

## Assessing Gender Equity in the Classroom as Perceived by University of Mindanao College Students: Basis for an Intervention Program

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### Abstract

*This study analyzed college students' perceptions of gender equity practices implemented in HEIs. The chosen respondents were identified using stratified random sampling. The respondents were selected from nine different departments of the University of Mindanao who are enrolled for the academic year 2023-2024. This study used a quantitative descriptive approach and a validated questionnaire to gather the needed data. The collected data was analyzed with descriptive statistics, comparing different mean averages and standard deviations, which yielded the result of a high level of perception among college students in which indicates that gender-neutral practices are often observed, and showed the significant difference of the said problem when analyzed by profile. Results showed how we should foster an inclusive learning environment, which is crucial to their academic success. However, an indicator for instructional materials revealed the lowest mean score that implies there should still be a need for continuous assessment of the effectiveness of policies and practices, with its proposed intervention programs specifically for teachers with workshop involvement to address the urgency of implementing gender-inclusive strategies and materials. Findings also suggest HEIs can work towards more equitable, inclusive education to achieve better quality for all. Overall, this study contributes to the growing knowledge of gender equality in higher education institutions. It emphasizes the importance of promoting inclusivity, challenging stereotypes, and fostering a supportive, open learning environment for students and their academic development.*

**Keywords:** education, gender disparity, equity, quality education, Davao City, Philippines  
**SDG Indicator #:** Gender Equality (SGD-5) and Quality Education (SDG-4)

### INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, gender inequality still emerges as one of the critical concerns within our society, placing a significant concern on educational institutions to conduct thorough evaluations of the current situation, which involves examining the social context in which education occurs and making innovative approaches to shape and transform societal norms actively (Kapur, 2019). Different studies have significantly revealed the challenges in combating gender inequality and creating a movement for the mission of gender equity within higher educational institutions (HEIs). Challenges like this have hindered progress toward creating inclusive and more open educational environments. This also impedes the achievement of SDG 4- outlined as a goal for Quality Education, which now calls for these higher education institutions to proactively address gender diversity and the challenges in achieving SDG-5 by implementing gender-focused policies and practices (Paul, 2023).

According to Galacgac (2017), many educational institutions still reinforce traditional gender stereotypes and roles in their curriculum and learning materials. This indicates that educational institutions may unknowingly contribute to the reinforcement of gender biases by offering educational materials and curricula that reflect existing gender stereotypes. Also, the existence of these traditional gender roles can hinder and limit the understanding of diverse gender identities; despite the attempts to confront and transform gender stereotypes and the continuous movement for gender-equal education for all, there are still several higher educational institutions that continue to face severe problems with gender inequality and disparities across their curriculum (Acai et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the study conducted by Alghneimin et al. (2023) in Saudi Arabia and Jordan studied the various methods educators used in STEM education and assessed the gender variance visible in the field of study. This study revealed numerous inequalities brought by the influence of cultural norms and gender stereotypes on educators within educational institutions that still create a gap in gender equity and continue to reveal gender disparities in STEM courses. Hence, this means that to achieve gender equity at HEIs and other academic institutions, educators and institutions should continue to discuss gender disparities across different curricula and fields of study.

Moreover, the study of Griffith et al. (2023) emphasized how gender disparities still exist in the engineering field, emphasizing how women still struggle with the existence of bias, stereotypes, and an overall lack of institutional support have all contributed to the harmful discrimination that women have endured. As a result, this fundamental idea of gender equality in educational settings posits that all students, irrespective of their gender identity, should be afforded equitable access to educational opportunities, impartial treatment, and the chance to realize their full potential.

This study is anchored to Bem's theory (1981), which is entitled "Gender- Schema Theory." Based on this theory, each cognitive structure or schema could facilitate the organization and understanding of gender-related inputs, which these schemas are formed by existing societal norms, expectations, and gender role stereotypes. This theory asserts that our schema or perception of knowledge for a particular topic helps us organize our information and guides our perception of everything based on gender assumptions and existing stereotypes created. In line with this, this theory can facilitate the understanding of biases and presumptions of the different roles and actions of students, which may also influence their perception of gender equity practices. Lastly, this theory proposes that the expectations and behaviors of educators in the classroom might be influenced by their gender schemas, and these instances can lead to disparate treatment of male and female students, hence reinforcing gender prejudices and disparities that still exist in the academe.

