

Gender – Responsive Curriculum for Bachelor of Technical – Vocational Teacher Education

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.51584/IJRIAS.2025.100900057>

Received: 14 September 2025; Accepted: 21 September 2025; Published: 15 October 2025

Page no. 566-583

ABSTRACT

This parallel and developmental research aimed to scrutinize the current Bachelor of Technical-Vocational Teacher Education (BTVTEd) curriculum in the research locale, focusing on identifying gender-based issues and challenges and proposing enhancements. Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng San Pablo was chosen as the locale for this study due to its relevance and alignment with the nature of the research. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents. Initially, 58 respondents were for the quantitative phase and 10 respondents for qualitative-focus group discussions. Additionally, 16 experts in curriculum and Gender and Development evaluated the curriculum's acceptability. The study utilized an adapted and modified questionnaire as its primary tool, employing average mean for quantitative and thematic analysis to interpret qualitative data. The findings revealed a lack of gender responsiveness and its extent of inclusivity to all genders. Additionally, in perpetuating gender biases and stereotypes, the data indicated moderately per. While the FGD revealed gender-based challenges and problems experienced by stakeholders. This research offers crucial insights for stakeholders seeking to improve the BTVTEd curriculum, promote gender sensitivity and inclusivity, and address current educational gaps. Through a parallel and developmental approach, this research provides valuable insights for stakeholders aiming to enhance the BTVTEd curriculum to be more gender-responsive and inclusive, thereby bridging gaps in current educational practices.

Keywords: BTVTEd curriculum, Program Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs), gender-responsive, gender equality, gender-based problems and challenges

INTRODUCTION

Gender plays a significant role in education, shaping the experiences and outcomes of students. Understanding gender dynamics is essential for creating equitable learning environments where all students can thrive, as it directly impacts inclusivity, equity, and effectiveness. Gender equality in education not only fosters individual development but also contributes to broader societal progress by ensuring that both men and women have equal opportunities to succeed (UNESCO, 2017).

Historically, educational curricula have often reflected and perpetuated gender biases, limiting opportunities for women and marginalized groups. Despite significant progress towards gender equality in recent decades, today's curricula still face challenges in fully integrating gender-responsive practices. Many educational institutions struggle to bridge the gap between policy and practice, reflecting ongoing challenges in achieving true gender inclusivity (Jones, 2020). The continuous evolution of gender roles in society necessitates the ongoing evaluation and adaptation of educational programs to meet the needs of all students.

The Bachelor of Technical-Vocational Teacher Education (BTVTEd) curriculum is particularly relevant for study in the context of gender responsiveness and inclusivity. Unlike other courses, the BTVTEd program directly impacts the training of future educators who will influence a diverse student population in technical and vocational fields. Ensuring that these educators are equipped with gender-responsive teaching strategies is crucial for fostering an inclusive learning environment in technical education, which has traditionally been male-

dominated. The incorporation of gender-sensitive modules and practical training can significantly enhance the capacity of educators to address and mitigate gender biases in the classroom. Moreover, such measures can promote equal opportunities and encourage the participation of underrepresented genders in technical and vocational disciplines.

Within the local setting, the BTVTEd program at Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng San Pablo emphasizes gender responsiveness. However, assessments and evaluations reveal persistent gaps, particularly in evaluating gender equity from multi-sectoral stakeholders' perspectives. These challenges include ensuring the curriculum's relevance to male, female, and LGBTQIA+ students, as well as addressing issues of gender bias and stereotyping. Thus, this research aims to scrutinize the existing BTVTEd curriculum, identify gender-based problems, and enhance the curriculum to foster inclusivity and gender responsiveness. Through this approach, the study seeks to align with the principles of gender equality in curriculum reform and development.

Statement of the Problem:

The main thrust of this study was to develop an enhanced curriculum on crafting a gender-responsive and inclusive curriculum for Bachelor of Technical – Vocational Teacher Education. Specifically, it sought to answer the following:

1. To what extent is gender equity manifested in the current Bachelor of Technical – Vocational Teacher Education in terms of:
 - 1.1 Gender Responsiveness;
 - 1.2 Extent of inclusivity to all gender orientations;
 - 1.3 Perpetuation of Gender Bias and Stereotyping?
2. What gender-based problems and challenges do the respondents face?
3. Based on the data gathered, what possible enhancements can be added to the curriculum?
4. What is the level of acceptability of the developed enhanced curriculum as assessed by the curriculum and gender experts in terms of:
 - 4.1 Curriculum Alignment;
 - 4.2 Higher Education Institution's Student gender sensitivity practices;
 - 4.3 Effectiveness in raising Gender-responsiveness?

RELATED LITERATURE

The pivotal role of teachers in promoting gender equality within educational settings is a focal point across various studies. Finkelstein et al. emphasize that teachers' actions directly influence student learning outcomes, either perpetuating or challenging gender inequality. This viewpoint is echoed by Pedrajas and Jalandoni, who highlight gender disparities in tertiary education and advocate for teaching gender equality to foster a fair and inclusive society.

