An Assessment of Teachers' Perception and Practice of Gender Equality in Education: The Case of Secondary Schools in Ambo Town Administration, Ethiopia

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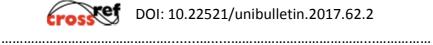
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Abstract

With significant importance and effort from the Ethiopian Government and non-governmental organizations to achieve gender equality in education, this study intended to critically assess teachers' perceptions and the practice of gender equality in education in Ambo Town administration secondary schools. A mixed research approach was selected involving interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions and document study as the data collection instruments. The data collected was analyzed with both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics measurement such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used; whereas in inferential statistics, ANOVAs variance and T-test were employed. The results of the descriptive statistics revealed that most of the teachers' have a favorable perception of gender equality, but that they lack the skills to practice it. Harmful traditional practices, sexual harassment, sexual abuse and bullying were found to be the main challenges to practicing gender equality; however, the teachers' lack knowledge and skill to respond to gender-based violence in education. ANOVAs variance revealed that teachers' demographic characteristics such as teachers' background and level of education made no significant difference regarding the perception, practice, challenges and teachers' responses to gender-based violence in schools. However, significant differences were found with age and teaching experience on challenges to practice gender equality in education. Independent T-test found significant differences between male and female teachers with perception practice and teachers' response to gender-based violence in their school. However, no significant difference was found between the genders with regard to challenges in practicing gender equality in education. On the other hand, no significant differences were revealed with regard to school types on the perception, practice and teachers' responses to gender-based violence, except on the challenge to practice gender equality in education. Based on these findings, the study recommended that teachers should be trained on gender and sexual reproductive health to avoid bias they may bring to the classroom and on how to identify students who are experiencing problems. For instance, there should be inclusive, active gender clubs, separate toilets, school counselors, procedures for a safe way of reporting victims and perpetrators of abuse, and feminine hygiene products provided in the school.

Keywords: gender, gender equality, gender equality in education, teachers' perception, practice, challenges, gender-based violence, ambo town.

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Introduction

All girls and boys, men and women have the right to quality education, with fair access and without discrimination (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies [INEE], 2010). Gender equality in education addresses the different needs of girls and boys and ensures their enrolment, participation and achievement in the learning environment (INEE, 2010, p. 8). Researchers and the education community at the international and Ethiopian national level are seeking to assess how far progress has been achieved in the areas of gender parity and equality in education. The terms gender parity and gender equality are two of the six Education For All (EFA) goals elucidated in UNESCO's Dakar Framework for Action (Subramanian, 2005).

The Earth Charter in Action also considers the role of women as a voice for the environment. Principle 11 of the Earth Charter calls for all to affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and to ensure universal access to education, healthcare and economic opportunity (Dankelman, 2005). This Earth Charter principle emphasizes, as a central element of its vision, the need to provide well-being and equal opportunities for women and men but it also incorporates the equal and inalienable rights of all women and men. The Beijing Platform for Action is the strongest collective statement of consensus on women's equality, empowerment and justice ever produced by the world's governments (Dankelman, 2005, p. 104).

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was established in 1981, criticizes the unequal treatment between genders and the stereotyped way of teaching of the educational system. Article 4 of this convention proposes temporary affirmative action to accelerate de facto equality between men and women and Article 10 states that:

State parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the same conditions for career and vocational guidance, access to studies and earning of diplomas access to the same curricula, teaching staff and standards and the elimination of stereotyped concepts of the role of women and men, the same opportunities for scholarships, the same access to continuing education, sports and physical education in the field of education (Ifegbesan, 2010).

At the continental level, the Department for International Development (DFID) gender equality action plan African Division 2009-2012 has long recognized that poverty will not come to an end until women have equal rights with men, and that promoting gender equality is an essential part of poverty reduction across the developing world (Thomas, 2009-2012). DFID implemented its gender equality action plan across African countries. DFID Ethiopia has also implemented increasing girls' primary school completion rates by expanding education services for girls through the Protection of Basic Services Program and implementing a General Education Quality Improvement program that includes a gender and equity needs assessment to improve learning outcomes for girls (Thomas, 2009-2012, pp. 14-15).

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has demonstrated its firm commitment to the equitable socioeconomic development of women with the establishment of the National Policy on Women in 1993 and the promulgation of the new constitution in 1995 (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia [FDRE], 1995). The National Policy on Women aims to

institutionalize the political and socioeconomic rights of women by creating appropriate structures in government institutions. Article 25 of the 1995 FDRE Constitution guarantees all persons equality before the law and prohibits discrimination on grounds of gender. In addition, Article 35 reiterates principles of equality of access to economic opportunities, including the right to equality in employment and land ownership.

One of the challenges of contemporary society and the educational system is to address gender inequality in the social systems (Ifegbesan, 2010). Gender stereotypes exist in all human societies and in all human endeavors, professions, careers and institutions. They exist in the home, schools and the workplace (Ifegbesan, 2010, p. 29). Thus, schools and teachers at all levels have a key role to play in developing a gender-sensitive future generation (Ifegbesan, 2010, p. 29). Though major efforts has been made by NGOs and IGOs which have formulated different laws and action plans at the international, continental, and national level, the problem of gender equality in education still exists in Ethiopian secondary schools.

We live in a world in which education is characterized by extensive gender inequalities (McCracken, Unterhalter, Márquez, & Chelstowska, 2015). Globally, some 39 million girls of lower secondary age are currently not enrolled in primary or secondary education, while two-thirds of the world's 796 million illiterate adults are women (UNESCO, 2011). This report by UNESCO also stated that only about one-third of countries has achieved gender parity at the secondary school level; though parity is a limited goal and can mean simply measuring the changes in numbers of girls as compared with boys enrolling in school. However, evidence shows that something needs to change.

The study of teacher-student interaction patterns over a period of several months in a co-education secondary school in Togo found that teachers had little regard for the ability, character and potential of female students (Biraimah, 1982, as cited in Ifegbesan, 2010, p. 29). However, schools and teachers at all levels have a key role to play in developing a gender-sensitive future generation (Biraimah, 1982, as cited in Ifegbesan, 2010).

Today, the term "gender" is understood in different ways by different people. The concept gender has been of interest to scholars and researchers, especially those in the field of social science and humanities, due to its different connotation and misuse in the various media (Helgeson, 2005, as cited in Ifegbesan, 2010, p. 29). "Gender" is distinct from sex and refers to the socially constructed not biologically defined characteristics of human beings though some scholars use these terms interchangeably (Helgeson, 2005, as cited in Ifegbesan, 2010). As Margaret and Crocco (2001, as cited in Monagahan, 2014, p. 7) stated, educators are in a unique position to consider gender because of their defining interests in citizenship education. Research has demonstrated that students' gender consciousness can be raised in the classrooms where gender-related topics are given explicit attention (Levstik, 2001, and Tetreavlt, 1986, both as cited in Monagahan, 2014, p. 7).