More importantly, the study of Consuegra et al. (2018) examined the association between teacher-student classroom interactions, students' perception of equity in the classroom, initial ability, and grade retention. The role of teacher- student interactions in determining student educational outcomes has been considered a great predictor of student academic outcomes. It was shown that gender did not significantly predict the outcomes, emphasizing that the student's perception of what equity is might not influence gender equity effectiveness. However, it was highlighted that the interaction between gender and the sociocultural personal roots emerged as a significant predictor of their academic success. In addition, Ahankara et al. (2022) said that when defining the concept of equality between each gender as a critical aspect of the experience, both concepts are labeled as

fundamental components of human rights, including the emphasis on sustainable development goals.

This was further affirmed in the article by Bhopal and Henderson (2021), which also described the current problem of gender and race, including how both are considered competing in inequality in higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. The study further analyzed the significance of the two concepts in molding and creating disparities in several institutions. It also revealed that there could be tendencies to prioritize gender-related issues over those raising concerns about race discrimination when attempting to tackle disparities within the higher educational system. This would mean that with its utmost importance, educational institutions must cultivate a comprehensive understanding and genuine regard for the multifaceted nature of gender diversity.

The study highlighted student perception analysis, specifically in terms of the level of perception of college students at the University of Mindanao, Matina Campus, to analyze how they perceive gender equity practices inside the classroom. Most of the published research gathered data based on the perspectives and self-assessments of in-service teachers in primary education. Only a few studies were conducted to assess the existing problem in higher educational institutions, focusing on students' perspectives and their level of perception of this matter.

This new knowledge can improve the curricula, teaching strategies, and school policies that should foster inclusive and non-discriminatory learning environments of several HEIs. According to Clavero and Rosa (2022), higher educational institutions and the science of conducting research play vital roles in empowering individuals and driving social transformation; it has been labeled that universities possess significant potential as institutions to advance gender equality, diversity, and inclusion, not only within the sphere of higher education but also within society. Previous research highlighted gender equity based on how instructors give importance and empowerment in implementing gender equity in the classrooms and how pre-service and in-service teachers become aware of gender disparities across different educational institutions. In addition, only a few local dissertations, specifically here in Davao City, explored and assessed how college students perceive gender equity in the classrooms and how HEIs implement gender parity. In the same way, this shows us the urgency of discussing gender-related social issues to raise awareness and prevent gender disparities among cross-gendered people so they can realize their subjective well-being and further research is needed to understand intersectional interactions between genders, which could help gender equality programs to become more inclusive and responsive, creating a genuinely fair educational environment for HEIs and improve how educational systems better accommodate their diverse identities and promote fair outcomes (Guo et al., 2022).

Moreover, this study investigates the following regarding college students' perception of gender equity in the classrooms. First, this study will assess the level of perception among college students regarding gender equity in the school. Next, it will examine whether there is a significant difference in the perception of college students regarding gender equity in the classroom when analyzed by gender, department, and year level. In addition, the findings of this study will serve as the basis for the proposal of an intervention/enhancement program aimed at empowering and raising awareness about gender equity across the curriculum, mitigating gender disparities across HEIs, and promoting open and inclusive environments with the practice of egalitarian principles in

classroom management. Lastly, the hypothesis for this study is that there is no significant difference in students' perception levels when analyzed according to their gender, year level, and department. Overall, by assessing the perceived views and opinions of college students concerning gender equity, this research is deemed significant because it will help identify strategies and interventions that can enhance educational outcomes for gender-sensitive approaches and other areas of concern. This paper will influence rules, regulations, and intellectual perspectives that promote improved gender equality, thereby facilitating an increasingly inclusive and equitable learning environment in higher educational institutions, which allows communities within these higher education institutions to possess the capacity to advance gender equity and contribute to local and national initiatives aimed at guaranteeing equal access and participation in educational opportunities.

## **METHOD**

### ***Research Respondents***

The chosen respondents for this study were undergraduates from the University of Mindanao, Matina Campus, Davao City, who were enrolled for the academic year 2023-2024. For the first semester, the recorded population of undergraduate enrollees at the University of Mindanao, Matina Campus, was calculated through Raosoft to determine the sample to participate in this study. The total sample size is 379 respondents who are bona fide students at the University and currently enrolled for the academic year 2023-2024. The sample involved students of any gender, department, and year level currently enrolled at the Matina Campus, specifically from 8 departments: CAE, CAFAE, CCE, CCJE, CEE, CHE, CHSE, and CTE.