In the Philippine context, Masangya et al. argue for gender-sensitive teaching practices to achieve inclusive education, noting a lack of awareness among educators and students regarding its significance. Galacgac identifies discrepancies in perceptions of gender responsiveness between teachers and students, underscoring the need for educational reforms. The collaboration between CHED and PCW, as noted by Gil, resulted in CMO No. 1, s. 2015, aiming to institutionalize gender equality in higher education through mechanisms like the GAD Focal Point System and gender-responsive curriculum development. This initiative highlights the importance of political will and effective communication in ensuring curriculum reforms align with gender equality principles.

Conversely, Rong et al. highlight deficiencies in gender mainstreaming within curriculum design despite training efforts, emphasizing the influence of teachers' perspectives on student learning experiences and gender bias reinforcement. This calls for comprehensive training programs to equip educators with skills for gender-responsive teaching.

Niemeyer and Colley discuss ongoing gender disparities in the TVET system and labor market, influenced by societal changes, emphasizing the critical role of technical educators in societal development and the necessity for gender-sensitive teaching practices. Lamptey et al. and UNESCO advocate for gender mainstreaming in educational policies to achieve inclusive and equitable educational environments by integrating gender concerns into all development initiatives.

This study uniquely contributes by focusing specifically on the Bachelor of Technical-Vocational Teacher Education (BTVTEd) curriculum at Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng San Pablo, examining its gender responsiveness and inclusivity. Unlike previous reviews that broadly discuss gender issues across educational settings, this study delves into a specific vocational education program, offering targeted insights and recommendations for enhancing gender equality within technical education. By scrutinizing local curriculum practices and stakeholder perspectives, this study aims to bridge gaps identified in previous literature and contribute practical strategies for curriculum enhancement and development aligned with gender equality principles.

Theoretical Framework

The theory models of the study utilized Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as a theoretical framework to explore the evolving gender responsiveness in technical-vocational teacher education, examining curriculum and pedagogical strategies within the context of knowledge, thinking, culture, and practice.

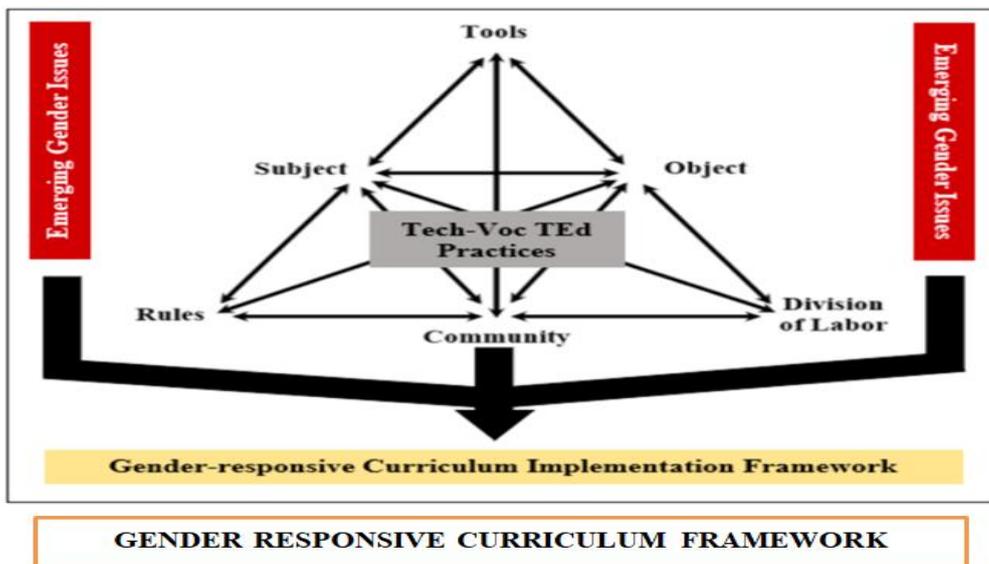


Figure 1. Representation of the second generation of CHAT, based on the work of Leont'ev and elaborated by Engstrom (1987)

This study investigated the increasing gender responsiveness between knowledge, thinking, culture, and practice in technical-vocational teacher education settings to better understand the existing curriculum and pedagogical strategies connected to gender responsiveness.

The Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) was chosen as the theoretical lens for this study because of its ability to provide a comprehensive lens for examining various aspects of the educational setting, such as teachers' backgrounds and perspectives, the entire institutional setting, and changes in the activity system over time (Murphy & Rodriguez-Manzanares, 2008).

CHAT was a transdisciplinary approach to human science study. It evolved from the cultural-historical psychology school of Vygotsky, Leontev, and Luria (Engeström et al., 1999). It examined the collective activity system as an artifact-mediated, object-oriented system.

As a result, the divide between the individual subject and the societal system was closed. Engeström derived the second generation of CHAT from Vygotsky's work, as shown in the middle area of Figure 1. The triangle at the top of the diagram was identical to Vygotsky's (1987) triangle.

Engeström enlarged the triangle's bottom to incorporate rules, community, and division of work, as well as socio-historical components of mediation that Vygotsky omitted from his original model. Vygotsky's research focused on the semiotic process relationship, whereas Engeström expanded on it by situating it in ordinary life, that was, in situated activities.