Most studies have focused on content analysis of textbooks and curriculum materials and gender differentiation in academic achievements, while teachers' gender-stereotypical beliefs and classroom practices have been neglected (Subramanian, 2005). However, teachers' personal beliefs and stereotypical perceptions affect their attitudes and classroom practice (Subramanian, 2005). According to SADEV (2010), poor school facilities, teachers' attitude, bias and stereotyping, as well as poverty and lack of implementation of legislation and policies are all challenges to the practice of gender equality in education. And yet teacher-related challenges were not investigated.

In Ethiopia, gender equity and other issues related to gender equality in education exist in a holding pattern. A study conducted by Aster and Meskerem (2014) found that female students' progression towards secondary school is low due to the influence of early marriage, child labor, less attention paid to girls' education, safety concerns, inadequate school facilities, repetition and drop-out rates. However, their study focused only on the net enrollment rate of students' without giving attention to teachers' perception and the practice of gender equality. A study conducted by Eshetu (2015) on secondary school students in the Ambo district found that female students were affected by sexual harassment and abuse at the hand of male students, teachers and bullies. However, Eshetu's study focused only on the prevalence of sexual harassment.

On the other hand, a study by Hilina (2015) found in Ethiopia that among females aged 25 years and older, only 7.8% had received at least some secondary education compared to 18.2% of males from the same age group. However the role of teachers in closing this gap was not assessed. Another important gap in the research is that little attention has been given to the importance of the availability of feminine hygiene products at schools for students. The current study therefore includes this and other tools which were developed by various NGOs and governmental organizations.

Given the evidence of persistent sexual abuse, sexual harassment, misunderstanding of gender equality and non-availability of feminine hygiene products in schools, the responsibility for addressing issues of gender and gender equality fails heavily on the teacher. The above stated problems and study gap, especially at the local level, were the drivers behind the researcher's decision to conduct the current study in order to examine the teachers' perception and practice of gender equality in education.

This study has attempted to answer the following questions:

- What are the perceptions of teachers on gender equality in education?
- To what extent do teachers practice the principles of gender equality?
- What challenges exist in practicing the principles of gender equality in education?
- How do teachers respond to gender-based violence in their schools?

Is there a difference in teachers' demographic characteristics regarding the perception, practice, challenges and ways of responding to gender-based violence?

The main objective of the current study is to assess teacher's perception and practice of gender equality in education. This study has five specific objectives. Assess teachers' perception of gender equality in education in the area of study.

- Investigate teachers' practices of gender equality in education.
- Assess the challenges which exist regarding gender equality in education.
- Understand the ways teachers respond to gender-based discrimination in schools.
- Compare teachers' demographic characteristics with their perception, practice, challenges and ways of responding to gender-based violence.

A lack of cooperation and reluctance to respond to questionnaires and interviews were challenges encountered during the study. However with the help of the researcher's colleagues in the schools, interviews were conducted and questionnaires completed.

Theories to Understand the Concept of Gender Inequality

Feminist Theory

According to UNESCO (2015a, p. 9), feminism is a collection of movements and ideologies for social, cultural, political and economic equality. Feminism aims at defining, defending and establishing equal rights and opportunities for women and men (UNESCO, 2015a, p. 9). Feminism campaigns against gender-based inequalities and provides women with information that enables them to make choices and free themselves from gender-based discrimination within their environments, cultures, societies and communities (UNESCO, 2015a, p. 9). Over the decades, feminists around the world have developed theories in a variety of disciplines in order to respond to the social construction of gender. The earliest forms of feminism were largely criticized for only taking into account the perspective of white, middle-class, and educated women. This criticism led to more ethnic-specific and multicultural forms of feminism as a movement (UNESCO, 2015a, p. 9).

The feminism of the 1960's and 1970's was the beginning of the second wave of feminism. There are various views of feminism, such as, liberal feminism, Marxist socialist and radical feminism. The study discusses these as follows.

Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism emerged as part of liberalism: a political and intellectual doctrine promoting the ideals of equality of opportunity and the notion that individuals had certain right (Holmes, 2007). These rights included the right to liberty, the right to some say in who ruled them, and the right to pursue their own interests to achieve happiness – as long as this did not deliberately harm others (Holmes, 2007, p. 72). Theoretically, liberal feminism claims that gender differences are not based in biology and, therefore, that women and men are not all that different – their common humanity supersedes their procreative differentiation (Lorber, 1997). According to the liberal feminism theory, if women and men are not different they should under law not be treated differently. Women should have the same rights as men and the same educational and work opportunities.

On the other hand liberal feminism suggests that due to "overt discrimination and/or systemic factors women are, compared to men deprived of resources like education and work experience (Ahl, 2004). All human beings are seen as equal and they are essentially rational, self-interest seeking agents (Ahl, 2004). Rationality is a mental capacity of which men and women have the same potential. Rationality is what makes us human and, since women and men have the same capacity for rational thinking, they are equally human. If there was no discrimination, men and women could actualize their potential to the same degree. Liberal feminist politics adopted important weapons from the civil rights movement, anti-discrimination legislation and affirmative action and used them to fight gender inequality, especially in the job market (Lorber, 1997).

Based on this analysis, liberal feminism claims that women's liberation will be achieved with the removal of sexist discrimination so that women have the opportunity to pursue their potential for individual development just as fully as men do. In addition, as to liberalism, gender prejudice is a form of individual ignorance and education is seen as a valuable tool in the battle against discrimination caused through ignorance. It is also possible to legislate (pass laws) against sexual discrimination as a way of changing individual attitudes and behaviors.

Socialist and Marxist Feminism

Socialist feminism is influenced by the Marxist theory and there are both socialist and Marxist versions. Marxist feminists usually see gender inequalities as caused by capitalism. Marxist theories tried to suggest that women's domestic labor as essential to capitalism through the work of reproducing workers, both by giving birth to them and by feeding, clothing and caring for them so that they can go out to work (Holmes, 2007). However, the unpaid labor that this reproduction of paid laborers produces has gone largely unrecognized (Holmes, 2007, p. 74).

In addition, as Ahl (2004) stated "the system of patriarchy (men's control of women's work and reproduction) is seen by the Marxist feminists as part of the system of capitalism"). Patriarchy is an ideology (a set of related beliefs about the world in this instance, male female relationships) that stems from male attempts to justify the economic exploitation of women ("Feminism Basic Principles", 2005 p. 1).

