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Research Article

Philippine English Modules During Covid-19 Pandemic: Its Gender Sensitivity and Responsiveness

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the manifestations of gender bias in DepEd Secondary English Modules. The distribution of characters and the occurrence of gender bias have been determined in self-learning modules (SLMs). In this research, both quantitative and qualitative methods of content analysis were used. These strategies were applied using the methodology given by Brugeilles and Cromer in their paper Analyzing Gender Representations in School Textbooks. The DepEd Region V English Self-Learning Modules for grades seven through ten were used in this research as part of the K-12 curriculum. It was discovered that there was a gender imbalance in secondary English SLMs along with pictures and text; females were underrepresented as men were represented twice in the modules; gender stereotyping was found to have the highest percentage of the four categories of the manifestations of gender bias, which is alarming to women who may feel that they have less value in society. The absence of women in occupations dominated by males demonstrates their inadequacy and dependence on men. The pedagogical implications of gender-responsive education must thus be emphasized, particularly in the new educational standard. It is advised that policies in Philippine schools be reexamined in order to determine their effectiveness.

Keywords: *gender bias, marginalization, self-learning modules, stereotyping*

Background

The terrible COVID-19 pandemic had a serious influence on the operation of public basic institutions in the Philippines and the rest of the world, with the exception of Antarctica. The

global health problem has become an unacceptably heavy burden for every human family, regardless of financial status or position. The dilemma, according to Ancheta and Ancheta (2020), has become a challenge for both the

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health care and education sectors. During the epidemic's peak, educational institutions developed remote learning as a replacement option. The effort and strategy aim to mitigate the effects of the closure while maintaining high-quality education.

The nationwide start of classes in October 2020, as mandated by DepEd Order No. 012, s.2020, titled "Adoption of the Basic Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) for School Year (SY) 2020-2021 in light of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency," stands for the principle of ensuring learning continuity through K-12 curriculum adjustments, alignment of learning materials, and deployment of multiple learning delivery modalities that are sensitive to equity considerations and concerns. One of them is modular distance learning, which includes individualized instruction and allows students to utilize Self-Learning Modules (SLMs) in paper or digital format, as well as other learning aids.

Textbooks, according to Sabir (2008), are one of the first types of media that show which educational standards are meant to be imparted in the classroom. Textbooks are used in the classroom for fundamental learning 70% to 95% of the time by teachers (Recana, 2019). Textbooks, according to Brugeilles and Cromer (2009), are the primary source of socialization, imparting information and values. As a result, a skewed portrayal of girls and boys in textbooks may influence students' perceptions of what is normal for women and men in society. In other words, the textbook material maintains gender as a social separation and prohibits men and women from having equal rights (Delavin and Buayan, 2020).

Ayesha Agura, a first-grade student who broke a gender stereotype while completing an Araling Panlipunan module worksheet, circled and checked all of the alternatives on the worksheet, which required the student to circle toys for girls and check toys for boys. (JCB, GMA News, October 20, 2020, 1:38 p.m.) The Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy (DepEd Order No. 32. S. 2017) commits to integrating the principles of gender equality, gender equity, gender sensitivity, non-discrimination, and human rights in the provision and governance of basic education and mandates the im-

plementation of a gender-responsive curriculum. Gender Schema Theory is defined by Bem (1981) as the way humans structure their mental information system when perceiving gender-based behavior. What young people see and read will instill in them a sense of their societal duties (Delavin & Buayan, 2020). To achieve gender equality in schools, the government must examine policies and advocacy in addition to gender and development. Even in the midst of a pandemic, we cannot afford to teach pupils in a gendered manner.

Methods

This investigation included qualitative and quantitative methods of Content Analysis. It utilized the methods developed by Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) in their handbook Analyzing gender representations in school textbooks. Cover to cover, the contents and language of Self-Learning Modules will be subjected to a comprehensive content analysis to determine the presence of gender stereotypes. The following areas will be examined in the analysis: gender visibility, gender stereotyping, the use of gender-biased terminology, asymmetrical titles, and "firstness." The data will be tabulated using a spreadsheet from Microsoft Excel. Through subjective interpretation of the textual material, qualitative research will be implemented.

In accordance with the new standard, this will use the Region V DepEd English SLMs in grades 7 to 10 of the Junior High School. This selection of samples tries to analyze the many manifestations of gender role stereotypes that may arise in SLMs. Specifically, English modules will be used since they provide a wealth of culture, conventions, and history in literature that makes sense of the world via tales, poetry, novels, and plays that depict gender in their characters.

