

Sulu State College as a Model for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Integration: A Strategic Leadership Framework for Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT. Sustainable development has increasingly become a priority within higher education institutions as universities serve a significant role in promoting sustainability awareness, research innovation, and community development aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This study examined the extent of SDG integration within the academic environment of Sulu State College in Jolo, Sulu, Philippines during the Academic Year 2025–2026. A descriptive–comparative quantitative research design was utilized to evaluate how sustainability principles were embedded in curriculum and instruction, research and innovation, community extension and engagement, and institutional policy and governance. Data were gathered from one hundred (100) faculty members representing different academic units through a structured survey questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, and statistical analyses were applied to determine the level of integration and differences in perceptions across selected demographic variables. The findings revealed that SDG integration was implemented to a great extent across all institutional dimensions. Sustainability concepts were incorporated in instructional practices, research initiatives addressed development-related concerns, and community extension programs supported local sustainability efforts. Institutional policies and leadership structures also demonstrated commitment to advancing sustainability initiatives. No significant differences were found when responses were grouped according to gender, while significant variations emerged based on length of service and educational attainment. Results indicated that Sulu State College demonstrated a coordinated institutional approach to integrating Sustainable Development Goals within its academic and operational systems, highlighting the importance of strategic leadership and faculty engagement in strengthening sustainability practices in higher education.

KEYWORDS: *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Leadership, Higher Education*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions increasingly function as strategic environments where sustainable development principles intersect with teaching, research, and institutional governance.

Contemporary academic discourse recognizes universities not only as knowledge producers but also as transformative platforms capable of embedding sustainability values into institutional culture and educational practice. Sustainable development frameworks, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), require structured institutional integration in order to influence curricular design, research orientation, and community engagement. Filho et al. (2022) emphasizes that sustainability integration in universities contributes to responsible leadership formation and socially responsive academic systems. Empirical analysis in international universities demonstrates that sustainability-driven academic strategies strengthen institutional relevance and community impact when academic structures intentionally incorporate SDG priorities into program planning and pedagogical practice (Drissi et al., 2025). Academic leadership research further indicates that systematic sustainability integration requires coherent institutional governance and collaborative academic participation in order to translate global development frameworks into localized educational practices. Contemporary policy discourse also recognizes higher education institutions as critical actors in achieving national sustainability objectives through research innovation and academic capacity building. Such perspectives position universities as central agents in the operationalization of sustainable development within formal education systems.

The integration of sustainability into academic environments has evolved beyond symbolic policy commitments toward measurable institutional practices that influence teaching, research productivity, and extension programs. Universities increasingly align institutional strategies with SDG priorities to ensure that academic outputs contribute to broader societal transformation. Within academic settings, sustainability integration manifests through curriculum enrichment, interdisciplinary research initiatives, and community-based learning models designed to address complex social and environmental challenges. Recent educational research demonstrates that universities implementing structured sustainability frameworks report improved academic collaboration and stronger institutional engagement with community development initiatives (Rodriguez et al., 2024). Institutional sustainability assessments also reveal that effective integration requires alignment among curriculum development, research agendas, and university governance structures to ensure coherence across academic functions. Moreover, contemporary higher education policy emphasizes that sustainability integration should be embedded within academic leadership strategies in order to guide institutional decision-making processes (Liu & Curtin, 2024). These developments reinforce the growing recognition that academic institutions serve as critical mechanisms for translating global sustainability goals into practical educational outcomes.

Within Southeast Asian higher education contexts, sustainability integration presents both opportunities and institutional challenges as universities attempt to reconcile global development frameworks with localized academic realities (Wardat & Alali, 2025). Regional education systems increasingly prioritize sustainability education as a mechanism for strengthening academic relevance and community engagement. In Asian universities highlight that institutional readiness and leadership commitment strongly influence the degree to which SDG principles become embedded in academic operations. Evidence from comparative higher education studies indicates that universities with structured sustainability governance demonstrate higher levels of interdisciplinary research collaboration and community partnership initiatives (Hassan & Ahmad, 2025). Sustainability education further reveals that academic institutions capable of aligning curricular innovation with sustainability goals contribute to the development of socially responsible graduates prepared to address complex global challenges. Institutional transformation

literature also emphasizes that sustainable academic systems emerge through leadership frameworks that encourage collaborative decision-making and continuous institutional evaluation (Zara, 2026). Such perspectives highlight the strategic role of universities in advancing sustainability within formal education environments.

