

## *Best Practices in Promoting Gender Equality in the Philippine Education*

Miguelito B. Emfimo, Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, Philippines

Faith Stephanny C. Silor, Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology,  
Philippines

Adelfa C. Silor, Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, Philippines

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### **Abstract**

Integrating gender education into the system is the key to breaking free from biases, closing pay gaps, ending workplace segregation, and empowering women economically. It transforms education into a catalyst for societal equality. The present study delves into an analysis of the best practices of Philippine Education in promoting gender equality. Employing a qualitative design, the research investigates how gender equality is integrated into the educational landscape. Twenty-five teachers participated, and thematic analysis was applied to decipher insights from their experiences. The findings illuminate that the journey towards gender equality in Philippine education commences within the sacred confines of schools, unleashing a transformative ripple effect across society. By instilling the tenets of gender education, deeply ingrained biases are dismantled, forging a path toward a future untainted by gender pay gaps, workplace segregation, and exclusionary practices. Realizing gender equality necessitates the adoption of best practices in schools, including training personnel to combat discrimination, integrating gender, sexuality, and human rights into teacher training and curricula, and commemorating crucial months that emphasize equality. A comprehensive approach involves addressing broader societal issues of social class, culture, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation within the educational sphere. Providing equal opportunities for all students in school activities, irrespective of gender, reinforces the commitment to inclusivity. Ultimately, the goal is to create a gender-fair learning environment where the rights of everyone are respected, heralding a society where equality is not merely taught but authentically lived.

Keywords: Inclusivity, Segregation, Gender-Fair Learning Environment, Teacher Training

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## **Introduction**

The exploration of "Best Practices in Promoting Gender Equality in Philippine Education" unveils a critical research gap that calls for urgent attention and scholarly exploration. The existing body of knowledge in this domain is marked by notable gaps, underscoring the need for comprehensive research to inform effective policies and practices.

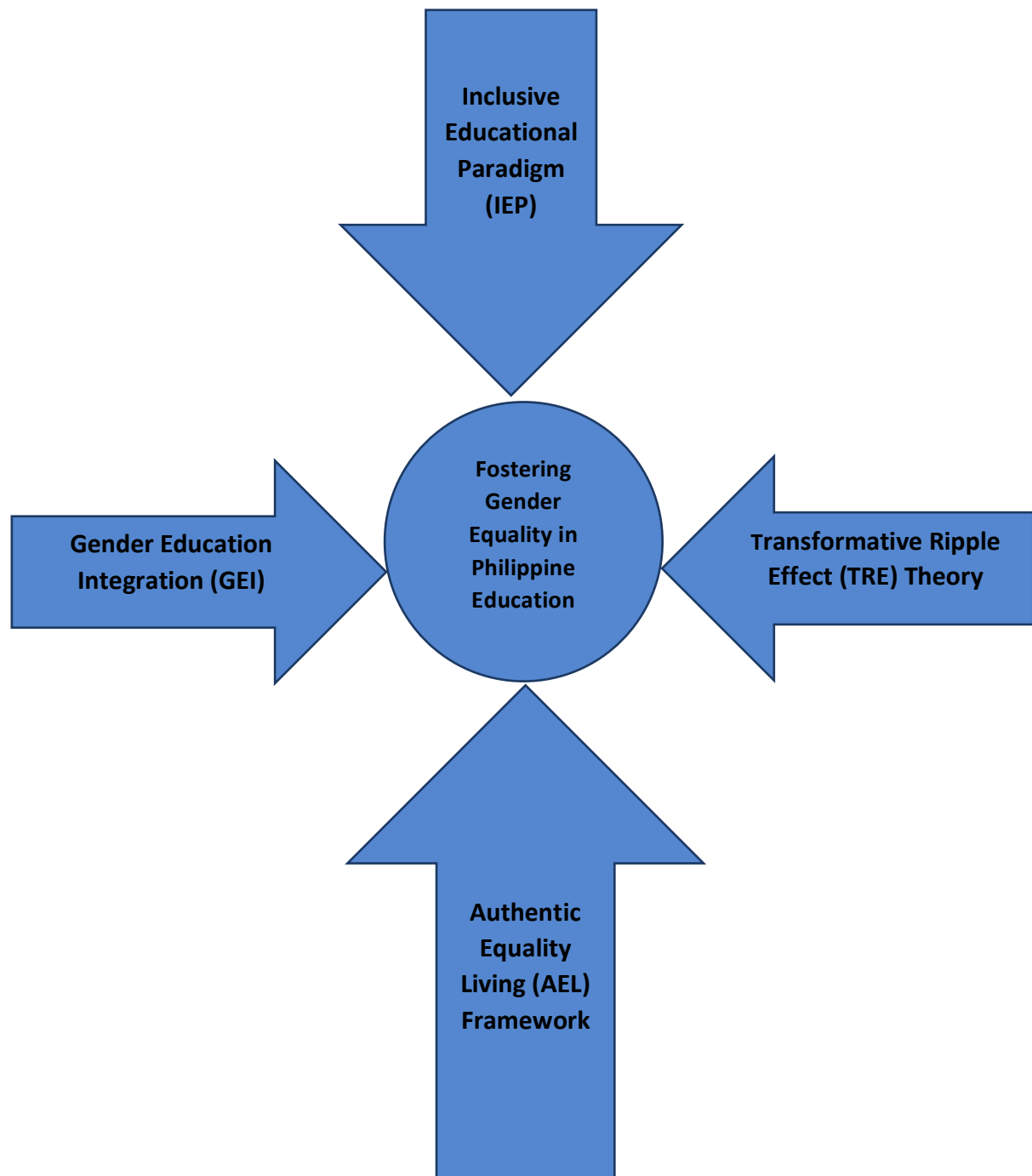
One glaring research gap lies in the specific identification and examination of best practices tailored to the unique socio-cultural context of the Philippine education system. While broader discussions on gender equality prevail, there is a dearth of in-depth analyses that delve into the nuanced strategies and interventions that prove most effective within the Philippine educational landscape. This research gap impedes the development of targeted and contextually relevant initiatives that could significantly propel the nation toward achieving gender equality in education.

