



GENDER ROLES AMONG PUBLIC ELEMENTARY TEACHERS: BASIS FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES

Mildred SEBASTIAN

Cavite State University/Philippine Normal University, Philippines

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9921-6861>

mildred.sebastian@cvsu.edu.ph

Ritch BANATE

Cavite State University, Philippines

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7114-4229>

ritchbanate@cvsu.edu.ph

Melona SAQUIN

Cavite State University/San Sebastian College Recoletos De Cavite, Philippines

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3063-6731>

melona.saquin@cvsu.edu.ph

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Abstract

Teachers are usually considered the backbone of schools, and understanding teachers' roles is vital to understanding the educational system. With this as a focus, differences in the perceived gender roles of public male and female elementary teachers were collected from 262 teachers from public central elementary schools in Cavite, Philippines. Results showed that elementary teaching is still a female-dominated profession and students have only limited encounters with male and/or father figures in elementary education. It was also observed that male and female teachers share equal roles in reproductive, community, and leisure activities. However, discrepancies are observed in their productive activities as female teachers spend more time in productive activities than male teachers. Strategies for gender-responsive policies and projects for teachers and other education personnel are recommended.

Keywords: Elementary teachers, gender roles, reproductive roles, productive roles, community roles.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching mirrors the common stereotypes of women and their supposed abilities and responsibilities for young children. For several years, there has existed a discrepancy between the number of female and male teachers at the elementary level. Historically, females have dominated the teaching profession at the elementary level. Teaching children in pre-elementary and elementary schools is traditionally seen as an extension of the mother's (nurturing) roles and, therefore, a natural job for women. In 2019, female elementary teachers in the Philippines were reported at 87.35% (World Bank Group, 2020). This deficit could result in an undesirable imbalance in elementary teacher gender demographics and perceptions about female and male teachers. The inferiority of male elementary educators has evoked an educational culture that perceives the near non-existence of male primary teachers as a common predicament among other basic education institutions. The notion of male primary school teachers is a possible injustice in elementary education.

Being a female-dominated profession yields negative impacts on the teaching profession. On the one hand, this results in a decline in educational quality and student discipline as boys in schools lack social role models and thus feel less engaged and underperforming (Dai, Li, Zhu, & Zhang, 2022; Sansone, 2017; Mulji, 2016; Antecol, Eren, & Ozbeklik, 2015). On the other hand, this condition may also result



in a reduced status of teaching as a profession [Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2004]. Teaching is less prestigious than law, medicine, and engineering; but is more prestigious than most blue-collar work, such as truck driving, and pink-collar work, such as secretarial work (Ingersoll, 2018). However, in most cases in the Philippines, the teaching profession in the elementary does not yield a higher status quo than in secondary and tertiary levels.

Achieving a gender balance among teachers is vital for a gender-responsive education system [United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)/ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2007]. Yet, many barriers and challenges have hindered this. While most research focused on the impact of teacher gender on academics and behaviors of male and female elementary students (Hentschel, Heilman & Peus, 2019; Moses, Admiraal, & Berry, 2016; Wood, 2012; Florack, 2012), this study focused on the gender roles of male and female teachers to analyze possible reasons for the underrepresentation of male educators in the elementary level and to further suggest gender-responsive policies and projects to minimize, if not eliminate, this disproportionality. The conduct of gender analysis (UNESCO), 2009 should be aimed at identifying these barriers and eventually providing information for possible response strategies.

To address the disparity between male and female teachers at the elementary level, the researchers used gender analysis to analyze the productive, reproductive, and community roles of public elementary teachers. The main goal is to recommend policies, strategies, and interventions to address the gender problems, needs, and constraints arising from gender differentiation. To achieve this, the researchers used the Input-Process-Output-Outcome Approach (Figure 1).

