

Gender Sensitivity Teaching Practices of Secondary Public School Teachers in the Division of Quezon City

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Abstract

This descriptive quantitative research investigated the extent to which secondary public-school teachers in Quezon City analyzed how selected demographic variables influence these practices. Employing a structured and validated questionnaire, the study measured the integration of gender sensitivity across six key pedagogical dimensions: (1) attitudes and values, (2) classroom interaction and atmosphere, (3) equal opportunities and participation, (4) language and materials used, (5) curriculum and instructional design, and (6) handling of gender-related issues. A stratified random sample of 362 respondents was drawn from a total population of 5,934 teachers, with the sample size determined using Cochran's formula and adjusted for finite population. The majority of participants were female, held entry- to mid-level teaching positions, and reported limited hours of Gender and Development (GAD) training. Findings indicated generally high levels of gender-sensitive practices, particularly in fostering respectful classroom environments and using inclusive instructional materials. However, areas such as reflective self-assessment and consistent application of gender-fair language presented opportunities for improvement. Statistical analyses revealed no significant differences in gender-sensitive teaching practices when respondents were grouped according to sex, civil status, teaching experience, or professional rank. However, age and extent of GAD training exposure emerged as significant factors influencing specific dimensions of gender-sensitive pedagogy. Notably, older teachers demonstrated greater proficiency in addressing gender issues in the classroom, suggesting a possible link between professional maturity and gender responsiveness. Additionally, increased exposure to GAD training correlated with higher levels of gender sensitivity in multiple domains, although post hoc analyses did not yield significant pairwise differences. These findings underscore the critical role of sustained professional development and targeted GAD interventions in enhancing teachers' gender-responsive competencies. The study recommends the implementation of differentiated and evidence-based training programs tailored to the developmental and experiential profiles of teachers to advance inclusive and equitable educational practices in the public secondary school system.

Keywords: Gender-Sensitive Teaching, Public School Teachers, Gender and Development (GAD), Inclusive Education

1. Introduction

Gender-sensitive teaching practices refer to deliberate, inclusive, and equitable approaches to instruction that recognize learners' diverse gender identities, roles, and experiences. These practices promote fairness, challenge stereotypes, and support inclusive participation, language use, and curriculum development, contributing to socially just and effective education systems (UNESCO, 2019). Despite global and national commitments to gender equality, gender bias and discrimination remain embedded in classroom interactions and learning opportunities, particularly affecting marginalized genders (Unterhalter, 2017; Stromquist, 2018). In school settings, the persistence of gendered expectations and unequal participation can influence learner confidence, engagement, and academic outcomes, highlighting the need for teachers to apply intentional strategies that ensure equitable classroom treatment and safe learning environments (Armas et al., 2019).

The implementation of gender-sensitive teaching is closely linked to institutional standards and teacher capacity, as classroom inclusivity requires consistent instructional planning, ethical conduct, and effective leadership at the school level. Quality assurance frameworks and performance-based approaches support the idea that effective educational practice depends on clear standards, reliable delivery systems, and monitored implementation across teaching domains (Gamit et al., 2024; De Lara & Santos, 2024). Teacher competence and professional readiness also influence how inclusion is translated into classroom practice, since educators' training background and professional development exposure shape their ability to manage diverse learners and respond appropriately to gender-related concerns (Hipolito & Santos, 2025; Santos & Cajucom, 2020). Moreover, gender-sensitive practice is not limited to content delivery; it involves classroom management behaviors, communication style, interaction patterns, and institutional responsiveness to learner needs, which may vary depending on teacher-related factors such as experience, organizational commitment, and professional values (Santos, 2020).

Emerging challenges in modern teaching environments further reinforce the relevance of gender-sensitive pedagogy, particularly in contexts where learner well-being, social attitudes, and behavioral pressures affect classroom participation. Studies on student attitudes and social behavior during periods of disruption suggest that teachers must be prepared to handle diverse learner perspectives and ensure inclusive engagement, especially when educational stressors heighten vulnerability and exclusion risks (Santiago & Santos, 2021; Santiago et al., 2023). Likewise, the integration of digital platforms and flexible learning tools introduces new spaces where inclusion must be sustained through respectful communication and equitable access to learning opportunities (Tuliao et al., 2025; Jacoba et al., 2025). When learning gaps and participation barriers persist, targeted instructional supports become essential to ensuring that all learners are provided fair opportunities to succeed regardless of gender identity and social context (Cara et al., 2025). In response to these realities, this study examines gender-sensitive teaching practices among secondary public school teachers in Quezon City by assessing key pedagogical domains and exploring how teacher-related factors influence classroom implementation.

