

The Lived Experiences of the Office of Student Affairs Coordinators on the Implementation of Gender-Neutral Uniform: A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study aimed to explore the experiences of the Office of Student Affairs Coordinators on the implementation of gender-neutral uniform in Davao del Norte. Data was collected from eight participants through in-depth interviews. The lived experiences of the Office of Student Affairs Coordinators on the implementation of gender-neutral uniform policy illuminated by the challenges struggles, and positive experiences as well. It is also broadly defined by the coping mechanisms and insights they share in the implementation of the policy. The experiences of the OSA coordinators revealed cultivating inclusivity during the implementation phase while struggling from cultural resistance brought by several factors such as diversity of cultural and social backgrounds. Coordinators are also challenged in the policy implementation, especially in framing the guidelines and polices. On the other hand, while these challenges pose certain forms of negativity, they also enjoy positive results such as seeing positive reactions from the stakeholders who welcome the policy with great enthusiasm. With all this, this research explored the diverse challenges positively and negatively experienced by the OSA coordinators on the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform policy in schools which includes challenges in the policy implementation, resistance from culture while cultivating inclusivity. The coping mechanism also includes effective communication, collaboration and support, as well as educational programs and awareness. Insights gained include flexibility, utilization of feedback and continuous policy evaluation. Finally, these can bring about changes in the approach to ensure that the policy being implemented will be relevant and timely.

Keywords: Gender-neutral uniform, Office of Student Affairs Coordinators, Davao del Norte, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of gender-neutral uniforms creates a lot of debate and discussion about their application in higher educational institutions. Gender-neutral uniforms are unisex attire that may be worn by students of any gender identification. Traditional school uniforms frequently have gender-specific aspects, with girls required to wear skirts and boys expected to wear pants. Gender-neutral uniforms differ from the usual by providing all available alternatives (Guiao, 2023). Implementation on the other hand refers to “a change-oriented process of approving an action plan” (Krainer, 2021). Hence, Implementation specifically on gender-neutral uniforms refers to the policy given by higher authorities allowing students to wear uniforms of their choice. While some institutions have already made the move to adopt gender-

neutral uniforms, others have not followed accordingly, citing potential implementation issues, stakeholder resistance, and tradition-related worries. Establishing a gender-neutral learning environment requires consideration of equity and inclusiveness. Institutions frequently fail to implement gender-neutral policies, setting different standards for boys and girls as a result.

The National Women's Law Centre (2023) reported on how institutional biases regarding the implementation of gender-neutral uniforms in schools targeted against black girls, their bodies, and attire, disrupting their education. Black girls in District of Columbia schools, like girls around the country, lose out on important class time merely because of their clothing, hairstyle, or cosmetics. They are repeatedly suspended for wearing tight jeans, sent to the office for shoes that aren't quite the proper color, and told they must "cover up" before they can study. Further, In Kerala India, schools introduced gender-neutral uniforms which were supported by 90% of the parents. However, the implementation was too extreme as schools often do away with skirts completely sending a harmful message that maleness is the default gender and maintains the notion that conventional masculinity is essential to boys' identities and any deviation from it is unacceptable (Rakshit, 2021). Kamimoto (2023) cited that in Japan about 40% of Japanese schools have recently begun implementing "gender-neutral" uniforms into their systems, but there are many schools who do not follow and implement gender neutral-uniform due to lack of policy implementation and dissemination of information to its stakeholders allowing students to customize their school attire to suit their taste. Although many parents want to let their children choose their favorite color, they are also worried that if they pick an "unusual" color, their children will become the target of bullying or mocking, as some parents have experienced bullying because of their choice of color.

In Manila, despite of the existing Senate Bill 1986 which was filed on March 8, 2023, promoting gender-neutral uniforms in schools, colleges, and universities, some schools have issues on its implementation because they still have very strict dress codes to the extent that female students are being scolded for their skirts that are lifted and students are forced to switched strands because they don't like wearing pencil skirts (Ducusin, 2023). In addition, a grade 12 transgender become an object of online criticisms after his school in Tacloban implemented a gender-neutral uniform allowing him to wear a uniform of his choice. Many netizens from different sectors came forward to lash out his action after posting on the social media asserting that freedom is not absolute and there will always be limitations despite of the Deped order no. 32 s. 2017 enabling gender-mainstreaming to address gender and sexually oriented issues (Sunstar Philippines, 2022).

Moreover, the implementation of the bill was not taken into account as suggested by a university student who described a tedious and stressful experience in one of the prestigious University in Davao City when he felt offended when the Office of the Student Affairs' (OSA) dress code policy required him to submit a medical certificate certifying that he is on a gender identity transition before he can enter the campus (Gacayan & Ruyeras, 2023). In the City of Mati, the Department of Education uncovered significant gaps that are deliberately ignored concerning gender inequalities and gender discrimination in schools through the help of gender mainstreaming. Hence, they firmly adhered that gender mainstreaming, such as practicing Gender and Development (GAD), and implementing a policy that is more gender-inclusive (e.g. all-gender restrooms, gender-neutral uniforms) in primary education is crucial for the economic and social development of young people as well as for the advancement of the country, as it serves as the cornerstone and vital location for the facilitation of skills, knowledge, and expertise (Sacro et al., 2022).

Studies have been undertaken concerning gender-neutral uniforms in schools. For instance, a study conducted by Chaudhry (2022) investigating the influence of wearing gender-neutral clothes at

educational institutions in relation to the rights of LGBTQ+ learners. However, the studies mentioned focus on the perspective of learners as well as instructors in the implementation of gender-agnostic uniform. On the other hand, this study will focus on the experiences of the OSA coordinators in the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform. Furthermore, the study also aims to discuss the challenges and the insights gained by the OSA coordinators as they implement the policy on gender-neutral uniforms. Taking into consideration the issues on gender-neutral uniforms presented, the researcher finds conduct of this study to be very urgent to provide substantial information that will add strength to the existing literature on gender-neutral uniforms with the aim of helping the people involved to properly implement the policies on gender-neutral uniform in school. Thus, it is vital to immediately address issues related to the importance and the implications of creating an inclusive environment for everyone by allowing them to feel safe in an institution regardless of their attire.

Moreover, the result of this study will give substantial information to higher authorities specifically to the Commission on Higher Education on the imperative part that there would be freedom of choice on choosing the dress they wear in school. This will also give information to the OSA coordinators regarding the proper implementation of gender-neutral uniforms which can support a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. Their experiences and strategies may lead to openness about this certain issue and their insights could lead to making this policy possible in the context of higher education institutions. Further, this study will be disseminated both online and offline (e.g., research forums & journals) which can become a good source of information and additional literature for OSA coordinators and teachers who are working in the same field. The study can also benefit other authors by providing them with data that can help them as they explore the same topic.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore and understand the implementation of gender-neutral uniforms as spearheaded by the coordinators of the Office of Student Affairs as they implement the policy for gender-neutral uniforms in a higher education institution in Davao del Norte.

At this stage in research, gender-neutral uniform policy implementation may somehow affect the quality of education in higher institutions as the policy involved promotes gender inclusivity and upholds the welfare of every student. The study will also delve into the lived experiences of OSA Coordinators focusing on their experiences, coping strategies, and the insights they gained including the action plan on how the policy will be enacted in the context of the school setting.

Research Questions

1. What are the lived-experiences of the OSA coordinators on the implementation of gender-neutral uniform?
2. How do the OSA Coordinators cope with the challenges they encountered in the implementation of the gender-neutral uniforms?
3. What are the insights of the OSA Coordinators on the implementation of gender-neutral uniform in an institution?

Theoretical Lens

This study is gleaned on under the filed Senate Bill No. 1986 of Senator Raffy Tulfo, which seeks to establish a more inclusive and comfortable environment of learning for all students, irrespective of gender. SB No. 1986 is a policy that permits female students to wear pants or trousers at all levels in both public and private schools, to guarantee that everyone has flexible, gender-neutral options for their school uniform.

Proportionate to the gender-neutral uniforms, school uniform policy both in public and private schools mandates that students must wear school uniforms in conformity with their gender (girls wear skirts, boys wear pants). Although the school uniform policy does not seem harmful to everyone, it could exacerbate gender inequality, in a way that girls are forced to wear something they are uncomfortable with (skirts) while boys are allowed to wear something that is convenient for them. It is also important to note that many students nowadays are having a gender identity crisis, which makes them uneasy with their school uniforms. Thus, approving SB. No. 1986, in all schools, public or private, will create a safer and more inclusive environment for students. In addition to that, it is imperative that a gender-neutral uniform be implemented in educational settings as it allows all students to feel like they belong in a community that accepts them for who they are, regardless of what they choose to wear in school.

This study is further viewed considering John Rawls' Theory of Justice (1971), which emphasized that all people should be treated equally, that similar people should have equal access to opportunities and basic liberties, and that the most disadvantaged members of society should benefit the most. A just society functions more smoothly, in Rawls' opinion, when this notion of justice is applied.

In connection with the theory of Rawls' gender-neutral uniforms can be an effective instrument for advancing justice and inclusivity. Gender-neutral uniforms can contribute to a better and more equitable educational environment for all learners by dismantling traditional gender stereotypes, opposing gender stereotyping, promoting gender diversity, and encouraging personal expression. Gender-neutral uniforms must, however, be implemented carefully, discussed frequently, and supported by an inclusive culture to fulfill their intended function.

This study is also anchored to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order No. 1 series of 2015 or Establishing the Policies and Guidelines on Gender and Development (GAD) in the CHED and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). GAD primarily focuses on two main frameworks namely Gender Roles and Social Relations Analysis. Gender roles highlight how identities are socially constructed in the home and highlight expectations about "maleness and femaleness" in terms of resource access. The social aspects of the hierarchical power relations ingrained in social institutions are shown by social relations analysis, which also highlights how these relations affect "the relative position of men and women in society." GAD policies seek to reinterpret conventional gender role expectations to promote gender equality, including the capacity to engage in public life.

In the case of gender-neutral uniforms, the study would probably investigate how societal norms, and traditionally constructed expectations, might affect a person's identity, including how they feel about uniforms that are not typically linked with their gender. More so, the social connection aspect makes clear how historically created roles for either gender have been shaped by hierarchical power relations that are ingrained in social institutions like schools. For instance, how do children with various gender schemas respond to a school uniform policy that mandates all students to wear the same sort of clothes, regardless of gender, if girls are usually expected to wear skirts and boys are supposed to wear pants. This notion suggests that individuals develop mental models, or gender schemas, to assist them in organizing and understanding information linked to gender. Furthermore, these are dynamic, changing throughout time in response to shifting perspectives and social occurrences. While gender-neutral uniforms were not specified in the CHED Memorandum Order No. 1 series of 2015, educational institutions might use this to question and disrupt conventional gender schemas, enabling students to freely explore and express their gender identity. More accommodating and equitable views of gender roles and identities may result from this.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This qualitative research focuses on the eight participants which are the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) Coordinators in the Higher Education Institutions in Davao del Norte, Philippines, and conducted between July and August 2024, academic year 2024-2025. The participants are involved in an in-depth interview during the conduct of the study.

Nonetheless, discussions provided in this study furnished them with vital information and detailed descriptions of the participants' experiences, challenges, and insights in the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform, and it does not account for the perspectives of people external to the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform policy.

Importance of the Study

The results of this research were utilized as useful information on the deployment of gender-neutral uniforms at higher education institutions in Davao del Norte, and the outcome might be extremely significant and helpful to the following: The results of this research may be valuable to the OSA Coordinators, this will help them enhanced their implementation and policies on gender-neutral uniform in their institution to cater students who are part of the LGBTQIA+ who are willing to pursue their studies. To the teachers, it can contribute to a more inclusive and equitable classroom environment, reducing gender-based stereotypes and promoting a sense of belonging for all students. This can foster a more positive and productive learning atmosphere for everyone.

Furthermore, the outcomes of this study may be very beneficial to the school administrators, for they will be able to promote inclusive education through implementing gender-neutral uniform to the students. Institutional practices might change for the better, improving students' general wellbeing and academic experience.

To the students who identify as LGBTQIA+ will be directly impacted by the study's findings. A more welcoming and encouraging environment for students of all gender identities is the goal of implementing gender-neutral clothing. School communities that are more welcoming and diverse will help students feel more like they belong and can freely express who they are.

The Commission on Higher Education can offer insightful information about the potential and difficulties involved in implementing gender-neutral uniforms in higher education settings. The study's findings might be used by CHED to update or develop policies pertaining to gender inclusion in the area's higher education system. It may aid in the formulation of policies or suggestions for other colleges and universities under CHED's purview, promoting a more diverse and inclusive learning environment.

To the future researchers, it will develop their research on the gaps that this research will identify in the final report. In the process, it is important to compare what will be the results of this study with what has been found in other studies in other countries. Thus, other researchers will build their research on the recommendations of this research.

Definition of Terms

The following concepts are defined conceptually and operationally for the purpose of accuracy and ease of understanding in this study.

OSA Coordinators- refers to the person in charge of the department which provides a major role in upholding students' well-being and progress by implementing programs such as advising, counseling, health services, career development, athletics and student life and development (Friedman, 2023).

In this study, it is defined as the school personnel who are assigned in the conduct and implementation of school policy and discipline of the students.

Gender Neutral Uniform- are unisex attire that may be worn by pupils of any gender identification (Guiao, 2023).

In this study this is defined as a uniform that is not specifically designed for one gender or the other. They are often designed to be comfortable and practical for all students, regardless of their gender identity or expression. These uniforms can promote inclusivity, equality, and personal expression in higher education settings.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section on literature review offers a comprehensive review of current research, theories, and concepts concerning the lived experiences of the Office of Student Affairs Coordinators in implementing gender-neutral uniform policies in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) located in Davao del Norte. This section seeks to provide background context by referencing pertinent research papers and insights that highlight the challenges, achievements, and best practices experienced by OSA coordinators in their efforts to promote inclusive learning environments for students, especially those who identify as LGBTQIA+. It will provide a basis for understanding the gender-neutral uniform implementation as it is today by synthesizing these numerous amounts of knowledge.

Overview of Gender-Neutral Uniform Policy

A study conducted by Verge et al. (2022), stated that efforts to higher education in terms of gender confront resistance rooted in gender specific and seemingly gender-neutral academic informal rules created a mainstream that has the potential to disseminate the continuous and systematic focus on gender. Gender equality in higher education necessitates concentrating on both the more subtle, supposedly gender-neutral informal rules that reinforce gender bias and the explicit regulations that are exclusive to a given gender. To achieve this, it could be necessary to question and adapt to the current academic culture to make it.

Gender-neutral uniforms have the main advantage of encouraging inclusivity. In today's diverse learning environment, they uphold unique identities and make sure everyone feels recognized and acknowledged. It is a declaration that schools value, acknowledge, and cater to the whole range of gender identities. Gender-neutral uniforms promote a sense of equality among students by giving all of them the same wardrobe options. The transition from unisex clothing to gender-neutral uniforms is a significant improvement. It represents a progressive change toward a school setting that is more equitable, courteous, and inclusive so that everyone can feel comfortable and represented (Network Association of Uniform Manufacturers & Distributors, 2024).

Additionally, gender-neutral school uniform policies aim to address issues like gender stereotypes and limiting self-expression but can be controversial. For example, Priory School in Lewes, England, mandated trousers for all students under a gender-neutral policy. Parents and students argued this was not truly inclusive, stating a genuine policy would offer both skirts and trousers as options. Some parents also questioned the necessity of such uniforms for academic success. (McMurray, 2021).

Gender identity may be reliably established through school uniforms. They give a continuous, eye-catching demonstration of gender difference while upholding traditional gender norms. Schools have been holding onto their uniforms for a long time for the sake of tradition and school identity. OSA revealed the need for gender-inclusive methods when implementing gender-neutral uniforms in higher education, the assessment of existing literature, the reality that these institutions are not gender-neutral, the implementation process, and the fact that these institutions actively generate and perpetuate gender

relations are issues that schools have long grappled with (Amiya, 2022).

Furthermore, by introducing a gender-neutral uniform policy on May 27, 2024, the University of Northern Philippines Student Council (UNP-SC) has made a substantial contribution to the advancement of inclusivity and gender equality. This program is a part of a larger effort to establish a more equal learning environment in which students may express themselves freely and without worrying about harassment or discrimination. Furthermore, in response to the growing demand for inclusivity and equality in educational institutions, the UNP-SC developed a gender-neutral uniform policy. The council wants to provide students with the opportunity to dress in a way that is gender-neutral in order to foster an environment where everyone is respected and accepted for who they are, regardless of how they want to represent their gender as per Villanueva (2024).

Concurrently, as per Bishop et al. (2020), an ongoing corpus of research delineates the tactics employed by the Student Affairs Coordinator to foster LGBTQ students' sense of safety and success in the classroom. First, policies explicitly listing protected groups like LGBTQ students help create inclusive environments. Secondly, professional development equips teachers and other school staff with the necessary resources to safeguard and assist every student such as gender-inclusive comfort rooms. Third, a positive school atmosphere is shaped by access to SOGIE-inclusive resources and curricula. Finally, student-run groups like Gender-Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) improve student wellbeing and foster a healthier school climate. Although there is a growing body of literature and student support for gender-neutral comfort rooms, there continues to be opposition to the installation of gender-inclusive facilities, particularly from stakeholders who maintain traditional norms that dictate that comfort rooms for men and women should be different and that comfort rooms for LGBTQ individuals should be determined by their biological gender (Francis et al., 2022).

Moreover, Redden et al. (2020) asserted that Student Affairs Coordinators must address current notions of exclusion and inclusion to guarantee that all students would feel that they belong, regardless of their differences. While the issues of teaching children have always been complex, decreasing inequality has emerged as one of the most important responsibilities facing schools. These expectations are made more pressing by growing knowledge of how differences affect school experiences and academic results. Hence, encouraging bias-free communication and equitable access to resources is essential, ensuring no group is underserved or overlooked. Staff training on implicit bias is crucial to help educators recognize and reduce biases, ensuring fair treatment in both academic and non-academic settings. Additionally, implementing anonymous reporting mechanisms allows students to report discrimination without fear of retaliation, reinforcing a neutral environment.

Lived Experiences and Challenges of OSA Coordinators on Gender-Neutral Uniform Policy

By creating a policy that acknowledges the complexities of the first amendment, schools can uphold student rights while enforcing a dress code. For the student affairs coordinator to foster inclusion in the educational setting, gender-inclusive uniforms must be promoted as part of a more inclusive policy change. The transmission and perpetuation of cultural value patterns is facilitated by systems. As a result, student affair coordinators often face challenges in challenging established conventions. One such system is the division of clothes into gender-specific categories (Raymond, 2019).

Further, Oomen (2022) highlighted that gender inequality, often rooted in patriarchal structures, remains a pervasive issue in many societies. This emphasizes the need for gender sensitization programs in schools to raise awareness about gender identity. Transgender students face significant discrimination, with alarmingly low and worsening pass rates. Bullying from both students and teachers, driven by a lack of

understanding about gender identity, exacerbates this issue.

Accordingly, Chaviz et al. (2020) noted that student affairs coordinators advocating gender-neutral uniforms often face resistance due to institutional inertia and entrenched societal norms. This opposition stems from deeply ingrained gender roles and skepticism from educators and students. Implementing gender-neutral policies is challenging in schools with long-standing traditional practices, where fears of disrupting customs lead to pushbacks. This was seen in gender equity efforts in sports, which elicited reactions ranging from enthusiasm to hostility. Marginalized students tend to favor gender-neutral rules but often feel unsupported by faculty and administration, further complicating implementation efforts.