The socialist feminism theory sees capitalism and patriarchy as independent of one another. Patriarchy precedes capitalism and will most likely succeed it as well if nothing is done to change the gender roles (Ahl, 2004). For instance, women's dual work (indoor work and outdoor work) is largely unrecognized in modern societies. Employers are able to exploit this dual role to pay women lower wages and men are able to exploit this dual role by receiving "unpaid services" within the home (Ahl, 2004; Holmes, 2010). The main reason for women's lower status in relation to men is the fact that they are generally economically dependent upon their male partner and because of myths about women as being passive (Ahl, 2004; Holmes, 2010).

Radical Feminism

Radical feminism locates the origins of women's oppression in the patriarchal control of female sexuality and female fertility. The concepts of patriarchy and gender-based class are key ideas in relation to the understanding of women's position and experience in all societies. According to Holmes (2007, p. 74), radical feminists argue that male control of women's sexuality is a key factor in women's oppression. Radical feminists also see sexuality, or reproduction, as the basis for patriarchy with words including rape, incest, abuse, prostitution and pornography (Ahl, 2004).

Methodology

The study was conducted in Ambo town administration. Ambo town is in central Ethiopia, located in the west Showa zone of the Oromia Region, west of Addis Ababa. The town is about 114 km from the capital with a latitude and longitude of 8°59'N, 37°51'E and an elevation of 2,101 meters.

Knowledge claims, strategies and methods all contribute to a research approach that tends to be either quantitative, qualitative, or mixed (Creswell, 2003). A quantitative approach is one in which the investigator primarily uses post-positivist claims for developing knowledge; while a qualitative approach is one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivism. A mixed methods approach is one in which the researcher tends to base knowledge claims on pragmatic grounds (Creswell, 2003). From these three research approaches, the mixed method approach was opted for in the current study. Mixed method is becoming increasingly articulated and more associated with

research practice and recognized as the third major research approach or research paradigm (Burke Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007).

In this study, "Gender" is a socially constructive idea which is suitable for the collection of information by the qualitative approach. However, the qualitative research approach is sometimes criticized because its process of sampling is one of the principal areas of confusion (Marshal, 1996); hence the researcher opted for the mixed method approach. In this research, interview, focus group discussion, document study (qualitative methods) and questionnaires (quantitative methods) were used to explore the teachers' perception and practice of gender equality in education.

Data collection is the primary work of the study and the main part of research. In this study, questionnaire, interview, focus group discussion and document study are used to collect data.

The merit of using questionnaire is: its low cost, free from the bias of the interviewer, respondents have adequate time to give well-thought out answers, and large samples can be made use of and thus the results can be more dependable and reliable (Kothari, 2004).

Questionnaires with 34 items were prepared and presented to 130 secondary and preparatory school teachers. Questionnaires consisted of four sections: (1) Demographic and background data which included questions about teachers' background: gender, age, level of education, school type, teaching experience and subject of specialization; (2) Teachers' perception and practice of gender equality in education with items assessing knowledge, understanding and implementation of gender equality; (3) Challenges which hinder gender equality in education with items focused on challenges regarding the practice of gender equality in education; and, (4) Ways teachers respond to gender-based violence in schools.

Except for demographic and background data, all statements were prepared on a Likert-type scale, with five possible responses to each statement (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-undecided, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree).

Interviews are a systematic way of talking and listening to people and are another way of collecting data from individuals through conversations (Kajornboon, 2005). Basically there are four types of interview; structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews, and non-directive interviews (Kajornboon, 2005, p. 4). Each of the four types has its own advantages and disadvantages. From the four types of interviews, the semi structured interview was selected. The reason for selecting semi-structured interview is that unlike structured interview, is it non-standardized and therefore the researcher can change questions based on the topic of research and also can probe to gather information more effectively and efficiently. And also, unlike the non-structured and non-directive interview types, it does take too much time to generate information. Interviews were conducted with ten (10) teachers with an equal number of males and females in five different secondary schools in Ambo town administration.

Focus group discussions (FGD) involve group interviewing which essentially is a qualitative research approach based on structured, semi-structured or unstructured interviews (Boa12). FGD gives a rapid assessment, semi-structured data gathering method in which a purposively selected set of participants gather to discuss issues and concerns based on a list of key themes drawn up by the researcher/facilitator.

Two groups formed for the FGD which were a male-only group and a female-only group, each with five (5) group members. Two participants, one (1) male and one (1) female, were selected purposively from each of the five secondary schools. The criteria for selection were their role as unit leader, team leader, or unit coordinator.

Document study is a form of qualitative research in which the study deals with existing records which often provide insight into a setting and/or group of people that cannot be observed or noted in another way. Documents, including educational reports, gender reports and related literature were examined and analyzed in this study.

First questionnaires, FGD and interview questions were prepared and submitted to the researcher's academic advisor for comment. Then, a pilot testing was held with five (5) teachers who were randomly selected from one of the schools. Based on the feedback of the respondents, some amendments were applied to the questions in order to improve their clarity. Then, after the necessary amendments had been made the questionnaires were distributed to the sample groups of teachers, and then the interviews and FGD were held. Finally, document analysis was performed on teacher's perception and practice of gender equality in education.

A sample is a sub-group of a population. A sample involves taking a representative selection of the population and using the data collected as research information (Letham, 2007). Cochran (as cited in Letham, 2007) stated that using correct sampling methods allows the study to reduce research costs, conduct research more efficiently (speed), have greater flexibility and greater accuracy. The current study incorporated all five government secondary schools in Ambo town administration: Ambo Preparatory School, Ambo Secondary School, Awaro Secondary School, Liban Mecha Secondary School, and Bekelcha Bari Secondary School. After the schools were identified, proportional quota sampling was used to ensure adequate representation of the sampled teachers chosen from the total teacher population in each school. The samples of male and female teachers were chosen in proportion to their number in each school. After the sample of teachers in each school was identified, simple random sampling was used in order to identify the participants for the questionnaires.

To determine sample size it is necessary to know the total population. The total number of teachers in these high schools was 293, with 233 males and 58 females. From the total population, the following simplified formula was used to calculate sample size as developed by Yamane (1967, p. 886, as cited in Israel, 2013, p. 4).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n is the sample size, N is the population size (293), and e is the level of precision (.05). When this formula was applied to the above sample, the result was as follows:

$$n = \frac{293}{1 + 293(.05)2} \qquad n = 130$$

All the returned questionnaires were coded on Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS), version 21.0, while answers to the open-ended items generated from interviews and the FGDs and document analysis were analyzed qualitatively. Items regarding the teachers' perception and practice of gender equality as well as the challenges which

exist regarding the practice of gender equality and ways in which teachers respond to gender-based violence were scored with the responses progressing from one through to five for strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), undecided (UD), agree (A) and strongly agree (SA), respectively. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to describe the teachers' perception, practice, challenges and ways to respond to gender-based violence in schools. To ascertain differences according to teachers' demographic and characteristics, such as, age, educational qualifications, year of teaching and teachers' subject background, the analysis of variances (ANOVA) was employed while T-test statistics were used to see the significant difference with teachers' school type and gender.

