

Gender Perspective In Social Science Education: The Batstateu Experience

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Abstract: The paper generally documents the experience of faculty members in Social Sciences Department in the integration of gender in the curriculum. It particularly discusses the initiatives of Batangas State University in integrating gender perspective in Social Science courses. It also presents the journey of social science instructors in integration. It is an inquiry into their experiences as social science instructors and how they selected or presented the topic, integrated gender perspective in the lesson, gave assignments, facilitated discussions and handled students' questions/responses. The results serve as basis for recommending strategies in creating an enabling environment for integrating gender in the curriculum. The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to document the experience of faculty members in social sciences department in the integration of gender in the curriculum. The journey was documented by identifying the lens, journey model, qualitative insights, quantitative insights and takeaways. In order to ensure that the objectives of this research are met, the researcher conducted series of meetings, focus group discussion and experience mapping workshop. Data shows that the gender perspective is mainstreamed in social science courses through faculty capacity building, conduct of GAD activities, and revision/development of syllabi. Integration was seen as a means of ensuring gender equality and equity through participative and interactive pedagogy, thereby experiencing fulfilment that students generally recognize equal rights. Challenges were met but these were seen as opportunity. Strategies include establishment of the GAD resource center, review and revision of syllabi, conduct of trainings and workshops, and gaining and sustaining administrative support.

Keywords: gad integration, gender mainstreaming, gender perspective, and

1. Introduction

Gender and development (GAD) is a new development paradigm which originated in the 1980s by socialist feminism. The predecessors of this development paradigm are the Women in Development (WID) and Women and Development (WAD) approaches. The GAD approach seeks to correct systems and mechanisms that produce gender inequality by focusing not only on women, but by also assessing the status of both women and men. The role of men in resolving gender inequality is also given emphasis, and the empowerment of women is given importance. This is premised on the belief that development is for all, and it is everybody's concern [6]. Gender and development has been a development approach in the Philippines since the early 1990s. Since then, several legislations have been enacted to ensure that this is mainstreamed in the country. With the creation of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (now Philippine Commission on Women), there have been initiatives to ensure that the goal of gender equality is in the hopes of fruition. Gender mainstreaming has been considered as the strategy of entrenching the GAD approach. This strategy was acknowledged in the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing Conference) held in 1995. The goal of mainstreaming GAD is to achieve gender equality in all fields of society. As an approach to development, gender mainstreaming looks more comprehensively at the relationships between women and men in their access and control over resources, decision making, benefits and rewards in society [5]. In addition, this strategy makes it possible to translate the GAD paradigm from theory to practice. In doing so, it has been adopted by the government as a priority program. CHED Memorandum Order No. 1, series 2015 provides for the policies and guidelines on gender and development in the Commission on Higher Education and higher education institutions (HEIs). The guidelines seek to introduce and institutionalize gender equality, and gender responsiveness and sensitivity in the

various aspects of Philippine higher education. In terms of scope, the Guidelines include enabling mechanisms that CHED and HEIs shall establish, such as the GAD Focal Point System or GFPS, and the integration of the principles of gender equality in the trilogical functions of higher education, namely; curriculum development, gender-responsive research programs, and gender-responsive extension programs [2]. Batangas State University cannot be considered a beginner in the area of gender mainstreaming since it has been advocating gender equality for quite a number of years. Gender integration is a strategy that the University implements. As a policy, it seeks to address discrimination and eliminate stereotype concepts in the educational system. To integrate in the curriculum means to coordinate, blend, or bring together separate parts into a functioning, unified, and harmonious whole [4]. The integration of gender perspective may be intradisciplinary, i.e., within the subject area; multidisciplinary or between two or more subjects; or transdisciplinary or beyond subject areas. There are also strategies available to particularly address discrimination. As discussed in Teaching CEDAW, the three strategies include introduction of gender courses, institution of gender courses, and integration of gender concepts into existing courses [3]. This study aimed to document the experience of Batangas State University in integrating the gender perspective, particularly in Social Sciences courses, by identifying initiatives in integration and presenting the journey of instructors in gender mainstreaming in the curriculum.

