Bridging the Gender Gap for Fostering Inclusivity in Secondary Schools: Sulu National High Schools in Focus

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ABSTRACT. This study aimed to assess the bridging gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools: Sulu National High Schools in Focus Specifically, the study aimed to address the following questions. To organize the data collection process, a descriptive-exploratory research design was utilized, incorporating a quantitative research approach approach was employed in bridging gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools: Sulu national high schools in focus. This method was chosen because the descriptive approach allows for the collection, examination, and validation of data. According to Krathwohl (1993), description arises from creative exploration and helps structure findings in a way that aligns with potential explanations, which can then be tested or validated. The results of the study indicated that a significant number of teacher-respondents were in their early thirties and older, predominantly female, mostly married, and many were relatively new in the teaching profession. The data further confirmed that teachers across varying demographic profiles uniformly acknowledged the importance of bridging the gender gap as a key factor in promoting inclusivity in secondary education. Moreover, the results emphasized that inclusive teaching and learning practices are intricately connected to school policies, rules, and leadership, highlighting the interdependence of institutional frameworks and classroom dynamics in fostering a gender-responsive learning environment.
KEYWORDS: Bridging, Gender, Gap, Inclusivity, Health programs

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Introduction

Equitable education is not only a fundamental human right but also a critical foundation for a just and thriving society (UNESCO, 2022). Yet, persistent gender disparities in education continue to impede this goal, particularly in developing nations. Globally, the education sector remains affected by gender-based challenges such as limited access, lower completion rates, gender-based violence, and restricted career opportunities for girls (Unterhalter et al., 2014). These issues are especially acute in socioeconomically marginalized and conflict-affected areas, where systemic barriers disproportionately hinder girls' educational experiences (UNICEF, 2020).

In the Philippines, while considerable strides have been made in expanding access to education for girls, significant disparities remain in terms of completion rates and overall educational attainment (Department of Education, 2021). Despite policies and frameworks promoting gender equality such as the Gender and Development (GAD) program—

implementation challenges persist, especially in rural and marginalized communities (Chiong, 2020; EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2015). Moreover, cultural normalization of gender biases—such as those perpetuated through online gender-based humor—reinforces inequality and marginalizes efforts toward gender inclusion in school settings (Chavez & Prado, 2023; Chavez, Lamorinas, & Ceneciro, 2023).

Sulu, a province in the southern Philippines, exemplifies this educational inequality. The region is plagued by poverty, armed conflict, and deeply rooted cultural norms that intensify gender-based disparities in schools (Samson, 2019). These structural and socio-cultural challenges necessitate a localized and nuanced understanding of the gender gap in education. In particular, the situation of girls in Sulu National High Schools calls for targeted interventions that respond to their lived experiences and intersecting vulnerabilities (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015). Equally concerning are the economic difficulties faced by female educators in the region, which were further worsened during the pandemic, affecting their motivation and participation in fostering inclusive environments (Chavez, Del Prado, & Estoque, 2023).

This study investigates the specific barriers faced by female learners in Sulu National High Schools and examines how these challenges contribute to the persistent gender gap in education. It also explores strategic interventions tailored to the socio-political and cultural context of the province. Drawing upon key theoretical perspectives such as gender equality (Sen, 1999), social justice in education (Fraser, 2009), inclusive education (Ainscow & Miles, 2009), and the capability approach (Nussbaum, 2011) the research aims to uncover root causes of inequality and recommend actionable strategies for fostering a more equitable learning environment. Rights-based frameworks like the Magna Carta for Women, though established, often face gaps in implementation and awareness, especially in marginalized settings (Chavez et al., 2024), while gender mainstreaming initiatives are undermined by entrenched biases and institutional resistance (Chavez & Cuilan, 2024).

Ultimately, this study seeks to inform education policy, school-level practices, and advocacy efforts to promote inclusivity and equal opportunity in education. By shedding light on the specific experiences of girls in Sulu, the research contributes to a broader movement toward educational justice and sustainable development in the Philippines and beyond.

Research Questions

This study aimed to assess the measures toward reading difficulties among Public Elementary School learners at Patikul West District, Division of Sulu, School year 2024-2025.

