

Gender Equity Concepts across Learning Areas and Values Formation among Learners

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between the integration of Gender Equity Concepts and learners' Values Formation in the Division of Malaybalay City District IX for SY 2025–2026. Specifically, it assessed the integration of gender equity across curriculum content, pedagogical approaches, and learning environments, and its impact on fostering social values such as inclusivity and fairness. Data collected from public school teachers were analyzed using descriptive and correlational statistics. Findings revealed a highly evident integration of gender concepts, reflecting a strong teacher commitment to gender-sensitive strategies. Consequently, learners exhibited highly positive values formation, characterized by deep respect for diversity and social responsibility. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant relationship between gender equity integration and values formation. The study concludes that mainstreaming gender concepts effectively enhances students' moral and ethical development. It is recommended that schools strengthen gender-mainstreaming initiatives and provide continuous professional development for teachers to sustain an inclusive and equitable learning environment.

Keywords: gender equity, values formation, gender mainstreaming, social studies instruction

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, schools have increasingly been expected to provide a learning environment where all learners, regardless of gender, feel valued, protected, and given equal opportunities to succeed. As a public elementary school teacher, the researcher has personally observed classroom situations where boys are expected to be more active and assertive. At the same time, girls are often perceived as more passive and nurturing. There are also instances in which traditional household roles and stereotypes are reflected in pupils' responses and interactions, thereby normalizing unequal treatment and limiting learners' aspirations. These realities highlight the need to intentionally integrate gender equity concepts in everyday teaching and learning across subject areas.

Gender equity in education refers to the fair treatment of learners of all genders, based on their unique needs and circumstances, so that they can achieve comparable educational and social outcomes. It differs from gender equality, which focuses on treating all students equally, without necessarily addressing historical and structural disadvantages. Gender equity recognizes that some learners, because of culture, economic status, or gender identity, may require additional support or differentiated strategies to enjoy the same opportunities as their peers. In many parts of the world, gender-diverse learners still face systemic barriers such as poverty, cultural biases, and gender-based violence, which negatively affect their access to quality education and holistic development.

In the Philippine context, the education sector is guided by national policies such as the Magna Carta for Women and the Gender and Development (GAD) framework, which support gender-responsive programs, teacher training, and learning materials. The country is often cited for relatively high gender parity in education, and female learners frequently perform well in many academic areas. However, local studies and school-based experiences reveal persistent challenges, including gender stereotyping, unreported gender-based violence, and unequal expectations for boys and girls, particularly in rural and low-income communities. For example, some male learners are more prone to dropping out due to child labor, while some female learners remain vulnerable to domestic abuse that rarely reaches formal reporting mechanisms.

One practical way to address these concerns is to ensure that gender equity concepts are woven into the curriculum, teaching strategies, and learning materials in different learning areas. When lessons, activities, and resources consciously promote respect, fairness, and inclusivity, learners are more likely to develop attitudes and values that challenge stereotypes and affirm the dignity of every person. However, integrating gender equity is not without difficulties. Deep-seated cultural beliefs, lack of specific guidelines, and limited gender-sensitive materials can hinder teachers from fully implementing gender-responsive instruction. In some schools, emphasis is still placed on meeting content standards and test scores, leaving little space for in-depth discussion of social justice issues such as gender equity.

These observations in the classroom and the documented realities in schools motivated the researcher to examine how gender equity concepts are integrated across learning areas and how this integration relates to learners' value formation.

This study is anchored on Social Identity Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, and Cognitive Development Theory. Together, these theories explain how learners build gender-related identities, how teachers influence value formation through their leadership, and how learners' developmental stages shape their understanding of gender equity.

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) states that individuals form part of their identity through the social groups they belong to, such as gender groups. They classify themselves and others as "us" and "them," which can lead to favoritism toward their own group and discrimination against others. When curriculum content, strategies, and materials present boys, girls, and gender-diverse learners fairly and in non-stereotypical roles, learners can question rigid gender boundaries and develop more inclusive identities. This can influence their attitudes and perceptions toward gender equity.

