Challenges of LGBTQ Pre-Service Teachers

Jannie SJ. Manimtim[1*], Jansen A. San Juan[2], Earth DP. Padilla[3], Johanne SJ. Aterrado[4], Helen R. Blanquisco[5]

[1,2,3,4,5]*College of Education*
[1,2,3,4,5]*University of Rizal System, Morong, Philippines.*
Corresponding Author: janniesanjuan@yahoo.com.ph

Abstract The LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) Community has established its identity and acceptance in the past few years through the advocacy of Gender Equality. The study aims to recognize the challenges facing LGBTQ pre-service teachers and how they navigate their teaching experience. In terms of the following areas, the study aimed to define the barriers faced by LGBTQ pre-service teachers: Access to assets, Practices and Participation, Beliefs and Perceptions and Institutions, Laws, and Policies. In their community and education, the respondents encountered general prejudice, but such experiences did not hinder their ability to follow their dreams or fulfill their duties as pre-service teachers.

Keywords LGBTQ, pre- service teachers, challenges, behavioral response

1. Introduction

In its Sustainable Development Goals, one of the United Nation's key priorities is to foster gender equality. It aims to dissipate deeply ingrained sexist traditions, abuse against women, and rampant gender bias in all facets of life. It also seeks to establish a level playing field where males and females will thrive as equals side by side.

In the Philippines, Gender and Development aim to encourage gender equality by empowering women. GAD's apparent emphasis on women's empowerment stemmed from the fact that, in general, traditional society continues to see women as less than men and even properties in some cultures. Ultimately, with such a misguided view, society does not see women's role in the construction of a country.

Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender people, and Queers, also known as the LGBTQs, are now trying to achieve the same acceptance and empowerment as women. The poor approval towards LGBTQ is because many people, primarily religious people, believe that God made humans as either men or women. This kind of thinking led to the rampant prejudice of LGBTQs and led to their discrimination and bias. Men need women as much as women need men. It is a natural truth that anyone can hardly deny. Such a notion of "natural" is perhaps the biggest hurdle towards LGBTQ empowerment.

In almost every organization in society today, members of the LGBTQ community can be identified. Teaching as a career depends heavily on the understanding of society. Prospective educators must solve the problem of his or her gender identity. An instructor would find it difficult to educate his / her guards without respect and authority. Proving competence as a mentor and even being acknowledged as an instructor can be challenging.

This paper attempts to describe the issues and challenges faced by LGBTQ preservice educators. The study aims to create a framework from which future policies on retained teaching can be extracted.

The proponents are the College of Education faculty members and a faculty member who is a member of the GAD Focal Point System. The proponents claim that the study would significantly support the educational institution.

1.1 Objectives

The goal of the paper is to recognize LGBTQ pre-service teachers' main challenges. It decides if the gender of LGBTQ pre-service teachers is embraced by the family, colleagues, and society. Identify the difficulties LGBTQ teachers face in their families, culture, and education, and respond to them. Establish the effect on their decision to proceed into the teaching career of these challenges.

1.2 Literature Review

"Queer" is being reclaimed as a self-affirming umbrella concept by others. As in still discovering one's sexuality, the Q may stand for "questioning." Some also think it's a homophobic slur, so it's always better to inquire or wait for it to be used by the person you're communicating with. The first four letters of this standard abbreviation are identified as 'Lesbian, homosexual, bisexual and transgender' by LGBTQ. The last word, or sometimes both, stands for "queer" (Aragon, Poteat, Espelage, & Koenig, 2014).