1. What is the demographic profile of the pupil-respondents in terms of:
   1.1 Age;
   1.2 Gender;
   1.3 Educational Attainment; and
   1.4 Length of Service?
2. What is the extent of measures toward reading difficulties among public elementary school learners at Patikul West District, Division of Sulu as perceived by the teachers in the context of:
   2.1 Literacy goal;
   2.2 Classroom strategies;
   2.3 Supplementary instruction; and
   2.4 Problem Identification?

3. To what extent does a significant difference exist in measures toward reading difficulties among public elementary school learners at Patikul West district, Division of Sulu as perceived by the teachers when data are classified according to their demographic profile in terms of:

3.1 Age;
3.2 Gender;
3.3 Educational Attainment; and
3.4 Length of Service?

4. Is there a significant correlation among the subcategories under the extent of measures toward reading difficulties among public elementary school learners at Patikul West District, Division of Sulu?

Foreign Literature and Studies

Historical Context and Women's Contributions in Technology. Despite the significant early contributions of women to computer science such as Ada Lovelace, the ENIAC programmers, and Margaret Hamilton, gender disparities in STEM fields persist, particularly in digital technology (Arısoy Gedik & Ceyhan, 2024). Marketing strategies during the 1980s that targeted computers primarily to males further contributed to a decline in female participation. This gender gap continues today, manifesting in digital skills inequality, algorithmic biases, and underrepresentation in high-growth tech industries.

Prominent innovations by women, including Ángela Ruiz Robles' invention of the e-book reader in 1949 and Hedy Lamarr's foundational work on GPS and Wi-Fi, underscore the transformative impact of women in technology. The World Economic Forum (2020) forecasts 6.1 million new jobs in fields like AI, data science, and cloud computing by 2030, stressing the need for gender inclusivity to fuel innovation and equitable development.

In addition to historical and systemic factors, online discourse has increasingly shaped public attitudes about women in technology and leadership. As Chavez and Prado (2023) argue, humor embedded with gender bias plays a subtle yet powerful role in normalizing exclusionary narratives in digital spaces, reflecting cultural barriers that further impede gender inclusivity. These cultural narratives, as supported by Chavez and Ceneciro (2024), often mirror broader societal belief systems that marginalize certain gender identities and expressions, thereby reinforcing systemic exclusion.

Gender Disparities in the Digital Workforce. McKinsey reports highlight that while automation may displace certain roles, it will create a surge in demand for technology-based jobs requiring creativity, critical thinking, and advanced digital skills (Manyika et al., 2017). Yet, the digital gender divide remains, with fewer women entering or advancing in technology-related careers. Arısoy Gedik and Ceyhan (2024) emphasize that addressing these gaps involves not only skill-building but also confronting underlying biases embedded in digital systems.

Chavez, Lamorinas, and Ceneciro (2023) further contextualize these disparities by examining recurring patterns of online discriminatory practices, stereotyping, and disempowerment. Their findings are crucial to understanding how societal messaging shapes gendered experiences in both academic and professional tech spaces. Likewise, Garcia, Lastam, Chavez, et al. (2025) highlight how gendered life events such as early marriage significantly impact educational attainment and career continuity, especially for young women in vulnerable communities.

Importance of Role Models, Representation, and Mentorship. To bridge this gap, global initiatives have advanced STEM education for girls, emphasizing mentorship, scholarships, and the visibility of female role models (Patel et al., 2023). Representation in leadership positions is vital, as it shapes aspirations and career trajectories among young women (Beede et al., 2011). Mentorship and support networks are particularly effective in nurturing talent, improving confidence, and fostering a sense of inclusion and belonging (Diekman et al., 2010; Blickenstaff, 2005).

Policy advocacy also plays a role in creating gender-equal environments. Chavez, Gregorio, Araneta, and Bihag (2024) highlight how awareness and institutional compliance with the Magna Carta for Women can drive workplace reforms, especially for women educators and other marginalized sectors.