Furthermore, there is a notable absence of extensive long-term research that monitors the application and results of gender equality initiatives over time. Understanding the sustained effects of best practices is essential for refining and adapting strategies, ensuring their continued relevance and efficacy. The lack of such longitudinal perspectives hampers the ability to assess the long-term transformative potential of these interventions within the Philippine education system.

Additionally, the research gap extends to the insufficient exploration of intersectionality within the context of gender equality in Philippine education. The interconnected nature of gender with other social factors such as social class, culture, ethnicity, and sexual orientation requires nuanced investigation. Failing to address intersectionality leaves gaps in our understanding of how various identity factors intersect and shape the experiences of individuals within the education system.

In conclusion, addressing the research gap in "Best Practices in Promoting Gender Equality in Philippine Education" is imperative for fostering meaningful progress. A more comprehensive and context-specific understanding of effective strategies, coupled with longitudinal analyses and an exploration of intersectionality, will not only contribute to academic scholarship but also serve as a guiding light for policymakers and educators striving to create an equitable educational environment in the Philippines.

# Theoretical Framework Fostering Gender Equality in Philippine Education



### ***Gender Education Integration (GEI)***

Definition: The systematic and intentional integration of gender education into the educational system to dismantle biases, eliminate pay gaps, eradicate workplace segregation, and economically empower women.

Key Components: Involves curriculum modifications, personnel training, and the incorporation of gender, sexuality, and human rights into teacher training and educational materials.

### ***Transformative Ripple Effect (TRE) Theory***

Definition: The notion that integrating gender education within the educational landscape initiates a transformative ripple effect, fostering societal equality beyond the confines of schools.

Mechanism: By challenging and dismantling deeply ingrained biases within educational institutions, the effects permeate broader societal structures, influencing workplaces, economic practices, and social norms.

### ***Inclusive Educational Paradigm (IEP)***

Definition: A comprehensive approach to gender equality in education that addresses not only gender-related issues but also broader societal factors such as social class, culture, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation.

Implementation: Involves strategies like providing equal opportunities for all students in school activities regardless of gender, fostering inclusivity in educational environments, and acknowledging crucial moments that emphasize equality.