In a study by Robinson and Espelage (2011), it has been disclosed that students who are members of the LGBTQ community are more vulnerable to suicidal thoughts and peer victimization. It was found that there is a high degree of in-principle support for LBTQ-inclusive education in a study conducted among Canadian educators. (Meyer, Taylor, & Peter, 2015). This would indicate a positive policy interventions but poor implementation and execution. It is not enough for the general population to have legislation and a good attitude. This involves specific encouragement from peers to encourage homosexual educators to participate equally (Lundin, 2016). To place the equity front and center in initial teacher education, there are four essential tasks. These are the conceptualization of educational inequality and the role of teacher education in the challenge of inequality; the definition of equity practice;

the development of equity-centered curricula and systems adapted to local inequality patterns; and the engagement in local improvement research and theory building on the conditions that support the equity practices of candidates (Cochran-smith et al., 2016). For LGBT students, faculty, and staff, there is space for change in introducing inclusive policies to enhance the campus environment. Accessible gender-neutral toilets and the provision of LGBT preparation, scholarships, and activities are the areas with the greatest potential for change (Jacobson, Matson, Mathews, Parkhill, & Scartabello, 2017).

With Collier et al. (2015), secondary school teachers' incentive to participate in the implementation of sexual and gender stigma among students was studied. Among teachers who were more secure in intervening effectively, they noticed greater intentions to intervene (Collier, Bos, & Sandfort, 2015). It was determined in a study by Baams, Dubas, & van Aken that the introduction of comprehensive sexuality education in schools could substantially reduce women and LGBTQ members' name-calling. The inclusion of a semester-long gender equity course (Erden, 2009). Furthermore, in a study conducted by Sanger and Osguthorpe (2011), The Pre-Service Instructor Beliefs Course prepares applicants for teaching moral work. Studies indicate that to achieve gender equality, constructive interventions by organizations are needed.

A new grounded theory of gay midlife intergenerational housing was disclosed by Hajek (2015). There are different ways of communicative convergence and divergence in the model.

For all students who take courses in education, pre-service preparation is a requirement. The actual school is supposed to be studied by student educators (Bartholomaeus, Riggs, & Andrew, 2017; Collier et al., 2015a; Shelton & Barnes, 2016).

Göçer (2008), the level of preparedness of student teachers to teach is a critical problem for their professional development. A well-designed and efficient teacher training program is the most important way of getting newly appointed teachers or student teachers ready for teaching (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2002). While Harris and Saas (2011) claim that teachers' effectiveness is improved by the aid of experiences obtained in-service training, Yıldırım and Kalman (2017) argue that pre-service teacher education is the basic starting point of being prepared to teach. Some researchers say that teachers do not feel ready to begin service and continue service when pre-service education is inadequate and insufficient to upskill their real school environment awareness and skills (Balkar, 2014; Blomberg & Knight, 2015; Brown, Lee, & Collins, 2015; Eret, 2013). Stanulis, Fallon, and Pearson (2002) note in another study that newly appointed teachers do not understand the complexities of education, class, and class and do not feel ready to teach.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

The research made use of the Context for Gender Analysis (Jhpiego, 2019).
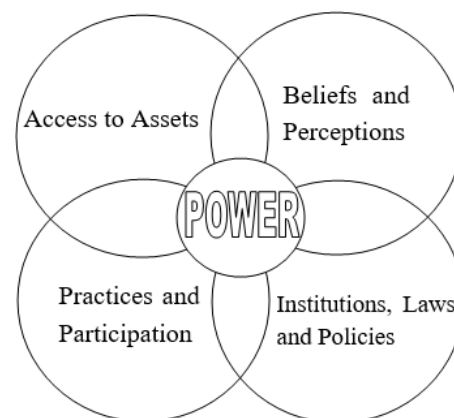
Figure 1
Gender Analysis Framework

The structure reflects the four realms of social life connected to various areas. These social arenas shape an individual's experiences. In the end, all these areas contribute to the power gauge or, in the case of this study, the level of empowerment of the participants. Jhpiego (2019) in the Gender Analysis Tool Kit for Health Systems, according to the gender analysis method used.

Access to Assets:
The availability of services, treatment, and provision of day-to-day necessities can be interpreted as access to properties. In all aspects of their lives, this also includes access to knowledge, education, and information.