However, Chavez and Cuilan (2024) caution that institutional reforms alone are insufficient if they are undermined by cultural resistance. Their discourse analysis reveals how gender mainstreaming campaigns are often derailed by persistent gender-based humor online, which trivializes and delegitimizes equality efforts. In this context, Dagoy, Ariban, Chavez, et al. (2024) explore how professional interest and institutional integrity among educators may be affected by administrative burdens and gendered expectations, especially in leadership roles.

Gender Integration in Educational Settings. In educational settings, gender plays a critical role in shaping classroom dynamics. Research shows that same-gender peer groupings, if left unchecked, perpetuate segregation and reinforce stereotypes. Promoting gender integration within classrooms leads to more inclusive and socially cohesive learning environments (Patel et al., 2023). Social learning theories further support this approach, suggesting that increased intergroup interaction fosters empathy, cooperation, and social development (Bigler & Liben, 2007).

Additionally, research by Chavez et al. (2024) highlights how many women educators, informed by rights-based legislation such as the Magna Carta of Women, engage in self-initiated protection behaviors in response to perceived gender-related risks in the workplace. This points to the critical role of empowerment through knowledge and legal frameworks in advancing gender equality. Leon, Jumalon, Chavez, et al. (2024) complement this by examining the real-world implementation of inclusive classroom policies, noting both successes and challenges as experienced by public-school teachers across diverse settings.

Towards Inclusive and Equitable Learning and Work Environments. Ultimately, these studies emphasize the urgent need for systemic change to eliminate gendered barriers in both education and technology sectors. Empowering women through education, inclusive policies, and equitable digital access is key to building resilient, future-ready societies (UNESCO, 2022; World Economic Forum, 2020). Gender equality in STEM and education is not just a matter of representation but also one of justice, innovation, and economic progress. As Chavez, Garil, Padirque, et al. (2024) argue, youth leadership and responsiveness to community needs play an essential role in sustaining inclusive progress.

Local Literature and Studies

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Inclusive Practices. Cultural competence in education has become a cornerstone of inclusive and equitable learning. It involves recognizing and respecting the diverse cultural backgrounds, experiences, and identities of students, educators, and communities to foster a welcoming environment. According to Eden et al. (2023), culturally responsive teaching enhances student engagement by integrating relevant content and instructional strategies that reflect learners' lived experiences. This approach supports the holistic development

of students and encourages mutual respect and understanding across cultural lines. In line with this, Leon, Jumalon, Chavez, et al. (2024) emphasize that while many teachers support inclusive classroom implementation, challenges such as lack of training, institutional support, and social resistance often obstruct full compliance. Additionally, Garil (2024) explores how socio-cultural factors influence the proficiency levels in reading comprehension and grammar among students in higher education. offering insights into the broader cultural and demographic variables that shape inclusive practices in education.

Professional Development for Cultural Awareness. To build effective culturally inclusive practices, ongoing professional development is essential. Training programs, as supported by Dela Cruz and Mariano (2022), equip educators with tools to identify and address unconscious bias, improve cultural awareness, and implement diversity-friendly classroom strategies. Additionally, Bautista and Soriano (2023) emphasized that educator reflection, peer mentoring, and exposure to multicultural case studies are vital for developing deeper intercultural empathy and responsive pedagogy. Dagoy, Ariban, Chavez, et al. (2024) further add that maintaining professional interest and integrity among teachers, especially those juggling administrative responsibilities, is critical to cultivating inclusive school cultures. Furthermore, Ceneciro (2025) highlights how workshops designed to promote motivated engagement and retention can foster a more inclusive educational environment by actively involving educators and students in continuous professional development.

Community and Family Engagement in Culturally Inclusive Schools. Furthermore, forging strong connections with community organizations and families of diverse backgrounds can enrich the learning process and foster a sense of belonging for all stakeholders. Luna and Esquivel (2021) pointed out that collaborative school-community initiatives have been instrumental in reinforcing cultural pride, civic engagement, and identity-building among learners. This is echoed by Chavez, Garil, Padirque, et al. (2024), who highlight the growing role of innovative and responsive young public leaders in promoting equitable and gender-inclusive community education initiatives. Additionally, Divinagracia (2024) discusses how macro and micromanagement practices in post-pandemic reading comprehension programs can support inclusive educational practices, helping schools to adapt to students' diverse needs in both academic and community settings.