As mentioned by the European Institute for Gender Equality (2024), numerous obstacles hinder the implementation of gender-inclusive uniforms, often due to individual or institutional resistance to gender equality. This resistance may be explicit or subtle, making it challenging to overcome. Clear commitment from senior management, along with dedicated time and training, is essential to address these barriers. While policy implementation is easier with existing support, gaining widespread buy-in from all staff levels remains difficult.

Administratively, schools could be hesitant because of worries about consistency, discipline, and extra expenses related to uniform redesign. Vague policies can also result in uneven enforcement and legal difficulties in areas without protective laws. In addition, kids who choose gender-neutral uniforms may become targets of bullying, and logistical problems with fit and design may make implementation more difficult. Not to mention, McQuillan (2021) adhered that there are various obstacles to implementing a standard policy that is gender inclusive. First, the number of local school boards that have passed explicit policies addressing gender identity, expression, and sexual orientation is unknown.

School uniforms have traditionally reinforced gender stereotypes by clearly distinguishing between male and female attire, limiting self-expression for those who do not conform to these norms. In contrast, the rise of gender-neutral uniforms seeks to challenge and undermine these stereotypes, promoting a more inclusive approach. Implementing gender-neutral uniforms can enhance the school environment in several ways. By eliminating overt distinctions in clothing, instances of bullying and harassment can be reduced, as students are less likely to be targeted based on their appearance or gender identity, fostering a safer and more welcoming atmosphere. Additionally, allowing all students to choose from a variety of uniform options encourages self-expression and builds self-confidence. Furthermore, gender-neutral uniforms signal that all students are respected and valued equally, regardless of their gender identity, helping to dismantle harmful stereotypes and biases (Wood, 2024).

On the other hand, while the school uniform policy appears to be acceptable, it has the potential to exacerbate gender disparity. Regardless of a student's gender, the gender uniform policy should be adaptive and provide freedom of choice. This involves choosing clothing that provides freedom of movement, comfort, and safety while also taking climate into account (Saumya, 2022).

In addition, Reidy (2021) mentioned that human rights legislation addressing equity and freedom from religious, or gender discrimination has been linked to school uniform policies. This legislation can help mediate conflicts over uniform design when institutional policies or societal norms fall short. Notably, there is no strong evidence that implementing a gender-inclusive uniform directly enhances academic performance; rather, it appears that uniforms may foster an environment conducive to academic success. Furthermore, gender-neutral uniforms eliminate "competitive dressing," reducing pressure to wear specific (often expensive) brands, and help diminish socioeconomic distinctions, including those among male, female, and LGBTQ member students.

Also, the expectations of gender-specific behavior are reinforced by gender-specific uniforms, and parents frequently subtly change their children's wardrobe choices to make them more "socially acceptable," even though they feel differently. Uniforms should not serve to further perpetuate gender stereotypes, hence allowing students to dress how comfortable they feel rather than based on their gender identity is crucial. Thus, encouraging gender-inclusive uniforms foster a sense of inclusivity and belongingness, which then leads to an improved overall well-being of students (Chaudhry, 2022).

Moreover, implementing gender-neutral uniforms will make students feel less constrained by their gender identity. It also confronts gender stereotypes about men only wearing pants and women only dressing in "feminine" ways. As some parents point out, gender-inclusive uniforms may also unintentionally teach young, school-age children that it's acceptable to defy outdated stereotypes about how men and women should live their lives by challenging preconceived notions about how they should dress in society as per Rakshit (2021).

In keeping with the dynamic of sustainable change, Singh (2020) asserted that principals have an obligation to build an effective teaching and learning culture in their schools through collaborative interaction with members of the school management team and student affairs coordinators. They are important in maintaining the culture and values that help students see themselves in relation to the world, develop a sense of self-worth and identity, and become well-respected members of society. Principals, whether intentionally or inadvertently, filter information, skills, and attitudes that shape and build inclusive viewpoints and practices through staff and parent participation. They could direct, steer, and encourage the path of change by utilizing their influence and power to create an inclusive environment for all students, regardless of gender. To provide all students with a sense of belonging, principals and the student affairs coordinator must work together.

On top of that, Wood (2023) strongly believed that educators ought to understand how their attitudes and beliefs affect the experiences of their students. Regardless of a student's gender identity, schools may foster a more inclusive and supportive atmosphere by addressing the topic of gender-neutral school uniforms with an open mind. The community's cooperation is essential to the successful adoption of gender neutral uniform policies. Open communication among staff, parents, and students can help schools build a shared sense of responsibility and dedication to the advancement of gender equality. This cooperative effort makes it possible to guarantee that the entire school community will welcome the introduction of new uniform policies with understanding and enthusiasm.

Furthermore, to develop accessible and sustainable policies that promote an inclusive environment, school heads and student leaders are encouraged to consult with parents, guardians, teachers, and staff. All students should feel welcome and at ease in their learning place, which is why these should recognize and acknowledge diversity. They must take all reasonable steps to ensure that every student may participate in and be engaged in their education, and to do this, they must create and put into effect inclusive and fair uniform regulations that are founded on a rights-based framework. These kinds of regulations ought to uphold equity, protect students from prejudice, abuse, or harassment, and improve equal access to opportunities while cultivating a supportive environment for every student (Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, 2024).

Shiwani (2021) also asserted that to create an inclusive learning environment, school administrators must work together to embrace gender-neutral uniforms. Successful collaborations between school administrators can significantly improve the outcomes of gender equality programs, such as uniform regulations. Through the introduction of gender-neutral clothing, head teachers have the strategic

leadership to reduce gender stereotyping and play a pivotal role in supporting inclusive practices. Heads of schools should work together to remove systemic obstacles to gender equality in education, highlighting the necessity of well-coordinated partnerships to promote inclusive learning environments. Subsequently, the absence of formal partnerships creates obstacles for many schools, making it difficult to implement gender-neutral policies in an efficient manner.

On the other hand, gender-neutral school uniforms strive to foster a more inclusive and fairer atmosphere for education. Students of any gender identification are encouraged to wear uniforms as they are gender neutral. Traditional school uniforms, which require girls to wear skirts and boys to wear pants, typically include elements that are distinctive to one gender over the other. By providing gender-neutral alternatives, schools may help debunk these stereotypes and level equal opportunities for the student body (Abasola, 2023).

Additionally, Knipp and Stevenson (2022) deduced that most previous research on gender-neutral uniforms looked at the effectiveness of them but did not find evidence to suggest that wearing them had a substantial impact on students' self-esteem, safety, conduct, or academic performance. Gender-neutral uniform schools encourage self-expression within realistic constraints because one high school pointed out, "Within our uniform guidelines, students are able to be creative, have fun, and express themselves through appropriate accessories and uniform options."

Furthermore, as specified by Chaudhry et al. (2022), a growing number of individuals have begun to accept the ideals of gender-neutral clothing, an expression of acceptance and diversity, and a wider range of represented and portrayed genders. Both established and new clothing companies are attempting to provide a wider range of inclusive and diverse options. Gender-neutral uniforms can contribute to the development of a more welcoming and inclusive school climate by dispelling the myth that boys and girls should dress differently.

In addition, McMurray (2021) asserted that gender-neutral uniforms must be pursued because wearing a uniform that contradicts their gender identity can cause stress, anxiety, and discomfort for young transgender people, who are highly sensitive and generally distressed by their gendered appearance, according to numerous studies that examined the experiences of gender variant and transgender children. Studies show that many children who identify as transgender also struggle with wearing non-gender-neutral school uniforms, using the toilet, and taking part in extracurricular activities because of what they're wearing.

Moreover, Wolfe (2024) specified that gender-neutral uniforms are important because they both serve to actualize what is significant and have an individual impact on the physiques of those who wear them no matter the gender. Both consciously and subconsciously, bodies respond affectively to the gender-neutral uniform by feeling either comfortable or uncomfortable physically and emotionally. Students who have trouble fitting into the compulsory uniform suffer physical pain while engaging in regular school activities and emotional pain since it does not fit their gender perspective. It's crucial to consider the opinions of people who might believe that wearing gender-neutral clothing prevents them from expressing their gender identity in the way they see fit. Perhaps the best course of action is to have a flexible stance that provides alternatives while still encouraging equality and inclusiveness.

In conclusion, Velding (2022) inferred that research further supports the gender-neutral school uniforms as they may be utilized to promote more inclusive policies and staff professional development in addition to creating a gender-inclusive learning environment for pupils. Giving people these options may also contribute to the creation of a more accepting and encouraging atmosphere for those who do not fit

traditional gender norms.

Coping Strategies of OSA Coordinators on Gender-Neutral Uniform Policy

A more diverse and equal learning environment will be promoted by the adoption of gender-neutral school uniforms, which also have practical and healthy advantages. Senator Raffy Tulfo introduced Senate Bill No. 1986, popularly known as the Pants for Her Act, which calls for a standard policy that permits more freedom of movement and lowers the possibility of harassment and discrimination. The bill emphasizes how seemingly harmless school uniform standards can really contribute to gender inequality. It advocates uniform policies that support equity by offering gender-neutral options and guaranteeing that every student can dress in a way that makes them feel good about themselves. Schools would enable students and their families to make decisions that reflect individual preferences and needs by providing pants as an option in addition to conventional skirts, thereby establishing a more supportive and inclusive learning environment (Abasola, 2023).

The acceptance of peers is crucial in reducing bullying and enhancing emotional health, especially for pupils wearing gender-neutral uniform as per Dimauro (2020). Additionally, Bernardo (2019), indicated that peer involvement also facilitates the transition by fostering a wider awareness of inclusivity because students are more likely to support rather than oppose change when their peers are involved in policy discussions and implementation. Peer cooperation is therefore essential to the effective adoption and normalization of gender-inclusive uniforms. Furthermore, Inclusive Education (2024) suggests that when support groups are available, students report less harassment and bullying based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Stilwill (2022) in her study addressed the American high school administrators' difficulty in developing inclusive policies that might protect transgender students from harassment or bullying. It was proposed that educational institutions create policies that center on the unique risks of victimization and bullying that transgender children may encounter. Furthermore, a high school official claims that although inclusive policies for transgender students have not yet been reviewed, they should be.

Addressing the interpersonal qualities that alleviate feelings of gender dysphoria is crucial. This concept, often referred to as "bedside manners," encompasses effective communication, respect, trust, understanding, and professionalism. Key attributes include empathy, open-mindedness, sensitivity, and reassurance. Furthermore, effective communication is vital; asking relevant, sensitive questions rather than invasive ones, ensuring a safe communicative environment that promotes confidence and calmness (Kerr et al., 2021).

In addition, schools and districts must prioritize professional development to enhance awareness and capacity in these areas. Unfortunately, not all locations offer the same level of support, resulting in varied experiences for diverse students nationwide. Consequently, understanding different perspectives on allyship is important, as some approaches may be seen as genuine while others may come across as self-serving. To cultivate authentic allyship, it's essential to listen to LGBTQ+ students without interjecting personal narratives. Ultimately, this approach fosters a respectful and supportive environment, helping those who have faced stigma and stress. Addressing harm and ensuring safety are essential for schools to provide proactive and sustainable support (Allison, n.d.)

Moreover, Watts (2022) adhered that ensuring that students feel included is just as important as implementing inclusive measures. Monitoring staff and student perceptions of the setting's inclusion on a frequent basis by peer support groups, school councils, student voice surveys, and other means. To adjust to the policy, it is recommended to have ongoing conversations and excellent communication with students.

This will also help to generate more suggestions for how the policy should be implemented.

As per the book of Simons et al. (2019) in their “Trans Youth in Education”, how educators and instructors respond to concerns about gender uniform in the classroom can either enhance or diminish students' experiences. The school counselor, in close collaboration with other relevant parties, can play a significant role in this process as an advocate for transgender, intersex, and genderqueer (TIG) kids. After reviewing current events in the USA, suggestions are given, and resources are pointed out to help school counselors validate TIG students and enhance educational environments to support their intellectual, social, and emotional success.

Meanwhile, HRC Foundation (2024) revealed that all educators and student leaders share the same objective of establishing schools that support academic performance, offer both physical and emotional safety, and embrace all students. By lowering gender role stereotypes and enabling students to express their interests and discover confidence in their abilities, school leaders can foster gender-inclusive environments that affirm all students. School administrators can foster a gender-inclusive school by teaching staff members about the intricacies of gender and providing them with targeted training on how to put an end to bullying, harassment, and unpleasant teasing. All employees of the school, including bus drivers, cafeteria workers, administrative staff, teachers, aides, and counselors, should get training.

In addition, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2017) explained that in a safe and secure learning environment, both boys and girls need to feel welcomed. Governments, educational institutions, instructors, and students all have a responsibility to guarantee that schools are free from prejudice and violence and offer high-quality, gender-sensitive education. In order to do this, schools should create curriculum that are inclusive of all genders and do not discriminate. They may additionally assist in strengthening the policy through staff and teacher training, which includes incorporating gender sensitivity into lessons and providing appropriate orientation on how the policy encourages education and awareness.

To guarantee that a gender-inclusive uniform policy is implemented in schools and continues to be effective for all students, it must be thoroughly reviewed and continuously monitored. Creating anonymous feedback channels is one method to do this, enabling students to voice any problems or worries about the policy without worrying about being judged. This makes it easier to guarantee that any issues are resolved quickly and that the uniform policy still satisfies the wide range of needs of the student population (Wiggins, 2021).

Furthermore, Hallahan and Worth (2021) firmly believed that review committees are essential to preserving the efficacy and inclusivity of a school uniform policy that is inclusive of all genders. Representatives from a range of stakeholder groups, such as parents, teachers, students, and school administrators, should serve on these committees. Through the integration of varied viewpoints, the committees are able to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy on a regular basis and pinpoint opportunities for enhancement. This cooperative strategy guarantees that the policy will always be pertinent, flexible enough to meet evolving requirements, and committed to fostering an inclusive learning environment for all students.

On top of that, for a gender-inclusive uniform policy to be successfully implemented in schools, there must be clear guidelines as per the Department of Education of the United Kingdom (2024). The rules must support the school's expectations for preserving a civil and supportive learning environment, encouraging students' professionalism and feeling of community. To ensure that parents, educators, and students all agree on what is appropriate, it is crucial that these regulations are clear and simple to comprehend.

Ensuring that everyone is informed and in agreement with the policy's objectives can be further achieved through regular communication of these rules and the rationale behind them.

Moreover, as mentioned by Parenting Focus (2024); to properly monitor and carry out a gender-inclusive uniform policy in schools, workers must get training. Schools may make sure that educators are prepared to serve children under the new policy by giving teachers and staff thorough training. The goal of this training should be to help staff members better comprehend the range of difficulties and experiences that students may face by promoting inclusivity and increasing sensitivity to gender diversity. Teachers can become adept at getting feedback from students and spotting problems with the policy, which will help them deal with complaints in a timely and appropriate manner.

Administrators play a key role in implementing gender-inclusive uniforms by setting the tone, updating policies, and fostering a positive atmosphere. They ensure regulations clearly address gender identity and inclusivity, while also providing staff training and educating students to reduce resistance. Administrators support gender-nonconforming students by creating safe spaces, offering counseling, and addressing bullying. Engaging with parents and the community further helps smooth the transition and gain acceptance, contributing to an inclusive school environment (Genspect, 2024). Mateo (2022) also averred the importance of administrative support as he stated in his article that the creation of standard regulations with options that are explicitly gender-neutral can be spearheaded by administrators. As an illustration of their commitment to inclusivity and respect for all students, the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila (PLM) recently implemented a gender-neutral uniform policy that permits students to wear clothing that corresponds with their gender identity.

On top of that, there are various ways to demonstrate administrative support. Educator training programs, like the REFLECT program, can be used to help teachers and staff better understand gender issues and provide them with ways to support every student, as well as to give their support in the implementation of the gender-inclusive uniform policy. This is one of the above initiatives. Teachers are encouraged by this training to examine their own prejudices and implement inclusive teaching strategies, to better enhance an inclusive environment (Kollmayer et al., 2020).

Moreover, administrator support is necessary to make sure that consistent policies adhere to the applicable laws that support equality. Senator Raffy Tulfo's "Pants for Her Act" emphasizes the necessity for schools to have gender-neutral uniform policies to combat prejudice and advance student equality. Support from the administration can make it easier for schools to establish these kinds of laws as mentioned by Abasola (2023).

In addition to that, Dispatch (2022) firmly believed that gender-inclusive policy implementation requires efficient resource allocation. Administrators have the authority to set aside funds for a variety of uniform choices that let students freely represent who they are. This involves offering financial support to families that might find it difficult to pay for uniform expenses, so fostering fair access.

Consequently, in the study of Burghardt et al. (2021), psychiatric therapies found that interventions are mostly gender-neutral; highlighting the necessity for gender-sensitive approaches. Gender-sensitive approaches consider the needs and experiences of people according to their gender identity. Addressing any trauma or discrimination a person may have suffered because of their gender, as well as how gender norms and expectations may affect their mental health, can all fall under this category.

In conclusion, Gardiner (2022), encourages curricular inclusion of gender studies and gender equality training because of the existence of official and informal institutions, as well as micropolitical strategies, within companies can have an impact on the successful applications of gender views Thus, reformation

in implementing gender-neutral uniforms in higher education is highly encouraged to re-align the growing population of the members of LGBTQIA+.

Insights of OSA Coordinators on Gender-Neutral Uniform Policy

Universities must address gender inequalities and be wary of regulations that appear to be gender-neutral but may nevertheless perpetuate gender prejudices. To get insight into the deployment of gender-neutral uniforms in higher education it requires to analyze current gender inequalities and resistance to gender equality programs in universities and colleges. In his study, it is found out that universities actively generate and replicate gender relations and ideas, demonstrating that they are not gender-neutral institutions. This shows that establishing gender-neutral uniforms may face strong resistance from seemingly gender-neutral academic informal regulations (Powell et al., 2020).

Moreover, Alliance International University (2024) reiterates that all students are valued and served by implementing gender-inclusive uniform, as it encourages learning and gives them the chance to have a positive educational experience. It entails setting up a classroom where each student receives equal treatment and access to instruction. Its objectives are to challenge, involve, and involve every learner. The deliberate use of tactics that promote a positive learning environment for all students is also known as inclusive teaching. The full participation of students of all genders is thus encouraged by gender-inclusive uniforms and inclusive teaching, which "respond(s) to the harmful impact of gender stereotyping and misgendering on student learning."

Furthermore, diverse tactics can be employed to advance gender equality in education. For example, implementing curriculum and teaching strategies that are inclusive and sensitive to the various needs of all students, including boys and girls, is known as gender-responsive teaching and learning. Establishing an atmosphere where all students, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, feel appreciated and respected is a key component of inclusive education policies and practices. This entails allowing the students to wear any uniform they are comfortable with (Gray Group International Insights, 2024).

On top of that, Lebos (2022) specified that in school policies, handbooks, and instructional materials, referring to students as "individuals" instead of "boys" or "girls" can assist lessen bias, especially in academic topics or extracurricular activities that are often associated with one gender. Teachers and administrators can concentrate on areas where changes are required, specifically regarding school uniforms, by addressing the components of school culture that create barriers for males, girls, and non-binary students. School administrators and student affairs coordinators can foster a more welcoming environment where students feel free to express themselves by instituting gender-inclusive uniforms.

