

OH MY GAD! A CASE STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT AMONG PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIS)

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ABSTRACT

The advancement towards gender equality had been made clear through the insertion of Gender and Development among the UNDP Goals. At the school level, certain measures had been implemented to answer the call for gender and development. This case study will examine the status of implementation of Gender and Development among private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Tacloban City, Philippines, based on the mandated CHED Memorandum No. 1 s. 2015 on the Implementation of GAD among Higher Learning Institutions. With GAD focal persons as the primary participants, exhaustive data was gathered and analyzed. GAD programs, activities, and projects, program planning, implementation, and evaluation, problems encountered in the implementation, differing school policies were the emerging themes from the data. The study concluded that private HEIs must recognize a sustainable and meaningful GAD program, activities, and projects to be implemented in their respective schools.

Keywords: Gender and development; Program implementation; Private HEIs; Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The movement towards gender parity and equality is not a new trend. The enduring struggle towards promoting gender equality and empowering women is part of the Millennium Development Goals through Gender and Development (GAD). Gender and Development is a developmental perspective that recognizes the uniqueness and unequal status and situation of women and men in all aspects of society. Women and men have varied developmental needs and interests due to said inequality, which is institutionalized and perpetuated by cultural, social, economic, and political norms, systems, and structures. It is a developmental approach that seeks to equalize the status and condition of and relations between women and men by influencing the processes and outputs of policymaking, planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring, and evaluation so that they would deliberately address the gender issues and concerns affecting the full development of women (DBM-NEDA-NCRFW Joint Circular 2004).

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly that describes the international bill of rights for women. The Convention provides the basis for realizing equality between women and men by ensuring women's equal access to and equal opportunities in political and public life -- including the right to vote and stand for election -- as well as education, health, and employment. States Parties agree to take all appropriate measures, including legislation and temporary special measures so that women can enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) is a progressive blueprint for advancing women's rights. It is a defining framework of change that promotes gender mainstreaming as a strategy to ensure that a gender perspective is reflected in all policies and programs at the national, regional, and international levels (PCW 2009).

The institutionalization of gender policies, promotion of gender awareness and sensitivity, and gender-inclusive programs are the adaptive measures and significant results of its compliance with the CEDAW and BPA.

The Magna Carta of Women Implementing Rules and Regulations (MCW-IRR), which were approved in March 2010, identified the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as the agency that is mandated to:

(1) develop and promote gender-sensitive curriculum; (2) develop gender-fair instructional materials; (3) ensure that educational institutions implement a capacity building program on gender, peace and human rights education for their officials, faculty and non-teaching staff and personnel, promote partnership between and among players of the education sector; (4) promote partnerships between and among players of the education sector; (5) encourage advertising industry and other similar institutions to provide free use of space and installation of displays for schools, colleges and universities for campaigns to end discrimination and violence against women; and (6) guarantee that educational institutions provide scholarship programs for marginalized women and girls set the minimum standards for programs and institutions of higher learning (MCW IRR, Rule IV, Section 16).

The CHED, through the HEIs, will put forth into action the frameworks of GAD in the learning environment. These HEIs are educational institutions, private or public, undertaking operations of higher education program/s with an organized group of students pursuing defined studies in higher education, receiving instruction from teachers, usually located in a building or group of buildings in a particular site specifically intended for educational purposes (CHED Memorandum Order No.40, s. 2008). Notably, this refers to the academic institutions that are mandated under Joint Circular No. 2001-1 of the Department of Budget (DBM), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), and the National Commission of the Role of Filipino Women to promote and implement gender mainstreaming.

This provision under the MCW IRR provides the legal mandate for CHED to create the CHED GAD Focal Committee and Secretariat (GFPS), which initiated the Commission's GAD program. The Commission approved the GAD Focal Point System (GFPS) constitution of CHED, with the commitment to undertake all necessary and appropriate mechanisms to advance the cause of GAD following the above-stated policies and directives. As a result, the Commission directed the formulation of this set of Policy Guidelines to guide all HEIs in their concomitant responsibilities under applicable laws and rules and regulations of the Philippine Commission for Women (PCW).

