

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Deliberate behavior modelling of teacher education faculty in integrating gender and development concepts among higher education learners

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined how teacher education faculty in selected Philippine higher education institutions deliberately integrated Gender and Development (GAD) concepts and modeled gender-responsive behavior within and beyond the classroom. Using semi-structured interviews with sixteen (16) purposively selected faculty members from Palawan Province, Biliran Province, Zamboanga City, and Surigao del Sur, Philippines, the study investigated their instructional strategies, motivations, and lived experiences in promoting gender inclusivity. Guided by Feminist Pedagogy and Social Gender Theory, the analysis revealed that faculty members embedded GAD principles through contextualized course content, reflective activities, and discussions that challenged stereotypes and encouraged empathy. Findings indicated that deliberate modeling was evident in the use of inclusive language, equitable classroom interactions, and immediate responses to gender bias or discrimination. Personal encounters with gender inequality, commitment to transformative education, and adherence to institutional mandates emerged as primary motivators for GAD integration. The study concluded that effective gender responsiveness was achieved not merely through curricular compliance but through consistent behavioral modeling that humanized instruction and fostered inclusive learning environments. Faculty behavior served as the most influential medium for translating GAD principles into practice,

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thereby advancing institutional culture and strengthening gender equality in higher education.

**Keywords:** Gender and Development; GAD integration; teacher education; gender-responsive behavior; inclusive teaching; curriculum integration; faculty modeling; gender equity; Philippine higher education

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the integration of Gender and Development (GAD) concepts in higher education has gained global and national traction as a key measure toward equity, inclusivity, and social justice. Education has long been recognized as a transformative tool that can challenge gender stereotypes, foster respect for diversity, and promote values of fairness and inclusion. In particular, teacher education institutions hold a unique position, as they prepare future educators whose values and behaviors will shape generations of learners. As such, equipping teacher educators with the tools and mindset to model gender-responsive behaviors is both urgent and essential.

Nationally, the Philippines has made strides in institutionalizing GAD through frameworks such as the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710), CHED Memorandum Order No. 1, s. 2015, and the Gender-Fair Education policy. These instruments encourage higher education institutions to integrate GAD principles into their curriculum and institutional policies. Several studies highlight how faculty members and school leaders are responding to these mandates by embedding gender-sensitive content into teaching materials, adopting inclusive language, and encouraging critical dialogue in classrooms <sup>[1,2]</sup>. For example, Boholano, Revita, and Villaver <sup>[3]</sup> showed that integrating GAD into the curriculum improved both faculty and student attitudes toward gender equity. Previous studies have documented that some teacher educators already incorporate gender-sensitive materials and discussion points into their lectures <sup>[4,5]</sup>. These include gender-inclusive language, diverse representation in teaching examples, and awareness of gender biases in classroom interactions. Others employ methods from feminist pedagogy, which prioritize participatory learning, critical inquiry, and reflective engagement to dismantle inequality and privilege in the classroom <sup>[6]</sup>. Similarly, Cendaña <sup>[7]</sup> noted successful curriculum-level integration but pointed out the low awareness among educators, underlining the need for more targeted professional development.

Recent national monitoring reports also indicated that the institutionalization of GAD in Philippine higher education remains uneven. While policy frameworks such as the CHED Memorandum Order No. 1, series of 2015, have provided a strong structural foundation, their translation into concrete teaching practices has varied widely across institutions. Several regional universities continue to report limited faculty training in gender-responsive pedagogy and inconsistent integration of GAD indicators in course syllabi. This disparity suggests that, although compliance mechanisms exist, the transformative intent of GAD education has yet to be fully realized within classroom culture and faculty behavior <sup>[8]</sup>. Yet, despite these policies, the Philippine sociocultural context presents unique challenges that influence how gender equity is practiced in education. Deeply rooted Catholic traditions, hierarchical school structures, and community expectations often frame gender discussions within moral or cultural boundaries rather than pedagogical ones. According to Kuteesa et al. <sup>[9]</sup> These intersecting forces shape how faculty interpret inclusivity sometimes reinforcing cautious or selective engagement with gender topics. Understanding this local cultural dynamic is vital, as it situates the present study within the lived realities of Filipino educators who navigate between institutional mandates for equality and enduring cultural norms of propriety and respect.

Moreover, empirical work by Cagang et al. <sup>[10]</sup> and Quitorio <sup>[11]</sup> reveals that GAD awareness strongly influences pedagogical behavior, yet inconsistencies in practice remain. This lack of intentional modeling may stem from several contextual factors identified in earlier research: limited faculty training that focuses

on personal reflection rather than compliance, institutional cultures that prioritize policy reporting over behavioral change, and sociocultural norms that discourage open discussion of gender diversity. Consequently, while educators may conceptually support GAD, many lack the structured mechanisms or institutional reinforcement needed to embody it consistently in practice. The present study thus investigates not only how faculty model gender-responsive behavior but also why deliberate modeling remains an underdeveloped yet critical dimension of GAD implementation. Shih and Wang <sup>[10]</sup> noted that this disconnect between awareness and modeling behavior is one of the most significant gaps in achieving gender-responsive instruction.

This issue is compounded by uneven institutional implementation. Valencia <sup>[11]</sup> and Aloba et al. <sup>[12]</sup> found that while some universities maintain active GAD resource centers and conduct training programs, others fall short in providing structural support, leading to inconsistent faculty practice. Doguiles and Rapsing <sup>[13]</sup> further emphasized the need for comprehensive awareness-building efforts even at the secondary level, pointing out that existing knowledge is often fragmented and theoretical.

Despite these challenges, several innovative practices show promise. Alinea and Reyes <sup>[14]</sup> and Laro <sup>[15]</sup> propose curriculum models that embed GAD systematically within teacher education programs, ensuring that gender inclusivity is not treated as an isolated topic but rather a core academic value. Internationally, the REFLECT program <sup>[16]</sup> and feminist pedagogy frameworks <sup>[6]</sup> have demonstrated that teacher behaviors particularly how they engage students, respond to bias, and present diverse examples greatly influence how learners internalize gender equity.

However, what remains understudied is how faculty members themselves interpret and enact their roles as gender-responsive models in both academic and interpersonal settings. While literature has shown what inclusive teaching might look like on paper, less attention has been given to how these values are embodied in the everyday choices, routines, and behaviors of teacher educators especially in the Philippine context.

This study seeks to address that gap by exploring two key areas: (1) how teacher education faculty deliberately integrate Gender and Development (GAD) concepts in their teaching practices, and (2) the ways they model gender-responsive behavior within and beyond the classroom. Investigating the lived experiences and conscious efforts of faculty, the research aims to provide a more complete picture of GAD implementation that goes beyond compliance and toward meaningful, sustained cultural change.

Rooted in the belief that modeling is a powerful form of implicit pedagogy, this study views the everyday behaviors of teacher educators how they speak, interact, and respond as integral to student learning. It contends that GAD integration is not only about content and lectures, but also about the relational environment created by educators. Therefore, this study hopes to offer valuable insights for improving teacher education programs, designing targeted GAD training, and ensuring that institutional mandates are realized in both principle and practice.

