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National Book Development Board (NBDB) Registration  
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PRC-CPD Accredited Provider: PTR-2025-749

SEC Registration No.: 2024020137294-00

Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



**iJOINED ETCOR**  
P - ISSN 2984-7567  
E - ISSN 2945-3577



**The Exigency**  
P - ISSN 2984-7842  
E - ISSN 1908-3181

Website: <https://etcor.org>

## Effectiveness of the gender and development program in the promotion of gender equality

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**Received:** 28 November 2025

**Revised:** 04 January 2026

**Accepted:** 08 January 2026

**Available Online:** 10 January 2026

**Volume V (2026), Issue 1, P-ISSN – 2984-7567; E-ISSN - 2945-3577**

<https://doi.org/10.63498/etcor528>

### Abstract

**Aim:** This study evaluated the effectiveness of the Gender and Development (GAD) Program in promoting gender equality at Gumaok Elementary School during the 2024–2025 school year, with emphasis on program implementation and its influence on stakeholders' awareness and perceptions of gender equality.

**Methodology:** A descriptive-correlational research design was employed. Data were gathered using a researcher-made survey questionnaire administered to 60 teachers and one school head. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics, including Pearson's  $r$  correlation and one-way analysis of variance.

**Results:** Findings revealed that the GAD Program was perceived as moderately effective in terms of implementation quality, budget utilization, and program coverage, with mean scores ranging from 3.38 to 3.65. Respondents demonstrated a moderate level of awareness of gender equality ( $M = 3.43$ ). A strong and statistically significant positive relationship was found between GAD Program effectiveness and the promotion of gender equality ( $r = 0.694$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Significant differences in perceptions were observed when respondents were grouped according to position and duration of exposure to the GAD Program.

**Conclusion:** The GAD Program at Gumaok Elementary School contributes positively to the promotion of gender equality by establishing a foundational level of awareness and fairness. Nonetheless, challenges related to stakeholder engagement, timeliness of fund utilization, and the translation of awareness into inclusive practices persist. The study recommends improved budget transparency, sustained and advanced capacity-building initiatives, and strengthened mechanisms for inclusive participation to further enhance program effectiveness.

**Keywords:** *gender equality; gender and development; program effectiveness; descriptive-correlational research; stakeholder engagement*

### INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is a fundamental human right and a critical driver of sustainable development. Globally, Gender and Development (GAD) programs have been institutionalized to address gender imbalances, challenge discriminatory norms, and ensure equal opportunities for all genders in various spheres, including education (UN Women, 2021). In the Philippines, the commitment to gender equality is enshrined in laws such as the Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act 9710), which mandates all government agencies, including educational institutions, to mainstream gender perspectives into their policies, programs, and operations.

The Department of Education (DepEd) has responded through the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy, directing schools to integrate GAD principles. These programs aim to create safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environments by raising awareness, reducing discrimination, and promoting balanced representation (DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017). Despite these robust policies, the effective translation of GAD mandates into tangible outcomes at the school level faces challenges, including inadequate stakeholder engagement, delays in fund utilization, and varying levels of awareness and commitment among implementers (Calora, 2020; Valdez, 2023).

At Gumaok Elementary School, the GAD program has been implemented as part of this national directive. However, informal observations suggested a gap between policy and practice, with potential disparities in how the



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E - ISSN 1908-3181

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program's effectiveness is perceived by the teaching staff. A systematic assessment was needed to determine whether the program was truly fostering gender equality or if strategic improvements were necessary.

This study therefore sought to evaluate the effectiveness of the GAD Program at Gumaok Elementary School during the 2024-2025 school year. While previous studies have examined GAD implementation challenges in Philippine schools broadly (Calora, 2020; Valdez, 2023), there remains a significant research gap in empirical assessments at the elementary school level using a descriptive-correlational approach. Specifically, few studies have investigated how demographic factors such as teaching position and duration of GAD exposure moderate perceptions of program effectiveness and gender equality awareness. By examining these relationships, this research provides novel, evidence-based insights that can guide school administrators, GAD coordinators, and policymakers in tailoring GAD programs to enhance their impact, ensuring that the school environment not only preaches but practices gender fairness and inclusion.