### ***Authentic Equality Living (AEL) Framework***

Definition: The ultimate goal of gender education, is that equality is not only taught but authentically lived in both educational institutions and broader society.

Components: Requires the adoption of best practices in schools, continuous training of personnel to combat discrimination, and the integration of inclusive values into curricula, fostering an environment where the rights of everyone are respected.

These theoretical concepts collectively form a framework for understanding and implementing gender equality within the educational system, emphasizing the transformative power of education on societal norms and practices.

### **Related Literature**

#### ***Gender Disparities in Academic and Research Career Trajectories: Unraveling Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions***

One factor influencing the distribution of academic and research career opportunities leads to an underrepresentation of women in higher academic positions. Conversely, women tend to

be overrepresented in the lower ranks of academia (European Commission, 2019). This disparity is particularly pronounced in higher academic ranks, where the majority of European countries have fewer than one female professor for every three professors (European Commission, 2017).

A robust knowledge foundation underscores persistent gender disparities in academic careers, emphasizing the significance of early career years in shaping a successful academic research trajectory. Minor differences during this phase have the potential to escalate into more substantial disparities later on. Our review has identified several research gaps: Current studies predominantly concentrate on the vertical dimension of gender equality, delving into hierarchical imbalances. There is a noticeable scarcity of studies along the horizontal dimension, which entails comparing situations between disciplines or groups of disciplines, despite the desirability of such studies. Furthermore, there is a lack of thorough analyses that examine the variations between women's and men's conditions in academia. Additionally, there is a scarcity of studies measuring the effects of these conditions on publication and career outcomes, employing methodologies such as "differences in differences" (Silander, Haake, Lindberg & Riis, 2022).

### ***Empowering Societal Transformation: Integrating Gender Mainstreaming in Higher Education for Inclusive Policy Changes***

Transforming the gender-blind higher education curriculum is a crucial step in successfully integrating gender mainstreaming into diverse policy areas. This initiative unveils the organizational structures and institutional settings that shape the micro-political strategies employed by feminist strategic alliances, resulting in significant policy changes. Additionally, the discussion delves into the possibility of transferring these effective strategies to different contexts (Verge, 2021).

Advanced education and research serve as crucial tools for empowerment and societal transformation. Universities wield significant influence in championing gender equality, diversity, and inclusion, not just within the realm of higher education but also on a broader societal scale (Rosa & Clavero, 2022). The idea that advanced education and research play a vital role in empowerment and societal transformation aligns with best practices in promoting gender equality in higher education. According to Rosa and Clavero (2022), universities have significant influence, not only within the academic sphere but also in society at large. Implementing best practices involves recognizing the transformative power of education and research, and leveraging universities as key players in championing gender equality, diversity, and inclusion. By integrating these principles into higher education institutions, we contribute to a broader societal shift towards greater equity and inclusivity.

Transformations in gender equality within Australian academia mirror broader societal shifts. However, these changes are intricately shaped by various factors such as government legislation, regulatory frameworks, cross-institutional action plans, university strategies, and dedicated individuals. The effects of these influences on gender equality in academia encompass heightened awareness across the sector, the adoption of gender equity strategies at the institutional level, and gradual yet consistent progress (Winchester & Browning, 2015).

## ***Unveiling Complexities: A Capability Approach to Understanding and Addressing Gender Inequalities in Education***

Examining gender inequalities in education through the lens of capabilities necessitates careful consideration of the intricate dynamics within the physical, political, and social environment, as well as the allocation of resources. It involves understanding how these complexities, distributions, and conversions contribute to individual freedoms and opportunities in the context of education. Gender influences these dynamics in multiple ways: as an aspect of the social, economic, and political environment; through the processes of resource distribution; in discussions about freedoms and opportunities; and in shaping individual values and interests, influenced by societal factors. Approaching gender inequalities in education through the capability approach involves a focus on freedoms, emphasizing how gender and other inequalities constrain these freedoms, rather than simply viewing gender inequalities as a component of educational outcomes (Unterhalter, Longlands & Vaughan, 2022).