Gender-inclusive uniform implementation in educational institutions requires strong stakeholder participation. It is crucial to effectively communicate the reasons for implementing gender-inclusive uniforms to all relevant parties. Participating in dialogues with stakeholder aids in elucidating the advantages of these strategies, which encompass diminishing gender stereotypes and advancing a fairer educational setting. Parents and community people may advocate for the policy more vehemently because of this awareness Network Association of Uniform Manufacturers & Distributors (2024).

First and foremost, Kuteesa et al. (2024) strongly explained that policy measures need to put equal access to education first, making sure that institutional, cultural, and economic barriers are removed. Second, it is critical to challenge prejudices and sociocultural conventions. Curriculum materials ought to be created with diversity and a challenge to gender stereotypes in mind. Furthermore, encouraging a supportive atmosphere for gender equity in education can be achieved through involving communities and stakeholders

in discussions and awareness campaigns.

Additionally, Dimauro (2020) further asserted that the implementation of gender-inclusive uniforms is contingent upon stakeholder involvement, which cultivates collaboration, guarantees that the policy incorporates a range of viewpoints, and cultivates a wider base of support within the school community. The successful deployment of gender-inclusive uniforms can be enhanced by active stakeholder involvement. Participating in the decision-making process increases the likelihood that stakeholders will support changes during implementation and assist in uniformly enforcing the policy.

For a gender-inclusive uniform policy in schools to be flexible and adaptable, responsive modifications are essential. Schools need to be ready to adjust their guidelines in response to recommendations from parents and students on how comfortable and useful the uniforms are. This openness to change guarantees that the policy stays current and successfully satisfies the wide range of needs of the student body (Tulfo, 2023).

Further, as emphasized by Uniform Market (2024), creating effective communication strategies is essential for the successful implementation of gender-inclusive uniform policies in schools. Establishing feedback systems allows for ongoing discussions and modifications to policies, ensuring that all perspectives are heard. It is important to utilize communication channels that resonate with students, such as suggestion boxes, meetings, or digital platforms, to foster a responsive environment that accommodates diverse student needs.

Additionally, Douglas (2019) explained that incorporating gender roles, norms, and equality training into pre-service and continuing teacher education enhances educators' ability to provide gender-responsive instruction. This training should include practical workshops, thoughtful follow-ups, and peer support to ensure instructors are well-equipped to support all students. In addition, to make the implementation of gender-inclusive uniforms in schools flexible and adaptive, tactics should include actively incorporating students in the design and selection of uniform options. Participating in decision-making with students promotes a feeling of accountability and guarantees that uniforms represent the various demands and preferences of the student body.

Consequently, the coordinator of student affairs needs to consider the cultural and religious backgrounds of the students, permitting religious clothing like turbans and hijabs while preserving gender inclusivity in the way the policy is applied. This strategy is essential for fostering an atmosphere that values the identities of all students and encourages inclusivity as stated by Jessiman et al. (2022).

Furthermore, Gil (2021) suggested that achieving a quality implementation of gender-neutral uniform policy is a complex and demanding process that necessitates flexible solutions to unexpected implementation problems, monitoring of individual performance, and group collaboration.

To promote inclusivity and student engagement, gender-inclusive uniform policies must include a feedback mechanism. The policy can better reflect the needs and desires of all parties, ensuring that everyone feels comfortable and represented by soliciting feedback from students with a variety of gender identities. Students who are involved in the decision-making process also feel more like they own the policy, which motivates them to support it and follow it because they feel that their opinions have been heard and are important in creating an inclusive environment (Smith et al., 2023).

Moreover, Hall (2024) averred that maintaining the relevance and efficacy of a gender-inclusive uniform policy for students requires constant refinement through frequent feedback. This versatility allows the policy to evolve in response to shifting societal standards and student expectations. An effective uniform policy can raise spirits by instilling a sense of worth and respect in students, which in turn creates a more

upbeat and effective learning environment. Including a robust feedback process ensures that the policy meets the requirements of all students and goes beyond merely establishing a policy. It also fosters a culture of inclusivity and continuous growth.

In addition, Chaudhry (2022) also averted that feedback mechanisms can be used to pinpoint specific gender equality issues, such as those affecting students who have sensory problems or who feel excluded by traditional uniform standards. Schools can establish a more accommodating atmosphere that values the varied needs of their students by addressing these issues through feedback.

The implementation of gender-neutral uniforms must adhere to existing legal frameworks. In the United Kingdom, for example, the Equality Act 2010 provides the legal foundation for gender-inclusive uniforms. This rule prohibits discrimination in school uniform policies based on gender identity or sex. Schools are asked to develop policies that support equity and remove barriers to student participation in class activities. It is even more crucial that educational institutions establish inclusive policies that protect each student's right to express their gender identity because of the legal backing for these rights (Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, 2024).

On top of that, Mergler (2017) explained that in order to foster comfort and inclusivity, schools in nations like Australia and New Zealand have transitioned to gender-inclusive uniforms, allowing students to select clothing that fits with their identities. In the past, laws have imposed gender-specific clothes, such as skirts for girls and pants for boys, to represent societal norms. These adjustments, like the introduction of pants for girls at Carey Grammar School and the adoption of gender-neutral uniforms at Mabel Park State, are intended to support students from varied backgrounds and create a more accommodating and encouraging environment.

Furthermore, Kaya and Erdem (2021) firmly believed that evaluation of gender-inclusive uniform policies is vital for ensuring their success in promoting inclusivity and support for all students. Schools can pinpoint areas for development and adjust to evolving student needs by evaluating the policy's effect on academic achievement and student well-being. Furthermore, ongoing assessment encourages responsibility among legislators and school administrators, making it clear to all parties involved how decisions are made and guaranteeing that the values of diversity and justice are reflected in all policies. An educational environment that is more responsive is facilitated by this combined focus on efficacy and transparency.

As specified by Cumming-Potvin (2023), office of Students Affairs concerns regarding the impact of school uniform restrictions on students' well-being and the regulation of gender identity and expression, particularly for young LGBTQIA+2 persons, have been highlighted by the media's coverage of gender-neutral uniform issues in nations. Regulations regarding school uniforms that are gender-neutral do not promote gender binary concepts such as hegemonic masculinity and femininity, which positively affect students who represent diverse gender identities and modes of expression.

Proponents of school uniforms contend that by fostering a positive learning environment, allowing students to express themselves, boosting school spirit, and enhancing safety and security, uniforms can reduce issues relating to clothing. It probably makes the case that wearing school uniforms can foster a sense of pride and consensus among students as well as a sense of community within the school. This can foster a more favorable school climate and have a good effect on their mental health and self-esteem (Yang, 2020).

In conclusion, Brunsman et al. (2021) highlighted that the inclusion of gender-neutral uniforms in university and school policies is seen to raise student success and the general quality of the learning environment. For those of us who work to lessen the influence of inflexible gender norms and the

expectations that go along with them, this is crucial. It also probably emphasizes how crucial gender-neutral uniforms are for raising student achievement and the general school climate. This contends that by doing away with the notion that boys and girls should wear a particular way to school, gender-neutral uniforms can contribute to the development of a more welcoming and equal learning environment.

In general, implementing gender-neutral uniforms in higher education requires a multifaceted approach that acknowledges and addresses a variety of challenges, including organizational dynamics, societal influences, cultural perceptions, and potential implications for public health and accessibility practices. Previous studies have shown that transitioning to gender-neutral uniforms requires a comprehensive approach that considers the intricacies of organizational dynamics, societal norms, cultural perceptions, and larger consequences for public welfare and accessibility. This survey of related literature on the implementation of gender-neutral uniforms in higher education gives a thorough grasp of the numerous aspects to consider during this process.

In addition, the aim of fostering proper implementation of gender-neutral uniforms among students is to promote a few benefits which includes acceptance, comfortability, and reduced psychological effects such as stress and anxiety because of wearing traditional uniforms especially among female learners. Studies also suggest that gender-neutral uniforms can impact an individual's physique regardless of gender. However, schools have not properly implemented this policy or are having some issues with its implementation, especially against marginalized racial, ethnic and religious communities. This led to more discrimination on the part of the students and must be dealt with by OSA coordinators immediately to prevent further problems in the future.

On the other hand, OSA coordinators are challenged by lots of circumstances as they implement this policy, for instance, differences in students' cultural backgrounds, ethnicity and religious practices to name a few. As a result, authorities involved in higher educational institutions are facing a dilemma in implementing gender-neutral uniform policies which will be beneficial to all.

METHODOLOGY

The study will be conducted in this chapter by the researcher utilizing qualitative phenomenological inquiry. The research design, participants, role of the researchers, data sources, data collection techniques, data analysis, study credibility, and ethical issues will all be covered in detail.

Research Design

This qualitative research will utilize phenomenological research design. Tenny et al. (2022) mentioned that qualitative research allows for greater in-depth understanding and analysis of real-world situations. Furthermore, qualitative research is described by Punch (2019) as empirical study in which numerical data are not used as sources of information. When data or study is based on experience or observation rather than theory, it is said to be empirical.

In the case of this study, qualitative research is considered appropriate in this situation since it makes use of in-depth interviews and other methods of gathering data on the implementation of gender-neutral uniform. The qualitative research method is most suited for gathering rich, detailed information and viewpoints, which is why in-depth interviews are so effective. This methodology guarantees that the research explores the depth and context of the participants' experiences, thus providing thorough and comprehensive research.

Moreover, phenomenology is a research method that aims to capture the essence of a phenomena by looking through the eyes of individuals who have witnessed it. Its goal is to convey the significance of

these events, both in terms of what occurred and how it was experienced. Different variations of this method were found on what and how of human experiences.

This strategy also demands the researcher to consider the philosophy they adhere to (Neubauer et al., 2019).

Phenomenology will be used in this study's framework to examine the experiences of OSA coordinators in the implementation of gender-neutral uniform among HEIs in Davao del Norte. Thus, through this qualitative phenomenological method, I will be able to explore the OSA coordinator's experiences, challenges, and their insights in the implementation of gender-neutral uniform. The procedure of thematic analysis will be used to condense, transcribe, and evaluate the collected material.

This study will be exploring the experiences of OSA Coordinators in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Davao del Norte about the implementation of gender-neutral uniforms using a qualitative research design employing a phenomenological approach. Examining and analyzing text, interviews, and observations in qualitative research are necessary to identify noteworthy patterns that describe a particular development. It is based on experiences and observations rather than numerical facts. The phenomenological method is concerned with discovering the fundamental nature of human experience and the significance that individuals attach to it. All information will be acquired through in-depth interviews, and thematic analysis will be employed for analysis.

Research Participants

The participants in this study will involve eight (8) OSA Coordinators who are currently working in Davao del Norte. The number of participants in this study will be chosen in accordance with Creswell's (2013) suggestion that a suitable sample size for a phenomenological investigation might be anything between three and twenty-five. Whichever sample size you decide on, you'll need convincing justification for your decision. To gather comprehensive data of the study research participants will undergo in-depth interviews. Performing comprehensive interviews may result in a detailed and extensive perspective of the phenomena being studied.

In addition, the participants will be selected and identified through purposive sampling. A range of non-probability sampling techniques called purposeful sampling enables you to choose units for your sample based on the characteristics you want. Put differently, the "on purpose" selection of units is a component of purposive sampling (Kassiani Nikolopoulou, 2022). With the use of purposeful sampling, the researcher can specifically select informants according to the specific expertise or experience they have (Campbell et al., 2020). Because of my adequate understanding of the study's objectives, I was able to appropriately choose and contact the eligible participants in accordance with the selection criteria.

Additionally, I will use the following criteria to determine and choose the participants: (a) OSA Coordinators with connections to Davao del Norte's private higher education institutions; (b) those with three (3) years of relevant experience in the field; and (c) those who have admitted to having experienced implementing gender-neutral uniforms. Thus, the participants who do not qualify in the given criteria in the conduct of the study are the following: (a), public school OSA Coordinators, (b) those who are in less than three (3) years in the practice, (c) those teachers who handle student services or/and prefect of discipline in the institutions.

The eligible individuals in this study will participate in an in-depth interview. One of the various qualitative research methods used to collect data and information on the participants' subjective experiences is the in-depth interview. The goal is to gather comprehensive information that will allow for a unique viewpoint and interpretation of a given issue (Rutledge et al., 2020).

Moreover, conducting detailed open-ended interviews with the participants to compile rich, comprehensive data on their viewpoints, ideas, and experiences of the topic or issue. The goal of IDI is to gain a deep understanding of the participants' thoughts and feelings about the subject under investigation. Recording the participants interviews and transcription will also be done for analysis. The results of the study will be made available to the research participants.

Role of the Researcher

In a qualitative study, the researchers' role is to hold the task of explaining the goal of the study and fostering positive relationships with the participants. As the discussion's facilitator, the researchers must be sensitive to all viewpoints and good at collecting such kinds of information. Researcher roles in the study process need to be frequently made clear in qualitative research. The idea definition through design, interview, transcription, analysis, verification, and reporting of the ideas and themes, the researcher is involved at every stage of the study through the QR procedure. Because of this, human beings are always an essential component of qualitative research processes involving tools (Mahnaz SanjariIn, 2014). Specifically, the researcher's logical duties in this study are as follows:

The first step in ensuring the ethical conduct of this study is to abide by the ethical norms established by the Republic Act 10173, also known as the "Data Privacy Act of 2012," which aims to safeguard all types of information, whether sensitive, private, or personal. Both natural and legal people engaged in the processing of personal data are intended to be included. The researchers must obtain participants' permission before collecting their personal data and can only use the information for the purposes for which it was gathered by establishing clear interview guide and components. Additionally, procedures must be taken by researchers to ensure data security and protect from illegal access or disclosure.

Second, in my capacity as the study's researcher, I will conduct interviews during IDI and adhere to interview protocol. I will ask the participants regarding their experience as OSA coordinators on the implementation of gender-neutral uniform to get more information that I need for this study. Additionally, I'll make sure that the interviews are accurately documented with the participants' permission. The use of mixed languages will be employed during the interview so that the participants can clearly understand the questions and clearly convey their ideas with ease.

Third, in my role as the study's researcher, I will also meticulously evaluate and examine the data by employing the format necessary for qualitative research transcription to record every conversation that occurred during the conduct of in-depth interviews. In addition, conducting in-depth interviews, I will also record and transcribe all the conversations that occurred during the interviews. This transcription will be done in the format required for qualitative research, which typically includes verbatim recordings of the spoken words, along with annotations for non-verbal cues and contextual details.

Fourthly, in my capacity as a researcher involved in the study, I will be responsible for converting the participants' responses into Standard English. Before conducting the interviews, I will clarify to the participants that they have the option to respond using their preferred language or dialect. Consequently, the literal responses provided by the participants will need to be converted during the data preparation phase to present the results effectively.

Furthermore, my main responsibility will be to analyze the data. As the primary data analyst, it is incumbent upon me to thoroughly analyze all the data and information gathered from the interviews, following transcription and translation processes. Subsequently, I will seek the expertise of a data analyst to review the analysis I have conducted.

Data sources

Most qualitative research uses participant interviews to gather data. Thus, conducting interviews is the simplest and most transparent approach to getting rich, in-depth information about a topic (Barret & Twycross, 2018). Numerous sources, such as documentation, interviews, observation, video records, and physical artifacts, can provide data for qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). The participants and sources provided the data for this study.

Consequently, I will use in-depth interviews (IDI) with the eight (8) participants as the primary data source for this study. A qualitative research method for conducting in-depth interviews is the in-depth interview. Unlike other qualitative research methods, in-depth interviews are one-on-one discussions that provide the researchers with plenty of time to spend with each participant.

In this investigation, the investigator aims to employ in-depth interviews (IDI) as the main technique for gathering data for this investigation. Eight participants will be involved in comprehensive one-on-one discussions during in-depth interviews. In addition, the use of in-depth interviews with a select group of participants reflects the researcher's intention to gather in-depth and detailed information, allowing for a thorough exploration of the research questions and contributing to a rich qualitative analysis.

To corroborate the findings, this study will also collect data from secondary sources, including books, journals, and articles that are mentioned in the relevant review of the literature. Steefkerk (2021) asserts that secondary sources offer data sources and first-hand knowledge from other researchers that are typically able to summarize, explain, or interpret primary sources.

In the final phase of this study, additional data will be obtained from secondary sources, such as books, journals, and papers cited in the literature review. To ensure relevance to the research questions and aims, the secondary materials chosen for inclusion in this context were carefully selected throughout the literature review phase. In conclusion, the utilization of secondary materials in this research is essential to contextualizing and strengthening the results. The ideas on the function of secondary sources in summarizing, understanding, and interpreting primary information will help the researcher understand the importance of using current scholarly work to improve the breadth and credibility of the study.

Data Collection Procedures

The practice of gathering measurements or observations via first-hand experience and original insights into your topic is known as data collecting. Whether you are doing research for governmental, commercial, or academic goals, data collection makes the challenge achievable (Bhandari, 2020). In addition, as suggested by Clark and Vealé (2018) a strategic mechanism is used by the researcher to collect and measure the variable of interest to comprehend the numerous correlations between the variables and offer conclusions to the study is known as the data collection technique. As a result, I used procedures in this study that are required for the data gathering process.

First, I will secure a clearance from the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of St. Mary's College, Inc. The proposed research study will undergo a comprehensive review process by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) to ensure that it meets the highest ethical standards. The REC will carefully assess the study's design, procedures, and potential risks to participants, and will provide clearance for the research to proceed with the conduct of the study. Additionally, I am authorized to carry out the study, as evidenced by the approval certificate from the REC and the letter of support from the Graduate Education program's dean.

Second, I will deliver my interview guide to the instrument validators to ensure that the questions intended for the data collection are accurately aligned with the study's objectives and specific inquiries. Permission

will be sought from the presidents of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Davao del Norte where the study will be conducted. Subsequently, the approved consent will be transmitted to the Office of Student Affairs at the respective HEI where the participants are affiliated. The consent of research participants will be obtained, with everyone from the involved higher education institutions receiving an Informed Consent Form (ICF) detailing the study's purpose and essential aspects, particularly their involvement. Additionally, a virtual orientation will be conducted prior to commencing the research.

Furthermore, prior to the interviews I will send a reminder to the participants with the notes they need to take part in the upcoming in-depth interviews. To keep things quiet and make sure no one can overhear us, we will locate a secluded, quiet area. This is to protect the privacy of the information collected during the interview.

The final step is that a thorough recording of every event during the interviews will be made and saved on the computer for transcription. The information collected is password-protected, and only the data analyst, the research adviser, and I are permitted access. When the transcription is done, thematic analysis is followed. The data that will be collected will be stored for three (3) years and will be shredded after.

Data Analysis

Following the completion of the interviews and the data gathering methods, the information will be arranged, examined, translated, transcribed, and examined. Pedamkar (2023) defines qualitative data analysis as the process of regularly reviewing and creating observation notes, interview transcripts, or other entirely non-textual resources that the researchers gather to deepen their knowledge of an event. In addition, Crosley (2021), described thematic analysis (TA) as finding meaning through pattern analysis. It involves examining the common themes and patterns in your that you have collected to determine its fundamental significance. It is important to remember that the research questions and objectives will guide the researcher in this approach.

In this study, I will use thematic analysis to uncover underlying themes hidden in the data transcripts by studying common themes such as ideas, subjects, and meaning patterns. To aid in the theme analysis, I will utilize coding to categorize each piece depending on the message it sends. I'll highlight sections of text or phrases and create shorthand labels or "codes" to indicate their substance. Then I'll check-up on the coding pattern to come up with the basic concepts. Several codes are typically combined to form a single fundamental notion. As a result, code clustering must be used to extract main themes from the collected data.