Policy, Leadership, and Institutional Commitment. Institutional commitment also plays a pivotal role. Educational policies and school leadership must reinforce diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) through inclusive curricula, fair disciplinary practices, and staff recruitment reflective of cultural pluralism. Eden et al. (2023) emphasized that such systemic efforts help cultivate a culture of respect and inclusivity at the school level. However, Chavez and Ceneciro (2024) caution that prevailing religious and social belief systems can subtly hinder the integration of gender-inclusive values within schools, particularly in conservative communities. Quisay and Aquino (2024) provide valuable insights into how stress levels among educators delivering distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of supportive leadership and institutional commitment, especially for teachers navigating the demands of inclusive education through non-traditional means.

Technology and Digital Tools for Cultural Competence. Moreover, technology has emerged as a valuable tool in promoting cultural competence. Virtual exchange programs, digital storytelling, and online forums create platforms for cross-cultural learning and dialogue. Reyes and Tolentino (2022) noted that multicultural e-resources and international collaboration projects have empowered students to better understand global issues and engage with diverse perspectives. Calzada (2024) supports this by arguing that anti-dependency teaching strategies, especially in the age of AI, foster innovation and equity through independent learning, thus further enhancing

inclusivity in education by providing students with the tools to learn autonomously while respecting cultural differences.

Women's Empowerment, Mental Health, and Educational Leadership. In tandem with cultural competence, the topic of women's empowerment and leadership remains significant. Stromquist (2015) and Arefin et al. (2024) discussed how women's growing involvement in leadership roles contributes to innovation, resilience, and social transformation. However, they also acknowledged the emotional and psychological challenges women face, especially in balancing societal expectations, career demands, and mental health. Garcia, Lastam, Chavez, et al. (2025) examined how early marriage remains a critical gender-related issue affecting educational continuity, with many young women dropping out of school due to family and societal pressures—underscoring the importance of systemic support for both learners and educators.

Promoting Inclusive and Empowered Learning Environments. In conclusion, fostering cultural competence and empowering women leaders are intertwined goals essential for inclusive education. These initiatives must be supported through curriculum design, educator training, community collaboration, and systemic reforms to ensure educational environments where all individuals regardless of background or gender are valued, supported, and empowered to thrive.

Methodology

This chapter provides a concise discussion of key elements such as the research design, study setting, target respondents, research tools, sampling approach, data collection process, validity and reliability measures, and the statistical methods employed for data analysis.

1. *Research Design*

In "Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches," John W. Creswell outlines the descriptive method as a research approach that aims to systematically describe a phenomenon, population, or situation.

This study employed the quantitative method or the study adopted a descriptive-exploratory design, considered fitting in ascertaining the bridging gender gap for fostering inclusive in secondary schools: Sulu national high schools in focus.

2. *Research Locale and Respondents*

The locale of the study was confined at selected public high schools in Sulu Province, utilizing the six selected public secondary schools covered by the aforesaid district namely: Talipao National High School-Main, Talipao National High School-Pantao Annex, Talipao National High School-Talipao Proper Annex, Indanan National High School-Main Campus, Pasil Indanan National High School, and Timbangan Indanan National High School.

The participants in this study consisted of one hundred (100) teachers among the six (6) selected public national high schools of Sulu specifically : from this study was conducted during the School Year 2024–2025 and involved the following institutions: Talipao National High School-Main, Talipao National High School-Annex Pantao, Talipao National High School-Annex Talipao Proper, Indanan National High School-Main, Pasil Indanan National High School, and Timbangan Indanan National High School.

Distribution of respondents

No.	Name of Secondary School	No. of Respondents
1	Talipao National High School-Main	20

2	Talipao National High School-Annex-Pantao	15
3	Talipao National High School-Annex-Talipao Proper	15
4	Indanan National High School-Main	16
5	Pasil Indanan National High School	17
6	Timbangan Indanan National High School	17
	Total:	100

3. Sampling Design

This study used a non-probability sampling method with a purposive sampling procedure. Specifically, representative samples were selected based on factors such as accessibility, availability, and time limitations Talipao National High School-Main, Talipao National High School-Annex-Pantao, Talipao National High School Annex-Talipao Proper, Indanan National High School-Main, Pasil Indanan National High School, Timbangan Indnanan National High School was purposively selected as samples for this study, the purposive sampling method was employed to ensure the collection of the required quality and quantity of data for the research.