The collaboration of CHED and PCW resulted in the crafting and implementation of CMO No. 1, s. 2015 otherwise known as the "Establishing the Policies and Guidelines on Gender and Development in the Commission on Higher and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). These guidelines seek to introduce and institutionalize gender equality and gender responsiveness and sensitivity in the various aspects of Philippine higher education. These guidelines shall apply to CHED, i.e., the Central and Regional Offices, and all higher HEIs, private and public. In terms of scope, the Guidelines include enabling mechanisms that CHED and HEIs shall establish, such as the GAD Focal Point System or GFPS, and the integration of the principles of gender equality in the trilogical functions of higher education: (1) curriculum development, (2) gender-responsive research programs, and (3) gender-responsive extension programs.

Having the purpose of GFPS or other similar GAD mechanisms, it projects that the academe plays a vital role in promoting gender-based programs that would elevate the

community's existing inequalities. Academic institutions such as SUCs help to address the disparity of gender within our country (Pulmano 2016). Academic institutions should shed off institutionalized discrimination and gender-based inequalities and create a support system for the oppressed to promote inclusivity. To fully eradicate cases of gender inequality incidents of sexual harassment, the CHED implemented Memorandum s. 2011 which directs all heads of public and private higher education institutions, CHED Commissioners, the CHED Executive Director, and the CHED Central and Regional Office Directors to submit reports on compliance to Republic Act No. 7877, otherwise known as the “Anti-Sexual Harassment Act.” Thus, the directives mentioned above require the different higher education institutions to provide a safe place for students of diverse gender to grow academically.

The CHED GFPS, like other feminist movements, has its objectives and philosophy that is anchored in feminism, which is women empowerment. Feminism helps in leveling up the playing field for women at the institutional level regarding rights, opportunities, and resources. Another theory that emerged from the feminist perspective extended the idea of raising equal rights and opportunities for other genders in the same spectrum, which is genderqueer theory. In simple words, it a way of thinking about lesbian and gay sexualities beyond the narrow rubrics of either deviance or preference”.

Given GAD's underlying legal basis, the government serves as the prime advocate of the GAD Program. However, this is not the case in the actual setting, and gender mainstreaming has not progressed as expected. Although compliant with the mandate is gaining a one step forward, HEI's in Region VIII the commitment to achieve is way behind (Blanco 2017). Furthermore, Blanco (2017) examined the status of the Implementation of GAD among State Universities and Colleges and found out the lagging implementation of GAD. While State Universities and Colleges enjoys the allocation of budget for their GAD office, private HEIs are required to allocate a portion of their annual budget for the functioning of their GAD office. This boosted the researcher to conduct a qualitative approach to investigate the status of GAD among private HEIs The purpose of this study was to examine the status of the implementations of GAD programs among Private HEIs in Tacloban City through various sources of data in the advent of a qualitative case study framework. This study had sought to unfold the different programs planned, managed, and implemented by the HEI's to address the calling towards gender-based equality. This study was deemed beneficial to the students, teachers, school administrators of higher education and as well as to society to broaden their minds about the existing notions and mechanisms at the institutional level in addressing gender issues and concerns.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Gender Inequality Theory

The issue of gender and development is a global concern. The gender gap that persists is multidimensional which affects women from different angles. Gender inequality theory asserts that society treats people based on their gender preferences (UNESCO 2018). The disadvantageous act of treating people in terms of their rights, status, and well-being has led to collective efforts in making a movement that will address such blasphemous acts. The feminist movement arises around the world to enhance the condition of women and other genders. Feminism is the belief that women should have equal economic, political, and social opportunities with men. Feminist scholars focus on issues related to the well-being of women throughout the world. Although feminists are consensus on the importance of gender equality, they separate ways to achieve it (Macionis 2013). The feminist perspective asserts that gender

is essential to all social structures and organizations, including the school. Thus, it recognizes that women's experiences are different from those of men, unequal or less privileged than men, and oppressed, subordinated, or abused by men. Although the movement had become apparent in the eyes of the world, there are still things to realize its significance in a society as defined by gender.

