GENDER-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE, GENDER MAINSTREAMING STRATEGIES AND SCHOOL CULTURE AMONG STUDENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS
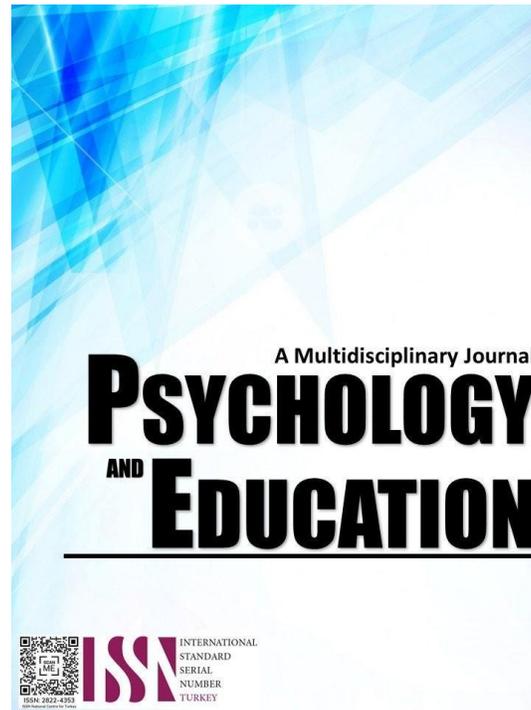
Gender-Inclusive Language, Gender Mainstreaming Strategies and School Culture among Students of Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the significant influence of gender-inclusive language and gender mainstreaming strategies on school culture among 320 BSED-English students from higher education institutions in Davao City. The researchers adapted and validated survey questionnaires to collect data from the participants. The survey instruments were designed to measure the levels of gender-inclusive language, gender mainstreaming strategies, and school culture among the respondents. The results of the study showed that the respondents exhibited a high level of gender-inclusive language, a high level of gender mainstreaming strategies, and a high level of school culture. Furthermore, the findings revealed a significant positive moderate relationship between gender-inclusive language and school culture, as well as between gender mainstreaming strategies and school culture. This suggests that higher levels of gender-inclusive language and gender mainstreaming strategies are associated with more positive school cultures. Additionally, the study found a significant influence of both gender-inclusive language and gender mainstreaming strategies on school culture. Notably, gender mainstreaming strategies had a stronger influence on school culture in higher education institutions compared to gender-inclusive language. This indicates that the implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies may be more effective in shaping a positive school culture than the use of gender-inclusive language alone.

Keywords: *english, education, gender-inclusive language, gender mainstreaming strategies, school culture*

Introduction

School culture encompasses the shared fundamental presumptions, beliefs, and practices that shape an institution's perceptions, operations, and orientations (Abdullah, 2019). This culture significantly influences the aptitude and attitude of students, making it a crucial aspect of the educational environment (Hinde, 2014). Despite the empowering and collaborative nature of many school cultures, issues of toxicity persist, causing significant distress within academic communities (Ohlson et al., 2016; Yalew et al., 2010). Research indicates that globally, toxic school cultures severely impact physical and mental health and overall quality of life (Moshman, 2022; Melesse et al., 2018). Addressing this alarming issue is essential as school culture, both virtual and physical, serves as the binding atmosphere for teachers, students, and stakeholders.

In Turkey, studies by Gemuseli et al. (2011), Waters (2020), and Lindahl (2006) reveal that unhealthy school culture is characterized by inward and short-term focus, low morale, emotional outbursts, instability, and inconsistency. These factors overshadow shared organizational ideals and hinder improvement. Similarly, in Nigeria, negative school culture, influenced by various academic and non-academic factors, disrupts students' academic progress and overall quality of life (Inuwa, 2014). In the Philippines, the deterioration of school culture is a recognized issue. Monsanto (2016) highlighted that centralized and bureaucratic school cultures in the National Capital Region (NCR) lead to classroom-related and student-behavior problems, necessitating significant efforts to create positive classroom changes and an optimal learning environment. Virola's (2007) comparative study on National Achievement Test scores found that public schools, compared to private schools, suffer from poor school culture due to overcrowded spaces and large class sizes. In Ilang, Davao City, Colita et al. (2019) observed low ratings of school culture, indicating that students only occasionally feel comfortable in their classes, school halls, and restrooms. This intermittent sense of safety and order suggests a need for improvement. Additionally, Lacar et al. (2019) reported that the school culture in madrasah education programs is not fully integrated, limiting the curriculum's holistic support for its constituents.