Ultimately, this study sought to bridge the persistent gap between gender policy awareness and lived pedagogical practice by examining how faculty consciously model inclusivity as both an instructional and moral act within higher education.

## 2. Theoretical and conceptual framework

This study is anchored in feminist pedagogy and social gender theory. According to Puri <sup>[17]</sup> Feminist pedagogy posits that learning occurs through collaboration, reflection, and power-sharing between teachers and students. It promotes inclusivity and challenges hierarchical, gendered norms in education. Within this

framework, teacher behavior such as equitable participation, empathy, and inclusivity becomes a pedagogical act.

Meanwhile, social gender theory emphasizes that gender is socially constructed through daily interactions, institutional expectations, and cultural norms. Applying this lens to teacher education reveals how faculty not only transmit content but also reproduce or challenge gender norms through their conduct [18]. Together, these frameworks guide the study's analysis of how faculty integrate GAD principles both explicitly (through curriculum content) and implicitly (through behavioral modeling).

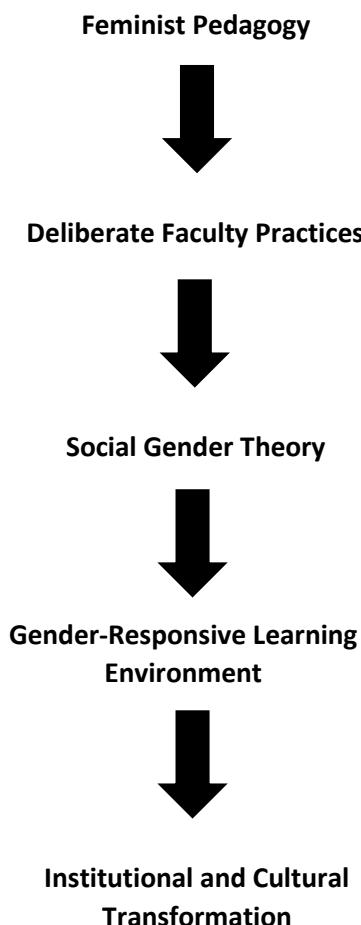


Figure 1. Theoretical flow of deliberate gender-responsive faculty modeling

**Figure 1** The theoretical flow model illustrates how Feminist Pedagogy and Social Gender Theory jointly frame the study. Feminist pedagogy provides the philosophical foundation by viewing teaching as a reflective and inclusive practice grounded in empathy and shared power. Within this framework, faculty members deliberately model gender-responsive behaviors that embody Gender and Development (GAD) principles in their instruction and interactions.

These deliberate practices are then interpreted through the lens of Social Gender Theory, which explains how everyday behaviors and institutional norms reproduce or challenge gender roles. The intersection of these frameworks leads to the creation of gender-responsive learning environments, ultimately contributing to institutional and cultural transformation toward equity in higher education.

### 3. Literature

#### 3.1. Gender mainstreaming and GAD integration in teacher education

The integration of Gender and Development (GAD) concepts into teacher education has become a significant pedagogical focus in both local and international contexts. Valencia <sup>[11]</sup> emphasized that gender mainstreaming in teacher education institutions in the Philippines is critical for nurturing inclusive values among future educators. Similarly, Tantengco and Maramag <sup>[17]</sup> revealed that the gender responsiveness of the K-12 Araling Panlipunan curriculum necessitates deliberate modeling from teachers, underscoring that inclusive teaching starts from foundational education. These findings suggest that teacher educators must take a proactive stance in embedding gender-sensitive instruction within the curriculum. De Guzman et al. <sup>[4]</sup> also found that teacher educators in Zambales employ strategies like neutral learning materials, balanced participation, and bias discussion to integrate GAD effectively.

#### 3.2. Modeling and faculty behavior as pedagogical tools

Caingcoy et al. <sup>[18]</sup> examined practice teachers' culturally responsive teaching and underscored that gender plays a significant role in shaping classroom approaches, particularly during practicum. Meanwhile, Gutierrez <sup>[19]</sup> explored inquiry-based instruction and revealed that collaborative professional learning is enhanced when educators model inclusive practices, including gender fairness. Shih and Wang <sup>[10]</sup> argued that gender education in Taiwanese universities often lacks depth, noting that without intentional modeling by faculty, GAD discussions remain abstract and ineffective. Kollmayer et al. <sup>[16]</sup>, through the REFLECT program in Austria, demonstrated that teachers trained to reduce gender stereotyping became more intentional in modeling gender-responsive classrooms.

#### 3.3. Impact of faculty representation and behavior

Faculty behavior has been shown to significantly affect students' attitudes and achievements. Lopez and Andal <sup>[20]</sup> highlighted the connection between teacher attitudes and their use of gender-responsive pedagogy. Likewise, Marx, Roman, and McIntyre <sup>[21]</sup> found that the presence of female role models in math significantly improved girls' academic performance, reinforcing the value of representation. Rosenthal and Jacobson <sup>[22]</sup> also showed that teachers' expectations through the Pygmalion effect can profoundly shape learner outcomes. Quinn et al. <sup>[23]</sup> further concluded that teacher behavior in unstructured lab settings influences gendered student roles, reinforcing the importance of instructor-led intervention. Chavez and Prado <sup>[24]</sup> argued that seemingly innocent online jokes often carry subtle sexism, as humor can normalize discriminatory attitudes and reinforce gender inequality. Further, Chavez et al. <sup>[25]</sup> showed how such humor targets women and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and other (LGBTQIA+) communities, perpetuating social hierarchies and bias through language.

#### 3.4. Challenges and gaps in GAD implementation

Several studies also highlight the challenges in implementing GAD principles. Barairo, Ramos, and Torregoza <sup>[26]</sup> and Lopez and Andal <sup>[20]</sup> found that GAD programs in the Philippine basic education system were inconsistently implemented due to lack of training and modeling. Aloba et al. <sup>[12]</sup> observed similar limitations in Davao schools, where unclear guidelines hindered implementation. Alinea and Reyes <sup>[14]</sup> noted that TVTEd curriculum practices often unintentionally reinforced gender norms unless faculty consciously acted to challenge these biases.

#### 3.5. Cultural context and influence of broader institutional support

Institutional support for gender equity is also crucial. UNESCO <sup>[29]</sup> emphasized that policies must be complemented by faculty commitment through deliberate classroom actions. Feminist pedagogy, which

encourages flattening power hierarchies and valuing diverse student experiences, offers a powerful framework for this [6]. Guerrero and Puerta [30] also emphasized the importance of faculty behavior in promoting gender equality in physical education—a field often marked by gender stereotypes.

### **3.6. Intersectionality, student reception, and evaluation systems**

Holthaus [31] presented a robotics program designed to promote diversity in engineering education, attributing its success to inclusive faculty behavior. Nikolakaki et al. [32] explored how student evaluations reflected entrenched gender biases, reinforcing the role of faculty in challenging stereotypes. Santos et al. [33] discussed LGBTQIA+ inclusion in computing, and Van Dusen and Nissen [34] highlighted how inclusive teaching strategies in college physics benefited diverse learners. Both studies affirm that inclusive environments are shaped by consistent faculty behavior.