1.1 Background of the Study

Gender-sensitive teaching practices are designed to ensure that teaching and learning environments are respectful, inclusive, and equitable for all learners. These practices involve ensuring fair treatment, actively addressing gender stereotypes, promoting equal participation, and integrating gender-responsive instructional strategies and materials (UNESCO, 2019). In the classroom, gender sensitivity is expressed not only through language use but also through instructional decisions and teacher-student interactions that shape how equality and inclusion are experienced in everyday learning contexts.

1.2 Themes and Insights from Related Literature

Existing literature emphasizes that gender inequality in education persists not only through structural barriers but also through subtle classroom practices shaped by cultural norms, unconscious bias, and traditional expectations. Gender bias continues to influence classroom engagement, participation, and learning opportunities, often disadvantaging marginalized genders despite broader institutional efforts toward equality (Unterhalter, 2017; Stromquist, 2018). Gender-sensitive teaching therefore requires intentional pedagogical strategies that support participation equity, stereotype reduction, and constructive responses to gender-related concerns. Teachers' attitudes and professional practices play a significant role in either reinforcing or challenging gendered norms within classrooms (Sadker & Zittleman, 2009).

1.3 Local, National, and Global Context

Globally, gender equality in education is strongly anchored in international commitments such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5, which promotes gender equality and the elimination of disparities across learning environments (United Nations, 2015). However, the persistence of gender bias demonstrates that education systems must go beyond access and participation to address how gender is embedded in institutional culture and classroom practice (Unterhalter, 2017; Stromquist, 2018). In the Philippine context, gender equality is supported through legal and policy mechanisms, including the Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act No. 9710) and the Department of Education's Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy (DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017). These frameworks institutionalize Gender and Development (GAD) principles by promoting inclusive curricula, gender-responsive pedagogy, teacher development, and safe learning environments for all learners, including those from the LGBTQIA+ community. However, the implementation of these policies remains uneven, and translating policy commitments into consistent classroom practice continues to be a challenge (DepEd, 2021; Philippine Commission on Women [PCW], 2022).

1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Basis

This study is grounded in the concept of gender-sensitive teaching as a framework for achieving equitable and inclusive education. Gender-sensitive teaching recognizes gender diversity and promotes fairness by ensuring respectful classroom interaction, the use of inclusive language, equal opportunities for participation, and responsive instructional planning (UNESCO, 2019). It also emphasizes that teachers are key agents in shaping classroom culture and learner experiences; therefore, their beliefs, attitudes, and pedagogical decisions significantly influence gender equality outcomes in education (Sadker & Zittleman, 2009). To strengthen this foundation, the study is anchored on two major social science theories that explain how gender roles and gender sensitivity are developed and can be transformed through education: Social Role Theory by Alice Eagly (1987) and Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (1977). Social Role Theory explains that gender differences are largely shaped by societal expectations and the traditional division of roles assigned to men and women. These expectations are reinforced through cultural norms, institutional practices, and repeated exposure to what society defines as "appropriate" gender behavior. In the educational setting, this theory helps explain how gender bias may be unintentionally reproduced through teaching practices, classroom routines, and learning materials. When teachers practice gender-sensitive teaching—such as using inclusive language, encouraging equal participation, and addressing gender issues—they actively challenge traditional gender roles and help dismantle stereotypes that sustain inequality.

