Global Scientific JOURNALS

UNDERSTANDING SOGIE-RELATED VIOLENCE IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

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ABSTRACT

Educational settings can be unsafe spaces for students, especially the marginalized groups, like girls, and lesbian, gay, transgender (LGBT) students. School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) is prevalent all over the world and is identified as an obstacle to global sustainable goals. The violence that happens in schools based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE) manifests in several forms, through physical, psychological, and institutional means. These negatively impact a learner's mental well-being, academic success, and opportunities later on in life. Through document analysis and a survey of related literature, this public lecture discusses SOGIE-related violence in educational settings and aims to justify the need for a gender-inclusive education. Understanding this violence leads to recognizing heteronormative attitudes and patriarchal practices that perpetuate stigma against women and the LGBT community. Key to challenging these problematic notions is education. Training and workshops on gender awareness among stakeholders are among the many ways described as good practice in addressing the problem of school-related gender-based violence. Educational institutions can also adopt a gender-inclusive approach in its curriculum to make learning safe and accessible for all learners.

Keywords: *school-related gender-based violence, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, LGBT*

The school is where students enjoy their right to learn in a safe and encouraging environment. However, some students are vulnerable to bullying and gender-based violence, corporal punishment and other forms of violence in educational settings. These forms of violence are perpetrated by members of the educational community, such as other students, teachers, and staff.

Recent data indicates that an approximately 246 million learners experience some form of school violence and bullying yearly (UNESCO, 2017). In a systematic review and meta-analyses from 21 countries, forms of violence on children negatively impact educational outcomes (Fry et al., 2018). The same study also revealed that girls are more at risk of academic struggle compared to girls who have never experienced emotional violence. Similarly, undergraduate women who report to be victims of sexual violence perform poorly in school, report delays on academic work and raise attendance issues (Stermac et al., 2020).

In a USAID report (2018), there is prevalent data for specific high-risk groups like students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) students, and other marginalized populations. In some Asian countries a proportion of LGBTQ students experience bullying in school. For example, 24% of Thai heterosexual students whose gender expressions are seen as not conforming to norms experienced homophobic violence (UNICEF, 2016). This suggests that students who do not identify as LGBTQ can also be targets of bullying and other forms of gender-related violence. The same is seen in Western countries like the United States where adolescents who are unsure and are still exploring their gender identity are susceptible to bullying (Ginestra, 2020).

Forms of abuse do not only exist in face-to-face settings, but also online. Although there is a dearth of studies focusing on sexual minorities, a 27-study review reveals that the LGBTQ community is more at-risk for cyberbullying compared to their heterosexual counterparts (Abreu & Kenny, 2018). Elementary and middle school students who experienced cyberbullying report that they suffer mental health issues like depression and anxiety (Evangelio et al., 2022).

Apart from negative effects on academic performance, gender-related violence also results to poor mental health outcomes. For instance, young Filipinos who identify as sexual minorities have been found to have more mental health issues than their heterosexual counterparts (Alibudbud, 2022).

Queer Theory

Over the years, queer theory has been a useful and important framework in the educational scene and it continues to be an evolving way to understand gender (Watson, 2005). An early 90s gender theory, Queer Theory acknowledges the ambiguity and fluidity of both gender identity and sexual orientation. It rejects sex and gender binarism, that is, the categorizing of persons as either female or male based on their biological sex (Griffin, 2017). Some feminist thinkers like Judith Butler and Elizabeth Grosz have also tried to introduce a non-binary or dualistic view of sexual identity (Fausto-Sterling, 2000).

Queer theory in education is not new. Queer theory and education were first associated by the ancient Greeks. Although they did not use the term "queer", it should be looked at as an expression without the Greek's elitism, misogyny, and slavery. Today, queer theory is a thriving incorporation to cultural studies in the curricula (Pinar, 2012).

In a paper on "Queering Education", author and educator Darla Linville (2017) raises several questions about education in aid of Queer Theory. One particular demand of queer theory is to shift questions from student deficiency to structural barriers that prevent students from achieving success. A valid question raised is how educators can teach students appropriate sexual and gendered interaction with one another without categorizing them in rigid labels that only perpetuate what is normal and abnormal (Linville, 2017). While binarism seem normal and natural, they are actually constructs of society. By questioning what is natural, normal, ignored, the academe can look at gender in new lenses. Hence, queer theory desires an education that confronts standing traditions of proper and improper and modernize the educational settings as inclusive and accessible.