4. Research Instrument

The research tool employed to gather the primary empirical data is a modified standardized questionnaire taken from the study of Connell, R.W. a leading scholar on gender studies, particularly regarding gender and education. which is a 30-item statements, The questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument through Chronbach's reliability testing.

5. Data Gathering Procedure

To collect the data, the researcher obtained permission to distribute the questionnaire from several authorities: The Dean of the School of Graduate Studies at Sulu State College, along with the Schools Division Superintendent, the District Supervisor, and the six (6) secondary school principals. The researcher will personally oversee the distribution, administration, and retrieval of the completed questionnaires.

6. Statistical Treatment of Data

To gather the primary empirical data for this study, the following statistical tools were utilized:

1. Frequency and Percentage. These statistical methods were employed to analyze the teachers' profiles in terms of gender, age, civil status, years of service, and educational attainment.

2. Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation. These measures will be utilized to evaluate the level of bridging gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools: Sulu national high schools in focus in the context of teaching and learning, school rules and leadership and student behavior.

3. T-test and One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The T-test will be used for comparing independent variables will be employed to determine the significant differences in the extent of bridging gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools: Sulu national high schools in focus , when the data are categorized based on gender, age, civil status, length of service, and educational background, and Single-factor Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) will be used to assess the significant variations in the extent bridging gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools: Sulu national high schools in focus when data are grouped based on gender, age, civil status, years of service, and educational level.

4. Pearson's correlation coefficient. Pearson's product-moment correlation will be employed to assess the significant relationship among the sub-categories encompassed within the scope of bridging gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools: Sulu national high

schools in focus in the context of teaching and learning, school rules and leadership and student behavior.

Scales to be used

Point	Scale Value	Interpretation
5	4.50 – 5.00	Strongly Agree
4	3.50 – 4.49	Agree
3	2.50 – 3.49	Moderately Agree
2	1.50 – 2.49	Disagree
1	1.00 – 1.49	Strongly Disagree

Results

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the results based on the data collected for this study. Additionally, it presents the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu. It also presents the teacher-respondents' demographic profiles in terms of age, gender, civil status and length of service; the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in, as perceived by selected high school teachers in Sulu and the subsequent significant correlations and differences in these sub-categories based on the classification of respondents' demographic profiles.

The following presents the analysis and interpretation of results based on the appropriate scoring and statistical methods treatment of the data collected for this study, corresponding to each of the research questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of: 1.1 Age, 1.2 Gender, 1.3 Civil Status, and 1.4 Length of Service?

1.1 In terms of Age

Table 1.1 shows the demographic profile of teacher-respondents in terms of age. It can be seen from this table that out of 100 teacher-respondents, 3 (3.0%) is from the age group of 20 years old and below, while 29 (29.0%) are between 21-30 years old, and 68 (68.0%) are 31 years old and above. This study reveals that more than one-half of the total teacher-respondents involved in this study are within 31 years old and above of age brackets. This further implies that most of teacher-respondents involved in this study belong to the upper level of age group as categorized in this study.

Table 1.1 Demographic profile of teacher-respondents from Sulu in terms of age.

Age	Number of respondents	Percent
20 years old and below	3	3.0%
21-30 years old	29	29.0%
31 years old and above	68	68.0%
Total	100	100%

1.2 In terms of Gender

Table 1.2 presents the demographic profile of the teacher-respondents based on gender. From this table, it is evident that out of the 100 teacher-respondents, 21 (21.0%) are male, and 79 (79.0%) are female. This study reveals that more than one-half of the total number of teacher- the majority of the respondents in this study are female. This suggests that great majority of the teacher-respondents from Sulu in terms of gender are predominantly female.

Table 1.2 Demographic profile of teacher-respondents from Sulu in terms in terms of gender.

