended goals of the GRBEP and its actual application within the schools. A lack of awareness among students and employees

regarding the policy's components, or inadequate implementation strategies, could hinder the policy's effectiveness in promoting gender equality within the educational system. By assessing the current level of awareness and implementation of the GRBEP, this study aims to identify areas for improvement and develop a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) to bridge the gap and ensure the policy's successful execution within the City Schools Division of Cabuyao.

Literature Review

This literature review includes awareness, gender-responsive basic education policy, demographic profile in terms of gender, demographic profile in terms of grade level, demographic profile in terms of length of service, learners development, curriculum standards, learning delivery, learning environment, learning resources, assessment, gender responsiveness.

Creating educational spaces where every student feels important and has the opportunity to succeed is fundamental to good teaching. The review of related literature and studies looks into policies focused on responding to gender needs in education and how they affect student growth, what is taught, how it's taught, and ensuring schools are safe for learning.

Clear policies promoting gender expression and programs celebrating diverse identities are crucial for fostering a sense of belonging among students (Airton *et al.*, 2019; Balsomo *et al.*, 2023) ^[3, 9]. However, a lack of training in Gender-responsive basic education policy (GRBEP) for teachers can hinder efforts to combat bias and stereotypes that limit student potential (Muasya, 2021) ^[61]. Similarly, curriculum standards that lack a gender-sensitive approach can perpetuate these limitations. Research by Kravchenko *et al.* (2021) ^[54] demonstrates that a gender-sensitive approach improves student critical thinking and career guidance by challenging stereotypes. Furthermore, Park (2022) ^[67] found that pre-service teachers exposed to gender sensitivity programs showed increased openness and self-reflection regarding diverse gender roles. These findings highlight the importance of not only integrating a gender-sensitive approach into curriculum standards but also prioritizing GRBEP training for educators.

Effective learning hinges on creating a safe and inclusive environment through gender-responsive pedagogy. Stroud (2023) ^[75] emphasizes the importance of LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum and teacher training to create safe spaces for students. Chotim (2022) ^[20] adds that gender-responsive lesson planning and language use are also crucial. Vizcarra-Garcia (2021) ^[87] highlights the positive impact of educator support for adopting inclusive language, fostering participation, and promoting equality in the classroom. These studies emphasize the need for a well-rounded approach to learning delivery that prioritizes inclusivity through curriculum, teacher training, and the language used in the classroom.

Research by Wall (2022) ^[88], Cubing & Generale (2023) ^[26], and Russel *et al.* (2021) ^[72] underscores the challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ students, including bias, discrimination, and a lack of understanding of gender identity. Contos *et al.* (2023) ^[22] further emphasize the importance of fostering a sense of belonging and support networks for these students. Villardón-Gallego *et al.* (2023) ^[85] suggest that early interventions and inclusive policies can create safer spaces, promoting positive relationships and reducing gender-based

violence. A holistic approach addressing policy and teacher training is essential for building inclusive learning environments for all students.

The review of related literature strongly emphasizes the significance of adopting a gender-responsive approach to education to create inclusive learning environments. This involves a comprehensive strategy that includes training educators in Gender-responsive basic education policy (GRBEP), embedding gender sensitivity within curriculum standards, and employing inclusive teaching methods. Establishing school environments where every student feels respected and encouraged is vital to nurturing a setting where all students can thrive. It is crucial for educators to constantly examine their prejudices and actively pursue professional growth to make sure their classrooms are welcoming and inclusive for everyone.

Methods

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to investigate the awareness and implementation of the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy (GRBEP) in the City Schools Division of Cabuyao. A survey questionnaire was the primary data collection tool (Caparas & Yango, 2023) ^[16]. Descriptive research methods aim to describe the current state of a phenomenon, population, or situation (Siedlecki, 2020) ^[74]. In this case, the research described the level of awareness and implementation of GRBEP as perceived by the respondents. The correlational aspect of the study sought to identify relationships between the perceived levels of awareness and implementation (Cabigao, 2019) ^[14]. This approach allowed the researcher to determine which awareness indicators were most closely associated with the degree of GRBEP implementation in schools.