There are several ways to design a gender-inclusive curriculum. It can be through the Integration Model, where concepts on gender are implicitly integrated into the current curriculum; this does not change the existing curriculum, but enhances it. This is also referred to as the Hidden Curriculum. Some universities approach gender studies by making explicit the inclusion of an actual subject on gender studies. This is also referred to as the Overt Curriculum Model. There are also identified factors that affect the implementation of a gender-inclusive curriculum. These are gender training, teacher's worldview on gender, and culture (Ma'shumah & Chamami, 2021).

Gender-related violence infringes upon children's right to education as provided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Chitsamatanga & Rembe, 2020). The data and literature suggest that there is a pressing need to confront violence on sexual minorities, especially in a place like schools, where students learn, and are supposedly granted an environment that is safe and accepting.

This lecture specifically focuses on the forms of violence that happen in educational settings, because schools can be violent. Understanding school-related gender-based violence can be the initial step in addressing it. Specifically, this lecture aims to shed light on the cause, scale, prevalence, and consequences of school-related gender-based violence. This lecture also covers the philosophical, theoretical and legal bases of why the academe needs to support the cause for gender equality. It is the hope of this lecture that an open, informed discussion on gender issues

will aid policymakers and the whole educational community to address a pressing matter, that is not only good for a certain community, but for all.

This public lecture aims to discuss the philosophical, theoretical and legal relevance of understanding violence on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression in educational settings. Specifically, the discussion aims to:

a. define school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression (SOGIE) and other related key terms,

b. describe the current understanding of SOGIE-related violence in schools, its causes, manifestations, scope, and consequences, and

c. elaborate on the theoretical, philosophical and legal significance of gender expression and identity

This public lecture made use of document analysis and literature review as a means to discuss and analyze school-related gender-based violence. A diverse collection of information sources such as peer-reviewed research, government and non-government organization reports, news articles, and other references like encyclopedia have contributed to the building of the lecture's thesis.

Definition of Key Concepts

While sexuality is often described as biological, gender is much more complex. Gender involves cultural and social norms attributed to men and women on the basis of biological distinctions (Baxter & Hoffman, 2019). To visually explain gender, activist and author Sam Killermann published the "genderbread person" as a teaching tool for simplifying gender (Killermann, 2017). In his work, he characterizes gender into four aspects: identity, gender expression, sex, and attraction. He has been updating the genderbread person since understanding of gender is a developing study. Recently, he added that the ideas of identity, gender expression, and sex may not be compatible with each other. The same is true for gender and sexual orientation.

While a graphic representation can be limiting, the genderbread model can be useful in teaching gender. Specifically, the genderbread person is a way to understand one's self and an aid to explain it to others (Killermann, 2014).

There are key elements touched in Killermann's model that reflect SOGIE. SOGIE stands for sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. Just like gender, sexual orientation is also complex. Sexual orientation is defined as *"...an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, or both sexes"*(American Psychological Association, 2008).

This is similar to Killermann's attraction from the genderbread person. A commonly used tool to assess sexual orientation is the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid (KSOG), which identifies seven dimensions of sexual attraction, namely, sexual attraction, sexual behavior, sexual fantasies, emotional preference, social preference, heterosexual/homosexual lifestyle, and self-identification (Cramer et al., 2015).

Gender identity, as defined by sociologists, is a complex and internalized set of systems that may vary across cultures and eras (Newman, 2002). Gender identity can be congruent to one's assigned sex at birth, but for some this may not be the case. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) is a frequent umbrella term for gender identity(Parent et al., 2013). To measure gender identity, a study adapted The Gender Unicorn (a popular infographic on gender diversity) to create the Gender-Identity Scale and found that the scale was useful in assessing a gender diverse population (Ho & Mussap, 2019).

While gender identity refers to one's sense of masculinity or femininity, or a combination of both, gender expression refers to one's way of exhibiting or displaying gender (Morrow & Messinger, 2006). Specific examples of gender expressions include dress, hair, make-up, and even posture. In a study on the contribution of posture to gender stereotypes, results show that a simple action, such as the way one sits can be judged on its masculinity and femininity (Vrugt & Luyerink, 2000). Stereotypes about how genders should behave and present themselves to the world can yield to danger. Those whose expressions do not conform to gender norms, including heterosexuals, reported to have experienced gender-related abuse (UNICEF, 2016). Regardless of sexual orientation and identity, non-conforming adolescents are characterized to be more vulnerable in school, compared to their conforming counterparts. This could result to absenteeism due to safety concerns and bullying (Klemmer et al., 2021).