Gender	Number of respondents	Percent
Male	21	21.0%
Female	79	79.0%
Total	100	100%

1.3 In terms of Civil Status

Table 1.3 presents the demographic profile of teacher-respondents based on civil status. As indicated in this table, out of 100 teacher-respondents, 41 (41.0%) are single, 55 (55.0%) are married, and 4 (4.0%) are either widowed or separated. The data reveals that more than half of the teacher-respondents are married, suggesting that a significant proportion of high school teachers in Sulu are married.

Table 1.3 Demographic profile of teacher-respondents from Sulu in terms of civil status.

Civil Status	Number of respondents	Percent
Single	41	41.0%
Married	55	55.0%
Separated/Widowed	4	4.0%
Total	100	100%

1.4 In terms of Length of Service

Shows the demographic profile of teacher-respondents in terms of length of service. It can be seen from this table that out of 100 teacher-respondents, 38 (38.0%) have 5 years and below, 26 (26.0%) have 6-10 years, 10 (10.0%) have 11-15 years, and 26 (26.0%) have 16 years and above. This study reveals that nearly half of the total number of teacher-respondents have 5 years or lesser number of teaching experience. This implies that Sulu has a relatively number of workforce on their early career.

Table 1.4 Demographic profile of teacher-respondents from Sulu in terms of length of service.

Length of Service	Number of respondents	Percent
5 years and below	38	38.0%
6-10 years	26	26.0%
11-15 years	10	10.0%
16 years and above	26	26.0%
Total	100	100%

2. What is the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu in the context of 2.1 Teaching and Learning, and 2.2. School Rules and Leadership?

2.1 In the context of Teaching and Learning

Table 2.1 shows the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu in the context of Teaching and Learning. This category obtained a total weighted mean score of 4.32 with standard deviation of .57897 which is rated as “Agree”. This result indicates that the teachers involved in this study affirmed that they recognize the importance of bridging the gender gap to foster inclusivity in teaching and learning in secondary

schools in Sulu. This implies that teacher-respondents involved in this study are aware of and actively consider gender inclusivity in their teaching practices.
Notably, teacher-respondents rated the following items as "Agree": "The teaching materials used in class are free from gender bias.", "Lessons include discussions about gender equality and inclusivity.", "Gender-neutral language is consistently used in teaching materials", "Teachers are trained to handle gender-related issues sensitively." and "Students feel comfortable discussing gender-related topics in class.".

Table 2.1 Extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu in the context of Teaching and Learning.

Statements	Mean	S.D	Rating
The teaching materials used in class are free from gender bias.	4.46	.658	Agree
Teachers treat all students equally, regardless of their gender.	4.59	.637	Strongly Agree
Lessons include discussions about gender equality and inclusivity.	4.29	.795	Agree
Teachers actively encourage participation from all students, regardless of gender.	4.51	.628	Strongly Agree
Teaching strategies promote a balanced representation of genders in classroom activities.	4.51	.628	Strongly Agree
Teachers address gender stereotypes when they appear in class discussions.	4.24	.740	Agree
Gender-neutral language is consistently used in teaching materials.	4.17	.739	Agree
Teachers are trained to handle gender-related issues sensitively.	4.22	.719	Agree
The curriculum reflects diverse perspectives from different genders.	4.17	.805	Agree
Students feel comfortable discussing gender-related topics in class.	4.05	1.048	Agree
Total Weighted Mean	4.3210	.57897	Agree

Legend: (5) 4.50-5.00=Strongly Agree; (4) 3.50-4.49=Agree; (3) 2.50- 3.49=Moderately Agree; (2) 1.50-2.49=Disagree; (1) 1.00- 1.49=Strongly Disagree

2.2 In the context of School Rules and Leadership

Table 2.2 shows the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu in the context of School Rules and Leadership. This category obtained a total weighted mean score of 4.29 with standard deviation of .58212 which is rated as "Agree". This result indicates that the teachers involved in this study affirmed that they acknowledge the importance of school rules and leadership in bridging the gender gap to foster inclusivity in

secondary schools in Sulu. This implies that teacher-respondents involved in this study perceive school rules and leadership as critical factors in fostering inclusivity and addressing gender disparities.