Meanwhile, Social Learning Theory emphasizes that learners acquire behaviors, values, and attitudes by observing and imitating others, especially authority figures such as teachers. In schools, students model what they see in classroom interactions, including how teachers treat boys and girls, assign roles in activities, respond to gender-related concerns, and reinforce participation. If teachers model gender-fair behavior and promote respect for diverse gender identities, learners are more likely to develop inclusive and equitable views. However, if bias is shown or tolerated, students may internalize these patterns as normal. Thus, this theory highlights the teacher's role in shaping gender norms through modeling and reinforcement. Together, these theories provide a strong explanation of both the reason gender norms persist (Social Role Theory) and the mechanism through which these norms are learned and reproduced in schools (Social Learning Theory). Anchoring the study on these perspectives supports the idea that gender-sensitive teaching is not only a pedagogical strategy but also a transformative practice that interrupts learned stereotypes, promotes equity, and builds inclusive learning environments for all students.

In addition, this study adopts the CIPP Evaluation Model (Context–Input–Process–Product) as its conceptual framework to assess the level of gender-sensitive teaching practices among secondary public school teachers. The Context component considers DepEd mandates and school culture that guide gender responsiveness, such as DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017, DepEd Order No. 1, s. 2023, and DepEd Order No. 19, s. 2008, together with existing GAD policies and institutional practices. The Input component includes teachers' profiles (gender, age, civil status, training hours, years in service, and rank/position) and the key dimensions of gender-sensitive teaching practices such as attitudes and values, classroom interaction, equal participation, language and materials, curriculum design, and handling gender issues. The Process component covers data gathering procedures and statistical analysis through frequency, percentage, mean, and the Kruskal-Wallis test. Finally, the Product component reflects the measured level of gender sensitivity in teaching practices and serves as the basis for developing a proposed intervention program. The integration of gender-sensitive teaching principles, Social Role Theory, Social Learning Theory, and the CIPP Model positions gender responsiveness as a multidimensional and evaluative practice embedded in teachers' daily instructional routines—shaped by societal expectations, strengthened through positive modeling, and improved through continuous feedback and intervention.

1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale

Despite the existence of national GAD frameworks and teacher training efforts, evidence indicates persistent gaps between policy intent and classroom implementation. Reports suggest that many public school teachers have limited access to comprehensive gender sensitivity training, and gender-blind practices continue to appear in instructional materials and classroom dynamics (PCW, 2022; DepEd, 2021). Moreover, empirical research examining gender-sensitive teaching practices in real classroom settings—especially in secondary education—remains limited. These gaps highlight the need for systematic investigation into how gender-responsive teaching is practiced and how teacher-related factors shape its consistency. This study addresses these concerns by assessing gender-sensitive teaching practices among secondary public school teachers in Quezon City across key domains such as attitudes and values, classroom interaction, language use, curriculum design, and handling gender-related issues.

1.6 Alignment with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This study aligns with SDG 4 – Quality Education, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable education and supports learning environments that promote fairness and respect for all learners. It also directly supports SDG 5 – Gender Equality by examining how teachers implement gender-responsive practices that help reduce gender bias and promote inclusion in classroom learning. The focus on strengthening teacher practice and institutional responsiveness reflects the role of education in reducing social inequalities and ensuring that schools serve as safe and equitable spaces for all students, including marginalized gender groups (United Nations, 2015; DepEd, 2021; Philippine Commission on Women [PCW], 2022).

1.7 Importance of the Study to Multidisciplinary Sustainability

This research contributes to educational sustainability by supporting long-term teaching practices that promote inclusive participation, gender fairness, and learner-centered classroom environments (UNESCO, 2019). It also strengthens socio-cultural sustainability by addressing gender stereotypes and discrimination that limit learners' opportunities and wellbeing, helping build respectful and equitable school communities (Unterhalter, 2017; Stromquist, 2018). At the institutional level, the study supports policy and governance sustainability by generating evidence on how national gender-responsive frameworks are translated into classroom practice, informing teacher development efforts and school-level capacity building (DepEd, 2021; Philippine Commission on Women [PCW], 2022). Through these contributions, the study reinforces the role of gender-sensitive pedagogy in advancing inclusive education systems that are socially just and responsive to diverse learner needs (Sadker & Zittleman, 2009).

