

Gender Sensitivity and Its Integration in Teaching English among Public Secondary School Teachers in Northern Negros Occidental

Jennifer F. Tabligan

Med English Program, Graduate School, Guimaras State University Salvador (Main) Campus
Buenavista, 5044 Guimaras, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the level of gender sensitivity and the extent of its integration in teaching English among public secondary school teachers in Northern Negros Occidental. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, the study involved 200 English teachers selected from public secondary schools. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, Mann–Whitney U test, Kruskal–Wallis H test, and Spearman’s rho. Findings revealed that teachers demonstrated a very high level of gender sensitivity and a high extent of integration of gender-sensitive practices in English instruction. No significant difference was found in gender sensitivity when respondents were grouped according to sex. However, a significant difference was found in the extent of integration when grouped according to educational attainment. A moderate positive and significant relationship was also found between gender sensitivity and integration, indicating that teachers with stronger gender-sensitive awareness are more likely to apply gender-responsive practices in the classroom. The study concludes that gender sensitivity is both an ethical and pedagogical necessity in English language teaching and recommends sustained professional development, inclusive instructional design, and stronger institutional support for gender-responsive education.

Keywords: gender sensitivity, gender-responsive pedagogy, English language teaching, inclusive education, secondary teachers, Northern Negros Occidental

INTRODUCTION

Gender sensitivity has become a necessary dimension of contemporary English language teaching because language classrooms do not merely transmit grammar, vocabulary, and literature; they also shape learners’ identities, values, and social perceptions. In English instruction, teachers’ choice of texts, examples, classroom language, participation patterns, and assessment practices may either reproduce gender stereotypes or challenge them. UNESCO emphasizes that gender equality in education must be reflected not only in access but also in curriculum, pedagogy, learning context, and educational outcomes.

Recent scholarship on gender-responsive pedagogy affirms that teachers play a central role in creating inclusive learning environments. Miralles-Cardona et al. (2025) reported that teacher education must meaningfully incorporate gender-responsive pedagogy to strengthen teachers’ self-efficacy for gender-equitable practice. Similarly, Mukagiahana et al. (2024) stressed that lack of gender-responsive instruction may contribute to gender disparity in classroom participation, subject positioning, and learning experiences.

In the Philippine secondary school context, English teachers occupy a strategic position because language learning often involves discussion, interpretation, representation, and critique. Thus, gender sensitivity in English teaching requires more than polite language; it requires the conscious selection of non-stereotypical materials, fair classroom interaction, equal participation, and critical engagement with gender representation in literature and media. This study therefore examined the level of gender sensitivity and the extent of its integration in teaching English among public secondary school teachers in Northern Negros Occidental.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. The respondents were 200 English teachers from public secondary schools in Northern Negros Occidental. The study described their profile in terms of age, sex, educational attainment, length of service, and department or unit.

A structured questionnaire was used to gather data on two major variables: level of gender sensitivity and extent of integration of gender sensitivity in teaching English. The data were analyzed using frequency and percentage for respondent profile, mean for descriptive levels, Mann–Whitney U test for differences according to sex, Kruskal–Wallis H test for differences according to age, educational attainment, tenure, and department, and Spearman’s rho for the relationship between gender sensitivity and integration.

RESULTS

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, educational attainment, length of service, and department. These variables provide a descriptive overview of the participants and serve as a basis for interpreting differences and relationships among the study variables. Understanding the demographic and professional characteristics of the respondents is essential in contextualizing the findings of the study.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Category	f	%
Age	21–30	50	25.0
	31–40	60	30.0
	41–50	55	27.5
	51+	35	17.5
Sex	Male	80	40.0
	Female	120	60.0
Education	Bachelor’s	90	45.0
	Master’s	95	47.5
	Doctorate	15	7.5
Tenure	0–5 yrs	70	35.0
	6–10 yrs	50	25.0
	11–15 yrs	45	22.5
	16+ yrs	35	17.5
Department	JHS	90	45.0
	SHS	70	35.0
	Others	40	20.0
Total		200	100.0

Level of Gender Sensitivity

Table 2 presents the level of gender sensitivity of the respondents as measured across selected indicators. The results reflect the respondents’ awareness, attitudes, and professional orientation toward gender-responsive teaching. The mean scores and corresponding descriptions were used to determine the overall level of gender sensitivity.

Table 2. Level of Gender Sensitivity (Overall)

Indicator	Mean	Description
Equal treatment regardless of gender	4.35	Very High
Equal potential of learners	4.40	Very High
Gender sensitivity as ethics	4.38	Very High
Respect for gender identity	4.30	Very High
Open-minded listening	4.25	Very High
Awareness of gender roles	4.20	High
Reflection on biases	4.08	High
Avoidance of stereotypes	4.05	High
Grand Mean	4.21	Very High

Extent of Integration of Gender Sensitivity

Table 3 presents the extent of integration of gender sensitivity in teaching English as perceived by the respondents. This variable measures how gender-sensitive principles are applied in classroom practices, including instruction, communication, and classroom management. The results were analyzed using mean scores and interpreted based on established descriptive categories.