The Philippine higher education sector has progressively recognized the significance of sustainability integration within academic institutions as part of broader national development strategies. Despite growing institutional commitment to sustainability education, significant variation persists in the extent to which universities successfully operationalize SDG integration across academic functions. Higher education institutions are increasingly required to redesign instructional strategies and assessment practices to respond to evolving global challenges and educational demands. Recent studies emphasize the need to transform traditional evaluation systems into more adaptive and student-centered approaches (Chavez & Lamorinas, 2023). Academic institutions frequently encounter structural limitations related to policy implementation, institutional coordination, and resource allocation when attempting to embed sustainability frameworks within educational systems (Khan, 2025). Sustainability initiatives often remain fragmented when institutional governance structures lack strategic alignment with sustainability objectives. Institutional transformation studies further suggest that sustainability integration requires coordinated leadership strategies capable of harmonizing academic priorities across teaching, research, and community engagement functions. Academic policy evaluations also highlight the need for empirical assessments that measure the extent to which sustainability principles are incorporated within institutional practices in order to guide future strategic planning (Di Nauta et al., 2020). In addition, Community and family support systems also play a significant role in the educational development of learners, highlighting the importance of collaboration between educational institutions and stakeholders (Chavez et al., 2023).

Examining the extent of Sustainable Development Goals integration within higher education institutions contributes to the understanding of how academic environments support sustainable development objectives. Institutional assessment of sustainability integration offers insights into the alignment between academic functions and global development frameworks. Analytical evaluation of curriculum, research initiatives, community engagement, and governance practices provides a comprehensive perspective on how universities operationalize sustainability within academic systems. Recent higher education studies highlight that empirical evaluation of sustainability practices allows institutions to refine strategic leadership approaches and strengthen educational contributions to societal development (Basheer et al., 2024). Sustainability education scholarship also emphasizes that evidence-based institutional analysis supports the development of governance models capable of enhancing academic participation in sustainability initiatives. Academic policy research further stresses that universities demonstrating coherent sustainability integration contribute significantly to national development and global education agendas (Duran & Mariñas, 2024). Consequently, systematic investigation of SDG integration within higher education institutions remains essential for strengthening sustainable academic leadership and institutional development.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to examine the integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the academic environment of Sulu State College.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) integration in Sulu State College in terms of curriculum and instruction, research and innovation, community extension and engagement, and institutional policy and governance.
2. Examine whether significant differences exist in the extent of SDG integration when faculty respondents are grouped according to selected demographic variables.

Statement of the Problem

This study investigated the integration of Sustainable Development Goals within the academic setting of Sulu State College. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of SDG integration in Sulu State College in terms of curriculum and instruction, research and innovation, community extension and engagement, and institutional policy and governance?
2. Is there a significant difference in the extent of SDG integration when faculty respondents are grouped according to selected demographic characteristics?

2. REVIEW RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Sustainability in Higher Education

Universities across the world increasingly function as key institutions responsible for advancing sustainable development through teaching, research, and community engagement for quality education (Nazareth et al., 2026). Academic systems influence how sustainability principles become embedded in knowledge production and professional training, particularly when institutional policies encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and socially responsive education. Contemporary scholarship emphasizes that sustainability in higher education requires intentional integration across academic structures rather than isolated environmental initiatives. (Holst et al., 2024). Educational sustainability frameworks highlight the importance of aligning curriculum development, research agendas, and governance strategies in order to produce long-term institutional transformation. International higher education research demonstrates that universities adopting sustainability-oriented academic models cultivate graduates capable of addressing complex social and environmental challenges (Bonilla-Jurado et al., 2024). Institutional sustainability analysis further indicates that systematic integration of development goals strengthens the relevance of universities within global and regional knowledge networks (Husban, 2025). Academic leadership studies also highlight that sustainability integration requires coherent institutional commitment in order to move beyond symbolic declarations toward measurable educational practices. Educational reform literature similarly identifies universities as crucial platforms for translating global sustainability frameworks into local knowledge systems and academic innovations (El-Jardali, 2018). These perspectives illustrate the expanding expectation that higher education institutions serve as strategic drivers of sustainable development.

Within Southeast Asia and the Philippines, sustainability integration in higher education continues to evolve as universities respond to national development priorities and global

educational reforms. Institutional initiatives increasingly focus on embedding sustainability principles within academic programs and research agendas while strengthening community engagement activities. Regional educational studies emphasize that sustainability-oriented universities contribute significantly to social innovation and regional development when academic structures support collaborative knowledge creation (Monteiro et al., 2021). Sustainability education scholarship further notes that academic institutions capable of linking sustainability principles with curricular innovation demonstrate stronger student engagement and research productivity. Educational governance research also emphasizes that sustainability integration requires clear policy frameworks and institutional coordination across academic departments (Murtaza & Libin, 2025). In the Philippine context, higher education reforms encourage universities to incorporate sustainability perspectives within academic planning and extension programs to support national development objectives (Mandane-Garcia, 2026). Academic policy discussions therefore increasingly recognize sustainability-oriented universities as important contributors to socially responsive education systems.