Cognitive Development Theory (Piaget, 1966) describes how learners' thinking becomes more complex as they grow. Their ability to understand ideas such as fairness, rights, and social justice progresses by stage. This theory suggests that integrating gender equity concepts should match learners' developmental levels to help them understand gender roles and equity in a meaningful way. Age-appropriate content, strategies, and materials can support learners in moving from simple recognition of fair treatment to deeper reflection on gender-related issues in school and community.

Conceptually, this study assumes that a higher and more consistent integration of gender equity concepts in curriculum content, teaching strategies, and learning materials will be associated with a greater extent of values formation among learners. In particular, the integration of gender equity concepts (independent variable and its sub-variables) is expected to relate to learners' attitudes, perceptions, and values of respect, fairness, and inclusivity (dependent variable and its sub-variables). This relationship will be examined statistically to determine if it is significant.

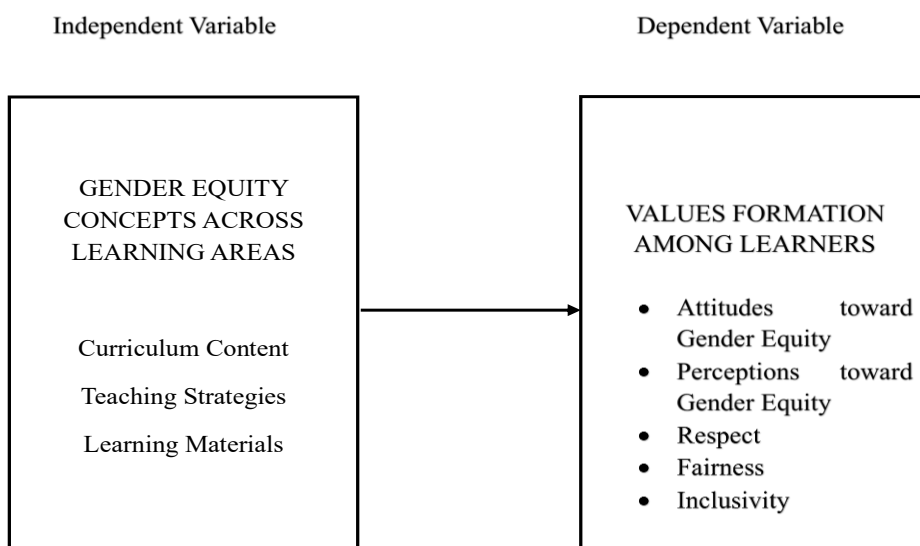


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram showing the Relationship of the Independent and Dependent Variables of the Study

This study aims to determine the level of integration of gender equity concepts across learning areas and their relationship with the extent of values formation among learners.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of integration of gender equity concepts in learning areas in terms of curriculum content, teaching strategies, and learning materials used in the classroom?
2. What is the extent of learners' values formation in terms of: attitudes toward gender equity (e.g., respect for opinions, willingness to share responsibilities, comfort working with the opposite gender), perceptions toward gender equity (e.g., views on fairness in materials, leadership roles, and classroom strategies), and values of respect, fairness, and inclusivity as reflected in their daily interactions (e.g., avoiding teasing, including all classmates, showing kindness regardless of gender)?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the level of integration of gender equity concepts in learning areas in terms of curriculum content, teaching strategies, and learning materials used in the classroom, and values formation among learners?

Hypothesis of the Study

The hypothesis was tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the level of integration of gender equity concepts in learning areas in terms of curriculum content, teaching strategies, and learning materials used in the classroom, and the value formation among learners.

Delimitation of the Study

This study focused on and was limited to the integration of gender equity concepts in learning areas and their influence on learners' value formation. The respondents and data sources will be the public elementary teachers of the Malaybalay City Division. The study timeline will also be limited to the 2025-2026 academic year.