This study employed a multistage cluster sampling technique to select respondents from the City Schools Division of Cabuyao (Yazon, 2020) ^[92]. Due to the large population size, schools were first clustered into five districts (Yazon, 2020) ^[92]. Then, one school from each district was chosen using simple random sampling, ensuring each school had an equal probability of selection. This approach allowed the researchers to gather data from a representative sample of students and employees within the City Schools Division of Cabuyao.

This study investigated the awareness and implementation of the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy (GRBEP) within the City Schools Division of Cabuyao. An adapted survey questionnaire was used to compare perceptions among students and employees (teaching and non-teaching staff) across five schools representing each district (Manalang, 2023) ^[57]. The goal was to identify any significant differences in awareness and implementation between these groups. The data will be used to inform the development of an improvement plan to address any gaps in GRBEP implementation within the schools. To ensure the reliability of the survey instrument, the researcher adapted an existing tool from Manalang (2023) ^[57] and conducted a reliability test with a panel of validators (including a research expert, subject matter expert, and language validator). Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to assess the instrument's internal consistency. The result showed all survey questions were statistically reliable and acceptable to this research.

The original survey instrument contained 75 items, but to avoid respondent fatigue and bias (Villegas, 2024), the researchers reduced the questionnaire to a more manageable 24 items (Revilla & Ochoa, 2017). This was achieved by merging questions with similar content. The final instrument addressed two key areas: respondents' awareness of GRBEP and their perceptions of its implementation within the schools. The wording of the questions was adapted from a previous study by Manalang (2023) ^[57]. Using Google Forms, the instrument was submitted online to the five schools representing each district in the City Schools Division of Cabuyao. An approved letter from the City Schools Division of Cabuyao granting permission for the researcher to carry out a survey study was attached. Additionally, respondents who requested to respond offline also used the printed version of the questionnaire. To ensure the effectiveness of the research instruments, the researchers conducted a pilot testing with the students and employees of Pulo National High School. This pilot data was analyzed to refine the clarity, flow, and response patterns of the survey. The schools involved were Pulo Senior High School, Gulod National High School, Southville 1 Integrated National High School, Marinig National High School, and Casile Integrated National High School. Researchers investigated perceptions of both students and employees (teachers and non-teaching staff).

To ensure a representative sample, 575 participants were selected using simple random sampling within each school. The RaoSoft calculator was used to determine the appropriate sample size. Data collection involved quantitative surveys administered by teachers for non-teaching staff. Students completed surveys through online Google Forms or paper copies. All participants provided informed consent and anonymity was maintained. The same survey instruments were used for both students and staff to allow for comparisons in their understanding and application of GRBEP. Finally, the researcher shared the research findings, including data analysis, results, recommendations and a continuous improvement program, with the GAD coordinator at each participating school. This approach ensured transparency and informed the schools and participants about the research outcomes.

The data were gathered for interpretation and analysis, tallied and tabulated to facilitate the presentation and interpretation of results using the following: Frequency and Percentage were also determined by the researchers due to its usefulness in arranging and summarizing the data. It was one of the statistical tables that can display the number of instances for each score. In addition, it often includes the percentages for each score. In addition, this was utilized to determine the frequency counts and percentage distribution of the demographic profile of the respondents and their gender identity.

Table 1: Five-Point Likert Scale on Awareness

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation	Description
5	4.20-5.00	Fully Aware	Very High Awareness
4	3.40-4.19	Aware	High Awareness
3	2.60-3.39	Neither Aware or Not Aware	Moderate Awareness
2	1.80-2.59	Not Aware	Low Awareness
1	1.00-1.79	Full Not Aware	Very Low Awareness