Furthermore, I shall accurately, succinctly, and simply describe the results in the article within the framework of this investigation. Rahman (2018) states that the researcher's use of data during presentation would be taken into consideration. When presenting the qualitative data, the most important thing to keep in mind is to refer to the themes and important points that were developed in the earlier phases in relation to the research questions.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Qualitative research investigates the subtle aspects of human behavior, attitudes, and relationships, stressing the importance of attention to detail and context. Maintaining trustworthiness of the study is critical to determining the validity and consistency of results. This includes elements like credibility, reliability, confirmability, and transferability (Ahmed, 2024).

Credibility in qualitative research, according to Ary et al., (2010) is concerned with the veracity of the investigation's conclusions. How successfully the researcher has built trust in the findings based on the research methodology, participants, and context is known as credibility or truth value.

Researchers are required to employ member checking, also known as respondent validation, a qualitative research method in which researchers collaborate with study participants to verify the accuracy of data (Delve & Limpaecher, 2023). I will employ members checking in my study by informing my participants of the responses I have already transcribed and that they can view it freely according to their will. I will then inquire my participants if the transcriptions accurately reflect, I'll also give them the option to add, amend, or remove responses from the transcripts. Once the participants have established that the transcripts are correct, I will ask them to sign the member checking form attesting to their accuracy.

In the context of this study, I will clearly use a variety of theories to support this study, including related studies from previous studies, research design, and data gathering process, and data analysis, all of which will be thoroughly explained. Additionally, informed consent forms from the participants will be given to ensure the participants privacy and confidentiality. The data collection shall be standardized and consistent to ensure that the data collected is reliable and can be used to draw a conclusion.

Dependability among the four parameters used to ensure the accuracy and consistency of qualitative research, dependability is critical. Two strategies were employed to ensure dependability. To address disparities in data collection methodologies, a simultaneous triangulation of method, source, and data should be performed. After methodological changes in data collection, consistent meanings and interpretations must be found using code and meaning saturation. This demonstrates that, despite variances in data collection approaches, reliability may be obtained (Janis, 2022).

To ensure the dependability of my study, I will use member checking and audit trails. To ensure that the information acquired is accurate and reliable, a structured method of data collection will be followed. Participants will assess and verify the accuracy and validity of the recorded data. Notes, documents, recordings from interviews, and other records will be kept safe for an additional expert evaluation. Moreover, to ensure that the procedures are thoroughly observed I will ask for help from my adviser so that no important detail will be overlooked.

Confirmability in qualitative research refers to the degree to which the findings fairly summarize the thoughts of the respondents without including the subjective or biased viewpoints of the qualitative researcher who conducted the study. It characterizes the degree of objectivity, or to put it another way, how the study's conclusions represent the opinions and experiences of the participants rather than the prejudices, goals, or interests of the researchers (Satu et.al., 2019).

Confirmability in this study is demonstrated by the contextualized description of every step in the research process. How and why these methodologies are used in the study will be explained in context. To avoid bias and ensure the validity of the conclusions and recommendations drawn from this study, an audit trail will be maintained, participants will be verified, and data will be triangulated.

As the researcher, I will guarantee that all my study's findings are based only on the data obtained. To avoid bias, I will ensure that no extraneous influences alter the results of my investigation. I will also seek assistance from my research adviser and panel members in assessing all data collected, particularly the outcomes, to eliminate biases. As a researcher, I value the usage of an audit trail to maintain track of the study's progress, including filed notes and other data. It will allow me to keep track of my progress and resume where I left off. I will also help me save time and manage it effectively because I will no longer return to previously completed processes. If something is forgotten or must be updated, I can simply locate it utilizing the audit trail.

Transferability adds to the study's credibility by ensuring that patterns and descriptions stay relevant across settings. King and Stahl (2020) use reflexive analysis and bracketed remarks to show the various research

procedures.

As the researcher, I may increase transferability by giving a clear explanation of the study setting and essential assumptions, allowing people who desire to transfer the results to a different context to do so responsibly while ensuring that the data remains intact, and nothing is lost. In addition, I will utilize coding to ensure that the data acquired for this project is handled in complete confidentiality and secrecy. To ensure that no one else can access the study data, it will be saved on a separate external device and password protected. To allow the findings to be applied to other relevant research, I will provide a detailed description of the data received from study participants.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical concerns are a collection of guidelines that apply to research designs and methodologies. There are rules that researchers and academics must always abide while collecting data from participants. Conducting research requires an intensive commitment to ethical issues, which are a collection of rules that direct planning and carrying out of research endeavors. Then, Researchers and scholars should always abide by a set code of behavior, especially when gathering data from human subjects (Pritha Bhandari, 2023). This study will be presented to the SMCTI-REC to guarantee that research ethics are strictly adhered to.

Social value. In research, social value is a term used to describe how important the findings are expected to be. The significance of information may result from its expected contribution to study or from its immediate relevance for understanding or addressing a significant problem. (Delden, 2021).

In this phenomenological research, it discusses societal problems specifically the current dilemma of the selected colleges towards Gender-neutral uniform. This research could provide a wide view for other institutions to investigate their policies related to current issues and might consider reforms to the handbook. The method used in this research can be a great tool to amplify the experiences of the participants loud enough to appeal to and solve the current challenges that the OSA coordinators are experiencing. This will open a healthy conversation in the community and promote the well-being of individuals, their families, and society in general. Moreover, the current societal acceptance regarding the clothing trends for students that might be too conservative can somehow be softened by the proper implementation of the existing policy on gender-neutral uniforms because of this study. The study's findings can also lead to the development of research-based programs for educational institutions on the implementation of gender-neutral uniforms.

Informed Consent is concerned that any studies participant must be told about the specifics of the study, as well as any possible risks and benefits, to provide their informed consent. It is a legal and ethical need for every study that uses human subjects. To give consent, a person must meet certain requirements, including being of legal age to do so, being able to practice free will be unhindered by compulsion, fraud, dishonesty, or any other subtle kind of restraint or pressure, and with sufficient information and understanding of the pertinent facts to allow him to make an educated decision (Arellano et al., 2023).

In the case of this study, I shall obtain participants' agreement before beginning any research before proceeding. To get the participants' full consent, I will conduct an orientation session in which the objectives and goals of the study will be presented. The participants' signed consent will be gathered as proof of their agreement. Additionally, I will let the participants know that the study is entirely voluntary, and they are free to stop taking part at any moment. The confidentiality of participant identification will be safeguarded during the study by closely monitoring the management of private information. It suggests that participants are free to reveal as little or as much information as they choose.

Vulnerability of Research Participants. The concept of vulnerability serves as the theoretical basis for ethics in human subjects' research as well as its practical application. Research participants must be provided with protection against hazards to reduce the dangers to human beings. Subjects that are vulnerable require greater protection (Ochsner, 2020).

The participants of the study are not seen as susceptible since they are old enough to be legally bound and wise enough to choose whether to involve themselves or not. By this, the concept of power asymmetry is addressed, thus ensuring that the participants are protected from being threatened or forced to participate. The researcher will also assure that the participants' identities remained confidential and guaranteed that no participants will be identified. Certainly, the participants shall be treated with highest respect. They will be also aware that they are free to withdraw their participation if they find it unconformable anymore. Risk, Benefits, and Safety. It is recommended for researchers to think about who might benefit from their work, particularly when it could affect or include a number of different people or groups. While pursuing a positive risk-benefit ratio, researchers must take care to maintain the quality and reliability of their study. This involves adhering to rigorous research methods, ensuring that the study is well-designed and properly powered, and using appropriate statistical analysis techniques. It also involves being transparent about the limitations of the study and acknowledging any potential biases or conflicts of interest. (Coleman, 2021). As to risk, benefits, and safety, the researcher will secure permission of the participants, who will also be advised of the study's goal before it is carried out. The subjects will not be coerced into taking part in the study, and I will make sure that they are safe from any potential threats or deception. To minimize hazards and guarantee participant safety, the IDI will also be conducted at a time that works best for them. To guarantee that there will be as little harm as possible, a team of specialists will also validate the guiding questions used in the IDI process. As a result, while the study is being conducted, one of the most important considerations will be the participants' well-being, as well as the objective of maximizing benefits while reducing risk. I will also ensure that the findings of this study will provide more benefits to the participants than any potential negative consequences. Furthermore, it will assist them in any way that benefits them, such as interventions and techniques to improve the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform policy.

Data Privacy and Confidentiality. A researcher's design and implementation of research must take into consideration key essential concepts: confidentiality and privacy. Confidentiality pertains to the information or data that people provide to the researchers, whereas privacy is protecting specific individuals. By establishing policies in place that let participants give information to researchers in a private setting where they can't be heard or seen by others, you can lessen the chance that privacy may be compromised when gathering data (Adar ouch, 2020).

In the context of this study, the researcher will secure all records of information in the study and will not release any of it that can expose and specify the participants' identity. The records will be classified so that only the researcher can identify them, and they will be kept on a different storage device so that no one else can access them. For the advantage of the study participants, the data will also be stored via the researcher's email address, making it simple to obtain when needed.

Also, in presenting the results, the researcher will use codes to anonymize the participants. The participants will also be informed that the researcher will happily accept their withdrawal of comments or participation in the study and will not use their information in the results presentation. All of these shall be carried out in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012's guidelines for proportionality, transparency, and legitimate purposes while gathering, storing, and using personal data. By taking this action, the

participants' identities will be safeguarded, and it will be impossible to link the data to them. Justice. This principle highlights the need to provide equal and fair treatment for everybody. It requires considering the necessity of minimizing bias when selecting samples from a wider community, as well as protecting subjects from potentially harmful research techniques. It further states that anyone who chooses not to participate in the study shall not experience unfair or negative repercussions (York, 2023).

To prevent prejudice when interacting with the subjects, the investigator treated each subject identically whether they participated in the survey and IDI. The selected OSA Coordinators are fit in with the qualification and are considered as potential participants in the study. Respect for the dignity of all research participants was also given the utmost priority. Furthermore, the participants will come from schools that are implementing gender-neutral uniforms and they will be chosen using appropriate sampling techniques. On the other hand, participants regardless of their positions and status within the organization will get equitable treatment.

The researcher will also cover all the expenses that may be incurred by the participants including lost wages, travel expenses and other incidental expenses. Tokens will also be given to the participants as a sign of gratitude for their time, effort and interrupted activities on the part of the participants during the conduct of the study. Hence, all efforts on the part of the participants will be compensated since they are the primary source of the data for the completion of the research.

Transparency. Transparency in research is a fundamental idea and principle of open research, encouraging openness and transparency in the scientific method. It is an ethical method of doing research that enhances the impact and informational value of the findings while maintaining the integrity of the study. It is the ethical duty of researchers to make sure that all information related to their research projects is presented in an understandable and transparent manner, including data, analysis, procedures, and any decision-making processes. This enables readers to assess the methods and results of the research. This is crucial to remember while working with qualitative data because it's frequently ephemeral, subjective, and interpretable (Rotelli, 2019).

In the context of this study, all parties need to be transparent to be ethical. The researcher will ensure that the participants can easily comprehend the procedure, the purpose of the study, and the level of engagement. The investigator shall maintain transparency in all elements of the study, especially the data that impacts the participants' decision to give or withhold their informed consent. To achieve precision in qualitative analysis, data transcripts will be presented to the participants to verify accuracy and correctness of interpretations.

Qualification of the researcher. Researchers are expected to have a strong understanding of ethical principles and to apply them rigorously in their research. This includes securing participant confidentiality, preventing conflicts of interest, and getting informed consent managing data ethically, and adhering to high standards of integrity and honesty (Fleming, 2018).

In the context of this study, the researcher will take responsibility for this study. The researcher must possess qualities like moral fortitude, scientific competence, social awareness, cultural sensitivity, humility in thought, alertness, and readiness for safety-related situations. Based on credentials, expertise, and training, the researcher satisfies the qualifying norms and is highly competent of conducting the study. The researcher is a professional teacher and currently taking up Master of Educational management. The knowledge and experience of the researcher gained from various training and seminars are sufficient to prove his credibility. Additionally, the adviser, who possesses greater research qualifications, will provide guidance to the researcher gained from the experiences form various trainings and seminars in various fields.

Adequacy of facilities. Enough facilities are necessary for performing ethical research in the studies. To ensure the safety and well-being of research subjects, it is necessary to have the proper research instruments and resources. Ensuring that study settings follow ethical rules and norms, such as getting participants' informed consent and respecting their privacy. Consideration should be given to standard items that are required for conducting a study, such as computers and phones. Analyzing the availability and sufficiency of additional materials required by the study problem is also important (Cristobal, 2017). In this study the accessibility and availability of the resources needed for the inquiry will be ensured by the researcher. Books, journal articles, and unpublished dissertations are available for further reading and references. The resources provide an array of scholarly works and investigations corroborating the association between the variables under investigation. Additionally, the researcher gets permission from pertinent organizations and agencies. This suggests that, given the availability of the required tools, facilities, and channels of communication, the researcher will execute and finish the study with success. Hence, all the facilities which will be used in the conduct of the research are adequate. The researcher will also put into considerations all the local norms and cultural background of the participants. Benefits which are received by the participants will also be discussed together with the other stakeholders for the dissemination of the results of the study.

Community involvement in research may strengthen a community's ability to handle issues relating to other research projects while also guaranteeing that researchers are aware of community goals. It can lead to a range of benefits for both researchers and communities, including improved research quality, increased trust and collaboration, and enhanced capacity to address problems (Hae-Ra An, 2021).

Prior to conducting the study, the researcher will write to the HEIs to request the required authorization. The results of this study will also be disseminated to internal and external stakeholders for knowledge, awareness, and potential application through training and seminar initiatives, appropriate HEI communication, and other professional development activities. Scholars in the academic community can also do further research related to the findings of this study to broaden further the bank of evidence-based information about this study. After the conduct of the study, findings will be distributed to various relevant stakeholders for awareness, information, and possible policy changes in the implementation of gender-neutral uniforms such as schools affiliated to CHED and even other educational institutions.

RESULTS

This part contains the findings based on in-depth interviews (IDI) of the participants. The findings are based on participant replies, with an emphasis on their lived experiences, coping techniques, and insights into their experiences on the implementation of gender-neutral uniforms in their institution.

Lived Experience of OSA Coordinators on the Implementation of Gender-Neutral Uniform

After carefully analyzing the OSA coordinators' responses regarding their experiences on the implementation of gender-neutral uniforms, five major themes were considered: a.) cultivating inclusivity; b.) cultural resistance; c.) challenges in policy implementation; d.) seeing positive reactions; e.) collaboration and support.

Table 1 shows the major themes and core ideas on the lived experiences of OSA coordinators on the implementation of gender-neutral uniform.

Major Themes and Core Ideas on the Lived Experiences of OSA Coordinators on the Implementation of Gender-Neutral Uniform Policy

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Cultivating Inclusivity	<p>Fostering a more inclusive school environment</p> <p>Promoting inclusive policies that positively contribute to students' well-being</p> <p>Fostering inclusivity by being open to LGBTQ+ Community</p>
	<p>Promoting neutral treatment as part of fostering inclusivity</p> <p>Being committed to promoting inclusivity among students</p> <p>Promoting inclusivity to make students feel respected and comfortable</p> <p>Considering gender-neutral uniform implementation for inclusivity</p>
Cultural Resistance	<p>Experiencing resistance from some stakeholders due to traditional norms</p> <p>Overcoming resistance and misconceptions about gender-neutral uniforms from parents.</p> <p>Having education and dialogue to address the presence of cultural resistance</p> <p>Feeling challenged due to the presence of culture shifting from a traditional norm</p> <p>Overcoming resistance to changing established practices in implementing gender-neutral uniforms</p> <p>Facing resistance and diverse opinions in the cultural shift to gender-neutral uniforms</p> <p>Seeing the challenge brought by cultural resistance toward policy for gender-neutral uniforms</p> <p>Implementing it in a case-by-case basis due to lack of a full policy and management discretion</p>
	<p>Implementing it on a case-by-case basis due to lack of a full policy and management discretion</p> <p>Framing desirable guidelines and policies poses a challenge</p> <p>Seeing loopholes in implementing gender-neutral</p>

Challenges in Policy Implementation	uniforms Aligning the policy on gender- neutral uniforms with the guidelines of partner industries is an issue
	Noticing positive reactions from LGBTQ students and others Having some policies not properly implemented
Seeing Positive Reactions	Having experience that was overwhelmingly positive Being inspired by the students' passion for representation Noticing that the policy made students feel included and comfortable Observing that the policy improved well-being and reduced bullying
Collaboration and Support	Observing discussions on inclusivity and participating in consultations with students and staff Receiving strong support from head office for smooth implementation Coordinating with departments, addressing concerns, and communicating the policy effectively Gathering feedback and exploring flexible and inclusive uniform options Undergoing talks and meetings for approval of changes Implementing gender-neutral uniforms through collaboration with stakeholders

Cultivating Inclusivity

The participants highlighted that one of their primary experiences on the implementation of gender-neutral uniforms was to cultivate inclusivity among students and stakeholders. They noted that as they consider gender-neutral uniform policy they are fostering inclusivity and neutral treatment among students especially those who belong to the LGBTQ community. Furthermore, being committed to its implementation also promotes a feeling of respect and comfort among learners as they can openly express themselves through their attire. Overall, the implementation of the policy promotes students' well-being. According to IDI06, the implementation of the policy promotes a more inclusive school environment. He mentioned that, "Feedback mechanisms have been established to make necessary adjustments, and early outcomes suggest that the policy has successfully fostered a more inclusive and supportive school environment."

IDI01 added that promoting inclusive policies will positively contribute to the well-being of students. He said that,

"So, in my case, the consideration to implement a gender-neutral uniform was prompted by growing awareness of the needs for inclusivity and representation within the school. So, there must be a series of discussions wherein discussions initiated by student advocacy groups highlighted the importance of allowing students to express their gender identity freely. This was further supported by research indicating

that inclusive policies contribute positively to student well-being and academic performance.”

In addition, IDI02 mentioned that the school community nowadays aims to instill the idea of inclusivity by being open to LGBTQ communities which is in contrast with the past. He said that, “Our school fosters inclusivity. Nowadays, our society is very open to LGBTQ+ unlike before.”

Fostering inclusivity also promotes neutral treatment among students as mentioned by IDI03. He specifically said that,

“The administration has encouraged everyone for mutual treatment to students regarding this neutral uniform implementation.”

(The administration has encouraged everyone to give mutual treatment to students regarding this neutral uniform implementation.)

The response from IDI04 also strengthens the notion that student-centered schools promote inclusivity by actively listening to the students. It was mentioned that,

“The (name of school) has always been student- centered actively listening to the needs and concerns of our students. This commitment to inclusivity and responsiveness prompted us to consider implementing gender-neutral uniform policies.”

Moreover, IDI05 also said that fostering inclusivity among students will make students feel comforted and respected. He mentioned that,

“The institution decided to implement gender- neutral uniform policies to promote inclusivity and ensure that all students felt comfortable and respected, regardless of their gender identity. It was also part of our broader commitment to diversity and equality within our educational environment.

Similarly, IDI05 said that considering gender-neutral uniform promotes inclusivity and equality. He mentioned that,

“Our institution, (name of school) considered implementing gender- neutral uniforms to promote inclusivity and equality, improve student well- being, and modernize our policies.”