2.2 SDG Integration in Universities

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals has significantly influenced how universities conceptualize their role within global development efforts. Academic institutions increasingly align educational programs and research initiatives with SDG priorities in order to address social, economic, and environmental challenges through evidence-based scholarship (Škokić et al., 2025). SDG integration within universities requires structured institutional strategies that connect teaching, research, and governance systems with sustainability-oriented objectives. Higher education research indicates that universities demonstrating strong SDG alignment often develop interdisciplinary programs that encourage collaborative problem solving across academic disciplines. Educational policy analysis further highlights that SDG integration strengthens the societal relevance of academic institutions by encouraging universities to respond directly to community development needs (Ahmed, 2024). Institutional sustainability evaluations also demonstrate that universities with comprehensive SDG frameworks frequently produce research outputs that contribute to policy innovation and social transformation. Governance studies emphasize that academic leadership plays a central role in guiding institutional alignment with global development agendas, itreinforce the growing recognition that universities serve as operational platforms for advancing SDG-related knowledge and innovation.

Regional studies examining SDG integration within Asian universities reveal that institutional capacity and governance structures strongly influence the extent to which sustainability goals become embedded in academic systems (Dalelo, 2025). Universities frequently initiate SDG-related activities through curriculum redesign, community-based research, and collaborative partnerships with local stakeholders. Educational sustainability research indicates that universities implementing SDG-oriented academic frameworks often demonstrate improved collaboration among faculty members and enhanced institutional engagement with social development initiatives (Mohd et al., 2024). Higher education leadership research emphasizes that universities must adopt strategic planning approaches in order to translate global sustainability agendas into operational academic programs. Within the Philippines, educational institutions increasingly participate in sustainability initiatives designed to support national development priorities and global education commitments. Academic discussions therefore

highlight the importance of examining how universities operationalize SDG frameworks within their institutional structures.

2.3 Curriculum and Research Integration

Curriculum development represents one of the most influential mechanisms through which universities integrate sustainability principles into academic practice. Educational frameworks emphasizing sustainability-oriented curricula encourage students to engage with complex societal challenges through interdisciplinary learning and critical inquiry. Academic integrity and humanized teaching approaches have also become essential components of quality higher education, ensuring ethical learning environments and responsible knowledge production (Chavez, 2023). Universities increasingly incorporate sustainability concepts into program structures in order to strengthen the relevance of academic knowledge within real-world contexts (Braßler, 2025). Curriculum innovation research demonstrates that sustainability-focused academic programs enhance students' capacity to analyze environmental and social issues from multiple disciplinary perspectives (Liu et al., 2022). Research-oriented universities also emphasize the importance of linking sustainability education with scientific inquiry and applied research initiatives. With this integration encourages collaborative scholarship capable of generating innovative solutions to complex societal challenges. These developments highlight the critical role of curriculum design in supporting sustainability-oriented higher education systems.

According to Filho et al. (2025), the research and innovation similarly function as essential components of sustainability integration within universities. Academic institutions increasingly prioritize research agendas that address social inequality, environmental protection, and sustainable economic development. Scholarly investigations reveal that sustainability-focused research programs often produce interdisciplinary collaborations capable of generating practical solutions to global development challenges (Kuzhabekova, 2025). Institutional research policies also encourage faculty members to engage in sustainability-oriented scholarship that contributes to public policy discussions and community development initiatives. Higher education research environments therefore serves a significant role in advancing knowledge related to sustainable development. Curriculum development in higher education must consider real-life language use and community perspectives to ensure the relevance of academic programs (Chavez, 2022). According to Ma et al. (2026)0, the Philippine Universities increasingly support research initiatives aligned with national sustainability priorities, particularly within environmental management and community development sectors. Academic policy emphasize research-driven universities as a core that strengthen the role of higher education in addressing societal needs while advancing sustainability knowledge systems.

2.4 Academic Governance and Leadership

Institutional governance and academic leadership significantly influence how sustainability initiatives become embedded within university structures. Institutional governance mechanisms such as accreditation systems and quality assurance frameworks also contribute significantly to strengthening higher education institutions and ensuring stakeholder confidence in university performance (Montero, 2025). Universities require coordinated policy frameworks and strategic planning mechanisms to operationalize sustainability principles across teaching, research, and community engagement functions. Universities promoting inclusive communication