Moreover, the other limitations of the study will also be anchored to the focal research objectives. Thus, the study will be limited to exploring the extent to which gender equity concepts are integrated into the learning areas curriculum, teaching strategies, and learning materials used in the classroom, and to determining learners' attitudes and perceptions toward gender equity as reflected in their learning areas learning experiences. Furthermore, the study will also be limited to the analysis of how the integration of gender equity concepts in learning areas contributes to the development of learners' values, such as respect, fairness, and inclusivity, and the analysis of the significant relationship between the extent of integration of gender equity in learning areas and the attitude and perception towards gender equity.

METHODS

The qualitative component complemented the quantitative findings through classroom observations, interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). Classroom observations focused on actual teaching practices such as participation patterns, teacher-student interactions, and the use of gender-sensitive language and materials. Interviews and FGDs explored teachers' experiences in implementing gender equity and their observations of learners' behaviors.

Qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Recurring patterns such as inclusive participation, gender-neutral task assignment, and respectful peer interaction were identified and used to explain the quantitative results.

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of gender equity integration in elementary education. The

quantitative component assessed the level of integration of gender equity concepts across curriculum content, teaching strategies, and learning materials, as well as the extent of learners' values formation, based on teachers' responses to a structured survey questionnaire.

The qualitative component complemented these findings through interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and classroom observations, which explored how gender equity concepts were implemented in actual classroom settings and how these influenced learners' attitudes and behaviors. This design enabled the researcher not only to measure levels and relationships but also to gain deeper insights into classroom practices and contextual realities.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in selected public elementary schools in District IX, Division of Malaybalay City, Bukidnon, Philippines, during the School Year 2025–2026. These schools implement the national basic education curriculum and are expected to integrate Gender and Development (GAD) policies and gender-responsive practices in teaching and learning.

The district is characterized by active implementation of GAD programs and initiatives, as evidenced by regular gender-related activities and institutional support. Additionally, learners come from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, making the locale well-suited to examining how gender equity concepts are integrated across learning areas and how they influence learners' value formation.

Participants of the Study

The respondents of the study consisted of 100 public elementary school teachers from selected schools in District IX, Division of Malaybalay City. Teachers were chosen as participants because they play a crucial role in integrating gender equity concepts into classroom instruction and in shaping learners' value formation.

The distribution of respondents across participating schools ensured representation from different educational contexts within the district.

Sampling Procedure

This study used purposive sampling to select participants directly involved in classroom instruction and values formation. The inclusion criteria were as follows:

- (1) currently teaching at the elementary level,
- (2) with at least one year of teaching experience, and
- (3) willing to participate voluntarily in the study.

Teachers who were on leave, reassigned, or who declined to participate were excluded. Given the manageable population size, total enumeration was applied, allowing all qualified teachers to participate.

To ensure representation across grade levels, a stratified purposive approach was adopted. Ethical standards were strictly observed, including voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw at any stage of the study.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed survey questionnaire aligned with the study objectives and indicators outlined in the Statement of the Problem. The instrument consisted of two main parts:

- Part I: Integration of gender equity concepts across learning areas in terms of curriculum content, teaching strategies, and learning materials

- Part II: Learners' values formation in terms of attitudes, perceptions, and values related to gender equity (e.g., respect, fairness, inclusivity)

All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale. The instrument underwent content validation by experts and was pilot-tested to ensure clarity, reliability, and appropriateness before full administration.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, necessary permissions were secured from the Schools Division Office and respective school heads. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

For the quantitative phase, the validated questionnaire was distributed either in person or via online platforms, depending on school arrangements. Completed questionnaires were retrieved, checked for completeness, and encoded for statistical analysis.

For the qualitative phase, data were gathered through interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations with selected participants. Interview and FGD guides were used to ensure consistency. All responses were recorded with permission, transcribed, and analyzed thematically to support and explain the quantitative findings.