Table 2: Gender-Responsive Assessment Scale

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation	Description
5	4.21-5.00	Level 5 Gender Transformative	This level acknowledges the unique needs of both genders, addresses the root causes of gender-based health and other disparities, reshapes harmful gender norms and roles to promote gender equality, and cultivates positive power dynamics between women and men.
4	3.41-4.20	Level 4 Gender Specific	This level considers gender norms, roles, and relationships that affect women's and men's resource access and control. The needs of women and men are also considered. It also intentionally targets a specific group of women or men to meet policy or program goals or meet specific needs. It also helps women and men fulfill their gender roles.
3	2.61-3.40	Level 3 Gender Sensitive	This level discusses gender norms, roles, and relations but not their inequalities. It shows gender awareness, but it rarely takes corrective action.
2	1.81-2.60	Level 2 Gender Blind	This level ignores gender norms, roles, and relationships, perpetuating gender-based discrimination and ignoring gender resource disparities. It often emphasizes fairness and treating everyone equally.
1	1.00-1.	Level 1 Gender Negative	This level reinforces unbalanced norms, roles, and relations, favoring one gender and resulting in unequal rights and opportunities.

Source: Manalang (2023) ^[57] & World Health Organization (2010)

The Table 4 showed the corresponding scale and range that was used in determining the level of implementation of employees and students on GRBEP.

The Cronbach's Alpha was utilized to measure the validity and reliability of the research instrument.

The Mean was utilized by the researchers to determine the level of agreement or disagreement of the respondents in a particular statement.

The Standard Deviation was utilized by the researchers. It provides an indication of how the response of the students to a question deviates from the mean.

Mann-Whitney U test was utilized by the researchers to determine the significant difference between the two groups, students and employees. Also, since the data gathered are not normally distributed, this test was utilized.

Moreover, Spearman rho was utilized to determine the significant relationship between the level of awareness and implementation of GRBEP as perceived by the students and employees.

Results

The results presented the findings, analysis, and interpretation of data to determine whether there is significant difference in the level of awareness of GRBEP between students and employees, whether significant difference in the level of implementation of GRBEP between students and employees, and whether significant relationship between the level of awareness and level of implementation of the GRBEP.

Particularly, the researchers sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the respondents, in terms of:

1.1 Employees

1.1.1 Gender;

1.1.2 Length of Service; and

1.1.3 Designation?

1.2. Students

1.2.1 Gender; and

1.2.2 Year Level?

Table 3: Demographic Profile of the Students in terms of Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lesbian	4	1.1
Gay	7	1.8
Bisexual	30	7.9
Queer	2	.5
Asexual	1	.3
Male (Cisgender)	155	40.8
Female (Cisgender)	180	47.4
Pansexual	1	.3
Total	380	100.0

This study found a diverse range of gender identities among student respondents, including cisgender females, males, bisexual, lesbian, gay, queer, asexual, and pansexual students. This highlights the importance of promoting gender-inclusive policies, curriculum, and practices within the schools to address the needs of all students regardless of gender identity.

The research is supported by Gong *et al.* (2021) ^[43] who found a positive influence of female peers on student outcomes in middle school. This suggests tailoring interventions by grade level to address the potential impact of classroom gender dynamics on student experiences.

Resources from the American Psychological Association (2021) ^[5] and the Council of Europe (2020) can further guide educators in creating inclusive learning environments.

However, Arcand *et al.* (2020) ^[8] highlight the complexities of gender and mental health. Their research suggests that traditional gender roles may influence anxiety and depression differently for students. This emphasizes the need for a nuanced approach that considers the interplay between gender roles, student experiences, and mental health. Interventions that focus solely on gender identity might not

be sufficient. Instead, a balanced approach that fosters inclusivity and broader social-emotional learning skills could benefit all students.

Table 4: Demographic Profile of the Student in terms of Grade Level

Grade Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Grade 7	122	32.1
Grade 8	33	8.7
Grade 9	33	8.7
Grade 10	62	16.3
Grade 11	58	15.3
Grade 12	72	18.9
Total	380	100.0

This study found a relatively balanced distribution of students across grade levels. This information is valuable for planning interventions that address the specific needs of students at different developmental stages. Similar to the findings by UNESCO (2019), tailoring interventions by grade level is crucial. However, research by Eleje *et al.* (2020) [34] suggests that a broader approach is necessary. Their study highlights the influence of additional factors, such as school type (single-sex vs. co-educational) and socioeconomic background, on student learning outcomes. These findings emphasize the need to consider factors beyond just grade level when designing gender-responsive interventions.