The following respondents were selected through stratified random sampling to ensure that each subgroup of the significant population was represented proportionally to its size in the population. This could help accurately represent the entire population and reduce potential bias (Simkus, 2023). Stratified random sampling was used to identify the number of subjects in the Department who would accomplish the survey instruments and identify the strata and number of respondents to enrich the acquired data further. Moreover, the following were excluded from the sample: students not enrolled for the 2023-2024 academic year, enrollees from the professional school, and students from the College of Business Administration (CBAE) as they are located at the Bolton Campus. Additionally, respondents living significantly far from the researchers' locale were excluded to facilitate the data-gathering process. Hence, both CBAE undergraduates and law students were excluded for the convenience of the researchers.

### ***Research Instrument***

In gathering the needed data, researchers used an adapted questionnaire entitled "Gender Responsiveness in the Curriculum and its Relationship and Influence on Students' Learning Behaviors" by Galacgac (2017). They measured the following indicators: instructional materials, learning activities, and teacher- student interaction. The researchers adapted, modified, and conducted a validation of the questionnaire, with a mean rating of 4.71 out of 5. Then, to ensure the validity and reliability of their research instrument, a pilot test with 30 students revealed excellent internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.945, and through this validation process, it strengthened the credibility of the study's conclusions. Lastly, the level of college students' perception of gender equity in the classroom was interpreted through a Likert scale interpretation method adopted from previous dissertations.

Moreover, the range of interpretations on the assessment of gender equity in the classroom is as follows: A score of 4.20-5.00 is very high, which means that the students perceive that gender equity is always performed in the classroom. Then, a score of 3.40-4.19 is high, indicating that the students perceive that gender equity is often performed in the classroom. Following the mid-range with a score of 2.60-3.39 that indicates gender equity practices in the classroom are sometimes observed. Following by the mean score of 1.80-2.59 indicates rarely gender equity practices in the classroom at a low level. Lastly, a score of 1.00-1.79, a very low mean range, indicates that gender equity practices are never performed in the classroom.

### ***Research Design and Procedure***

The researcher utilized a quantitative descriptive approach to actualize and assess this research. As Bhat (2018) defined, a descriptive approach involves collecting data to outline the features of a population or phenomenon under study. Descriptive research methods like in-person survey gathering help researchers discover demographic characteristics and produce unbiased responses. It enables identifying, observing, and measuring population sample features to inform decision-making.

In addition, the researchers also followed the prescribed protocol for conducting the data-gathering process. The researchers worked for two months while conducting the data-gathering procedure. The raw data was tallied and submitted to the statistician to generate results and findings. The expert statistician employed the software tool SPSS to calculate the descriptive statistics for each variable and its corresponding measurements and reviewed the stated problem to generate descriptive statistics from the sample. Furthermore, the mean and standard deviation per indicator were tabulated, including ANOVA and post hoc test, to achieve significant differences in college students' perception regarding gender equity in the classroom according to their course and gender.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### ***Level of Perception about Gender Equity Practices***

Table 1.1 shows college students' perception level regarding gender equity practices in the classroom. Based on the gathered results, the overall mean score of 4.10 (SD= 0.605) illustrates the descriptive equivalence of high degree, which indicates that college students observed that gender equity practices are often experienced in the classrooms of HEIs. This implies that students often experience a learning environment where gender biases are minimized, and all students are given equal opportunity to be part of the classroom discussion.

*Table 1: Level of Perception of College Students about Gender Equity*

Indicator	Mean	SD
Instructional Material	3.95	.685
Learning Activities	4.11	.662
Teacher-student	4.25	.670
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.10</b>	<b>.605</b>



Additionally, the indicator teacher-student-interaction got the highest mean score of  $M=4.25$  with  $SD=.670$  with a descriptive equivalent of very high level, which connotes that there are instructors who consistently demonstrate commitment to providing equal opportunities for all students, regardless of gender, by promoting balanced participation and fostering inclusive discussions to all. Moreover, the third indicator concerns instructional materials, which scored the lowest mean average of  $M= 3.95$  ( $SD=.685$ ); however, this still implies that there is also a high level of descriptive equivalence in terms of gender equity practices in assessing the instructional materials used, which implies that gender-neutral activities and gender-sensitive language use is often evident in classroom discussions.