Notably, teacher-respondents rated the following items, among others as "Agree": "The school has clear policies that promote gender inclusivity.", "School leaders actively work to reduce the gender gap in academic achievement.", "The school ensures equal opportunities for boys and girls in all extracurricular activities." and "School rules discourage gender-based discrimination or harassment."

Table 2.2 Extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu in the context of School Rules and Leadership.

Statements	Mean	S.D	Rating
The school has clear policies that promote gender inclusivity.	4.34	.655	Agree
School leaders actively work to reduce the gender gap in academic achievement.	4.17	.943	Agree
The school ensures equal opportunities for boys and girls in all extracurricular activities.	4.46	.717	Agree
School rules discourage gender-based discrimination or harassment.	4.21	.880	Agree
Total Weighted Mean	4.2950	.58212	Agree

Legend: (5) 4.50-5.00=Strongly Agree; (4) 3.50-4.49=Agree; (3) 2.50- 3.49=Moderately Agree; (2) 1.50-2.49=Disagree; (1) 1.00- 1.49=Strongly Disagree

3. Is there a notable difference in the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu when the data are categorized based on their demographic profile in terms of 3.1 Age, 3.2 Gender, 3.3 Civil Status; 3.4 Length of Service?

3.1 According to Age

Table 3.1 Table presents the differences in the extent of bridging the gender gap to promote inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu, categorized by the respondents' age. The table shows that all F- values and p-values are not statistically significant at the 0.05 alpha level. This indicates that despite variations in the teachers' ages, their perceptions regarding the subcategories related to bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu do not significantly differ. This further implies that teacher-respondents with the age range 31 years old and above may not make him/her a more accurate perceiver of the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools compared to those within 20 years old and below as categorized in this study, or vice versa.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the variable age has no significant intervention in the ways how teacher-respondents at selected secondary schools in Sulu perceive the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools. Consequently, the hypothesis suggesting that: "There is no significant difference in the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu when data are classified according to their demographic profile in terms of age" is accepted.

Table 3.1 Difference in the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu when data are grouped according to their demographic profile in terms of age.

Sources of Variation		Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Description
Teaching and Learning	Between Groups	.105	2	.053	.154	.857	Not Significant
	Within Groups	33.081	97	.341			
	Total	33.186	99				
School Rules and Leadership	Between Groups	.923	2	.461	1.372	.258	Not Significant
	Within Groups	32.625	97	.336			
	Total	33.548	99				

* Significant at alpha 0.05

3.2 According to Gender

Table 3.2 presents the differences in the extent of bridging the gender gap to promote inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu, categorized by the respondents' gender. As shown in the table, all t-values and p-values do not show significance at the 0.05 alpha level. This indicates that male and female teacher-respondents in this study do not significantly differ in their perceptions of the subcategories related to bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu. It further suggests that being a male teacher-respondent does not necessarily make one a better perceiver of the efforts to bridge the gender gap in secondary schools in Sulu, nor does being female. Therefore, it can be concluded that the gender variable does not have a significant intervention in the ways how teacher-respondents at Sulu perceive the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu. Thus, the hypothesis stating that: "There is no significant difference in the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu, when data are classified according to their demographic profile in terms of gender" is accepted.

Table 3.2 Difference in the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu when data are grouped based on their demographic profile in relation to gender.

Variables	Grouping	Mean	S.D	Mean Difference	t	Sig.	Description
Teacher's Knowledge	Male	4.1095	.52144	-.26769	-1.908	.059	Not Significant
	Female	4.3772	.58352				
Teaching Methods	Male	4.2024	.63057	-.11724	-.819	.415	Not Significant
	Female	4.3196	.57028				

Note. * Significant at alpha 0.05

3.3 According to Civil Status

Table 3.3 shows the differences in the extent of bridging the gender gap to foster inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu, based on the respondents' civil status. As indicated in the table, all F-values and p-values for the subcategories are not significant at the 0.05 alpha level. This suggests that, despite the variation in the civil status of the teacher-respondents in this study, their perceptions regarding the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary

schools do not significantly differ. It implies that teacher-respondents who are married may not be a better perceiver on the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools compared to those who are single or either separated or widowed, and vice versa.