Moreover, this theory framework was lifted from the framework used by Alinea (2022) toward knowing the best practices in implementing the TVTEd Curriculum. This study expanded on the framework created by Vygotsky (1987) and improved by Engeström and was used by Alinea (2022). To better serve the study's aim, the CHAT was placed in a box where increasing challenges in curriculum implementation involving gender problems and challenges existed. The extent to which these concepts were implemented in the technical-vocational teacher education program was measured. Furthermore, the information acquired through this lens was used to create the curriculum for BTVTEd.

Conceptual Framework

The figure illustrates the framework for evaluating and enhancing the current Bachelor of Technical and Vocational Education (BTVTEd) curriculum was gender responsive. The explanation follows a formal structure grounded in CHAT theory. The core of the framework was the current BTVTEd curriculum. This served as the primary tool and object of analysis, providing the foundation upon which gender responsiveness enhancements were built.

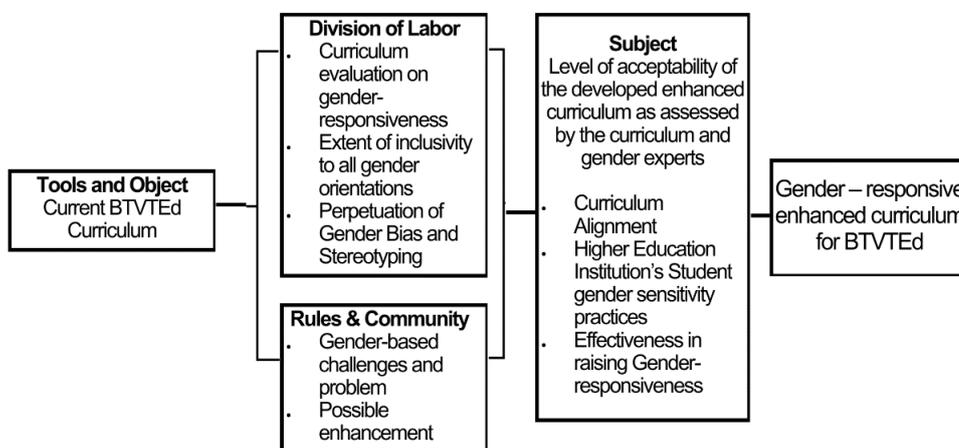


Figure 2. Research Paradigm

Moreover, the division of labor is central to the evaluation process and encompasses several key variables which were (1) Curriculum evaluation on gender-responsiveness, (2) Extent of inclusivity to all gender orientations, and (3) Perpetuation of gender bias and stereotyping. The activities within this framework were influenced by the community's rules, both explicit and implicit, as well as the gender-based challenges and problems faced by that community which were: (1) Gender-based challenges and problems and (2) Possible enhancements. Furthermore, the subject of this analysis is the level of acceptability of the developed enhanced curriculum, as assessed by curriculum and gender experts. This encompasses the (1) Curriculum alignment, (2) Higher education institution's student gender sensitivity practices, and (3) Effectiveness in raising gender-responsiveness. These were the basis of level of acceptability which refers to the degree to which the developed enhanced curriculum was deemed appropriate, relevant, and effective by both curriculum and gender experts.

This involves several critical dimensions. The aim of this framework was to develop a gender-responsive enhanced curriculum for BTVTEd. This enhanced curriculum fosters an inclusive educational environment that acknowledges and supports all gender orientations, thereby eliminating biases and stereotypes.

This framework, grounded in the CHAT theory, provides a structured approach evaluating and enhancing the BTVTEd curriculum for gender responsiveness. Through this process, the curriculum can be transformed to better meet the needs of all students, promoting an equitable and inclusive educational experience.

Research Design

The study utilized a sequential mixed method that involves parallel and development research design. This approach involves conducting quantitative and qualitative research in sequence, with one phase informing the other. In a sequential mixed-methods design, the researcher may start with a quantitative phase (parallel research) to gather numerical data, followed by a qualitative phase (developmental research) to provide deeper insights into the quantitative findings or to explore new research questions. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. (Gonzaga University, 2023).

Thematic analysis was chosen as a method of data-driven discourse in the qualitative part because it allows for the identification of patterns in data and the attempt to integrate them into meaningful groupings and themes that represent the issue under investigation (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Likewise, the use of thematic analysis allowed the researcher to analyze and code the data for description and themes, interpret the meaning of the information based on personal reflections and previous research, and write the final report with respondents' predispositions and a flexible structure. In addition, the qualitative data was then interpreted by an expert, an English teacher based in the research locale.

Research Locale

Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng San Pablo, located in Brgy. San Jose, San Pablo City, Laguna, is the sole local university offering various programs, including the newly introduced BTVTEd program. The researcher aims to evaluate its curriculum for gender responsiveness and inclusivity through selected respondents. This location is ideal as the researcher is actively involved in the BTVTEd field, facilitating convenience and access to a plentitude of significant information, diverse perspectives, and firsthand experiences crucial for the study. The researcher chose the location of implementation because it will give the researchers the needed information for the BTVTEd program to be more gender-responsive and inclusive. Furthermore, the study was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2023-2024.