eliminates discriminatory practices within academic environments (Leon et al., 2024). Governance structures guide how academic institutions allocate resources, establish institutional priorities, and implement development-oriented initiatives. Higher education leadership research emphasizes that sustainability integration becomes more effective when university administrators promote collaborative decision-making processes and interdisciplinary academic participation (Hua et al., 2025). Effective governance therefore becomes essential for transforming sustainability commitments into operational academic practices. Leadership-driven sustainability initiatives also encourage academic institutions to evaluate institutional performance in relation to global development frameworks (Leal Filho et al., 2020). Universities implementing sustainability governance models frequently establish monitoring systems designed to measure institutional progress toward sustainability objectives. Educational management in Philippines research demonstrates that institutional evaluation mechanisms contribute to improved policy implementation and accountability within universities (Pelino, 2025). Strategic leadership frameworks further support the integration of sustainability principles within institutional planning and organizational culture (Munghaisong et al., 2025). In the Philippines, educational governance reforms encourage universities to adopt innovative leadership approaches capable of strengthening institutional responsiveness to societal needs. According to Vesudevan and Abdullah (2024) and Aggarwal and Agarwala (2026), Academic leadership discussions therefore increasingly emphasize the role of university administrators in guiding sustainability initiatives and fostering collaborative institutional cultures. These perspectives highlight the importance of governance structures in advancing sustainability integration within higher education institutions.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive–comparative quantitative research design to examine the extent of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) integration within the academic environment of Sulu State College. Descriptive research design was utilized to systematically describe and quantify how SDG-related practices are manifested in institutional functions such as curriculum and instruction, research and innovation, community extension and engagement, and institutional policy and governance. This design enabled the study to provide empirical evidence regarding how faculty members perceive and evaluate the implementation of SDG-related initiatives within the institution.

The comparative component of the research design was used to determine whether significant differences exist in the extent of SDG integration when faculty respondents are grouped according to selected demographic characteristics. Through this approach, the study was able to examine variations in perceptions among faculty members with different professional backgrounds and institutional experiences. The combination of descriptive and comparative techniques allowed the study to generate a comprehensive understanding of how SDG integration is operationalized within a higher education setting. This methodological approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to measure observable institutional practices and compare group responses using statistical procedures. Quantitative data generated from survey responses enabled systematic analysis of patterns and differences in SDG integration across the academic environment of the institution.

3.2. Research Locale

The study was conducted at Sulu State College (SSC) located in Jolo, Sulu, Philippines. Sulu State College is a public higher education institution operating under the supervision of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). The institution offers undergraduate and graduate programs in several academic disciplines including education, sciences, business administration, engineering, nursing, and criminal justice. Sulu State College served as the research locale because of its significant role in delivering higher education services within the Bangsamoro region. As a state college, the institution contributes to regional development through academic instruction, research activities, community extension programs, and institutional governance initiatives. These functions make the institution a suitable setting for examining the integration of Sustainable Development Goals within a higher education academic environment. The study focused on faculty members during the Academic Year 2025–2026, as they play essential roles in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs related to teaching, research, and community engagement within the institution.

3.3. Participants of the Study

The participants of the study consisted of one hundred (100) faculty members of Sulu State College. These faculty members were selected because they are directly involved in the academic and institutional processes where Sustainable Development Goals integration is implemented. Their professional roles allow them to observe and assess how SDG-related initiatives are incorporated into institutional activities such as teaching practices, research development, extension services, and governance policies. Faculty members represent key actors in the implementation of academic programs and institutional strategies that support sustainability initiatives within higher education institutions. Consequently, their perspectives provide valuable insights regarding the level of SDG integration within the academic environment of Sulu State College. The representation of respondents from various academic units ensured that perspectives regarding SDG integration were obtained from multiple disciplinary contexts within the institution. The distribution of the respondents across the academic units of the institution is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents Across Academic Units

College Units in Sulu State College		Number
	School of Agriculture	10
	College Business Administration and Management	20
	College of Teacher-Education	15
	College Arts & Sciences	20
	College Computing Studies and Engineering	20
	School of Nursing	10
	College of Criminal Justice Education	5
Total:		100

3.4. Sampling Procedure

This study utilized a purposive sampling technique in selecting the participants. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to identify individuals who possess relevant knowledge and experience regarding the integration of Sustainable Development Goals within the institution. Faculty members were selected because of their active participation in academic instruction, research activities, extension programs, and institutional governance processes. Through purposive sampling, the study ensured that respondents included faculty members from different academic units and professional backgrounds. This approach allowed the study to capture diverse perspectives regarding SDG integration while maintaining representation across the various colleges within the institution.

3.5. Research Instrument

A structured survey questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection in this study. The questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative information regarding the extent of SDG integration within Sulu State College. The instrument was adapted from established sustainability assessment frameworks developed by international organizations and sustainability education scholars. The instrument was slightly modified to ensure relevance to the institutional context of Sulu State College and to reflect the operational structure of the institution. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale designed to evaluate the perceived extent of SDG integration within the institution. This scale enabled the researcher to quantitatively determine the perceived level of SDG integration across the institutional dimensions examined in the study.