### **3.7. Deliberate modeling and its influence on student perceptions**

Punyanunt-Carter and Carter [35] addressed gender bias in teaching evaluations, noting that explicit gender-neutral behavior by faculty reduced bias. Aragón et al. [36] expanded on this, demonstrating that students' perceptions were significantly shaped by the conscious or unconscious modeling of gender norms by faculty, especially in male-dominated fields. These findings reaffirm the need for deliberate modeling to overcome institutional and cultural inertia.

Collectively, the reviewed literature underscores a growing scholarly and institutional recognition of gender inclusivity in teacher education. However, most prior studies concentrated on curriculum design, policy implementation, or awareness campaigns rather than the subtle, everyday enactments of gender equality through educator behavior. This limited attention to behavioral modeling reveals an essential gap: how teacher educators themselves internalize and perform GAD values through classroom interaction, reflection, and language. Addressing this gap is central to the present study, which examines the deliberate and lived practices of faculty in translating GAD principles into action.

We can deduce that while GAD policies and content inclusion are necessary, they are not enough on their own. It is the daily, visible, and deliberate modeling of gender-responsive behavior by teacher education faculty that brings these concepts to life. True integration of GAD happens not only in syllabi and lectures but in how we speak, engage, include, and challenge. As educators, our conduct becomes the curriculum. This study seeks to amplify the critical role of faculty modeling in embedding GAD principles into higher education learning environments and nurturing future teachers who embody inclusivity by example.

Overall, the reviewed studies reveal a steady expansion of Gender and Development (GAD) integration efforts in teacher education, yet they also expose important gaps in implementation. Research by Cendaña [7] and Lopez and Andal [24] demonstrates that curriculum-level integration has improved, while De Guzman et al. [4] emphasize the role of administrative support and training. However, these works focus primarily on institutional policies and course content rather than the behavioral practices of faculty members. As highlighted in global literature [6] the translation of gender equity from policy to practice depends largely on how educators model inclusivity, empathy, and fairness in their daily teaching interactions. This study addresses that gap by focusing on deliberate behavioral modeling the intentional demonstration of gender-responsive behaviors that bring GAD principles to life in higher education settings.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Research design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore how teacher education faculty deliberately model gender-responsive behaviors and integrate Gender and Development (GAD) concepts in their teaching practices. A qualitative approach was chosen for its capacity to capture lived experiences, nuanced beliefs, and classroom strategies expressed through rich, descriptive data <sup>[37]</sup>.

This design allowed an in-depth understanding of how faculty members interpret, practice, and communicate GAD principles in higher education <sup>[38]</sup>. The open-ended and context-sensitive approach revealed behavioral patterns and institutional influences shaping faculty modeling of gender equity. The goal was not to generalize findings but to present a contextually grounded account of deliberate GAD integration and behavioral modeling in teacher education.

### 4.2. Population and sampling

The study focused on teacher education faculty members from higher education institutions who were involved in teaching courses with integrated Gender and Development (GAD) content or who held active roles in institutional GAD initiatives. These participants were selected because of their direct involvement in modeling gender-responsive practices and shaping inclusive learning environments.

The participants of this study were sixteen (16) teacher education faculty members from higher education institutions from Palawan Province, Biliran Province, Zamboanga City, and Surigao del Sur, Philippines. They were selected based on their experience teaching GAD-related courses or active involvement in institutional GAD programs. According to Guest, Bunce, and Johnson <sup>[39]</sup>, data saturation in qualitative studies can often be achieved with as few as 12 interviews when participants are homogeneous in terms of experience related to the research topic.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to identify information-rich participants who could offer relevant insights into the deliberate integration of GAD in teaching practices. Purposive sampling is appropriate for qualitative research that seeks to understand specific phenomena from individuals who have direct experience with the subject matter <sup>[40-41]</sup>. The criteria for inclusion in the study were as follows: (1) The participant must be a full-time or part-time faculty member in a teacher education program. (2) The participant must have at least one year of teaching experience in higher education. (3) The participant must have experience integrating GAD concepts into their instructional practices or be actively involved in the implementation of GAD programs, policies, or training. (4) The participant must be willing and available to participate in an in-depth interview.

Participants who did not meet these criteria or who declined to provide informed consent were excluded from the study. This strategy ensured that data collected reflected authentic, experience-based perspectives on gender-responsive teaching behaviors.

To further enhance credibility, maximum variation sampling was considered to ensure diversity in gender, academic rank, institutional affiliation, and years of teaching experience. This approach allowed the researcher to capture different dimensions of faculty perspectives on GAD modeling <sup>[37]</sup>.

### 4.3. Instrument

To collect qualitative data, the researcher developed a semi-structured interview guide designed to explore faculty members' experiences, strategies, and challenges in modeling gender-responsive behavior and integrating Gender and Development (GAD) concepts in their teaching practices. The use of semi-

structured interviews was appropriate for this study as it allowed flexibility in probing key themes while maintaining consistency across all interviews [42].

The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions grouped according to the study's two main objectives: (1) to explore how faculty integrate GAD concepts into teaching, and (2) to examine how they model gender-responsive behavior inside and outside the classroom.

The instrument was validated by two experts in teacher education and gender studies. Their feedback led to minor revisions in question phrasing to improve clarity and alignment with the objectives. This process of expert validation enhanced the instrument's content validity [37].

Prior to the actual data gathering, the interview guide was pilot-tested with two faculty members who met the inclusion criteria but were not part of the final participant group. The pilot testing helped assess the flow of questions, identify ambiguous wording, and ensure that the questions were able to elicit rich and meaningful responses [43].

The interviews were conducted face-to-face or virtually, depending on the availability and preference of the participants. With consent, the interviews were audio-recorded for accuracy and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

**Table 1.** Instrument of the study

Objectives	Interview questions	Participants
1. To explore how teacher education faculty deliberately integrate Gender and Development (GAD) concepts in their teaching practices.	1. How do you intentionally incorporate gender-related themes or examples in your lessons? 2. Can you describe any teaching strategies or activities you use to promote gender awareness in your students? 3. What motivates you to embed gender concepts in your instructional design?	Teacher education faculty members from higher education institutions.
2. To examine the ways teacher educators model gender-responsive behavior within and beyond the classroom.	1. In what ways do you demonstrate gender sensitivity through your actions or communication with students? 2. How do you handle situations that involve gender bias or stereotyping in the learning environment? 3. Can you share specific behaviors or practices you consistently model to support gender inclusivity?	

#### 4.4. Data gathering procedure

The researcher sought approval from the institutional review board and the concerned academic departments prior to data collection. After obtaining clearance, participants were contacted through email and invited to join voluntarily. Each participant received an informed consent form explaining the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, and voluntary participation rights.

Interviews followed the validated semi-structured guide focusing on faculty experiences, strategies, and challenges in GAD integration. Sessions were held at times convenient for participants, either in-person or virtually. Conversations were audio-recorded (with permission), transcribed verbatim, and checked for completeness and accuracy.