Results and Discussion

Questionnaires were distributed to 130 teachers with 34 items rated on a Likert-type scale, with five possible responses to each questions (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Undecided, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree). The questions were divided into four groups based on the research questions (the teachers' perception of gender equality in education, teachers' practice of gender equality in education, the challenges which exist in practicing gender equality in education, and the ways teachers' respond to gender-based violence in schools). The results of the interviews, FGDs and document analysis were analyzed qualitatively and triangulated with supporting statistical data under each research question.

Table 1. Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation on Teacher's Perception of Gender Equality in Education

Items	N	SD F(p)	D F(p)	UD F(p)	A F(p)	SA F(p)	mean	std
1. Teachers have adequate knowledge of gender and its difference from sex.	130	6 (4.6)	10 (7.7)	6 (4.6)	47 (36.2)	61 (46.9)	4.13	1.12
2. Teachers know the principle of GE in general and GEIE in particular.	130	3 (2.2)	15 (11.5)	11 (8.5)	61 (46.9)	40 (30.8)	3.92	1.03
3. Teachers should be involved in shaping their students' perceptions about gender roles.	130	4 (3.9)	7 (5.4)	13 (10.0)	53 (40.8)	53 (40.8)	4.12	.99
4. Awareness about gender issues should be incorporated into school subjects.	130	5 (3.8)	10 (7.7)	18 (13.8)	57 (43.8)	40 (30.8)	3.90	1.05
5. Female students should be encouraged to join traditionally male jobs.	130	5 (3.8)	8 (6.2)	15 (11.5)	30 (23.1)	72 (55.4)	4.20	1.11
6. Boys and girls should be given equal opportunity and not treated differently.	130	7 (5.4)	11 (8.5)	11 (8.5)	32 (24.6)	69 (53.1)	4.11	1.19
		10	27	14	52	27		

7.	Giving more support for female over male students.	130	(7.7)	(20.8)	(10.8)	(40)	(20.8)	3.45	1.25

Table 1 indicates that 83.1% agree, 12.3%, disagree and 4.6% were undecided about having adequate knowledge of gender and its difference from sex. Data gained from the interviews and FGDs support this statistical data. The majority of participants interviewed and in the FGDs said that "gender is a socially constructive idea and sex is a biological factor." This implies that teachers have an understanding of the meaning of gender and its difference from sex. This study's results for this are similar to the finding of Shrestha (2012) who revealed that the term gender is known to all teachers. At the same time, these findings contradict with the findings of Shrestha (2012) who stated that the teachers used the term gender and sex interchangeably.

Regarding item two about whether teachers know the principles of gender equality in general and gender equality in particular, 77.7% gave affirmative answers, 13.7% disagreed and 8.5% held a neutral position. Data obtained from the interviews and FGDs on item two support this statistical data in some way. Most of the respondents answered that gender equality means "treating both males and females" equally without "discrimination on the basis of sex" whereas gender equality in education is "giving equal opportunities" and treating both male and female as equal in the educational setting. However, the results of the interviews and FGDs are not as sound as the statistical data revealed. Most of respondents' perceived gender equality as treating both male and female in the same way which is identical treatment or formal equality. This finding agreed with the findings of Shrestha (2012) in that teachers perceived the concept of equality in the form of a formal equality approach that treats men and women alike without differentiating. However, according to Subramanian (2005), formal equality is to measure numerical gap between female and men outcomes. He stated that the best way to realize gender equality is by substantive equality which requires the recognition of the ways in which women are different from men, both in terms of their biological capacities and in the socially constructed disadvantages women face relative to men.

Most teachers, however, believe shaping their students perception on gender role is important with 81.6% of respondents agreeing, 9.3% disagreeing and 10% percent undecided. The FGD results support this data. Both female and male groups agreed that shaping students perception is very important and the responsibility of both teachers and family at home and school. However, as some members of the group said; "first teachers should know about gender and its role and then they can shape students perception." The majority of teachers are also in support of incorporating gender into school as a subject with 74.6% agreeing, 11.5% disagreeing and 13.8% of the respondents holding a neutral position. There is a link here between shaping the students' perception of gender and incorporating gender in the school curriculum. This implies that the students' perception of gender roles could be shaped if gender was integrated into the school curriculum.

Another interesting issue the research found was that the majority of respondents had a positive towards attitudes for females who undertake jobs like engineering, medicine or architecture with 78.5% agreeing, 10.0% disagreeing and 11.5% undecided. But respondents more than the sum number of strongly disagree and disagree held a neutral position with 10% and 11.5%, respectively.

With reference to item six, 77.7% of the teachers agree with equal treatment and equal opportunity for male and female students, whereas 13.9% disagree and 8.5% hold a neutral position. 60.8% of respondents agreed, 28.5% disagreed and 10.8% were undecided with the need to support more female than male students. The two items responses contradict each other. The reason could be attributed to the different perception that female and male teachers have over the treatment of male and female students. Female teachers were said to be more in support of special treatment for girls than male teachers.

The above findings confirmed the finding of Ifegbesan (2010), who found that teachers should shape their students perception on gender role, incorporating gender into school subject, female students should be encouraged to enter jobs like engineering, medicine or architecture, and equal treatments and equal opportunity for both female and male students. However, the study of Hilina (2015) found that the number of female students enrolled to the fields of engineering and technology at Addis Ababa University was 16.8%, compared with medicine and health science 34.0%.

Table 2. Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation on Teacher's Practice of Gender Equality in Education

Items	N	SD	D	UD	A	SA	Mean	std
		F(p)	F(p)	F(p)	F(p)	F(p)		
1. I have adequate content knowledge to apply GE in classroom.	130	33 (25.4)	38 (29.2)	36 (27.7)	10 (7.7)	13 (10)	4.13	1.11
2. I use gender equitable language in my lessons.	130	47 (36.2)	34 (26.2)	13 (10)	16 (12.3)	20 (15.4)	2.45	1.45
3. My classroom practices encourage students to respect gender differences.	130	30 (23.1)	75 (57.7)	7 (5.4)	11 (8.5)	7 (5.4)	2.15	1.05
4. Teachers should encourage both male and female students equally to carry out the same activities.	130	7 (5.4)	11 (8.5)	9 (6.9)	44 (33.8)	59 (45.4)	4.05	1.16
5. Teachers take contributions from both male and female students.	130	2 (1.5)	10 (7.7)	21 (16.2)	42 (32.3)	55 (42.3)	4.20	1.10
6. Teachers give intensive, constructive feedback equally to male and female students.	130	3 (2.3)	7 (5.4)	28 (21.5)	47 (36.2)	45 (34.6)	4.11	1.19
7. I obtain and use gender neutral instructional materials.	130	40 (30.8)	64 (49.2)	11 (8.5)	13 (10.0)	2 (1.5)	3.45	1.25

The data clearly indicates to what extent teachers apply the principles of gender equality in school. 54.6% of respondents disagree, whereas 17.7% agree regarding adequate content knowledge to apply gender equality. 27.7% held a neutral position. This may be

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because they were not sure about their knowledge of gender, or perhaps they did not have the necessary skills.