Gender-sensitive pedagogy emerges as both a theoretical imperative and a practical necessity, grounded in social constructivism (Connell, 2020), feminist theory (Hooks, 2020), and critical pedagogy (Freire, 2023). These frameworks assert that education must not only impart knowledge but also challenge gender-based inequities and affirm diverse

identities. As emphasized by UNESCO (2021) and UN Women (2020), the classroom becomes a transformative space when teaching actively fosters inclusivity, justice, and empowerment. In the Philippine context, this imperative is institutionalized through policies like the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710), the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (RA 10533), and DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017, which collectively mandate the integration of gender equality and human rights in all aspects of education (DepEd, 2017; DepEd, 2022). These are further operationalized through memoranda and programs such as DM Nos. 627 and 661, s. 2022, reinforcing the state's commitment to inclusive education governance. Empirical research affirms that the effectiveness of gender-sensitive teaching is influenced by teacher profiles, particularly their experience, education, and exposure to Gender and Development (GAD) training (Rosales & Manalo, 2022; Delos Reyes & Magno, 2021; Santos & Villanueva, 2023). Significantly, studies find that gender sensitivity is not an innate trait but one shaped through structured professional development and institutional culture. This is supported by the UNESCO & DepEd (2022) national study showing that urban 36 Polytechnic University Of The Philippines 36 teachers with greater access to GAD seminars are more likely to adopt inclusive practices, underscoring the need for equitable training access across regions. Attitudinal dimensions also play a key role. As Wiwattarakul et al. (2025) and UNESCO (2009) assert, educators must embody empathy, fairness, and critical awareness to dismantle entrenched norms. Yet "social inertia" and institutional resistance often hinder meaningful implementation, requiring deliberate policy alignment, training reform, and community engagement. Studies by Smith & Johnson (2022), Moya & Borong (2024), and Cagang et al. (2023) demonstrate that inclusive curriculum design, cooperative learning, and integration of GAD principles significantly enhance student engagement and reduce gender bias. However, gaps persist in curriculum contextualization and textbook content, especially in underrepresented areas like STEM (Gamboa, 2022; Christou & Parmaxi, 2022). Here, the ADDIE model (Choi et al., 2024) is a promising framework to systematize gender-sensitive curriculum development. Institutional initiatives such as those by UP Diliman, University of Southeastern Philippines, and University of Southern Philippines serve as exemplars of translating policy into practice through structured gender sensitivity training. Yet as Niones-Bojos (2022) notes, the lack of consistent monitoring and contextual materials dilutes the impact of these programs. Thus, a systemic strategy is needed—anchored in intersectionality (Crenshaw, 2021; Yuval-Davis, 2022), local responsiveness (Cruz, 2021), and sustained institutional support. 37 Polytechnic University Of The Philippines 37 From a global perspective, gender-sensitive education aligns with calls by UNESCO, WHO, and international scholars to go beyond neutrality and address embedded cultural and institutional biases (Ottens, 2022; Elhoushy et al., 2024; Ansari et al., 2017). These insights are echoed in research across various sectors, including STEM (Hu, 2024; Msambwa et al., 2024), media (Mamo & Orgot, 2024; Velasco & Aliangan, 2017), and curriculum reform (Torres, 2021). In relation to the current study, these theoretical and empirical foundations establish the necessity of assessing teachers' gender-sensitive practices in terms of both internal dispositions and external support systems. The review justifies the investigation of how teacher demographics, training exposure, policy awareness, and institutional climate influence the implementation of inclusive pedagogy. More importantly, it positions the current research as a timely contribution to understanding the gaps between policy and practice in promoting gender equity in Philippine education.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

A descriptive quantitative research design was employed to determine the existing level of gender-sensitive teaching practices without manipulating variables. This approach is appropriate for describing current conditions and practices using numerical data (Ardales, 2020). Data were collected through structured questionnaires that measured gender-sensitive attitudes, classroom interactions, instructional practices, and the handling of gender-related issues.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the Division of Quezon City and focused on secondary public school teachers from the city's six congressional districts during School Year 2024–2025. Population data were obtained from the Schools Division Office of Quezon City.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of 362 secondary public school teachers drawn from the six congressional districts of Quezon City. Participants represented varied demographic characteristics, teaching ranks, and lengths of service that were relevant to the study variables.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The target population included 5,934 secondary public school teachers from the six congressional districts of Quezon City. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, with an adjustment through the Finite Population Correction to account for the finite population. A stratified random sampling technique was applied to ensure proportional representation from each congressional district, and teachers were randomly selected within each stratum to reduce sampling bias and increase representativeness (Creswell, 2018).

