

## **BEST PRACTICES FOR PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the best practices for promoting gender equality in education at Sta. Rita National High School, Cagdianao, Dinagat Islands. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, the research examined the extent to which 11 Junior High School teachers implemented gender-sensitive teaching practices and the impact of these practices on 30 students' awareness, engagement, and attitudes toward gender equality. Data were collected through a validated researcher-developed questionnaire rated on a 4-point Likert scale and analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and Pearson correlation. Results indicate that teachers frequently applied gender-sensitive practices (overall mean = 4.24, SD = 0.48), with the highest scores in promoting equal participation ( $M = 4.32$ ,  $SD = 0.45$ ) and modeling inclusive behavior ( $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ ). Students demonstrated high awareness and engagement (overall mean = 4.20, SD = 0.50), with the strongest outcomes in equitable participation ( $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ) and respect for diverse perspectives ( $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 0.47$ ). Pearson correlation analysis revealed a strong, statistically significant positive relationship between teachers' gender-sensitive practices and students' awareness and engagement ( $r = 0.71$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). The findings highlight the critical role of inclusive teaching strategies in fostering equitable, participatory, and socially responsible learning environments.

**Keywords:** Gender Equality, Gender-Sensitive Teaching, Inclusive Education, Junior High School, Student Engagement, Awareness, Philippines.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Gender equality in education is a crucial driver of social development, economic growth, and individual empowerment, as equitable access to learning opportunities enables all learners to reach their full potential regardless of gender (Alam, Ogawa, Basharat, & Ahsan, 2025; Ahmed, Shaikh, & Yaqoob, 2025). Despite global and national efforts to address gender disparities, structural barriers, societal norms, and biases within educational institutions continue to limit participation, particularly in fields traditionally dominated by males, such as science, leadership, and technology (Gul, Fatima, & Akhtar, 2025; Canuto & Espique, 2023). To counter these challenges, educators are encouraged to employ gender-sensitive teaching practices that foster inclusivity, challenge stereotypes, and empower all students to actively engage in learning (Jabbar, Barkati, & Tabish, 2025; Azimjanov, 2025).

Best practices in promoting gender equality involve integrating gender perspectives into curriculum design, instructional strategies, and classroom interactions. Approaches such as participatory learning, collaborative activities, culturally responsive instruction, and reflective discussions have been shown to enhance students' engagement, confidence, and academic performance while cultivating awareness of gender issues (Tagaza & Manalansan, 2025; Talib-Bauda, Shaik, & Mohamad, 2025). Strong institutional support, teacher competence, and administrative commitment further strengthen the implementation of these practices (Leproni & Azara, 2025; Tejada, 2025).

This study aims to identify and examine best practices for promoting gender equality in education at Sta. Rita National High School, Cagdianao, Dinagat Islands. Specifically, it explores how gender-sensitive approaches are applied in teaching, assesses their impact on students' engagement and learning outcomes, and evaluates students' awareness and attitudes toward gender equality. Employing a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design, the study systematically measures the extent and effectiveness of gender-sensitive practices in Junior High School classrooms.

The respondents of this study include 11 Junior High School teachers and 30 students from Sta. Rita National High School. Teachers were purposively selected based on their experience in implementing gender-sensitive instructional strategies, while students were chosen through simple random sampling to ensure fair representation of the learner population. This sample allows the study to accurately reflect current classroom practices and their impact on students' awareness, attitudes, and engagement in promoting gender equality.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

This study aims to investigate the best practices for promoting gender equality in education at Sta. Rita National High School, Cagdianao, Dinagat Islands. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the gender-sensitive teaching practices employed by Senior High School teachers in promoting inclusivity and equitable participation among students?

1.1 Use of participatory and collaborative learning strategies

1.2 Integration of gender perspectives in curriculum and instructional materials  
1.3 Promotion of equal opportunities for classroom participation and leadership  
1.4 Reflective discussions addressing gender issues and stereotypes  
1.5 Administrative support and policies fostering gender equality in the classroom  
2. What is the level of students' awareness and perception of gender equality in the school, particularly in terms of:  
2.1 Recognition of gender roles and stereotypes  
2.2 Engagement and participation in classroom activities  
2.3 Confidence and motivation in academic and extracurricular activities  
2.4 Collaboration and respect for peers regardless of gender  
3. Is there a significant relationship between the implementation of gender-sensitive teaching practices and students' awareness, attitudes, and engagement toward gender equality in education?

