International Journal of Academic Multidisciplinary Research (IJAMR)
ISSN: 2643-9670
Vol. 10 Issue 6 June - 2026, Pages: 264-271

Perceived Level of Gender and Development Program Implementation in Public Elementary Schools in Pampanga, Philippines

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Abstract: *This study examined the perceived level of Gender and Development program implementation in GIDA or Last Mile public elementary schools in Pampanga, Philippines.The study focused on four dimensions: GAD policy implementation, GAD projects and activities, gender-responsive learning environment, and GAD resources and support. A Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods research design was employed, using a structured survey questionnaire and interview questions derived from the lowest-rated indicators in each dimension, which were administered to teachers and school personnel. The mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of GAD program implementation, while Spearman's Rank Correlation was employed to evaluate the strength and direction among variables. Findings revealed that the overall level of GAD program implementation was high, with mean scores ranging from 3.426 to 3.560, interpreted as "Agree to Strongly Agree. Among the four dimensions, the gender-responsive learning environment obtained the highest mean score, indicating the presence of inclusive, safe, and equitable learning environments. Conversely, GAD resources and support had the lowest mean score, indicating areas that require further improvement. Additionally, the results showed a statistically significant positive correlation among all GAD dimensions, suggesting that improvements in one area of implementation contribute to the enhancement of other areas. Overall, the findings reflect a strong institutional commitment to gender equality and inclusivity in GIDA or Last Mile public elementary schools in Minalin District, Pampanga.*

Keywords: Gender and Development (GAD), gender-responsive learning environment, policy implementation, GIDA public elementary schools, mixed methods design

INTRODUCTION

Gender and Development (GAD) emphasizes equality, inclusivity, and social justice in all sectors of society, including education. In educational settings, gender equality extends beyond access and participation and includes addressing the structural, institutional, and cultural factors that influence learners' experiences. Schools play a vital role in promoting gender inclusivity and equality through policies, programs, and practices that foster respect, fairness, and equal opportunities for all learners regardless of gender.

Globally, gender equality remains a significant concern despite continuous efforts to promote human rights and social inclusion. The United Nations recognizes gender equality as both a fundamental human right and an essential foundation for achieving sustainable development. In particular, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 advocates for inclusive and equitable quality education, while Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. These goals highlight the importance of creating educational environments that address gender issues and promote inclusivity through institutional policies and programs.

The implementation of Gender and Development programs in schools serves as an important mechanism for promoting gender sensitivity and eliminating discrimination. International organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) emphasize that effective GAD implementation requires collaboration among government agencies, educational institutions, school administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders. Such efforts include the development of gender-

responsive policies, inclusive curricula, equitable teaching practices, and supportive learning environments.

Several studies have examined the implementation of gender-responsive programs in educational institutions. Cislaghi and Heise (2020) found that social and cultural norms continue to influence gender inequality in educational settings, affecting learners' opportunities and experiences. Similarly, Cardona et al. (2025) reported that although many schools have adopted gender mainstreaming initiatives, implementation often remains fragmented and limited. Studies further suggest that gender-responsive environments contribute positively to learners' awareness, participation, and educational outcomes.

In the Philippine context, Gender and Development initiatives are supported by national policies and legal frameworks. Republic Act No. 9710, otherwise known as the Magna Carta of Women, mandates government agencies, including educational institutions, to integrate GAD programs and allocate resources for gender-responsive initiatives. Likewise, the Philippine Commission on Women serves as the lead agency in monitoring and promoting gender mainstreaming efforts across various sectors. Previous studies have reported generally positive levels of GAD implementation in schools; however, challenges related to resource availability, training opportunities, monitoring systems, and stakeholder participation continue to affect program effectiveness.

Existing literature indicates that the successful implementation of GAD programs depends largely on administrative support, adequate resources, teacher competence, stakeholder involvement, and sustained institutional commitment. Although several studies have examined GAD implementation in higher education institutions and secondary schools, limited research has focused on public elementary schools, particularly those located in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA) or Last Mile Schools. These schools often face unique challenges related to accessibility, funding, facilities, instructional resources, and institutional support.