The results of both the FGDs and interviews were consistent with the findings reported. The majority of participants said that teachers did not lack knowledge, but rather the skill to practice or apply gender equality in the classroom. Gender knowledge refers to having the concepts of gender equality, while skills refers to the system by which gender equality is practiced. Therefore, the gap here represents a lack of necessary skill to practice gender equality. The FGD participants discussed that the issue of attitude had improved.

With regard to language usage in the classroom, 62.4% of respondents disagrees that teachers are aware of using gender sensitive language, 27.7% agreed and 10.0% were undecided. Regarding equitable language used in the classroom, 80.0% believe their classroom practice does not encourage students to respect the other gender, whereas 13.9% agree and 5.4% were undecided. These three items interrelate with each other. If there is inadequate content knowledge to apply gender equality, teachers cannot use equitable language and this leads to a lack of respect on gender differences in the classroom by students and teachers. This finding is also supported by the literature. As Owens, Smothers, and Love (2003) note in their analysis of gender bias in schools, "what teachers say or do not say, their body language, what they do and who they call upon form a 'hidden curriculum' that is more powerful than any textbook lesson." This finding, however, contradicts that of Ifegbesan (2010) who found that 58.8% of teachers used gender equitable language and 73.6% confirmed that their classroom practice respect both. In the same finding, 64.8% of teachers know where to obtain gender neutral instructional materials which also contradict this finding.

Regarding to item should teachers encourage both male and female students equally to carry out the same activities, 79.2% agreed, 13% disagreed and 6.9% were undecided. Regarding should teachers take equal contributions from male and female students, 74.6% agreed, 9.2% disagreed and 16.2% were undecided; whereas, for teachers giving equally intensive and constructive feedback, 70.8% agreed, 7.7% disagreed and 21.5% were undecided. The study also found that 80.0% of respondents disagreed, 11.5% agreed and 8.5% were undecided over obtaining gender neutral instructional materials for their lessons. This contradicts with the findings of Ifegbesan (2010) as mentioned earlier.

Table 3. Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation regarding Challenges to practices for Gender Equality in Education

Items	N	SD	D	UD	A	SA	mean	std
		F(p)	F(p)	F(p)	F(p)	F(p)		
1. Cost of schooling may prevent families from sending their students to school.	130	7 (5.4)	16 (12.3)	22 (16.9)	62 (47.7)	23 (17.7)	3.60	1.08
2. Girls may be less valued than boys in society.	130	22 (16.9)	19 (14.6)	33 (25.4)	31 (23.8)	25 (19.2)	3.13	1.35
3. HTPs are factors to gender equality in education.	130	10 (7.7)	8 (6.2)	9 (6.9)	46 (35.4)	57 (43.8)	4.02	1.20
		2	10	11	54	53		

4. Heavy load of domestic chores is a potential to hinder female education.	130	(1.5) 6	(7.7) 12	(8.5) 18	(41.5) 59	(40.8) 35	4.12	.96
5. Absence of water in school toilet and inaccessibility of feminine hygiene products were hindering GEIE.	130	(4.6) 36	(9.2) 31	(13.8) 34	(45.4) 15	(26.9) 14	3.80	1.08
6. Teachers give more attention to boys than girls in the classroom.	130	(27.7) 9	(23.8) 17	(26.2) 16	(11.5) 50	(10.8) 38	2.54	1.30
7. Sexual harassment, abuse and bullying challenge female students in and out of the classroom.	130	(6.9)	(13.1)	(12.3)	(38.5)	(29.2)	3.70	1.21

As Table 3 shows, 65.4% agree, 17.7% disagree and 16.9% hold a neutral position over whether or not the direct cost of schooling prevents families from sending their children to school. Also, 43.0% of respondents said that preference to education is given to males rather than females in society, whereas 31.5% disagreed and 25.4% neither agreed nor disagreed and held a neutral position. Therefore, considering item one and two, it can be concluded that, if a family has economic problems, they will send their male child rather than their female child to school. On the other hand, information gained from the interviews and FGDs showed that the education is free. But indirectly, schools impose secondary costs for parents such as payment for clothing, reference materials, food, transportation costs and housing rental cost challenges that are more than any school fee.

According to UNESCO (2012) on the Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education for the aforementioned problems of gender equality in education in Ethiopia, poverty is one of the main barriers to girls' and women's education. Other important issues observed include harmful traditional practices (79.2% agreed, 13.9% disagreed and 6.95% undecided), heavy domestic work (82.8% agreed, 9.2% disagreed and 8.5% undecided), absence of feminine hygiene facilities in school (72.3% agreed, 13.8% disagreed and 13.8% undecided), and sexual harassment and abuse (67.7% agreed, 20.0% disagreed and 12.3% undecided).

Evidence from the interviews and FGDs also confirmed these statistical data. Though the Ethiopian government has formulated laws and policies on how to compact harmful traditional practices, some things remain unchanged. One participant of the FGDs stated that his sister had been abducted on her way home from school in a rural area. He also added that the abductee was not taken to the court and the issue was not seen by arbitration. The results of the FGDs showed that sexual harassment and abuse are harmful tradition practices challenging gender equality in education. Unwanted and unpleasant comments and the touching of females' private body parts are common in schools. These problems may arise where the school authority is perceived as too weak to take the necessary measures or to create awareness on the impact of such abuse. Most of the participants in the FGDs, both males and females, agreed on the severity of verbal and physical abuse in schools by male students against female students.