Respondents and Participants

This research utilized a purposive sampling method, a non-probability sampling technique particularly effective for studying specific cultural domains with experts (Pykes, 2022). The respondents included curriculum experts, Gender and Development (GAD) experts, currently enrolled students, and training partners, all integral to the Bachelor of Technical-Vocational Teacher Education (BTVTEd) program.

For the quantitative part, the study involved fifty-eight (58) various stakeholders. This group comprised twenty – eight (28) BTVTEd students who were currently enrolled in the second semester of the Academic Year 2023-2024, eleven (11) PLSP teachers who handled BTVTEd courses, five (5) Curriculum and GAD Experts who were curriculum implementers with a background in GAD, and fourteen (14) training partners who were teaching in the tech-voc department of Cresencia Drusila Memorial Senior High School.

Subsequently, ten respondents from the quantitative phase were selected for the qualitative Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). This group included two (2) individuals from the teacher sector, two (2) from the student sector, two (2) training partners, two (2) GAD experts, and two (2) curriculum experts. The respondents were carefully selected based on specific criteria: teachers actively teaching major courses in BTVTEd, students actively engaged in BTVTEd and holding leadership roles, curriculum experts with significant expertise in

curriculum development or implementation, Gender and Development (GAD) experts advocating for gender issues, and training partners serving as master teachers and technical-vocational heads.

Furthermore, sixteen (16) respondents, comprising GAD experts and curriculum experts, participated in the acceptability survey. All of them were from outside the research locale and were also curriculum implementers and evaluators working at teacher education institutions and advocating for GAD.

Instrument

Formal communication seeking permission was first sent to the College Dean, whose acceptance allowed the researcher to distribute questionnaires via Google form to the targeted study respondents. Subsequently, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted, and the gathered data underwent thorough analysis. Based on this analysis, an enhanced curriculum was developed and subjected to acceptability testing.

Similarly, the quantitative survey utilized an online questionnaire to collect numerical data from a purposive sample of 58 respondents, ensuring representation across relevant demographics. Structured questions with predefined response options facilitated efficient data collection and analysis.

In the qualitative phase, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with ten (10) respondents selected from diverse backgrounds. Guided by a third-party skilled facilitator through Google Meet, these discussions provided deep insights into respondents' perspectives and experiences. It was a single session that lasted two hours. The session was conducted via Google Meet due to the high heat index during the data-gathering period. The qualitative data was then interpreted by an expert, an English teacher based in the research locale.

The final part of the study involved administering an acceptability tool to 16 respondents, comprising curriculum and GAD experts. This tool assessed the acceptability of the proposed curriculum enhancement, with quantitative analysis of responses offering insights into implementation feasibility and desirability. The instrument's validity was rigorously evaluated, utilizing a Likert Scale for rating responses.

Furthermore, to ensure adherence to accepted principles of ethical and professional conduct, objectivity, and transparency, the researcher of this study established several guiding principles for ethical research. Voluntary participation was emphasized, with respondents solicited to contribute voluntarily, ensuring their dignity and well-being were always protected. Informed consent was obtained through a request letter seeking approval from the administrators of the HEIs where the study was conducted. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research, with data remaining confidential and students' permission obtained for using the information gathered from them. The Data Privacy Act was strictly observed. Results were communicated transparently, with proper citations used from the start to avoid plagiarism and research misconduct. The researcher was fully aware that good research communication demanded honesty, reliability, and credibility.

Data Gathering Procedure

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Data Analysis

The study employed the mean to determine the extent to which multi-sectoral stakeholders responded to gender equity in the current curriculum of the Bachelor of Technical-Vocational Teacher Education, particularly in terms of gender responsiveness, relevance to male, female, and LGBTQIA+ students, and gender bias and stereotyping. Additionally, thematic analysis was utilized to identify the gender-based challenges and problems encountered by the respondents, as well as how these issues impacted the implementation of the curriculum.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Extent of gender equity manifested in the current Bachelor of Technical – Vocational Teacher Education

The table shows the extent to which gender equity is manifested in the current BTVTEd curriculum, focusing on gender responsiveness across four groups: Student Sector, PLSP Teachers, Training Partners, and Curriculum and Gender and Development (GAD) Experts.

Table 1.1 presents the level of gender responsiveness among the Student Sector, PLSP Teachers, Training Partners, and Curriculum and GAD Experts. The highest mean, 3.32, was observed in the "PLSP Teachers" category, described as not responsive. In contrast, the lowest mean, 3.28, was found equally among the remaining categories, also described as not responsive. Although efforts towards gender responsiveness were noted among the Curriculum and GAD Experts, particularly regarding cultural appropriateness and promoting gender equality within the curriculum, certain areas still require improvement. Specifically, there is a lack of clear commitment to gender equality in the mission statements and learning outcomes of the existing curricula. Furthermore, Cagang (2023) highlights the need for a Pedagogy Program focused on GAD awareness and Gender-sensitive Pedagogical Strategies for faculty, based on the definition of gender and development in Republic Act 9710 (the Magna Carta of Women). To strengthen and maintain a high level of GAD awareness, it is crucial to provide pre-service teachers with ongoing training in gender-sensitive teaching, workshops, and awareness-raising programs related to GAD. These initiatives can help incorporate gender-sensitive pedagogical practices into their teaching processes.