Much research has explored the relationships between school culture and various factors, suggesting interventions to address low-rated school cultures. For instance, Remigio et al. (2021) found that gender-inclusive language can positively influence school culture if students respond well to the circumstances. Deleavin (2017) noted that gender mainstreaming strategies symbolize a school's shift towards a gender-inclusive environment. Corbett (2010) examined the relationship between gender-inclusive language and British school culture, linking it to pedagogy and curricular materials. Li-Ching (2014) argued that establishing a school gender equity education committee and providing professional support can enhance gender mainstreaming in classrooms.

This study focuses on the variables of gender-inclusive language, gender mainstreaming strategies, and school culture. There has been no prior research correlating these three variables among respondents in higher education, where school culture is more advanced and expected to exercise gender inclusivity and sensitivity. The current study aims to determine if gender mainstreaming strategies and gender-inclusive language significantly relate to school culture. The researcher seeks to highlight the urgency of this study, hoping it will guide language teachers in realigning language use and strategies to foster a more positive school culture.

The study's results could serve as a basis for the academic community's intensified mainstreaming of gender and development (GAD),

aligning with CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 01, series of 2015, which establishes policies and guidelines on GAD in CHED and HEIs. The findings can contribute to curriculum development and innovation, promoting a gender-responsive approach in instruction, research, and extension. This research aims to provide valuable data for administrators, department heads, language teaching organizations, educational institutions, and policymakers. The researcher intends to present the findings at academic conferences and eventually publish the work in a recognized national or international refereed journal, contributing to advancements in language and gender sensitivity.

Literature Review

Examining Gender-Inclusive Language in Educational Settings

Gender-inclusive language, defined as speech and writing that avoid discrimination against any sex, social gender, or gender identity, and that does not reinforce gender stereotypes, is critical for promoting equality, respect, and appreciation of diversity (UN, 2022; CSC, 2014). Given the significant role language plays in shaping cultural and societal attitudes, using vocabulary inclusive of all genders is an effective strategy to advance gender equality and combat gender bias.

Recent studies highlight the effectiveness of gender-inclusive language in educational contexts. Clemente et al. (2019) found that professors in teacher education programs are proficient in using non-sexist terminology, contextual non-sexist terms, and formal register, contributing to a gender-inclusive environment. Similarly, Teliousi et al. (2020) observed that gender-inclusive language remains evident in school textbooks, reinforcing a more comfortable environment for students concerned about pronoun usage and potential misgendering. Techniques such as professors introducing themselves with their pronouns, "I'm Professor X, and I'm using [insert pronouns] today," help normalize flexible and evolving pronoun use (The Milstein Center for Teaching and Learning, 2023).

In the Philippines, Tarrayo (2014) emphasized the crucial role teachers play in promoting gender-inclusive language in classrooms. Parks et al. (2020) identified three essential components for gender-inclusive language: attitudes toward sexist and non-sexist language, recognition of sexist language, and willingness to use gender-fair language. These findings underscore the global linguistic interest in de-gendering language and its practical applications in educational settings. By fostering an inclusive linguistic environment, educators can significantly contribute to the broader movement towards gender equality and inclusivity.

Attitude Towards Sexist and Non-Sexist Language

Gender-inclusive language, characterized by the avoidance of discriminatory phrases and stereotypes based on sex or gender identity, is crucial for fostering equality and respect (EIGE, 2022; Nordquist, 2020). Hostile and modern sexist language usage has been associated with negative attitudes toward gender-related language reforms (Sarrasin et al., 2012). British students have shown greater acceptance of gender-neutral language compared to Swiss students, highlighting cultural variations in attitudes (Sarrasin et al., 2012). Instruction in recognizing sexist language has been effective in enhancing awareness among participants (McMinn et al., 2010).

Traditional gender roles and both sexist and non-sexist language contribute to the perpetuation of gender bias (Benson et al., 2013). Students recognize the importance of eradicating sexist and non-sexist language and emphasize the need for instructors to adopt more inclusive language (Talosa et al., 2018). Those supporting conventional gender roles are more likely to use gendered language (Sczesny et al., 2016). Despite efforts to address sexism in language, individuals with sexist attitudes may be less likely to recognize sexist language or behaviors (Swim et al., 2004).

Recognition of Sexist Language

Sexist language, which reinforces gender norms and stereotypes, can be hurtful even when used unintentionally (Lind, 2011; Ambrose, 2022). Students demonstrate a limited understanding of sexist terminology, indicating a need for increased awareness (Remigio et al., 2021). Recognition of sexist language is crucial, as it fosters awareness and prompts individuals to adopt more neutral language (Vergoossen et al., 2020). Consistent use of neutral language is essential for promoting inclusivity in daily interactions (Koeser et al., 2014).