2. Methodology

The qualitative approach was utilized in this study since it examined gender integration. Series of meetings, focus group discussion and experience mapping workshop were the data gathering techniques used. These were conducted among 80 social science faculty members from the ten (10) campuses of Batangas State University. They handled social science

courses, namely: Art Appreciation, Introduction to Philosophy, Logic, General Psychology, Philippine History, Society and Culture with Responsible Parenthood, Life and Works of Rizal, Politics and Governance with Philippine Constitution, and Basic Economics with TLR, The framework used by the researcher to document how instructors integrated the gender perspective in the courses they handled was experience mapping developed by Adaptive Path [1]. This was used to organize the results in the following components: lens, journey model, quantitative and qualitative insights, and takeaways. Participants were divided into six groups, namely; Art Appreciation, Philosophy, General Psychology, Philippine History, Life and Works of Rizal, and Politics and Governance with Philippine Constitution. The grouping was based on the course that they commonly handled. Participants were given guide questions to enable them to map their journey towards GAD integration in the curriculum.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Initiatives of Batangas State University in integrating gender issues in social science courses

Gender and development is an advocacy of the University. Initiatives revolved around the following: creation of GAD structure, capacity building of faculty, conduct of GAD activities, and revision/development of syllabi. To ensure gender mainstreaming, it has established the Gender and Development Unit under the supervision of the Director for Extension Services. The GAD unit is generally responsible in implementing GAD and GAD-related programs and projects. It regularly conducts, among others, gender sensitivity trainings and gender orientation seminars among its internal (students, faculty, and employees) and external stakeholders. With respect to gender integration in the curriculum, activities necessary for this endeavour have been conducted. These activities included syllabi revision sessions, meetings with faculty members, and seminars on gender fair education and gender integration. The University's Social Science Department pioneered the integration of GAD concerns in the curriculum in 2014. It initially identified courses where GAD concepts and issues are integrated. It was found that Social Science courses in the General Education integrate gender concepts and issues. These include General Psychology, Philippine History, Society and Culture with Responsible Parenthood, Life and Works of Rizal, Basic Economics with TLR, Politics and Governance with Philippine Constitution, Art Appreciation, Introduction to Philosophy, and Logic. There were other courses in several programs offered in the University which discuss gender and development concepts and concerns, such as Gender and Development, Research, Photography, Introduction to Development Communication, Strategic Communication for Development, Media Ethics, Human Rights, Communication and Society, Group Dynamics, Film Critique, Broadcast-Based Distance Learning Education and Communication Theory. Syllabi revision sessions were conducted to integrate gender concepts, issues and concerns in Social Science courses. Since the University follows outcomes-based education, the Social Science Department Chairperson and Social Science faculty members included GAD perspective in their respective syllabi, specifically on the Intended Learning Outcomes, Specific Objectives, Course Requirements and Strategies. During the syllabi

revisions sessions, course objectives and descriptions were reviewed. Gender biases in the theories and perspectives discussed in the course content were analyzed. Topics that highlight human rights and gender equality concerns were integrated. Activities which avoid gender role stereotyping were also identified. Furthermore, identification and review of reading materials to be included in the reading list and other references was also done. Meanwhile, results of the focus group discussions and meetings with Social Science instructors showed that said instructors integrate gender concepts and concerns in the courses that they handled. There were courses identified wherein concepts were discussed; while there were courses which did not directly discuss the concepts although gender issues and concerns were tackled during classroom discussions.

3.2 Journey of Social Science Instructors in Integrating Gender in the Curriculum

Using Adaptive Path's Guide to Experience Mapping, the researcher was able to document the experiences of Social Science instructors on gender and development integration in the curriculum. Since experience mapping is a collaborative process, this was conducted in a workshop held to enable these instructors to share their stories of gender integration. Participants were asked to create a map of their journey in teaching social science subjects while integrating gender in the topic/discussion/ class activities. The map provided some qualitative and quantitative information in order for it to take shape in a meaningful way. Figure 1 presents an illustration of the experiences of Social Science instructors in gender integration. The focus was on lens, journey model, qualitative insights, quantitative insights, and takeaways.