Furthermore, few studies have explored the implementation of GAD programs in public elementary schools located in Barangays Bulac, Dawe, Maniango, and Saplad (BUDAMASA) in Minalin District, Pampanga. As a result, the experiences and contextual realities of these geographically isolated schools remain underrepresented in existing literature. Addressing this gap is important in understanding how GAD programs are implemented in schools facing geographical and resource-related challenges.

Therefore, this study assessed the perceived level of Gender and Development Program Implementation in public elementary schools in Minalin District, Pampanga, particularly in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA) or Last Mile Schools. Specifically, the study examined GAD Policy Implementation, GAD Projects and Activities, Gender-Responsive Learning Environment, and GAD Resources and Support. The findings of the study are expected to contribute to the continuous improvement of gender-responsive educational policies, programs, and practices in public elementary schools.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Design to assess the perceived level of Gender and Development (GAD) Program Implementation in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA) or Last Mile public elementary schools in Minalin District, Pampanga. The design involved the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by qualitative data to further explain and support the quantitative findings. The quantitative component employed a descriptive-correlational approach to determine the perceived level of implementation across four dimensions: GAD Policy Implementation, GAD Projects and Activities, Gender-Responsive Learning Environment, and GAD Resources and Support. The qualitative component utilized interview responses to provide deeper explanations regarding the lower-rated indicators identified during the quantitative phase. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings enabled a more comprehensive understanding of GAD implementation in GIDA or Last Mile public elementary schools.

The study respondents were teachers and school principals from selected GIDA or Last Mile public elementary schools in Barangays Bulac, Dawe, Maniango, and Saplad (BUDAMASA) in Minalin District, Pampanga. Total population sampling was employed in the quantitative phase to include all identified respondents from the participating schools. For the qualitative phase, selected participants were interviewed to provide explanations regarding the lowest-rated indicators in each dimension of GAD implementation.

Data were gathered using a researcher-made survey questionnaire based on the indicators of Gender and Development Program Implementation. The instrument measured respondents' perceptions regarding GAD Policy Implementation, GAD Projects and Activities, Gender-Responsive Learning Environment, and GAD Resources and Support. Prior to data collection, the instrument underwent content validation by experts to ensure its validity and appropriateness. Interview questions were likewise developed based on the lowest-rated indicators from the quantitative findings to obtain further insights and explanations from the participants.

The researchers secured the necessary permissions from school authorities before conducting the study. After obtaining approval, the survey questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. Quantitative data were collected and analyzed first. Subsequently, interview sessions were conducted with selected participants to explain and support the survey results. Responses obtained from the interviews were subjected to

thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and insights related to GAD implementation in the participating schools.

Descriptive statistics, specifically the mean and standard deviation, were used to determine the perceived level of GAD Program Implementation across the four dimensions. Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient was utilized to determine the strength and significance of the relationships among GAD Policy Implementation, GAD Projects and Activities, Gender-Responsive Learning Environment, and GAD Resources and Support. Qualitative data gathered from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis and were integrated with the quantitative findings to provide a richer interpretation of the results. Ethical considerations were observed throughout the conduct of the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the purpose of the research. Confidentiality and anonymity of responses were maintained, and all data gathered were used solely for academic and research purposes.

RESULTS ANG DISCUSSION

GAD Policy Implementation

Table 1. Respondents' Perceived Level of GAD Policy Implementation

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. GAD Policies are actively implemented	3.52	0.51	Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent
2. GAD policies are clearly communicated and understood by teachers and staff	3.65	0.49	Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent
3. Policies against gender discrimination are consistently enforced.	3.48	0.51	Perceived to be Implemented to a Great Extent
4. GAD principles are integrated into the School Improvement Plan (SIP).	3.55	0.51	Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent
5. Regular orientations or training on GAD policies are conducted for school personnel.	3.61	0.5	Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent
Total Mean	**3.56**	**0.01**	**Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent**

The findings revealed that GAD Policy Implementation obtained a mean score of 3.560, which was interpreted as Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent. This indicates that respondents generally perceived school policies related to Gender and Development as effectively implemented, promoted, and integrated within school operations. The low standard deviation further suggests consistency in respondents' perceptions regarding policy implementation.