School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) are *"acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence occurring in and around schools, perpetrated as a result of gender norms and stereotypes, and enforced by unequal power dynamics"* (UN WOMEN & UNESCO, 2016). The unequal power dynamics between males and females, including adults and children, play a part in SRGBV(USAID, 2020).

UNESCO makes a distinction for the gendered violence that happens in schools as opposed to violence on the basis of SOGIE in general, which is a type of gendered bullying based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. A number of SRGBV victims are LGBTQ students, including those whose gender identity or expression is nonconforming (or does not meet the binary norms of feminine and masculine).

Violence based on SOGIE can happen at schools, on school premises, in restrooms and, on the way to and from school, and online, much like other types of SRGBV. Research in South Africa shows that specific areas like bathrooms in school cause fear among girls because this is a potentially unsafe space for them (Ginestra, 2020).

Physical, psychological and sexual violence, cyberbullying, social discrimination and exclusion are some of the forms of violence that occur in educational settings. Teachers, staff, and other students are perpetrators of violence based on SOGIE (UNESCO, 2016a).

Another form of violence on the basis of SOGIE is "institutional" or "symbolic" violence. This is an implicit form of violence on the basis of SOGIE since these are often embedded in school norms like discriminatory school policies which reinforce gender stereotypes (UNESCO, 2018).

SRGBV is deeply rooted in discriminatory gender norms and stereotypes (UNESCO, 2016a). Traditionally, the norm and natural expression of sexuality is heterosexual. A person who challenges heteronormative norms is likely to be a target of violence. Other than the strict gender norms, SRGBV drivers include the normalizing of negative attitudes and behaviors that justify violence on SOGIE, poor education on comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), and inadequate legal mechanisms to protect sexual minorities (UNESCO, 2018).

Educational institutions tend to reinforce patriarchal and heteronormative attitudes and this can result to less acceptance for homosexuals. These attitudes can be enforced on school policies like gendered uniforms, haircut, etc. As a case in point, many schools in the Philippines require students to wear uniforms, which are based on their sex assigned at birth, rather than their identified gender or preference (Human Rights Watch, 2017; International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, 2012).

UNESCO (2018) reports that there is a lack of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in Asia-Pacific. Specifically, gender and SOGIE- related topics are lacking in the curricula. Learning materials like textbooks from the region contain problematic messages about gender, such as labeling homosexuality as a mental disorder (Human Rights Watch, 2017). The existence of gender topics and sexuality can be helpful in reducing SRGBV. In a study on the effectiveness of school-based sex education, results show that an LGBTQ-inclusive education with a social justice approach can result to appreciation of sexual diversity, including prevention of child abuse (Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2021).

Lack of legal protections for SOGIE is also a driver for gender-based abused in school. This is seen in the case of Thailand, where evidence shows that SGRBV occurs more in schools without policy protection for LGBTQ students (UNESCO, 2014).

While most research on SRGBV manifestations and scale come from the West, limited studies exist in Asia and the Pacific region (Jones et al., 2016). Literature suggests that school-related gender-based violence is universal. In the Asia-Pacific Region, manifestations of SRGBV can be clustered into two groups - personal and institutional. Personal forms of abuse are direct and are classified as physical, sexual, or psychological (UNESCO, 2018).

Specific indications of personal attack on the basis of SOGIE is seen in verbal violence, which is commonly reported in the Philippines (UNESCO, 2015). The same is true for China, however, it is also followed by physical violence and discrimination (UNDP et al., 2016).

Because of recent technological advancement, gender-based violence has also taken new forms. Worldwide data shows one in three youth in 30 countries experience online bullying and one in five young people report truancy as a result of online bullying. Philippine data indicates that children from ages 13-17 experience violence online (UNICEF, 2019). Most common reported forms of online gender-based violence include data privacy breach, blackmailing, verbal abuse and others (Foundation for Media Alternatives, 2022).

