

THE GENESIS OF INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY: MAPPING GENDER PERSPECTIVES IN FIRST-YEAR BACHELOR OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the cultural and gender perspectives of first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) students at Pangasinan State University, Bayambang Campus. It focuses closely on their foundational ideas, beliefs, pedagogical interests, classroom values, and routine habits regarding gender inclusivity in early childhood education. The results reveal a distinctly progressive trend among incoming educators, characterized by a highly liberal stance toward diversity, gender equity, and inclusive language. Students expressed deep commitments to dismantling traditional gender stereotypes before they solidify in young learners' minds, while actively championing gender-neutral classroom environments. Ultimately, this study provides an essential baseline of the evolving student teacher culture. It emphasizes the importance of integrating cultural sensitivity and gender-fair literacy early in college courses to prepare future elementary teachers for building equitable and nurturing learning spaces in a diverse society.

Keywords: *student culture, gender perspective, BEEd freshmen, inclusivity, elementary pedagogy, ethical awareness*

INTRODUCTION

The cultural and gender perspective of the next generation of educators is a dynamic, multi-layered foundation that directly impacts how they will eventually shape their own primary classrooms. At Pangasinan State University Bayambang Campus, first-year students in the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) program exhibit an evolving mix of traditional values and highly progressive ideals. For academic leaders and teacher trainers who aim to build a truly inclusive teacher education environment, understanding these baseline cultural qualities—especially regarding gender equity, language usage, and classroom interaction—is vital. This study

looks deeply into these specific cultural dimensions to give educators a clear roadmap for nurturing culturally sensitive primary school teachers.

As future elementary teachers, these freshmen are preparing to step into classrooms where gender roles are often subtly reinforced or challenged. How they view gender neutrality, play-based activities, and communication patterns directly influences the emotional and cognitive growth of young learners. By using a descriptive cross-sectional approach, this study captures a detailed snapshot of first-year BEd student culture. The data shows that while these student teachers hold a deep respect for core educational values, they are overwhelmingly liberal when it comes to supporting gender-fair classrooms. These cultural leanings emphasize how crucial it is to introduce gender-fair pedagogy early in the curriculum, ensuring these future professionals can thoughtfully manage inclusive classrooms.

Statement of the Problem

Through a cultural analysis of freshman elementary education students, this study seeks to define the baseline gender perspectives of the emerging generation of teachers. It specifically looks for responses to the following queries: (1) How do first-year BEd students view the following aspects of gender perspective in teaching and learning: (a) Ideas and beliefs on early childhood equity; (b) Pedagogical interests and primary curriculum design, (c) Classroom values and ethical awareness, (d) Classroom routines and interaction patterns? (2) Is it possible for the educational institution, peers, and evolving social norms to shape or alter the gender perspectives of these freshman student teachers? (3) What action plan can be proposed to integrate gender-fair literacy effectively into the first-year teacher education curriculum?

METHODS

Research Design

A cross-sectional descriptive method of research has been used in this study. This approach allows for a "snapshot" look at the specific ideas, values, and habits of a distinct cohort of subjects at a single point in time.

Subject and Locale of the Study

The respondents of this study consisted of 124 first-year students enrolled in the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEd) program at Pangasinan State University, Bayambang Campus, during the academic cycle. Sampling was handled through a structured, random distribution across the freshman sections to gather a reliable representation of incoming elementary teacher candidates.

Data Gathering Instrument

The primary data gathering tool was a structured, content-validated questionnaire adapted to measure gender perspectives within elementary teaching and learning. The questionnaire is divided into four critical sub-sections: Ideas and Beliefs, Pedagogical Interests, Classroom Values, and Classroom Routines. The questionnaire had been reviewed by three education experts for clarity, fairness, and cultural fit. It was proven reliable, boasting a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Data analysis utilized the Average Weighted Mean (AWM) to determine the general trends and see how liberal or conservative the first-year students were. To interpret the scores smoothly alongside our previous institutional studies, the following standard mean scale range was applied:

Rating Scale and Interpretation Framework:

3.26 – 4.00: Strongly Agree (SA) / Very Liberal (VL)

2.51 – 3.25: Agree (A) / Liberal (L)

1.76 – 2.50: Disagree (AD) / Conservative (C)

1.00 – 1.75: Strongly Disagree (SD) / Very Conservative (VC)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ideas and Beliefs on Gender in Early Childhood Education

When asked about foundational ideas and beliefs, students largely demonstrated a liberal outlook (AWM = 3.06). A significant majority (Mean = 3.72) agreed that both male and female teacher education students possess equal abilities when it comes to nurturing and managing young learners. This aligns with international findings (e.g., Carrington & Skelton, 2003) that challenge the notion of teaching as gendered work. At the same time, there remain pockets of conservatism: a notable minority supported the idea that certain elementary subjects should be taught by traditional gender roles (Mean = 2.18), and some believed a teacher's biological gender may influence patience in the classroom (Mean = 2.30). These contradictions reflect the persistence of gender stereotypes even among a generally progressive cohort, echoing Blumberg's (2008) observation that deeply rooted biases can be difficult to fully dislodge.