During data collection, some participants expressed hesitation in discussing gender-sensitive topics openly due to concerns about cultural perceptions and institutional norms. To address this, the researchers emphasized confidentiality and the academic purpose of the interviews. Additionally, scheduling challenges were encountered due to teaching loads and remote interview logistics, which were resolved through flexible session timing. These field experiences contributed to a more transparent understanding of the contextual realities shaping gender-related research in higher education.

To maintain data trustworthiness, member checking was conducted by returning transcripts to participants for verification. Data were organized systematically for thematic analysis, ensuring that emerging codes accurately reflected faculty behaviors and perceptions.

#### **4.5. Data analysis**

The data collected from the interviews were carefully transcribed and organized for analysis. The data collection process began after securing approval from the research ethics committee and obtaining informed consent from the participants. Sixteen (16) teacher education faculty members from selected higher education institutions were purposefully chosen based on specific inclusion criteria.

Each participant was contacted individually through email or professional networks. Upon confirmation, semi-structured interviews were scheduled at their convenience. The interviews were conducted either in person or online, depending on participant availability and public health guidelines. Each session lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participant's permission to ensure accuracy of transcription.

The use of interviews allowed for the collection of rich, contextual insights into how faculty deliberately modeled gender-responsive behavior and integrated GAD concepts in their teaching. This method aligned with Creswell's <sup>[44]</sup> assertion that interviews are effective for understanding participant experiences in qualitative studies. Open-ended questions were used to encourage depth of response while allowing flexibility for follow-up questions and clarification.

After each interview, recordings were transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were then reviewed by the researcher to ensure completeness and clarity. Participants were also given the opportunity to verify their responses (member checking), ensuring credibility and authenticity of the data, as recommended by Lincoln and Guba <sup>[49]</sup>.

#### **4.6. Ethical considerations**

Prior to the data collection process, the researcher secured approval from the institutional ethics review board to ensure that the study adhered to ethical standards concerning human participants. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their voluntary involvement, and their right to withdraw at any point without any negative consequences, as guided by the ethical principles outlined by the American Psychological Association <sup>[46]</sup>.

Each participant signed an informed consent form before the interview commenced. The form outlined the nature of the study, data usage, confidentiality assurances, and the voluntary nature of participation. The researcher emphasized that participation involved no risk and that all data collected would be used strictly for academic purposes.

To protect confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned to all participants, and any identifying information was removed during transcription and reporting. Digital audio recordings, transcripts, and related documents were stored in a password-protected folder accessible only to the researcher.

The study also followed the principle of beneficence by ensuring that participants experienced no harm during or after the interview process. Participants were treated with respect and care, and efforts were made to maintain an open and non-judgmental interview environment. These practices are consistent with the ethical standards for research with human subjects, as emphasized by Babbie <sup>[51]</sup>.

## 5. Results

**Research Objectives 1.** To explore how teacher education faculty deliberately integrate Gender and Development (GAD) concepts in their teaching practices.

**Question No. 1.** How do you intentionally incorporate gender-related themes or examples in your lessons?

### 1.1 *Contextualizing GAD Concepts through Course Content and Everyday Scenarios*

Twelve (12) of the participants shared that they deliberately connect gender-related issues with course content by contextualizing them in real-life examples and discussions. This allows students to reflect critically on their own assumptions and apply gender concepts to various situations—whether in literature, science, education, or social studies. Faculty members emphasized that GAD integration is most effective when embedded in course content that aligns with learners' lived experiences, thereby transforming gender awareness from abstract policy into situated pedagogy.

“When I teach literature, I intentionally select texts written by female authors or that feature strong female protagonists. I ask my students, 'What do you notice about the female voice here? How is it different from the male narrator we previously discussed?' From there, I connect the conversation to issues like gendered expectations, the historical silencing of women, and contemporary struggles for equality. In one class, I even had my students write poems from a perspective opposite their own gender—many of them came back saying it changed how they saw simple daily interactions. It's these small, natural insertions that shift their mindset.”

“In my Educational Foundations class, I make it a point to raise questions about gender roles in the classroom and the hidden curriculum. For instance, when we talk about classroom management, I ask: 'Why do we sometimes see more boys being scolded for being noisy, while girls are expected to stay quiet?' These real examples help them see the biases we unconsciously carry. It's not enough to define gender equality—we have to live it in our examples.”

### 1.2 *Integrating GAD through Reflective Activities and Assignments*

Ten (10) educators explained that they embed gender-responsive teaching through reflective assignments, research papers, and classroom activities. These tools allow students to internalize GAD concepts at their own pace and in relation to their beliefs and experiences. Through reflection, students are encouraged to think deeply about societal structures, gender roles, and their future responsibilities as teachers.

“In my class, we start each semester with a journal prompt: 'How has gender shaped your life so far?' You'd be surprised how raw and emotional some of the responses are. Some talk about being the eldest daughter expected to sacrifice for the family, others reflect on being told not to cry because 'boys don't cry.' It becomes a personal awakening. I then connect their responses to theories of gender socialization, and from there, it's easier to move into broader classroom implications.”

“One of the best ways I found to integrate gender is to assign them to observe school practices—like classroom seating, textbook images, or even how teachers

talk to boys vs. girls. After their observations, they write a reflection. Many come back shocked, saying, 'Ma'am, I never noticed how often girls are asked to clean the classroom.' That's when the concept of gender roles really becomes real to them."

### 1.3 Challenging Stereotypes through Media and Discussion

Eight (8) faculty shared that they use films, advertisements, and viral social media content to spark discussions about gender norms, discrimination, and inequality. This approach draws on familiar platforms and helps bridge generational gaps. These discussions are often followed by analysis tasks or debates to promote critical thinking and foster empathy.

"I show my students commercials or viral TikTok videos that show very gendered behavior—like the one where a guy mocks makeup tutorials or a girl is told not to lift weights. Then we dissect the message. We ask: 'What does this say about what society expects from men and women?' The classroom gets so animated. Even the shy ones speak up because they've seen the videos before. Then I slide into the Gender Sensitivity Training module and the concepts stick better because now they care."

"We once watched a short film about a young boy who liked to cook and how he was bullied for it. I didn't need to lecture after that—the students themselves initiated a conversation on gender roles, toxic masculinity, and how teachers should respond to these situations. I believe that's what intentional integration looks like—it's giving students a space to feel and think, then linking it back to the theory."

**Question No. 2.** Can you describe any teaching strategies or activities you use to promote gender awareness in your students?

### 2.1 Use of Gender-Sensitive Case Studies and Situational Role-Plays

Eleven (11) faculty members reported using real-life case studies and role-plays where students take on different gender roles to expose them to the lived experiences of others. These strategies are particularly effective in teacher education, where pre-service teachers must critically analyze behavior, decisions, and biases in classroom settings. Role-plays provide a safe space for students to "step into someone else's shoes" and confront their own assumptions.

"In my Child and Adolescent Development class, I ask students to enact a classroom scenario where one student is being teased for not conforming to traditional gender norms—like a boy liking pink or a girl preferring to play basketball. We pause midway and I ask the audience: 'What's the teacher doing right? What should change?' That moment of reflection creates real learning. It shows them that gender awareness isn't just a subject matter—it's a daily classroom responsibility."