Institutional violence is comprehensively defined by UNESCO (2018) as *"gender-blind or gender-exploitative institutional policies, non-inclusive school rules and regulations, biased and stereotyping school cultures, lack of gender-appropriate and inclusive facilities, and misrepresentation or absence of SOGIE in textbooks and curriculum."*

For instance, evidence suggests that LGBTQ students, or those perceived to be LGBTQ students in Vietnam are graded unfairly (UNESCO, 2015). A similar scenario is faced by Thai LGBTQ students whose experience of exclusion can be traced by gendered school policies like haircut, access to bathrooms, and hairstyle (World Bank, 2017).

Table 1. Types and manifestations of violence on the basis of SOGIE (UNESCO, 2018)

Type of violence	Manifestation
Physical	Repeated hitting, kicking and taking, or the threat of taking, possessions
Sexual	Rape, coercion and sexual harassment
Psychological	Verbal and emotional abuse such as repeated mocking, name-calling, and teasing
	Cyber bullying, exclusion, gossiping, spreading of rumours and withholding of friendship, repeated threats, unkind comments or images that are sent using information and communication technology, such as mobile phones, email and social media, including chat rooms and networking sites
Institutional violence	Gender-blind or gender exploitative institutional policies, SOGIE-non-inclusive school rules and regulations, biased and stereotyping school cultures, lack of gender-appropriate inclusive facilities, misrepresentation or absence of SOGIE in textbooks and curriculum

It could be gleaned from the table above that SRGBV can also spill over to virtual settings (e.g., cyberbullying).

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SRGBV impacts several aspects of a victim's life. Evidence from global studies illustrates the gender-based violence results to negative educational outcomes. Students who experience gender-based violence are likely to be absent from school, take remedial classes, perform poorly, and eventually have difficulties in future academic and employment opportunities (USAID, 2018). In a study on the prevalence of school corporal punishment, it was found that schools in Nigeria permitting corporal punishment (e.g., slapping, hitting with a stick), had lower receptive vocabulary, executive functioning, and intrinsic motivation compared to schools that ban corporal punishment (Gershoff, 2017).

Not only does SRGBV negatively impacts education, but it also leads to negative physical and psychological consequences (Cuxart et al., 2021). LGBTQ individuals are likely to suffer mental health problems than heterosexual youth, because they are subjected to discrimination and inequality (Wilson & Cariola, 2020). Adverse effects of gendered violence are characterized as anxiety, stress, low self-esteem, self-harm, depression, and suicide(UNESCO, 2018). Other studies also associate violence based on SOGIE with higher risk of drug use, unprotected sex and HIV infection ("Health Concerns of Adolescents Who Are in a Sexual Minority," 2011).

There is also evidence suggesting that chronic exposure to stress and violence can hinder brain development and other bodily functions (Juster et al., 2017; Shonkoff et al., 2012; WHO, 2016; Wilson & Cariola, 2020). In fact, a recent study claims that the impact of childhood bullying can have lifelong consequences (Hornor, 2018). The long-term effects of bullying diminish one's

ability to adult roles such as establishing enduring relationships, fitting in at work, and being financially independent (Wolke & Lereya, 2015).

Based on these evidences, the impact of school-related gender-based violence on a child's well-being, (mental health, physical health) including academic success is profound. Violence on the basis of SOGIE in educational settings also has a serious effect on personal relationships, employment and income later on in life. This is especially tough on students who identify as LGBTQ or perceived as LGBTQ.

Providing a philosophical and theoretical rationale for gender-positive education is found in the schools of thought that champion progressive ideals.

Post-structuralist philosopher Judith Butler claims that for a gender identity to be constructed, it first has to be performed. She explains that a series of acts that are repeated, mundane and stylized create the gendered self. Gender performativity challenges the notion that gender identity is fixed or stable, but rather as shifting and contingent upon culture by which a gender is performed (Butler, 1988).

Inclusive and quality education should be accessible to everyone. It is a fundamental human right and is essential in empowering lives, especially children and adolescents who belong to the minorities (girls and LGBTQ). Violence based on SOGIE in educational settings violates human rights and threatens inclusive and quality education (Chitsamatanga & Rembe, 2020).