Table 1 Summary table on the extent of gender equity manifested in the current Bachelor of Technical – Vocational Teacher Education

	Student Sector	PLSP Teachers	Training Partners	Curr. and GAD Experts
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Gender Responsiveness	3.28	NR	3.32	NR	3.28	NR	3.28	NR
Extent of inclusivity to all gender orientations	3.42	NI	3.51	NI	3.49	NI	3.48	NI
Perpetuation of Gender Bias and Stereotyping	3.30	MP	3.32	MP	3.30	MP	3.18	MP
Total:	3.33	MM	3.38	M M	3.35	MM	3.31	MM
Legends: NR-Not Responsive, NI, Not Inclusive, MP-Moderately Perpetuating, MM-Moderately Manifested								

This table presents a summary and the weighted average of the data from sub variables that were asked to the respondents, focusing on gender responsiveness and relevance to all genders across various sectors: Student Sector, PLSP Teachers, Training Partners, and Curriculum and Gender and Development (GAD) Experts. For the Student Sector, the scores for gender responsiveness and relevance were 3.28, 3.42, and 3.30 for items 1.1, 1.2, and s, respectively, with a total weighted average of 3.33, indicating a "Moderately Manifested" status. Similarly, PLSP Teachers scored 3.32, 3.51, and 3.32 for the same items, resulting in a total average of 3.38, also "Moderately Manifested." Training Partners received scores of 3.28, 3.49, and 3.30, culminating in an overall average of 3.35, reflecting a "Moderately Manifested" status. Finally, Curriculum and GAD Experts had scores of 3.28, 3.48, and 3.18, with a total average of 3.31, again categorizing them as "Moderately Manifested." The terms "Not Responsive," "Not Inclusive," and "Moderately Perpetuating" indicate low levels of gender responsiveness, inclusivity, and a moderate level of reinforcing existing gender biases and stereotypes, respectively. Overall, the findings suggest that while there are efforts to address gender issues across all sectors, there remains significant room for improvement to achieve full inclusivity and reduce the perpetuation of gender biases.

Gender-based challenges and problems encountered by the respondents

The qualitative focused group discussion yielded insightful themes regarding gender-based challenges encountered by the respondents in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs. One predominant theme was the presence of gender stereotypes, particularly regarding the choice of specialization within TVET programs. Respondents highlighted how certain fields, such as automotive or Electrical Installation and Maintenance (EIM), were perceived as more suitable for either males or females. For instance, one participant expressed, *"ayun nga po may mga stereotypes po kasi na kapag ka-sinabing automotive, lalake lang yung dapat na mag-enroll dun sa program na yun"* (P1).

Moreover, the discussion revealed that addressing these stereotypes requires a multi-faceted approach, including curriculum reforms, awareness campaigns, and professional development for educators. By challenging these stereotypes and promoting inclusivity, TVET programs can create a more supportive and equitable learning environment for all students, regardless of gender. Efforts to diversify the workforce within TVET and showcase successful role models who defy traditional gender norms were also identified as crucial strategies to inspire and empower students to pursue their interests freely.

Another participant shared their experience of being questioned for choosing a specialization perceived as gender-inappropriate, indicating a prevalent stereotype within the TVET community (P2). Moreover, discussions revealed gender disparities in vocational opportunities, where male respondents often have more options and access to leadership roles compared to their female counterparts. This inequality was exemplified by the unequal distribution of opportunities for leadership roles, as expressed by one participant: *"Kapag need ng leader or mangunguna, lalaki lagi ang nabibigayn ng opportunity na manguna"* (P5).

Furthermore, the lack of representation and limited access for females in certain fields were highlighted as significant challenges. Respondents noted instances where females were steered away from traditionally male-dominated fields, reinforcing gender biases and limiting their career choices. Additionally, gender-fair language and the incorporation of gender-sensitive perspectives into the curriculum were identified as crucial steps towards promoting gender equality within TVET programs. Respondents emphasized the need for inclusive language and the integration of gender-related topics into the curriculum to address these disparities effectively. However, despite efforts to promote gender equality, the discussion also revealed a lack of empowerment for both women and men in certain fields, indicating a broader societal challenge that extends beyond TVET programs. Overall, the interpretation of this data underscores the multifaceted nature of gender-based challenges within TVET, necessitating comprehensive strategies to promote inclusivity and equal opportunities for all respondents.

From the results of the previous table, respondents emphasized the influence of advisers and parents in shaping the perception of educational opportunities, particularly concerning specialized offers that might traditionally be considered suitable only for male students. One participant noted that schools should explain that specialized offerings are available to all genders, stating, *"ipapaliwanag kung kahit pang lalaki, yung specialized na offer ng isang school ay pwede nilang kuhanin"* (P9). Another participant emphasized the importance of *"Tamang paggabay"* (proper guidance) from parents in navigating educational choices (P9). These responses suggest a need for academic institutions and parents to adopt a more inclusive and gender-sensitive perspective toward educational opportunities, ensuring that biases do not limit students' choices.