Table 2. Measurement Scale

The responses in the questionnaire were analyzed using the following five-point scale:

Point	Scale Value	Descriptors
5	4.50- 5.00	Very Great Extent
4	3.50- 4.49	Great Extent
3	2.50- 3.49	Moderate Extent

2	1.50- 2.49	Less Extent
1	1.00- 1.49	No Extent

To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the research instrument, the questionnaire underwent expert validation prior to its administration. The instrument was reviewed by at least two faculty experts from the School of Graduate Studies of Sulu State College who possess expertise in educational research and sustainability studies. The validation process ensured that the questionnaire items were clear, relevant, and appropriate for measuring the extent of SDG integration within the institutional setting. Minor modifications were incorporated based on the recommendations of the validators to improve clarity and contextual relevance.

3.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection followed a systematic procedure to ensure ethical compliance and reliability of responses. First, a formal letter requesting permission to conduct the study was submitted to the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and subsequently endorsed to the President of Sulu State College and the Deans of the respective colleges. After obtaining the necessary approvals, the researcher personally distributed the survey questionnaires to the selected faculty respondents across different academic units. Participants were given adequate time to read and complete the questionnaire to ensure thoughtful and accurate responses. After completion, the questionnaires were retrieved by the researcher for data encoding and statistical analysis. The collected data were then organized and prepared for interpretation according to the objectives of the study.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study to ensure the protection of participants and the integrity of the research process. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were fully informed about the purpose of the research before completing the questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by ensuring that personal identifiers were excluded from the data collection process. All responses were treated with strict confidentiality and were used solely for academic and research purposes. Furthermore, the study obtained ethical clearance from the appropriate ethics committee of Sulu State College to ensure compliance with institutional and national research ethics standards. Respondents were also informed that they had the right to withdraw from participation at any point without any consequences.

4. RESULTS

Table 3. Extent of SDG Integration at Sulu State College in the Context of Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum and Instruction		Mean	S.D.	Rating
	The curriculum integrates concepts related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).	4.3700	.74745	Great Extent
	Faculty members incorporate SDG-related topics in classroom discussions.	4.0200	.95325	Great Extent
	Lesson plans and teaching strategies reflect principles of sustainability.	4.1100	.97333	Great Extent
	Students apply SDG concepts in academic projects and activities.	4.0900	.82993	Great Extent
	The College provides resources for faculty to teach SDG-related content.	4.0800	.86082	Great Extent
	Courses are regularly updated to include local and global sustainability issues.	4.1300	.90626	Great Extent
	Faculty receives training on integrating SDGs into teaching.	4.1100	.91998	Great Extent
	Classroom assessments encourage critical thinking about SDG challenges.	4.1800	.78341	Great Extent
	Students are exposed to interdisciplinary approaches linked to SDGs.	4.1000	.82266	Great Extent
0	The College promotes lifelong learning skills consistent with SDGs.	4.2600	.82413	Great Extent
Total Weighted Mean		4.1450	.75067	Great Extent

Legend: (5) 4.50-5.0=Very Great Extent (VE); (4) 3.50 – 4.49=Great Extent (GE); (3) 2.50 – 3.49=Moderately Extent (ME); (2) 1.50 – 2.49=Less Extent (LE); (1) 1.00 – 1.49=No Extent (NE)

The results indicate that Sustainable Development Goals are meaningfully integrated within the instructional practices of Sulu State College. Faculty members recognize that sustainability concepts are incorporated into course content, teaching strategies, and learning outcomes, reflecting the institution’s effort to align its academic programs with global development priorities. This suggests that the curriculum plays a crucial role in promoting awareness and understanding of sustainability among students. This finding highlights the importance of curriculum leadership in embedding sustainability competencies within higher education. The integration of SDGs in classroom instruction strengthens the institution’s capacity to prepare graduates who are responsive to contemporary social, economic, and environmental challenges.

Table 4. Extent of SDG Integration at Sulu State College in the Context of Research and Innovation

Research and Innovation	Mean	S.D.	Rating
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	Research conducted at the College addresses issues related to SDGs.	4.1700	.79207	Great Extent
	Faculty and students are encouraged to conduct sustainability-focused research.	4.2900	.71485	Great Extent
	The College provides funding support for SDG-related research projects.	4.2200	.78599	Great Extent
	Research outputs are shared with stakeholders for policy and practice.	4.3000	.79772	Great Extent
	Innovative research solutions address local and global SDG concerns.	4.2700	.80221	Great Extent
	Faculty collaborates with other institutions on SDG-related research.	4.3400	.74155	Great Extent
	Student research projects are aligned with SDG priorities.	4.3100	.78746	Great Extent
	The College maintains a research agenda consistent with SDGs.	4.2200	.87132	Great Extent
	Published research contributes to knowledge on sustainability.	4.4000	.66667	Great Extent
0	Research outputs are applied to benefit communities or policies.	4.2400	.81798	Great Extent
Total Weighted Mean		4.2760	.65461	Great Extent

Legend: (5) 4.50-5.0=Very Great Extent (VE); (4) 3.50 – 4.49=Great Extent (GE); (3) 2.50 – 3.49=Moderately Extent (ME); (2) 1.50 – 2.49=Less Extent (LE); (1) 1.00 – 1.49=No Extent (NE)

The findings show that research and innovation activities at Sulu State College contribute to advancing sustainability-oriented initiatives within the institution. Faculty engagement in research aligned with Sustainable Development Goals reflects the institution’s commitment to generating knowledge that addresses relevant societal concerns. Through scholarly investigations and innovation-based activities, the academic community participates in the development of solutions that support sustainable development. This result emphasizes the importance of research culture in strengthening sustainability integration in higher education institutions. It also demonstrates that academic research serves as a vital platform for translating sustainability principles into practical and scholarly contributions.