This study makes use of the Self-Learning Module from Grades 7 to 10 in Junior High School, which covers the first quarter of the school year (as it is the available modules released intended for the Basic Learning Continuity Plan for the SY 2020-2021). All of these instructional resources were standardized, authorized, and verified by the Department of

Education. The percentage and qualitative content book analysis by Brugeilles and Cromer is used as the statistical instrument for evaluating the data.

This research hypothesized that the impact of curricular materials as media on the formation of gendered concepts is transferred through the focus placed on the equal depiction of men and women. The treatment of the sexes in written media, such as textbooks, is sometimes skewed. Some literature may overemphasize masculine terminology or examples, so perpetuating the misconception that masculinity is superior to feminine.

If curricular materials include "hidden" lessons that students take with them throughout their lives, then it is rational to ensure that they provide accurate, fair, and practical information. Regarding gender sensitivity, educational materials must provide a balanced portrayal of masculine and femininity in their terminology and depictions of human examples. Only then can we be certain that the curriculum, especially the secret one, is promoting gender equality. Curriculum materials may be evaluated for their portrayal of gender stereotypes in order to determine gender responsiveness.

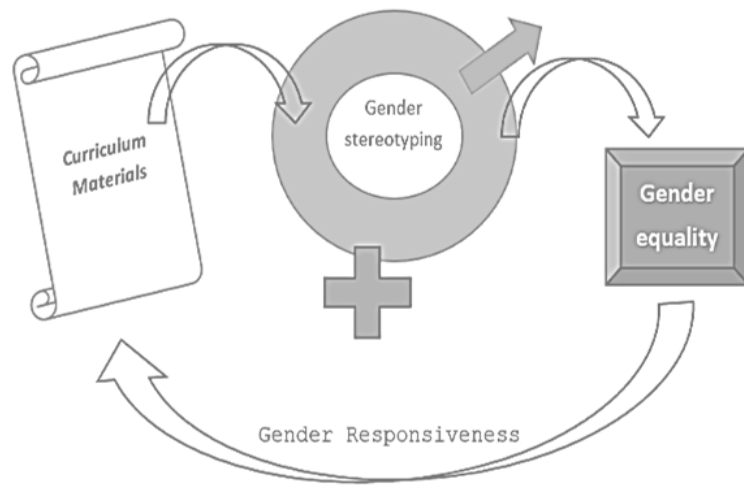


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Results and Discussion

A. Gender Distribution of Male and Female in the DepEd Secondary English SLMs along pictures

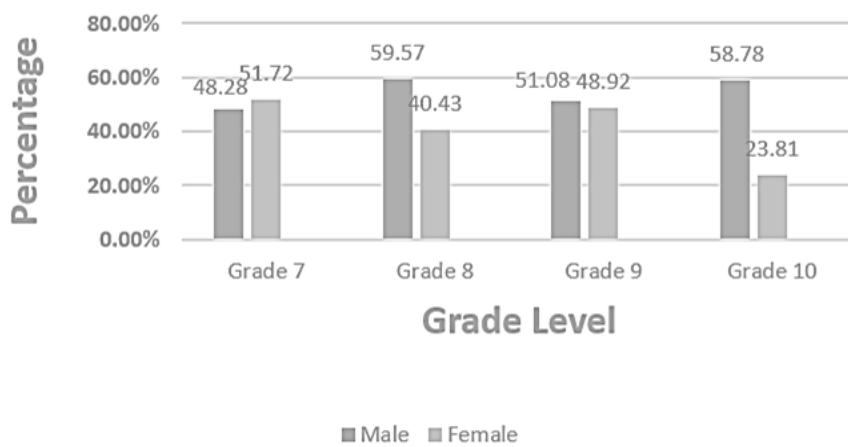


Figure 2. Distribution of Male and Female in the DepEd Secondary English SLMs along pictures

The above figure depicts the percentage distribution of male and female characters in DepEd Secondary English SLMs with images. Of a total of 375 characters, 204 were male (54.4%), and 171 were female (45.6 percent). As seen in the graph, out of 375 shown characters in the modules, male characters comprised the largest proportion in the majority of modules for grades 7 through 10.

Out of 241 identified characters across four grade levels, educational activities were reflected by an average of 53.26 percent in men and 46.74 percent in females. The majority of grade 9 self-learning modules (SLMs) included male characters, including images of students in uniform studying together, reading a book, thinking and writing, completing an assign-

ment, a teacher talking, and a conversation between guys. These were evident in the grade level's three modules including 19 themes. According to Michel (1986), the prevalence of male and female characters may indicate sexist attitudes toward girls and women. This is shown by the fact that male characters appear more often in textbook images and text than female ones. As corroborated by the study of Java and Parcon (2006), it is also emphasized that there are a bigger number of portrayed characters for male reproductive activities, as well as a high predominance of male characters, even in sports with dominant figures. It shows that the gender distribution of male and female characters in English SLMs was biased towards male characters.