### Review of Related Literature and Studies

The literature underscores the critical role of GAD programs in dismantling structural inequalities. Effective programs typically employ strategies such as awareness campaigns, policy advocacy, capacity building, and community engagement (UN Women, 2021). Studies, however, present a mixed picture. While research by Smith et al. (2020) in Southeast Asia showed a 25% reduction in gender-based violence due to community-based GAD programs, other studies highlight persistent barriers like insufficient funding, cultural resistance, and weak monitoring systems (Johnson & Perez, 2019).

In the Philippine educational context, the success of GAD initiatives heavily relies on the active involvement of school heads and GAD coordinators (Valdez, 2023). However, Calora (2020) found that while school administrators provide support, teacher and community engagement often remains low, and GAD activities are sometimes viewed as compliance obligations rather than opportunities for genuine cultural change. Furthermore, logistical challenges, particularly delays in the release of GAD funds, consistently hamper smooth implementation (Calora, 2020).

### Synthesis and Research Gap

The reviewed literature establishes the importance of GAD programs in addressing gender inequalities and highlights common implementation challenges including insufficient stakeholder engagement, funding delays, and cultural resistance. While studies in the Philippine context have examined administrative roles in GAD implementation (Valdez, 2023) and general challenges (Calora, 2020), there is limited empirical research focusing specifically on elementary school settings. Furthermore, few studies have employed a descriptive-correlational design to examine how demographic factors such as teaching position and duration of GAD exposure influence both program effectiveness perceptions and gender equality awareness. This study addresses these gaps by providing a focused assessment of GAD implementation at Gumaok Elementary School, examining not only overall effectiveness but also the moderating role of respondent characteristics on program outcomes.

This study is grounded in Feminist Theory and Critical Pedagogy, which emphasize the need to challenge power dynamics and empower all individuals. It also draws from Intersectionality, recognizing that gender inequality intersects with other social factors like seniority and position, making the examination of demographic differences particularly relevant.

### Conceptual Framework

The study operated on a conceptual framework illustrating the relationship between the GAD Program (Independent Variable) and the Promotion of Gender Equality (Dependent Variable).

- **Input:** The existing GAD Program at Gumaok Elementary School, including its policies, allocated budget, and training modules.
- **Process:** The implementation of the program, encompassing the quality of training, stakeholder engagement, budget utilization, and program accessibility.
- **Output:** The immediate results, measured through the level of awareness and perceptions of gender equality among teachers and the school head.
- **Outcome:** The enhanced promotion of gender equality, characterized by reduced discrimination, equal participation, balanced representation, and a pervasive sense of fairness and inclusiveness.

The framework posits that effective processes lead to positive outputs and outcomes, with external factors (e.g., community norms, leadership) and feedback loops influencing the entire system.



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### Statement of the Problem

Despite the Department of Education's mandate on Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy (DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017), the effective translation of Gender and Development (GAD) programs into measurable and sustainable outcomes at the school level has remained a persistent challenge. At Gumaok Elementary School, informal observations indicated a gap between policy intent and actual practice, particularly in how stakeholders perceived the program's effectiveness. These disparities raised concerns regarding stakeholder engagement, fund utilization, and the extent to which awareness of gender equality translated into inclusive practices. Consequently, a systematic assessment was necessary to determine whether the GAD Program was effectively promoting gender equality or required strategic improvements to enhance its implementation and impact.

### Research Objectives

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the GAD Program in promoting gender equality at Gumaok Elementary School during the 2024-2025 school year. Specifically, it sought to:

1. Determine the demographic profile of the teacher-respondents and school head.
2. Assess the perceived level of effectiveness of the GAD Program in terms of implementation quality, budget utilization, and program coverage.
3. Evaluate the level of awareness among respondents regarding the promotion of gender equality.
4. Examine the relationship between the effectiveness of the GAD Program and the promotion of gender equality.
5. Identify significant differences in perceptions of program effectiveness and gender equality awareness when grouped according to demographic profile.

### Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of sex, highest educational attainment, position, and years of exposure to the GAD Program?
2. What is the perceived level of effectiveness of the GAD Program in terms of implementation quality, budget utilization, and program coverage?
3. What is the level of awareness of the respondents regarding the promotion of gender equality?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the effectiveness of the GAD Program and the promotion of gender equality?
5. Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of program effectiveness and gender equality awareness when grouped according to demographic profile?

### Hypotheses

*H<sub>01</sub>*: There is no significant relationship between the effectiveness of the Gender and Development (GAD) Program and the promotion of gender equality at Gumaok Elementary School.

*H<sub>02</sub>*: There is no significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the GAD Program when respondents are grouped according to their demographic profile in terms of sex, highest educational attainment, position, and years of exposure to the GAD Program.

*H<sub>03</sub>*: There is no significant difference in the level of awareness regarding the promotion of gender equality when respondents are grouped according to their demographic profile in terms of sex, highest educational attainment, position, and years of exposure to the GAD Program.

### Methodology

#### Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design. This non-experimental approach was deemed most appropriate as it allowed for the documentation of the current state of the GAD program's implementation and outcomes while simultaneously analyzing the relationship between program effectiveness and gender equality promotion without manipulating variables.



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## Population and Sampling

The study participants were 60 teachers and one school head from Gumaok Elementary School, DepEd Division of City of San Jose del Monte, during the 2024-2025 school year. A complete enumeration was used for all teachers actively employed during the study period to capture the full range of perspectives. Purposive sampling was employed for the school head to ensure the inclusion of a key administrative perspective essential for understanding leadership and implementation oversight.

## Instrument

A researcher-made questionnaire was used, comprising three sections: (1) Demographic Profile, (2) Level of GAD Program Effectiveness (using a 5-point Likert scale from 1-Least Effective to 5-Highly Effective), and (3) Level of Awareness on Gender Equality Promotion (using a 5-point Likert scale from 1-Least Aware to 5-Highly Aware). The instrument was validated for content validity by three experts with substantial experience in education and GAD implementation: two held doctorate degrees in Educational Management with over 10 years of experience, and one was a serving GAD Focal Person at the division level with 8 years of experience in gender mainstreaming.

## Data Collection

Permissions were secured from the school and relevant authorities. In October 2024, the questionnaires were distributed and collected online via Google Forms over a two-week period. The process involved sending the survey link to the official school communication channel, followed by two polite reminder emails to non-respondents. Confidentiality and voluntary participation were ensured throughout.

## Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 26). Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) summarized respondent profiles and responses to scales. Pearson's *r* correlation tested the relationship between program effectiveness and gender equality promotion (addressing Research Objective 4). One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) determined significant differences in perceptions based on demographic profiles (addressing Research Objective 5).

## Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research standards. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Confidentiality was maintained through anonymization of responses, and data were stored securely on a password-protected computer with access limited to the researcher. The study protocol was reviewed and approved in accordance with institutional requirements.

## RESULTS and DISCUSSION

### Demographic Profile of Respondents

The majority of the teacher-respondents were female (61.54%), held a Master's Degree (65.38%), and had moderate exposure to the GAD program (65.38% had 3 years or less of exposure). This profile suggests that the sample is primarily composed of experienced and educated professionals, which may influence their perceptions of the GAD Program. The predominance of female respondents aligns with the broader teaching demographics in Philippine elementary education and may reflect gendered patterns in care-oriented professions. The limited exposure to the GAD Program for a majority of respondents highlights a potential area for sustained engagement and capacity-building.

### Level of Effectiveness of the GAD Program

As shown in Table 1, the GAD Program was perceived as "Moderately Effective" overall ( $M=3.38-3.65$ ). Budget utilization was rated highest ( $M=3.65$ ), though the timely release of funds was a weaker area ( $M=3.38$ ). Opportunities for participation scored lowest ( $M=3.19$ ), indicating a need for more inclusive engagement strategies.