Moreover, it also highlighted the importance of evaluating the career paths of graduates to determine whether their chosen fields align with their educational pursuits. As one participant said, *"tama ba ang napunta nilang trabaho sa kanilang inaral, so isang factor din yun"* (P9). This perspective underscores the significance of assessing the effectiveness of academic programs in preparing students for their desired career trajectories. The data suggests a call for greater awareness and proactive measures to address biases, provide comprehensive guidance, and ensure that educational pathways align with students' aspirations and realities.

On the other hand, another qualitative part of the Focus group discussion shows the results of the question, "What are the effects of gender-based challenges or problems encountered by the respondents?" The table highlights the multifaceted challenges faced by male and female students in education, ranging from external barriers like discrimination and limited opportunities to internal struggles such as doubt and isolation.

Additional common themes were "Psychological and Emotional Challenges," namely, doubt, sense of isolation, potential of the participant, and unintentionally hurting people. Sub-themes show interpretation of pedagogical considerations underscores the importance of creating inclusive learning environments and curricula that address these challenges. Some of the respondents answered, "P1: "May mga ilang students na imbis na i-pursue nila yung career na gusto nila ay hindi nila maggawa." Overall, the discussion emphasizes the need for proactive measures to support male and female students in pursuing their academic and career goals without facing gender-based obstacles.

Enhancement that can be added in the BTVTEd curriculum

The least theme in was Pedagogical Considerations, with the sub theme of incorporate activities and teaching and learning process. One of the respondents emphasized that, *"Magkaroon po ng mga activities which will create equality among the students. Kasi sa ganung way kung may activities na laging included ang lahat at walang restrictions mas magiging open ang mind ng mga students, ng teachers, pati ng administration or institution."* (P7) Nonetheless, it shows a narrative of how societal norms and biases shape the educational experiences of female students, hindering their academic and career pursuits.

Based on the insights shared during the focus group discussion, it's responsive that there was a strong commitment within the institution to promote gender sensitivity and equality in its practices. Respondents emphasized the importance of education and advocacy in addressing instances of gender insensitivity, as highlighted by P8's statement: *"If you see something that is not practicing gender sensitivity, you must try to educate them and tell them what to do. From this, they can learn from the example."*

Seeking advice from other experts was also deemed valuable, demonstrating a willingness to learn and improve. As P2 mentioned, *"Kasi kahit curriculum experts na kami, maganda pa din na magtanong da iba pa ng right things to do and decide."* The institution's support system plays a crucial role in fostering gender awareness and empowerment. Respondents discussed how peers, classmates, and advisers contribute to creating an inclusive environment. P2 highlighted the importance of learning from peers about gender definitions and strategies to overcome gender-related challenges, stating, *"And natuto po kaming lahat ng mga second year student kung ano po ba yung definition ng gender. Ano po ba yung dapat na gawin para maiwasan po namin yung mga gano'ng bagay at ma-overcome po namin."*

Furthermore, P10 emphasized the importance of encouragement and equal opportunities for all genders in tasks and activities, stating, *"Walang pang babae, walang pang lalaki. Even 'yung pagbuhat ng train, yung pag-setup ng mga oval tray na alam natin na mabigat. So, hindi siya particular na task lang for boys. Hindi lang siya particular task for girls only."*

Overall, the interpretation derived from the focus group discussion underscores the institution's commitment to promoting gender equality through education, advocacy, and inclusive practices. By fostering a supportive environment and seeking guidance from experts, the institution aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills to combat discrimination and promote gender sensitivity in all aspects of education. As articulated by P7, *"So yung pong ating gender, education dun po kailangan pong magkaroon ng gender equality, which will equip the students with the knowledge and skills to combat discrimination."*

Additionally, they highlighted the significance of analyzing how authors challenge or reinforce gender norms through their works. Another subtheme that surfaced was the proposal for the inclusion of Gender Studies in the education curriculum. Respondents expressed a desire for a dedicated subject that delves into gender-related topics such as gender identity, gender roles, gender inequality, and the societal impact of gender. Participant 1 remarked, *"Ano yung i-discuss sa Gender Studies? Siguro this subject is dedicated to the study of gender, exploring topics such as gender identity, gender roles, gender inequality, and the impact of gender on society."*

Moreover, there was a call for advocacy for gender education, with respondents emphasizing the need to counter the influence of media on young minds by introducing specific gender studies subjects. Participant 3 pointed out, *"Kasi ina-idolize sa mga bata, mga estudyante, yung mga napapanood sa television."* Participant 1 added, *"Mari po mag-cover ng mga topics like yung sa mga feminist perspectives po at 'yung mga social construction of gender."*

Furthermore, respondents advocated for policies supporting gender inclusivity in educational settings, suggesting the implementation of gender-inclusive policies and the formulation of clear guidelines for classrooms and student behavior. Participant 1 reiterated, *"Isa pa po na ma-suggest ko as student ay yung classroom guidelines and maybe kung pwede may student policies na naglalaman ng dos and don'ts for the rights and empowerment of all genders."* Participant 10 emphasized *the need for specificity in policy formulation, particularly regarding subjects like home economics, to ensure clarity and avoid confusion among different specializations.*

These discussions underscore the respondents' commitment to fostering a more inclusive and gender-sensitive educational environment, advocating for curriculum expansion and policy changes to address these goals.