Willingness to Use Gender-Fair Language

Gender-fair language, which employs symmetrical linguistic forms for men and women, promotes gender equality and reduces prejudice and stereotypes (Koeser et al., 2014; Harris et al., 2019). Exposure to gender-fair language can influence perceptions and preferences (Moreland et al., 2010). Avoiding outdated terminology and employing feminization techniques can enhance the effectiveness of gender-fair language strategies (Lindqvist et al., 2018). Gender-neutral pronouns and matched forms have been effective in eliminating gender bias in language (Stahlberg et al., 2001; Renström et al., 2018).

Gender Mainstreaming Overview

Gender mainstreaming aims to promote gender equality by integrating gender perspectives into all facets of policymaking and implementation (Yao, 2009; Fufa, 2014). It addresses subtle gender inequalities and is a key strategy for advancing international gender equality efforts (CE, 2022; UN Women, 2020). This process involves incorporating feminist viewpoints into policy formulation and implementation (Marcondes et al., 2021) and applying a gender lens systematically throughout policy development and execution

(Kurebwa, 2020).

Gender Mainstreaming Strategies and Challenges

Efforts to implement gender mainstreaming strategies vary in success and face several challenges. Leveraging internal and external support and identifying strategic entry points are crucial for successful institutional gender mainstreaming (Ravindran et al., 2022). However, challenges such as funding constraints can hinder Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) gender mainstreaming at the local level (Duah et al., 2020). Additionally, complacency and depoliticization of gender issues pose barriers to effective gender mainstreaming (Freidenvall et al., 2021; Acosta et al., 2019). Overcoming these obstacles requires reforms that dissociate violence from masculinity and inclusive research approaches (Newby & Sebag, 2021).

Gender-Sensitive Content

Gender-sensitive content involves recognizing and addressing perceived gender norms and disparities in decision-making and action (Celik et al., 2011; Verdonk et al., 2008). It encompasses considerations of power dynamics between genders and intersectionality (Humbert, 2020), aiming to eliminate gender inequality and stereotypes (Lindsay et al., 2019; Tannenbaum et al., 2017; deKleijn et al., 2015). However, studies indicate a continued neglect of gender-sensitive concepts in various contexts (Yusuf, 2022; Dubreucq et al., 2021), emphasizing the need for greater attention to gender-sensitive material implementation (Melnykova-Kurhanova, 2022).

Gender-Sensitive Pedagogy

Gender-sensitive pedagogy encompasses diverse teaching and learning approaches that consider gender perspectives (Humbert, 2020). It fosters equal learning opportunities and challenges gender stereotypes (UN, 2022; Nabbuye, 2018). Implementing gender-sensitive pedagogy empowers students and promotes social change (Pilcher, 2017). However, despite awareness of gender concerns, teachers may lack training in gender-sensitive pedagogy (Njeri Muasya, 2021), highlighting the need for further professional development in this area (Jackson, 2000).

Gender-Sensitive Structures

Gender-sensitive structures involve maintaining gender balance and providing ongoing professional development for teaching staff (Humbert, 2020; Simbar et al., 2021). They aim to address gender disparities and promote inclusivity (EIGE, 2022). While efforts to establish gender-sensitive structures have been noted (Simbar et al., 2022; Eger, 2021), challenges such as limited training and gender imbalance persist (Achmad, 2019; Kuhlmann et al., 2017). Collaborative efforts and ongoing monitoring are essential for sustained progress (Zabaniotou et al., 2021).

Gender-Sensitive Ecosystems

Gender-sensitive ecosystems integrate gender perspectives into curriculum development and research, promoting institutional commitment to gender equality (Humbert, 2020). They aim to address gender biases in educational materials and combat sexism in language and communication (Ginestra, 2020; Padavic et al., 2020). Despite efforts to promote gender sensitivity, inequalities persist in higher education (Hazel et al., 2019). Data tracking and collaboration among institutions are essential for fostering meaningful gender-sensitive ecosystems (Humbert et al., 2020; OECD, 2016).

Overview of School Culture

School culture emerges from the collective experiences of teachers, students, and stakeholders over time, shaping the unique identity and environment of each institution (Bayar et al., 2020; Wagner, 2007). It encompasses interactions among faculty, students, and the community, influencing behavioral norms and expectations (Hinde, 2014; FES, 2019). Effective school culture fosters positive relationships, student behavior, and overall academic success (Melesse & Molla, 2018; Brown, 2004).

Factors Influencing School Culture

Several factors influence school culture, including leadership, environment, and technology integration (Barnes et al., 2012; Cleveland et al., 2012; Cakiroglu et al., 2012). School administrators play a significant role in shaping culture, with their actions and decisions impacting the overall environment (Pritchard et al., 2005). Additionally, professional collaboration among teachers contributes to a supportive and cohesive culture (Gumuseli et al., 2011; Hargreaves et al., 2017).