## ***Fostering Gender Equity: Analyzing and Addressing Disparities in Higher Education Participation and Decision-Making in Southeast Asian Contexts***

In Asian developing nations, the distribution of males and females in higher education follows similar patterns. Among the nations are the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia experiencing lower levels of male participation in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (Saadat, Alam & Rehman, 2022).

The determinants influencing the choice to pursue higher education typically fall into individual, social, financial, and educational categories. It is imperative to undertake research that examines these factors through a gender lens to comprehend the roots of gender disparities within higher education institutions. Equally important is the identification of the most significant factors among these categories that impede male students from pursuing higher education. Existing literature predominantly concentrates on female participants, highlighting the necessity to allocate time and attention to studying these factors specifically for male students (Saadat, Alam & Rehman, 2022).

In Southeast Asia, the decision-making process regarding higher education has historically exhibited gender-based imbalances, with a noticeable inclination toward male participation (Olson-Strom & Rao, 2020). The discussion on gender-based imbalances in the decision-making process for higher education in Southeast Asia, particularly favoring male participation, aligns with the imperative for adopting best practices in promoting gender equality in Philippine education. As indicated by Olson-Strom & Rao (2020), historical disparities in Southeast Asia highlight the need for targeted efforts to address gender-related challenges in education decision-making.

In the context of the Philippines, implementing best practices involves recognizing and rectifying historical imbalances in gender participation in higher education. Strategies may include targeted interventions to encourage and support female enrollment, addressing societal perceptions of gender roles, and promoting inclusivity in educational opportunities.

The discussion underscores the importance of not only acknowledging gender-based imbalances but also actively working towards creating an educational landscape that is equitable and inclusive. By aligning policies and practices with best practices for promoting

gender equality, the Philippine education system might help create a more equitable and balanced representation of both genders in higher education decision-making.

### ***Empowering Education: Transforming Societal Perspectives and Gender Roles for Inclusive Higher Education in the Philippines***

Nevertheless, there has been a substantial shift over time, characterized by a noteworthy increase in female enrollment in higher education institutions across Asian countries (Mukerji & Tripathi, 2016). This transformation is ascribed to evolving societal perspectives on gender roles, liberating women from traditional homemaking roles. With the recognition that education can augment their employment opportunities, women are actively responding to the changing societal landscape, thereby diminishing the opportunity cost for their families. The observed shift in Southeast Asia, marked by a notable rise in the number of women enrolling in postsecondary education institutions, resonates with the importance of adopting best practices in promoting gender equality in Philippine education. As highlighted by Mukerji & Tripathi (2016), this transformation is linked to evolving societal perspectives on gender roles, particularly in liberating women from traditional homemaking roles.

In the context of the Philippines, adopting best practices involves fostering an educational environment that actively challenges and overcomes traditional gender norms. Strategies may include implementing awareness campaigns to showcase the value of education for women in enhancing their employment opportunities. Empowering women to pursue higher education not only contributes to their personal growth but also has broader societal implications, as highlighted in the discussion.

By aligning with best practices, the Philippine education system can work towards dismantling stereotypes, providing equal opportunities for all genders, and creating an inclusive space where individuals are free to pursue their educational aspirations without being constrained by traditional gender roles. This not only benefits women but also contributes to the overall development and progress of society.

### ***Decoding Gender Dynamics in Asian Higher Education: Shifting Patterns and Decision-Making***

Examining specific instances in Asian countries, Wan (2018) observed a metamorphosis in gender participation in Malaysia, where females have exceeded males in enrollment over the past two decades. Wibrowski et al. (2017) delved into the interplay of decision-making and gender, shedding light on variations in gender preferences for pursuing higher education, leading to a higher proportion of female students in Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Multiple studies, including those by Husain & Sarkar (2011), Jung & Lee (2019), Menon et al. (2017), and Rughoobur-Seetah (2019), consistently highlight a significant correlation between gender roles and the decision to pursue higher education. These findings underscore the pivotal role of gender roles as a determinant in informed decision-making, emphasizing the imperative for further exploration in future studies.

### **Methodology**

In integrating the concept of best practices for promoting gender equality in Philippine Education, the qualitative design, particularly within the phenomenological framework, served as an empowering tool for researchers. This approach facilitated a profound

exploration into the lived experiences of individuals, where the process involved conducting individual interviews with the twenty-five participants, acting as a rich source of personal narratives.