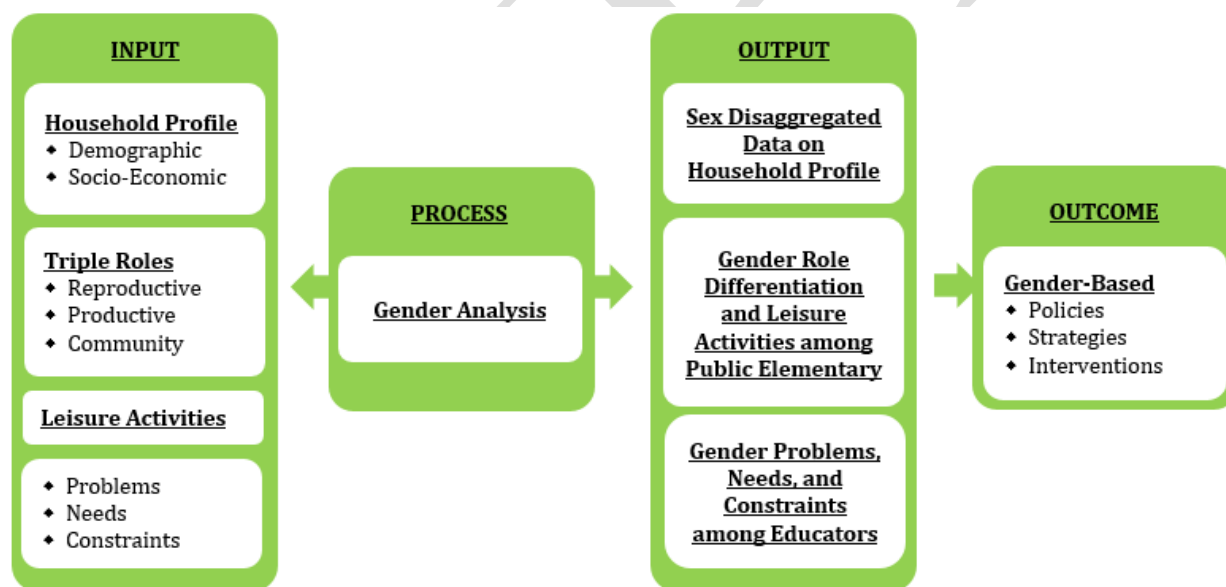


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

The inputs considered were the institutional profiles, household profiles, triple roles, leisure activities, time devoted to triple roles and leisure activities, and the problems, needs, and constraints encountered in performing these roles and activities. Based on these primary data, gender analysis was conducted to create sex-disaggregated data on the household profiles and differentiate gender roles among elementary educators. Also, the identified problems, needs, and constraints among the participants served as bases for formulating policies, strategies, and interventions to develop a gender-responsive school community.

To better understand the disproportionality in the number of male and female elementary teachers, the researchers conducted a gender analysis of the participants' perceived differences in gender roles. Specifically, the study was aimed at determining answers to the following questions:



1. What are the socio-demographic characteristics of male and female elementary teachers and their households?
2. What are the perceived gender roles of male and female elementary teachers in reproductive, productive, community, and leisure activities?
3. What problems, needs, and constraints are identified based on their perceived differences in gender roles?
4. What gender-responsive and gender-equality strategies could be recommended to address the identified problems, needs, and constraints?

METHOD

Research Design

A descriptive research design has been selected for this research study. It describes gender-based differentiation among public elementary teachers in Cavite, Philippines. It was also used to determine the characterization of the participants and their households; gender roles in reproductive, productive, community, and leisure activities of the selected public elementary teachers in Cavite; and access and control over resources and benefits of males and females in the household, workplace, and the community.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in public central elementary schools in each town of Cavite. Central elementary schools were pre-selected to reduce time and effort in reaching the said schools as these were in the town proper.

Sampling Procedure

A total enumeration of male participants was employed, while systematic random sampling was used to select the female participants, which shall be equivalent to the number of male participants. A total of 262 elementary teachers from 23 central elementary schools in the municipalities and cities of Cavite participated in the study.