The level of acceptability of the enhanced curriculum as assessed by the curriculum and gender experts in terms of:

Table 4.1 Curriculum Alignment

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal description
1. The courses included in the curriculum improve the gender awareness of both the students and instructors.	4.88	Strongly Agree
2. The content is realistic in terms of female and male roles and responsibilities in the community.	4.81	Strongly Agree
3. Enhancement in the curriculum does not reinforce gender stereotypes and bias.	4.63	Strongly Agree
4. Cited Program Intended Learning Outcome (PILO) aligned to the BTVTEd PSGs and foster gender responsiveness.	4.94	Strongly Agree
5. The proposed elements included in the learning plan promote gender equality and empowerment.	4.94	Strongly Agree
Average Mean	4.84	Highly Acceptable

Table 4.1 shows the evaluation of the enhanced BTVTED curriculum by both curriculum and Gender and Development (GAD) experts reveals a high level of acceptability across various gender-responsive indicators. The data indicates that the curriculum effectively improves gender awareness among students and teachers, with a weighted mean of 4.88, which was categorized as "Strongly Agree."

This suggests that the curriculum's courses were significantly successful in raising gender consciousness within the academic environment. Supported by the study of Laro et. al., (2020), gender-responsive curriculum here in the Philippines is a must. The sense of urgency drives them to explore the creation of a curriculum that addresses gender and women's issues effectively.

Moreover, the evaluation of gender roles and responsibilities within the community, reflected in the second indicator, received a weighted mean of 4.81, again rated as "Strongly Agree." This score indicates that the curriculum accurately reflects societal roles without perpetuating traditional gender biases. In terms of avoiding the reinforcement of gender stereotypes and biases, the curriculum scored a weighted mean of 4.63, still falling under the "Strongly Agree" category. This rating reflects the curriculum's effective strategies in promoting a more equitable learning environment by avoiding the reinforcement of gender stereotypes.

Additionally, the alignment of the Program Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) with the BTVTED PSGs (Policies, Standards, and Guidelines) and their role in fostering gender responsiveness achieved a weighted mean of 4.94, the highest score among the indicators. This strong alignment underscores the curriculum's comprehensive approach to integrating gender responsiveness at a systemic level. Furthermore, the inclusion of elements in the learning plan that promote gender equality and empowerment also scored a weighted mean of 4.94, highlighting the curriculum's effectiveness in fostering an environment of gender equality.

Overall, the average weighted mean of 4.84 for these indicators categorizes the enhanced BTVTED curriculum as "Highly Acceptable," demonstrating a strong commitment to gender-responsive education. This high level of acceptability reflects the curriculum's success in promoting gender awareness, equality, and empowerment while avoiding stereotypes and biases, thus preparing students for a more inclusive and equitable community. Moreover, a research study discussed gender discrepancies in educational access, the empowering influence of education on women, and the obstacles within education systems that uphold gender inequality. The study underscores the transformative power of education for women. It highlights how access to education can lead to improved economic opportunities, greater personal autonomy, and enhanced social status. Education is portrayed as a crucial tool for empowering women, enabling them to contribute more effectively to their communities and societies. In addition to its core analysis, the study delves into various strategies to promote gender parity in education. It includes a range of case studies and success narratives that illustrate the practical impact and effectiveness of different interventions aimed at closing the gender gap. These real-world examples highlight successful initiatives, providing concrete evidence of what works in diverse contexts to ensure equal educational opportunities for all genders. By showcasing these successes, the study not only underscores the importance of gender parity in education but also offers valuable insights and inspiration for implementing similar measures elsewhere (Dhiman, 2023).

Table 4.2

Higher Education Institution's Student gender sensitivity practices

Indicators	Mean	Verbal description
1. It provides equal opportunity for the students to participate and collaborate with each other regardless of the gender.	5.00	Strongly Agree
2. Gender responsiveness is manifested in the proposed enhancement in the curriculum.	4.75	Strongly Agree
3. The proposed enhancement in the curricula support the learning needs of the students in terms of gender responsiveness.	4.88	Strongly Agree
4. It promotes gender sensitization inside and outside the learning environment.	4.88	Strongly Agree
5. Courses in the curricula does not exhibit gender bias and stereotype.	4.63	Strongly Agree
Average Mean	4.83	Highly Acceptable

Table 4.2 shows various aspects of gender sensitization and responsiveness within the curriculum have received mean scores reflecting a high level of acceptability.

The indicator assessing whether the curriculum provides equal opportunity for student participation and collaboration regardless of gender received a mean score of 5.00, categorizing it as "Highly Acceptable." This suggests that experts strongly believe the curriculum effectively fosters an inclusive environment where all students, regardless of gender, can equally engage and cooperate.

Moreover, the gender responsiveness of the proposed curriculum enhancements received a mean score of 4.75, also deemed "Highly Acceptable." This indicates that the enhancements were perceived as significantly addressing gender-related issues, ensuring that the curriculum was aligned with the needs and perspectives of all genders.