Professional Collaboration in School Culture

Professional collaboration among teachers involves sharing pedagogical knowledge and engaging in productive discussions to support the school's vision (Gumuseli et al., 2011). It enhances the confidence and competence of educators while promoting a supportive learning environment (Campbell, 2020). Studies have shown positive associations between professional collaboration and job satisfaction among teachers (García Torres, 2019), emphasizing its importance in fostering a positive school culture.

Affiliative Collegiality and its Impact

Affiliative collegiality, characterized by supportive relationships among teachers, contributes to a conducive learning environment (Le

et al., 2018). While collaboration is essential, an optimal balance is necessary to avoid hindering learning outcomes (Gillies et al., 2010). Teachers' commitment to social change and professional growth is influenced by affective collegiality (Myers, 2009). Positive school culture and professional engagement are interconnected, highlighting the importance of supportive relationships among educators (Fu et al., 2022).

Self-Determination and Efficacy in School Culture

Self-determination and efficacy play vital roles in fostering a positive school culture (Ng et al., 2012). They encompass individuals' beliefs in their abilities to accomplish tasks and goals (Lopez-Garrido, 2020). Supportive environments that satisfy autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs enhance student engagement and well-being (Chiu, 2022; Dunn et al., 2020). Competence underpins self-esteem and confidence, contributing to overall self-efficacy (Bartholomew et al., 2011).

Gender-Inclusive Language and School Culture

Gender-inclusive language practices can significantly impact school culture dynamics (Kalkan et al., 2020). Studies suggest a positive association between the use of gender-inclusive language and aspects of school culture, such as teacher engagement and student academic achievement (Melesse et al., 2018; Fu et al., 2022). However, disparities in gender representation and language usage persist in educational settings, affecting perceptions of inclusivity and diversity (Barton et al., 2012; Kedley, 2015).

Implications for Educational Practice

Understanding the multifaceted nature of school culture and its interaction with factors like professional collaboration and language usage is crucial for fostering inclusive and supportive learning environments. Educators and administrators can promote positive school culture by prioritizing collaboration, supporting teacher efficacy, and implementing gender-inclusive language practices. By addressing these aspects, schools can create environments that nurture student growth, well-being, and academic success.

Overview of Gender Mainstreaming Strategies

Gender mainstreaming strategies aim to promote gender equality by integrating gender perspectives into all aspects of policymaking, planning, and implementation (Yao, 2009). These strategies recognize and address gender disparities and biases that may exist within institutions, including schools (Fufa, 2014). By adopting gender mainstreaming practices, schools can create inclusive environments that support the needs and rights of all students, regardless of gender (CE, 2022).

Impact of Gender Mainstreaming on School Culture

Research on the relationship between gender mainstreaming strategies and school culture has yielded mixed results. Some studies suggest a positive correlation between the use of gender mainstreaming strategies and positive school culture (Mavhunga et al., 2015; Chikunda, 2010). For example, establishing gender equity education committees and providing professional support can enhance gender mainstreaming efforts within schools (Li-Ching, 2014).

Challenges and Barriers

However, challenges exist in implementing gender mainstreaming strategies within school culture. Some teachers may still hold views that science and other disciplines are gender-neutral, ignoring the influence of gender on students' experiences and outcomes (Chikunda, 2010). Gender biases and stereotypes may also affect the way teachers assess and treat students, impacting their educational experiences (Frei et al., 2014).

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative research method to investigate the relationship between gender-inclusive language, gender mainstreaming strategies, and school culture. Data were collected through surveys and analyzed using statistical techniques. The study utilized a descriptive-correlational approach to examine associations between variables and a predictive correlational design to anticipate outcomes. The findings aim to clarify how these factors influence school culture and inform inclusive educational initiatives.

Respondents

The study surveyed 320 Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English students enrolled in the Purposive Communication subject to assess gender-biased language awareness. Stratified sampling was used across three higher education institutions in Davao City. Three questionnaires were adapted: Parks and Roberton's (2020) Inventory of Attitudes toward Sexist and Non-Sexist Language, Humber's (2020) Gender Mainstreaming Higher Education checklist, and Wagner's (2016) The School Leader's Tool for Assessing and Improving School Culture.

Each questionnaire measured various indicators using a Likert scale, with results interpreted based on predefined ranges indicating the level of manifestation for each variable.

