

# Gender Equality and Diversity Instructional Practices of Teachers and Social Fitness of Students

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**Abstract:** This study is aimed to find out the relationship between gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers and social fitness of students. This study utilized the non-experimental quantitative research design using descriptive technique involving teachers in Sta. Maria District of Davao Occidental Division, Philippines. The study was conducted on the second semester of School Year 2024-2025. Research instruments on gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers and social fitness of students were used as source of data. Using mean and pearson-r as statistical tools to treat the data, the study showed the following results: the study found to exhibit a very high level of gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers, there is a very high level of social fitness of students, there is a significant relationship between gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers and social fitness of students. This implies that the higher the gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers, the higher is the social fitness of the students. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers was rejected.

**Keywords:** gender equality and diversity, instructional practices of teachers, social fitness of students, school administration and supervision.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Social fitness refers to students' ability to form positive social relationships, interact effectively in various social settings, and adapt socially to different environments. Socially fit students tend to have well-developed communication skills, a sense of empathy, and the ability to navigate social complexities. However, several challenges and issues can hinder students' social fitness, impacting their social interactions, academic performance, and overall well-being (Ranjith, 2021).

Some students do not have developed essential social skills like effective communication, empathy, or conflict resolution. This made them experience difficulties in forming and maintaining friendships, working in groups, or understanding social cues. A lack of these skills can make social situations feel overwhelming or intimidating, reducing students' confidence in social settings and causing social isolation. Limited social skills can also impact academic success, as group work and collaboration are often integral to learning environments (Miralles-Cardona, Chiner & Cardona-Moltó, 2021).

There are also students who have social anxiety and low self-esteem which hinder students' ability to engage comfortably in social settings. These students avoid participating in group discussions, social activities, or extracurricular events due to a fear of judgment or embarrassment. Low self-esteem can similarly prevent students from engaging with others or asserting themselves in social contexts, limiting their ability to build friendships and develop confidence in their social skills. Over time, these issues can lead to social withdrawal, loneliness, and increased feelings of inadequacy (Assari & Caldwell, 2018).

Bullying and peer pressure are significant issues that impact students' social fitness. Students who experience bullying may become socially withdrawn, lose trust in their peers, and struggle with low self-worth. This can create a long-lasting impact on their ability to form relationships, especially if they develop an aversion to social interaction. Similarly, peer pressure can force students into uncomfortable or risky situations, which can harm their social well-being and hinder their ability to develop authentic friendships. Constant pressure to fit in may also affect their self-confidence and reduce their comfort in social interactions (Diller, 2018).

To date, there has no study conducted in the local context regarding the correlation between gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers and social fitness of students. While the problem on social fitness of students continues to be present in the classrooms, the need to give special attention to this concern is important in order to increase their learning outcome. It is on this reason that this research is conceptualized in order to explore on the given topic and to look into the veracity of the presented problems on students' social fitness. This study, therefore, is a contribution to the existing literature on each of the topics covered in this study.

## II. BODY OF ARTICLE

### Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the significance of the relationship between gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers and social fitness of students. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following objectives:

1. What is the level of gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers in terms of:
  - 1.1 Learning material;
  - 2.2 Didactics, and
  - 1.3 Learning evaluation?
2. What is the level of social fitness of the students in terms of:
  - 2.1 social play and emotional development;
  - 2.2 emotional regulation;
  - 2.3 group skills, and
  - 2.4 communication skills?
3. To determine the significance of the relationship between gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers and social fitness of students.

### Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were treated at 0.05 level of significance.

There is no significant relationship between gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers and social fitness of students.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative correlational design is a type of non-experimental research design used to determine whether and to what degree a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables. This study will find out the significance of the relationship between gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers and social fitness of students.

### Statistical Treatment

The following statistical tools were used in the analysis of data.

**Mean.** This was used to determine the level of gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers and social fitness of students

**Pearson  $r$ .** This was used to determine the significance of the relationship between gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers and social fitness of students.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### Level of Gender Equality and Diversity Instructional Practices of Teachers

Shown in Table 1 is the level gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers with an overall mean of 4.23 with a descriptive equivalent of very high indicating that all enumerated indicators were oftentimes observed. The overall mean was the result obtained from the mean of the indicators for the specific items from the questionnaire intended for this particular indicator which was appended in this study.

Among the enumerated indicators, learning evaluation ranked the highest, with a mean score of 4.28 or very high. The mean ratings of the following items under this indicator from highest to lowest are as follows, didactics, 4.24 or very high and learning materials, 4.18 or very high.

