Fostering Inclusion and Equity in Diverse Learning Environment: Insights from School Heads and Teachers

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Abstract — This study explores the perceived insights of fourteen (14) school heads and one hundred fifteen (115) teachers in fostering inclusion and equity in diverse learning environments in Getafe 2 District, Division of Bohol, school year 2024 - 2025. The study aimed to determine the perceived level of school heads and teachers, identify challenges they faced and gather insights in fostering inclusion and equity in diverse learning environments. Using mixed qualitative and quantitative approach, data were gathered using structured survey questionnaires to determine the perceived level in fostering inclusion and equity in diverse learning environment; semi-structured interviews to gain deeper insights into challenges and best practices; and document analysis of school policies, training records, and reports. Moreover, the study employs descriptive statistics to summarize demographic profiles and key variables, correlation analysis to determine relationships between variables, and thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns in qualitative responses. The findings revealed that there were four (4) domains on level of inclusion and equity ranked lowest which include student engagement and participation, support systems and resources, inclusive teaching practices and culturally responsive school climate. On the other hand, the highest-ranked challenges include insufficient support for special education, biases and stereotypes, and the lack of parental involvement and awareness. The study highlights the need for comprehensive, systemic and sustainable reforms that address both immediate challenges and long-term issues. Key recommendations include increasing support for special education, offering professional development programs focused on inclusivity and anti-bias training, and addressing structural limitations such as class size and curriculum rigidity. To overcome these challenges, the study calls for a collaborative approach, where school leaders, teachers, and families work together to remove practical barriers and ensure that inclusive education practices are fully integrated into school policies. Ultimately, the study advocates for a systemic yet sustainable shift towards equitable and inclusive educational environments that meet the needs of all learners.

Keywords — Inclusion, Equity, Special Education, Sustainable Reforms, Professional Development.

I. Introduction

This study explores the role of school administrators in fostering inclusive and equitable education within the Division of Bohol. Inclusive education, as promoted by global frameworks like SDG 4 and national policies such as the DepEd Inclusive Education Framework, seeks to provide equal learning opportunities for all students regardless of their background or abilities. However, challenges such as limited resources, inadequate training, and systemic biases persist—particularly in developing contexts like the Philippines. In Cebu, and similarly in Bohol, schools

face significant barriers to effective inclusion due to funding constraints and insufficient administrative support. This research aims to assess current strategies, identify challenges faced by administrators, and evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programs related to inclusive education. Findings will inform policy and professional development efforts to enhance inclusive practices and support all learners.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study determined the level of fostering inclusion and equity in diverse learning environment among school heads and teachers in Getafe 2 District, Schools Division of Bohol during the School Year 2024 – 2025 as basis for sustainable program.

Specifically, it sought to answers to the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of

1.1 school heads:

1.1.1 age;

1.1.2 sex;

1.1.3 civil status;

1.1.4 highest educational attainment;

1.1.5 designation/position;

1.1.6 years of administrative experience;

1.1.7 number of relevant trainings and seminars attended?

1.2 teachers:

1.2.1 age;

1.2.2 sex;

1.2.3 civil status;

1.2.4 highest educational attainment;

1.2.5 designation/position;

1.2.6 years of teaching experience;

1.2.7 number of relevant trainings and seminars attended?

2. What is the level of fostering inclusion in the school in terms of:

    2.1 Inclusive teaching strategies;

    2.2 Student Engagement and Participation;

    2.3 School Policy on Inclusivity; and

    2.4 Support Systems and Resources?

3. What is the level of level of equity in diverse learning settings in terms of:

    3.1 Inclusive Teaching Practices;

    3.2 Resource Accessibility;

    3.3 Student Participation and Engagement; and

    3.4 Culturally Responsive School Climate?

4. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of respondent groups and their level of fostering inclusion?

5. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of respondent groups and their level of equity in diverse learning environment?

6. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of respondent groups perceived level of fostering inclusion and their level of equity in diverse learning environment?

7. Is there a significant difference between the respondent groups' perceived level of fostering inclusion?

8. Is there a significant difference between the respondent groups' perceived level of equity in diverse learning environment?

9. What are the challenges encountered in fostering inclusion and equity in diverse learning environment?

10. Based on the findings, what sustainable program can be proposed?

II.   Methodology

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the level of inclusion and equity in diverse learning environments within the Division of Bohol. The descriptive component assessed leadership styles, institutional policies, and inclusive strategies, while the correlational aspect explored the relationships between the profiles and leadership

approaches of school heads and teachers and their effectiveness in fostering inclusion. The research was conducted in all public elementary and secondary schools in the Getafe 2 District, involving selected teachers through stratified sampling and all qualified school heads through complete enumeration. Data collection methods included structured survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Descriptive statistics summarized demographic data and key variables, correlation analysis identified relationships among variables, and thematic analysis highlighted recurring patterns in qualitative responses. This comprehensive approach aimed to understand how school leaders and teachers contributed to inclusive and equitable education.