Table 1

Ideas and Beliefs on Gender in Early Childhood Education

Indicators	Mean	Description
I believe male and female teacher education students are equally capable of nurturing and managing preschool and primary-grade learners.	3.72	VL
I believe that certain subject areas in the elementary curriculum, like Home Economics or Industrial Arts, should be taught according to traditional gender roles.	2.18	C
I believe addressing young elementary learners with gender-inclusive language supports their emotional development.	3.46	VL
I believe that a teacher's biological gender influences their innate patience when handling diverse learners in a classroom.	2.30	C
I believe early childhood classrooms must actively dismantle gender stereotypes before they solidify in a child's mind.	3.64	VL
Average Weighted Mean (AWM)	3.06	L

Pedagogical Interests & Curriculum Design

Students' pedagogical preferences indicate a clear orientation toward modern, gender-inclusive educational practices (AWM = 3.14). There was strong support for using children's literature that breaks away from career stereotypes (Mean = 3.58) and for planning play activities that avoid gender-based divisions (Mean = 3.66). These findings mirror global shifts toward gender-fair curriculum design (UNESCO, 2017; Ching & Ching, 2015). However, a subset of students still expressed a preference for traditional teaching materials, even when such materials contained subtle gender biases (Mean = 1.94). This suggests that while progressive attitudes are widespread, some students may require further guidance and exposure to critically assess ingrained curricular materials.

Table 2

Pedagogical Interests & Primary Curriculum Design

Indicators	Mean	Description
I prefer selecting children's literature and storybooks that depict boys and girls breaking traditional career stereotypes (e.g., female pilots, male nurses).	3.58	VL
I prefer designing elementary play-based activities where toys (such as building blocks or dolls) are shared equally without gender division.	3.66	VL
I prefer using standard, historically traditional elementary teaching materials even if they contain subtle gender biases.	1.94	C
I prefer learning about instructional strategies that explicitly integrate gender-fair principles into lesson plans for young learners.	3.38	VL
Average Weighted Mean (AWM)	3.14	L

Classroom Values & Ethical Awareness

The highest overall agreement was registered in the domain of classroom values and ethical awareness (AWM = 3.58, Very Liberal). Respondents overwhelmingly voiced objections to the idea that teaching is a profession suited only for women (Mean = 3.52), and they demonstrated a robust respect for students' freedom of self-expression, regardless of gender (Mean = 3.40). They also placed a high value on emotional sensitivity across all genders (Mean = 3.78) and recognized the long-term negative impact of implicit gender bias (Mean = 3.60). This finding is consistent with Sadker and Zittleman's (2009) research, which stresses the damage caused by gendered expectations in early education. It is important to consider, however, that the majority of respondents were female, which may contribute to the strong opposition to gendered professional stereotypes.

Table 3

Classroom Values & Ethical Awareness

Indicators	Mean	Description
I actively voice objections when classmates or colleagues imply that primary education is a profession suited only for women.	3.52	VL

I respect an elementary student's freedom of self-expression, even if their playtime preferences do not align with traditional societal expectations.	3.40	VL
I value emotional sensitivity and tears just as much from male students as I do from female students in a classroom setting.	3.78	VL
I believe that implicit gender biases held by a teacher can negatively impact an elementary student's lifelong academic confidence.	3.60	VL
Average Weighted Mean (AWM)	3.58	VL

Classroom Routines & Interaction Patterns

When it comes to daily routines and classroom interactions, students expressed a strong commitment to inclusivity (AWM = 3.36, Very Liberal). Many intentionally practiced gender-neutral groupings in micro-teaching sessions (Mean = 3.54) and ensured equal praise for all students (Mean = 3.82). These behaviors reflect an active rejection of traditional “boys vs. girls” dynamics, supporting recommendations by Banks (2015) for equity in daily classroom practice. Nevertheless, some students admitted to defaulting to traditional task assignments—such as assigning heavy lifting to males and organizational tasks to females (Mean = 2.38)—indicating that reflexive habits shaped by cultural norms persist beneath conscious intentions.

Table 4

Classroom Routines & Primary Interaction Patterns

Indicators	Mean	Description
I intentionally practice using gender-neutral groupings during micro-teaching sessions instead of dividing the class into "boys vs. girls."	3.54	VL
I instinctively assign tasks like lifting heavy classroom furniture to male classmates and organizing files or decorations to female classmates.	2.38	C
I provide equal praise and encouragement to all students regardless of gender during academic or physical activities.	3.82	VL
I consciously monitor my classroom communication habits to make sure I do not favor one gender when calling on students to speak.	3.68	VL
Average Weighted Mean (AWM)	3.36	VL

Demographic and Contextual Interpretation

The sample’s gender breakdown (85% female, 15% male) likely shaped the overall liberal orientation, especially in domains tied to professional identity and emotional sensitivity. This context echoes findings by Martino and Kehler (2006), who note that gender representation in classrooms can influence both attitudes and practices. Moreover, the university’s institutional emphasis on inclusivity may prime students to respond favorably to gender-fair practices, but deeper qualitative research is needed to determine the authenticity and durability of these beliefs.

In summary, while first-year BEEd students at Pangasinan State University Bayambang Campus show strong support for gender equity and inclusive pedagogy, conservative attitudes still surface in certain beliefs and routines. These nuanced results highlight the importance of sustained, reflective teacher education that both affirms inclusive ideals and critically addresses lingering traditional biases. Engaging students with both global literature and local realities will be key in bridging the gap between aspiration and practice.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings indicate that first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) students at Pangasinan State University demonstrate an advanced, progressive awareness regarding gender fair-play in education, highlighting an emancipatory shift away from outdated stereotypes. The freshman cohort consistently aligns with liberal to very liberal pedagogical perspectives, recognizing ethical classroom values and conscious daily routines are the most essential elements for building an effective, unbiased elementary school environment.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that Gender and Development (GAD) concepts and gender-fair literacy be intentionally integrated into first-year professional education seminars and foundational courses. Additionally, interactive micro-teaching activities, simulation exercises, and laboratory teaching sessions should be incorporated early in the curriculum to actively train freshmen to use gender-neutral vocabulary, balanced grouping strategies, and equitable praise habits.

Future investigators are encouraged to explore how these early-career gender perspectives evolve over time as these students progress into their higher-level field studies and formal practice teaching assignments.

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