The qualitative findings supported this result. Participants emphasized that schools continuously conduct orientations, awareness campaigns, and advocacy activities to strengthen gender sensitivity among learners, teachers, parents, and community stakeholders. Respondents also highlighted the integration of GAD principles into school policies, child protection programs, and daily school operations to promote inclusivity and equality. These practices demonstrate the commitment of schools to creating gender-responsive educational environments.

GAD Projects and Activities

Table 2. Respondents' Perceived Level of GAD Projects and Activities

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. GAD-related projects and activities are conducted regularly in the school.	3.29	0.523	Perceived to be Implemented to a Great Extent
2. GAD activities address gender-related issues among learners and school personnel.	3.419	0.499	Perceived to be Implemented to a Great Extent
3. Teachers actively participate in GAD-related projects and activities.	3.677	0.483	Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent

4. GAD projects and activities are monitored and evaluated for effectiveness.	3.484	0.507	Perceived to be Implemented to a Great Extent
5. Results of GAD activities are properly documented and reported.	3.645	0.492	Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent
Total Mean	**3.503**	**0.015**	**Perceived to be Implemented to a Great Extent**

GAD Projects and Activities obtained a mean score of 3.503, interpreted as Perceived to be Implemented to a Great Extent. The findings indicate that schools regularly conduct activities that promote gender awareness, equality, and inclusivity. Although the level of implementation was high, respondents identified certain challenges affecting the continuous conduct of GAD-related activities. These include limitations in budget allocation, time constraints, competing school responsibilities, and varying levels of stakeholder participation.

Despite these challenges, qualitative responses revealed that schools continue to sustain GAD-related programs through proper planning, stakeholder collaboration, integration into school improvement plans, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. Respondents emphasized that GAD activities remain part of regular school programs and awareness campaigns, reflecting the schools' commitment to maintaining gender-responsive initiatives.

Gender-Responsive Learning Environment

Table 3. Respondents' Perceived Level of Gender-Responsive Learning Environment

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. The school provides a safe and inclusive learning environment for all genders.	3.516	0.507	Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent
2. Gender-based bullying and discrimination are appropriately addressed by the school.	3.645	0.483	Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent
3. Teaching practices promote fairness and gender equality among learners.	3.742	0.44	Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent
4. School facilities are safe and accessible to all learners, regardless of gender.	3.419	0.499	Perceived to be Implemented to a Great Extent
5. Respect for gender diversity is consistently encouraged in the school community.	3.581	0.499	Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent
Total Mean	**3.581**	**0.027**	**Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent**

Among the four dimensions, Gender-Responsive Learning Environment recorded the highest mean score of 3.581, interpreted as Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent. This finding suggests that respondents viewed their schools as providing safe, inclusive, equitable, and gender-sensitive learning environments for all learners. The high rating indicates strong awareness and implementation of practices that support equality, accessibility, and respect regardless of gender.

Interview responses further explained this result. Participants reported continuous improvement of sanitation facilities, maintenance of school cleanliness, provision of adequate lighting, and equal access to learning spaces and educational facilities. Respondents also emphasized child protection measures, disaster risk reduction initiatives, and the implementation of gender-sensitive practices that contribute to a positive learning environment. These efforts demonstrate the schools' commitment to ensuring that all learners experience a supportive and inclusive educational setting.