Cultural Resistance

The OSA coordinators who are participants of this study mentioned that one of the challenges they encountered on the implementation of gender-neutral uniform was cultural resistance. Many factors can be attributed to this such as being accustomed to traditional norms, misconceptions about the policy, the big cultural shift that accompany the implementation of the policy, practices, and cultural issues. This experience does not only pose a challenge to the coordinators but the school community.

In connection with this, IDI01 said that cultural resistance comes from a lack of understanding of the trends and the policy. He mentioned that,

“One of the primary challenges I encounter was resistance from certain stakeholders who are accustomed of traditional uniform policies. That is the very primary challenge to that, diba?, because the resistance often from the lack of understanding especially on in the changing passing (ano) trends nowadays, there are also some people who are really isolated in that of idea that they are going to stick with the traditional way of uniform, compared to the gender neutral policy of uniform so therefore, it’s really you know primary challenge to me.”

(One of the primary challenges I encountered was the resistance from certain stakeholders who are accustomed to traditional uniform policies. That is the primary challenge, because resistance often comes from a lack of understanding, especially in terms of the changing trends. There are also some people who are really isolated in that they have the idea of sticking with the traditional way of uniform, compared to the gender- neutral policy of uniform which I consider as a primary challenge.)

Moreover, according to IDI04, the resistance is due to misconceptions and misunderstanding about the gender-neutral uniform policy. This then became a major burden to them as he mentioned that, “The primary challenges included resistance from some parents and students who were to traditional uniforms and addressing misunderstanding or misconceptions about the purpose of gender-neutral uniforms.”

(The primary challenge included resistance from some parents and students who were into traditional uniforms and addressing misunderstanding or misconceptions about the purpose of gender-neutral uniforms.)

Also, according to IDI06, the resistance coming from parents and members of the community in relation to the policy needs educational intervention and dialogue. He said that, “...Cultural resistance from some parents and community members required going education and dialogue.”

IDI01 added that one of the biggest challenges in the implementation of the policy is cultural shift in which a shift from long standing practices to a more inclusive one requires full support from the stakeholders. He said that,

“I view this implementation of this gender-neutral uniform as a challenge due to the need for a cultural shift within the institution. It is a big cultural shift because if we notice if we are stick on that traditional way of implementing uniform so this is a drastic change from a traditional to an open or shall we say a gender-neutral uniform policy because changing a long-standing practice requires not only the administrative support but also from students, parents and faculty.”

(I view this implementation of this gender-neutral uniform policy as a challenge due to the need for a cultural shift within the institution. It is a big cultural shift because if we notice if we stick to the traditional way of implementing uniform, this will be a drastic change from a traditional to an open or shall we say a gender-neutral uniform policy because changing a long-standing practice requires not only administrative support but also from students, parents and faculty.)

Meanwhile, IDI05 mentioned that the implementation of them requires a change from the established practices of using traditional uniforms. He added that,

“Implementing gender-neutral uniforms is challenging because it requires changing established practices and overcoming resistance from those who are used to traditional uniforms.”

In addition to this, IDI06 mentioned that the cultural shift brings with it diverse opinions and resistance which needs to be addressed through cultural adjustment. It was mentioned that,

“Implementing a gender-neutral uniform presents several challenges, including resistance from those accustomed to traditional uniform policies and varying opinions within the school community. Designing a uniform that meets diverse needs and preferences while remaining practical can be difficult. Additionally, shifting from established traditions and norms requires careful cultural adjustment.”

Finally, the challenge brought by cultural resistance towards the implementation of policy lies in the policy itself. A careful and concrete policy should be crafted to address this issue. As IDI08 mentioned that,

“A challenge, why? because kahit na sinasabi natin they are all accepted so on and so forth, the society is not yet full accepted because of cultural issue, and some other issues, so, that is really a challenge na though me as a focal person I’m open to this kind of policy, but of course the organization has to look into kaya nga sabi ko, this particular study which will help us also aide in crafting a concrete policy in this particular issue.”

(It is a challenge because society does not fully attest to it because of cultural issues, so it is really a

challenge to me as a focal person. Also, I am open to this kind of policy but of course the organization must investigate it, so this study will help us also in crafting a concrete policy for this issue.)

Challenges in Policy Implementation

The implementation of the policy was met by various challenges according to the participants. The challenges mentioned were lack of full policy and management discretion, challenge of framing desirable guidelines and policies, the loopholes in the implementation as seen by the coordinators and other stakeholders, and the challenge of aligning the policy with the guidelines of partner industries especially in the case of on- the-job training students. These challenges may be attributed to the improper implementation of the policy and differing opinions from stakeholders. Furthermore, the effect of these challenges can create difficulties among the policy implementors.

In line with this, as mentioned by IDI08, the implementation should be on a case-to-case basis due to the lack of full policy and management discretion. He said that,

“First no ano, it’s too hard for us kasi we do not have the full policy yet, but we are implementing to it through case to case basis, then may mga intentions talaga ang students to really ask permission to wear that gender neutral uniform privilege. The problem is specifically sa C.I. won’t allow really that they would wear yung uniform that are so, hopefully, there should be a complete policy because that is also the discretion of the management to install the policy, so it is an issue and problem here in our institution.”

(First, it is too hard for us because we do not have the full policy yet, but we are implementing it via case to case basis, then students have intentions to really ask permission to wear that gender neutral uniform. The problem is specifically the C. I.’s. won’t allow them to wear those uniforms. Hopefully, there will be a complete policy because that is also the discretion of the management to install the policy, as it is one of the problems in our institution.)

In addition, guidelines and policies that can accommodate the desire of the stakeholders also pose a challenge. As IDI03 stated that,

“The challenges that I encountered one, how to frame a desirable guidelines and policies that promotes gender neutral uniform and number two how to encourage the administration for a sensitive programs and initiative to promote understanding and dialogues within the campus community.”

(One of the challenges that I encountered is how to frame desirable guidelines and policies that promote gender neutral uniform and how to encourage the administration to conduct sensitive programs and initiative that promotes understanding and dialogue within the campus community)

Also, IDI07 also mentioned that there are loopholes in the policy which makes it hard to implement. As he mentioned that,

“It is hard to start with this implementation constant question of the policy if there are loopholes in the rules.”

(It is hard to start with the implementation if there are constant questions regarding the policy due to loopholes in the rules)

Meanwhile, IDI04 mentioned another significant issue referring to the alignment of the policy to the guidelines set forth by the partner institutions. It was stated that,

“One significant issue has been aligning our policies with the guidelines. Additionally, during on-the-job training program, some partner industries have strict dress code policies that may not align with our gender-neutral uniform initiative.”

Lastly, IDI 01 stated that navigating these challenges can be daunting to the coordinators due to differing opinions and some potential pushbacks. As he mentioned that, “Navigating differing opinions and

potential pushback can be daunting and ensuring that the policy is effectively communicated and understood is crucial for its success. So therefore, these reflections the nuanced experiences of as an OSA coordinator when addressing those topics related to gender neutral uniforms even in contexts that where policies have not yet been implemented that's what I noticed.”

(Navigating differing opinions and potential pushbacks can be daunting and ensuring that the policy is effectively communicated and understood is crucial for its success. So therefore, this reflects my experiences as OSA coordinator when addressing those topics related to gender neutral uniforms even in contexts wherein policies have not yet been implemented as I noticed.)

Seeing Positive Reactions

On the other hand, responses from the coordinators do not only present the challenges they encountered as they oversee the implementation of the gender-neutral policy. Positive feedback from responses was also highlighted, for instance positive reactions from the stakeholders because of the implementation of the policy. This includes positive feedback from the LGBTQ community, seeing inspired students for their representation, a sense of comfort, improved well-being and reduced bullying. These reactions from the stakeholders bring the policy into the limelight as it shows that stakeholders are more than ready to make a shift culturally if the policy is just well implemented.

In lieu of this, IDI03 stated that the LGBTQ community welcomes the policy positively. As he stated that, “I have only one experience that I encounter in the implementation of gender-neutral uniform that was the positive reactions from the LGBTQ and some student's concern.”

In addition, IDI04 also mentioned that the implementation of the policy was overwhelmingly positive. He mentioned that,

“Our experience with the implementation of a gender-neutral uniform has been overwhelmingly positive.”

The response from IDI01 also shows that the policy inspired and motivated the students as the coordinators witness in them the passion from seeking representation in their school environment. It was mentioned that,

“Witnessing the passion and concern from students who seek representation in their school environment has been both inspiring and motivating.” Moreover, the policy also makes students comfortable as stated by IDI05. He spoke

“...but it was rewarding to witness the positive impact on students who felt more included and comfortable with the new uniform policy.”

Overall, IDI06 added that the implementation of the policy affects the students positively as it improved their well-being and reduced bullying. He added that,

“Overall, the positive impact on student well-being and reduction in bullying have made the effort worthwhile.”

Collaboration and Support

The coordinator's lived experiences were also backed by the support from the community and through collaboration from other coordinators, school staff and members of the community as well. The responses support this notion, for instance discussions on inclusivity were participated by students and staff, strong support from the head office were received, coordination with other departments for an effective implementation of the policy, feedback, and meetings were all part of the implementation of the policy.

These steps increase the success of the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform policy in the schools where the participants belong.

In connection with this, IDI01 reiterated the need for participation in discussions and planning, and

consultation regarding the dress code. He stated that,

“My experiences revolved around observing the discussions, research as well as the planning that have taken place regarding inclusivity in the dress codes. I also participated in consultation in student groups and staff gathering insights and opinions that reflect the diversity of our student body.”

A strong support from the head office is very instrumental for smooth implementation of the policy as mentioned by IDI04. He said that,

“We have received strong support from our head office, which has been instrumental in ensuring a smooth implementation.”

Furthermore, coordinating with other departments to address concerns and effective communication is also essential, added IDI05. He mentioned that,

“My experiences in implementing the gender- neutral uniform policy at (name of school) have been diverse and impactful. It involved coordinating with different departments, addressing concerns from students and parents, and ensuring that the new policy was effectively communicated and understood by the entire school community.”

IDI06 also cited feedback from stakeholders motivated them to create a more supportive school environment. He stated that,

“Feedback from students, parents, and staff highlighted the need for more flexible and inclusive uniform options. These factors collectively motivated us to explore and implement gender-neutral uniform policies, aiming to create a more supportive school culture.”

While feedback gave them motivation, being open to changes was also explored through a series of talks and meetings for the approval of the policy guidelines as mentioned by IDI07. He said that,

“...and also, the school is open for changes we undergone series of talks and meetings prior to its approval.”

Finally, the success of the implementation of gender-neutral uniform is a collaborative process which involves the different school staff. This was strongly mentioned by IDI06 when he said that,

“At (name of school) we implemented gender- neutral uniforms through a collaborative process involving students, faculty, and experts. The new uniform design features flexible options, including unisex shirts, to accommodate all students.” Coping Strategies of OSA Coordinators on the Implementation of Gender-Neutral Policy

- A. thorough analysis of the responses of the participants on how they deal with the challenges on the implementation of gender-neutral policy revealed several ideas a.) effective communication and dialogue;
- B. peer collaboration and support; c.) educational awareness and programs; d.) policy review and monitoring; and e.) administrative support.

Table 2 shows the Coping strategies of OSA Coordinators on the implementation of gender-neutral uniform policy.

Major Themes and Core Ideas on the Coping Strategies of OSA Coordinators on the Implementation of Gender-Neutral Uniform Policy

Table 2

Major Themes	Core Ideas
	Fostering open communication with stakeholders and seeking support from colleagues and external resources

<p>Peer Collaboration and Support</p>	<p>Talking to other implementers and OSA coordinators to learn about their strategies and experiences</p> <p>Collaborating with a team to develop solutions and maintaining flexibility in plans</p> <p>Building support networks in the implementation of the policy</p> <p>Involving concerned departments in the implementation process providing support through active communication with other school staff</p>
<p>Effective Communication and Dialogue</p>	<p>Accepting and adapting to new policies while listening to students' needs and concerns</p> <p>Maintaining open communication to raise awareness</p> <p>Listening to students' sentiments as a means of effective communication and dialogue</p> <p>Conducting an information dissemination campaign about the policy</p> <p>Having effective communication and dialogue with the stakeholders to address concerns regarding the policy</p>

<p>Educational Awareness and Programs</p>	<p>Employing education and policy awareness to stakeholders Calling students’ attention regarding the policy for proper orientation and awareness Integrating gender sensitivity in teachers’ lessons and proper orientation regarding the policy promotes education and awareness Providing information sessions for stakeholders through the education and awareness programs of the school Educational and awareness programs to explain the benefits of the policy Conducting seminars to CI’s regarding their implementation of the policy Having regular training for personnel to include education and awareness programs</p>
<p>Policy Review and Monitoring</p>	<p>Having regular evaluation and monitoring to ensure the effectiveness of the policy Reviewing and updating the policy regularly to align with evolving social norms and student needs Outlining rules, emphasizing importance, and regularly reviewing the policy to ensure relevance and effectiveness Embedding the policy into strategic goals, conducting reviews, and involving students and staff in discussions</p>

	<p>Following policies to ensure consistency, reviewing the policy for updates</p>
<p>Administrative Support</p>	<p>Providing resources and allocating necessary support for training and materials Asking administrators for their support by catering to student needs and facilitating access to seminars and training Allocating resources facilitates strong support from the administration Providing strong policy made by the administration in support of gender-neutral uniform Ensuring the policy is well-written by the administration and supporting its implementation</p>

Effective Communication and Dialogue

The responses from the research participants revealed that one of the strategies to counter the challenges experienced by the OSA coordinators on the implementation of gender-neutral uniforms was to effectively communicate and have proper dialogue with the stakeholders to ensure that the policy is well understood. Fostering open communication, adapting and accepting new policies while listening to the sentiments of the students, and conducting an information campaign about the policy can be done to promote healthy open communication to both the school staff and its stakeholders.

As IDI01 strongly suggests that engaging in dialogue with the students helps in understanding their sentiments and perspective. He stated that,

“I cope with the challenges by fostering open communication with stakeholders. That was the number one coping strategy that I had mentioned, by engaging in dialogues with students, parents, and faculty it really helps me to understand especially their sentiments, their concerns and their perspectives. I also seek support from colleagues and external resources, even friends coming from different institutions, especially different schools, different OSA coordinators which really helps me in understanding this kind of policy to share best practices and strategies for addressing resistance.”

(I cope with the challenges by fostering open communication with stakeholders. That was the number one coping strategy that I had mentioned, by engaging in dialogues with students, parents, and faculty it really helps me to understand especially their sentiments, their concerns and their perspectives. I also seek support from colleagues and external resources, even friends coming from different institutions, especially from different schools and different OSA coordinators which really helped me in understanding the policy to share best practices and strategies for addressing any resistance.)

In addition, IDI04 also mentioned that there is a need to continuously listen to the concerns of the students while actively adapting to the new policy on gender-neutral uniforms. He stated that,

“We cope with the challenge by actively accepting and adapting to new policies, while continuously listening to the needs and concerns of our students.”

Likewise, IDI06 maintained open communication with the school community to raise awareness. He said that,

“To cope with the challenges of implementing gender-neutral uniforms at (name of school) we maintained open communication, involved the school community in the design process, and conducted educational sessions to raise awareness.”

IDI07 on the other hand, listened to the sentiments of the students and benchmarking on the best practices of other institutions provides a means of effective communication and dialogue. He mentioned that,

“By having an open mind and to listen to their concerns. Pakinggan ang mga saloobin ng mga students to fully implement the policy and of course to benchmark other institutions of ang mga like best practices nila on that implementation.”

(By having an open mind and listening to their concerns. Listening to the sentiments of the students to fully implement the policy and benchmarking on other institutions’ best practices in the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform policy”

Moreover, IDI08 conducted an information dissemination on the policy. He said that,

“I think information dissemination, so gumawa ako ng information dissemination campaign on this policy so that’s why I how so no, information dissemination campaigns in relation to that policy.)

(I think, information dissemination, so I made an information dissemination campaign in relation to that policy. Finally, IDI06 suggested that to address the challenges, maintaining open communication and involving the school community is very important. He stated that,

“To address the challenges of implementing gender-neutral uniforms at (name of school), we maintained open communication with students, parents, and staff to address concerns and provide information. We involved the school community in the design process through surveys and focus groups, ensuring the uniforms met everyone’s needs.”

Peer Collaboration and Support

In the implementation of gender-neutral uniform policy, coordinators need support from other

coordinators as well. Collaborating with other coordinators allows them to exchange ideas and strategies on the implementation of the policy, develop new solutions and maintain flexibility, build support systems, and provide active communication. This will allow them to effectively implement the policy according to the responses of the participants.

According to IDI02, having discussions with other implementers and OSA coordinators helped him know their strategies and experiences on how they implement the policy. He said that,

“My coping mechanism was to talk to other implementers or OSA coordinators. Having discussions with the other coordinators would help me know more about their strategies/experiences on how they are implementing this gender-neutral uniform.”

Having said this, IDI05 added that collaborating with others helped them develop solutions and maintain flexible plans. He mentioned that,

“I address challenges by collaborating with a dedicated team to develop and implement solutions and by maintaining flexibility to adjust plans as needed.”

Moreover, IDI01 mentioned that his strategy to build support networks with other institutions allows him to share experiences and solutions. He stated that,

“Second is support network, building networks with other institutions that have implemented similar policies to share experiences and solutions. Just like what I had said about having this benchmarking.”

Involving other departments in the implementation of the policy was employed by IDI02. He said that, “Managing the situation in implementing gender-neutral uniforms by involving the concerned departments.”

Lastly, IDI04 involved open communication with other staff to ensure smooth transition of the policy. He said that,

“This involves open communication, providing support and education to both students and staff, and working closely with our guidance counselors to ensure smooth transition.”

Educational and Awareness Programs

Responses from the coordinators also made education and awareness programs a tool for a smooth implementation of the gender-neutral uniform policy. They employ policy awareness to stakeholders, integrate the policy into the teachers’ program, provide sessions in giving key information to students, and conduct training to school personnels. In addition, they also conducted seminars to CI’s of their partner institutions and even called the attention of students informing them of the policy.

Hence, IDI01 organizes workshops, and information drives to address the challenges in the implementation of the policy. He mentioned that,

“To address the challenges, I encountered I would employ several solutions, first, education and awareness, by organizing workshops information drive or it could be symposium to educate stakeholders about the importance of gender- neutral uniform and the impact of inclusivity.”

On the other hand, IDI02 called the attention of students informing them of the policy aside from assigning a comfort room for the third gender. He stated that,

“The solution that we did was to assign a comfort room for the third gender. I also inform them that they need only to consult us if they need to wear that gender-neutral uniform and submit a letter to us. Pero may iba talaga na makikita namin pinapatawag na lang naming ang attention nila. Proper orientation also to the students and parents, yun.”

(The solution that we did was to assign a comfort room for the third gender. I also inform them that they need only to consult us if they need to wear that gender-neutral uniform and submit a letter to us. But there

are really others that we can see, we are just calling their attention. Proper orientation also to the students and parents.)

Adding to this, IDI03 integrated gender sensitivity in the teachers' lesson plans aside from orientation programs. He mentioned that,

“I have only one solution in my mind that is the integration of gender sensitivity in the lesson based on depending on their syllabus of the teachers, inform the students about the policy through orientation and having mga activities and posting namin sa bulletin boards.”

(I have only one solution in my mind and that is the integration of gender sensitivity in the lessons based on the syllabus of the teachers, informing the students about the policy through orientation and having activities which we posted in the bulletin boards.)