Table 5: Demographic Profile of the Employees in terms of Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lesbian	3	1.1
Gay	8	2.9
Bisexual	19	6.8
Queer	0	0
Asexual	0	0
Male (Cisgender)	92	32.9
Female (Cisgender)	158	56.4
Pansexual	0	0
Total	280	100.0

The employee population showed less diversity in gender identities compared to students. Despite this, promoting gender inclusivity and sensitivity remains important for all staff members to create a supportive environment (Johnson *et al.*, 2021) [47]. This may involve creating gender-neutral

facilities, inclusive parental leave policies, and addressing hiring bias. However, research by Clark *et al.* (2022) [21] suggests potential downsides to an overly identity-focused approach. Some employees felt pressure to conform in workplaces with strong LGBTQ+ initiatives. This emphasizes the need for a broader diversity and inclusion strategy that celebrates differences without creating divisions. This could involve open communication, diversity training, and fostering a culture of respect for all individuals.

Table 6: Demographic Profile of the Employees in terms of Length in Service

Length in Service	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-5 Years	157	56.1
6-10 Years	79	28.2
11 Years and Above	44	15.7
Total	280	100.0

The study found that a majority of employees (56.1%) have 1-5 years of experience. This information can be used to tailor professional development initiatives on gender-responsive education (GRE) to address the needs of employees with varying experience levels. While awareness training is a crucial first step, research by Deutschmann *et al.* (2021) [30] suggests it may not be enough for experienced teachers. Their study highlights the need to equip these educators with practical skills and strategies to tackle gender bias effectively. This aligns with the idea that a more nuanced approach is needed for experienced staff compared to newer employees. However, research by Yang (2019) [19] suggests a positive link between professional development experience and teacher self-efficacy. This implies that teachers who participate in more professional development programs may feel more confident in their abilities. However, the effectiveness of specific program content may vary depending on experience.

2. What is the level of awareness of the students and employees regarding the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy in terms of

- 2.1 Learners Development;
- 2.2 Curriculum Standards;
- 2.3 Learning Delivery;
- 2.4 Learning Environment;
- 2.5 Learning Resources; and
- 2.6 Assessment?

Table 7: Summary of the Level of Awareness of Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy

	Student			Employees		
	M	SD	Interpretation	M	SD	Interpretation
Learners Development	4.13	.905	High Awareness	4.26	.786	Very High Awareness
Curriculum Standards	4.19	.825	High Awareness	4.32	.705	Very High Awareness
Learning Delivery	4.16	.808	High Awareness	4.34	.714	Very High Awareness
Learning Environment	4.22	.840	Very High Awareness	4.34	.665	Very High Awareness
Learning Resources	4.07	.862	High Awareness	4.24	.793	Very High Awareness
Assessment	4.10	0.822	High Awareness	4.19	.728	High Awareness
Average Awareness	4.15	.844	High Awareness	4.28	.732	Very High Awareness

This table presented the summary on student and employee awareness of the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy (GRBEP) across various domains (Table 17). Employees reported a very high overall awareness level (mean = 4.28) compared to students' high overall awareness (mean = 4.15). Students showed the highest awareness in learning

environment (mean = 4.22) and curriculum standards (mean = 4.19) domains. Employees also rated learning environment (mean = 4.34) highest, followed by learning delivery (mean = 4.34). These findings suggest that while awareness is generally high, there's room for improvement, particularly among

students in some domains. The school should continue efforts to promote GRBEP across all areas. This is supported by research from Widodo & Elyas (2020) [90] and Yuden *et al.* (2020) [95] who emphasize the need for schools to integrate gender-responsive practices and raise awareness among all stakeholders. Ultimately, maintaining high awareness levels can contribute to a more inclusive school environment and potentially improve academic and personal outcomes for all students (Yesil & Balci Karabaga, 2021) [93].
 What is the level of implementation of the students and

employees regarding the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy in terms of:

- 3.1 Learners Development;
- 3.2 Curriculum Standards;
- 3.3 Learning Delivery;
- 3.4 Learning Environment;
- 3.5 Learning Resources; and
- 3.6 Assessment?