"I use case studies about classroom incidents involving gender bias—for example, a teacher who always appoints boys as group leaders, or a lesson that includes only male examples in history. Students discuss what they would do differently. These are often eye-openers, especially for male students who haven't had to think about how language and representation can exclude."

## 2.2 Integration of Gender-Awareness Modules in Course Assessments

Nine (9) participants explained that they embed gender-awareness activities directly into their assessment tools—quizzes, reflection papers, performance tasks, or even midterm projects. These modules are not treated as "extra topics" but as core components of academic performance, thereby signaling to students that gender responsiveness is part of professional teaching standards.

"For my Assessment of Learning course, one of their performance tasks involves creating test items that are free from gender bias. I ask them to evaluate existing tests and identify gendered language. One student was shocked to see how many questions assumed male figures in positions of authority—like 'The policeman chased the thief' or 'The boss called his secretary.' That activity made her rethink everything she thought was neutral."

"I ask students to analyze their field observation logs through a gender lens. For instance, they document how teachers call on boys versus girls, or who gets praised more. Then, they write a reflection. Many come to class saying, 'I didn't realize I was doing this too during my practice teaching.' That's when awareness becomes personal."

## 2.3 Creating Inclusive Language and Safe Classroom Spaces

Ten (10) Faculty also emphasized modeling inclusive language and fostering respectful classroom discussions as strategies to build a gender-aware environment. Students are encouraged to speak freely and listen to diverse perspectives without fear of ridicule. Educators believe that creating a safe, inclusive climate is a foundational teaching strategy in itself.

"I remind students from day one to be mindful of their language—no 'that's so gay' jokes, no sexist comments masked as humor. I make sure that everyone, regardless of identity, feels safe in class. When they see me calling these out gently but firmly, they begin to hold themselves and each other accountable."

"One of the most powerful tools we have is language. So I always refer to people as 'they' unless I know their pronouns. In group activities, I discourage gendered task assignments—like girls being the secretaries and boys being the leaders. I rotate the roles so students experience everything. These are small things, but over time, they reshape how students think about fairness and gender."

## Question No. 3. What motivates you to embed gender concepts in your instructional design?

### 3.1 Personal Encounters with Gender Inequality

Ten (10) participants cited their own lived experiences or those of close family and friends as key motivators. These personal encounters with discrimination, gender-based roles, or stereotypes pushed them to use their platform as educators to advocate for change.

"When I was a young teacher, I was once told not to wear pants because 'it wasn't feminine enough.' That stuck with me. Now that I'm in a position to shape future teachers, I try to make sure no one else feels boxed in by outdated norms. I want my students to think critically and make schools safe for everyone."

"My daughter is very athletic, and I remember how often coaches would sideline her in favor of boys. That woke me up. So, I make sure my teaching

materials in PE always show women and LGBTQ+ athletes. If we don't model inclusivity now, when will we?

### *3.2 Commitment to Inclusive and Transformative Education*

Seven (7) educators mentioned that they see GAD integration as part of their broader mission to deliver inclusive, relevant, and transformative education. For them, gender concepts aren't optional—they are integral to helping students become socially aware and compassionate future teachers.

“I always say, what's the point of education if it only prepares students for tests but not for life? Teaching gender concepts helps them see inequalities and gives them tools to address these in the classroom. It's not just about content—it's about consciousness.”

“Integrating GAD is one way I make sure that my students are not just competent, but also empathetic. When they understand how gender intersects with poverty or mental health, they become more human in their teaching approach. And to me, that's real education.” “I think we lack consistency. My husband speaks in English, I speak in Filipino, and sometimes our child mixes both. We want to raise her bilingual, but I guess we need a better plan.”

### *3.3 Institutional Mandate and Policy Alignment*

Five (5) participants pointed to institutional mandates such as CHED Memorandum Orders and internal GAD policies as formal motivators. While some saw these as starting points, others emphasized that such policies empower them to take bolder steps in designing gender-responsive content.

“Our university has a strong GAD office that provides training and materials. I use those to align my course objectives. But beyond compliance, it gives me confidence. I can say, ‘This is part of our mandate, this is necessary,’ especially when some students push back.”

“CHED's requirement to integrate GAD in the curriculum is not just about ticking boxes. It gives us educators a concrete framework. Once I realized that, I stopped treating it as extra work and began seeing it as a professional obligation.”

**Research Objectives 2.** To examine the ways teacher educators model gender-responsive behavior within and beyond the classroom

**Question No. 1.** In what ways do you demonstrate gender sensitivity through your actions or communication with students?

#### *1.1 Use of Inclusive and Respectful Language*

Fourteen (14) participants shared that being gender-sensitive starts with language. They consciously choose words that are inclusive, neutral, and respectful of students' identities and pronouns. They also mentioned that this practice helps build a sense of safety and belonging, especially for students who do not conform to traditional gender norms.

“In my teaching, I avoid gendered language unless the context demands it. Instead of saying ‘he’ or ‘she,’ I use ‘they.’ When asking about family or relationships in examples, I refer to ‘partners’ rather than ‘boyfriend’ or ‘girlfriend.’ One time, a student approached me after class to say, ‘Thank you for not assuming I

was straight.' It hit me how such a small shift in my words can make a world of difference in how safe they feel."

"During the first week of classes, I ask students how they want to be addressed. I tell them, 'You can write your pronouns beside your name on the sign-up sheet if you like, and I'll respect that.' I had one student who told me, 'Ma'am, you're the first teacher who asked me that.' From then on, I realized that sensitivity isn't just taught—it's practiced in how we speak and how we listen."

### 1.2 Modelling Respect in Classroom Interactions

Ten (10) participants expressed that their behavior in classroom interactions reflects their stance on gender sensitivity. They act as moderators of respectful discourse and intervene when biases emerge in group dynamics, activities, or discussions. Their goal is to foster an environment where all students—regardless of gender—feel equally valued and empowered to speak up.

"When we do debates or collaborative group tasks, I observe the distribution of roles. Often, the assertive students—usually male—dominate the discussion while others, mostly female or queer students, stay quiet. I intervene by saying, 'Let's hear from someone we haven't heard yet.' I've had students thank me for making space for them. It's not just about fairness—it's about giving every student the chance to feel seen and heard." — Participant 11, Assessment and Evaluation Instructor

"In one class, a student made a joke about how certain tasks are 'for girls only.' I paused the lecture and asked the class, 'Why do we say that? What impact does that have?' It became an impromptu discussion on gender roles. At the end of the session, one student told me, 'I didn't realize how often we make those comments without thinking.' That's when I knew that modelling sensitivity means calling things out—but doing it in a way that invites reflection, not shame."

### 1.3 Extending Gender Sensitivity Beyond the Classroom

Eight (8) educators mentioned that modeling gender-responsive behavior goes beyond academic settings. Their actions in student advising, school activities, GAD programs, and even personal conversations demonstrate consistency in applying inclusive values. Many also tie their actions to the values of their institution, especially in Catholic Jesuit universities like Ateneo de Zamboanga University, where the value of being persons for and with others strongly guides behavior.