Scoring Procedure

Responses were interpreted using a five-point Likert scale, where higher scores indicated greater integration of gender equity concepts and stronger value formation among learners.

| Scale | Range | Interpretation |
|-------|-----------|-----------------|
| 5 | 4.20–5.00 | Very High Level |
| 4 | 3.40–4.19 | High Level |
| 3 | 2.60–3.39 | Moderate Level |
| 2 | 1.80–2.59 | Low Level |
| 1 | 1.00–1.79 | Very Low Level |

Mean scores were used to determine the overall level of gender equity integration and learners' values formation.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools.

- Frequency count and weighted mean were used to determine the level of integration of gender equity concepts and learners' values formation.
- Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was employed to examine the significant relationship between the extent of gender equity integration and learners' attitudes and perceptions toward gender equity.

All statistical analyses were conducted at a 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the study's findings on the integration of gender equity concepts in learning areas and their relationship to learners' values formation. The discussion follows the order of the research problems.

Level of Integration of Gender Equity Concepts in Learning Areas

Table 1. Level of Integration of Gender Equity Concepts in Learning Areas

| Dimension | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---------------------|------|-------|-----------------|
| Curriculum Content | 4.70 | 0.294 | Very High Level |
| Teaching Strategies | 4.78 | 0.283 | Very High Level |
| Learning Materials | 4.60 | 0.384 | Very High Level |
| Overall | 4.69 | 0.320 | Very High Level |

The findings reveal a very high level of integration of gender equity concepts ($M = 4.69$), with teaching strategies ranking highest. This suggests that teachers actively translate gender equity into classroom practice.

Qualitative observations support this result. During classroom visits, teachers were observed assigning leadership roles equally to boys and girls, such as group leaders, reporters, and facilitators. In one observed class, a teacher intentionally rotated responsibilities to ensure that both male and female learners had equal opportunities to lead discussions. Additionally, group activities were structured to promote mixed-gender collaboration, preventing gender-based grouping.

Teachers also reported consciously avoiding gender-biased language. For example, instead of assigning tasks traditionally associated with gender roles, such as boys handling physical tasks and girls organizing materials, teachers distributed responsibilities equally. One teacher noted:

“I make sure both boys and girls are given the same chance to lead and participate because it helps them see that everyone is capable.”

However, despite these strong practices, learning materials were rated slightly lower. Observations revealed that some textbooks still depict traditional gender roles, such as men as leaders and women in supportive roles. This confirms that while teachers compensate through strategies, institutional materials still require improvement.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings align with Piaget’s Cognitive Development Theory (1966). At the elementary level, learners are in the concrete operational stage, where they begin to understand fairness and equality through observable experiences. When teachers model equitable practices—such as equal participation and inclusive interaction—learners internalize these concepts through direct experience, reinforcing their understanding of gender equity.

Extent of Learners’ Values Formation

Table 2. Extent of Learners’ Values Formation

| Dimension | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|--|------|-------|----------------|
| Attitudes toward Gender Equity | 4.60 | 0.384 | Very High |
| Perceptions toward Gender Equity | 4.77 | 0.257 | Very High |
| Values of Respect, Fairness, Inclusivity | 4.71 | 0.333 | Very High |
| Overall | 4.69 | 0.325 | Very High |

The results show a very high extent of values formation ($M = 4.69$), particularly in perceptions and values of fairness and inclusivity.

Qualitative data further illustrate how these values are manifested. Observations showed learners willingly working with peers of both genders, sharing responsibilities, and demonstrating respect during group activities. In one classroom, learners voluntarily included a quieter classmate—regardless of gender—in a group discussion, showing inclusivity in practice.

Teachers also reported behavioral changes among learners. One teacher shared:

“Before, boys would hesitate to work with girls, but now they collaborate more freely and respect each other’s ideas.”

However, assertiveness-related behaviors were observed less consistently. Some learners, particularly girls, remained hesitant to express their opinions in group discussions. This supports the quantitative finding that attitudes may lag behind cognitive understanding.

Applying **Piaget’s theory**, this suggests that while learners cognitively understand fairness, full internalization into behavior requires continuous reinforcement. Learners at this stage are transitioning from understanding rules to applying them consistently in real-life interactions.