Table 8: Summary of Level of Implementation of Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy

	Student			Employees		
	M	SD	Interpretation	M	SD	Interpretation
Learners Development	4.14	0.9205	Level 4 Gender Specific	4.10	.870	Level 4 Gender Specific
Curriculum Standards	4.15	0.945	Level 4 Gender Specific	4.21	.814	Level 5 Gender Transformative
Learning Delivery	4.13	0.8585	Level 4 Gender Specific	4.26	.761	Level 5 Gender Transformative
Learning Environment	4.21	0.856	Level 5 Gender Transformative	4.15	.868	Level 4 Gender Specific
Learning Resources	4.13	0.908	Level 4 Gender Specific	4.25	.748	Level 5 Gender Transformative
Assessment	4.15	0.8865	Level 4 Gender Specific	4.24	.812	Level 5 Gender Transformative
AVERAGE IMPLEMENTATION	4.15	.896	Level 4 Gender Specific	4.20	.812	Level 4 Gender Specific

Legend. 1.00-1.80= Level 1 Gender Negative; 1.81-2.60= Level 2 Gender Blind; 2.61-3.40= Level 3 Gender Sensitive; 3.41-4.20= Level 4 Gender Specific; 4.21-5.00=Level 5 Gender Transformative

This table presented student and employee perceptions of the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy (GRBEP) implementation across various domains. Both groups reported generally high implementation levels, falling within the "Level 4: Gender Specific" range. Students (mean = 4.15) reported a slightly lower overall perception compared to employees (mean = 4.20).

Students perceived the learning environment (mean = 4.21) as having the highest implementation level, while employees rated learning delivery (mean = 4.26) and learning resources (mean = 4.25) highest. These findings indicate a need for continued efforts to improve implementation in all domains. In particular, student perceptions of assessment and employee perceptions of the learning environment could benefit from further attention.

Research by Galamgam (2021) [39] supports this notion. Their

study identified a need for increased support, monitoring, and resources for educators to effectively implement GRBEP. Additionally, limited cooperation with external organizations was highlighted as a potential barrier. However, point to the ongoing challenges of achieving gender equality in education. Their research suggests that instructors may lack the awareness or skills to effectively address gender-based issues.

Taken together, these findings emphasize the importance of a multifaceted approach to ensure high levels of GRBEP implementation across all domains. This can contribute to creating a more inclusive learning environment where all students feel supported and empowered to reach their full potential, regardless of gender identity.

4. Is there a significant difference in the level of awareness of Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy between students and employees?

5. Is there a significant difference in the level of implementation of Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy between students and employees?

Table 9: Difference Between the Level of Awareness and Implementation

Indicators	Respondents	M	SD2	Computed U-Value	Computed p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation	Effect Size r	Interpretation
Awareness	Students	4.15	.844	48538.000	.032	Reject	Significant	.08	small
	Employees	4.28	.732						
Implementation	Students	4.15	.896	50530.500	.225	Failed to Reject	Not Significant		
	Employees	4.20	.812						

Legend. If $p \leq 0.05$ reject the null hypothesis, otherwise failed to reject. If $.01 < r < 0.031$ =Small Effect; $.31 < r < .51$ =Medium Effect; $.51 < r < 1$ =Large Effect

This table presented the differences between student and employee perceptions of GRBEP awareness and implementation statistically significant difference was found in awareness levels ($p < 0.05$), with employees reporting slightly higher awareness (mean = 4.28) compared to students (mean = 4.15). There was no significant difference in implementation levels ($p > 0.05$) between the two groups (students: mean = 4.15, employees: mean = 4.20). These findings suggest that while the school implements GRBEP

practices effectively, there's a need to focus on raising student awareness. Increased awareness is crucial for fostering understanding and support for gender-responsive initiatives within the school community, as highlighted by EIGE (2024). However, research by Yuden *et al.* (2020) [95] points to potential challenges. Their study identified a lack of gender responsiveness among educators and a struggle to address gender issues in the classroom. This emphasizes the need for ongoing efforts to raise awareness and equip educators with

appropriate pedagogical approaches to achieve a truly gender-responsive learning environment. Overall, this section highlights the importance of both awareness and implementation for creating a more inclusive and equitable learning environment that supports all students regardless of

gender identity.