2.5 Research Instrument

Data were gathered using a modified survey questionnaire adapted from Enoc and Gagani (2019), The Development of a Gender-Sensitivity Teaching Test. The instrument consisted of three parts: the first collected demographic information including sex, age, civil status, years in service, teaching position, and hours attended in GAD trainings; the second contained thirty indicators assessing gender-sensitive teaching practices across six dimensions, namely attitudes and values, classroom interaction, equal participation, language and materials, curriculum design, and handling gender issues; and the third included ten items identifying challenges encountered in implementing gender-sensitive teaching practices. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (Always) to 1 (Never). Content validity was established through expert evaluation by two Public Schools District Supervisors, one GAD focal person, and one registered psychometrician to ensure clarity and relevance. Reliability testing through pilot administration yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.934, indicating excellent internal consistency (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Ethics clearance and formal approvals were secured from the Research Management Office and the Schools Division Superintendent of Quezon City prior to data collection. Questionnaires were administered through both online and printed formats depending on school accessibility. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality of responses was strictly maintained throughout the data-gathering process.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage were used to summarize respondents' demographic profiles. Mean and standard deviation were computed to determine the level of gender-sensitive teaching practices across the identified dimensions. To examine differences in gender-sensitive teaching practices according to demographic variables, the Kruskal-Wallis H test was applied due to the ordinal nature of Likert-scale data (Field, 2018). Statistical analyses were performed using open-access statistical software.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Main Findings on Respondents and Gender-Sensitive Teaching Practices

3.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The respondents were predominantly female (71.77% or 272), followed by male teachers (27.70% or 105), and a small proportion identifying as LGBTQ (0.53% or 2). Most participants were married (60.69% or 230) and the rest were single (37.73% or 143) or classified under other civil status categories (1.58% or 6). The largest age group was 31–40 years (28.50% or 108), followed by 41–50 years (26.65% or 101), 51–60 years (25.07% or 95), 25–30 years (17.41% or 66), and 61–65 years (2.37% or 9). Teaching experience was distributed across categories, with the highest proportion reporting 21 years and above (24.27% or 92), and those with 1–5 years comprising 23.22% (88). In terms of rank, most teachers were Teacher I (30.08% or 114), Teacher III (29.02% or 110), and Teacher II (24.27% or 92), while fewer were Master Teachers (10.82% or 41) or Head Teachers (5.80% or 22). Most respondents reported limited exposure to GAD training, with 67.81% (257) attending 4–8 hours and 17.15% (65) attending 9–16 hours, while smaller proportions attended longer training durations.

These demographic trends suggest that perspectives on gender-sensitive teaching were largely drawn from teachers in entry to mid-level positions who may have varying degrees of influence in curriculum planning and school-level reforms. The distribution across teaching ranks indicates representation from different career stages, which may influence capacity for leadership and implementation of inclusive practices in schools (Galing Pook Foundation, 2019). The limited number of training hours reported by most teachers also reflects the need for more sustained professional development exposure, especially for deeper integration of gender-responsive practices beyond basic awareness-building activities (Galing Pook Foundation, 2019).

3.1.2 Overall Level of Gender-Sensitive Teaching Practices

The overall mean score for gender-sensitive teaching practices was 4.43 (SD = 0.62), interpreted as “Always,” indicating consistently high self-reported gender sensitivity among secondary public school teachers. Item-level results showed that the highest-rated practice was showing genuine respect for every student regardless of gender (M = 4.73, SD = 0.71), followed by giving equal opportunities for tasks in front of the class regardless of gender (M = 4.67, SD = 0.73), and avoiding bias or favoritism toward any gender (M = 4.65, SD = 0.76). The lowest-rated indicator was usually calling on students who raise their hand first (M = 4.12, SD = 0.91), interpreted as “Often,” while the rest of the indicators were generally interpreted as “Always” across the scale.