Procedure

Before commencing the study, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from the UIC Research Ethics Committee, followed by permission from the graduate school dean. Subsequently, approval was sought from the Office of the Research Director/Head of the selected higher education institutions. Once all necessary permissions and approvals were secured, the researcher obtained consent from the respondents, ensuring they were fully informed about the study's objectives and procedures. The survey questionnaire was administered online using platforms like Google Form and Google Meet, with contact details obtained from the registrar. Each respondent was individually contacted, and an informed consent form was sent prior to participation. The data collection process adhered to health protocols, and confidentiality was maintained throughout. Following data collection, the scores were checked, recorded, and analyzed using descriptive statistical tools. To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted, and after validation, permission was sought from School X for questionnaire administration to a separate sample population. The data obtained were then submitted to a statistician for reliability testing.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards set by the University of the Immaculate Concepcion - Research Ethics Committee (UIC-REC) to ensure participant safety and confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained from college students, emphasizing voluntary participation and confidentiality. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, risks, and their right to withdraw at any time. Measures were taken to prevent harm, including careful questionnaire design and providing anonymity. Participants were reimbursed for expenses and given incentives as a gesture of appreciation. Transparency was maintained through public dissemination of study goals and findings. The researcher's qualifications were outlined, and facilities were deemed adequate for the study. The study's community involvement aimed to contribute to gender-inclusive language mainstreaming in education, benefiting academic institutions and society at large. Future plans include presenting findings at conferences and publishing in scientific journals to advance gender sensitivity in language education.

Results and Discussion

Level of Gender-Inclusive Language Among BSED-English Students of Higher Education Institutions

Table 1. *Level of Gender-Inclusive Language Among BSED-English Students of Higher Education Institutions*

	Mean	SD	Description
Attitude towards Sexist and Non-sexist Language along the Belief about Gender Exclusive Language			
1. considering women who think that the term 'chairman' is misinterpreted by gender.	3.52	.95	High
2. regarding the way English was traditionally written and spoken should not be modified.	3.59	1.00	High
3. worrying about sex is a daunting job.	3.10	1.06	Moderate
4. regarding the original sense of the word "he" was "person," and still need to use "he" to refer now to both men and women.	3.00	1.28	Moderate
5. considering the word gender-based should not refer to those using the term 'man and wife' if users do not mean it, is a sexual orientation.	3.56	1.05	High
6. considering English is never modified because it is so culturally ingrained.	3.45	.99	High
7. eliminating gender is an important objective.	2.88	1.37	Moderate
8. having journalists of most of the publications to avoid the use of ethnic and racial slurs and having guidelines that require writers to avoid gender language.	3.75	1.06	High
9. having sexist language to do with the treatment of people in society based on gender.	3.55	1.08	High
10. urging teachers turn terms like "our forefathers," into phrases that involve women when they speak about Philippine culture.	3.48	1.07	High
11. viewing teachers who require students to use nonsexist language as unfairly forcing their political views upon their students.	3.20	1.09	Moderate
12. considering that while changes are difficult, the vocabulary based on gender should also be removed.	2.90	1.32	Moderate
Category Mean	3.33	.62	Moderate
Recognition of Sexist Language			
1. regarding people should think for all humanity, not just themselves.	4.27	.89	Very high
2. considering the idea that frogs can give you warts is just an old wives' tale.	3.45	1.01	High
3. considering that if the child wants to play the piano well, the boy must practice hard.	4.12	.97	High
4. regarding Juana Dela Cruz should be chairman of our committee.	3.58	1.05	High
Category Mean	3.85	.61	High
Willingness to Use Gender-fair Language			
1. having the willingness to use the title "Ms. Smith" rather than "Mrs. Smith" when referring to a married woman	3.37	1.26	Moderate
2. having the willingness to use the word "server" rather than "waiter" or "waitress"	3.56	1.10	High
3. having the willingness to use the expression "husband and wife" rather than "man and	3.97	1.15	High

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	wife"			
4.	having the willingness to use the term "camera operator" rather than "cameraman"?	3.47	1.23	High
5.	having the willingness to use the title "flight attendant" instead of "steward" or "stewardess"	3.92	1.00	High
	Category Mean	3.66	.73	High
	Over-all Mean	4.11	.65	High

The table illustrates that the overall mean of gender-inclusive language among BSED-English students is 4.11, indicating a high level of observance. This suggests that these students frequently utilize gender-fair language practices, reflecting their awareness and commitment to gender equality. Furthermore, the overall standard deviation of 0.65 indicates minimal variation among respondents' ratings, highlighting consistency in their perceptions.

Recognition of Sexist Language. The dimension of recognition of sexist language was assessed as high by BSED-English students, with a category mean of 3.85, indicating frequent observation. Notably, specific items within this dimension received varying mean ratings, ranging from 3.45 to 4.27. For instance, the item concerning the debunked belief about frogs causing warts received a mean rating of 3.45, while the item emphasizing consideration for all humanity scored 4.27, indicating a very high level of observance. These results underscore the persistence of gender-based language and the importance of adopting gender-fair language strategies to promote inclusivity.