Data Collection Tool

The researchers developed the research tool used in collecting data for the study. The tool mainly contains demographic and socioeconomic characteristics (sex, age, civil status, educational attainment, academic rank, monthly income, and years in teaching) of the public elementary school teachers. Actual information was requested from them. As for the reproductive, productive, and community roles, a set of activities usually observed in the performance of various roles was listed. The participants were asked to check which are primarily done by a male or female family member, including themselves. There was a total of 36 identified activities that were validated. Three validators were asked to evaluate the activities and whether or not they agreed with the items used to measure the constructs. Fleiss' Kappa statistic was used to determine the interrater reliability. After the validation, only 32 items were used – 5 activities for the reproductive roles, 21 for the productive, and six for community roles. Items that have Fleiss' Kappa statistics of .40 and below were discarded.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to the actual distribution of the instrument, the developed questionnaire was pre-tested on selected public elementary school teachers who were not part of the target participants. Permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of elementary schools was sought first to obtain the number and names of faculty members. Once permission was granted, the self-administered survey questionnaires were distributed to selected elementary school teachers. Also, interview with selected participants was conducted to validate their responses to the questionnaires.

Data Analysis

Data gathered were tabulated and analyzed accordingly. Descriptive statistics, frequency counts, ranks, means, and percentages, were used to describe the primary data collected among the educators. It gives information about the method and the process followed in the study.



RESULTS

Sex-Disaggregated Data

Table 1 presents the sex-disaggregated data of public elementary schools regarding the number of stakeholders, namely staff, teachers, and students, for three school years. The number of stakeholders increased from SY 2017 – 2018 to the current school year. It can be noticed that there is almost an equal number of male and female staff and students in the three school years. However, the number of female teachers outscored the number of male teachers showing that teaching is still a female-dominated profession and students have only limited encounters with male and/or father figures in elementary education. Teachers opt to build their environments based on customary practices and gender identities, which may be biased towards a particular group or gender of students; in return, students may create bias in their own literacy experiences towards this created bias in the classroom (Florack, 2012).

Table 1. Sex disaggregated data of public elementary schools in terms of the average number of staff and teachers

STAKEHOLDERS	SY 2017 – 2018		SY 2018 – 2019		SY 2019 – 2020	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Staff	2.00	4.33	2.33	4.33	2.33	4.33
Teachers	5.22	96.00	5.43	97.33	5.70	97.67

Gender Roles in Reproductive, Productive, Community, and Leisure Activities of Public Elementary Teachers

The gender roles in reproductive, productive, community, and leisure activities of public elementary teachers were collected through self-administered survey questionnaires. Results were presented as follows. Table 2 presents teacher participants' sex-disaggregated data regarding demographic characteristics. It can be seen that most of the female participants are 36-40 years old, single, college graduates, have an academic rank of Teacher I with a monthly income of Php20,000 – 24,000, and have rendered 6-10 years in service. The male participants, mainly belong to 41-45 years old, single college graduates, have an academic rank of Teacher I with a monthly income of Php20,000 – 24,000, and have rendered 6-10 years in service.

Table 2. Sex disaggregated data of teacher participants in terms of demographic characteristics

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS	FEMALE (n = 131)		MALE (n = 131)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Age				
21 – 25	12	9.16	10	7.63
26 – 30	15	11.45	14	10.69
31 – 35	53	40.46	41	31.30
36 – 40	27	20.61	21	16.03
41 – 45	10	7.64	27	20.61
46 – 50	9	6.87	13	9.93
51 – 55	4	3.05	4	3.05
56 – 60	1	.76	1	.76
Civil Status				
Single	102	77.86	69	52.67
Married	29	22.14	57	43.51
Separated	0	.000	5	3.82
Educational Attainment				
College Graduate	107	81.68	77	58.78
with MA/MS units	14	10.69	39	29.77
MA/MS Graduate	10	7.63	15	11.45
Academic Rank				
Teacher I	86	65.65	57	43.51
Teacher II	27	20.61	36	27.48
Teacher III	6	4.58	17	12.98
Master Teacher I	10	7.63	17	12.98
Master Teacher II	2	1.53	4	3.05