The high overall results suggest that teachers consistently practice inclusive and equitable teaching behaviors, reflecting a strong commitment to gender sensitivity in classroom environments. This aligns with international standards emphasizing the importance of integrating gender equality into teaching practices and school culture to ensure fairness in learning

opportunities (UNESCO, 2011). The consistently high ratings also indicate that teachers view gender-sensitive teaching as a regular and embedded component of classroom instruction, supporting efforts to reduce gender bias and promote inclusive participation and representation (Acedillo-Velasco, 2018).

3.1.3 Gender Sensitivity Across Pedagogical Dimensions

Across the six dimensions, teachers reported “Always” practicing gender-sensitive strategies, with mean scores of 4.50 (SD = 0.65) for Attitudes and Values Promoting Gender Sensitivity, 4.40 (SD = 0.64) for Classroom Interaction and Atmosphere, 4.51 (SD = 0.63) for Equal Opportunities and Participation, 4.36 (SD = 0.86) for Language and Materials Used, 4.35 (SD = 0.71) for Curriculum and Instructional Design, and 4.41 (SD = 0.63) for Handling Gender Sensitivity Issues. Within these dimensions, strong ratings were evident for cultivating a gender-sensitive classroom atmosphere ($\bar{x}$ = 4.58), avoiding stereotypes through instructional resources ($\bar{x}$ = 4.48), and applying gender-neutral representation in learning evaluation ($\bar{x}$ = 4.46). Lower but still high ratings were found in reflective self-evaluation of teaching performance ($\bar{x}$ = 4.28) and in selecting and developing gender-sensitive teaching materials ($\bar{x}$ = 4.22), indicating areas where improvement remains possible despite the overall strong performance.

These findings indicate that teachers demonstrate strong gender-responsive attitudes and classroom interaction strategies that support inclusive participation. High ratings in equal opportunities and participation emphasize the use of classroom strategies that minimize gender-based participation imbalance and promote equitable engagement (Galing Pook Foundation, 2019). Similarly, the consistently high ratings in language use, curriculum design, and instructional materials support the idea that gender sensitivity is strengthened when learning content and assessment practices avoid stereotypes and promote representation (Ahn, 2011; Philippine Commission on Women, 2014). Although teachers reported high competence in addressing gender-related classroom concerns, the slightly lower results on reflective practice and material development suggest the need for more focused support in sustaining gender responsiveness at deeper instructional levels (Acedillo-Velasco, 2018).

3.2 Challenges Encountered in Promoting Gender Sensitivity

Teachers reported an overall challenges mean score of 3.79 (SD = 0.60), interpreted as “Often,” indicating that barriers to implementing gender-sensitive practices were encountered frequently. The most commonly identified challenge was lack of awareness on gender sensitivity (46.97% or 178), followed by attitudinal problems (37.73% or 143) and cultural beliefs and tradition (34.04% or 129). Other challenges included lack of conceptual clarity (31.13% or 118), lack of coordination among concerned bodies (27.97% or 106), insufficient financial and material resources (23.75% or 90), and limitations in technical capacity (14.25% or 54), while very few respondents reported other concerns (0.26% or 1).

The frequent reporting of awareness and attitudinal barriers indicates that gender sensitivity remains influenced by personal beliefs and social norms that can affect classroom behavior and decision-making. As Enoc and Gagani (2019) note, attitudinal barriers are often among the most persistent obstacles in establishing gender-sensitive environments within educational settings. The presence of resource limitations and coordination concerns further suggests that institutional support mechanisms may require strengthening to ensure that gender-responsive pedagogy is consistently practiced, supported, and sustained in classroom implementation (Ahn, 2011; Dela Cruz, 2012).

3.3 Interpretation of Overall Patterns in Gender Sensitivity and Implementation

The data indicate that secondary public school teachers in Quezon City consistently reported a high level of gender-sensitive teaching practices, with strong performance across multiple teaching dimensions and generally positive indicators of fairness, inclusivity, and respect in classroom instruction. However, teachers also reported that challenges were encountered often, particularly those related to awareness, beliefs, and attitudes, along with institutional constraints such as limited resources and coordination difficulties. These overall patterns suggest that while gender sensitivity is strongly reflected in teachers’ reported practices, sustaining and deepening these practices requires ongoing professional development and support systems. Gender-responsive teaching is strengthened when teachers use inclusive strategies and equitable participation approaches that reduce bias and foster respectful learning environments (UN Women, 2014). At the same time, the persistence of implementation barriers supports the need for continuous improvement and capacity-building to ensure that gender-sensitive education moves beyond commitment and becomes consistently embedded in daily classroom practice (UNESCO, 2005).

