

Gender Roles in Home Economics: Male Senior High School Students in Focus

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Abstract: The study examined the experiences of male senior high school students in home economics education. A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion (FGD) with five male senior high school students enrolled in home economics courses. Data was analyzed using thematic coding to identify patterns related to gender stereotypes, challenges faced, coping strategies, and insights gained from their experiences. The results revealed that male students faced challenges such as stigmatization, lack of male role models, and restrictive cultural expectations. However, participants also reported positive experiences, including empowerment from acquiring practical skills, increased confidence, and breaking gender stereotypes. Coping strategies included building resilience through self-advocacy, seeking mentorship, and reframing traditional gender roles in education. The findings suggest that while male students in home economics face significant challenges due to gendered expectations, these challenges also provide opportunities for growth and the development of a more inclusive curriculum. The lack of male role models and cultural expectations of masculinity are significant barriers to male participation in home economics. The study highlights the importance of inclusive educational practices and teacher training to break down gender stereotypes and encourage broader male participation in domestic skill-based subjects.

Keywords: Gender Roles, Home Economics, Male Students, Gender Stereotypes.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In many countries, home economics is still seen as a subject for girls, which makes it hard for boys to join. Boys who want to study home economics often face unfair treatment because school lessons and activities support old ideas about what boys and girls should do. There are also few male role models, so boys don't get much support or encouragement in this area.

In the Philippines, similar problems happen. Even though gender equality has improved, traditional ideas about what boys and girls should do are still strong, especially in home economics. Boys interested in these skills often feel left out. In Davao City, limited school resources and strong beliefs about what boys and girls should do make it even harder for boys to explore interests seen as "for girls" and express themselves freely.

The study found a research gap on how societal norms and school practices affect male students in home economics. It showed the need for curriculum changes, teacher training, and community support to challenge gender stereotypes. Addressing this could create a more inclusive environment, giving all students equal chances to pursue their interests regardless of gender.

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of male senior high school students in home economics education, focusing on how traditional gender roles, societal expectations, and school practices influenced them. Using qualitative methods, it sought to highlight these students' perspectives to support efforts in promoting gender inclusivity and equity in home economics. Knowing the challenges, coping strategies, and experiences of male senior high school students in home economics is important for encouraging inclusivity and creating a supportive learning environment.

The literature review revealed several important points. First, home economics education varies widely across countries, shaped by cultural and contextual differences. Second, it supports positive outcomes like academic success, life skills, and career readiness. Gender plays a major role in students' experiences, with efforts growing to create more inclusive classrooms that challenge traditional stereotypes. Recent studies also show that home economics can address current issues such as sustainability and social equity.

This study was grounded in Feminist Theory and Social Learning Theory to examine gender roles in home economics education. Feminist Theory helped reveal how power structures and cultural norms sustain gender inequalities and intersect with factors like race and class, encouraging reflection on biases and promoting inclusive learning

environments. Social Learning Theory explained how students learn gender roles by observing peers, teachers, and family, highlighting the importance of role models and supportive settings. Together, these theories provided a framework to understand how gender shapes students' experiences and how educators can challenge traditional stereotypes to create more equitable classrooms.

II. METHOD

This study used a qualitative research design with a phenomenological method. Phenomenology helps explore and understand people's personal experiences and feelings about a situation. In this study on gender roles in home economics classes among male senior high school students, phenomenology was useful for capturing the students' detailed experiences. It allowed the researcher to see how the students understand and interpret gender roles in their home economics classes.

The study was guided by key philosophical assumptions emphasizing ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology to ensure a coherent and ethical research process. Ontologically, it recognized the existence of objective social realities beyond individual perceptions while acknowledging the influence of underlying structures on male students' experiences in home economics education. Epistemologically, it embraced a constructivist view, understanding knowledge as co-created through interaction between researcher and participants, valuing their perspectives in shaping understanding. Axiologically, the research prioritized transparency, reflexivity, and ethical integrity, addressing researcher biases and respecting participants' dignity. Methodologically, a qualitative phenomenological approach was employed to deeply explore and interpret the lived experiences of male students, focusing on capturing rich, contextual insights into gender roles within the educational setting.

The researcher's qualitative assumption was that reality is socially constructed and subjective, focusing on understanding individuals' lived experiences within their contexts. This perspective is especially relevant to the study of gender roles in home economics education among male senior high school students, as it acknowledges the complex nature of gender dynamics and aims to explore the personal meanings and interpretations of the students' experiences in the classroom.