**Table 2.** (Continued). Sex disaggregated data of teacher participants in terms of demographic characteristics

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS	FEMALE (n = 131)		MALE (n = 131)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Monthly Income (Php)				
20,001 – 24,000	109	83.2	78	59.54
24,001 – 28,000	9	6.87	21	16.03
28,001 – 32,000	6	4.58	25	19.09
32,001 – 36,000	5	3.82	5	3.82
36,001 – 40,000	2	1.53	1	.76
40,001 – 44,000	0	0	1	.76
Years in Teaching				
1 – 5	45	34.35	27	20.61
6 – 10	48	36.64	50	38.17
11 – 15	19	14.51	19	14.50
16 – 20	4	3.05	22	16.79
21 – 25	7	5.34	5	3.82
26 – 30	8	6.11	8	6.11

Sex-Disaggregated Data

Table 3 presents the sex-disaggregated data of public elementary schools regarding the number of stakeholders, namely staff, teachers, and students, for three school years. The number of stakeholders increased from SY 2017 – 2018 to the current school year. It can be noticed that there is almost an equal number of male and female staff and students in the three school years. However, the number of female teachers outscored the number of male teachers showing that teaching is still a female-dominated profession and students have only limited encounters with male and/or father figures in elementary education. This disparity may opt teachers to build their environments based on customary practices and gender identities, which may be biased towards a particular group or gender of students; in return, they may create bias in their own literacy experiences towards this created bias in the classroom (Florack, 2012).

Table 3. Sex-disaggregated data of public elementary schools in terms of the average number of staff and teachers

STAKEHOLDERS	SY 2017 – 2018		SY 2018 – 2019		SY 2019 – 2020	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Staff	2.00	4.33	2.33	4.33	2.33	4.33
Teachers	5.22	96.00	5.43	97.33	5.70	97.67

Gender Roles of the Participants

Reproductive activities. Table 4 shows the gender roles in reproductive activities that are primarily and sometimes done by members of the family. It can be observed that the father and male child primarily do water and fuel-related activities. In terms of health-related activities, it can be observed that both mother and father are primarily doing health-related activities. However, the burden is sometimes on the shoulders of the mothers. In terms of food-related activities, these are perceived to be a primary role of mothers and fathers; but sometimes done by mother and female Child. In terms of other household chores, most activities are distributed to each family member.

Table 4. Gender roles in and time allocation of reproductive activities that are done by members of the family

REPRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES	Who Primarily Does	Who Sometimes Does	AVE. DURATION (HOURS)
Water Related			
1. Fetching Water	Father (1.15%)		.79
2. Buying distilled/ purified water	Father (79.39%)		.55
Fuel Related			
1. Buying gas	Father (71.76%)		.67



Table 4. (Continued). Gender roles in and time allocation of reproductive activities that are done by members of the family

REPRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES	Who Primarily Does	Who Sometimes Does	AVE. DURATION (HOURS)
Health-related			
1. Bringing children to the doctor for a check-up	Father and Mother (70.23%)		2.80
2. Bringing adult member to the doctor for a check-up	Father and Mother (7.25%)	Mother (78.24%)	2.76
3. Generally taking care of children at home	Father and Mother (15.27%)	Mother (71.37%)	4.81
4. Taking care of seniors at home	Father and Mother (27.10%)	Mother (56.49%)	3.17
5. Caring sick	Father and Mother (19.47%)	Mother (67.56%)	3.15
Food-related			
1. Preparing foods	Father and Mother (17.56%)	Mother and Female Child (46.95%)	.81
2. Cooking	Father and Mother (19.08%)	Mother and Female Child (47.33%)	1.05
Other Household Chores			
1. Washing dishes	Both children (80.15%)		.96
2. Washing clothes	Mother and Female Child (85.11%)		3.33
3. Ironing clothes	Mother and Female Child (74.43%)		.67
4. Buying vegetables/fish	Father and Mother (44.65%)		.96
5. Buying groceries	Father and Mother (79.00%)		3.41
6. Cleaning the house	Both children (82.44%)		2.30
7. House repair	Father (84.35%)		1.86
8. Tutoring children	Mother (80.53%)		2.65