Normalization Processing Theory

The Normalization Processing Theory (NPT) is a middle-range theory that offers a tool that delineates normalization differently by defining the processes of normalizing a discrete or new set or practices in the system. NPT is used to understand the fluid, dynamic, and interactive processes at play between context, people, and objects. It focuses on the work that people undertake to engage with social context and objects to implement, embed, and integrate a new practice or way of working to become normalized. Instead of dealing with the results or outcomes, it encourages the researcher to engage with and think through issues around implementation (how practices are actioned through the social organization), embedding (the process of practices becoming routinized), and integration (the process of sustaining) of practices. Since the focus of the study is to provide an in-depth analysis of the implementation of GAD programs among private HEIs, the NPT will be used to understand how the private HEIs implement various GAD programs, promote and practice the GAD programs, and sustain GAD programs in their respective institutions (MacNaughton, Steven, & Shucksmith 2019).

NPT seeks to surface factors that can promote, or inhibit, the normalization of a set of practices or programs and does so by identifying four core components needed for normalization: coherence, cognitive participation, collective action, and reflexive monitoring.

Coherence is the planning phase, which refers to making sense of practice with an emphasis on understanding and conceptualizing interventions in their work (McEvoy et al. 2014). It is concerned with identifying and unpacking what people do when trying to understand a new practice or program. GFPS or other similar GAD mechanisms of private HEIs must differentiate the uniqueness of GAD programs from their conventional programs, provide a collective understanding about the intentions and outcomes of the program, provide a clear and shared understanding of the aims, objectives and expected benefits of the programs to the school community, and internalize a knowledge on the value, benefits, and importance of the said programs.

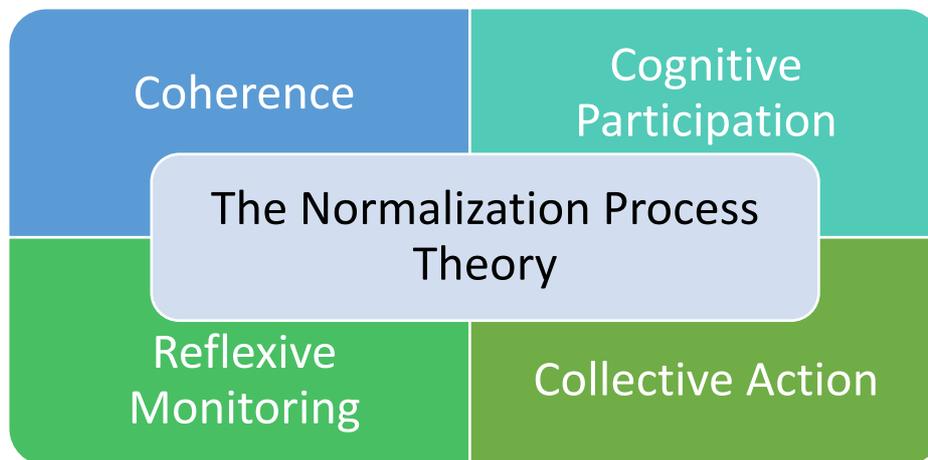
Cognitive Participation, which is still in the planning phase, focuses on how people engage and participate with practice with an emphasis on notions of legitimation and buy-in, both in terms of the individuals involved and involving others. It is about people's relational work to build a group with shared agreement and engagement about the new practice (McEvoy et al. 2014). The principal officials and focal persons of GFPS in private HEIs must possess the right and necessary skills to implement the program implementation successfully. They must organize or reorganize themselves and others to collectively contribute to the success of the undertaking. This ensures that the right people with the right skills are ready to carry out the work. The realization of GAD programs' validity helps GFPS, and the beneficiaries make engagement and valid contribution for it. Finally, GFPS and other similar mechanisms should identify and define the actions and procedures needed to sustain a practice and stay involved.