This finding is consistent with that of UNESCO (2012) regarding sociocultural factors such as social norms and traditional practices about the role and position of women in Ethiopian society, gender-based violence, early marriage and teenage pregnancy, which all affect girls' and women's access to and completion of their education. However, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979 established an action agenda for putting an end to gender-based discrimination. Article 10 of the Convention in particular, stipulates specific rights to education that governments should ensure. The study conducted in Ambo secondary school on sexual harassment by Eshetu (2015) found that from a total of 414 female students, 147 (35.5%) of them had experienced sexual harassment during their school life. Additionally, 138 (33.3%) reported having experienced sexual harassment in the past twelve months; and of those, 66 (47.8%) had received verbal harassment and 49 (35.5%) physical sexual harassment. Among the female students who had experienced sexual harassment in the past twelve months, 84 (60.9%) feared harassment at school, while 54 (39.1%) did not. According to this finding, male teachers were the perpetrators of the sexual harassment more than the male students. Referring to whether or not teachers give more attention to male over female students, 21.8% agreed, 51.5% disagreed, and 26.2% were undecided.

Table 4. Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation on Challenges to Practice Gender Equality in Education

Items	N	SD	D	UD	A	SA	mean	std
		F(p)	F(p)	F(p)	F(p)	F(p)		
1. Teachers, students and school personnel lack respect for female students.	130	33 (25.4)	38 (29.2)	36 27.7)	10 (7.7)	13 (10.0)	2.48	1.23
2. Lack of training to recognize gender bias.	130	16 (12.3)	22 (16.9)	23 (17.7)	33 (25.4)	36 (27.7)	3.39	1.37
3. Lack of procedures to protect students from intimidation, harassment and sexual abuse.	130	10 (7.7)	21 (16.2)	21 (16.2)	51 (39.2)	27 (20.8)	3.49	1.20
4. Lack of procedures to ensure safe reporting and follow-up of GBV.	130	8 (6.2)	16 (12.3)	17 (13.1)	44 (33.8)	45 (34.6)	3.78	1.21
5. Gender club not active creating awareness.	130	3 (2.3)	11 (8.5)	8 (6.2)	49 (37.7)	59 (45.4)	4.15	1.02
6. Students afraid to report violence	130	8 (6.2)	16 (12.3)	18 (13.8)	62 (47.7)	26 (20.0)	3.63	1.12

As the data in Table 4 shows, on the first item, whether or not teachers, students and school personnel lack respect for female students, 54.6% disagreed, 17.7% agreed and 27.7% were undecided. This means that most teachers, students and school personnel respect female students. Yet, this finding contradicts with the findings of Biraimah (1982, as cited in Shrestha, 2012) and Subramanian (2005). The first found that teachers had little regard for the ability, character and potential of female students, while the latter found that teachers most often described their female students in negative terms such as "disruptive behavior" or "lack of interest in school" while their male counterparts were acknowledged positively as "responsible," "hard working" and "scholarly."

On the question do you think that teachers who have not received training on gender sensitiveness become gender biased in the classroom? 53.1% responded yes, we agree, 29.2% disagreed and 17.7% were not sure. From the 10 interviewed teachers and two FGDs, it was found that none of the teacher had taken training on gender issues. They said that teachers unknowingly can bring bias into the classroom. However, a study by Towery (2007) found that training programs on gender issues redouble the efforts to only make teachers aware of gender inequities in their school environments, and to reinforce the criticality of teachers' active, ongoing analyses of the many ways in which institutionalized sexism and gender inequity permeate throughout school life.

Regarding the lack of policies and procedure to protect boys and girls from sexual harassment and sexual abuse, 60% agreed, 23.9% disagreed and 16.2% were undecided. Referring to the lack of policies and procedures to ensure and safety in the reporting of gender-based discrimination, 68.4% agreed, 18.5% disagreed and 13.2% were undecided. Here, the information gained from the interviews and FGDs were a little different from the data. Most of the teachers responded that the biggest problem is not with the policies that protect from sexual abuse and harassment, but on how to implement such policies. The reasons for the lack of implementation include lack of training, budget, school facilities, commitment and the low level of attention from administrators.

Whether the absence of an active gender club to create awareness on gender issues depends on a lack of budget, fund, voluntary individuals, and lack of attention was given by administrators as the factors preventing gender equality in education with 83.1% agreeing, 10.8% disagreeing and 6.2% of respondents holding a neutral position. For instance, on students being reluctant or afraid to report violence like sexual harassment and abuse, 67.7% agreed, 18.5% disagreed and 13.8% were undecided. This can be explained by an absence of policies and procedures to ensure a safe way of reporting the perpetrators of sexual harassment and abuse.

Table 5. Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation on Ways Teachers' Respond to Gender-Based Violence in the Schools

Items	N	SD F(p)	D F(p)	UD F(p)	A F(p)	SA F(p)	mean	Std
1. I try to protect and report sexual harassment, abuse and bullying.	130	6 (4.6)	28 (21.5)	18 (13.8)	50 (38.5)	28 (21.5)	3.51	1.18
2. I respect both male and female students.	130	4 (3.1)	4 (3.1)	5 (3.8)	49 (37.7)	68 (52.3)	4.33	.92
3. Teachers should actively and effectively stop bullying.	130	5 (3.8)	2 (1.5)	12 (9.2)	58 (44.6)	53 (40.8)	4.16	.94
4. Teachers should encourage school counselors and staff to provide counseling for bullies alongside the enforcement of consequences.	130	2 (1.5)	6 (4.6)	15 (11.5)	61 (46.9)	46 (35.4)	4.10	.89
5. I have the skills and knowledge to know and identify students with SRH problems.	130	46 (35.4)	57 (43.8)	6 (4.6)	16 (12.3)	5 (3.8)	2.05	1.11

Items	N	SD	D	UD	A	SA	mean	Std
		F(p)	F(p)	F(p)	F(p)	F(p)		
6. Teachers should be a role model and condemn sexual and GBV.	130	4 (3.1)	9 (6.9)	12 (9.2)	41 (31.5)	64 (49.2)	4.17	1.06
7. Teachers should provide safe and welcoming spaces for gender differences.	130	7 (5.4)	10 (7.7)	17 (13.1)	56 (43.1)	40 (30.8)	3.87	1.10

As can be seen from Table 5, 60.0% of respondents said they tried to report and protect students from harassment and abuse; whereas, 26.0% did not report and protect their students from abuse and sexual harassment, and 13.8 were not unsure. Respondents regarding gender discrimination responded as 90% agreeing, 6.2% disagreeing and 3.8% were undecided. The study also revealed that teachers should be active to stop bullying with 85.4% agreeing, 5.3% disagreeing, and 9.2% were undecided.

Regarding another important issue, the study found that most respondents agreed that working with school counselors helped them to stop gender-based violence, 82.3% agreeing, 6.1% disagreeing, and 11.5% were undecided. As evidence from the interviews and FGDs showed, only Ambo preparatory school had a school counselor who had only started this work relatively recently. Before this, the counsellor had taught civics and ethical education for many years.