Human rights education is rooted in the premise that all individuals are entitled to human rights, as acknowledged in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Human rights are characterized by the United Nations (2014) as a means to:

a. learn about the standards and mechanisms to human rights, and apply them in daily life (knowledge and skills);

b. integrate values and strengthen attitudes that uphold human rights (values and attitudes);

c. promote action that safeguard and uphold human rights (behavior and action)

These dimensions are part of the learning process that shape HRE (United Nations, 2014). The United Nations recognizes that schools are places through which human rights education can be made accessible. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child affirms HRE, as well as learning tolerance and gender equity. In a study on challenges on human rights education, it was found that human rights create tension and may be declined in patriarchal and conservative societies. HRE is frequently taught without adequate inclusion of everyday rights violations. Be

that as it may, HRE remains to be important to democracy and social justice. HRE can endow students with skills and attitudes that is cosmopolitan, empowering and gender positive (Osler & Yahya, 2013).

Existentialism began as a response to the uncertainties brought by the Second World War and emphasizes on individuality and freedom. An oversimplification of existentialism may be described as advocating an individual's action and accountability. Meaning is established and defined by the individual himself. Existentialism, then, in education is defined by questioning educational issues and being aware of existential awareness (Purnama et al., 2022).

As an existential feminist, it was Simone de Beauvior who began to question gender and identity. Her magnum opus, the Second Sex began the debate of othering women (Tidd, 2004). In what is now a popular quote, she writes *"one is not born but rather, becomes a woman,"* pointing to the gender roles and social constructs imposed upon women. She argues that just like the meaning of life, gender is not preordained. Women have been othered by society's ideals of womanhood, mostly established by men. This is why her work is considered to be the beginnings of feminism. From then, scholars have used de Beauvoir's ideas on discussions about gender and freedom. Universal ideals of the existentialism and freedom can be culled from her other works as well.

In the Ethics of Ambiguity, de Beauvoir suggests that we have an *"ethical imperative to create our own life's meaning,"* and that *"a freedom which is interested only in denying freedom, must be denied."* (de Beauvoir, 1962). Her work invites the academe to deliberate upon our own freedom while protecting the freedom of others.

Since freedom is core to existentialist philosophy, it should not be divorced from human rights. Based on de Beauvoir's ethics, individuals must be able to realize themselves on the condition of their own and other's freedom (Simga, 2017).

Purnama et. al. (2022) furthers this by suggesting that school administrators and staff must acknowledge the values of existentialism – individuality and the intensity of awareness in order for students to live the life they determine on their own.

Political and Legal Basis for a Gender-responsive Education

As a member country of the United Nations, the Philippines makes a pact to uphold the rights of an individual as stated in The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights or ICESCR (1966), and the International Covenant on Civic and Political Rights (1966). Both covenants further detail the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) which embodies the rights and freedoms of all persons. Article 26 of the UDHR states that an individual

has the right to education that aims for holistic development and respect for human rights and freedoms and an education that favors tolerance, understanding and friendship (United Nations, 1948).

The United Nations also makes it clear that school-related gender-based violence hampers sustainable development goals, particularly on quality education and gender equality (UN WOMEN & UNESCO, 2016). While the goals are intersectional, certain targets, especially Goal 10 (on reduced inequalities) tackle sexual inequality. For instance, Target 10.3 of Goal 10 aims for the removal of discriminatory practices and policies (United Nations, 2016).

Similarly, the 1987 Philippine Constitution echoes the upholding of human rights and dignity in Article III (Bill of Rights), Section 1 and the right to quality education in Article XIV (Education, Science and Technology, Arts, Culture, and Sports), Section 1 (Official Gazette, 1987). Not only does the Constitution recognizes the inherent value of human rights, but also the role of women in building the nation, as stated in Art. II, Sec. 14. This is also the legal foundation of Gender and Development (GAD) which is a program that ensures fair gender relations between men and women as a means to attain sustainable development. The Magna Carta for Women (R.A. 9710) defines GAD as a means for women to be empowered and active participants for development (Official Gazette, 2009).

During the 18th congress, there was an attempt to enact the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression Equality Bill (SOGIE Bill) also known as the Anti-Discrimination Bill. The bill aims to safeguard the rights of LGBT persons and prohibits discrimination on the basis of SOGIE. However, the bill was archived and must be refiled (Delizo, 2019). In recent news, Senator Hontiveros aims to refile the SOGIE Equality Bill. She adds that the SOGIE Equality Bill guarantees more Filipinos access to safe schools, health care and adequate livelihood (Felipe, 2022).