Collective Action is in the doing phases, where the distribution of work required among stakeholders and resources to support that with an emphasis on organizational resources, training, division of labor, confidence, and expertise as well as the workability of the intervention (McEvoy et al. 2014). In this phase, GFPS must identify physical actions taken to perform the tasks, build accountability and maintain confidence with each other, allocate tasks

appropriately according to people’s skills, knowledge, and expertise, and manage resources to implement GAD programs.

Reflexive Monitoring belongs to the appraisal phase, where the focus is on how individuals reflect and appraise their (practice) effects, emphasizing appraising, and monitoring implementation work (McEvoy et al. 2014). In the final phase, GFPS or other similar GAD mechanisms of private HEIs must seek to determine how effective and useful for them and others the GAD programs are through collecting feedback information. Anticipate in appraising the program's effects on an individual and communal level may lead to attempts to redefine procedures or modify practices subject to reconfiguration.

The intervention involved in the system is the institutionalization of GAD among private HEIs, where it affects the system norms and process. In compliance with its legal mandate, Gender and Development practices and programs will become part of the school's values, principles, and undertakings, leading to its normalization within the system's operation. The system's normalization process will be measured using an exhaustive interview with the persons who are part of the system. This includes the GFPS focal person and teachers of the private HEIs. Furthermore, the NPT, as a framework, is contextualized in the guide questionnaire to extract copious data from the participants.



METHODOLOGY

This study was aimed to provide exhaustive information on the implementations of GAD programs of Private HEIs. Thus, a case study method was used to investigate the case in-depth and within its real-world context. The qualitative tools that were utilized to gather data were interview guide questions, observations, and significant documents that are deemed helpful in providing comprehensive data. The study was conducted at four (4) identified private HEIs in Tacloban City, Leyte, Philippines. There were four (4) GAD focal persons who were the primary participants that participated in the in-depth interview. The GAD focal persons of each private HEIs are the assigned key implementors by the head of the educational institution for Gender and Development in their respective schools as mandated by CMO No. 1 s. 2015. To validate the data gathered from them, a peer debriefing was conducted to the teachers of the respective private HEIs as coordinators with the GAD focal persons in delivering GAD-related programs. There were six (6) private HEIs teachers who served as the secondary participants of the study.

The collection of data started with an in-depth interview with the GAD focal persons. Then to supplement the information and to confirm their statements, an FGD with the private

HEIs teachers, who are part of the implementing body of GAD program, activities, and projects, in every institution. Since this research was conducted at the midst of the community lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an alternative method of gathering exhaustive data was recited through video conferencing applications.

Data acquired from the participants were read several times to make sense from the interview as a whole before breaking it down into small parts. Reading and memoing emergent ideas from the transcript attempts to describe and synthesize them for a higher level of analytical meanings (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña 2014). Using the categorical aggregation, the researcher will seek a collection of themes from the data, hoping that relevant meaning about lessons to be learned about the case will emerge (Stake 2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the interview transcripts had led to relevant themes that were in adherence with the research's rationale. The themes provided an appalling result on the actions of the private HEIs in their GAD planning and implementation. Several school factors had to be considered to build a gender inclusive learning environment and promote gender equality in the academic community. The following are the emerging and overarching themes from the analyzed data.

GAD programs, activities, and projects

There were GAD programs, activities, and projects (PAPs) that GAD focal persons planned, implemented, managed, and evaluated to ensure that the purpose was aligned towards the truism of GAD. The conduct of GAD-related competitions, seminars, and workshops on GAD, inclusive curriculum design, and gender-neutral facilities are among the initiatives of the GAD Office. School-wide activities such as pageants where contestants are gays and lesbians are annually held during the school's foundation days or sports fest. Such pageants symbolize the school's viewpoint on the role of the LGBTQIA+ in the school community. Gay and Lesbian pageants serve as platforms for the students to express their gender identity and preferences to the academic community and celebrate the fluidity of gender (Toraman & Ozen 2019).