Productive Activities. Table 5 presents the gender roles in productive activities. It can be observed that male and female teachers usually do all the activities. In general, female teachers spend more time in productive activities than male teachers. This might indicate that female teachers are being extra careful of the tasks assigned to them or that male teachers are doing it faster.

In addition, both male and female teachers use different teaching strategies, which are incorporated into the lesson discussion. More male teachers use film showing, inductive method, concept-mapping, inquiry approach, project-learning, metacognitive, partner-learning, round table discussion, panel discussion, and debate as teaching strategies than female teachers. On the other hand, more female teachers use the deductive method, peer tutoring, and socio-drama as teaching strategies than male teachers do.

Table 5. Gender roles and time allocation in productive activities

PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES	USUALLY DONE BY		TIME ALLOCATION (MINUTES)	
	M	F	M	F
Daily Productive Activities				
1. Cleaning Room before class	131	131	35.58	36.16
2. Saying a prayer	131	131	15.58	16.16
3. Taking attendance	131	131	25.58	26.16
4. Reviewing the previous lesson	129	131	45.58	46.16
5. Connecting the previous lesson with the present lesson	129	127	45.58	46.16
6. Discussing the lesson	123	131	35.58	36.16
7. Assessing student learning	131	127	116.73	118.47
8. Checking of papers and other outputs	129	127	46.73	48.47
9. Recording scores	121	131	46.73	48.47



Table 5. (Continued). Gender roles and time allocation in productive activities

PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES	USUALLY DONE BY		TIME ALLOCATION (MINUTES)	
	M	F	M	F
10. Cleaning room after class	131	131	95.58	96.16
12. Preparing instructional materials for the next class	130	127	41.15	42.32
17. Preparing for the next day's activities	130	130	41.15	42.32
Weekly Productive Activities				
11. Conducting tutorials to under-achieving students	129	127	147.89	151.15
15. Bringing home any unfinished work	130	131	120.00	120.00
16. Writing/Preparing lesson/lesson plan	131	127	128.89	129.25
20. Counselling students	130	131	123.89	124.12
Monthly Productive Activities				
13. Attending faculty meetings	118	131	140.19	145.39
19. Conducting home visitation	105	112	241.35	247.69
Occasional Productive Activities				
14. Designing bulletin boards	98	108	117.89	120.77
18. Conducting parent conference	102	91	207.89	210.77
21. Use of teaching strategies				
• lecture-discussion	131	131		
• demonstration	130	128		
• film showing	123	117		
• inductive	118	111		
• deductive	104	120		
• concept-mapping	122	112		
• inquiry	125	118		
• project-learning	126	116		
• metacognitive	124	114		
• constructivist	115	114		
• reflective thinking	111	116		
• cooperative learning	121	119		
• peer tutoring	119	125		
• partner-learning	123	116		
• role playing	106	107		
• socio-drama	102	108		
• round table discussion	125	118		
• panel discussion	119	110		
• debate	121	117		

Community Activities. Table 6 shows the gender roles and time allocation in community activities that family members usually do. Regarding community management activities, mothers usually participate in most activities, except in community homeowners' associations. Both mother and father sometimes do these activities. In addition, when female teachers participate in community activities, they render more time in PTA and nutrition month. In comparison, male teachers spend more time in HOA, livelihood programs, health awareness activities, and being a member of BEI (board of elections).