Practices and Participation:
According to specified norms and potential stereotypes, this domain defines the actions of men and women. It is the dimension that captures the fundamental assumption of tasks and the general conduct of the respondents. This domain analyzes how individuals behave in compliance with the preconceptions of how men or women should behave.

Beliefs and Perceptions:
While activities and engagement analyze individuals' external actions, attitudes, and expectations are derived from cultural beliefs. This area is focused mainly on an individual's internal interpolations of what is proper and what is not.

Institutions, Laws, and Policies:
The social groups or formal affiliations in which the respondents may be affiliated are the subjects of this dimension. This field explores the impact of laws and policies on respondents that take their gender into account.

Power:
According to a new report, family, culture, and schools have the most influence in the U.S. The research found that the average family has the authority to determine who is eligible to access the most money.

In the sense of the school setting, the model illustrates how LGBTQs face challenges. The numbers indicate how the challenges are connected.

2. Methodology

The participants were 30 pre-service teachers from the College of Education at Rizal System University, Morong Campus, who are members of the LGBTQ community. To

reflect the LGBTQ using theoretical sampling, the participants are composed of five (5) lesbians, ten (10) homosexual, and five (5) bisexual, and ten (10) queer participants. Before the interview and centered group debate, they were individually invited and expected to complete the consent form. It has been decided that this paper treats its identity with confidentiality.

In response to emerging trends and themes for all participants, data were collected through in-depth document review, open-ended interviews, and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) interview protocols. Initial questions were broad enough to provide space for individual reaction and liberty (Rosenthal, 2016).

The study assumes that pre-service LGBTQ teaching has recognized difficulties that may discourage the teaching profession.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 How does the participant, including their families, friends, and immediate community accept their gender?

Beliefs and Perceptions

It is discovered that most of the respondents were able to express their gender orientation as early as their elementary years, based on the respondents' responses. A respondent who described himself as a homosexual said: *"noong elementary pa lang po alam ko na kung anu ang gusto ko, hindi kaparehas ng mga kababata kong lalaki"* (When I was in elementary, I already knew what I prefer to be, unlike other boys). This sentiment is also similar to another gay respondent who said: *"Nagsimula ito nung ako'y nasa elementarya, lagi akong nakikihalobilo sa mga babae"* (It began during elementary when I frequently mingled with girls). A bisexual respondent also intimated that she was aware that she had some admiration to a classmate of the same sex. She said: *"Elementary days pa lang ng naging aware ako sa special condition ko dahil nagkaroon na ako ng pag-hanga sa classmate kong babae."* (During my elementary days, I was already aware of my special condition because I admired my female classmate). Other respondents became aware of their gender in their High School years.

During the face-to-face interview, the participants clearly conveyed that they knew and accepted themselves concretely as early as the teenage age. As early as five (5) years old, a gay respondent was able to identify their gender identity, explaining when he described himself as a gay person: *"Since 5 years old alam ko na I'm gay. (laugh)"* (Since five (5) years old, I knew I'm gay. He laughed). However, at a later age, such as eight years and fifteen years of age, most of the respondents were able to assess their gender. This indicates that LGBTQ members, or at least millennials, could determine their preference for gender earlier in their lives. This is in contrast to previous generations who, in their younger years, had trouble recognizing their gender.

Access to Assets

As the respondents began to embrace their genders, they also began to express their desires and inclinations that were readily adopted by their family and friends. The respondents did not suffer from any prejudice from their families after sharing their gender freely. A gay respondent, explaining how, after coming out, his parents treated him, said: *"Maalaga pa rin po sila, same lang din po ng pag-aalaga nila sa mga kapatid ko"* (They were caring the same for my siblings). Another gay respondent also experienced such acceptance from his family; he said he was treated like an ordinary child: *"Just like (sic) ordinary child to my parents and ordinary brother/sister to my sibling"*.