The study included 10 male senior high school students taking Home Economics at AO Floirendo National High School in New Visayas, Panabo City. All were 18 years old or older and were chosen on purpose because they fit what the study needed. This helped the researcher learn more about how male students see and experience gender roles in Home Economics classes.

The students had to be currently enrolled in Home Economics and willing to join interviews and group talks. Five students took part in interviews, and five joined group discussions. This number was enough because after talking

with them, no new ideas or themes came up. This means the researcher got a good understanding of their experiences with gender roles in Home Economics.

The researcher received permission from school authorities to conduct the study in December 2024. The goal was to understand the experiences of male senior high school students with gender roles in home economics education. Data was collected through in-depth interviews (IDIs) and a focus group discussion (FGD) using a set of open-ended questions. The IDIs were done individually from December 2 to 6, giving students a chance to share their personal thoughts and experiences in a private and comfortable setting.

After the interviews, a focus group was held on December 12, 2024, with five participants. This group discussion allowed the students to talk together, share ideas, and reflect on common experiences. The same interview guide was used to lead the conversation. This process helped the researcher collect detailed and meaningful information about how gender roles affect male students in home economics.

The researcher used Braun and Clarke's six-step method to analyze the data from interviews and focus group discussions with male senior high school students about gender roles in home economics. First, the conversations were transcribed and carefully reviewed to understand the students' experiences. Then, important points were labeled with short codes. These codes were grouped into themes, such as breaking stereotypes or gaining confidence. The themes were reviewed, refined, and clearly defined to make sure they reflected the data accurately. Finally, the researcher wrote a report that explained the findings using quotes from the students and connected the results to related studies.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study highlighted how male senior high school students experience both growth and challenges in home economics. On one hand, they gain confidence and practical life skills, breaking gender stereotypes and redefining masculinity. On the other hand, they face barriers like social stigma, lack of male role models, cultural expectations, and limited peer support, which discourage their participation.

This study also highlighted male senior high school students in home economics and how they coped with gender role challenges through four themes which are self-advocacy, mentorship and peer support, reframing gender roles, and building supportive communities. They asserted their abilities, sought guidance, challenged stereotypes, and fostered collaboration to navigate a female-dominated field.

Male senior high school students in home economics reflected on four key themes in coping with gender roles: Breaking Gender Stereotypes in Class, Serving as Role Models for Male Students, Empowering Students with Life Skills, and Challenging Outdated Masculinity Perceptions. They encouraged participation in domestic tasks regardless of gender, demonstrated that men can excel in the field,

emphasized the importance of practical life skills for all, and promoted a broader, more inclusive definition of masculinity.

After analyzing the data, the researcher has noted that male senior high school students in home economics often faced challenges because of society's expectations and gender stereotypes. While some felt empowered by learning new domestic skills, many experienced teasing and judgment from their classmates for doing tasks usually seen as feminine. These experiences showed a struggle between their own interests and outside pressures, which affected how they took part in the subject.

To handle these challenges, the male students used coping strategies like standing up for themselves, finding support from mentors, and rejecting old ideas about what it means to be a man. They built strength by reminding themselves that skills like cooking and sewing are useful for everyone, no matter their gender. Through their experiences, they learned that doing household tasks did not make them any less masculine. By questioning traditional gender roles, they developed a wider understanding of manhood and saw the value of both personal growth and social acceptance.

The results showed that male students' experiences in home economics highlight the need for more acceptance and encouragement in gender-neutral subjects, urging schools to create inclusive environments that challenge stereotypes and allow all students to participate freely. Their coping strategies revealed the importance of having role models, mentors, and supportive peers, suggesting that schools should strengthen support systems to help students manage social pressures and build resilience. Additionally, the students' insights emphasized the need to redefine gender roles in education by exposing learners to a wide range of skills regardless of traditional gender boundaries, fostering personal growth and helping to break down harmful societal expectations.

The future directions suggest that the Department of Education should create policies and programs that promote gender-inclusive education, especially in home economics, encouraging schools to adopt curricula that challenge traditional gender roles and support male students. School leaders are urged to foster a positive and inclusive environment where gender stereotypes are addressed, making male students feel confident to participate in all subjects. Home economics teachers should continue to act as role models by challenging stereotypes and providing opportunities for male students to excel. Students are encouraged to embrace a variety of skills regardless of gender norms and take pride in learning life skills. Lastly, future researchers are recommended to study the effects of gender-inclusive education in other subjects and its long-term impact on students' growth, career paths, and societal views on gender.

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