Significant Relationship Between Gender Equity Integration and Values Formation

Table 3. Test of Significant Relationship Between Gender Equity Integration and Learners’ Values Formation

| Variable | r-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|---------------------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Curriculum Content | .392 | .000 | Significant |
| Teaching Strategies | .403 | .000 | Significant |
| Learning Materials | .604 | .000 | Significant |
| Overall | .593 | .000 | Significant |

The results reveal a significant relationship between the integration of gender equity concepts and learners’ values formation ($r = .593$, $p = .000$). Among the variables, learning materials showed the strongest relationship ($r = .604$), followed by teaching strategies ($r = .403$) and curriculum content ($r = .392$).

The results confirm a significant relationship ($r = .593$), indicating that higher integration of gender equity concepts leads to stronger value formation.

Qualitative findings strengthen this conclusion. Classrooms with more visible gender-equitable practices, such as inclusive materials and balanced participation, showed more respectful and cooperative behavior among learners. In contrast, in classrooms where materials were less inclusive, learners occasionally reverted to stereotypical assumptions.

Learning materials showed the strongest relationship with value formation. This is supported by classroom observations where visual representations—such as images of women in leadership roles or men in caregiving roles—prompted discussions and influenced learners’ perceptions.

From a Piagetian perspective, this highlights the importance of concrete experiences in learning. Learners better understand abstract concepts like equality when they are represented through tangible materials and real-life examples. Repeated exposure to these representations helps reshape learners’ cognitive structures regarding gender roles.

These findings support Casteleyn (2020), who found that learners' awareness of gender sensitivity is strongly influenced by how equality is represented in instructional materials. Additionally, Kahulugan (2023) emphasized that effective integration of gender equity concepts encourages learners to internalize and practice gender sensitivity. This result is further supported by Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which explains that repeated exposure to inclusive representations reshapes learners' perceptions of gender roles and group identities, and by Cognitive Development Theory (Piaget, 1966), which highlights that concrete and observable learning experiences, such as materials and classroom practices, are essential in helping learners understand and internalize abstract concepts like equality and fairness.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that integrating gender equity significantly enhances learners' values formation, as supported by both quantitative and qualitative evidence. Classroom practices such as equitable participation, inclusive language, and collaborative activities play a crucial role in shaping learners' attitudes and behaviors.

The findings further confirm that learners develop a stronger understanding of gender equity when they experience it directly through structured classroom practices and materials, consistent with Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory.

However, the study also recognizes that value formation is a gradual process that requires continuous reinforcement. While learners demonstrate strong cognitive understanding, full behavioral internalization may take time and consistent exposure.

Future research is recommended to adopt a longitudinal design to examine how sustained exposure to gender equity practices influences learners' attitudes and behaviors over time. Such studies can provide deeper insights into the long-term impact of gender mainstreaming in education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings and conclusions, the researcher formulates the following recommendations:

It is recommended that teachers sustain and further strengthen the very high level of integration of gender equity concepts. They should explicitly address challenging stereotypes and intentionally distribute leadership roles to both boys and girls. This is because Problem 1 evaluates the integration of concepts into the curriculum, teaching strategies, and materials. Therefore, teachers are directly responsible for implementing and maintaining these practices in the classroom.

It is recommended that parents and community stakeholders participate in orientation and capability-building activities to reinforce the school's efforts at home and model respect, fairness, and inclusivity. This group is targeted because Problem 2 focuses on the learners' values, attitudes, and behaviors. Since the findings show that learners are already performing very well in school, parents and the community need to reinforce and sustain these positive values outside the classroom.

It is recommended that School Administrators and DepEd review policies, provide resources for gender-fair textbooks, and integrate equity indicators into instructional monitoring and review tools. They are the focus here because Problem 3 proves that integrating these concepts significantly improves student values, especially through learning materials. Therefore, it targets administrators and DepEd who have the institutional authority to make systemic changes and provide the required resources.

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