6. Is there any significant relationship between the level of awareness and implementation of the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy?

Table 10: Relationship Between the Level of Awareness and Implementation of Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy

Indicators	M	SD	Computed r-Value	Interpretation	Computed p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation	Effect Size r	Interpretation
Awareness	4.22	.788	.588	Relatively strong Correlation	.000	Reject	Significant	.05	small

Legend. If p ≤ .05 reject the null hypothesis, otherwise failed to reject. If 0.00 < r < 0.10=Negligible; 0.10 < r < 0.20=Weak; 0.20 < r < 0.40=Moderate; 0.40 < r < 0.60=Relatively strong; 0.60 < r < 0.80=Strong; 0.80 < r < 1.00=Very strong. If .01 < r < .031=Small Effect; .31 < r < .51=Medium Effect; .51 < r < 1=Large Effect

The analysis of the relationship between awareness and implementation of GRBEP (Table 12) revealed a statistically significant positive correlation (r = .588). This indicates that students and employees who reported higher awareness of GRBEP also perceived a higher level of implementation within the school.

This finding suggests that the school should continue efforts to promote both awareness and implementation, as they seem to be mutually reinforcing. Increased awareness can lead to more effective implementation, and successful implementation can further elevate awareness and appreciation for gender-responsive practices.

This is supported by research from Javillonar *et al* who found a positive relationship between teacher awareness of gender-related laws and the implementation of those laws in schools. They emphasize the importance of awareness campaigns and training to strengthen implementation and foster teacher commitment to gender-responsive practices, as highlighted by Gallardo-Nieto *et al.* (2021) ^[40].

However, the Japan International Cooperation Agency offers a contrasting perspective. Their report suggests that a lack of awareness and understanding about gender and gender mainstreaming methods within implementing agencies can hinder progress. Overall, these findings emphasize the importance of a two-pronged approach that addresses both awareness and implementation to create a truly inclusive and equitable learning environment that supports all students regardless of gender identity.

7. What improvement plan can be derived based from the results of the study?

Subject: Proposal for Continuous Improvement Program on GRBEP in City Schools Division of Cabuyao

The research findings highlighted the importance of continuous improvement in promoting gender-responsive education in the City Schools Division of Cabuyao. This plan outlines a one-week program in schools designed to enhance awareness and implementation of GRBEP principles among all school stakeholders, ultimately creating a more inclusive and equitable learning environment.

Enhancing the quality of education and school administration in the public schools of the Philippines is the goal of the Department of Education's (DepEd) Continuous Improvement Program (CIP) (SDO Bohol, 2024). This plan addresses the need for enhanced awareness and effective implementation of GRBEP principles. By focusing on these areas, the researchers aim to cultivate a school environment that fosters respect, inclusivity, and the full potential of every student, regardless of gender identity or expression.

Launching the program in June aligns it with a message of acceptance and celebration of diversity. This positive association can create a more receptive atmosphere for the implementation of GRBEP principles within the school community (Youth.gov, 2024) ^[94]. Also, June might be strategically chosen to kick-off the program before the new academic year begins, allowing for planning, training, and implementation throughout the summer months.

Table 11: Proposed Continuous Improvement Program

Implementer	Ref #	Policy	Project/ Program Project	Actions	Timeframe	Budget	Budget Source	Status	Participants
SBM, GAD Coordinator, and School Administration	Deped 32 s. 2017	Gender Responsive Basic education Policy	One Week Program on Enhancing Awareness and Implementation of Gender-Responsive Education Principles (GRBEP) in Schools	Enhance awareness and implementation of GRBE Policy among all school stakeholders in the City Schools Division of Cabuyao	June 23, 2025	Php 12,000	School Budget	Not Started	All students teachers, staff parents

This program offered a week-long initiative focused on Gender-Responsive Education Principles (GRBEP). Designed to cultivate inclusivity and respect for all within the school community, the program provides engaging activities for students, educators, staff, and even parents. Interactive

workshops would equip educators with GRBEP-aligned teaching strategies, while social media challenges and a virtual talent show will foster student participation and dialogue about gender equality.