Even without the SOGIE Equality Bill, there are local ordinances in cities that protect the rights of LGBT persons. Quezon City calls its ordinance the Gender-Fair Ordinance. In Manila, the Manila LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex) Protection Ordinance bans gender discrimination; Cebu City calls it the Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) Equality ordinance (Abad, 2022). In 2017, Baguio City also passed into law the City Ordinance No. 13, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of SOGIE, health status, disability, etc. (Refuerzo, 2017).

Although there are ordinances that shield LGBT persons from discrimination, this only reflects a small fraction of protected minorities. Based on available data, 82 million Filipinos live

in areas that do not have anti-discrimination ordinances (Manalastas, 2015). A national law that protects actual or perceived LGBT Filipinos is yet to be enacted.

While the SOGIE Equality Bill is still to be revived to date, there exists a legislation that aims to prosecute SOGIE-related violence. The Safe Spaces Act OR Bawal Bastos Law (R.A. 11313) penalizes gender-based sexual harassment (GBSH) in public spaces, educational or training institutions, workplace, and online settings.

GBSH is an act of unwanted and uninvited sexual actions or remarks against any person regardless of motive in the spaces listed above. Specific instances of GBSH include, but are not limited to: catcalling (e.g. wolf-whistling or "paninipol"), persistent requests for personal information, sexist, transphobic, homophobic slurs and unwanted invitations (Official Gazette, 2019; Philippine Commission on Women, 2021).

The Safe Spaces Act also illustrates the duties of educational or training institutions in cases of GBSH. The school or institution shall uphold due process and must guarantee a gender-sensitive environment, conducive to truth-telling. The school also has a responsibility to disseminate the provisions of the law and report GBSH to authorities (Official Gazette, 2019).

Parallel to Section 2 of the Safe Spaces Act on the state's mandate to respect human rights and its provisions for educational institutions is the Department of Education's Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy. The Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy (DepEd Order no. 32 s. 2017) is congruent to the Gender and Development (GAD) mandate of the state as prescribed in the Philippine Constitution, the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710), including international commitments like the UDHR, among others (Department of Education, 2017).

According to the Dep Ed order, basic education institutions shall commit to the principles of human rights, gender equality and gender sensitivity, as this establishes accessible basic education for everyone. The Gender- Responsive Basic Education Policy describes competencies that includes advocating for gender equality in policies, programs, and activities, inclusion of GAD-related events in the school calendar (e.g., Women's Month, Pride Month, etc.) and others that are supportive of SOGIE. While the curriculum is unchanged, the enhancement through this policy is what Ma'shumah & Chamami (2021) refer to as the integration model, where gender is tacitly infused in the curriculum.

Conclusion

This section presents the implications drawn from the discussion.

The prevalence of school-related gender-based violence is serious. Although there are limits of studies in certain parts of the world, data shows how universal the problem is and its dire consequences. The violence that learners experience based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE) can gravely impact their physical and psychological health, even their opportunities later on in life. The protracted effects of violence and abuse upon children must clearly be addressed through informed and humane policies and approach.

SRGBV is deeply rooted in patriarchal and sexist attitudes. Disrupting negative notions about gender is through education – one that is participated in by not only members of the academe but by society at large. Since gender violence stems from internalized negative attitudes, a curriculum designed to be gender inclusive can also create the same result – internalization of gender-fair values (Ma'shumah & Chamami, 2021). Teachers armed with knowledge and positive attitude towards gender diversity improves learners' self-concept and sense of belongingness (Ullman, 2017).

There are laws and policies in place that protect SOGIE. The legislations highlight and justify the need for a society that is on the side of human rights and dignity. These can serve as indicators that SRGBV is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. However, there appears to be a lack of robust policy implementation and monitoring (UNESCO, 2018).

Finally, a gender inclusive society is good for sustainable development (UN WOMEN & UNESCO, 2016). When everyone is empowered and afforded a life of dignity, they can effectively participate in nation-building. Ending SOGIE-related abuse does not only benefit gender minorities, but everyone.

Since studies on gender and SRGBV is emerging, researchers can use the USAID tool in assessing SRGBV called the School-Related Gender-Based Violence Measurement Kit. Specifically, the toolkit aims to guide the researcher for measuring the prevalence and extent of SRGBV, which can be the initial step in addressing SRGBV (USAID, 2020).

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