GAD seminars and workshops' annual conduct augments the school stakeholders and students' views on GAD advancement. During the conduct of such event, the students' interest towards the topic was manifested based on their engagement and performance in the workshops. As one GAD focal person expressed *"Based on my observation, students had internalized the things that they had learned from the seminar because the students were active participants during the seminar. The reaction was good."* These seminars and workshops have an indispensable role in promoting gender awareness and sensitivity, eradicating gender stereotypes, and instilling tolerance towards gender diversity.

The CMO No.1, s. 2015 Part V clearly indicates that HEIs shall promote and develop Gender-Responsive Curricular Programs (GRCPs) that prevent all forms of gender discrimination in instruction, research, extension, as well as in marketing methods and the use of promotional materials. The participants claimed that gender sensitivity and inclusivity were integrated into their school curriculum, specifically in their course syllabus, instructional methods, and classroom management. The curriculum was designed to project a course that embraces diversity which includes gender mainstreaming. Learning outcomes, reference materials, and topics were carefully crafted aligned with the principles of GAD, institutional goals, and teachers' expectations. In terms of the delivery of the lesson, teachers select pedagogies that are learner-centered and diverse. Since the learner-centered approach involves the diversity of learners in planning for the instructional delivery, this approach seemed fit for

recognizing gender's role in the teaching-learning process. Hernandez and Cudiamat (2017) proposed that teachers consider gender-based differentiated instruction in selecting appropriate teaching methodologies, instructional media, and assessment tools. Teachers are also gender-sensitive in terms of addressing someone who is non-binary inside their respective classrooms. A participant stressed that *“On my first day of class, if I encounter a student [who is gay] and wearing female uniform, I address them as Ms. Not Mr, because I respect their gender expression. On the other hand, if I notice a lesbian student, I usually ask how I will address you? Ms or just your last name?”*

It was also witnessed that the school's infrastructures provide gender-inclusive services to the students. The private HEIs constructed facilities that are gender-friendly for the student's utilization and convenience. Specifically, the construction of a separate comfort room for students who do not identify themselves as gender binary. These provide the students clean and sufficient sanitation facilities that promote gender-sensitivity and awareness among users, that all gender exists and matters (UN Global Education Report 2018). Wernick, Kulick and Chin (2017) added that educational policies and practices should explicitly ensure all students' well-being and healthy development by supporting students' right to use a bathroom in an institutional context that affirms their gender identity and expression. Based on their findings, bathroom safety for trans safety significantly impacted overall school safety, self-esteem, and grades. The gender-inclusive bathrooms are well-functioning and there were school staffs that were assigned for the safety and cleanliness of the bathroom for students who will use it. The GAD focal person strongly advertises how their bathroom by stating that *“We assure that there will be no form of aggression against [one another].”*

Program Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation

The CMO provides a provision on the funding of HEIs for their annual GAD plans. The private HEIs have the discretion to allocate a sufficient portion of their budget for the planning and implementation of GAD PAPs. Common to all private HEIs, the executive committees of the respective schools conduct a strategic plan for the entire academic year, where the GAD focal persons are involved. The GAD office also conducts orientation on their committee for the implementation of the planned PAPs. The committee includes the GAD focal persons as the chairman and steering committee, assigned teachers, staff, and student organizations as temporarily assigned committee members. In terms of funding, the school's administrators financially and morally support the GAD office initiatives. Rigorous planning was necessary to identify program goals, the program directions, project and unveil problems, give a sense of preparedness, and provide perspectives (Crothers, Theodore, & Hughes 2012). It has to be noted that PAPs must be identified along gender mainstreaming to attain gender equality (Aguilar-Delvin 2017). In the normalization processing theory, the planning stage of private HEIs is equivalent to the coherence and cognitive participation phase. It is the stage where the GAD focal person, the program managers, and concerned people must identify the program objectives, assigning roles, allocate materials, and resources, decide on implementation strategies, identify actions and procedures, and internalize an understanding of the planned programs (McEvoy et al. 2014).