Table 6. Gender roles and time allocation in community activities that are primarily done by members of the family

Community Activities	USUALLY DONE	SOMETIMES DONE	TIME ALLOCATION	
			M	F
Community managing activities				
1. Engage in parents-teachers association (PTA)	Mother	Mother and Father	3.02	3.10
2. Engage in community homeowners' association (HOA)	Father	Mother and Father	3.46	3.37
3. Participate in livelihood programs	Mother	Mother and Father	3.14	3.04
4. Engage in school and community-based activities				
• Nutrition month	Mother	Mother and Father	2.85	3.00
• health awareness activities	Mother	Mother and Father	2.75	2.22
5. Engage in NGOs activities	Mother	Mother and Father	2.86	2.83

**Table 6.** (Continued). Gender roles and time allocation in community activities that are primarily done by members of the family

Community Activities	USUALLY DONE	SOMETIMES DONE	TIME ALLOCATION	
			M	F
Community politics activities				
1. serve as a member of the board of election inspector (BEI)	Mother	Mother and Father	75.52	75.02

Leisure Activities. Table 7 shows the gender roles in leisure activities. Male and female teachers watch TV, play with personal gadgets, surf the internet, read books, chat with friends, and sleep daily. Male teachers spend more time playing with personal gadgets, surfing the internet, and sleeping than female teachers. Moreover, teachers watch movies and do their hobbies on a weekly basis. Male teachers spend more time watching movies, while female teachers spend more time on their hobbies. For the monthly leisure activities, teachers listen to the radio, do workout activities, go to salons, parks, and malls and dine outside. Male teachers spend more time listening to the radio, doing workout activities, and going to the park.

In comparison, female teachers spend more time going to salons and malls and dining outside. Teachers play card games, go to a spa, play sports, and swim for occasional leisure activities. Furthermore, male teachers spend relatively more time playing card games and sports, while female teachers spend more time going to the spa and swimming.

Table 7. Gender roles, time allocation, and location of leisure activities

LEISURE ACTIVITIES	PERCENTAGE SHARE		TIME ALLOCATION (HOURS)	
	M	F	M	F
Daily				
1. Watching TV	97.71	98.47	2.76	3.05
4. Playing with personal gadgets	36.64	36.64	3.97	3.24
5. Surfing the Internet	97.71	96.95	3.17	3.03
7. Reading books	98.47	94.66	2.69	2.91
13. Chatting with friends	14.5	15.27	2.20	2.60
14. Sleeping	99.24	99.24	4.91	4.62
Weekly				
2. Watching movies	20.61	38.93	3.60	3.11
18. Hobby	35.88	32.82	2.54	3.19
Monthly				
6. Listening to the Radio	16.03	17.56	2.43	2.24
8. Work out activities	14.5	23.66	2.13	1.83
9. Going to salons	16.03	29.77	1.32	3.08
11. Going to the park	13.74	35.11	3.88	3.27
12. Going to the mall	32.82	29.01	3.27	3.96
17. Dining Outside	26.72	38.93	3.00	3.26
Occasionally				
3. Playing card games	55.73	51.15	3.40	1.43
10. Going to a spa	10.69	18.32	1.50	2.17
15. Playing sports	28.24	12.98	2.41	1.83
16. Swimming	18.32	12.98	3.25	5.00

Problems, Needs, and Constraints

In the focus group discussion conducted among selected male and female teachers, there were some themes as regards the lack of male teachers at the elementary level. First, males are foremost the breadwinner of each family, but the teaching profession does not promise lucrative compensation. Most elementary teachers complain that the salaries given to teachers here in the Philippines are less promising than the ones provided in other countries such as Singapore, Japan, and the like. Hence, increasing the baseline salary for entry-level elementary schools may attract more male teachers to the academe.