Attitude towards Sexist and Non-sexist Language along the Belief about Gender Exclusive Language. Analysis of the dimension related to attitudes towards sexist and non-sexist language, along with beliefs about gender-exclusive language, yielded a category mean of 3.33, classified as moderate, indicating that this aspect of gender-inclusive language is occasionally observed. The mean ratings of individual items ranged from 2.88 to 3.75. For instance, the item advocating for the elimination of gender biases scored 2.88, while the item endorsing journalistic guidelines against discriminatory language scored 3.75, indicating varying levels of observance among BSED-English students. These findings underscore the nuanced perceptions of language as either sexist or non-sexist among students, suggesting the need for continued awareness and education on gender-inclusive language practices.

These results align with previous research, such as Clemente et al. (2019), Teliousi et al. (2020), and Tarrayo (2014), emphasizing the significance of gender-inclusive language in educational settings and beyond. Additionally, findings are consistent with studies by Koeser et al. (2014), Remigio et al. (2021), Benson et al. (2013), Sarrasin et al. (2012), and Talosa et al. (2018), highlighting the multifaceted impact of language on perceptions of gender and the importance of promoting inclusive language practices to combat biases and foster equality.

Level of Gender-Mainstreaming Strategies among BSEd-English Students of Higher Education Institutions

Table 2. *Level of Gender-Mainstreaming Strategies among BSEd-English Students of Higher Education Institutions*

	Mean	*SD*	*Description*
Gender- sensitive Content			
1. having basic key concepts related to sex and gender present in the curriculum.	3.97	.93	High
2. having more advanced key concepts related to sex and gender in the curriculum	3.83	.96	High
3. having concept of intersectionality in the curriculum	3.80	.86	High
4. having concepts of sex and gender in the law curriculum from a structural standpoint.	3.93	1.00	High
5. having concepts of human rights, fundamental rights and equality legislation in the curriculum.	3.95	1.00	High
6. using teaching materials regularly reviewed to ensure the absence of stereotypes.	3.91	.92	High
7. having a curriculum that provides alternative views and approaches besides the 'orthodox' approaches.	3.84	.89	High
Category Mean	3.89	.71	High
Gender-sensitive Pedagogy			
1. having gender as a stand-alone element of the curriculum.	3.62	.99	High
2. having gender as a compulsory element of the curriculum.	3.61	1.13	High
3. having standpoint and/or feminist approaches and methodologies considered in the curriculum.	3.54	.98	High
4. having opportunities created within teaching for students to work collaboratively in diverse groups.	3.83	.96	High
Category Mean	3.65	.80	High
Gender-sensitive Structures			
1. having gender balance in the programme delivery team.	4.02	.89	High
2. having available training to ensuring teaching staff are aware of gender-related pedagogical issues.	3.95	.91	High
3. having the commitment to promoting gender in the curriculum among decision-makers in the senior management team.	3.92	.93	High
Category Mean	3.96	.76	High
Gender-sensitive Ecosystems			

		Mean	SD	Description
4.	having assessment mechanism to report on whether gender is included as a horizontal issue in module descriptors.	3.80	.84	High
5.	having data regularly collected on gender in the curriculum for monitoring and reporting purposes.	3.74	.82	High
6.	having data regularly collected on gender in the student body for monitoring and reporting purposes.	3.69	.97	High
7.	having case being made as to why mainstreaming gender in the law curriculum is important.	3.71	.86	High
8.	having community actions that multiply gender knowledge in the wider society.	3.74	.93	High
9.	having measures in place to ensure the physical, sexual, and psychological integrity of both women and men in the institution.	3.94	.82	High
	Category Mean	3.77	.66	High
	Over-all Mean	3.82	.64	High

Table 2 illustrates the level of gender mainstreaming strategies among BSEd-English students in higher education institutions. The overall mean for gender mainstreaming strategies is 3.82, denoted as high, indicating frequent manifestation. With a minimal standard deviation of .64, responses from teachers show negligible variation. This suggests that respondents frequently exhibit efforts to mitigate sexism and other gender-related issues within higher education school culture. The finding aligns with Ravindran et al. (2022), emphasizing the vital role of gender mainstreaming in institutional success, leveraging strategic internal and external support. Conversely, it contradicts Freidenvall et al. (2021), rejecting the notion of complacency hindering gender mainstreaming progress.

Gender-sensitive Structures. This dimension, with a high category mean of 3.96, is frequently manifested. Notably, item mean ratings range from 3.92 to 4.02. Commitment to promoting gender in the law curriculum among decision-makers received a mean rating of 3.92, while gender balance in the program delivery team scored 4.02. This underscores efforts to maintain gender balance within instructional and program structures. The results echo Simbar et al. (2022) and Zabaniotou et al. (2021), highlighting the significance of identifying and addressing gender-sensitive services and structures, promoting accountability among decision-makers.