Figure 1: Experience Mapping of Gender Integration

Lens. This is an overriding filter through which the participants viewed the journey. They focused on core touchpoints that applied to the experience. Participants responded to the inquiry on how they viewed GAD integration, how they accepted it, and what important concepts guided them to integrate gender concepts and concerns. Generally, they viewed gender integration as a way of incorporating an important concept or idea which will provide a strengthened perspective of gender and development. They believed that the integration of gender in the curriculum would be a means of ensuring equality and equity between women and men. Some considered it as a positive view to break gender stereotyping and pursue social justice. Others considered it a difficult task particularly in courses which are not directly related to gender and development.

“Ang naging basis namin ay ang psychological aspect of our students. So in integrating GAD, we encourage group works, promotion of gender equality, sensitivity in giving examples, student self-expression, and we are considering individual differences, and the nature of the course.” - Psychology Group

“Tiningnan po namin ang GAD sa pagtutulungan ng babae at lalaki. Ang tingin namin sa integrasyon ay sadyang ito ay napakaganda dahil dito mabubuo ang kalakasan ng babae at hindi lamang ng lalaki. Dito po sa GAD ay aming tiningnan na ang babae ay hindi mga gamit. Hindi po kami material na bagay. Syempre, yun pong pinakalente natin ay magmumula sa pamamahala ng bawat myembro ng pamilya simula sa ama’t ina. Magkaiba ang priorities pero dun magtatagpo bilang dalawang kasarian na naging isa.” – History Group

“Nakita namin na ito ay isang daan para patibayin ang equality between women and men. Ginamit din naming lente na ito ay mandato na kailangan itong ilagay sa kurikulum. Ito ay naging isang paraan para mailagay namin ang GAD sa aming subject.” – Art Appreciation Group

“Sa aming pagtingin, mula sa simple, komplikado. May negatibo at positibo. Nagkaroon ng pagiging kapaki-pakinabang at pagkakapantay-pantay. Dito pumapasok ang karanasan, opinion, oryentasyon at pinagmulan.” – Philosophy Group

Participants were aware of the importance of integrating gender in classroom discussion as a way of achieving the goal of gender equality and equity. They found it a timely concern among students. It would also raise their consciousness and take part in uplifting women’s morale. Furthermore, the lens that they used depended on the course that they were handling.

The Journey Model. Results revealed how the participants prepared for gender integration and what medium they used to deliver lessons related to gender and development. It can be understood that teaching gender and development concepts and issues entails sensitivity among instructors. Faculty members said that they planned how to discuss gender concepts and concerns in class. They attended GAD-related seminars, read references on GAD and searched for articles.

“Sa paghahanda, nagkaroon kami ng mga pagkakataon para maka-attend ng mga seminars, mga pananaliksik, research forums at talakayan tungkol sa GAD concepts.” – Art Appreciation Group

“Nagplano, research na ginamit at pinahalagahan.” – Philosophy Group

“Hindi po tayo makakapag-integrate kung kulang ang ating kaalaman. Dapat tayo ay handa pagpasok sa klase.” – History Group

In terms of the manner in which they discussed GAD concepts and concerns, participants provided specific examples on particular topics included in their courses. For instance, they conducted focus group discussions, film viewing, group dynamics and discussions. Other faculty members held debates and research presentations in class.

“Sa humanities, naging paraan ang talakayan. Halimbawa, isinisingit ko kahit wala sa libro ‘yung pag-aaral ng prehistoric artworks na patungkol sa mga babae. Halimbawa ay ‘yung Venus of Willendorf. Hindi ‘yung kilala nating Venus na sexy at magandang babae. ‘Yung Venus na

‘yun ay mataba, buntis. Nagpapakita ng pagpupugay sa mga kababaihan bilang ang role nya ay isang babae na nanganganak. Aktibidades ay mga exercises sa painting na social issues at lumalabas sa mga painting na iyon ang abuse of women. Ibig sabihin po, ang ating mga estudyante ay aware na ang mga kababaihan ay nakakaranas ng pang-aabuso. Pagpapaliwanag naman na dapat sa halip na manatili tayo dun sa paggamit ng salita na para sa kalalakihan ay babaguhin gaya ng paggamit ng chairperson sa halip na chairman.” – Art Appreciation Group