B. Gender Distribution of Male and Female in DepEd English SLMs along texts.

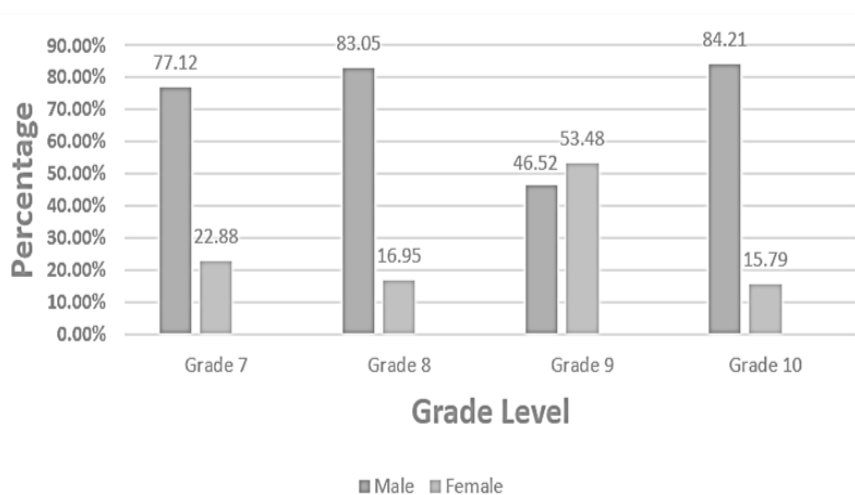


Figure. 3 Distribution of Male and Female in DepEd English SLMs along texts

There were 616 characters represented in the writings, with 437 (70.9%) men and 179 (29.1%) females. The graph demonstrates that grade 10 had the highest number of male characters, particularly in Week 2 of the myth "The Story of Daedalus and Icarus," which details the accomplishments and flaws of heroes or characters on pages 10-12 of the 25-page topic "Thought Organizing Tools." A male-to-female ratio of 210:20 from the story through the module's activities was definitely suggestive of discrimination.

Another graphic appears in Week 1 of "Knowing Africa's Local Culture" for Grade 8.

The bulk of the characters seen were men. One of which is on page 2, featuring "Wakanda Forever," popularized by Marvel's film Black Panther directed by Ryan Coogler; in Practice Task 2, pages 15-18, presenting the four (4) African writers who won the prestigious Nobel Prize in Literature with a 3:1 male-to-female ratio; and in Practice Task 3 and Post Test pp. 20-28, a story titled "No Witchcraft for Sale" by Doris Lessing; and the featured film "The Boy Who

The relative significance of the characters, whether protagonists or auxiliary characters, may influence whether or not a story is biased

(Gupta et al. 1990). Significant exclusion or underrepresentation of certain qualities based on gender means that girls and males have less worth, significance, and importance in society (Charlotte 1976). As a result, if some groups of

people are ignored, youngsters may assume that the modules they are expected to use do not acknowledge their existence due to the dominating portrayal of textual characters.

C. Manifestation of Gender Bias in Occupational Roles in DepEd English SLMs

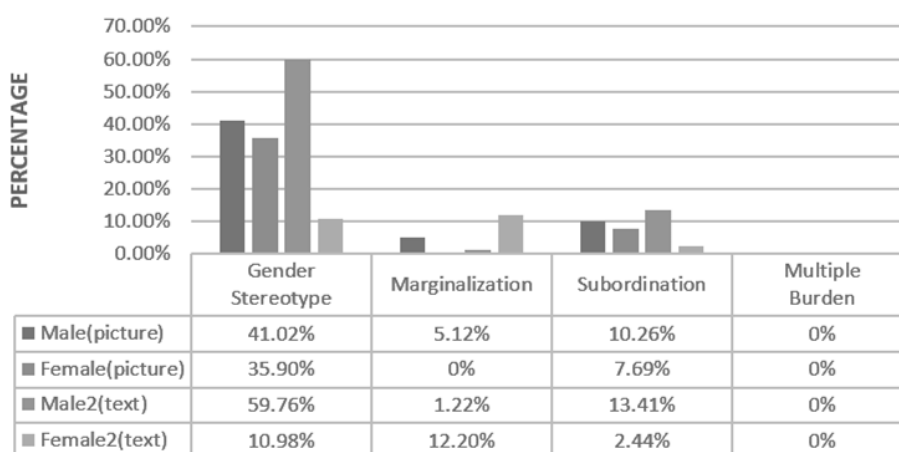


Figure 3. Percentage Distribution of Gender Bias in Occupational Roles in DepEd English SLMs