Within the study encompassing twenty-five College of Education teachers at Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, the phenomenological approach aimed not only to unveil the essence of their experiences as educators but also to discern the gender dynamics within their professional journeys. The emphasis on individual interviews played a pivotal role, providing each teacher with the platform to articulate their unique perspectives, free from external influences and unveiling gender-related challenges or triumphs.

Thematic analysis, acknowledged as a robust method for discerning patterns within qualitative data, played a crucial role in identifying not only general themes but also specific gender-related nuances within the teachers' narratives. It resembled the discovery of threads intricately weaving their experiences together, shedding light on gender-specific aspects within the educational landscape.

Considering the cultural and regional context of Mindanao, the research inherently anticipated diverse perspectives and unique challenges faced by educators in promoting gender equality. The phenomenological emphasis on individual experiences facilitated the capture not only of general nuances but also specific gender-related variations within their stories.

Exploring themes such as teaching methodologies, challenges encountered from a gender perspective, cultural influences on gender roles, and the impact of experiences on personal and professional growth with a gender lens promised intrigue. Through thematic analysis, the researchers were strategically positioned to organize and interpret these narratives, contributing to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the intricate landscape of teaching, with a focus on gender equality, in Philippine Education.

## **Results and Discussions**

### ***Theme 1: Transformative Impact of Gender Education in Schools***

Recognizing the transformative impact of gender education in schools is instrumental in shaping a more inclusive and enlightened society. Integrating gender education into the curriculum can help students understand and challenge traditional gender norms, fostering a generation that values diversity and equality. By incorporating discussions on gender roles, identity, and stereotypes, schools can contribute to the broader goal of dismantling deeply rooted biases. This proactive approach not only empowers students to question societal norms but also equips them with the tools to advocate for gender equality in their communities.

In tandem with dismantling biases, addressing the gender pay gap within the educational sector takes on added significance. A curriculum that emphasizes the importance of equal compensation for equal work can instill values of fairness and justice. Moreover, educating both educators and students about the consequences of workplace segregation fosters a collective commitment to breaking down these barriers. Through this holistic educational approach, the Philippine education system has the potential to not only eliminate exclusionary practices but also nurture a generation that actively champions gender equality.



In doing so, the nation can forge a path toward a more equitable and empowering future for all.

### ***Theme 2: Best Practices for Gender Equality in Education***

Best practices for gender equality in education encompass a multifaceted approach, beginning with the imperative of personnel training to combat discrimination. Teachers are essential in forming the learning environment, and by providing comprehensive training, schools can empower them to recognize and challenge discriminatory practices. This not only includes fostering awareness of unconscious biases but also equipping educators with the skills to create an inclusive and respectful atmosphere within the classroom.

The integration of gender, sexuality, and human rights into teacher training and curricula represents another critical facet. By incorporating these elements, educational institutions can ensure that teachers are well-versed in addressing diverse perspectives and fostering an environment that values all individuals, regardless of gender or sexual orientation. This proactive approach goes beyond mere awareness, fostering a deeper understanding of the nuances surrounding gender equality and human rights.

Commemorating crucial months that emphasize equality further reinforces the commitment to gender equality in education. By dedicating specific periods to highlight and celebrate diversity, schools can create opportunities for meaningful discussions and activities that promote understanding and inclusivity. This not only raises awareness but also encourages a collective effort toward dismantling stereotypes and fostering a culture of equality throughout the academic year.

In essence, these best practices collectively contribute to creating an educational landscape that goes beyond traditional norms and actively works towards a more inclusive and equitable future. Through personnel training, curriculum integration, and commemorations, schools can open the door to a life-changing educational experience that empowers students and educators alike to champion gender equality in all aspects of life.

### ***Theme 3: Comprehensive Approach to Gender Equality***

The discussion on best practices in promoting gender equality in Philippine education is inherently linked to the broader concept of a comprehensive approach to gender equality. Recognizing that gender issues are interconnected with various societal factors such as social class, culture, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation is essential. By acknowledging the intersectionality of identities, educational institutions in the Philippines can gain a deeper awareness of the particular difficulties that each person faces and work towards dismantling barriers that disproportionately affect certain groups.