Integrating gender concepts into existing courses is one strategy to particularly address GAD concerns and issues. Findings showed that integration usually occurred in the form of examples or discussing current issues as part of the course outline. Furthermore, there were several points of integration such as teaching principles, course content, teaching method and teaching materials. Faculty members checked and leveled off with what students already know about gender and development. In terms of course content, they took note of the historical perspectives, issues, and the existing differences on the views of students regarding women and men. Their teaching methods varied and found that interactive, experiential and practical pedagogy was essential. Particularly, they utilized participatory lecture-discussion, group discussions, film showing, reflection papers, role playing, assignment and class presentations.

Qualitative Insight. This was an important component which identified how they felt during and after the actual integration of GAD concepts and concerns in classroom instruction. It also provided a description on what they believed the students felt after discussing gender issues in class. Since they made the necessary preparations on how to integrate gender perspective, they somewhat had the feeling of enjoyment and optimism towards the topic. They had a sense of fulfilment knowing that they gained a new perspective about gender which they can share to their students. Nevertheless, there were instances when they had difficulty talking about gender issues since each student has his or her own value system. There were also extremely personal questions and concerns of students (example, family and other personal issues). Students sought advice and there were different views and reactions of students (culture, class, religion, social norms, issues in the society). They experienced a more meaningful interaction with their students after each session. Considering that gender is a pressing concern among the youth, especially students who may be part of the LGBT community, they found it very timely to discuss these issues in class.

“Nagkaroon ng excitement, happiness and enjoyment. Nagkaroon din ng kaba. Sa obserbasyon, nariyan ang pagtanggap, pag-unawa at kasiyahan. Sa pagsasalin ng GAD, naging active, nagkaroon ng participation and fulfillment, excitement at changes.” – Philosophy Group

“Iba-iba ang paraan ng pagpalaki sa atin. A person is a product of own experience. Kami po sa grupo ng kasaysayan, kami e sumasama ang loob. Ang mga aklat, ang mga halimbawa ay mga lalaki. Wala kaming mga babae. History talaga, walang her story. Kaya minsan ay nakakagalit. Pero may mga pagkakataon namang kami ay natutuwa, nalilito, nalulungkot. Yung sa Spanish period, ay

tunay naman pong nakakagalit. Sa pre-Spanish ay masaya pero sa Spanish period ay ayan na ang nakakalungkot pero pagdating ng Amerikano ay masaya na kasi may mga pagkakataon na para sa kababaihan sa politics, sa education.” – History Group

“Natuwa, kasi naobserve namin na 80% na equal na ang female at male sa klase. Talagang sila po ay tanggap na ang pagkakaparehas ng babae at lalaki. Siguro po dahil modern na ang panahon, through social media, nakikita na ng mga estudyante natin ang importance ng both female at male. Halos lahat ay parehas ng na-experience maliban sa pagkakaiba ng activities sa classroom.” – Art Appreciation Group

“Nagkaroon ng excitement kasi para sa amin ito ‘yung chance para mas lumawak ang discussion, kasama ang her story. Natatakot din kasi nagkaroon ng agam-agam dahil hindi lahat ng tao dito sa kultura natin ay tanggap na tanggap ang equality. At may mga konspeto na mas angkop i-describe sa kababaihan at meron namang sa kalalalahanan. Tayo ay natutuwa dahil nagkaroon ng chance na iexplore pa ang gender issues. Nagkaroon ng bagong pananaw matapos ang integration. Mayroon mga batang mas mabilis na natuto, meron namang di agad nakuha. May mga nakakarelate lalo na at naranasan din nila. May mga nagrerejoice naman dahil nagkaroon ng pagiging sensitibo sa nararamdaman ng bawat isa.” – Rizal Group

“Sa takbo ng talakayan sa klase, nakaramdam ng pangamba sa kung ano ang tatahakin ng lipunan. Pero pagkatapos ng integration ay napansin namin na naging aktibo ang partisipasyon ng mga estudyante. Lumabas din sa discussion ang pagkaroon ng magkakaibang pananaw.” – Constitution Group