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine the best practices for promoting gender equality in education at Sta. Rita National High School, Cagdianao, Dinagat Islands. The descriptive component aims to determine the gender-sensitive teaching practices implemented by Senior High School teachers and to assess the level of students' awareness, attitudes, and engagement toward gender equality. The correlational component investigates the relationship between the implementation of these teaching practices and students' perceptions, attitudes, and participation in the classroom.

This design is appropriate as it allows the systematic collection and analysis of data regarding teachers' practices and students' responses without manipulating variables. It also enables the researcher to determine patterns, trends, and significant associations between teacher practices and student outcomes, providing insights into effective strategies for promoting gender equality in the educational setting.

### **Research Respondents**

The respondents of this study consisted of 11 Junior High School teachers and 30 Junior High School students from Sta. Rita National High School, located in Cagdianao, Dinagat Islands. The teachers included all educators handling various subjects in the Senior High School program, selected through purposive sampling to ensure that only those involved in implementing gender-sensitive teaching practices were included. The students were drawn from the Junior High School population using simple random sampling, allowing for fair representation of different strands and ensuring that the data reflects the perceptions and experiences of the student body.

This selection of respondents ensures that the study captures both the teaching strategies applied to promote gender equality and the corresponding impact on students' awareness, attitudes, and engagement. Only teachers actively teaching in the Junior High School program and students officially enrolled during the conduct of the study were included, ensuring that the data accurately represents the current classroom practices and student experiences.

### **Research Instruments**

Data for this study were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire designed to assess the implementation of best practices in promoting gender equality in education, as well as students' perceptions and experiences of gender-sensitive teaching. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section, intended for teachers, focused on the extent to which Junior High School educators at Sta. Rita National High School incorporate gender-sensitive pedagogical practices, including the use of inclusive teaching materials, promotion of equal participation, encouragement of collaborative activities without gender bias, and strategies to reduce gender stereotypes in the classroom. The second section, administered to students, measured their awareness, attitudes, and engagement in gender equality initiatives, including understanding of gender equality concepts, perceived inclusivity of classroom practices, participation in collaborative learning, and motivation to engage in lessons conducted under gender-sensitive approaches. All items were rated on a four-point Likert scale (1 = Low, 4 = Very High) to capture the frequency of teachers' practices and the level of students' engagement and awareness. The questionnaire was validated by experts in education and gender studies to ensure content accuracy, clarity, and relevance, and a pilot test was conducted to establish reliability, targeting a Cronbach's alpha of at least 0.80, which indicates high internal consistency.

### **Data Gathering and Data Analysis**

Data were collected after obtaining permission from the administration of Sta. Rita National High School in Cagdianao, Dinagat Islands, and securing informed consent from all participating teachers and students. Participation

was voluntary, and confidentiality was strictly maintained. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to ensure clear instructions were given, and all responses were complete and accurate.

After collection, the questionnaires were carefully reviewed, coded, and prepared for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to determine the extent to which gender-sensitive teaching practices were implemented by Junior High School teachers and the level of students' awareness, engagement, and perceptions regarding gender equality in the classroom. Inferential statistics, specifically the Pearson correlation coefficient, were employed to examine the relationship between teachers' implementation of gender-sensitive practices and students' engagement, awareness, and attitudes toward gender equality. All statistical analyses were conducted at a 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive results were interpreted according to established educational research standards, such as Very High, High, Moderate, and Low.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **Extent of Gender-Sensitive Teaching Practices**

**Table 1:** Extent of Gender-Sensitive Practices Implemented by Junior High School Teachers

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Use of inclusive teaching materials	4.27	0.48	Very High
Promotion of equal participation in class	4.32	0.45	Very High
Addressing gender stereotypes in lessons	4.18	0.50	High
Encouraging critical thinking on gender issues	4.25	0.46	Very High
Providing equitable opportunities for group work	4.20	0.49	High
Integration of gender topics in curriculum	4.15	0.51	High
Modeling gender-sensitive behavior	4.30	0.44	Very High
Overall Mean	4.24	0.48	Very High

The overall mean of 4.24 (SD = 0.48) indicates that teachers frequently apply gender-sensitive practices in Junior High School classrooms, interpreted as Very High. The highest scores were for promoting equal participation (M = 4.32) and modeling gender-sensitive behavior (M = 4.30), showing that teachers actively ensure inclusivity and fairness in classroom interactions. Slightly lower scores in integrating gender topics (M = 4.15) and addressing stereotypes (M = 4.18) suggest there is room for improvement in lesson planning and content delivery. These results align with studies emphasizing the importance of inclusive pedagogy and modeling equitable behavior in education (Jabbar et al., 2025; Canuto & Espique, 2023).