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**Table 1.** Level of Effectiveness of the GAD Program

Aspect	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Implementation Quality	3.38	0.12	Moderately Effective
Budget Utilization	3.65	0.16	Effective
Program Coverage	3.53	0.22	Moderately Effective

The moderate effectiveness ratings across implementation quality and program coverage suggest that while the GAD Program is operational, it may lack depth or consistency in execution. The higher rating for budget utilization, despite noted delays in fund release, could indicate that once funds are available, they are used appropriately. However, the lower score for participation opportunities points to a procedural gap where stakeholder involvement is not fully realized, potentially limiting the program's transformative impact as emphasized in GAD literature (UN Women, 2021).

**Level of Awareness on Gender Equality Promotion**

Respondents were "Moderately Aware" of gender issues (M=3.43, SD=0.05). While fair treatment was highly perceived (M=3.90), feelings of full inclusion (M=3.43) and equal voice in decision-making (M=3.29) were moderate, revealing a potential gap between procedural fairness and experiential inclusion.

The discrepancy between high perceptions of fair treatment and moderate feelings of inclusion and voice suggests that awareness of gender equality principles does not automatically translate into a sense of empowerment or participatory equity. This aligns with Calora's (2020) observation that GAD activities are often viewed as compliance obligations rather than avenues for genuine cultural change. The results imply that moving from awareness to embodied practice requires intentional shifts in organizational culture and decision-making structures.

**Relationship between GAD Program Effectiveness and Gender Equality**

A strong, positive correlation was found between the effectiveness of the GAD Program and the promotion of gender equality (r=0.694, p=0.000). This statistically significant result suggests that more robust and effective program implementation directly correlates with higher levels of gender equality awareness and practice within the school.

This finding reinforces the theoretical assumption that well-implemented GAD initiatives can drive tangible progress toward gender equality. The strength of the correlation underscores the importance of program quality—including thorough implementation, efficient budget use, and broad coverage—in fostering an equitable school environment. It also supports the advocacy for continued investment and refinement of GAD programs as a mechanism for institutional change.

**Difference in Perceptions based on Demographic Profile**

Significant differences were found in perceptions of both program effectiveness and gender equality awareness based on the respondents' **position** (p=0.042; p=0.049) and **duration of GAD exposure** (p=0.037; p=0.029). Master Teachers and those with longer GAD exposure perceived the program more positively and reported higher gender equality awareness.

These differences highlight the role of positional authority and sustained engagement in shaping GAD outcomes. Master Teachers, often involved in leadership and planning, may have a more comprehensive view of the program's aims and activities, leading to more favorable perceptions. Similarly, longer exposure likely allows for deeper understanding and integration of GAD principles, consistent with Valdez's (2023) emphasis on the critical role of experienced implementers. This suggests that targeted efforts to engage newer and junior staff could help harmonize perceptions and enhance collective ownership of GAD goals.

**Conclusion**

The GAD Program at Gumaok Elementary School is on a positive trajectory, effectively establishing a baseline of gender awareness and fairness. The strong correlation between program implementation and gender equality outcomes validates the investment in GAD initiatives. However, the study reveals critical areas for growth: engaging



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all stakeholders meaningfully, ensuring the timely flow of funds, and bridging the gap between awareness of gender equality and the lived experience of full inclusion and empowerment, particularly for newer teaching staff.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Budget Transparency and Timeliness: School administrators may implement participatory budgeting committees and streamline fund release processes to enhance transparency and efficiency.
2. Deepen and Diversify Training: Capacity-building initiatives may move beyond foundational awareness to include advanced topics like unconscious bias and intersectionality, with sustained follow-up support provided.
3. Foster Inclusive Participation: School GAD committees may create more structured opportunities for all teachers, regardless of seniority, to contribute to GAD planning and decision-making.
4. Strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation: A balanced scorecard to track both quantitative and qualitative progress may be developed, allowing for continuous program improvement.
5. Expand Stakeholder Engagement: Proactive involvement of parents and community leaders in GAD activities may be considered to build a supportive ecosystem for gender equality beyond the school walls.

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