Gender-sensitive Pedagogy. With a high category mean of 3.65, this domain is frequently manifested. Item mean ratings range from 3.54 to 3.83. Standpoint and/or feminist approaches considered in the curriculum scored 3.54, while opportunities for collaborative work in diverse groups scored 3.83. This suggests active promotion of gender-sensitive pedagogy. The findings support Pitcher (2017), Nabbuye (2018), and Karlson et al. (2011), emphasizing the importance of creative approaches, collaborative learning opportunities, and the incorporation of feminist methodologies to foster gender-sensitive pedagogy.

Level of School Culture as Perceived by BSEd-English Students of Higher Education Institutions

Table 3. *Level of School Culture as Perceived by BSEd-English Students of Higher Education Institutions in Davao City*

		Mean	*SD*	*Description*
Professional Collaboration				
1.	having teachers and staff discuss instructional strategies and curriculum issues.	4.13	.79	High
2.	having teachers and staff work together to develop the school schedule.	4.14	.86	High
3.	having teachers and staff are involved in the decision-making process about materials and resources.	4.05	.83	High
4.	having student behavior code through collaboration and consensus among staff.	3.92	.84	High
5.	planning and organizational time allotted to teachers and staff is used to plan as collective units/teams rather than as separate individuals.	4.07	.82	High
	Category Mean	4.06	.67	High
Affiliative Collegiality				
1.	having teachers and staff tell stories of celebrations that support the school's values.	4.11	.80	High
2.	having teachers and staff visit/talk/meet outside of the school to enjoy each other's company.	3.76	.99	High
3.	having the school reflects a true "sense" of community.	4.08	.92	High
4.	having the school schedule reflects frequent communication opportunities for teachers and staff.	3.96	.92	High
5.	having the school supports and appreciates the sharing of new ideas by staff members	3.90	.97	High
6.	having a rich and robust tradition of rituals and celebrations including holidays, special events and recognition of goal attainment.	4.02	.87	High
	Category Mean	3.97	.70	High
Self-Determination/Efficacy				
1.	having the faculty and staff predict and prevent rather than react and repair, when something is not working in school.	3.71	.97	High
2.	having school members who are interdependent and value each other.	3.86	.88	High
3.	having members of our school community who seek alternatives to problems/issues rather than repeat what they have always done.	3.92	.89	High
4.	having members in the school community who seek to define the problem/issue	3.93	.88	High

	rather than blame others.			
5.	having the school staff empowered to make instructional decisions rather than wait for supervisors to tell them what to do.	3.77	.90	High
6.	having people work in school because they enjoy and choose to be in school.	3.79	.93	High
	Category Mean	3.83	.71	High
	Over-all Mean	3.95	.62	High

Table 3 presents the perceived level of school culture among BSEd-English students in higher education institutions in Davao City, recording an overall mean of 3.95, denoted as high, indicating consistent presence of positive school culture. With a standard deviation of .62, responses exhibit minimal variation, suggesting uniformity in perceptions. This finding underscores the prevalent guiding beliefs and values governing school operations. This aligns with Marini et al. (2018), demonstrating the predictive impact of character education on religious school culture. Furthermore, it supports Cansoy et al. (2017) and Balkar (2015), emphasizing the significance of school culture in determining teacher leadership and empowerment.

Professional Collaboration. This dimension, with a high category mean of 4.06, signifies frequent manifestation of school culture among BSEd-English students. Item mean ratings range from 3.92 to 4.14, indicating consistent collaboration among staff. These findings echo Melkamu et al. (2020) and Garca-Torres (2019), highlighting successful inter-professional collaboration and its positive association with job satisfaction.

Affiliative Collegiality. Affiliative collegiality reflects a high category mean of 3.97, indicating frequent manifestation. Item mean ratings range from 3.76 to 4.11, illustrating interpersonal support and shared values among teachers and staff. These results are consistent with Van De Pol et al. (2013), Van Leeuwen et al. (2013), and Webb (2009), emphasizing the importance of school support for staff and the sharing of fresh ideas. However, they contradict Brucato (2005), suggesting the need to strengthen collegiality culture before implementing reform initiatives.

Significance of the Relationship of Gender-Inclusive Language, Gender Mainstreaming Strategies and School Culture

Table 4 illustrates the relationships between gender-inclusive language, gender mainstreaming strategies, and school culture. Gender-inclusive language exhibits a significant positive moderate correlation with school culture (r = .48, p < .05), indicating that as the level of gender-inclusive language increases among BSEd-English students, school culture significantly improves. Similarly, gender mainstreaming strategies show a significant positive moderate correlation with school culture (r = .52, p < .05), suggesting that an increase in gender mainstreaming strategies leads to a corresponding improvement in school culture.