"One of my students once approached me for advice after being mocked by peers because of how they expressed themselves. I didn't just listen—I helped that student report the incident, and I followed up with the department. That student later said, 'I didn't think any teacher would care.' To me, being gender-sensitive is about standing up even when it's uncomfortable. That's how we teach students that they are not alone."

"As a faculty member in Ateneo, I carry with me the mission to be a person for and with others. When we host events, I make sure the language in our posters is inclusive, that we have diverse speakers, and that LGBTQIA+ students are represented and supported. When students see that these values are lived out—not just discussed in class—they begin to realize that equity isn't just theory. It's in the details of how we live out our mission."

**Question No. 2.** 2. How do you handle situations that involve gender bias or stereotyping in the learning environment?

### 2.1 *Immediate and Constructive Intervention*

Eleven (11) participants expressed that they are intentional about addressing gender-biased remarks or behaviors the moment they occur in the classroom. These educators emphasized the importance of responding not by shaming students but by using the opportunity to build awareness. They described a strategy of "calling in"—inviting students into a conversation to critically reflect—rather than "calling out" with disciplinary tones. This approach is grounded in empathy, where the goal is to unlearn, not to punish. Most educators reported that even offhanded or casual sexist jokes, if left unchallenged, can reinforce harmful norms. They acknowledged that confronting bias on the spot helps create a safer classroom climate and communicates to students that gender equity is a core learning value, not a side issue.

"In one of my classes, a male student made a sarcastic remark during a group task—he said, 'Let the girls do the decorating, they're good at that.' Everyone laughed, except for one of the girls. I paused and said, 'Let's unpack that comment. Why do we associate certain skills with gender?' I didn't scold him—I facilitated a short discussion. By the end of the class, even the student who made the joke reflected, saying, 'I didn't realize how automatic that thinking was.' Moments like that remind me that classroom time is not just for academics—it's for unlearning too."

"There was a time when a student questioned why we were reading a short story written by a transgender author. He said, 'Ma'am, what does this have to do with education?' I didn't brush it off. I told the class, 'Let's discuss the importance of representation in our curriculum.' That turned into one of our most honest and powerful sessions. The student later approached me and admitted that he never thought literature could open up these conversations. You have to confront bias—not with anger, but with awareness."

### 2.2 *Turning Incidents into Teachable Moments*

Nine (9) faculty members said they treat gender-biased situations as valuable teaching opportunities. Instead of moving past uncomfortable remarks or comments quickly, they choose to slow down the lesson to allow critical engagement. These teachers create space for dialogue where students can reflect on their assumptions, deconstruct stereotypes, and draw connections to course content. They also integrate the incident into the day's learning objective, aligning it with relevant themes in psychology, curriculum development, or classroom management. For these educators, gender sensitivity is not seen as a separate lesson but as something woven into every subject. They believe that when students participate in analyzing bias, they are more likely to transform their own thinking.

"In my class on teaching strategies, a student once remarked that boys were 'just naturally better at math.' Instead of correcting her right away, I wrote her statement on the board and asked, 'Is this true for everyone? Where might this belief come from?' That led to a rich discussion on gender socialization, stereotypes, and fixed mindsets. The student was not embarrassed—she participated actively. Sometimes the best teaching strategy is to let the class deconstruct the bias themselves."

“When gender bias shows up, I use it as a segue into the next topic. In one session on classroom management, a student said girls are ‘easier to discipline’ than boys. I paused and said, ‘Let’s critically analyze that. What messages are we taught about gender and behavior?’ The students ended up reflecting on their own biases and even revising their earlier assumptions. For me, these moments are not disruptions—they’re curriculum in action.”

### 2.3 *Collaborating with Institutional Mechanisms*

Four (4) participants shared that for persistent or serious cases of gender stereotyping, they partner with institutional structures like the GAD office, guidance counselors, or academic heads. These educators understand that classroom management of bias is not always enough, especially when patterns of discrimination emerge. They emphasized that working with existing mechanisms ensures that responses are systemic and sustainable. Moreover, many of them described how institutional support—such as protocols, forms, or assigned focal persons—can protect both students and teachers from mishandling sensitive issues. Faculty also explained that these actions show students that gender equity is a shared responsibility and that there are consequences to perpetuating bias. It is through this system-wide collaboration that modeling respect and accountability becomes authentic.

“There was an instance when a student repeatedly made homophobic jokes even after being advised to stop. I documented everything and consulted our university’s GAD focal person. Together, we conducted a mediation session with the student. It’s important for students to see that our concern for gender equity is not just a classroom expectation—it’s a campus-wide commitment.” — Participant 15, Values Education Professor

“As part of our school’s GAD committee, we remind faculty that we don’t have to handle everything alone. When a gender-based issue arises, I follow the protocol—report it, support the student, and work with the guidance office or our GAD focal point. Our role is not just to react, but to model systems of care and accountability. We show our students that being a ‘person for and with others’ includes standing up when harm is done.”

**Question No. 3.** Can you share specific behaviors or practices you consistently model to support gender inclusivity?

### 3.1 *Language Mindfulness and Curriculum Decentering*

Ten (10) participants emphasized their intentional use of gender-inclusive language, both in speech and in written materials. They avoid default masculine terms, use neutral labels such as “they” when examples don’t require gender specification, and consciously revise old materials that may reinforce heteronormative assumptions. Some even include disclaimers or “language notes” in their syllabi explaining their inclusive word choices. Their modeling extends to citing gender-diverse scholars and examples across their subject matter, which subtly influences students to recognize authority beyond the usual gendered expectations.

“In our readings, I always try to balance the authors we use—female, male, LGBTQIA+. It’s a quiet way of saying: ‘Look, knowledge is not monopolized by one gender.’ Even in examples, I ask myself—why always ‘Juan’ or ‘he’? Let’s say ‘they’ or use names that reflect diversity.”

“I started inserting ‘Note: This class uses gender-fair language’ at the start of my modules. It’s a tiny change, but it signals what we stand for. Students notice, and they start adjusting too.”

### *3.2 Modeling Emotional Openness and Vulnerability as a Humanizing Tool*

Eight (8) faculty members revealed that one of the most effective ways they model gender inclusivity is by showing emotional openness. They intentionally discuss emotional labor, gendered expectations, and even share personal reflections or struggles to challenge the stereotype of the emotionally detached authority figure. They noted that this allows students—especially men—to witness alternative models of strength, empathy, and care. For these educators, modeling emotional honesty is a subtle but powerful act of breaking down rigid gender norms in classroom behavior.

“I told my class once that I cried after reading a student's reflection. It wasn't weakness—it was human. I want my students, especially the boys, to know it's okay to feel. Gender inclusivity also means dismantling toxic expectations of manhood.”

“When I show vulnerability in class, I notice that it gives students permission to be vulnerable too. It becomes a space of connection, not competition. And that's what inclusive education should feel like.”