Despite these results, it still highlights the importance of pushing for gender-equitable practices in teaching, resources, educational activities and curriculum, and even teacher-student relationships. The presence of any negative barrier, such as gender bias, is likely to inhibit development, even though specific positive incentives can support the progress of learners. According to Roshan (2016), there are ways in which educators understand the concept of "gender" but also involve the challenges of how they identify with gender and the perspectives they hold regarding gender-related topics. Hence, it is essential for educators and higher education institutions (HEIs) who advocate for a gender-neutral and healthy educational environment to consider this still.

These results conformed with the mentioned study by Consuegra et al. (2018), which highlights how the interactions between teachers and students have a significant impact on the increasing amount of educational success of the students, which supports the highest mean score indicator as the most significant factor to consider in assessing gender equity practices in the classroom. Moreover, in conformity to the article of Galacgac (2017), educational institutions should continue to foster and maintain such environments by promoting inclusive strategies and pedagogical practices, providing resources on gender equity, and addressing any gender biases and disparities that may arise.

### ***Significant Difference in the Level of Perception of College Students about Gender Equity Practices in terms of Gender***

Table 2.1 presents the analysis of the level of perception of gender equity among college students based on gender. The results showed no significant difference in the perception levels of students when analyzed by gender ( $p = 0.499$ ). This implies that college students' perceptions of gender equity practices were not significantly influenced by their gender. Hence, this result accepts the null hypothesis that when it comes to gender, there is no significant difference. The lack of a significant difference suggests that the efforts to promote gender equity practices in the classroom have created an environment where students perceive equal opportunities and treatment, irrespective of gender. Biological factors do not solely determine gender as a socially constructed notion but are also shaped by cultural, social, and historical influences. Subsequently, increased awareness and understanding of gender equity issues in society can influence college students' perceptions.

**Table 2.1: Significance Difference in the Level of Perception of College Students about Gender Equity in Terms of Gender**

	<i>Some of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>
Between Groups	.510	2	.255	.696	.499
Within Groups	137.727	376	.366		
Total	138.237	378			

In addition, this also implies that students had similar perceptions regarding gender equity practices in the educational setting regardless of how they identify themselves. These results are consistent with the notion that gender equity initiatives aim to create an inclusive and fair environment for all students, regardless of gender expression. The previously mentioned study by Consuegra et al. (2018) showed that teacher-student interaction had become a predictor of students' success. However, the analysis showed that gender did not significantly impact the outcomes, suggesting that the effects of gender might be contingent upon students' perception of equity. However, it is essential to note that while no significant difference was found, it does not imply that gender equity practices are no longer necessary.

Overall, there may still be underlying gender biases or inequalities that need to be addressed. Despite ongoing efforts to challenge and reshape gender stereotypes in society and to promote gender equality in education, many higher education institutions still grapple with significant issues of gender inequality and disparities within their communities (Acai et al., 2022). Hence, continued efforts should be made to promote and uphold gender equity practices, ensuring equal opportunities and experiences for all students in education.

### ***Significant Difference in the Level of Perception of College Students about Gender Equity Practices in Terms of Department***

Table 2.2 displays the analysis of gender equity among college students based on their department. The analysis indicates a significant difference in the perception of gender equity across different departments,  $p = 0.002$ . This would reveal that the findings from Table 2.2 showed a significant difference in the perception of gender equity among college students when analyzed by the department. This could indicate that students' perceptions of gender equity practices may vary across different academic departments. Hence, the results reject the null hypothesis, indicating a statistically significant difference in gender equity practices when analyzed by the department.

**Table 2.2: Significant Difference in Gender Equity of College Students by Department**

	<i>Some of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>
Between Groups	8.740	8	1.092	3.121	.002
Within Groups	129.497	370	.350		
Total	138.237	378			

\* $p < 0.05$

It is possible that the curriculum, teaching approaches, or departmental culture may contribute to differing perceptions of gender equity among students. This could also be supported by the data gathered where the CAE Department got the highest mean score of  $M = 4.24$  and CAFAE lowest mean score of  $M = 3.65$ ; however, with its descriptive equivalence, both departments still show a very high and high degree level of perception which connotes that there is constant practice of gender equity activities in CAE Department and frequently evident in the CAFAE Department. This implies that both departments prioritize gender equity activities, with the students under the CAE Department exhibiting powerful perceptions.