In the interest of advancing gender parity in Philippine education, a comprehensive approach involves providing equal opportunities for all students in school activities. Extracurricular activities often mirror societal dynamics and may perpetuate inequalities. Ensuring that every student, regardless of gender or background, has equal access and encouragement to participate in a range of activities fosters a sense of belonging and empowerment. This not only enhances students' overall educational experience but also contributes significantly to breaking down traditional gender roles and expectations within the Philippine educational landscape.

Moreover, reinforcing a commitment to inclusivity is the cornerstone of a comprehensive gender equality strategy. This involves creating policies and practices within Philippine educational institutions that actively promote diversity and celebrate differences. Implementing inclusive language, curriculum materials, and support systems that cater to the needs of all students contributes to fostering an environment that values and respects every individual, irrespective of their gender or other identities. In this way, educational institutions in the Philippines become catalysts for societal change, nurturing future generations with a profound awareness of and respect for diversity.

By combining the best practices in promoting gender equality in Philippine education with a comprehensive approach that addresses broader societal factors and embraces inclusivity, the educational landscape can become a transformative force. The Philippines has the opportunity to lead the way in championing holistic efforts toward gender equality, fostering an environment that not only eliminates exclusionary practices but also nurtures a generation actively committed to embracing and celebrating diversity in all its forms.

#### ***Theme 4: Creating a Gender-Fair Learning Environment***

When considering the promotion of gender equality in the Philippines, the discussion on creating a gender-fair learning environment takes on a profound significance. The Filipino context, like many others, grapples with societal norms and expectations that can perpetuate gender disparities. Implementing best practices in education becomes a crucial step in reshaping mindsets and fostering genuine equality.

Respecting the rights of everyone aligns with the principles enshrined in the Philippine Constitution, which upholds the dignity and equality of all individuals. In the context of education, this involves acknowledging and safeguarding the rights of students, teachers, and staff, irrespective of their gender identity. The Philippines, with its commitment to human rights, can leverage this foundation to create an inclusive educational environment that goes beyond legal frameworks to embrace the lived experiences of diverse individuals.

The broader societal goal of transforming equality from a slogan to a lived reality resonates strongly in a country like the Philippines, where cultural norms can sometimes perpetuate gender stereotypes. Education becomes a key player in challenging these ingrained beliefs and fostering critical thinking. By promoting a culture in educational institutions that celebrates diversity and inclusivity, the Philippines can contribute significantly to shaping a more egalitarian society.

In the Philippine educational context, adapting the curriculum to reflect diverse perspectives is a potent tool for societal change. The rich history and cultural diversity of the Philippines can be incorporated into the curriculum, showcasing positive role models and achievements from different gender backgrounds. This not only breaks down stereotypes but also fosters a sense of pride and identity among students.

Addressing systemic barriers is crucial, especially in a country where gender-based discrimination and harassment persist. Implementing effective reporting mechanisms within educational institutions and creating safe and inclusive spaces are essential steps towards dismantling these barriers. By doing so, the Philippines can pave the way for a more equitable educational landscape that mirrors the values enshrined in its legal and constitutional frameworks.

In essence, the vision of creating a gender-fair learning environment aligns seamlessly with the Philippines' societal aspirations for equality. Education emerges as a catalyst for change, instilling values that transcend traditional gender norms and promoting a culture where everyone can thrive. The Philippines, by embracing and implementing these best practices, has the potential to become a trailblazer in shaping a more gender-fair society.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the multifaceted approach to gender equality in education outlined above holds the key to shaping a more inclusive and enlightened society. From integrating gender education into the curriculum to reducing the gender wage gap and offering opportunities for all in-school activities, these best practices collectively contribute to a transformative educational landscape. By fostering a commitment to inclusivity, embracing diversity, and challenging traditional norms, educational institutions can open the door to a more empowered and equitable future. In the context of the Philippines, these practices take on profound significance, offering a path to reshape societal norms and contribute to the nation's aspirations for genuine equality. Through proactive measures, the Philippines has the potential to become a trailblazer in championing gender-fair learning environments and fostering a generation that actively advocates for gender equality in all aspects of life.

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