Second is that meager salaries provided by the teaching profession come with a heavy workload for them to perform – from the preparation of teaching materials, the conduct of actual teaching, and assessing students' learning to classroom management and guidance facilitation. They were also compelled to fill out certain forms and reports indicative of their student's performance. These workloads seemed to be a burden for them. They suggest that if higher authorities would hire additional non-teaching staff that would help them un-load these burdens would be of great help to them. After all, they were trained to teach and assess student learning but not to become clerks doing office work after classes. Another workload problem is handling varied subject matters. Teaching at the elementary level entails handling varied subjects at a grade level. This means that different preparation is expected for each subject they must handle. An increased number of preparations requires more time to study their lessons and prepare materials for the next day's activities.

Third, the teachers found that the elementary teaching profession requires good nurturing skills, which could be observed in most females. According to them, most male teachers are dominant and more commanding inside the class and would only be better for uncontrollable students. Also, the age of the students is one of their problems since most of them do not have enough maturity level; hence a higher patience level is required.

Finally, the problem concerns raising the status quo for the teaching profession. They confessed that most love teaching but are not adequately paid according to their job. They also complain that teaching has always been a challenging job. It gets harder and harder but gets less and less respect. If this will not be solved, then the role and value of teachers and the future of public education will be at stake.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

The public elementary school still consists of more feminine figures, from the principal to the teachers and staff to the students. This disparity may opt for teachers to build their environments based on customary practices and gender identities, which may be biased toward a particular group or gender of students. In return, students may create bias in their own literacy experiences towards this created bias in the classroom (Florack, 2012). Hence, elementary educational institutions may increase their attention the recruitment as this may be beneficial to elementary education considering the impacts of male teachers on the holistic well-being of elementary pupils.

Net enrolment rate (NER) for Cavite elementary schools indicates that the proportion of girls not enrolled at the specified level of education is lower than that of boys (CALABARZON Regional Social and Economic Trends, 2019). In other words, girls have a higher participation rate in schools than boys. On the other hand, the cohort survival rate indicates that a high level of retention and low incidence of dropout among girls are being observed more than with boys. In general, key performance indicators for elementary schools reveal that girls outperform boys in almost every aspect, including completion, graduation, survival rates, and the like. This result cannot be directly attributed to female teachers' school dominance. Nevertheless, the presence of both male and female teachers in classrooms allows students to learn from teachers they perceive as being like themselves (McGrath, Bhana, Bergen, & Moosa, 2014). In addition to the differences observed in the general academic performance of male and female teachers (which may reflect their performance when they were still students), it may be an eye-opener for higher authorities to consider the field of specialization when assigning teachers their subjects to teach.

Results show discrepancies in the teachers' use of teaching strategies regarding gender, and female teachers spend more time in productive activities than male teachers. Studies also show disparities in girls' and boys' academic performances showing girls outperform boys in reading (Chadwell, 2010) while boys outperform girls in mathematics and science (Dickey, 2013). These studies only looked for disparities in pupils' academic performance when primarily female teachers taught them. However, one may explore possible research studies on the impact of teachers' gender on pupils' academic performances while identifying effective gender-specific teaching strategies. Since female teachers



dominated public elementary schools, one may also explore the reasons for this domination and the possible impact of male teachers at the elementary level in terms of pupils' academic performance, attendance, and other aspects of pupil's life.

Moreover, although there are existing gender-sensitive and responsive policies in the central elementary schools, they are yet to implement these inside the classroom and schools strictly (e.g., use of gender-fair language). For example, the use of Mrs. to address a married female teacher has long been eliminated from the list of gender-fair language. A seminar-workshop on the use of Gender-Fair Language is suggested for them.

Ethics and Conflict of Interest

This study was conducted according to ethical and research standards. Authors declare and confirm that we have acted in accordance with ethical rules throughout the entire research. Authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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