Practices and Participation

During the FGD, the participants explored how their family was welcoming compared to the Filipino society of the 19th century in which aggressive disciplinary steps were taken to meet the "girl and boy" gender definition pattern. They also addressed the relationship between peers in this session. The findings found that having such gender is no longer segregated or discriminated against. They may build a "barkada" or peers. Many of the respondents tend to associate with others who are similarly situated to them. One of the respondents asserted: *"Most of my friends ko po miyembro ng LGBTQ family may bakla at may mga bisexuals"* (Most of my friends were LGBTQ members. Some of them are gays and bisexuals). Another respondent also shared the same tendency, but he made a major distinction as to the sort of individuals with which he wishes to be associated: *"marami akong kaibigan, pero nagiging maingat ako, pagdating sa mga LGBTQ pinipili ko mga magiging kaibigan ko, ayoko ko kasi ng masyadong lantad, loud, nagko-cross dres."* (I have lots of friends, but I'm selective about LGBTQ because I don't like too loud and out and crossdresser). The majority of the respondents have no preference for the kind of people they want to be familiar with.

Institutions, Laws and Policies

In the development of the respondents, the family, and the community as social institutions played significant roles. In particular, most of the respondents encountered a general acceptance of their gender by their families. The general trend in the overview of the respondents regarding their family's reaction to their gender is generally optimistic, such as: *"Opo tanggap na tanggap"* (Yes, I'm very much accepted). While most respondents experience minimal or no prejudice from their families, it is impossible to say the same about their experience with their culture. Some of the respondents were exposed to discrimination based on gender. In his culture, one of the respondents remembered his experience of discrimination: *"Yes, especially to young children. Like for example dumaan ka sa harap ng mga bata they always end up teasing you and calling you different names like bakla, bayot, etc"* (Yes, particularly with young kids. For example, if they passed by with other kids, they mocked you and called you various names, such as gay, faggot, etc.). While the respondents encounter bullying, without any permanent trauma, they have managed to get through them.

3.2 How does their gender affect their school experience?

Beliefs and Perceptions

LGBTQ representation in schools varies in conduct. Most of the participants tend to be conservative because of "teacher values and ethics." Most male participants strongly agree that it is not appropriate to wear feminine make-up and accessories, including clothing, to be a gay person.

Practices and Participation

The findings have shown that the gender expressed is not a hindrance but gives others comfort in self-expression. Actually, in seeking peers, their gender acted as a good starting point. The respondents said that in school, they were able to develop ties with other LGBTQ community members. Despite their gender similarities, however, the respondents argue that they do not let their LGBTQ peers impact their decision-making or life perceptions. A respondent was saying: *"meron po, kasamahan ko po sa volleyball, hindi naman po ako agad agad naiimplewensyahan nila"* (I have friends from volleyball, but they do not easily influence me).

Access to Assets

Most respondents agree that being a member of the LGBTQ community has not impeded their ability to access and appreciate the school's benefits. A respondent, however, revealed that his gender was somehow hindering his ability to rise. He clarified that he refrained from engaging in school events due to fear of being shamed or ridiculed: *"Yes naging hadlang, hindi na ako madalas magpagparticipate during High School years"* (Yes, it is a hindrance. That's why I seldom participate during High School years).

Institutions, Laws and Policies

As an institution, the school serves as an outlet for professional advancement and as a location for more social experiences. The respondents acknowledged that while they could find peers who accepted their gender more or less, some of them were still discriminated against by other students and even teachers. One respondent disclosed: *"nagkaroon ng diskriminasyon together with the friends and teachers"* (Discrimination takes place with friends and teachers). This same experience is shared by another respondent who said: *"Meron, minsan pa nga mga guro pa ang naglelable at nagsisimula ng diskriminasyon"* (Teachers have often begun to label and discriminate.).

3.3 How does their gender influence their pre-service teaching?

They found difficulty teaching during their pre-service teaching due to the number of students, behavior, and intellectual level, but they can handle them.