Regarding whether or not teachers were a role model by speaking out against sexual and gender-based violence, 80.7% agreed, while 10.0% disagreed and 9.2% were undecided. On the last item, which regards providing safe, welcoming spaces for gender difference, 73.9% agreed, 13.1% disagreed and 13.1% were undecided.

Table 6. Analysis of Variance in Teachers' level of Qualification and Subject Background

		Sum / Square	df	Mean sq.	F	Sig
Subject Background						
Perception	Between Groups	214.758	13	16.520	.856	.600
	Within Groups	2237.505	116	19.289		
	Total	2452.263	129			
Practice	Between Groups	131.625	13	10.125	.930	.525
	Within Groups	1262.941	116	10.887		
	Total	1394.566	129			
Challenges	Between Groups	1359.156	13	104.550	1.611	.92
	Within Groups	7530.290	116	64.916		
	Total	8889.446	129			
RGBV	Between Groups	190.601	13	14.662	1.122	.348

		Sum / Square	df	Mean sq.	F	Sig
	Within Groups	1515.948	116	13.069		
	Total	1706.550	129			
Level of Qualification						
Perceptions	Between Groups	60.183	2	30.092	1.598	.206
	Within Groups	2392.080	127	18.835		
	Total	2452.263	129			
Practice	Between Groups	18.864	2	9.432	.871	.421
	Within Groups	1375.702	127	10.832		
	Total	1394.566	129			
Challenges	Between Groups	29.620	2	14.810	.212	.809
	Within Groups	8859.826	127	69.762		
	Total	8889.446	129			
RGBV	Between Groups	28.226	2	14.113	1.068	.347
	Within Groups	1678.323	127	13.215		

*Significant level ≤0.05

Table 6 indicates that no significant difference exists between teachers demographic characteristics such as teachers' subject background and level of education on teacher's perception, challenges to practice gender equality in education and ways teacher's respond to gender-based violence in the schools.

This finding is similar with the finding of Ifegbesan (2010) where the analysis showed no significant difference regarding teachers' subject specialization and education qualification on awareness and attitudes/practices of gender-stereotyped beliefs and perception.

Table 7. Analysis of Variance in Teachers' Age and Teaching Experience

		Sum / Square	df	Mean sq.	F	Sig
Age						
Perceptions	Between Groups	65.669	4	16.417	.860	.490
	Within Groups	2386.594	125	19.093		
	Total	2452.263	129			

		Sum / Square	df	Mean sq.	F	Sig
Practice	Between Groups	65.092	4	16.273	1.530	.197
	Within Groups	1329.473	125	10.636		
	Total	1394.566	129			
Challenges	Between Groups	1334.232	4	333.558	5.519	.000*
	Within Groups	7555.214	125	60.442		
	Total	8889.446	129			
RGBV	Between Groups	34.758	4	8.689	.650	.628
	Within Groups	1671.792	125	13.374		
	Total	1706.550	129			
Years of Teaching						
Perceptions	Between Groups	129.232	6	21.539	1.140	.343
	Within Groups	2323.031	123	18.886		
	Total	2452.263	129			
Practice	Between Groups	29.834	6	4.972	.448	.845
	Within Groups	1364.732	123	11.095		
	Total	1394.566	129			
Challenges	Between Groups	1170.021	6	195.004	3.107	.007*
	Within Groups	7719.425	123	62.760		
	Total	8889.446	129			
RGBV	Between Groups	63.565	6	10.594	.793	.577
	Within Groups	1642.984	123	13.358		
	Total	1706.550	129			

*Significant level ≤0.05

Table 7 shows that no significant difference was found in age and teaching experience of teachers on perception, practice and ways of responds to gender-based violence. However,

a significant difference was revealed with challenges to practice gender equality in education in both age and teaching experience with df(4,125) F=5.519, P=.000 and df(6,123) F=3.107, P=.007 respectively. The study of Ifegbesan (2010) also found age to be significantly different to the awareness of gender-stereotyped belief.

Table 8. T-test Analysis of Teacher's Gender and School type

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig (2 tailed)
Perception	Male	102	25.2983	4.16332	2.167	.032*
	Female	28	23.3112	4.77206		
Practice	Male	102	19.8796	3.05581	3.033	.003*
	Female	28	17.8163	3.64088		
Challenges	Male	102	42.0415	8.29939	-1.210	.228
	Female	28	44.1813	8.23718		
RGBV	Male	102	22.4328	3.66927	-2.758	.007*
	Female	28	24.5204	3.04891		
	School Type	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig (2 tailed)
Perception	Prep	33	25.0909	4.53611	.335	.738
	Sec	97	24.7953	4.32010		
Practice	Prep	33	19.5411	2.16529	.214	.831
	Sec	97	19.3991	3.59982		
Challenges	Prep	33	39.7343	7.15659	-2.252	.026*
	Sec	97	43.4441	8.48505		
RGBV	Prep	33	25.7273	4.46005	-.738	.462
	Sec	97	26.3505	4.10041		

*Significant level ≤0.05, Prep: Preparatory School, Sec: Secondary School

The study revealed that a significant difference exists between gender on perception and practice of gender equality in education and the ways in which to respond to gender-based violence with t(2.167), p=.032; t(3.033), p=.003; and t(-2.758), p=007, respectively. However, no significant difference found regarding challenges to practice gender equality in

education. This may be because of the similarity of challenges across the age groups. Significant differences were revealed in school types on challenges to practice gender equality in education with t(-2.252), p=.026. The mean of the two shows that secondary school teachers meet more challenges in practicing gender equality in education than preparatory school teachers.

The results of the interviews and FGDs supported this quantitative data. The interviewee affirmed that Liben Mecha secondary school female students face sexual harassment and abuse by bullies both in and outside of the school. The perpetrators of harassment were mainly male students, taxi drivers and bullies. Lack of a school counselor was also found to be one of the challenges to the practicing of gender equality in education at each secondary school. This finding is similar with that of Ifegbesan (2010), who found a significant difference between teachers' gender-stereotyped perception based on the school type and gender of teachers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Teachers' Perceptions of Gender Equality in Education

The study found that the terms gender, gender equality in general and gender equality in education in particular were familiar to teachers. However, most teachers perceived gender equality in education in the form of formal equality – which is an equal number of male and female enrollments. The study also revealed that shaping students' perception on gender role reduces gender-based violence, inequalities, stereotype beliefs and practice. Yet teacher training on gender is a prerequisite to shape the students' perception on the gender role. This is to avoid bias, prejudice and myths while they deal with shaping students perception. On other hand, incorporating gender into school curriculum was found to be important in shaping students' perception on gender role. This study also found teachers have a positive attitude towards females entering traditional male jobs like engineering, medicine or architecture. Surprisingly the majority of teachers were in support of equal treatment and equal opportunity of female and male students. However, at the same time, the majority of teachers were in favor of female support over that of male students. These really contradict each other. This problem identified by t-test result found female teachers were in agreement with special support for female students over male student; whereas, male teachers were in favor of equal treatment. However, analysis of ANOVA variance revealed no significant difference with other teacher demographic characteristics such as subject background, age, education level, and teaching experience on teacher's perception of gender equality in education. Independent T-test analysis revealed no significant difference with school types, but teachers' gender was found to have a significant difference on teachers' perception of gender equality in education.