## **6. Discussion**

The findings reveal that teacher education faculty members demonstrate intentionality in integrating GAD concepts through diverse, context-driven strategies. The first theme, Contextualizing GAD Concepts through Course Content and Everyday Scenarios, underscores how faculty embed gender topics into academic discussions, using subject-relevant materials and relatable experiences. This practice allows students to internalize gender-sensitive principles more naturally. Such integration echoes Valencia's <sup>[11]</sup> assertion that gender mainstreaming in Philippine higher education is best realized when contextualized in course content rather than treated as a separate, peripheral topic. Similarly, De Guzman et al. <sup>[4]</sup> found that teacher educators utilized balanced participation and neutral materials as a means of embedding GAD, reinforcing the importance of making the concept real and applicable in the learning process.

The second theme, Integrating GAD through Reflective Activities and Assignments, shows how faculty encourage students to engage with GAD concepts through journaling, observation-based reflections, and performance tasks. This aligns with Caingcoy et al.'s <sup>[18]</sup> observation that reflection plays a pivotal role in culturally and gender-responsive pedagogy. Such activities go beyond theoretical understanding, compelling students to examine their socialization and internal biases, an approach that supports transformative learning as advocated by Agud-Morell et al. <sup>[6]</sup>. The emphasis on internalization also reflects Gutierrez's <sup>[19]</sup> position that inquiry-based and reflective strategies foster critical awareness, which is essential in achieving gender-responsive education. This intentional use of reflection may be interpreted as a response to the enduring tension between cognitive learning and affective transformation. Faculty participants deliberately use introspection not only to teach awareness but also to provoke self-accountability among future teachers an approach consistent with feminist pedagogy's emphasis on reflexive consciousness. This suggests that deliberate GAD integration is not merely a curricular exercise but a process of personal transformation that reshapes both educator and learner identities. The use of journaling, therefore, functions as a pedagogical bridge between policy compliance and the internalization of inclusive values

The third theme, Challenging Stereotypes through Media and Discussion, illustrates how faculty use popular culture and digital content to initiate gender conversations. This strategy reflects the generational

shift in student engagement and resonates with Kollmayer et al.'s <sup>[16]</sup> REFLECT program, where media and classroom discussions were instrumental in helping educators dismantle gender stereotypes. These findings suggest that engagement through digital content not only bridges generational gaps but also cultivates empathy and critical awareness traits that are foundational in inclusive education.

In relation to the second interview question, faculty shared active strategies for promoting gender awareness. The theme Use of Gender-Sensitive Case Studies and Situational Role-Plays highlights experiential learning approaches where students actively participate in role-playing and scenario analysis. This pedagogical strategy mirrors Tantengco and Maramag's <sup>[17]</sup> findings that GAD impact is enhanced through real-time classroom modeling. Furthermore, it supports the Pygmalion effect <sup>[22]</sup>, demonstrating that teacher-led scenarios significantly shape student perceptions and attitudes toward gender fairness.

The theme Integration of Gender-Awareness Modules in Course Assessments shows how faculty embed gender concepts in grading criteria and deliverables, treating GAD principles not as add-ons but as core academic competencies. This practice reflects the integration recommended by UNESCO <sup>[29]</sup>, which emphasized that gender responsiveness must be embedded within systems and not left to discretion. Lopez and Andal <sup>[20]</sup> also concluded that students perceive GAD as more legitimate when it is part of their assessment not just class discussions.

The final theme for this question, Creating Inclusive Language and Safe Classroom Spaces, presents how language and classroom climate contribute to GAD learning. Faculty members model inclusive speech, respect for pronouns, and equal participation. These daily interactions, while often understated, significantly influence student behavior and reinforce a culture of acceptance. Guerrero and Puerta <sup>[30]</sup> highlighted the same in physical education spaces, noting that inclusivity is often communicated not through content alone, but through day-to-day faculty behavior. This theme is closely aligned with feminist pedagogy principles, which prioritize non-hierarchical, participatory, and inclusive learning environments <sup>[6]</sup>.

Regarding the third question, faculty described Personal Encounters with Gender Inequality as a major motivator for embedding GAD into instruction. These testimonies support the idea that personal narrative and lived experience are powerful drivers of educational commitment. Similar sentiments were reported by Alinea and Reyes <sup>[14]</sup>, who found that faculty in TVTEd settings became more proactive when they themselves had experienced gender-related challenges. This highlights the deeply personal nature of gender advocacy in education.

The theme Commitment to Inclusive and Transformative Education captures faculty perspectives that GAD integration is not merely compliance, but a moral and pedagogical duty. These views mirror Agud-Morell et al. <sup>[6]</sup> who stated that transformative education requires conscious modeling of gender responsiveness by teachers to produce compassionate, socially aware learners. Lastly, the theme Institutional Mandate and Policy Alignment acknowledges the influence of CHED Memorandum Orders and institutional GAD frameworks in prompting faculty action. However, these mandates only become effective when faculty view them not as administrative burdens, but as empowering tools. This supports the findings of Quinn et al. <sup>[23]</sup> and UNESCO <sup>[29]</sup>, both of which argue that policies only become meaningful through classroom-level action.

The results of this study demonstrate that teacher education faculty model gender-responsive behavior through deliberate, visible actions that extend across language use, interpersonal engagement, and institutional collaboration. These modeling practices make gender sensitivity a lived experience for students rather than a theoretical concept confined to textbooks.

The first theme, Use of Inclusive and Respectful Language, highlights that fourteen educators consistently use gender-neutral pronouns, avoid assumptions about identities, and invite students to share how they wish to be addressed. This finding affirms Chavez's et. al [25] observation that inclusive classroom environments in Philippine higher education are significantly shaped by everyday speech acts. Faculty members' careful attention to language contributes to a classroom climate where students especially those from LGBTQIA+ communities—feel recognized and respected. This mirrors the conclusions of Punyanunt-Carter and Carter [35], who found that inclusive language use helped reduce gender bias in classroom evaluations. Moreover, Kollmayer et al. [16] emphasized that inclusive teacher language enhances student openness to learning about gender issues, further supporting the results of this study.

The second theme, Modelling Respect in Classroom Interactions, underscores how faculty regulate classroom participation and respond to bias when it arises in peer interactions. Ten participants shared how they redistribute speaking opportunities, challenge microaggressions, and facilitate reflective dialogue when stereotypical remarks occur. This aligns with the Pygmalion effect posited by Rosenthal and Jacobson [22], which shows that teacher behavior influences student self-concept and expectations. When faculty model fairness and critical engagement, students internalize these norms. These practices also reflect the findings of De Guzman et al. [4], who emphasized that classroom modeling is key to effective GAD integration. Similarly, the interventions described by participants parallel Agud-Morell et al.'s [6] feminist pedagogy framework, where the educator's role is to promote critical thinking through participation and dialogue rather than authority-driven instruction.