**Table I. Level of Gender Equality and Diversity Instructional Practices of Teachers**

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Levels
Learning Materials	4.18	Very High
Didactics	4.24	Very High
Learning Evaluation	4.28	Very High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.23</b>	<b>Very High</b>

The result of this study is in consonance with the statement of Lindsay, Rezai, Kolne & Osten (2019) and Hasenhütl, Luttenberger, Macher, Eichen, Eglmaier & Paechter (2024) stated that one of the primary objectives of gender-sensitive teaching is to create equal opportunities for all students. Historically, gender biases in education have led to disparities in subject choices, career aspirations, and academic achievements. For instance, traditional education systems have often steered boys toward science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields while encouraging girls to pursue humanities and caregiving professions. By adopting gender-sensitive teaching methods, educators can dismantle these barriers and encourage students to explore diverse academic and career paths based on their interests and abilities rather than societal expectations

##### Level of Social Fitness of Students

Presented in Table 2 are the ratings of social fitness of students. Computations revealed an overall mean score of 4.12 or very high rating indicating that the said respondents always manifested. Among the enumerated indicators, social play and emotional development ranked the highest with a mean score of 4.15 or very high, group skills, 4.14 or very high, communication skill, 4.11 or very high, and emotional regulation, 4.10 or very high.

The result of this study is congruent to the statement of Murphy, Gopalan, Carter, Emerson, Bottoms & Walton (2020); Schmadier & Sedikides (2018) and Suhlmann, Sassenberg, Nagengast & Trautwein (2018) who stressed that education

**Table II. Level of Social Fitness of Students**

Indicator	Mean	Descriptive Levels
Social Play and Emotional Development	4.15	Very High
Emotional Regulation	4.10	Very High
Group Skills	4.14	Very High
Communication Skill	4.11	Very High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>Very High</b>

is not solely about academic excellence; it also encompasses the development of social skills that prepare students for success in personal and professional life. Social fitness, the ability to interact effectively, build relationships, and adapt to various social settings, is an essential aspect of a student's overall development. In an era where teamwork, communication,

and emotional intelligence are highly valued, social fitness plays a crucial role in shaping a well-rounded individual. This essay explores the importance of social fitness for students, its benefits, and strategies for its development.

This is also supported by the statement of Rowe & Fitness (2018) who averred that Social fitness enables students to build and maintain healthy relationships with their peers, teachers, and family members. The ability to form meaningful connections fosters a sense of belonging, which is essential for emotional well-being and academic motivation. Friendships play a significant role in a student's life, providing emotional support and enhancing their school experience. A socially fit student can navigate conflicts, practice empathy, and contribute positively to group dynamics. These relationship-building skills also extend to teachers and mentors, helping students receive constructive feedback and guidance.

### **Significance on the Relationship between Gender Equality and Diversity Instructional Practices of Teachers and Social Fitness of Students**

Illustrated in Table 3 were the results of the test of relationship between variables involved in the study. The overall correlation had a computed value of 0.215 with a probability value of  $p < 0.01$  which is significant at 0.05 level. Hence the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers and social fitness of students is rejected.

The result of the study is in congruence with the statement of Leach (2022) who emphasized that in today's rapidly changing educational landscape, schools are not just centers of academic learning, they are also critical spaces where values such as equality, diversity, and social responsibility are taught and modeled. Among the most significant educational goals of the 21st century is the promotion of gender equality and diversity through inclusive teaching practices. These instructional approaches not only foster fairness and representation in the classroom but also play a vital role in shaping the social fitness of students, equipping them with the skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for positive social interactions.

**Table III. Significance on the Relationship between Gender Equality and Diversity Instructional Practices of Teachers and Social Fitness of Students**

Pair	Variables	Correlation Coefficient	p-value	Decision on Ho
IV and DV	Gender Equality and Diversity Instructional Practices of Teachers and Social Fitness of Students	0.215	0.000	Reject

The result of this study is also aligned with the idea of Montoya-Rodríguez, de Souza Franco, Tomas Llerena, Molina Cobos, Pizzarossa, García & Martínez-Valderrey, (2023) impacts a student's readiness for life beyond the classroom who stressed that there is a clear and powerful connection between teachers' gender equality and diversity instructional practices and the social fitness of their students. Inclusive education not only supports academic equity but also lays the foundation for emotionally intelligent, socially competent, and globally minded individuals. By fostering inclusive, respectful, and equitable classroom environments, educators empower students to thrive both within the school community and in society at large.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

Based from the findings of the study, conclusions are drawn in this section. The study found to exhibit a very high level of gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers. This means that the provisions relating to gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers is always manifested.

The study revealed a very high level of social fitness of students. This indicates that the provisions relating to social fitness of students are embodied in the item is always manifested.

The results of the study also confirm that there is a significant relationship between gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers and social fitness. This implies that the higher the gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers, the higher is the social fitness of students. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between gender equality and diversity instructional practices of teachers and social fitness was rejected.

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