Also, IDI05 provided information sessions for parents and students regarding frequently asked questions about the policy. He said that,

“Some solutions included holding information sessions for parents and students providing detailed FAQs and offering support to students who had questions or concerns.”

Thus, educational sessions were conducted to explain the benefits of inclusivity as according to IDI06. He stated that,

“...educational sessions were conducted to explain the benefits of inclusivity and gender-neutral uniforms.”

IDI 08 also included the CIs of their partner institutions in the seminars. He mentioned that, “...so, I conducted seminars to all CI's what are really the conditions of that particular community.”

Hence, IDI01 created a framework for regular training for staff and administrators to ensure the sustainability of the policy. He said that “Ensuring sustainability involves creating a framework for ongoing evaluation and support, how? Such as regular training, yes, that is very important, regular training is very important by provide ongoing training for staff and administrators to maintain awareness and understanding of the policy.”

Policy Review and Monitoring

The policies pertaining to the implementation of gender-neutral uniform is still being updated every now and then, that is why coordinators need to conduct regular review and monitoring as stated by the responses of the participants. This is to ensure its effectiveness, alignment to the evolving social norms, and consistency, Furthermore, outlining important rules ensures its relevance. This can be done when the policy is embedded into the strategic goals of the implementors.

In line with this, IDI03 confirms that having regular evaluation and monitoring ensures the effectiveness of the policy. He said that,

“Well, in coping up with the challenges, I have to have a regular monitoring and evaluation on the effectivity of school policy and of course understanding some ah questions regarding this implementation and of course giving positive reaction to those negative questions.”

(Well, in coping with the challenges, I must have regular monitoring and evaluation on the effectiveness of school policy, understanding some questions regarding this implementation and giving positive reaction to those negative questions.)

Hence, IDI01 reviewed and monitored the policy to ensure that the updates to the evolving social norms are aligned with the implemented policy. He stated that,

“...to ensure that the sustainability, time to time we're going to review the policy itself, because there are some instances that a certain section is already updated so they are sure that the policy itself must be up

to date that is why we must review of some policies to ensure that there is an alignment with evolving social norms and student needs because we are talking about gender neutral uniform, and we see to it that there are some changes itself as to the aspect of the mindset when it comes to the gender identity and other aspects within relation to gender neutral uniform.”

(To ensure that the sustainability, from time to time we are reviewing the policy, because, there are some instances that certain section is already updated, so to ensure that the policy must be up to date, we have to review some policies in order to ensure that there will be an alignment with the evolving social norms and student needs because we are talking about gender neutral uniform and we see to it that there are some changes as to the aspect of the mindset when it comes to the gender identity and other aspects within relation to gender neutral uniform.) Also, IDI04 outlined rules to emphasize the policies’ relevance and effectiveness. He said that,

“We ensure the sustainability of the gender-neutral uniform policy by clearly outlining the rules and regulations to students and emphasizing its importance. We also regularly review and update the policy to address any emerging concerns and ensure it remains relevant and effective.” In addition, IDI05 embedded the policy in the school’s strategic goal. He said that,

“We ensured sustainability by embedding the policy into school’s strategic goals, conducting regular reviews and updates and involving students and staff in ongoing discussions to keep the policy relevant and effective.”

Thus, according to IDI07 reviewing the policy and taking seminars can help. He stated that,

“By following the policies of gender-neutral uniform, to ensure firmness and to avoid bias, reviewing the policy and attending seminars or talks and having symposium and seminars regarding the importance of the policy.”

Administrative Support The success of the implementation of gender-neutral uniform policy can be attributed to many factors. One of these is administrative support as mentioned in the responses of the OSA coordinators. This includes the provision of resources and allocation of training materials and support, support in catering to the needs of the students, allocation of resources for the facilities, provision of a strong policy as determined by the administration, and overall support in the implementation of the policy. With this, IDI01 points out that their administration provided resources and allocated necessary support for training and materials. He stated that,

“We all know that administration plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of the policy by first providing resources, allocating necessary resources for training, materials, and support systems that is very important thing because you cannot allocate resources if you cannot generate that particular policy.” IDI02 added that their administration is very supportive in that they cater to the needs of the students by providing seminars and training that would help them as they implement the policy. He said that,

“The administration is very supportive of the implementation and sees to it that if they can cater to the needs of the students, they will provide it. They would send us to different seminars and trainings that would help us during our implementation.” Moreover, IDI05 expressed his gratitude because their administration is very supportive by allocating resources for the effective implementation of the policy. He mentioned that,

“The administration allocated resources facilitated discussions and promoted the policy. The administration provided strong support by endorsing the policy allocating resources for its implementation and effectively participating in communication efforts.” IDI06 also supported this notion when he said

that the administration played a vital role in the implementation of the policy by providing strong support, clear communication, and organizing training sessions. He stated that,

“The administration allocated resources facilitated discussions and promoted the policy. The administration provided strong support by endorsing the policy allocating resources for its implementation and effectively participating in communication efforts.” Hence, IDI07 concluded the support of the administration in the implementation of the policy by ensuring that it is well-written and implemented. He said that,

“The administration is also supportive of the implementation they are also one of the persons who made sure the policy is well written and implemented.” Insights of OSA Coordinators in the Implementation of Gender-Neutral Uniform Policy After carefully considering the responses of the participants, five major themes were revealed pertaining to insights gained by OSA coordinators in the implementation of gender-neutral uniform policy: a.) inclusive cultivation b.) strengthening stakeholder engagement c.) flexibility and adaptability d.) utilizing feedback mechanisms e.) continuous policy evaluation and development.

Table 3 shows the themes and core ideas of the insights of OSA Coordinators on the implementation of gender- neutral uniform policy.

Major Themes and Core Ideas on the Insights of OSA Coordinators on the Implementation of Gender-Neutral Uniform Policy

Table 3

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Inclusivity Cultivation	Inclusivity fosters a positive school climate through respect, collaboration, and open communication. Inclusivity fosters wellbeing and success; communication ensures community support Training in gender inclusive and support systems creates an inclusive environment Commitment to the values of inclusivity and respect is crucial to the policy implementation Reducing bullying and discrimination by fostering inclusiveness through the gender-neutral uniform policy
Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement	Ensuring a clear, well-communicated plan with diverse stakeholder involvement in the development process Engaging stakeholders is crucial to successfully implementing the policy. Forming a committee of various stakeholders to oversee implementation and address concerns Solving implementation problems requires careful consideration and collaboration with other departments.
	Being flexible and adaptable by listening to feedback

Flexibility and Adaptability	and addressing concerns Applying patience and adaptability for effective implementation
	Using flexibility and feedback to overcome challenges and promote inclusivity Adapting to challenges by adjusting based on community feedback Being adaptive to ensure better handling of challenges
Utilizing Feedback Mechanisms	Engaging the school community early and be open to feedback Conducting feedback sessions every semester Listening to feedback to make necessary adjustments. Reviewing policies regularly and improving based on feedback Gathering diverse opinions through feedback forms from all groups
s Policy Evaluation and Development	Evaluating the effectiveness of gender equality policies Reconsidering and re-evaluating policies to ensure they align with students' welfare Creating a universal gender-neutral uniform policy Reviewing and improving the policy regularly based on its performance Defining policy objectives clearly, involve a diverse team, plan comprehensively, and provides ongoing updates and support

Inclusivity Cultivation

Participants share commons thoughts on the insights they gained in implementing the gender-neutral uniform policy. They value inclusivity in promoting a positive school climate for learners. They recognize the role of inclusivity so that students will feel respected and valued. They promote it by providing training and established support systems. Commitment to the values of inclusivity and respect is firmly adhered to as it is crucial in its implementation. Hence, bullying and discrimination are reduced due to its implementation.

Regarding the implementation of the policy, IDI01 stressed the value of inclusivity in promoting a positive school climate. He stressed that,

“A significant lesson learned is the value of inclusivity in promoting a positive school climate. Implementing a gender-neutral uniform policy highlights the necessity of recognizing and respecting

diverse identities. Additionally, the process emphasizes the importance of collaboration and communication among all stakeholders to ensure that everyone feels heard and value.”

(A significant lesson I learned is the value of inclusivity in promoting a positive school climate. Implementing a gender-neutral uniform policy highlights the necessity of recognizing and respecting diverse identities)

Hence, recognizing the role of inclusivity is essential for student well-being and success according to IDI06. He stated that,

“Inclusivity is crucial for student well-being and success, and effective communication with the school community is essential for gaining support”

Further, IDI04 promoted inclusivity by fostering a culture where students feel valued and respected. He mentioned that,

“Providing training on gender inclusivity and establishing support systems for students facing challenges can create a more inclusive environment”

With this, IDI05 mentioned that commitment to the values of inclusivity together with strong administration support and clear communication is crucial to the implementation of the policy. He stated that,

“Key factors included strong administration support, clear communication stakeholder involvement and a commitment to our values of inclusivity and respect”

Lastly, IDI02 expressed that fostering inclusivity and boosting student morale contributed to the reduction of bullying and discrimination. He said that,

“The key factor that contributed to the implementation was reducing bullying and discrimination and fostering inclusivity and boosting student morale.”

Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement

Participants ensured a clear well-communicated plan with diverse stakeholders by engaging all stakeholders, which includes parents and students in the decision making regarding the policy. They also formed committees to oversee the implementation and worked with other departments to promote stakeholder engagement, which is very essential for the success of the implementation.

Hence, IDI05 mentioned that in the process of gender-neutral uniform policy development, a well-communicated plan which involves different groups of stakeholders is essential. He said that,

“Ensure you have a clear well communicated plan and involve a diverse group of stakeholders in the development process.”

Moreover, IDI06 engaged all stakeholders specifically in the decision-making process to successfully implement the policy. He stated that,

“To successfully implement a gender-neutral uniform policy, it’s crucial to engage all stakeholders, including students, parents, and staff, in the decision-making process.”

Also, IDI01 suggested that forming a committee which is composed of students, parents and staff is effective in the implementation of the policy. He mentioned that,

"Suggestion for effective implementation, include number one, is you’re going to create or form a committee, a committee comprising students, staff and parents to oversee the implementation and address concerns. Thus, IDI02 stressed that in dealing with the problems in the implementation of the policy working with other departments should be considered. He stated that,

“I realized that in dealing with problems with the implementation we should weigh in on everything before we act and work closely with other departments.”

Flexibility and Adaptability

Participants expressed that flexibility and adaptability are keys to the success of the implementation of the policy. Being flexible and adaptable to feedback and applying its principles for effective implementation. Using feedback and flexibility to overcome the challenges of inclusivity and adjusting are some of the key principles embodied by the participants. These are essential to the success of the policy implementation. Thus, IDI04 adapted to the challenges brought by the implementation of the policy by being flexible and listening to feedback. He mentioned that,

“..flexibility and adaptability are key; we learned to listen feedback and make necessary adjustments to address concerns.” In addition, IDI05 learned that patience and adaptability are required for the successful implementation of the policy. He said that,

“I learned that effective implementation requires patience and adaptability.” IDI06 overcomes the challenges by being flexible and being open to feedback while ongoing education reinforces inclusivity. He said that,

“Flexibility and openness to feedback help overcome challenges, while ongoing education reinforces the importance of inclusivity and the benefits of gender-neutral uniforms. These lessons will guide future initiatives to promote equality and acceptance.” Thus, IDI01 also stressed that being flexible based on community feedback is essential in addressing the challenges of the implementation of the policy. He said that,

“Furthermore, flexibility in addressing challenges is essential as adjustments may be necessary based on community feedback.” Finally, IDI07 addressed the concerns early will help build trust and ensure smoother implementation. On the other hand, adaptability allows for better handling of unforeseen challenges. He stated that,

“Understanding and addressing concerns early helps build trust and ensures smoother implementation while adaptability allows for better handling of unforeseen challenges.”

Utilizing Feedback Mechanisms

Regarding the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform policy, the participants received various feedback from different stakeholders. However, they utilized it to their advantage by being open to it through community engagement, conducting feedback sessions, and listening to it to adjust. Moreover, this feedback helped the participants in reviewing the policy as a basis for improvements.

Hence, IDI05 made an early engagement and feedback among the school community to facilitate policy transitions. He mentioned that,

“Engaging with the school community early on and being open to feedback helps navigate challenges and foster a smoother transition to new policies.”

Also, IDI03 conducted feedback sessions every semester. He said that,

“I have only one suggestion there should be feedback undertaken by the OSA, administration for every semester of the academic year.”

(I have only one suggestion, there should be feedback undertaken by the OSA, administration for every semester of the academic year.)

In addition, IDI04 listened to the concerns of the students through their feedback to be able to adjust. He said that,

“Be open to feedback and listen to concerns and be ready to make adjustments.”

Similarly, IDI04 gathered feedback to help him make necessary adjustments and improvements as he

reviewed the policy. He stated that,

“Regularly reviewing the policy and gathering feedback will help make necessary adjustments and improvements.”

Thus, IDI07 gathered opinions from forums with the stakeholders to listen to their opinions that will help in the formation of the policy, He mentioned that,

“I suggest having a form with different circles like with the students, LGBTQ+ and teachers and administration to listen all their opinions that will help in the formation of the policy.”

(I suggest having a forum with the different circles like the students, LGBTQ+ and teachers and administration to listen all their opinions that will help in the formation of the policy.)

Continuous Policy Evaluation and Development

The policy on the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform needs to be continuously evaluated and developed as revealed by the responses of the participants. With this, the participants evaluated the effectiveness of the policy to ensure that they are aligned with the students’ welfare. Furthermore, the creation of a universal policy was also done together with a clear definition of its objectives. This involves a team of experts that will plan comprehensively, support and provide updates.

In lieu of this, IDI03 recommended a responsive officer in charge that will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy. He mentioned that,

“I would like to recommend for a responsive officer in charge of the OSA to properly evaluate the effectivity of their governing policies with regards to gender equality as to gender neutral uniform implementation.”

Similarly, IDI08 considered the evaluation of the policy to promote students’ welfare and uphold the reputation of the school. He stated that,

“I think it is also time to others to reconsider, re- evaluate kasi ang objective lang naman diyan ay ang kapakanan ng mga studyante, wala naman tayong intention to damage the reputation of the school and beside as an institution it is a responsibility also to install your policy in accordance to the needs of your client I think that is one we should look into the two sides of the coin to evaluate if this would help then try to implement and of course that would go with the process”

(I think it is also time for others to reconsider and re-evaluate because the objective is the students’ welfare, and we do not have the intention to damage the reputation of the school and besides as an institution it is our responsibility to instill the policy in accordance with the needs of our client. I think that is one we should investigate the two sides of the coin to evaluate if this would help them try to implement and of course that would go with the process.)

Moreover, IDI02 created a universal policy regarding the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform policy. He said that,

“Creating a universal policy about the gender- neutral uniform.”

Also, IDI04 reviewed the policy regularly and checked if it is properly working. He said that,

“Review regularly and check how the policy is working and make improvements as needed.”

Hence, IDI 05 started to define the objectives of the policy which involves a team specifically in the planning of process. In addition, support and updates were provided to establish feedback and adjustments.

He said that,

“Start by clearly defining the policy objectives involve a diverse team in the planning process and create a comprehensive rollout plan. Provide regular updates and support and establish channels for ongoing feedback and adjustments.”

With all this, the participants revealed the different challenges they encountered on the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform policy as well as the positive side in its implementation. The challenges include stakeholders' culture and policy implementation. However, support from the stakeholders and administration, effective communication in addition to educational programs and constant monitoring and review of the policy were employed by the participants as coping mechanisms. Moreover, as the implementation went through, insights were gained by the participants which includes cultivation of inclusivity, being flexible and adapting to adjust, utilizing feedback and continuous evaluation of the policy. These ideas came from the responses of the participants regarding their experiences of the implementation of the policy.

DISCUSSIONS

This chapter discusses the study's findings derived from the responses of the participants. This also explores its implications on the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform policy. The goal of the study was to shed light on the lived experiences of OSA coordinators on the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform policy in Davao del Norte. The lived experiences of OSA coordinators on the implementation of the gender-neutral policy illuminated by the challenges, struggles, and positive experiences as well. In addition, it is also broadly defined by the coping mechanisms and the insights they share in the implementation of the policy. The data gathered came from in-depth interviews which used validated questionnaires approved by the evaluators. The responses of the participants provide substantial data for analysis.

The Lived Experiences of OSA Coordinators on the Implementation of Gender-Neutral Uniform

The chosen OSA coordinators who were chosen as participants shared their lived experiences as they implemented the gender-neutral uniform policy in their respective schools. The responses gathered highlighted the following themes: a.) cultivating inclusivity; b.) cultural resistance; c.) challenges in policy implementation; d.) seeing positive reactions; e.) collaboration and support.

Cultivating Inclusivity

The responses of the participants highlighted their experiences on the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform which brought them as cultivators of inclusivity. In doing so, they fostered a more inclusive school environment which promotes positively to the well-being of the learners. In addition, inclusivity also opens

neutral treatment for members of the LGBTQ community which allows them to feel respected and comfortable. As specified by Russel et al. (2021) student coordinators are under enormous pressure to create enduring settings that show a dedication to the inclusive excellence tenets. Considering systemic discrimination and bias against people with varying socioeconomic and social statuses, effective inclusive excellence leadership approaches that prioritize justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion must be prioritized. Further, he addressed the special possibilities, difficulties, and realities academic leaders have while fostering an inclusive and egalitarian academic workplace culture, such as the challenges to meet the varied requirements of students from different backgrounds, including those related to race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and socioeconomic status.

Moreover, Redden et al. (2020) asserted that Student Affairs Coordinators must address current notions of exclusion and inclusion to guarantee that all students would feel that they belong, regardless of their differences. While the issues of teaching children have always been complex, decreasing inequality has emerged as one of the most important responsibilities facing schools. These expectations are made more

pressing by growing knowledge of how differences affect school experiences and academic results. Hence, encouraging bias-free communication and equitable access to resources is essential, ensuring no group is underserved or overlooked. Staff training on implicit bias is crucial to help educators recognize and reduce biases, ensuring fair treatment in both academic and non-academic settings. Additionally, implementing anonymous reporting mechanisms allows students to report discrimination without fear of retaliation, reinforcing a neutral environment.

Concurrently, as per Bishop et al. (2020), an ongoing corpus of research delineates the tactics employed by the Student Affairs Coordinator to foster LGBTQ students' sense of safety and success in the classroom. First, policies explicitly listing protected groups like LGBTQ students help create inclusive environments. Secondly, professional development equips teachers and other school staff with the necessary resources to safeguard and assist every student such as gender-inclusive comfort rooms. Third, a positive school atmosphere is shaped by access to SOGIE-inclusive resources and curricula. Finally, student-run groups like Gender-Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) improve student wellbeing and foster a healthier school climate. With all these, fostering an inclusive academic workplace culture must meet various learners' diversity which includes background, race, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. Moreover, OSA coordinators need to give students the guarantee that they are welcome in the school community while addressing their differences. The LGBTQ community, steps have been done to create an environment where they will feel respected and comfortable which includes the construction of a separate comfort rooms for them. Finally, cultivation of an inclusive school environment must be a priority for every student affair coordinator as it will give the students a breathing space for a more conducive learning environment.