The third theme, Extending Gender Sensitivity Beyond the Classroom, demonstrates how educators act consistently across advising, student activities, and institutional initiatives. Eight participants noted that they advocate for inclusive messaging, ensure representation in events, and support students in reporting gender-based discrimination. These efforts extend the modeling of inclusivity into the broader educational environment. Guerrero and Puerta [30] argued that inclusive learning happens not only in academic content but also in the institutional culture shaped by faculty conduct. This aligns closely with Chavez's et. al [25] findings that the alignment of speech, values, and behavior among faculty members leads students to perceive the learning environment as genuinely inclusive. In this study, faculty grounded their actions in Jesuit values such as being “persons for and with others,” showing that gender responsiveness is not detached from institutional identity, but rather embedded in it.

In response to the second interview question, faculty explained how they handle gender bias through three main strategies. The first theme, Immediate and Constructive Intervention, reflects how eleven educators respond to biased comments or behaviors the moment they arise. Rather than shaming students, they engage them in reflection, a technique often referred to as “calling in.” This approach is supported by Kollmayer et al. (2020) [16], who noted that teacher interventions shape the tone of classroom discussions and help students recognize and unlearn stereotypes. It also resonates with UNESCO [29], which emphasized that faculty-led responses to gender issues are central to promoting equity in learning environments.

The theme Turning Incidents into Teachable Moments further reveals how educators embed gender issues into course content by leveraging bias incidents as learning opportunities. Nine participants said they redirected the flow of lessons to critically analyze remarks or assumptions, making GAD learning spontaneous and contextually grounded. These results echo Gutierrez's [19] advocacy for inquiry-based instruction, where learners are engaged in deconstructing their assumptions. Through transforming bias into pedagogy, educators model how inclusive education adapts to the social realities of the classroom.

The final theme under this question, Collaborating with Institutional Mechanisms, reflects how four educators utilized the school's GAD office, guidance counselors, and reporting protocols to respond to more serious or repeated cases. These participants understood that while classroom intervention is critical, system-wide responses provide structure and accountability. This is in line with Barairo, Ramos, and Torregoza's [26] finding that institutional support enhances GAD implementation when paired with faculty initiative. Chavez et. al [24] also noted that institutional consistency—through both policy and faculty behavior fosters student trust and contributes to a genuine culture of inclusion.

The third interview question focused on the behaviors educators consistently model to support gender inclusivity. The theme Language Mindfulness and Curriculum Decentering shows that ten faculty members revised their teaching materials to avoid gender bias and broaden their examples to include diverse identities. These acts, while seemingly minor, significantly shift classroom norms, affirming findings from Nikolakaki et al. [32] and Van Dusen and Nissen [34], who noted that even small changes in teaching materials reshape perceptions of authority and participation.

The theme Modeling Emotional Openness and Vulnerability captures how eight faculty members challenge gendered expectations by expressing empathy, sharing personal reflections, and encouraging emotional honesty. These behaviors humanize teaching and challenge norms of emotional detachment traditionally associated with authority figures. This finding aligns with feminist pedagogy principles [6] and supports Lopez and Andal's [20] conclusion that modeling compassionate behavior encourages students to replicate such values in their own future classrooms.

While this study focused on Philippine higher education institutions, its implications extend beyond national borders. Oasia & Don [52] emphasized that there's similar challenges in translating gender awareness into everyday faculty practice have been reported in other Southeast Asian and developing contexts where policy frameworks exist but behavioral modeling remains inconsistent. The strategies identified in this study such as reflective integration, inclusive communication, and institutional collaboration can inform GAD implementation across comparable cultural and educational systems. Thus, the findings are transferable to contexts aiming to bridge the gap between policy compliance and authentic gender-responsive teaching practice.

The findings also reveal how cultural and religious influences, particularly Catholic traditions emphasizing compassion and moral leadership, shape faculty attitudes toward gender inclusion. While these values often promote care and empathy, some educators noted that conservative interpretations occasionally hinder open discourse on LGBTQIA+ and gender-diverse topics. Acknowledging this tension underscores the need for culturally sensitive GAD training that harmonizes faith-based values with inclusivity.

This study's findings are shaped by its small, purposive sample and the absence of student perspectives. The insights presented reflect the views of faculty members only; future research should include student voices to assess how behavioral modeling influences perceptions of gender inclusivity. Comparative studies across regions and institutional types, particularly religious or rural colleges, are recommended to deepen understanding of how local contexts mediate GAD implementation.

The findings underscore the necessity of institutional frameworks that bridge the divide between awareness and action. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) should formalize faculty development programs on gender-responsive teaching, emphasizing behavioral modeling as a measurable professional competency. Integrating GAD indicators into performance evaluation systems can institutionalize inclusivity as a standard of teaching excellence.

## 7. Conclusion

The present study concludes that the effective integration of Gender and Development (GAD) principles in higher education transcends policy compliance and curricular inclusion. It fundamentally depends on the deliberate behavioral modeling of faculty members who embody the values of equity, respect, and inclusivity in their daily academic and interpersonal practices. Anchored in Feminist Pedagogy and Social Gender Theory, the study establishes that inclusive education is not only an instructional framework but also a lived process manifested through empathy, reflective dialogue, and equitable classroom engagement. Teacher educators, as facilitators of knowledge and agents of socialization, exert a formative influence on how gender equality is internalized and practiced by future educators.

The findings demonstrate that faculty members operationalize GAD integration through contextually grounded strategies linking gender themes to subject content, facilitating critical reflection, utilizing media and case analyses to challenge stereotypes, and fostering language and environments that affirm diversity. These pedagogical practices bridge the gap between abstract gender sensitivity concepts and the authentic, relational experiences of students. Moreover, faculty modeling of gender-responsive conduct such as addressing bias, redistributing participation equitably, and extending inclusivity beyond the classroom illustrates that professional commitment to GAD must be sustained through intentional, observable behavior.

At a broader level, the study advances the understanding that behavioral modeling is an indispensable yet often overlooked dimension of educational reform. It repositions faculty behavior as a measurable expression of institutional commitment to gender equality. This perspective aligns with global initiatives such as Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and UNESCO's Education 2030 Framework, both of which underscore the transformative power of educators in achieving equitable and inclusive quality education. The insights generated herein may therefore inform international faculty-development programs, curriculum reviews, and accreditation policies that seek to harmonize pedagogical innovation with gender-equity imperatives.

Nevertheless, these conclusions must be interpreted within the study's contextual limitations. The purposive sample of sixteen faculty participants from six higher education institutions provides rich qualitative depth but does not represent the full diversity of the Philippine academic landscape. The absence of student and administrative perspectives constrains the triangulation of findings, while cultural and institutional variations in GAD implementation may have shaped participant narratives. Future research should thus employ mixed-method or comparative approaches involving students, administrators, and policy makers to validate and expand the proposed behavioral modeling framework across regional and international settings.

In addressing the enduring "so-what" question, this study underscores that faculty behavior constitutes the critical frontier of gender-responsive education. Policies and curricula can institutionalize equality, yet it is through the everyday actions, language, and decisions of educators that inclusivity becomes reality. Situating teacher behavior at the center of Gender and Development discourse, this study contributes a humanistic and actionable model that links theory, pedagogy, and institutional transformation. Ultimately, fostering gender equity in higher education requires not only structural reforms but also educators who consciously model the very values of justice and inclusivity that they aspire to teach transforming gender awareness from principle into enduring academic culture.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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