The above figure depicts the percentage distribution across the four manifestations of gender prejudice. 39 (32%) of the 121 depictions of gender bias in occupational positions from grade 7-10 modules were visual, while 82 (68%) were written. Except for multiple burden, the graph indicates that these gender biases were prevalent in three categories. The biggest proportion of gender bias is attributed to gender stereotyping, with 41.02% in image and 59.76% in text favoring men, who are stereotypically seen as the family's breadwinner and budget managers. As a result, significant components of the educational system, such as the usage of textbooks in the teaching and learning process, continued to promote gender repressive relationships. Mbilinyi (1991).

In terms of marginalization, females were found to be marginalized in texts at a greater rate than men, 12.2% vs 1.22%. This indicates that the vocational responsibilities allotted to women were minor, since senator, inventor, author, police officer, and professor are not featured in the modules. This is in reference to Grossman's (1994) research, which identifies the absence of female characters as one of the

characteristics of gender-biased textbooks. Invisibility occurs when particular groups of individuals are underrepresented or absent entirely; in this situation, women are invisible. In subordination, men were characterized as superior with the majority of vocations in both photos and text, such as president, spokesman, writers, and academics, as seen in the graph.

Thus, they were portrayed as decision-makers inside and outside the house (Michel et al 1991). The absence of multiple load in the research is a positive sign. The depiction of male and female jobs does not correspond with the three domains of labor. Notably, they were not included in the modules; nonetheless, the elimination of gender prejudices may still be seen as beneficial for expanding male and female conceptions of the roles they may choose to play in society (Delavin & Buayan, 2020).

Conclusion

The objective of this research is to evaluate the symptoms of gender bias in DepEd Secondary SLMs in the New Normal. The research included both quantitative and qualitative content analysis methods. This research used the

DepEd Region V English Self-Learning Modules (SLMs) for the first trimester of grades 7–10 for SY 2020–2021. From the 22 modules of English quarter 1, 812 characters were shown in photos and text, with a male to female ratio of 204 (54.4 percent): 101 (45.6 percent) in pictures; and 437 (70.9 percent): 121 (29.1 percent) in texts. This demonstrates a substantial difference in the representation of male and female characters. In addition, 121 depicted gender prejudices were identified, with a picture-text ratio of 39 (32 percent) to 82 (68 percent) for both men and women in vocational occupations. Quantitative data collection and analysis indicates that male characters were overrepresented, whilst female characters were underrepresented. Significant exclusion or underrepresentation of particular characteristics depending on gender implies that girls or men are of lesser value, relevance, and importance in society. Consequently, women may feel diminished and unrecognized in the society to which they belong. The textbook is gender biased when the language does not include girls and men equally. Therefore, curriculum materials may represent the discriminatory character of languages.

Moreover, gender stereotyping in occupational positions was discovered with the largest proportion among the four categories of manifestations of gender prejudice, especially in text, with a proportion of 49 (59.76%) male and 9 (10.98%) female. This is in reference to Michel's (1986) research, in which he found that vocational and career activities were skewed toward masculine characteristics. The absence of female characters in positions such as president, senator, police officer, inventor, and firefighter was cited as a depiction of women as backward and males as superior. In general, gender bias was evident in the data presented in each graph. Interventions recommended by previous research include mechanisms that may help in the manufacture of textbooks free of gender bias for all students, as well as a review and improvement of DepEd order No. 32 series 2017 or the Gender Responsive Basic Education Policy.

Thus, textbooks and modules should be designed in accordance with the established rules to aid publishing houses, authors, illustrators,

and editors in ensuring the quality of gender-sensitive textbooks and modules. Before textbooks or modules are published, the developed criteria assist the identification of gender role stereotyping. Organizing training workshops, seminars, and/or GAD-related concepts and ideas that are the most effective solutions for people participating in the construction of gender-related textbooks and modules. The curriculum designers should collaborate with the Philippine Commission on Women to create a gender-inclusive curriculum that does not reinforce gender stereotypes and mainstreaming. It is suggested that the DepEd Order No. 32, series 2017 or Gender Responsive Basic Education Policy be strictly implemented and monitored. For a fair teaching-learning process, teachers are advised to complete GAD training and courses on gender equality problems in order to recognize and critically assess the manifestations of gender bias in textbooks used in the classroom. They may urge students to do so, following the teacher's supervision, for their own knowledge, and future research is encouraged to perform similar studies in all learning areas relevant to gender roles in order to promote gender equality for both men and women.

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