Hence, it is safe to say that the civil status variable has no significant intervention in the ways how teacher-respondents perceive extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that: "There is no significant difference in extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu, when data are classified according to their demographic profile in terms of civil status" is accepted.

Table 3.3 Difference in the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu when data are grouped according to their demographic profile in terms of Civil Status.

Sources of Variation		Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Description
Teaching and Learning	Between Groups	.658	2	.329	.981	.379	Not Significant
	Within Groups	32.528	97	.335			
	Total	33.186	99				
School Rules and Leadership	Between Groups	.258	2	.343	.376	.687	Not Significant
	Within Groups	33.289	97	.329			
	Total	33.548	99				

Note. * Significant at alpha 0.05

3.4 According to Length of Service

Table 3.4 shows the differences in the extent of bridging the gender gap to foster inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu, based on the respondents' length of service. As observed in the table, all F-values and p-values for the subcategories are not significant at the 0.05 alpha level. This indicates that, despite variations in the length of service among the teacher-respondents, their perceptions of the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu do not differ significantly. It implies that teacher-respondents who have 16 years and above may not be a better perceiver on the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu compared to those who are only have 5 years or less length of service, and vice versa.

Hence, it is safe to say that the length of service variable has no significant intervention in the ways how teacher-respondents perceive the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that: "There is no significant difference in the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu, when data are classified according to their demographic profile in terms of length of service" is accepted.

Table 3.4 Difference in the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu when data are grouped according to their demographic profile in terms of length of service.

Sources of Variation		Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Description
	Between Groups	1.208	3	.403	1.209	.311	

Teaching and Learning	Within Groups	31.977	96	.333			Not Significant
	Total	33.186	99				
School Rules and Leadership	Between Groups	1.064	3	.355	1.049	.375	Not Significant
	Within Groups	32.483	96	.338			
	Total	33.548	99				

Note. * Significant at alpha 0.05

4. Is there a significant relationship among the sub-categories included within the scope of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu?

Table 4 shows the relationship between the subcategories subsumed under the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu. As shown in the table, the calculated Pearson correlation coefficients (Pearson r) between these variables are significant at an alpha level of 0.05.

Furthermore, the correlational degree among the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu is as follows:

1) Very high positive degree of correlation among the subcategories subsumed under the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu between the context of Teaching and Learning and School Rules and Leadership. This indicates that the effective implementation of school rules and leadership plays a significant role in fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu. This further suggest that school leaders and administrators must prioritize creating and enforcing inclusive policies and practices through strong school rules and effective leadership. Leadership training programs should emphasize fostering equitable opportunities and addressing gender disparities within schools, as these initiatives significantly enhance teaching and learning environments for all students.

Hence, it is safe to say that generally the subcategories subsumed under the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu are highly correlated. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that "There is no significant correlation among the sub-categories subsumed under the extent of bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu" is rejected.

Table 4. Shows the correlation among the subcategories subsumed under the extent of promoting quality education through the integration of sustainable development in elementary school curricula in Sulu.

Variables		Pearson *r*	Sig.	N	Description
Dependent	Independent				
Teaching and Learning	School Rules and Leadership	.798*	.000	100	Very High

Note. **Correlation coefficient is significant at alpha .01

Correlation Coefficient Scales Adopted from Hopkins, Will (2002):0.0-0.1 = Nearly Zero; 0.1-0.3 = Low; 0.3-0.5 = Moderate; 0.5-0.7 = High; 0.7-0.9 = Very High; 0.9-1 = Nearly Perfect.

Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from the findings of the study are as follows:

1. Many of the respondents are in their early 30s and above, females are more than the males, mostly married, and a good number are new in service.
2. The result confirms that the teachers recognized the importance of bridging the gender gap to foster inclusivity in teaching and learning in secondary school s in Sulu.

3. The result showed that regardless of profile, the teachers have the same perception towards bridging the gender gap for fostering inclusivity in secondary schools in Sulu.
4. The result indicated that the variables are closely interrelated. Teaching and learning is the end result of school rules and leadership or vice – versa.

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