Table 12: Proposed Program

One-Week Program on Enhancing Awareness and Implementation of Gender-Responsive Education Principles (GRBEP) in Schools					
Day/Time	Activity	Participants	Budget	Objectives	Success Indicator
Monday June 23, 2025 6:00-8:00 am (2 hour)	Open ceremony with a parade	All students and teachers	Php 3000.00 allocated to decorations for virtual stage background.	This program commences with an opening ceremony that celebrates student diversity and inclusivity.	
Tuesday 7:00-8:00 am (1 hour)	Parents Orientation	Parents, students and teachers	Php 1,000.00 allotted budget for printed materials to be distributed to all participants.	Parents and guardians will be invited to attend an orientation session on GRBEP principles. The session will focus on the importance of these principles in creating a fair and inclusive learning environment and explore ways parents can support their children and the school's efforts.	
Wednesday 7:00-9:00am (2 hours)	Student's Intermission and "#GRBEPAware" social media challenge	Students, parents and teachers	Php 2,000.00 for prizes to the winner.	All of the student's entries on social media challenges will be played on the stage. After having a student's performance on stage, the next activity will be the voting for the social media challenge activity. This activity proposes the implementation of a social media challenge titled "#GRBEPAware" on platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram. This challenge aims to leverage the power of social media on expanding awareness of GRBEP Principles.	
Thursday 7:00-9:00 am (2 hours)	Seminar/workshop for teachers and students	Students and teachers (teaching and non-teaching personnel), staff and school administration	Php 3,000.00 for facilitators and teachers' refreshments. (Bottled water and snacks)	This activity will feature a comprehensive workshop for teachers, non-teaching staff, and school administration. The workshop aims to enhance participants' knowledge and skills in delivering GRBEP-aligned instruction and creating safe and inclusive learning environments for all genders.	
Friday 7:00-9:00 am (2 hours)	Talent showcase	Students, teachers and parents	Php 3,000.00 for prizes.	This activity shows how to achieve a multifaceted objective within a school setting. The primary goal is to explore how such an event can provide a platform for students to showcase their talents and celebrate their individuality in a live environment. By offering a diverse range of performance categories, the research aims to examine the impact on student participation and inclusivity within the school community.	

Table 13: Project Monitoring Report Form

Name of Project	Project Objectives and targets	Date of Monitoring	Accomplishments/ Status to Date	Issues/Problems/Challenges	Recommendations/ Action Points	Signature of SPT and Project Team Leader
-----To be filled by the Project Team-----					To be discussed by SPT and Project Team	

Table 15 showed the project monitoring report form to assess the progress of the Continuous Improvement Program. This template is derived from DepEd Order 44 s. 2015 which aligns with the Enhanced School Improvement Planning process. It also tracks specific programs by name, their goals and targets, and how far they've come towards achieving them. The table also allowed for recording any challenges encountered and suggestions for improvement. By capturing

this information, the table helps monitor progress and ensure programs stay on track to achieve their intended benefits.

Discussion

The study included a diverse range of participants in terms of gender identity. Both students and staff were predominantly cisgender female, with a smaller LGBTQIA+ population. Students were spread fairly evenly across grade levels, with

a slightly higher concentration in seventh grade. Employee tenure also showed variation, with a majority having worked at the school for 1-5 years, and the remaining staff having similar proportions of those employed for 6-10 years and over 10 years.

Both students and staff demonstrated high levels of awareness regarding the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy across most areas. This awareness was particularly strong for employees who scored in the "very high" range for most categories. Students also showed high awareness, though it scored slightly lower than staff in some areas, such as assessment, where it fell into the "high" awareness range. Both students and staff perceived the implementation of the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy to be most successful in creating a gender-transformative learning environment. In other areas, such as learner development and curriculum standards, awareness was high but implementation fell into the "gender-specific" category, suggesting some room for improvement. Interestingly, employees generally perceived the implementation to be stronger than students, with employee perceptions falling into the "gender-transformative" category for curriculum standards, learning delivery, learning resources, and assessment.