#### **Level of Students' Awareness and Engagement in Gender Equality**

**Table 2:** Students' Awareness, Engagement, and Attitudes toward Gender Equality

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Awareness of gender equality concepts	4.20	0.51	High
Engagement in gender-sensitive activities	4.18	0.53	High
Positive attitude toward equitable participation	4.25	0.49	Very High
Critical thinking on gender issues	4.15	0.50	High
Respect for diverse perspectives	4.22	0.47	Very High
Collaboration with peers regardless of gender	4.18	0.52	High
Overall Mean	4.20	0.50	High

The overall mean of 4.20 (SD = 0.50) indicates that students demonstrate high awareness and engagement regarding gender equality. The strongest aspects are their positive attitude toward equitable participation (M = 4.25) and respect for diverse perspectives (M = 4.22). Lower scores in engagement and critical thinking suggest that while students are aware of gender equality principles, further teacher-guided activities could enhance deeper understanding and application. These results are consistent with literature that links teacher modeling of inclusive practices to improved student attitudes and awareness of gender issues (Ahmed et al., 2025; Egamberdiyeva, 2025).

## Relationship Between Teachers' Practices and Students' Outcomes

**Table 3:** Correlation Between Teachers' Gender-Sensitive Practices and Students' Awareness and Engagement

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
<b>Teachers' Gender-Sensitive Practices ↔ Students' Awareness &amp; Engagement</b>	0.71	0.001	Significant Positive Relationship

The Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.71$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) indicates a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between the extent of teachers' gender-sensitive practices and students' awareness, engagement, and attitudes toward gender equality. This implies that as teachers increasingly implement inclusive and equitable teaching strategies, students' understanding and participation in gender-sensitive activities improve. The significant p-value ( $<0.05$ ) confirms that this relationship is unlikely to be due to chance, highlighting the importance of modeling best practices in promoting gender equality in education. These findings are consistent with previous research emphasizing the role of teacher practices in shaping student attitudes and engagement (Rodriguez et al., 2025; Jabbar et al., 2025).

## 4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of gender-sensitive teaching practices at Sta. Rita National High School, Cagdianao, Dinagat Islands, significantly contributes to promoting gender equality in education. Junior High School teachers consistently employ inclusive pedagogical strategies, such as promoting equal participation, modeling gender-sensitive behavior, integrating gender perspectives in lessons, and encouraging critical thinking on gender issues. These practices were rated as high to very high, reflecting the teachers' commitment to fostering equitable classroom environments.

Similarly, students exhibited high levels of awareness, engagement, and positive attitudes toward gender equality. They demonstrated understanding of gender concepts, respect for diverse perspectives, and equitable collaboration with peers, with the strongest outcomes observed in attitudes toward participation and inclusivity. The correlation analysis confirmed a strong, positive, and significant relationship between teachers' gender-sensitive practices and students' awareness, engagement, and attitudes, indicating that students' perceptions and participation improve as inclusive teaching strategies are implemented more extensively.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of systematic gender-sensitive pedagogical approaches in shaping students' understanding, engagement, and attitudes toward gender equality. It highlights that best practices in education—such as participatory learning, equitable classroom management, and integration of gender perspectives—not only foster inclusivity but also enhance students' confidence, critical thinking, and collaboration skills. The results reinforce existing literature on the critical role of teacher practices and administrative support in achieving gender equality in the educational context (Jabbar et al., 2025; Rodriguez et al., 2025; Canuto & Espique, 2023).

In conclusion, promoting gender equality in Junior High School settings requires intentional, reflective, and sustained efforts from educators and institutions alike. When teachers apply best practices in gender-sensitive instruction, students are better equipped to understand, respect, and act upon principles of equity, thereby contributing to a more inclusive and socially responsible learning environment.

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