Quantitative Information. The journey was also illuminated through quantitative information. Responses were grouped based on their similarities and differences. In terms of lens, all groups noted that gender integration was based on mandates and other policies. All groups also considered that it was both a challenging and difficult topic to discuss in class. Nevertheless, as mentioned by the Philosophy Group, it was not an impossible task. They likewise had the same journey model in terms of attendance to seminars, preparation for class, and the strategies to integrate gender in their respective courses. In relation to what they felt before actual integration in class, they shared the same feeling of nervousness believing that they will be tackling a sensitive topic in class. Only two groups felt excited about integration, although all six groups were happy to talk about gender issues in class. Generally, they experienced fulfillment to think of a new way or approach, strategies and activities. They all observed that students participated actively in class discussion.

Takeaways. The information presented on the initial components of the experience map became the basis of the participants in identifying the challenges met, opportunities, and strategies which may be developed to ensure the integration of gender concepts and concerns in the curriculum.

Based on their experiences, they considered that it was an opportunity to realize the importance of GAD integration in the curriculum. The participants also noted that with integration, there will be an understanding and awareness of the differences among people which will lead to their acceptance. It was also seen as an opportunity for the promotion of equal rights, empowerment, and full recognition of the role that women play in nation building. The challenges that they identified included lack of awareness of students about gender concepts, cultural differences, influence of religion, biased opinions, and difficulty of integration due to lack of references or materials about gender and development. They recommended that textbooks should be revised to remove gender bias. Faculty members should also participate in GAD conferences/trainings and seminars in teaching strategies. There should also be proper dissemination of information about gender integration. Activities related to gender and development should be conducted. Participants suggested that every member of the academic community should take part in gender integration and that policies should be institutionalized to ensure that it will be pursued.

4. Conclusions

The following conclusions were based on the findings generated in the study:

1. Gender perspective is mainstreamed in social science courses. This is through creation of GAD structure, capacity building of faculty, conduct of GAD activities, and revision/development of syllabi.
2. Social Science instructors integrate gender perspective in their respective classes by looking at it as a means of ensuring equality and equity between women and men, by preparing participative and interactive pedagogy, thereby experiencing fulfillment in knowing that students generally recognize equal rights of women and men. They may have met challenges in discussing gender concepts and concerns in class, nevertheless, they find it as an opportunity to promote gender equality and equity.

5. Recommendations

Results showed that the University can be able to integrate gender perspective in the curriculum, primarily by creating an enabling environment for its integration. Policies should be institutionalized to effectively mainstream the gender perspective in curricular, research and extension programs. Strategies proposed include establishment of the GAD resource center, review and revision of syllabi, and conduct of trainings and workshops. Gaining administrative support and sustaining it is also essential to ensure gender responsive curricular programs. GAD structures and enabling mechanisms should be strengthened to ensure that the University’s GAD endeavours are pursued. The GAD Center will serve as a learning resource center where faculty members and students will be able to gain access to GAD materials needed in the academics. Resources may include GAD knowledge products produced to be accessed and utilized by both internal and external clients. These may be briefers with situationers on women and men, reports of the organization utilizing SDD and gender statistics, caselets or case studies, gender analysis, manuals or guidelines on integrating GAD in programs or projects, GAD modules, books and researches. Continuous syllabi review and revision including review of course objectives and

description is also proposed. This is necessary to promote students' learning and appreciation of human rights and gender equality dimensions and guarantee the use of gender fair language in the syllabi and teaching materials. In this aspect, topics, activities, reading materials, and class policies will also be re-examined for possible gender biases. The conduct of trainings and workshops will capacitate faculty members and develop them into gender-competent instructors. Through these activities, they will demonstrate understanding of basic gender concepts, assess and critically evaluate issues through a gender lens, and impart knowledge through more participative and interactive pedagogy. Administrative support is necessary in order to sustain gender integration in the curriculum. They may be developed into powerful actors and champions of GAD advocacy.

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