GAD Resources and Support

Table 6. Respondents' Perceived Level of GAD Resources and Support

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. Instructional materials related to GAD are available in the school.	3	0.672	Perceived to be Implemented to a Great Extent
2. Teachers are provided with	3.548	0.504	Perceived to be Implemented to

training on gender-related and gender-responsive topics.			a Very Great Extent
3. Adequate resources are allocated to support GAD programs and activities.	3.452	0.619	Perceived to be Implemented to a Great Extent
4. School administrators actively support the implementation of GAD initiatives.	3.581	0.499	Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent
5. Teachers receive guidance and support in applying gender-responsive teaching practices.	3.548	0.504	Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent
Total Mean	**3.426**	**0.081**	**Perceived to be Implemented to a Great Extent**

GAD Resources and Support obtained the lowest mean score among the four dimensions, with a mean of 3.426, although it was still interpreted as Perceived to be Implemented to a Great Extent. This result indicates that while schools generally provide support mechanisms for GAD implementation, limitations remain in terms of instructional materials, funding, training opportunities, and resource availability.

Qualitative findings strongly supported this result. Respondents identified the limited availability of updated and localized instructional materials, insufficient budget allocation, and inadequate access to GAD-related resources as common challenges. Despite these constraints, schools continue to address resource gaps through resource-sharing initiatives, stakeholder collaboration, integration of GAD approaches into learning activities, utilization of digital learning platforms, and continuous teacher training. These efforts reflect the determination of schools to sustain GAD implementation despite existing resource limitations.

Overall Level of GAD Program Implementation

Table 7. Summary of Respondents' Perceived Level of GAD Implementation in their Institution

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. GAD Policy Implementation	3.56	0.01	Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent
2. GAD Projects & Activities	3.503	0.015	Perceived to be Implemented to a Great Extent
3. Gender Responsive Learning Environment	3.581	0.027	Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent
4. GAD Resources & Support	3.426	0.081	Perceived to be Implemented to a Great Extent
Grand Mean	**3.518**	**0.069**	**Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent**

The overall assessment of GAD Program Implementation yielded a grand mean of 3.518, interpreted as Perceived to be Implemented to a Very Great Extent. Mean scores across the four dimensions ranged from 3.426 to 3.581, indicating consistently positive perceptions regarding the implementation of Gender and Development programs in public elementary schools in Minalin District, Pampanga. Among the dimensions, Gender-Responsive Learning Environment received the highest rating, while GAD Resources and Support received the lowest. Nevertheless, all dimensions demonstrated favorable levels of implementation.

The combined quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that schools have successfully integrated gender-sensitive policies, programs, and practices into their educational systems. Respondents consistently highlighted the importance of policy implementation, teacher participation, administrative support, stakeholder collaboration, monitoring mechanisms, and continuous capacity-building activities in sustaining effective GAD programs.

Relationship Among the Dimensions of GAD Program Implementation

Table 8. Spearman Rank Correlation Analysis Among the Dimensions of GAD Program Implementation.

Bivariate	Spearman Rank (r subs)	N	T Statistics	DF	P-value	Verbal Interpretation
GAD Policy Implemen	0.777	32	3.314	30	0.000**	Significant. (There is a strong

tation and GAD Projects and Activities						positive relationship between GAD Policy Implementation and GAD Projects and Activities)
GAD Policy Implementation and Gender Responsive Learning Environment	0.627	32	4.413	30	0.000**	Significant. (There is a strong positive relationship between GAD Policy Implementation and Gender Responsive Learning Environment)
GAD Policy Implementation and GAD Resources and Support	0.518	32	3.314	30	0.002**	Significant. (There is a strong positive relationship between GAD Policy Implementation and GAD Resources and Support)
GAD Projects and Activities and Gender Responsive Learning Environment	0.813	32	7.651	30	0.000**	Significant. (There is a strong positive relationship between GAD Projects and Activities and Gender Responsive Learning Environmen)
GAD Projects and Activities, GAD Resources, and Support	0.522	32	3.356	30	0.002**	Significant. (There is a strong positive relationship between GAD Projects and Activities and GAD Resources and Support)
Gender Responsive Learning Environment and GAD Resources and Support	0.701	32	5.379	30	0.000**	Significant. (There is a strong positive relationship between Gender Responsive Learning Environment and GAD Resources and Support)

The results of the Spearman Rank Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships among all dimensions of GAD Program Implementation. Correlation coefficients ranged from 0.518 to 0.813, with all p-values indicating statistical significance. The strongest relationship was observed between GAD Projects and Activities and Gender-Responsive Learning Environment ($r = 0.813$, $p = 0.000$), while the relationship between GAD Policy Implementation and GAD Resources and Support also remained significant ($r = 0.518$, $p = 0.002$).