Beliefs and Perceptions

Most of the participants portrayed themselves as male/female, disguising their true gender. Still, students see them with a dubious gender while their students are more relaxed and welcomed by the gay participants who portrayed their true gender. Their fear of disrespect causes this challenge. One respondent who wanted to reflect his true gender expressed the following: *"hindi alam ng mga students, kasi nahirapan ako mag-come out. Nahirapan ako magsalita at kumilos"* (My students aren't aware of it. Coming out, talking, and acting is hard for me). While a respondent who chose to show his true gender said: *"On the first day of my class, they already know that I'm gay, so I guess they accept me on the first time they saw me."*

Practices and Participation

Although some of the respondents preferred to be frank about their gender, students generally welcomed them with reverence because of righteous actions and authority representation. Due to the formality of acts and gestures by both co-teachers and students, they are valued. A respondent argued that he or she should be respected as long as an instructor behaves accordingly: *"kasi nasa ikinikilos po iyan at kung paano mo tingnan ang mga bagay bagay"* (It depends on how you act and see things). This is further supported by another respondent who said: (referring to the effect of being a member of the LGBTQ community to the capacity to teach students) *"As long as na alam mo yung limitation mo at responsibilidad mo as teacher"* (As long as you understand your limitations and duties as a teacher). Teachers are charged with improving skills and influencing learners, who are very important in this regard. They faced bullies who attempted to test their hold on power. Therefore, to communicate effectively with the students, maintaining a place of formality and courtesy is essential.

Institutions, Laws and Policies

The respondents communicated with two major parties during their pre-service teaching: the students and the school administration. The students subject the respondents to juvenile perceptions, bias, and judgment as to the primary clientele. This caused most of the respondents to conceal their true gender completely. A respondent who voiced the difficulties he faced during his pre-service teaching said: *"yun pong piitin ang sarili kong lumamya, ang hirap po kasi"* (It was difficult for me to push myself to be tough). Another respondent, commenting on the challenges he encountered, said: *"kung paano ako kumilos at magsalita sa harap ng students ko, kasi naitatago ko ang totoong sarili ko"* (In the way I behave and talk before my students, I conceal my true identity).

Although the respondents were usually not discriminated against by their co-workers, some felt a little pressure from their superiors. Results show that due to the cooperating teacher's likely response, who will later give their score, they had trouble communicating the true expression and behavior according to gender. Some respondents revealed that their superiors summoned them to address the topic of their gender. Posted by a respondent: *"nagkakaroon ng segregation. Pinatawag ako ng Principal pero sinabi nya as long as hindi maapektuhan ang trabaho at kumilos ng maayos ok lang"* (Segregation is there. The principal called and told me that it's okay as long as it won't affect my work and behave appropriately).

Access to Assets

The respondents did not experience any problems with their access to assets in pre-service teaching, based on the respondents' answers and statements in the FGD and the

interviews. The respondents were usually granted the same rights as other pre-service instructors. Some of the respondents also felt that their teaching in pre-service went very well.

4. Conclusion

For the most part, the respondents were not denied access to assets in their families or schools. Beliefs and perceptions are primarily askew in the school community against stereotypical gender roles. As for practices and participation, the sex of the respondents in their family and school did not affect their ability to engage in any events. However, for the respondents to completely fulfill their school duties, such expectations need to be followed. In their community and the school, the respondents encountered general prejudice. Still, such experiences did not hinder their ability to follow their dreams or fulfill their duties as pre-service teachers.

5. Implications and Recommendation

This research indicates that pre-service LGBTQ teachers should be sufficiently focused to help them determine how to embrace the profession. The outcome may be used to introduce and execute pre-service teaching to re-visit the policies and practices. The teaching power is no longer the primary component of being a straight male and a female. When society grows, resilience for the promulgation of harmony and equality should be continually exercised by the teaching profession.

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