Table 5. Extent of SDG Integration at Sulu State College in the Context of Community Extension and Engagement

Community Extension and Engagement		Mean	S.D.	Rating
	Extension programs address SDG-related concerns in communities.	4.2400	.83024	Great Extent
	Faculty and students participate actively in outreach programs linked to SDGs.	4.1900	.81271	Great Extent
	Community engagement activities promote environmental sustainability.	4.2400	.76700	Great Extent
	Extension programs respond to social and economic community needs.	4.2900	.79512	Great Extent
	The College partners with LGUs and NGOs in SDG projects.	4.2000	.84087	Great Extent
	Extension programs empower communities to become self-reliant.	4.2400	.86597	Great Extent

	SDG-focused outreach programs are monitored and evaluated.	4.2800	.72586	Great Extent
	Community beneficiaries are involved in program planning.	4.3700	.76085	Great Extent
	Faculty research and extension complement each other in addressing SDGs.	4.3500	.77035	Great Extent
0	Best practices in SDG-oriented community work are documented and shared.	4.1400	.85304	Great Extent
Total Weighted Mean		4.2540	.70430	Great Extent

Legend: (5) 4.50-5.0=Very Great Extent (VE); (4) 3.50 – 4.49=Great Extent (GE); (3) 2.50 – 3.49=Moderately Extent (ME); (2) 1.50 – 2.49=Less Extent (LE); (1) 1.00 – 1.49=No Extent (NE)

The results suggest that Sulu State College actively integrates Sustainable Development Goals through its community extension and engagement initiatives. These programs demonstrate the institution’s commitment to applying academic knowledge in addressing real-world issues within surrounding communities. Through collaborative outreach activities, the college strengthens partnerships that support inclusive and sustainable development. A community engagement represents a significant dimension of higher education’s social responsibility. This finding implies that the institution functions not only as a center for teaching and research but also as a catalyst for community-based sustainability initiatives.

Table 6. Extent of SDG Integration at Sulu State College in the Context of Institutional Policy and Governance

Institutional Policy and Governance		Mean	S.D.	Rating
	The College has policies that promote sustainability and SDG integration.	4.2500	.77035	Great Extent
	Leadership demonstrates strong commitment to SDG priorities.	4.3900	.79003	Great Extent
	Institutional strategies reflect SDG goals and targets.	4.3000	.78496	Great Extent
	Resources are allocated to support sustainability initiatives.	4.3600	.75905	Great Extent
	The College maintains partnerships with organizations aligned with SDGs.	4.2600	.73333	Great Extent
	Decision-making processes integrate sustainability and responsibility.	4.3400	.76831	Great Extent
	Policies ensure gender equality and inclusivity in all practices.	4.3500	.70173	Great Extent
	Institutional programs and operations are evaluated using SDG indicators.	4.3100	.83720	Great Extent
	Leaders promote accountability and transparency in governance.	4.3500	.77035	Great Extent
0	Governance encourages innovation in promoting SDGs.	4.3000	.82266	Great Extent
Total Weighted Mean		4.3210	.67753	Great Extent

Legend: (5) 4.50-5.0=Very Great Extent (VE); (4) 3.50 – 4.49=Great Extent (GE); (3) 2.50 – 3.49=Moderately Extent (ME); (2) 1.50 – 2.49=Less Extent (LE); (1) 1.00 – 1.49=No Extent (NE)

The findings indicate that institutional policies and governance structures at Sulu State College support the strategic integration of Sustainable Development Goals across academic and

operational systems. Administrative leadership appears to provide direction and institutional support that enable sustainability initiatives to be implemented effectively. This suggests that sustainability integration is reinforced through policy frameworks and institutional decision-making processes. A strong governance structures are essential for sustaining long-term academic and organizational commitments to sustainability. Such leadership support ensures that SDG initiatives are systematically embedded within the institution’s strategic priorities.