The curriculum's support for students' learning needs concerning gender responsiveness gained a mean score of 4.88. This high score, along with the same score for promoting gender sensitization both inside and outside the learning environment, underscores the experts' strong approval of the curriculum's comprehensive approach to gender issues in both educational content and its setting. Additionally, the elimination of gender bias and stereotypes in courses scored 4.63. While this was slightly lower than the other indicators, it still falls within the "Highly Acceptable" range. This score reflects a positive evaluation, suggesting that the curriculum was largely successful in avoiding gender biases and stereotypes, contributing to a fairer and more equitable educational experience.

Furthermore, the average mean score across all indicators was 4.83, clearly categorized as "Highly Acceptable." This high average underscores the experts' consensus that the curriculum effectively integrates gender sensitivity and responsiveness, thus promoting a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

Table 4.3 Effectiveness in raising Gender-responsiveness

Indicators	Mean	Verbal description
1. It improves in the teaching and learning materials to make them more gender responsive and better at promoting gender equality.	4.69	Strongly Agree
2. The courses included in the curricula can help the students and teachers to break the barrier of gender stereotypes.	4.75	Strongly Agree

3. The enhancement in the course offerings can make them more gender responsive and better at promoting gender equality.	5.00	Strongly Agree
4. It suggests gender equality in relations.	5.00	Strongly Agree
5. It provides guidance for teachers and students so they can use materials in a more gender-responsive way	4.94	Strongly Agree
Average Mean	4.88	Highly Acceptable

Table 4.3 shows the indication of a highly positive reception across several key indicators. Each aspect evaluated received a mean score reflecting a "Highly Acceptable" rating, which suggests that the enhancements were well-aligned with the goals of promoting gender equality and responsiveness within the educational context. The indicator that focuses on improving teaching and learning materials to be more gender-responsive and better at promoting gender equality have a mean score of 4.69. This high rating highlights the effectiveness of the changes in making educational resources more inclusive and reflective of gender equality principles.

In addition, the inclusion of courses designed to help students and teachers break the barriers of gender stereotypes achieved a mean score of 4.75. This suggests a strong endorsement from the experts, affirming that the curriculum successfully addresses and mitigates gender biases, fostering a more equitable educational environment. The enhancement of course offerings to be more gender-responsive received a perfect mean score of 5.00. This indicates complete agreement among the experts on the curriculum's effectiveness in integrating gender equality into the course content. Moreover, the provision of guidance for teachers and students on using materials in a more gender-responsive way gained a mean score of 4.94. This high rating underscores the curriculum's success in providing practical tools and instructions for implementing gender-responsive practices in the classroom. Overall, the average mean scores of 4.88, with a verbal description of "Highly Acceptable," strengthen the conclusion that the enhanced BTVTED curriculum was effective in promoting gender equality and responsiveness. These high ratings from both curriculum and GAD experts suggest that the curriculum not only addresses existing gaps but also provides tangible solutions for fostering an inclusive and equitable educational setting.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the conclusions drawn were:

1. The findings indicated that efforts to promote gender equality exist across various educational sectors. There is a lack of gender sensitivity and inclusiveness in the BTVTED program, especially among the PLSP teacher sector and Training Partners and significant enhancements are necessary.
2. Additionally, although the curricula incorporate elements of human rights and gender diversity, there is insufficient effort to actively challenge gender biases and stereotypes, highlighting the need for ongoing professional development and awareness programs for educators.
3. Conversely, the enhanced BTVTEd curriculum integrates gender-responsive strategies, achieving high acceptability across various metrics. This curriculum promotes gender awareness among students and teachers, reflects societal roles without biases, and aligns well with BTVTEd Policies, Standards, and Guidelines. It also incorporates a framework focused on gender sensitizing the current curricula implemented in the research locale, influenced by other curriculum development processes such as planning, designing, and evaluating. Additionally, a salient feature of this enhancement includes a learning plan and syllabus that highlight the curriculum's comprehensive approach. In the enhanced syllabus, changes in the PILO are evident. During the first week of classes, the orientation should cover topics related to Gender Equity and Inclusivity, such as Gender-Fair Language, Gender Sensitivity and

Responsiveness, and RA 11313, also known as the "Safe Spaces Act." The syllabus also includes gender sensitization rules. Furthermore, the course requirements will be gender-inclusive and free from biases, incorporating gender-responsive statements (Appendix L & M).

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and conclusion, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Utilize the baseline data provided by the findings to inform curriculum enhancements that address gender-based issues. It is essential to consider policy formulation, regulate program offerings, and improve materials to ensure they are more gender-responsive and inclusive.
2. Engage in professional development programs focused on gender sensitivity and inclusivity. These trainings should include practical strategies for integrating gender-responsive approaches into teaching practices and curriculum delivery. By deepening their understanding of gender issues and learning how to apply inclusive teaching methods, educators can better contribute to an environment that supports gender equality and empowers all students.
3. Encourage the student sector to actively participate in feedback mechanisms and advocacy initiatives to maintain the effectiveness and relevance of the gender-responsive curriculum. Students should be motivated to provide constructive feedback on curriculum content and delivery, join focus groups, and collaborate with faculty on gender-related issues.

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