Identifying and understanding these departmental differences in the perception of gender equity is crucial for addressing any possible disparities. It provides an opportunity for targeted interventions and strategies to promote gender equity practices within specific departments. This can be supported by this study by Alghneimin et al. (2023), which asserts how specific fields of study still perpetuate gender disparities among students. Its results showed how the education system and educators within institutions play a role in perpetuating gender gaps in STEM courses since, typically, STEM courses are a men-dominated field of study and are still influenced by societal norms and gender stereotypes. Moreover, it is common knowledge and well-documented that women are at a disadvantage in the field of engineering. Bias, stereotypes, and an overall lack of institutional support have all contributed to the harmful discrimination that women have endured. In engineering and computer science, it is still a great leap to provide a platform centered on education to empower individuals to continue addressing gender inequality in academic settings (Griffith et al., 2023).

### ***Significant Difference in the Level of Perception of College Students about Gender Equity Practices in terms of Year Level***

*Table 2.3: Significance Difference in Gender Equity of College Students by Year Level*

	<i>Some of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square<sup>f</sup></i>	<i>p</i>
Between Groups	4.461	3	1.487	4.254
Within Groups	130.733	374	.350	
Total	135.194	377		

\* $p < 0.05$

Table 2.3 presents the analysis of gender equity among college students based on their year level, and the results show a significant difference in the perception of gender equity across different year levels ( $p = 0.006$ ). The findings from Table 2.2 revealed a significant difference in the perception of gender equity among college students when analyzed by year level. Hence, the findings reject the null hypothesis, demonstrating a statistically significant difference in gender equity practices across academic year levels. This implies that students' perceptions of gender equity practices vary depending on their academic year, which implies that year-level-specific factors may influence how students perceive gender equity in the educational setting. Furthermore, understanding these year-level differences in gender equity perception is crucial for addressing existing disparities. This insight provides several HEIs an opportunity to implement targeted interventions and



strategies that promote gender equity practices at specific stages of the academic journey. Moreover, the progression through the academic program, exposure to different courses, or the accumulation of experiences they could encounter in every academic year may contribute to the observed variations in perceptions of gender equity among students. This conforms to the study of Wu (2017), which explores the relationship between students' attitudes towards mathematics (SATM) and math-gender stereotypes (SMGS), examining the influence of both gender and academic year levels.

Attitudes towards mathematics (SATM) and math-gender stereotypes (SMGS) among students at varying educational stages have revealed that gender equity practices vary across different academic year levels. Thus, this study further corroborates the significance of understanding gender equity with its year-level- specific factors, which still necessitate efforts to address the prevailing gender gaps.

In conclusion, the significant difference in the perception of gender equity among college students by year underscores the significance of considering year- level-specific factors when promoting gender equity practices. By acknowledging and addressing these variations, educational institutions can strive towards fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment for all students, regardless of their academic year and subject matter.

### **ADVANCING GENDER EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: EQUISTRIDE RATIONALE:**

Based on the findings, achieving gender equity is necessary to advance equitable opportunity, diversity, and inclusion across all HEIs. Despite the changes that have taken place over the past several years, inequalities and prejudices continue to exist, which has a detrimental effect on the educational experiences and outcomes of persons who belong to marginalized genders. The results also highlighted that it is not just the students who were affected and considered factors about gender equity practices but also the involvement of teachers; hence, the teacher-student interaction was mentioned.

Resolving these problems and establishing an inclusive atmosphere that enables all students to flourish academically and professionally is of utmost importance right now; this is why the proposed program intervention was categorized in various ways. However, the results also revealed a low mean score in the indicator, instructional materials. Designing inclusive gender materials should be highlighted and more focused on improving the teaching-learning strategies that promote inclusive classroom environments. According to Condrón et al. (2023), whether within the higher education setting or in the larger community, educational institutions have the potential to be influential advocates for diversity, inclusion, and gender equality. Efforts to combat gender imbalance in universities should begin on the first day of classes, according to some academics.

### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

EquiStride is an intervention program designed to address the issue of gender equity in higher education. The program aims to empower and promote gender parity by creating a more balanced and inclusive educational environment.

It recognizes the importance of equal representation and opportunities for all genders, acknowledging that disparities and biases can hinder marginalized genders' educational experiences and outcomes. For the benefit of the faculty and administrators, this intervention provides training, workshops, and educational resources; EquiStride can help

educators understand the need for equal representation and develop gender-sensitive practices in the classroom. They are creating a platform for designing gender-inclusive instructional materials and pedagogical strategies to promote them, including gender-neutral representations and activities inside the classroom.

**Program Description:** Enhancement Program

**Program Objectives:**

The participants of the overall program will be able to:

- a. To understand why gender-inclusive policies and practices are crucial in the academic setting.
- b. To provide training and workshops for faculty and staff to raise awareness about gender issues and promote inclusivity.
- c. To enhance the educators' skills and knowledge of gender-sensitive strategies and the practice of inclusive classroom environments.
- d. To design instructional materials and implement effective gender-sensitive strategies for an inclusive classroom environment.

**Target Participants:** The proposed enhancement program beneficiaries are the University of Mindanao faculty, including the pre-service teachers of the College of Teacher Education, who will help implement more gender-sensitive teaching practices.

**Venue:**

AVR 2, GET Bldg. Matina, Davao City

**Program Content:**

- c. Gender Sensitive Instructional Materials Designing Workshop
- d. Assessment and Evaluation Strategies
- e. Classroom Management Strategies: Gender Inclusive Classrooms

**Evaluation Tools:** Survey Forms – Questionnaires

**Time Schedule:** See Action Plan

**Working Committee:** Social Studies Students: Under ILUSSTRADO | CTE CSG

<b>KRA</b>	<b>Specific Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies &amp; Activities</b>	<b>Success Indicator</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Target Beneficiary</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Instructional Materials Designing	Develop Inclusive and Gender-Responsive Instructional Content	Lecture and Output Actualization with Tutorials	Rating of students' results: 75% above	5 hours	UM Main Faculty Members and CTE Pre-service teachers	Support from the administration is needed for the training workshop, including using the University's resources and venue.
Classroom Management Strategies	Develop gender-sensitive behavior management approaches.	Lecture and Tutorials with Case Analysis	Rating of students' results: 75% above	5 hours	UM Main Faculty Members and CTE Pre-service teachers	Support from the administration for the training workshop includes using the University's resources and venue.
Teaching Learning Strategies	Employ strategies to mitigate potential gender-based barriers to student engagement.	Lecture and Tutorials with Case Analysis	Rating of students' results: 75% above	5 hours	UM Main Faculty Members and CTE Pre-service teachers	Support from the administration for the training workshop includes using the University's resources and venue.

*EquiStride Total Sessions: 5 with 3 hours each session*

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, the study provided valuable insights into college students' perception of gender equity in the classroom. It shows that the students generally have a high level of awareness regarding gender fairness. By examining the differences in perception based on gender, department, and year level, the researchers developed an enhancement program. The program aims to empower educators, raise awareness about gender equity, lessen disparities in higher education, and promote egalitarian practices. The study examined whether the students' views on gender fairness differ based on demographics like gender, department, and year level. This study aimed to help educators create a fairer and more inclusive environment for all students.

Additionally, this study found that college students have a generally positive view of fairness regarding instructional materials, learning activities, and teacher- student interactions. It is also shown that the teacher-student relationship is a significant indicator of a student's success in being able to experience and create inclusive learning and an open classroom environment. These interactions are influenced by the experiences and personal beliefs of students and teachers, as explained by the Gender Schema Theory of Bem (1981). The theory emphasizes that students and teachers have preconceived notions of everything due to their gender, which are biologically identified from birth down to all the experiences and personal schema shaped by the norms of society.

Overall, based on the findings, it is recommended that higher education institutions (HEIs) create a fairer and more inclusive educational environment through a series of enhancement workshops. They can do this by requiring gender sensitivity training for faculty and staff, setting clear policies against gender-based discrimination, and using a gender-inclusive curriculum for all subjects. These strategies foster a campus environment that values diversity, equity, and inclusion. Lastly, future researchers should consider using quantitative and qualitative methods, like interviews or focus groups, to better understand students' experiences and perceptions.

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