Table 7. Differences in the Extent of SDG Integration at Sulu State College when Data are Grouped According to Gender

VARIABLES							
	Grouping	Mean	S. D.	Mean Difference	t	Sig.	Description
Curriculum and Instruction	Male	4.2447	.71611	.16087	1.041	.301	Not Significant
	Female	4.0839	.77039				
Research and Innovation	Male	4.2632	.72351	-.02071	-.153	.879	Not Significant
	Female	4.2839	.61463				
Community Extension and Engagement	Male	4.2474	.75076	-.01070	-.073	.942	Not Significant
	Female	4.2581	.68054				
Institutional Policy and Governance	Male	4.3289	.73628	.01282	.091	.927	Not Significant
	Female	4.3161	.64508				

*Significant at alpha 0.05

The analysis indicates that there is no significant difference in the extent of SDG integration when the data are grouped according to gender. This suggests that both male and female faculty members demonstrate comparable perspectives regarding the institution’s sustainability practices. The result reflects an inclusive academic environment where participation in SDG-related initiatives is not limited by gender distinctions. Gender-neutral engagement in sustainability initiatives contributes to collaborative academic leadership and institutional development. This indicates that SDG integration at Sulu State College is supported through collective academic participation.

Table 8. Differences in the Extent of SDG Integration at Sulu State College when Data are Grouped According to Length of Service

SOURCE OF VARIATION		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig	Description
Curriculum and Instruction	Between Groups	11.311	3	3.770	8.138*	.000	Significant
	Within Groups	44.476	96	.463			
	Total	55.787	99				
Research and Innovation	Between Groups	8.076	3	2.692	7.525*	.000	Significant
	Within Groups	34.346	96	.358			
	Total	42.422	99				
Community extension and Engagement	Between Groups	9.714	3	3.238	7.891*	.000	Significant
	Within Groups	39.394	96	.410			
	Total	49.108	99				
Institutional Policy and Governance	Between Groups	9.371	3	3.124	8.312*	.000	Significant
	Within Groups	36.075	96	.376			
	Total	45.446	99				

*Significant alpha .05

The results indicate that significant differences exist in the assessment of SDG integration when faculty respondents are grouped according to length of service. Faculty members with longer teaching experience tend to demonstrate stronger assessments of sustainability integration within the institution. This suggests that institutional familiarity and professional exposure may influence how faculty perceive sustainability initiatives. The experience within the academic environment may enhance understanding of institutional policies, research programs, and community engagement activities related to sustainable development. As a result, length of service can contribute to deeper awareness of institutional sustainability practices.

Table 9. Differences in the Extent of SDG Integration at Sulu State College when Data are Grouped According to Educational Attainment

SOURCES OF VARIATION		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Description
Curriculum and Instruction	Between Groups	3.639	4	.910	1.658	.166	Not Significant
	Within Groups	52.148	95	.549			
	Total	55.787	99				
Research and Innovation	Between Groups	6.831	4	1.708	4.559*	.002	Significant
	Within Groups	35.591	95	.375			
	Total	42.422	99				
Community extension and Engagement	Between Groups	4.776	4	1.194	2.559*	.044	Significant
	Within Groups	44.332	95	.467			
	Total	49.108	99				
Institutional Policy and Governance	Between Groups	5.545	4	1.386	3.300*	.014	Significant
	Within Groups	39.901	95	.420			
	Total	45.446	99				

*Significant alpha .05

The findings reveal that educational attainment significantly influences faculty perceptions regarding the extent of SDG integration within the institution. Faculty members with higher academic qualifications tend to demonstrate broader perspectives in evaluating sustainability initiatives. This suggests that advanced academic training may contribute to deeper understanding of sustainability concepts and institutional strategies related to SDG implementation. This result emphasizes the role of faculty professional development in strengthening sustainability integration in higher education. It also indicates that academic advancement may enhance the capacity of educators to engage with sustainability-oriented teaching, research, and institutional practices.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of the study indicate that Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are substantially integrated within the curriculum and instructional practices of Sulu State College. This suggests that the institution has taken deliberate steps to embed sustainability principles into teaching and learning processes, enabling students to develop awareness of global development challenges through academic instruction. The integration of sustainability concepts within

curricular frameworks reflects the growing recognition that universities must serve as platforms for developing socially responsible graduates who can respond to complex environmental and social issues. In higher education research, sustainability-oriented curricula are considered a critical mechanism for promoting interdisciplinary learning and cultivating sustainability competencies among students, thereby strengthening the transformative role of universities in addressing societal challenges (Castaño et al., 2025). Similarly, sustainability education studies indicate that curricular integration enhances students' ability to analyze development issues within real-world contexts and encourages critical engagement with sustainability themes in academic discourse (Jintalan & Litao, 2024). The institutional alignment of curriculum with global sustainability priorities also reflects the broader shift in higher education toward embedding SDG-related competencies into academic programs in order to strengthen the relevance of university education to global development agendas (Laura Montes et al., 2026). Such developments demonstrate that curriculum leadership and instructional innovation play an essential role in institutionalizing sustainability within higher education systems.