Cultural Resistance

Participants of the study struggle with cultural resistance from various sources. Misconceptions about the policy from parents who are more inclined to traditional norms. Further, the shift from a traditional to a more inclusive policy may seem to be drastic for other stakeholders due to their long-standing practices which is more established than the latter. Also, stakeholders have also different opinions about the policy regarding the shift from the traditional preference which according to them needs further cultural adjustments. Resistance may also come from the lack of concrete policy itself and management discretion. Although there is a growing body of literature and student support for gender-neutral comfort rooms, there continues to be opposition to the installation of gender-inclusive facilities, particularly from stakeholders who maintain traditional norms that dictate that comfort rooms for men and women should be different and that comfort rooms for LGBTQ individuals should be determined by their biological gender (Francis et al., 2022).

As Raymond (2019) mentioned, creating a policy that acknowledges the complexities of traditional norms, schools can uphold student rights while enforcing a dress code. In order for the student affairs coordinator to foster inclusion in the educational setting, gender-inclusive uniforms must be promoted as part of a more inclusive policy change. The transmission and perpetuation of cultural value patterns is facilitated by systems. As a result, student affair coordinators often face problems in challenging established conventions. One such system is the division of clothes into gender-specific categories. Further, Oomen (2022) highlighted that gender inequality, often rooted in patriarchal structures, remains a pervasive issue in many societies. Thus, the biggest challenge for student affairs coordinators is overcoming parental misconceptions and resistance to changing traditional practices.

Moreover, Chaviz et al. (2020) noted that student affairs coordinators advocating for gender-neutral uniforms often face resistance due to institutional inertia and entrenched societal norms. This opposition

stems from deeply ingrained gender roles and skepticism from educators and students. Implementing gender-neutral policies is challenging in schools with long-standing traditional practices, where fears of disrupting

customs lead to pushbacks. This was seen in gender equity efforts in sports, which elicited reactions ranging from enthusiasm to hostility. Marginalized students tend to favor gender-neutral rules but often feel unsupported by faculty and administration, further complicating implementation efforts.

It is very evident that OSA coordinators struggle from resistance brought by differences in the culture. The transition of the traditional norms to a more inclusive one experiences several barriers perpetrated by cultural values. Additionally, patriarchal systems embedded in various cultures may prove to be a very pervasive issue making parental misconceptions about the policy one of the biggest challenges faced by the student coordinators on the implementation of a more inclusive uniform. Also, long-standing practices regarding gender roles have led pushbacks due to fear of disrupting customs. Along with this, marginalized students also feel unsupported by school administration, especially in the transition process due to various cultural demands and norms.

Challenges in Policy Implementation

Implementors of gender-neutral uniform policy have struggles with the implementation itself according to the responses from the participants. They enumerated several factors they considered as a challenge during the implementation phase. This includes the method of framing the correct guidelines and policies that would align with the guidelines of their partner industries. This is very crucial since not all are open to this policy. In addition, proper implementation of the policy should also be taken into consideration since there are loopholes found in the current policies being implemented.

These experiences are parallel to the study of McMurray (2021), that in Priory School in Lewes, England, mandated trousers for all students under a gender-neutral

policy which aims to address stereotypes and limit self-expression are still controversial. Parents and students argued this was not truly inclusive, stating a genuine policy would offer both skirts and trousers as options. Some parents also questioned the necessity of such uniforms for academic success. In addition to this, numerous obstacles hinder the implementation of gender-inclusive uniforms, often due to individual or institutional resistance to gender equality. This resistance may be explicit or subtle, making it challenging to overcome. Clear commitment from senior management, along with dedicated time and training, is essential to address these barriers. While policy implementation is easier with existing support, gaining widespread buy-in from all staff levels remains difficult (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2024).

Similarly, Stilwill (2022) mentioned in her study that the American high school administrators had trouble in developing inclusive policies that might protect transgender students from harassment or bullying. It was proposed that educational institutions create policies that center on the unique risks of victimization and bullying that transgender children may encounter. Furthermore, a high school official claims that although inclusive policies for transgender students have not yet been reviewed, they should be. Administratively, schools could be hesitant because of worries about consistency, discipline, and extra expenses related to uniform redesign. Vague policies can also result in uneven enforcement and legal difficulties in areas without protective laws. In addition, kids who choose gender-neutral uniforms may become targets of bullying, and logistical problems with fitness and design may make implementation more difficult.

Also, McQuillan (2021) adhered to the fact that there are various obstacles to implementing a standard

policy that is gender inclusive. First, the number of local school boards that have passed explicit policies addressing gender identity, expression, and sexual orientation is unknown. Furthermore, it is unclear if school administrators in districts with these guarantees receive instructional direction on how to help transgender and nonbinary students. Finally, it's still unclear why certain districts choose to implement these safeguards while others don't. Meaningful school reforms are typically the result of government institutions aligning their policies, but state directives are only successful when local leaders have the skills and means to carry them out.

Hence, challenges in the implementation of gender-neutral uniform are not only isolated experiences but are common among many schools globally. This struggle has been dealt with by the implementors in the past and they are still battling it today. Guidelines should be crafted carefully in a way that would not only meet the demands of certain groups of individual but the school community as well. Careful consideration should also be given to individual differences in terms of gender identity, expression and social orientation.

Seeing Positive Reactions

The experiences of the student affairs not only highlight the challenges they encounter with regards to the implementation of the policy, but it is also revealed that there were positive reactions from the stakeholders. Their responses enumerate some examples, for instance the implementation of the policy was welcomed by the LGBTQ community as well as other stakeholders while some of the participants responded that they have seen positive reactions from the stakeholders and were themselves satisfied. Moreover, students are inspired by the policy, and they also feel comforted knowing they are being included in the policy. Most importantly, the policy improved students' well-being and reduced bullying according to the participants. These responses are parallel to the study conducted by Wood (20024) that by eliminating overt distinctions in clothing, instances of bullying and harassment can be reduced, as students are less likely to be targeted based on their appearance or gender identity, fostering a safer and more welcoming atmosphere. Additionally, allowing all students to choose from a variety of uniform options encourages self-expression and builds self-confidence. Furthermore, gender-neutral uniforms signal that all students are respected and valued equally, regardless of their gender identity, helping to dismantle harmful stereotypes and biases.

Further, Reidy (2021) mentioned that human rights legislation addressing equity and freedom from religious, or gender discrimination has been linked to school uniform policies. This legislation can help mediate conflicts over uniform design when institutional policies or societal norms fall short. Notably, there is no strong evidence that implementing a gender-inclusive uniform directly enhances academic performance; rather, it appears that uniforms may foster an environment conducive to academic success. Furthermore, gender-neutral uniforms eliminate "competitive dressing," reducing pressure to wear specific (often expensive) brands, and help diminish socioeconomic distinctions, including those among male, female, and LGBTQ member students.

Also, the expectations of gender-specific behavior are reinforced by gender-specific uniforms, and parents frequently subtly change their children's wardrobe choices to make them more "socially acceptable," even though they feel differently. Uniforms should not serve to further perpetuate gender stereotypes, hence allowing students to dress how comfortable they feel rather than based on their gender identity is crucial. Thus, encouraging gender-inclusive uniforms foster a sense of inclusivity and belongingness, which then leads to an improved overall well-being of students (Chaudhry,2022). Moreover, implementing gender-neutral uniforms will make students feel less constrained by their gender identity. It also confronts gender

stereotypes about men only wearing pants and women only dressing in “feminine” ways. As some parents point out, gender-inclusive uniforms may also unintentionally teach young, school-age children that it's acceptable to defy outdated stereotypes about how men and women should live their lives by challenging preconceived notions about how they should dress in society as per Rakshit (2021).

Therefore, the implementation of the policy can also bring about some positive results, especially among members of the community who feel they are being considered. The policy can lessen bullying and harassment among members of the LGBTQ community giving them the freedom to express themselves freely without fear of being harassed. It also fosters a welcoming atmosphere as it encourages self-expression and builds confidence. Furthermore, studies revealed that the policy may foster a conducive learning environment among learners as it lessens the pressure of wearing specific brands. The policy also fosters the feeling of belonging which may result in an improved learners' well-being.

Collaboration and Support

Participants in the study also revealed that during the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform policy, they experienced the support from other stakeholders while collaborating with them. This is evident in their responses as discussions on inclusive during the planning phase were carried out in partnership with student groups and staff. Also, they received strong support from the head office as they coordinate with the different departments to address the concerns of the policy. The feedback from various stakeholders has been very instrumental to them as it ensures that the policy was being communicated effectively.

Although changes with the policy are constantly being

discussed among the different stakeholders, this has opened doors of opportunity to properly discuss the guidelines of the policy.

These responses are in line with the result from the study of Singh (2020) which asserted that head offices have an obligation to build an effective teaching and learning culture in their schools through collaborative interaction with members of the school management team and student affairs coordinators. They are important in maintaining the culture and values that help students see themselves in relation to the world, develop a sense of self-worth and identity, and become well-respected members of society. Department heads, whether intentionally or inadvertently, filter information, skills, and attitudes that shape and build inclusive viewpoints and practices through staff and parent participation. They could direct, steer, and encourage the path of change by utilizing their influence and power to create an inclusive environment for all students, regardless of gender. To provide all students with a sense of belonging, principals and the student affairs coordinator must work together.

On top of that, Wood (2023) strongly believed that educators ought to understand how their attitudes and beliefs affect the experiences of their students. Regardless of a student's gender identity, schools may foster a more inclusive and supportive atmosphere by addressing the topic of gender-neutral school uniforms with an open mind. The community's cooperation is essential to the successful adoption of gender-neutral uniform policies. Open communication among staff, parents, and students can help schools build a shared sense of responsibility and dedication to the advancement of gender equality. This cooperative effort makes it possible to guarantee that the entire school community will welcome the introduction of new uniform policies with understanding and enthusiasm.

Furthermore, to develop accessible and sustainable policies that promote an inclusive environment, school heads and student leaders are encouraged to consult with parents, guardians, teachers, and staff. All students should feel welcome and at ease in their learning place, which is why these should recognize and acknowledge diversity. They must take all reasonable steps to ensure that every student may participate

in and be engaged in their education, and to do this, they must create and put into effect inclusive and fair uniform regulations that are founded on a rights-based framework. These kinds of regulations ought to uphold equity, protect students from prejudice, abuse, or harassment, and improve equal access to opportunities while cultivating a supportive environment for every student (Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, 2024).

Shiwani (2021) also asserted that to create an inclusive learning environment, school administrators must work together to embrace gender-neutral uniforms. Successful collaborations between school administrators can significantly improve the outcomes of gender equality programs, such as uniform regulations. Subsequently, the absence of formal partnerships creates obstacles for many schools, making it difficult to implement gender-neutral policies in an efficient manner.

Therefore, OSA coordinators must keep on coordinating with the different stakeholders and department heads and staff to gain more support, especially in the implementation of the policy. This will also help them nurture values and culture, which are essential for effective implementation in addition to attitudes that help shape inclusive viewpoints. Experiencing support from higher offices allows the implementors to better understand how their beliefs affect the experiences of the learners. Moreover, successful implementation can be attributed to the cooperation gained from the community. Thus, working together ensures the success of inclusive and fair uniform regulations which uphold equity, protect students from prejudice, abuse, harassment and can increase equality among the students.

Coping Strategies of OSA Coordinators on the Implementation of Gender-Neutral Policy

Implementors of the gender-neutral uniform policy shared the strategies they employ to cope with the different challenges they experienced on the implementation of the policy. Their responses highlighted the following themes: a.) effective communication and dialogue b.) collaboration and support c.) educational and awareness programs d.) policy review and monitoring e.) administrative support.

Effective communication and dialogue The participants of the study highlighted that one of the strategies they employ to cope with the challenges on the implementation of gender-neutral uniform policy is effective communication with the stakeholders as well as seeking support from their peers. Moreover, maintaining open communication paved the way so that they can effectively listen to their students, especially their concerns and needs. This also includes an effective information dissemination campaign regarding the policy and addressing the concerns of different stakeholders.

These results are in parallel with the study of Watts (2022) which emphasizes ensuring that students feel included is equally as vital as creating inclusive policies. Monitor staff and student impressions of the setting's inclusiveness on a regular basis using peer support groups, school councils, student voice surveys, and other methods. To adjust to the policy, it is advised that you have regular talks and strong communication with your pupils. This will also assist in developing further recommendations for how the policy should be implemented.

In addition, Kerr et al. (2021) mentioned that the interpersonal characteristics that ameliorate experiences of gender dysphoria are critical. This idea, sometimes known as "bedside manners," includes good communication, respect, trust, understanding, and professionalism. Empathy, openness, sensitivity, and reassurance are important qualities. Furthermore, good communication is essential; asking pertinent, sensitive questions rather than invasive ones, providing a comfortable conversational atmosphere that encourages confidence and relaxation.

These notions support that effective communication, and dialogue can indeed alleviate the pressures felt by the OSA coordinators on the implementation of the policy. To create an inclusive school environment

where everyone will feel at ease it is a must to have regular talks among the stakeholders to address any concerns regarding the policy. Further, alongside characteristics such as empathy, sensitivity, respect, and trust, good communication is very vital in creating an atmosphere which helps learners increase their confidence in relation to policy implementation.

Peer Collaboration and Support

Effective implementation of the policy cannot be done alone, this is why OSA coordinators employed the help of the different stakeholders. Gaining knowledge through collaboration with other OSA coordinators brings in the much-needed strategies and experiences to cope with the challenges they encounter. Adding to this, flexible planning can be done with colleagues who are in the same field and even those who are in different departments. Building support groups from school staff can also help them in effectively implementing the policy.

According to the book "Trans Youth in Education" by Simons et al. (2019), how educators and instructors respond to concerns about gender-uniform policy in the classroom can either enrich or reduce students' experiences. The school implementor, in close coordination with other parties involved, can play an important role in this process as an advocate for transgender, intersex, and genderqueer (TIG) students. As a result, peer acceptability is critical in minimizing bullying and improving mental health, particularly among students wearing gender-neutral uniforms, according to Dimauro (2020).

Furthermore, Bernardo (2019) said that peer collaboration promotes the transition by raising knowledge of inclusion, as students are more likely to embrace rather than oppose change when their peers participate in policy debates and implementation. Collaboration-focused schools encounter less pushbacks to new laws, which help to provide a welcome and safe environment for all students. Peer collaboration is thus critical for the successful adoption and normalization of gender-inclusive uniforms. According to Inclusive Education (2024), it suggests that when support groups are present, children report experiencing less harassment and bullying because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Since a result, peer support and collaboration are critical for implementing gender-inclusive uniform regulations, since they significantly improve the inclusion of the school environment.

Hence, collaboration and support networks are key to effective policy implementation as it can enhance learners' experiences and promote a healthy school environment through acceptance which also helps lessen bullying. Further, it may increase emotional health especially among students who are into gender-neutral uniform policy. Schools that are focused on collaboration also face less opposition from stakeholders but on the other hand fosters a welcoming school environment where students are less likely to experience harassment due to inclusive uniforms.

Educational Programs and Awareness

Responses from the participants also highlighted the importance of educational programs and awareness conducted by the OSA coordinators in dealing with the challenges of the policy implementation. These programs aim to properly orient the students as well as stakeholders so that they can understand better the policy being implemented.

As Abasola (2023) mentioned that gender-neutral school uniforms will encourage a more varied and equal learning environment while also providing practical and health benefits. Further, senate Bill No. 1986, often known as the Pants for Her Act, advocates for a uniform policy that allows more freedom of movement while reducing the likelihood of harassment and discrimination. The measure shows how seemingly innocuous school uniform policies can really lead to gender inequity. It pushes for uniform regulations that promote fairness by providing gender-neutral alternatives and ensuring that every student

may wear them in a way that makes them feel confident in themselves. Schools would allow kids and their families to make options that reflect individual preferences and needs by giving trousers as an alternative in addition to customary skirts, so creating a more supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Furthermore, Villanueva (2023) cited that by implementing a gender-neutral uniform policy a university has made a significant contribution to the growth of inclusion and gender equity. This initiative is part of a wider effort to create a more equitable learning environment in which students may freely express themselves without fear of harassment or discrimination. Furthermore, in response to the rising demand for inclusion and equality in educational institutions, universities created a gender-neutral uniform policy. The council aims to offer students the choice to dress in a gender-neutral fashion to build a climate where everyone is valued and welcomed for who they are, regardless of how they wish to portray their gender. Meanwhile, the HRC Foundation (2024) indicated that all educators and student leaders have the same goal of creating schools that promote academic achievement, provide physical and emotional safety, and welcome all students. School leaders may create gender-inclusive cultures that affirm all students by reducing gender stereotypes and allowing kids to express their interests and gain confidence in their talents. School administrators may promote a gender-inclusive environment by educating staff members on the complexities of gender and giving focused training on how to stop bullying, harassment, and unpleasant taunting. Everyone at the school, including bus drivers, cafeteria workers, administrative personnel, teachers, aides, and counselors, should get training.

Furthermore, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (2017) stated that in a safe and secure learning environment, both boys and girls should feel welcome. Governments, educational institutions, instructors, and students all have responsibilities for ensuring that schools are free of prejudice and violence and provide high-quality, gender-sensitive education. To do this, schools should develop curricula that are gender inclusive and non-discriminatory. They may also help to reinforce the policy by educating staff and teachers, which includes adding gender sensitivity into classes and providing suitable orientation on how the policy promotes education and awareness.

In summary, there is indeed a need for schools to develop a school environment where all students regardless of their gender identity will feel comfortable and welcomed. One of the many ways to do this is by establishing educational programs that would cater to the needs of the learners whether by incorporating it to their daily lesson activities or conducting programs that will help in disseminating the information they need to better understand the policy. Moreover, all school staff should also be trained to avoid any gender stereotyping and lessen bullying and harassment. Hence, establishing a school program that would create a more inclusive learning environment should be given utmost priority by the school administration.

Policy Review and Monitoring

The participants of the study cited that there is a need to further review the policies embedded in the implementation of the gender-uniform policy. This is mainly since there are loopholes found which can cause various issues in the future. However, through revisions these issues can be halted if done properly. On the other hand, changes in the policy must also ensure that they will address the concerns of the different stakeholders regarding its implementation.

As Wiggins (2021) suggests that to ensure that a gender-inclusive uniform policy is adopted in schools and remains successful for all students, it must be properly evaluated and regularly monitored. Creating anonymous feedback channels is one way to do this, allowing students to express any issues or concerns about the policy without fear of being judged. This makes it easy to ensure that any difficulties are rectified

swiftly and that the uniform policy still meets the diverse demands of the student population.

Furthermore, Hallahan and Worth (2021) were certain that review committees are critical to maintaining the efficacy and inclusion of a school uniform policy that includes both genders. These committees should be made up of representatives from various stakeholder groups, including parents, teachers, students, and school officials. The committees can regularly examine the success of the policy and identify chances for improvement by including diverse perspectives. This collaborative technique ensures that the policy is constantly relevant, adaptable enough to meet changing needs, and dedicated to creating an inclusive learning environment for all students.

Furthermore, for a gender-inclusive uniform policy to be successfully implemented in schools, clear instructions are required, according to the United Kingdom's Department of Education (2024). The regulations must align with the school's standards for maintaining a polite and supportive learning environment while boosting students' professionalism and sense of community. To guarantee that parents, instructors, and kids all agree on what is proper, these rules must be explicit and easy to understand. Regular communication of these guidelines and the reasons behind them can help to ensure that everyone is informed and agrees with the policy's aims.

Also Parenting Focus (2024) mentioned that to properly monitor and carry out a gender-inclusive uniform policy in schools, workers must get training. Schools may make sure that educators are prepared to serve children under the new policy by giving teachers and staff thorough training. The goal of this training should be to help staff members better comprehend the range of difficulties and experiences that students may face by promoting inclusivity and increasing sensitivity to gender diversity. Teachers can become adept at getting feedback from students and spotting problems with the policy, which will help them deal with complaints in a timely and appropriate manner.