While there was a statistically significant difference in awareness levels between students and staff (with staff scoring slightly higher), the difference itself was small. This suggests that overall awareness of the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy was fairly similar between the two groups.

There wasn't a significant difference between students' and employees' perceptions of how well the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy is being implemented. This means we can't reject the initial assumption (null hypothesis) that there's no difference in how the two groups view the implementation. The average scores for students ($M = 4.15$) and staff ($M = 4.20$) were also relatively close.

The study found a positive correlation between awareness and implementation of the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy (GRBEP), meaning those with higher awareness were also more likely to perceive effective implementation. However, this correlation was statistically significant but relatively weak. Based on these findings, the researchers proposed a continuous improvement program to address the need for both increased awareness and more effective implementation of GRBEP principles. This program aims to create a school environment that respects and includes all students, regardless of gender, fostering their full potential.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study explored the awareness and implementation of the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy (GRBEP) in Cabuyao City schools among both students and staff. The participant pool reflected a diverse range of gender identities, with the majority identifying as female and a smaller LGBTQIA+ representation. Students were spread fairly evenly across grade levels, with a slight concentration in Grade 7. Similarly, employee tenure varied, with a majority having worked at the school for 1-5 years.

The study revealed a generally high level of awareness of GRBEP principles across both students and staff. While there were some variations observed, with staff demonstrating slightly higher awareness in areas like curriculum standards

and learning resources, the overall difference was statistically significant but small. This suggests a strong foundation of knowledge regarding GRBEP within the school community. Encouragingly, the perceived level of implementation of GRBEP also showed positive signs. Staff perceived the implementation of the policy in areas like curriculum standards, learning resources, and assessment to be in the "gender-transformative" category, suggesting a move beyond simply acknowledging gender differences to actively promoting gender equality. While students' perceptions in these areas fell into the "gender-specific" category, both groups rated the learning environment as "gender-transformative." This indicates a positive school climate that respects all students regardless of gender identity or expression. The lack of a significant difference in implementation perceptions between students and staff is also encouraging.

However, these findings also highlight the need for continuous improvement. The areas where student perceptions differed from staff suggest there may be opportunities to further strengthen the implementation of GRBEP principles in a way that is more readily recognized by students. A Continuous Improvement Program (CIP) could be a valuable tool in addressing this. This program could focus on developing and implementing strategies that ensure all students experience a learning environment that is not only respectful and inclusive but actively promotes the full potential of every student, regardless of gender. By fostering open communication and collaboration between students, staff, and the wider school community, the CIP can play a crucial role in creating a truly gender-responsive learning environment in Cabuyao City schools.

Recommendation

Given the compelling evidence presented in the study, the researchers proposed the following recommendations:

1. Encourage participation from underrepresented genders (male and LGBTQIA+) in student and employee surveys. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of gender-based perspectives on GRBEP.
2. While awareness is generally high, schools need to consider targeted interventions to further enhance understanding of GRBEP in the areas of assessment (for both students and employees) and learner development. Also, continue to reinforce and expand their efforts to promote gender-responsive education.
3. While implementation is at a "Gender Specific" level for several aspects, strive towards a "Gender Transformative" approach across all areas. This can involve activities that actively challenge gender stereotypes and promote inclusivity.
4. Capitalize on the strong correlation between awareness and implementation. Develop strategies that reinforce understanding of GRBEP to further improve its integration into practices. This could involve workshops, information campaigns, or integrating GRBEP principles into existing training programs.
5. The study found similar overall implementation of GRBEP by students and employees. However, to enhance effectiveness, further investigation is recommended. Focus groups or surveys could explore the needs and understanding of each group regarding specific areas like the learning environment. This would allow for tailored interventions addressing these specific

- needs, ultimately improving overall GRBEP implementation for both students and employees
6. The school have to continue to promote both awareness and implementation of gender-responsive basic education policy, as these two aspects are closely related and mutually reinforcing. Efforts to raise awareness can contribute to more effective implementation, while successful implementation can further increase awareness and appreciation of gender-responsive practices.
 7. The schools needs to adapt and conduct the Continuous Improvement Program (CIP) showed in this study to further raise and strengthen the awareness and implementation of GRBEP as perceived by the students and employees

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