3.4 Post Hoc Analysis

A statistically significant difference in teachers’ perceptions of equal opportunities and participation was observed across GAD training hour groups (χ^2 = 9.9622, p = 0.0411), as revealed by the Kruskal-Wallis test. This suggests that attitudes toward equity and inclusion may be influenced by exposure to Gender and Development (GAD) training. However, Dunn’s post hoc test results showed no statistically significant pairwise differences after Holm adjustment. In summary, although general group differences may exist, no specific comparisons were strong enough to identify which training-hour group differed meaningfully from another.

This pattern points to a deeper concern regarding gender training programs: while training may increase baseline awareness, it does not always produce clearly distinguishable outcomes across varying levels of exposure. Acedillo-Velasco (2018) emphasized that the impact of GAD initiatives depends not solely on participation or duration, but on opportunities for critical reflection, dialogue, and contextual relevance within each training session. Without these elements, even longer training hours may not significantly change how individuals understand or apply principles of equal participation.

The limited variation across training brackets further aligns with the findings of Enoc and Gagani (2019), who argued that many training programs concentrate more on conceptual delivery than on practical application and lived experience, which are necessary to bring about behavioral change rather than cognitive awareness alone. Notably, respondents who had attended as few as 4–8 hours and as many as 33–40 hours of training still expressed no significant differences in their perceptions of equitable participation. This highlights a potential limitation in standardized GAD training delivery, which may fail to address entrenched biases or may not be sufficiently differentiated across participants' needs and contexts (Burtscher & Spiel, 2020).

The implication is crucial: institutions should avoid equating the length of training with its effectiveness. Meaningful learning is more likely achieved through participatory methodologies, identity-based reflection, and real-world case applications that encourage deeper engagement and accountability (Christou & Parmaxi, 2022). These findings support Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which emphasizes that behavioral change is shaped through environmental reinforcement and role modeling. Hence, GAD training should not be treated as an isolated intervention; it must be reinforced through institutional culture, policy implementation, accountability mechanisms, and visible leadership that consistently models inclusive practice (Salazar, 2014; Ansari et al., 2017).

Moreover, the role of inclusive and gender-fair language in professional and instructional materials remains essential in dismantling implicit bias and reinforcing equitable thinking (Gamboa, 2022; Jacinto, 2020). However, if training hours do not translate into stronger application of inclusive language and discourse, teachers may struggle to challenge stereotypes consistently. This supports Burtscher and Spiel's (2020) critique that gender training often fails when it ignores intersectional realities and lacks human-sensitive design, limiting its ability to generate meaningful change.

The findings further highlight the significance of linguistic framing in gender discourse. Language carries symbolic power that influences how gender roles are internalized and reproduced in behavior (Jabeen & Asad, 2014). Thus, training programs should ensure that materials are not only free from sexist themes but also intentionally promote inclusive narratives, especially for participants with varied levels of exposure and expertise (Velasco & Aliangan, 2017). This suggests that training content quality may be just as important as training duration.

Additionally, the Kruskal-Wallis test for overall gender sensitivity by GAD training hours also showed a statistically significant result ($\chi^2 = 9.8464$, $p = 0.0431$), indicating that variations exist among training exposure groups. Nevertheless, Dunn's post hoc test again revealed no statistically significant pairwise differences after Holm adjustment. This implies that while gender sensitivity may generally improve with additional training, the differences between specific training-hour groups were not substantial enough to reflect clear incremental gains.

The absence of distinct pairwise differences may indicate nonprogressive learning or redundancy across training sessions. Repetition without increasing depth, complexity, or application can limit learning progression, especially in experiential and transformative areas such as gender mainstreaming (Galing Pook Foundation, 2019; Christou & Parmaxi, 2022). This reinforces the view that inclusive leadership, institutional commitment, and organizational context are vital in supporting lasting transformation (Ansari et al., 2017; Bajcar & Babiak, 2019). Therefore, the impact of GAD training is intertwined with broader school culture, policy support, and the consistency of gender-responsive practices within the institution.