In conclusion, schools must strictly review and monitor the gender-uniform policy to craft revisions that would cater to the needs of the students and stakeholders. Feedback mechanism is a very essential tool for this to be realized and materialized. In addition, stakeholders' viewpoints should also be considered as they can point loopholes in the policy and can serve as basis for enhancement. It is also very vital that these policies are clear and simple so that everyone can comprehend. With this, the policy can ensure that it will support a learning environment which encourages students' professionalism. On top of this, continuous monitoring would guarantee that the policy will always be relevant, flexible enough to meet the demands of evolving times, and will foster an inclusive learning environment.

Administrative Support

This has been one of the key elements in effective implementation as higher authorities are the ones responsible for the essential resources such as training and materials. The provision of a strong policy will always reflect the support coming from the administration who ensures that all the resources need will be met.

This notion is supported by the study of Genspect (2024) which suggests that administrators play an important role in promoting gender-inclusive uniforms by establishing the tone, revising policy, and creating a favorable environment. They guarantee that legislation properly addresses gender identification and diversity, while also training staff and teaching students to decrease opposition. Administrators help gender- nonconforming pupils by creating safe places, providing therapy, and intervening in bullying. Engaging with parents and the community helps smooth the transition and achieve acceptance, contributing to a more inclusive school climate.

Furthermore, Mateo (2022) also emphasized the need for administrative assistance, stating in his paper

that administrators may lead the development of standard rules with explicitly gender-neutral solutions. As part of its dedication to inclusion and respect for all students, the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila (PLM) has introduced a gender-neutral uniform policy that allows students to dress according to their gender identification.

In addition, Kollmayer et al. (2020) mentioned that there are various ways to indicate administrative support. Educator training programs may be utilized to help teachers and staff better understand gender issues and equip them with strategies for supporting every student, as well as to promote the implementation of the gender-inclusive uniform policy. This is one of the efforts. This program encourages teachers to analyze their own preconceptions and apply inclusive teaching practices to build an inclusive atmosphere.

Also, Dispatch (2022) firmly believed that gender-inclusive policy implementation necessitated effective resource allocation. Administrators have the flexibility to allocate cash for several uniform options that allow pupils to freely express who they are. This includes providing financial assistance to families who may find it difficult to pay for uniform charges, so promoting equitable access. In summary, the administration can greatly influence the success of the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform policy as it holds all the essential resources needed for its implementation. It has the capacity to ensure that regulations are well considered while providing training for the staff members and other stakeholders. It can also help students by offering different programs that will ensure their rights are being upheld. In addition, it can conduct various educational programs to enhance teachers' strategies in relation to the policy. Lastly, it has the authority to allocate funds that would offer support to families that are struggling to pay for uniform expenses and promote fair access to all.

Insights of OSA Coordinators in the Implementation of Gender-Neutral Uniform Policy

The participants of the study also highlighted the insights they gained from implementing the gender-neutral uniform policy. Their responses indicate the following:

a.) inclusive cultivation, b.) strengthening stakeholder engagement, c.) flexibility and adaptability, d.) utilizing feedback mechanisms, d.) continuous policy evaluation and development.

Inclusivity Cultivation

The responses from the participants repeatedly highlighted that one of the most common insights they gained from implementing the gender-uniform policy was cultivating inclusivity. Recognizing the role of inclusivity among students brings about respect and values while promoting well-being and success. Being committed to inclusiveness according to them is very crucial in the implementation because this will determine the outcome of the policy.

According to Lebos (2022), employing the term "individuals" instead of "boys" or "girls" in school policies, handbooks, and instructional materials may lessen discrimination, especially in subjects or extracurricular activities that are typically linked to one gender. Teachers and administrators can focus on areas where adjustments are needed, such as school uniforms, by addressing the aspects of school culture that cause obstacles for males, females, and non-binary children. School administrators and student affairs coordinators may create a more inviting environment in which students feel free to express themselves by using gender-inclusive uniforms.

Moreover, gender-neutral uniforms have the primary benefit of promoting inclusion. In today's varied learning environment, they maintain individual identities while ensuring that everyone feels recognized and appreciated. It is a proclamation that schools appreciate, acknowledge, and support all gender identities. Gender-neutral uniforms encourage equality among pupils by providing them with the same

clothing options. The change from unisex attire to gender-neutral uniforms represents a substantial advance. It signifies a gradual shift toward a more equal, respectful, and inclusive educational environment in which everyone feels comfortable and represented (Network Association of Uniform Manufacturers and Distributors, 2024). Adding to this, the student affairs coordinator must consider the students' cultural and religious backgrounds while implementing the policy, allowing religious wear such as turbans and hijabs while maintaining gender inclusiveness. This method is critical for creating an environment that honors all students' identities and promotes inclusion (Jessiman et al., 2022).

Also, Alliance International University (2024) emphasizes that having a gender-inclusive uniform benefits all students by encouraging and providing them with the opportunity to have a great educational experience. It requires establishing a classroom environment in which all students enjoy equal treatment and access to education. Its goals are to challenge, engage, and include all students. Inclusionary teaching refers to the intentional application of strategies that provide a healthy learning environment for all students. Gender-inclusive uniforms and inclusive teaching therefore encourage full involvement of students of all genders, which respond(s) to the harmful impact of gender stereotyping and misgendering on student learning.

Diverse strategies may be used to promote gender equality in education. Gender-responsive teaching and learning, for example, refers to the implementation of curriculum and teaching practices that are inclusive and attentive to the diverse needs of all students, including boys and girls. Creating an environment in which all students, regardless of gender, color, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background, feel valued and respected is an important aspect of inclusive education policies and practices. This includes enabling pupils to wear whichever uniform they like (Gray Group International Insights, 2024).

In summary, OSA coordinators insights on the implementation of gender-neutral uniforms, especially in cultivating inclusivity may bring about unique identities among students as it promotes a sense of being acknowledged and recognized. This represents a positive school environment where students will feel equality. In addition, this is a good response to gender stereotyping and may lessen bullying. The different tactics employed by the coordinators also establish an atmosphere in which students will feel appreciated and respected. This can be done by allowing learners to wear uniforms that are comfortable for them and that they can express themselves freely. With all this, student affair coordinators can foster a positive school environment where students need will be catered and cared for.

Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholders are very vital in the success of the implementation of gender-neutral uniform policy among its prime movers. Hence, the school staff and stakeholders must work together towards this goal. They can do this with ease if there is clear communication and a well-established plan between them. This can only happen if these two diverse groups are in a close relationship with each other.

The study of Kuteesa et al. (2024) which mentions that policy initiatives must prioritize equal access to education, removing institutional, cultural, and economic barriers. Second, it is necessary to question preconceptions and cultural norms. Curriculum materials should be designed to promote diversity and challenge gender stereotypes. Involving communities and stakeholders in debates and awareness campaigns may also help to create a conducive environment for gender equity in education.

Adding to this, gender-inclusive uniform implementation in educational institutions necessitates significant stakeholder involvement. It is critical to properly convey the rationale for establishing gender-inclusive uniforms to all stakeholders. Participating in discussions with stakeholders helps to clarify the benefits of these initiatives, which include reducing gender stereotypes and developing a more equitable

educational environment. As a result of this awareness campaign, parents and community members may become more vocal in their support of the policy.

Thus, Dimauro (2020) further asserted that the implementation of gender-inclusive uniforms is contingent upon stakeholder involvement, which cultivates collaboration, guarantees that the policy incorporates a range of viewpoints, and cultivates a wider base of support within the school community. The successful deployment of gender-inclusive uniforms can be enhanced by active stakeholder involvement. Participating in the decision-making process increases the likelihood that stakeholders will support changes during implementation and assist in uniformly enforcing the policy.

It is then imperative that strengthening stakeholder engagement is a very crucial ingredient in the implementation of the policy. OSA coordinators must therefore use these insights to their advantage such as participating in dialogues with the different stakeholders to know their opinions and incorporate them into their existing plans. Through dialogues, stakeholders' awareness may increase which may diminish gender stereotyping and produce a fair educational experience. Further, a supportive atmosphere can create active involvement among stakeholders which fosters collaboration and can enhance participation. Flexibility and Adaptability Student affair coordinators' responses revealed that being flexible and adaptable, especially on the current trends in relation to gender-neutral uniform policy can benefit them. Through its application in their field, inclusivity can be promoted since the challenges they encountered needs resilience and patience. Being able to adapt to certain situations can help them create ideas that might offer unique solutions to these unique challenges. Thus, being flexible and employing adaptability can help them effectively implement the policy.

Douglas (2019) stated that to make adoption of gender-inclusive uniforms in schools more flexible and adaptable, strategies could include actively including students in the design and selection of uniform alternatives. Participating in decision-making alongside students fosters a sense of accountability and ensures that uniforms reflect the diverse needs and interests of the student population. In addition, for a gender-inclusive uniform policy in schools to be flexible and adaptive, responsive changes are required. Schools must be prepared to change their standards in response to feedback from parents and students on how comfortable and beneficial the uniforms are. This willingness to evolve ensures that the policy remains current and effectively addresses the diverse demands of the student body (Tulfo, 2023).

Moreover, Gil (2021) recommended that achieving a quality implementation of gender-neutral uniform policy is a complex and demanding process that requires flexible solutions to unanticipated implementation problems, monitoring of the performances of individuals involved, and group cooperation. On the other hand, the school uniform policy may look rather acceptable, but it could fuel gender inequality. Regardless of a student's gender, the implementation of gender uniform policy should be adaptable and allow for freedom of choice. This includes the selection of attire that allows for freedom of movement, comfort, safety, and consideration of Climate factors (Saumya, 2022). To summarize being flexible and adaptable in the implementation of gender-neutral policy employs approaches that necessitates flexible solutions to demanding issues and unforeseen problems that may arise during the phase. The policy also needs to be adaptable in a manner that would allow the wearer freely to express themselves. Further, actively engaging students in the design and selection of the uniform process may also lead to adaptability and flexibility on the part of the implementors. Lastly, it is very vital for coordinators to be responsive to changes and be ready to adapt to certain situations to fully and effectively implement the policy.

Utilizing Feedback Mechanisms

One method of determining if a policy is beneficial is through feedback mechanisms. When considered, it can provide OSA coordinators with a wealth of information, including detailed data on the degree of stakeholder acceptability of the policy under implementation. To achieve the intended results, student affairs coordinators might modify and enhance the implementation processes by being receptive to input. This is back-up by the study of Smith et al. (2023) wherein they mentioned that to foster inclusivity and student participation, gender-inclusive uniform regulations must incorporate a feedback system. By requesting input from students of all gender identities, the policy may be improved to better reflect the needs and wants of all parties, ensuring that everyone feels comfortable and represented. Students who participate in the decision-making process also feel more like they own the policy, which pushes them to support and obey it since they believe their thoughts have been acknowledged and are vital in building an inclusive atmosphere.

Furthermore, Hall (2024) stated that preserving the relevance and usefulness of a gender-inclusive uniform policy for students necessitates ongoing adjustment through regular feedback mechanism. This adaptability enables the policy to develop in response to changing society norms and student expectations. A successful uniform policy may boost morale by fostering a sense of value and respect in pupils, resulting in a more positive and productive learning environment. Including a strong feedback mechanism ensures that the policy meets the needs of all students, going beyond simply drafting a policy. It also promotes a culture of inclusion and continual growth.

Also, Chaudhry (2022) asserted that feedback mechanisms may be utilized to identify gender equality difficulties, such as those impacting students with sensory disorders or who feel excluded by traditional uniform requirements. Schools may create a more accommodating environment that appreciates their students' diverse needs by addressing these concerns through feedback. Uniform Market (2024) further emphasizes the need to develop effective communication techniques for the successful implementation of gender-inclusive uniform regulations in schools. Establishing feedback mechanisms enables continuing debates and policy changes, ensuring that all opinions are heard. To develop a responsive atmosphere that meets the different needs of students, use communication channels that connect with them, such as suggestion boxes, meetings, or digital platforms.

To wrap up, feedback mechanisms allow development of effective communication among stakeholders which may result in successful implementation of the policy. This strategy can identify possible gender equality issues and needs and desire of both parties. Moreover, this promotes a culture of inclusivity while permitting the policy to evolve to address the demands of society. On top of this, when students are involved in the implementation process through their opinions, it will create a feeling of comfort and security among them.

Continuous Policy Evaluation and Development

Responses from the participants also highlight continuous policy evaluation and development as one of the insights they gain during the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform policy. Although the policy has gone many revisions, they can still find loopholes in it, especially when it comes to meeting the needs of different students with diverse cultural backgrounds. Thus, the policy needs to be revisited every now and then to cope with the changing times and demands of society.

As stated by Kaya and Erdem (2021) evaluation of gender-inclusive uniform rules are critical to evaluating their effectiveness in fostering inclusion and support for all students. Schools can identify areas for improvement and adapt to changing student requirements by assessing the policy's impact on academic success and student well-being. Furthermore, continuing evaluation of the policy promotes accountability

among lawmakers and school administrators by making it evident to all parties involved how choices are made and ensuring that the ideals of diversity and justice are represented across all policies. This focus on efficacy and openness helps to create a more responsive educational environment.

Moreover, the Cabinet Secretary for Educational Skills (2024), stated that the implementation of gender-neutral uniforms must adhere to existing legal frameworks. In the United Kingdom, for example, the Equality Act 2010 provides the legal foundation for gender-inclusive uniforms. This rule prohibits discrimination in school uniform policies based on gender identity or sex. Schools are asked to develop and evaluate existing policies that support equity and remove barriers to student participation in class activities. It is even more crucial that educational institutions establish inclusive policies that protect each student's right to express their gender identity because of the legal backing for these rights.

Similarly, Mergler (2017) said that to promote comfort and inclusion, schools in countries such as Australia and New Zealand have adopted gender-inclusive uniforms, enabling students to choose attire that reflects their identities. In the past, legislation mandated gender-specific clothing, such as skirts for girls and pants for males, to reflect cultural expectations. These changes, such as the addition of pants for females at Carey Grammar School and the adoption of gender-neutral uniforms at Mabel Park State, are meant to help students from diverse backgrounds and create a more welcoming and supportive atmosphere.

With this, implementors of the gender-neutral policy must see to it that continuous evaluation of the provisions of the policy is being carried out. This is to safeguard the policy as a whole and to meet the evolving demands of the stakeholders which differ due to diverse cultural backgrounds. This strategy will ensure the policy's success in fostering inclusivity and meet the needs of the students which can impact their overall well-being. It should also be noted that it is the responsibility of school administrators and legislators to continuously monitor if the existing provisions of the policy are still relevant to the present circumstances.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study highlights the experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights gained by the Office of the Students Affairs Coordinators on the Implementation of the Gender-Neutral Uniform Policy. These aspects of policy implementation can be explored deeper by future researchers.

These recommendations will open doors to various explorations on the different aspects of the implementation of the policy. Future researchers can conduct comprehensive needs assessments regarding the policy, focus on stakeholders' equity, pilot programs, and document and share findings. Addressing these gaps, future studies can contribute positively to the success of the gender-neutral uniform policy.

Future studies should conduct comprehensive needs assessments on the implementation of the gender-uniform policy so that students' needs and concerns as well as parents and school staff can be better understood. This unique strategy will address the different unique context each school has. This involves clearly defining the objectives and scope of the policy and determining what specific information they need and its importance to the implementation process. In addition, developing a data collection method should be done to unify quantitative and qualitative data by means of interviews and observations. Existing policies should also be well examined to see if they are still currently relevant or if changes must be taken into consideration. Cultural and Social contexts must also be analyzed thoroughly because these can greatly help in designing an inclusive policy.

Secondly, focusing on stakeholders' equity must be considered since this is vital to ensure that the policy

is fair, inclusive and accepted widely. Involving diverse groups can be done to ensure representation from all stakeholders from different cultural and social backgrounds. Surveys that focus on equity must be conducted to uncover any issues related to this such as regular policy review to see if there are disadvantaged groups among the stakeholders. Further, support systems can also address the needs and help especially during the implementation phase of the policy. Resources in terms of logistics should also be allocated in the transition from the traditional to the new school uniform policy.

Thirdly, pilot programs should also be explored to identify potential issues and gather feedback before the full implementation of the policy. Strategies can be employed to ensure this such as selecting pilot participants using a sample from different groups of stakeholders to ensure diversity in terms of cultural backgrounds, social status, age, and gender. In the implementation phase of the policy, uniforms must be practical, comfortable, and should meet all the concerns of the students. Furthermore, necessary adjustments should be made to make the policy non-biased and will cater to everyone's concern. A concrete plan should also be made before the implementation of the policy.

Lastly, documenting and sharing the findings on the implementation of the policy is very important to see to it that transparency, sharing of knowledge and continuous improvement can be achieved. This can be done through a series of meetings and forums with different stakeholders to allow feedback and listening to opinions. These findings can also be published on websites and newsletters to reach a broader audience. Proper dissemination can be done to orchestrate desired results. In conclusion, these aspects can be explored further for futures studies to increase better understanding of the policy implementation. It will greatly contribute to the improvement of literature on the topic. Finally, these can contribute richly to the stockpile of literature that will help future researchers on the topic.

Conclusion

This study sought to highlight the lived experiences, coping, mechanisms, and insights gained by the OSA coordinators in the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform policy. By comprehending these aspects on the implementation of the policy OSA coordinators can gauge and refine their approaches to better implement the said policy.

In this study, OSA coordinators revealed several experiences on the implementation of the gender-neutral uniform policy. OSA coordinators experienced cultivating inclusivity during the implementation phase while struggling with cultural resistance brought by several factors such as diversity of cultural and social backgrounds. Coordinators are also challenged in the policy implementation, especially in framing the guidelines and polices. On the other hand, while these challenges pose certain forms of negativity, they also enjoy positive results such as seeing positive reactions from the stakeholders who welcome the policy with great enthusiasm. Further, they also experience collaborating with other coordinators and staff during the implementation.

In addition, the study also highlighted the coping strategies employed by the OSA coordinators to minimize the impacts of the challenges they experienced. They employ effective communication and dialogue to address the gap between the different stakeholders. Collaboration and support from their peers encouraged them to do more as they work on the implementation process. Implementors also employ educational and awareness programs to properly educate the stakeholders regarding the policy. This also includes administrative support to breach logistical challenges and other issues. Finally, policy review and monitoring are strategies to ensure that the policy is relevant and effective.

The OSA coordinators revealed the insights they gained on the implementation of the policy. This

includes inclusive cultivation in relation to the well-being of the students and success. Strengthening stakeholders' engagement during the implementation phase also gave them insights which includes engagement with the stakeholders. In addition, flexibility and adaptability are gained to address the challenges in promoting inclusivity. Coordinators also learned to utilize feedback mechanisms to better understand the concerns of the stakeholders. And finally, continuous policy evaluation and development to ensure that the policy will always be relevant and unbiased to different stakeholders. With all this, this research explored the diverse challenges positively and negatively experienced by the OSA coordinators on the implementation of the gender- neutral uniform policy in schools which includes challenges in the policy implementation, resistance from culture while cultivating inclusivity. The coping mechanisms also include effective communication, collaboration and support, as well as educational programs and awareness. Insights gained include flexibility, utilization of feedback and continuous policy evaluation. Finally, these can bring about changes in the approach to ensure that the policy being implemented will be relevant and timely.

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