These findings indicate that improvements in one dimension of GAD implementation are associated with improvements in other dimensions. Effective policy implementation contributes to the successful conduct of projects and activities, while adequate resources and support strengthen the development of gender-responsive learning environments. The qualitative findings reinforced these results, as respondents consistently emphasized the interconnected roles of policy integration, stakeholder participation, administrative support, and resource allocation in achieving successful GAD implementation.

CONCLUSION

This study assessed the perceived level of Gender and Development (GAD) Program Implementation in public

elementary schools in Minalin District, Pampanga, particularly in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA) or Last Mile Schools. The findings revealed that GAD Program Implementation was perceived to be implemented to a Very Great Extent, as evidenced by the overall grand mean of 3.518. Among the four dimensions examined, Gender-Responsive Learning Environment obtained the highest rating, followed by GAD Policy Implementation, GAD Projects and Activities, and GAD Resources and Support. These findings indicate that participating schools have effectively integrated gender-responsive principles, policies, and practices into their educational programs and daily operations.

The qualitative findings further confirmed the quantitative results by highlighting the schools' commitment to promoting gender equality, inclusivity, awareness, and stakeholder participation. Respondents emphasized the importance of policy implementation, capacity-building activities, collaboration among stakeholders, and the creation of safe and inclusive learning environments. Although challenges related to funding, instructional materials, and resource availability were identified, schools continue to implement strategies that support the sustainability of Gender and Development programs.

Furthermore, the correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships among all dimensions of GAD Program Implementation. This indicates that effective policy implementation, meaningful projects and activities, supportive resources, and gender-responsive learning environments are interconnected and collectively contribute to successful Gender and Development implementation. Therefore, sustained institutional commitment, adequate resource allocation, continuous professional development, and strengthened stakeholder engagement are essential to further enhance Gender and Development initiatives in public elementary schools.

RECOMENDATIONS

1. School administrators and Gender and Development coordinators can continue to strengthen the Gender and Development policies by having meetings to talk about the policies, observing if they are being followed, and making sure that Gender and Development principles are included in the School Improvement Plan and other school programs to sustain effective policy implementation.
2. Schools can make sure that Gender and Development projects and activities are consistent by making plans. These plans should ensure that projects and activities are consistently monitored, documented, and evaluated throughout the year.
3. School administrators and teachers can continue helping the school with Gender and Development (GAD), where everyone feels welcome regardless of gender. They can do this by using teaching strategies that encourage students to respect each other's differences and be fair to everyone.
4. Additional teaching resources, learning opportunities, and administrative assistance related to Gender and Development (GAD) might be allocated, specifically in GIDA or Last Mile schools in which accessibility to resources and support systems may be limited. Improved collaboration among schools, DepEd officials, Local Government Units (LGUs), and external stakeholders may further improve resource allocation and program support.
5. School administrators and policymakers may take up a holistic and integrated approach in the implementation of GAD programs to further strengthen the interconnected dimensions of policy implementation, projects and activities, learning environment, and resources and assistance.
6. Future researchers may administer similar studies in other educational settings to further investigate the efficacy, limitations, and long-term impact of GAD program implementation and to facilitate additional findings for the improvement of gender-responsive programs in schools.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researchers would like to express their sincere gratitude to the Schools Division Office of Pampanga, school administrators, principals, teachers, and all respondents from the selected public elementary schools in the Minalin District for their participation and support in this study. The researchers also extend their appreciation to their research adviser, panel members, family, and friends for their guidance, encouragement, and invaluable assistance throughout the completion of this research.

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