Table 3. Extent of Integration of Gender Sensitivity

Indicator	Mean	Description
Professional modeling of equality	4.25	Very High
Inclusive classroom responsibilities	4.22	Very High
Encouraging participation	4.20	High
Inclusive classroom norms	4.20	High
Gender-sensitive communication	4.15	High
Equal leadership opportunities	4.12	High
Gender-fair language	4.10	High
Material revision for bias	3.95	High
Participation in GAD programs	3.90	High
Grand Mean	4.10	High

Difference in Gender Sensitivity According to Sex

Table 4 presents the results of the Mann–Whitney U test used to determine whether there is a significant difference in the level of gender sensitivity when respondents are grouped according to sex. The analysis compares the mean ranks of male and female respondents and evaluates the statistical significance of the observed difference. The decision was based on the p-value at the 0.05 level of significance.

Table 4. Mann–Whitney U Test (Gender Sensitivity by Sex)

Group	Mean Rank	U	p-value	Interpretation
Male	95.30	4320.50	0.084	Not Significant
Female	103.80			

Difference in Integration According to Profile Variables

Table 5 presents the results of the Kruskal–Wallis H test used to determine whether there are significant differences in the extent of integration of gender sensitivity when respondents are grouped according to age, educational attainment, length of service, and department. The test examines whether variations exist among multiple groups based on the computed H values and corresponding p-values. Statistical significance was determined at the 0.05 level.

Table 5. Kruskal–Wallis H Test (Integration)

Variable	H	df	p-value	Interpretation
Age	2.765	3	0.429	Not Significant
Education	9.210	2	0.010	Significant
Tenure	3.145	3	0.370	Not Significant
Department	2.004	2	0.367	Not Significant

Relationship Between Gender Sensitivity and Integration

Table 6 presents the relationship between the level of gender sensitivity and the extent of its integration in teaching English using Spearman’s rho. This analysis determines the strength and direction of the association between the two variables. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

Table 6. Relationship Between Gender Sensitivity and Integration

Variables	ρ	p-value	Interpretation
Gender Sensitivity & Integration	0.512	0.000	Moderate Positive Significant

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that English teachers possess strong awareness, ethical commitment, and inclusive attitudes toward gender-responsive education. Their very high level of gender sensitivity suggests that teachers recognize gender equality as a professional responsibility rather than an optional classroom practice. This supports recent literature emphasizing that inclusive education requires teachers who are critically aware of how classroom discourse, instructional materials, and interaction patterns shape learners’ perceptions of gender (Miralles-Cardona et al., 2025; Khalil et al., 2023; UNESCO, 2024).

The high extent of integration shows that teachers are already translating gender-sensitive attitudes into classroom practice. However, the relatively lower ratings in material revision and participation in gender-awareness programs suggest that integration remains stronger at the level of individual teacher behavior than at the level of institutionalized curriculum transformation. This aligns with contemporary studies indicating that gender-responsive pedagogy requires not only teacher awareness but also systemic support, including curriculum reform, access to inclusive materials, and sustained professional development (Unterhalter et al., 2023; Le Mat, 2022; Miralles-Cardona et al., 2025).

The absence of significant difference according to sex implies that gender sensitivity is not determined by whether the teacher is male or female. Rather, it may be shaped by shared professional preparation, school culture, and exposure to gender and development (GAD) initiatives. Empirical studies have shown that gender-responsive teaching competencies are more strongly influenced by training, institutional frameworks, and policy environments than by biological sex (Khalil et al., 2023; Unterhalter et al., 2023). Meanwhile, the significant difference according to educational attainment suggests that advanced academic preparation strengthens teachers’ ability to integrate gender-responsive principles in English instruction, as higher education enhances critical awareness, reflexivity, and pedagogical competence (Miralles-Cardona et al., 2025; Le Mat, 2022).

The significant relationship between gender sensitivity and integration confirms that awareness and practice are closely linked. Teachers who demonstrate higher levels of gender sensitivity are more likely to apply inclusive strategies, such as using gender-fair language, promoting equitable participation, selecting non-stereotypical instructional materials, and challenging gender biases in classroom discourse. This finding is consistent with recent research asserting that teachers’ beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge systems are strong predictors of classroom practices and inclusive pedagogy outcomes (Unterhalter et al., 2023; UNESCO, 2024).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn.

1. Public secondary school English teachers in Northern Negros Occidental demonstrate a very high level of gender sensitivity, indicating strong awareness, inclusive attitudes, and ethical commitment toward gender-responsive education.
2. The extent of integration of gender-sensitive practices in teaching English is high, suggesting that teachers are able to translate their gender awareness into actual classroom practices.
3. Gender sensitivity is not significantly influenced by the sex of the teachers, implying that both male and female educators exhibit comparable levels of awareness and inclusivity.
4. The integration of gender-sensitive practices significantly varies according to educational attainment, indicating that higher academic preparation enhances teachers' ability to implement gender-responsive instruction.
5. There is a moderate positive and significant relationship between gender sensitivity and its integration, suggesting that increased awareness of gender issues contributes to improved application of inclusive teaching practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are proposed.

1. Schools should sustain and strengthen gender and development (GAD) programs, inclusive pedagogy workshops, and reflective teaching sessions to continuously enhance teachers' gender sensitivity and classroom practices.
2. Curriculum planners and school administrators should intensify the review and development of English instructional materials to ensure that content, examples, activities, and assessments are free from gender bias and promote inclusivity.
3. Teachers should be encouraged to pursue graduate studies and engage in continuous professional development, as higher educational attainment is associated with stronger integration of gender-responsive teaching practices.
4. Educational institutions should provide institutional support, including access to gender-inclusive teaching resources and training opportunities, to bridge the gap between awareness and curriculum-level implementation.
5. Future programs and interventions should focus on strengthening the alignment between gender sensitivity and its practical application in classroom instruction to ensure sustained and meaningful integration.

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