The success of the program implementation is determined by the effective management and cooperation of the involved persons. In the implementation of GAD-related competitions, seminars, and workshops, the GAD office assigns a program manager who is responsible for managing the operations and functioning of the entire committee and accountable for the program's success. The implementation of the gender-inclusive curriculum is witnessed in the classroom setting, where teachers as curriculum experts apply the written curriculum to the actual classroom scenario by involving gender-related concepts in their classroom discussion,

observing gender-neutral pronouns, and providing a gender-equal platform during students performances. Durlak et al. (2011) recommended that achieving a quality implementation is a complex and demanding process that requires flexible solutions to unanticipated implementation problems, monitoring of the performances of individuals involved, and group cooperation. It is also noteworthy that private HEIs are satisfied with the level of implementation of their GAD programs. However, based on the Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF) of PCW in 2001, the stated program implementations of private HEIs fails to hit the mark of satisfactory level. Gonzaga (2014) recommended installing strategic enabling mechanisms for GAD to enhance the level of program implementation.

In the NPT model, the implementation and management of the private HEIs in their GAD program refer to the collective action stage. In this phase, the private HEIs encouraged individuals who participated in the program implementation to cooperate all throughout the process. This is the execution phase where the GAD focal person and the program manager direct and facilitate the committee towards the program's effectiveness (McEvoy et al. 2014).

The evaluation phase of GAD programs is reported to be of equal importance with planning. UNESCO (2018) delineated that educational institutions must demonstrate their gender-based practices through concrete evidence to be obtained from self-evaluation and monitoring. Yet, during the program evaluation, there was an absence of valid and reliable evaluation tools to be adopted. In lieu of an evaluation tool, an informal conversation happens after the program involving the committee members whether the program objectives were met and identify key stages to improve. Regarding the NPT, the program evaluation of GAD programs refers to reflexive monitoring, where the focus is now on reflection, assessing, and feedbacking about the program implemented (McEvoy et al. 2014). This is also where the weaknesses and strengths were identified, and problems encountered were consolidated.

Problems, Issues, and Concerns

Despite being planned ahead of time, there were still problems encountered by the private HEIs during the program implementation. The difficulties met range from minor to significant and personal biases. Some of the small-scale challenges faced are monitoring attendance, participants' involvement, technical problems, program flow management, and time management. The major problem that GAD focal persons met is the personal biases and gender discrimination that persist in the community, especially when they held Gay and Lesbian Pageants. This holds true to Moser and Moser (2010), where implementation of gender mainstreaming could be hurdled due to resistance and negative attitudes towards gender issues. Due to such predicaments, the GAD focal persons find it difficult to scout for a venue where their pageant will be promoted and shown. It also influences the crowd's impression and treatment towards people who are gender non-conformity. This could even contribute to individuals' continuing anxiety towards gender equality (Schwartz & Sinicrope 2013). Nevertheless, GAD focal persons or the program manager were able to cope with such predicaments through consolidation and formal meetings.

Program Structure

There was explicit agreement that constitutes the advancement of Gender and Development among nations. The United Nations asserted a place for the campaign Gender and Development in its Millennium Development Goals, a movement towards the attainment of gender parity. The Beijing Platform Action provided the document for the advancement of women's rights. The UN adopted the CEDAW as the international bill of rights for women, while the Magna Carta for Women was the Philippine adaptation of the said right. In pursuing gender equality

among learners in higher education, CHED was mandated to craft and implement an office in the commission and SUCs that will uphold the commission's commitment to gender equality. As such, it had resulted in the development of CMO No. 1, s. 2015. Specifically, Part IV, Section, Paragraph B of CMO No. 1, s. 2015, describes the composition of the GFPS of Private HEIs. As stated, the private HEIs shall likewise establish a GFPS or a similar GAD mechanism and shall be composed of the following members:

1. The HEI's President or Head of institution, as Head thereof;
2. The President's Advisory Council, Management Committee or its equivalent, composed of the members of the Management/Executive Committees;
3. GAD Focal Committee, chaired by a Dean or Department Head, with other designated officials or staff as members; and
4. Secretariat composed of identified support staff from the various colleges/offices of the private HEI.