These results strengthen the call to reassess the qualitative design of GAD training sessions in the Philippine education context, where gender sensitivity initiatives are increasingly institutionalized but still uneven in implementation (Acedillo-Velasco, 2018; Dela Cruz, 2012). Greater participant engagement may be achieved by integrating narratives from lived experiences, community realities, and local gender issues to ensure that learning becomes reflective, relevant, and actionable (Enoc & Gagani, 2019; Obiunu & Emakpor, 2020).

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that the majority of respondents were female secondary public school teachers occupying entry to mid-level teaching positions, with relatively fewer years of teaching experience and limited exposure to Gender and Development (GAD) training. Despite these profile characteristics, the findings revealed that secondary public school

teachers demonstrated a consistently high level of gender-sensitive teaching practices across all instructional dimensions. This reflects a strong commitment to fairness, inclusivity, and respect in classroom interaction, curriculum delivery, and the use of instructional materials. However, certain areas still require further strengthening, particularly in reflective self-evaluation, the consistent application of gender-neutral and inclusive language, and ensuring balanced participation among learners. While most demographic variables did not significantly influence gender-sensitive teaching practices, age and the extent of GAD training exposure emerged as significant factors affecting specific domains, especially in handling gender-related concerns and improving inclusive attitudes, values, and classroom practices.

Based on these conclusions, educational institutions are encouraged to institutionalize continuous, in-depth, and differentiated GAD training programs that go beyond standard compliance-oriented sessions. These programs should emphasize practical classroom strategies such as the consistent use of inclusive and gender-fair language, equitable classroom participation, and values-based gender responsiveness that can be applied in daily teaching routines. It is also recommended that schools strengthen peer support mechanisms by establishing a structured mentoring or coaching system, where senior or more experienced teachers guide younger educators in effectively addressing gender-related concerns inside the classroom. This approach can help reinforce professional confidence, improve classroom decision-making, and ensure that gender-sensitive practices are sustained through collaborative learning and shared expertise. Furthermore, schools should implement evidence-driven intervention efforts that focus on the key areas identified for improvement, particularly inclusive participation, handling gender issues, and the development of gender-sensitive instructional materials. Regular monitoring and evaluation should be conducted to ensure that improvements are sustained and that interventions remain responsive to actual classroom realities.

As part of the recommendations, this study proposes the implementation of the GENDER-IN: Gender-Sensitive Instructional Development Program, a structured six-month intervention designed to strengthen teachers' gender-responsive practices through practical, contextualized, and evidence-based learning activities. The program is anchored on the study's findings that age and the number of GAD training hours influence teachers' implementation of gender-sensitive teaching, particularly in handling gender issues, promoting equal participation, and improving language and materials used in instruction. Specifically, GENDER-IN aims to enhance teachers' capacity to integrate gender-sensitive practices across all teaching dimensions, strengthen competencies in addressing gender issues in classroom contexts especially among younger or less experienced teachers, provide differentiated and age-responsive GAD professional development, and promote sustainability through peer mentoring and collaboration. Through guided modules, applied workshops, mentoring sessions, and reflective practice activities, the program is expected to help institutionalize gender-responsive instruction across subject areas and support continuous improvement in gender-sensitive education.

This study was limited to secondary public school teachers in the Division of Quezon City during School Year 2024–2025 and utilized a descriptive quantitative approach based on self-reported survey responses. As such, the findings reflect teachers' perceived practices and may not fully capture actual classroom behaviors or the broader complexity of implementing gender-sensitive teaching across other divisions, contexts, or educational levels.

Compliance with ethical standards

This study complied with institutional ethical standards for research involving human participants. Participation of secondary public school teachers in the Division of Quezon City was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. All data were handled responsibly and used solely for research purposes.

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Conflict of interest statement

The author declares no conflict of interest. No external entity influenced the study design, conduct, analysis, or reporting.

Statement of ethical approval

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the concerned offices prior to data collection. Ethical safeguards such as fair recruitment, confidentiality protection, and objective reporting were observed throughout the research process.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was secured from all respondents prior to participation. Participants were informed of the study purpose and their right to withdraw at any time, with anonymity ensured throughout data collection and reporting.

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