These findings are consistent with Kwauk & Bever (2017), highlighting a direct relationship between gender-inclusive language and positive school culture, wherein higher usage of gender-inclusive language fosters a more inclusive classroom environment. Additionally, they align with Remigio et al. (2021), emphasizing the role of gender-inclusive language in shaping school culture positively. Furthermore, the results corroborate Li-Ching (2014), emphasizing the importance of gender mainstreaming strategies, such as establishing gender equity education committees and providing professional support, in enhancing school culture and educational outcomes.

Table 4. *Significance of Relationships of Gender-Inclusive Language, Gender Mainstreaming Strategies and School Culture Among BSED-English Students of Higher Education Institutions*

	School Culture		
	R	p-value	Remarks
Gender-Inclusive Language	.48**	.00	Significant
Gender Mainstreaming Strategies	.52**	.00	Significant

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Significance of the Influence of Gender-Inclusive Language and Gender Mainstreaming towards School Culture among BSED-English Students of Higher Education Institutions

Table 5 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis. Individually, gender-inclusive language significantly influences school culture (p < .05) with a positive standardized beta value of .14, indicating that for every unit increase in gender-inclusive language, there is a corresponding increase of .14 in school culture. Similarly, gender mainstreaming strategies significantly impact school culture (p < .05) with a positive standardized beta value of .67, suggesting that for every unit increase in gender mainstreaming strategies, there is a corresponding increase of .67 in school culture. Notably, gender mainstreaming strategies exert a stronger influence on school culture compared to gender-inclusive language.

The combined influence of both variables on school culture is significant (F = 199.95, p < .05), explaining 56 percent of the variance in school culture (R^2 = .56). This implies that 44 percent of the variance in school culture can be attributed to factors other than gender-inclusive language and gender mainstreaming strategies.

These findings align with Remigio et al. (2021), highlighting the role of gender-inclusive language in shaping school culture positively, and Deleavin (2017), emphasizing gender mainstreaming as indicative of a transition to a more inclusive setting. Moreover, they

support Corbett's (2010) study on the relationship between gender-inclusive language and British school culture, underscoring the importance of pedagogy and curricular materials in various contexts.

Overall, these results affirm the gender-neutral language theory, advocating for the use of non-sexist, accepting, and gender-inclusive language to promote inclusivity and positive school culture, both within academia and in wider society.

Table 5. *Significance of the Influence of Gender-Inclusive Language, and Mainstreaming Strategies towards School Culture*

	School Culture			
	Standardized Coefficients	*T*	*p-value*	*Remarks*
Gender-Inclusive Language	.14	3.12	.002	Significant
Gender Mainstreaming Strategies	.67	15.32	.000	Significant
R	.75			
R2	.56			
F	199.95			
P	.000			

Conclusions

Based on the findings, BSEd-English students in higher education institutions in Davao City demonstrate a high proficiency in gender-inclusive language use and exhibit proactive engagement in gender mainstreaming strategies, indicating their commitment to mitigating sexism and fostering an inclusive school culture. Moreover, the pervasive presence of guiding beliefs and standards within the school culture highlights a strong commitment to promoting inclusivity and fairness. Significant positive relationships exist between gender-inclusive language and school culture, as well as between gender mainstreaming strategies and school culture, underscoring the mutually reinforcing nature of linguistic inclusivity and positive educational environments. Notably, while both variables significantly influence school culture, gender mainstreaming strategies exert a stronger impact compared to gender-inclusive language, emphasizing their crucial role in shaping the educational landscape among BSEd-English students in higher education institutions in Davao City.

Based on the conclusions, several recommendations are proposed. Firstly, due to the lower mean in the attitude towards sexist language and beliefs about gender-exclusive language, school stakeholders should offer re-orientation sessions on gender equality, particularly focusing on diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE), and reevaluate Grammatical Gender concepts to understand the functional use of gender-specific words. Secondly, as gender-sensitive pedagogy scored lowest among the indicators of gender mainstreaming strategies, enhancing capability training and promoting collaborative group work in syllabi revisions can provide equal learning opportunities and challenge gender stereotypes. Thirdly, addressing the lower mean in self-determination/efficacy within school culture suggests enhancing interdependency among school members through programs fostering collective decision-making. Fourthly, given the significant relationship between gender-inclusive language, gender mainstreaming strategies, and school culture, sustaining collective leadership and participatory management is recommended to ensure inclusive education initiatives and practices are continued. Finally, maintaining this significant influence through consistent monitoring and feedback mechanisms on gender-inclusive language and mainstreaming is crucial to address gender-related issues, protect students, and promote gender equality and non-discrimination, fostering a sustainable inclusive school culture where every member is valued and respected.

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