Based on the development of the data, the GAD Committee's composition among private HEIs are commonly composed of one designated person who spearheads the different GAD-related programs, activities, and projects. By their virtue, the respective head of the administration of private HEIs assigned individuals who will perform a GAD Focal Person's duties and responsibilities as stated in the CMO. The assigned individual is obliged to identify the GAD committee members, plan, and implement GAD programs, activities, and projects, establish a database of information and report on the status of implementation annually or as often as may be required by the CHED Regional Office. Despite the CMO's effectivity, no special order was issued to any personnel as a formal designation to the said post. Moreover, the lack of employee orientation and on-boarding led to role confusion and even culture shock at work.

The School's Policy on Cross-dressing

The selected private HEIs have a set of recognized school policies that protect and promote the school's orderliness, safety, and integrity. There are specific provisions regarding the dress code that students must follow upon entering the school premises. Although school uniforms reinforce sex and even gender labeling, it is still widely used as the school attire during school days. Eventually, private HEIs allow genderqueer students to wear male or female uniforms as long as they wear them complete and with pride. This is also applied during their washdays, where students are allowed to wear casual attire. As a GAD focal person mentioned, *"In here [the school], gays, especially if they identify themselves as gay, they would wear feminine clothes. That's the thing that I appreciate here."* This statement embodies how the school community welcomes gender expression inside the campus. However, the wearing of extreme body revealing clothes are strictly prohibited. This policy allows the students to come out of the closet and express their gender identity through their clothing. Curtis and Morris (2015) explained that gender identity and how we dress are nearly interlinked. Thus, the type of clothes students wore are windows towards their gender identity.

Furthermore, CHED has no known mandate that regulates the private HEIs in their dress code policy. For it is expected that in a cultural setting, men and women are expected to perform social roles recognized by the community as a norm, such as wearing appropriate attire. The private HEIs have the authority and discretion to implement policies and standards that would protect the school's integrity and promote student welfare. GAD focal person's even classified such a policy as a GAD program since it tackles the person's gender preference.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study's findings, the following are drawn conclusions:

It is safe to infer that GAD committee and office's organization among private HEIs deviate and fails to comply with the mandates of CHED for the advancement of women empowerment and gender equality. Specifically on the provisions for budget allocation, program interventions, and GAD office function. However, private HEIs are to be recognized for the integration of GAD-related programs and other related mechanisms in their school culture and policies and annual academic and nonacademic activities. There is an awful need for sustainable and meaningful GAD programs, researches, and extensions for the schools to implement. In relation to the NPT theory, the private HEIs follows the phases as indicated in the framework but lack the enforcement of organized and well-developed GAD interventions. Despite the school's movement towards GAD, gender inequality and stereotypes are still an enduring problem that augments and concurs the gender inequality theory. More systematic planning, organized implementation, and reliable evaluation tools are necessary for a successful and compelling GAD program. Finally, there is a lack of enforcement from the CHED Regional Office on their guidelines and policies for implementing GAD.

Recommendations

In light of the recent findings, the following recommendations are provided:

1. The private HEIs president or school head, in appointing designation, must provide an office structure and assign faculty or staff who will be part of the GAD Committee. There must also be a clear distinction in their duties and responsibilities to provide direction and guidance in their assignments.
2. The GAD committee must conduct annual strategic planning to identify the programs to be implemented and set the program objectives for implementation reference.
3. GAD focal persons should be provided with training and seminars to enhance their GAD programs' capabilities and ensure the program's successful facilitation and resource allocation.
4. The GAD committee must intensify the conduct of seminars, training, and workshop for the school community to promote gender awareness and equality.
5. Existing school policies should be regularly reviewed to prevent gender discrimination and ensure that school activities are gender-inclusive.
6. The GAD programs, activities, and projects must reflect on the school's core functions, curriculum, research, and extension.
7. To improve GAD program implementation in all private HEIs, the CHED Region VIII office must intensify GAD implementation by providing feedback in the private HEIs GAD annual report and strictly monitoring its development.
8. Finally, further research should be conducted in line with implementing the GAD program of private HEIs. This will help school administrators and policymakers establish reforms to implement better GAD programs towards attaining gender equality and equity.

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