Teachers' Practice of Gender Equality in Education

This research found teacher's lack knowledge and skills to apply gender equality. However, the study also revealed that teachers have a positive attitude towards gender. Therefore, together, positive attitude towards gender, knowledge of gender and skills to practice gender equality in education constitute effective ways of implementing gender equality in education. The study also found gender equitable language was not used by teachers. This constitutes what was said by scholars as "a hidden curriculum" or "gender blindness." This implies more than curriculum bias; it is what teachers say or use in the

classroom which affects gender equality in education. The study also found that lack of adequate content knowledge results in not using gender equitable language, which discourages students to respect the other gender. When the teachers lack adequate content knowledge, they are unable to care and consider what they say, and students also follow and behave in this way. On the other hand, the study revealed that gender equality in education can be achieved when teachers contribute and give constructive feedback to female and male students equally. The results of ANOVA variance analysis found that no significant difference in teachers' demographic characteristics such as age, teaching experience, level of education and subject background on teachers' practice of gender equality in education. However, T-test analysis revealed a significant difference in teachers' gender on the practice of gender equality in education, but no significant difference for school type.

Challenges Prevailing to Practice Gender Equality in Education

The cost of schooling such as clothing, books, supplies are preventing families to send their students to school. Rather than costs of clothing and books, supplies such as food, cost of house rent and similar costs are found to be major factors for poor families. The study also found that when families are poor, preference is given to educating boys rather than girls. This shows us the strong relationship between economy and education as well as how low a value is given to females. Other hot issues revealed by the researcher are harmful traditional practices, heavy domestic work, absence of feminine hygiene products in school, sexual harassment and abuse challenging the practice of gender equality. Sexual harassment and abuse were found to be common across the five secondary schools in the current study. The practices of such abuses were in the form of saying unpleasant or unwanted comments to the opposite gender, mainly against females by males, and the unwanted touching of females' private parts (breasts, buttocks and other parts) without their consent. These practices were committed by bullies who frighten and threaten physically and verbally in order to get what they want. In terms of feminine hygiene product accessibility, this was seen as a major problem in the practicing of gender equality which may add a new finding to the literature. Other finding was that teachers' lack of training brought gender bias to the class unwittingly. Lack of school policies and procedures to protect females from intimidation, harassment, sexual abuse or other forms of physical and mental violence were found to be factors hindering the practice of gender equality in education. In addition lack of policies and procedures to ensure safe reporting and follow up of gender-based harassment and abuses were challenging the project of gender equality in education.

Another finding was the existence of weak and inactive gender clubs. The finding of the current study revealed that gender clubs were led by female teachers had only female members. Their roles were also found to be weak with absence of budget, lack of commitment and they did not receive the attention of the administrators. Analysis of ANOVA variance showed the significant difference in age and teaching experience on challenges to practice gender equality in education. However, no significant difference was found with teachers' subject background and level of education on challenges to practice gender equality in education. On the other hand, analysis of T-test revealed significant difference between teachers' gender and school type on challenges to practice gender equality in education.

Ways Teachers' Respond to Gender-Based Violence in the School

Reporting perpetrators of sexual harassment and abuse were ways that most teachers responded to gender discrimination in education. Respecting both females and males regardless of their gender, wealth, ability or other condition were also seen as how teachers respond to gender discrimination. The research also found that teachers should be active and effective to stop bulling like hitting, kicking, pushing, choking, punching, threatening, taunting and teasing, and hate speech. On the other hand, the current study revealed that teachers should work with school counselors and other staff in order to provide counseling for bullies alongside the enforcement of consequences. However, school counselors were not assigned to four of the five schools that took part in the current study. Though one school has counselor service, it was deemed to be inadequate and not sufficient.

Lack of skill and knowledge to know how to identify students with SRH problems were hindering teachers response to gender-based violence in schools. Another important finding was that teachers should be a role model by speaking out against gender-based violence and create a safe environment for gender difference to avoid gender discrimination in education. Analysis of ANOVA variance found no significant difference with teacher's demographic characteristics such as age level of education, teaching experience and subject background on the ways that teachers respond to gender-based violence in schools. However, T-test found a significant difference between male and female teachers, whereas no significant difference was found with school type.

Conducting research is to solve problems by providing available options and solutions based on data collected from different sources. The following are the recommendations of the current study in line with the research questions.

The concept of gender equality in education should be clear to teachers in order to avoid confusion with its specific principles and activities. The reasons that most teachers did not understand gender equality in education as formal equality may be due to the focus being on balancing the number of female and male students in school. However, due to past discrimination, domestic work and other forms of discrimination, female students should be treated differently.

Scholars, professionals and officials must aware of the impacts of using the word gender and sex interchangeably. From different document analyses it was observed that some scholars used the word gender the same as sex. As a result, some teachers perceived the word gender to be the same as sex.

Teachers should shape students perception of gender role, but that this should be followed by training on gender in order to avoid bias, prejudice and myth. The study also found training on gender should focus on not only increasing knowledge, but also developing skills in order to apply the principles of gender equality and positive attitude towards gender.

School communities, government and other bodies should work together in order to support students from poorer families, especially those who are incapable of paying house rent, and purchasing clothing and other necessary supplies.

Awareness should be created at the family level by sharing roles between boys and girls equally. At school, there should be strong and inclusive gender clubs. The study found that

when males are involved in gender issues, gender equality was generally achieved effectively and efficiently.

Another major issue is that schools should have separate toilets for male and female students with piped water. In addition, the availability of feminine hygiene products would help female students during menstruation. This protects female students from feeling ashamed for not having feminine hygiene products if they are unprepared for or experience the unexpected start of their menstrual period.

Policies, procedures, rules and regulation should be established in order to protect female students from intimidation, sexual harassment, sexual abuse and other forms of discrimination. For instance, policies or procedures to ensure the safe reporting and follow-up methods for gender-based violence should be available in schools. This must be achieved through maintaining the confidentiality of both the perpetrators and victims of abuse. Training teachers on sexual reproductive health was also found to be important in order for them to identify students with sexually-based problems. In addition to active gender clubs, it is also important to establish sexual reproductive health clubs in the schools.

Notes

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