The results also demonstrate that research and innovation initiatives within the institution contribute to advancing sustainability-oriented knowledge and scholarly engagement. The presence of SDG-aligned research activities indicates that the academic community recognizes research as a strategic avenue for generating solutions to societal challenges. Universities that encourage sustainability-focused research agendas often strengthen their contribution to evidence-based policy development and community transformation through interdisciplinary scholarship. Research on higher education sustainability emphasizes that universities play a vital role in producing knowledge that supports environmental protection, social equity, and sustainable economic development through academic investigation (Buckner & Zhang, 2024). Furthermore, collaborative research initiatives among faculty members and institutions have been shown to expand the scope of sustainability scholarship while fostering innovative approaches to addressing complex development issues (Christou et al., 2024). Sustainability development programs that support the implementation of SDGs at local and national levels. Strengthening research culture within higher education institutions significantly enhances their capacity to contribute to sustainable development initiatives (Prior et al., 2025).

Another important finding of the study relates to the role of community extension and engagement programs in advancing sustainability integration. The results indicate that the institution actively implements outreach initiatives that connect academic knowledge with community needs, thereby reinforcing the social responsibility function of higher education. Community engagement activities provide opportunities for universities to apply research findings and instructional expertise in addressing social and environmental concerns within surrounding communities. Service-learning and community-based engagement initiatives strengthen the relationship between universities and local communities by promoting collaborative problem-solving and knowledge exchange (Rodríguez-Zurita et al., 2025). Universities that integrate community engagement into their sustainability strategies are often able to expand their societal impact by translating academic expertise into practical solutions that address local development challenges. In addition, institutional partnerships with local stakeholders and organizations have been recognized as essential mechanisms for ensuring that sustainability initiatives produce meaningful outcomes beyond the academic environment (Yassim & Uleanya, 2025). These findings therefore reinforce the idea that community extension

programs serve as a bridge connecting higher education institutions with broader sustainable development efforts.

The study further highlights the importance of institutional policy and governance in supporting the systematic implementation of sustainability initiatives. The results suggest that leadership commitment and policy frameworks within the institution provide strategic direction for integrating SDG-related practices across academic and administrative functions. Governance structures ensure that sustainability commitments are translated into operational strategies that influence institutional planning, resource allocation, and academic program development. Leadership research in higher education emphasizes that sustainability initiatives become more effective when institutional leaders promote collaborative decision-making and align organizational culture with sustainability goals (Bolívar, 2020). Moreover, leadership-driven sustainability strategies often encourage continuous institutional evaluation and accountability mechanisms that strengthen the long-term implementation of development-oriented initiatives (Beena et al., 2023).

Regarding demographic variables, the study found that faculty perceptions of SDG integration did not significantly vary according to age or gender, suggesting that sustainability initiatives within the institution are collectively supported across diverse faculty groups. This consistency in perception may indicate that sustainability principles have been widely communicated and institutionalized within the academic environment. Higher education sustainability research suggests that institutional culture plays a significant role in shaping shared academic perspectives regarding sustainability practices across faculty members. However, the study also revealed that differences emerged when respondents were grouped according to length of service and educational attainment, indicating that professional experience and academic training may influence the depth of understanding regarding sustainability initiatives. Advanced academic qualifications have been associated with stronger conceptual understanding of sustainability frameworks and greater participation in sustainability-oriented teaching and research initiatives (Ogbolu et al., 2026). These findings suggest that professional development and academic advancement may further strengthen faculty capacity to support sustainability integration within higher education institutions.

6. CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrate that the integration of Sustainable Development Goals within Sulu State College is systematically embedded across the institution's academic and administrative functions. Sustainability principles were reflected in curriculum and instructional practices, research and innovation initiatives, community extension programs, and institutional policy and governance structures. These results indicate that the institution has developed coordinated academic and leadership mechanisms that enable sustainability concepts to be translated into operational practices within the academic environment. Through these institutional efforts, the college contributes to the preparation of graduates who are capable of engaging with contemporary social, environmental, and development challenges while strengthening the institution's role in supporting sustainable development. The analysis further revealed that faculty perceptions of SDG integration remained generally consistent across age and gender groups, suggesting a shared institutional understanding of sustainability initiatives. However, differences associated with

length of service and educational attainment indicated that professional experience and academic preparation may influence the level of awareness and engagement with sustainability-related practices. This highlights the importance of continuous faculty development and institutional support in strengthening sustainability integration within higher education institutions. Despite these contributions, the study was limited to faculty respondents from a single higher education institution, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other universities or institutional contexts. The reliance on self-reported survey data also focused primarily on perceived practices rather than direct measurement of institutional sustainability outcomes. Future research may expand the scope by including multiple higher education institutions, incorporating perspectives from students and administrators, and employing mixed or qualitative research approaches to obtain deeper insights into the processes and outcomes of SDG integration within higher education systems.

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