Procedure

The study followed a systematic data collection process, beginning with the approval of the Schools Division Office of Bohol and coordination with school administrators, teachers, and stakeholders. A structured survey questionnaire was developed, validated through expert review and pilot testing, and administered to randomly selected school heads and teachers from elementary and secondary schools to ensure broad representation. Data were collected through in-person and online surveys, with follow-ups and focus group discussions conducted for deeper insights. The data were reviewed for accuracy and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics for quantitative responses, while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data. Ethical standards, including informed consent, confidentiality, and use of data solely for research purposes, were strictly observed. The findings were then analyzed to develop recommendations for improving inclusive and equitable education in the Division of Bohol.

Data Processing

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to ensure a comprehensive interpretation of the findings. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency and percentage, summarized the demographic profiles of school heads and teachers, while mean and standard deviation measured levels of inclusion and equity in diverse learning environments. Thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data to identify recurring themes related to challenges and insights. Inferential statistics included Pearson's correlation coefficient to examine relationships between inclusion and equity, t-tests and ANOVA to assess differences based on demographics, and chi-square tests to analyze categorical variables, such as the relationship between school policies and inclusive practices. Hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 significance level. If the p-value was below 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant relationship; otherwise, it was accepted. Results were presented using tables and graphs, with interpretations guiding recommendations to improve inclusive and equitable practices in schools.

III.   Results and Discussion

This section presents the demographic profile of school heads, covering their age, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, designation or position, years of administrative experience, and the number of relevant training and seminars they have attended.

The demographic profile of school heads reveals a leadership group characterized by experience, academic competence, and gender diversity. Half of the school heads are aged 46 and above, and 28.6% are between 41 and 45 years old, indicating a mature and experienced workforce well-positioned to implement complex frameworks like Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

In terms of gender, 64.3% are female and 35.7% are male, reflecting a female-dominated leadership landscape that may support more empathetic and student-centered approaches aligned with UDL principles. Most school heads (85.7%) are married, suggesting a potentially stable administrative base conducive to sustaining long-term educational initiatives.

Educational attainment is notably high, with 57.1% holding Master's units, 21.4% possessing a master's degree, and another 21.4% having earned Doctorate units. This advanced academic preparation supports their capacity to understand and apply inclusive educational practices.

Regarding designation, 57.1% are head teachers, followed by 28.6% principals and 14.3% assistant principals. Head teachers, due to their close involvement with classroom implementation, are particularly instrumental in promoting UDL strategies.

Administratively, 35.7% have over 16 years of experience, while others range from 1 to 15 years, offering a mix of veteran leadership and fresh perspectives. However, training participation remains limited—71.4% have attended only 1–3 relevant seminars. This highlights a clear need for enhanced professional development to ensure school heads are fully equipped to lead inclusive and adaptive learning environments aligned with UDL.

Table 2 Frequency Distribution on the Demographic Profile of the School Heads

Age	Frequency	Percent
46>	7	50.0
41-45	4	28.6
36-40	1	7.1
31-35	2	14.3
Total	**14**	**100.0**
Sex	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Male	5	35.7
Female	9	64.3
Total	**14**	**100.0**
Civil Status	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Single	1	7.1
Married	12	85.7
Widowed	1	7.1
Total	**14**	**100.0**

Highest Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percent
Doctorate Units	3	21.4
Master's degree	3	21.4
Master's Units	8	57.1
Total	**14**	**100.0**
Position/Designation	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Principal	4	28.6
Assistant Principal	2	14.3
Head Teacher	8	57.1
Total	**14**	**100.0**
Administrative Experience	**Frequency**	**Percent**
16>	5	35.7
11-15	2	14.3
6-10	1	7.1
1-5	4	28.6
<1	2	14.3
Total	**14**	**100.0**
Number of Relevant Trainings/Seminars Attended	**Frequency**	**Percent**
1-3	10	71.4
4-6	2	14.3
11-15	2	14.3
Total	14	100.0

The demographic profile of teachers reveals a mid-career workforce with strong academic preparation and a predominantly female composition. The largest age group is 41–45 years old (38.3%), followed by those aged 36–40 and over 46 (each at 19.1%), suggesting a balanced mix of experience and energy ideal for implementing differentiated instruction. This age distribution supports the use of adaptive teaching methods, as mid-career teachers often have the professional maturity and classroom insight needed for tailoring lessons to diverse learners.

The teaching workforce is predominantly female (79.1%), which may foster a collaborative and nurturing school culture conducive to inclusive practices. While gender does not determine teaching effectiveness, literature associate's female educators with empathetic, student-centered approaches—beneficial for implementing differentiated instruction.

Most teachers (83.5%) are married, suggesting personal and professional stability, which can enhance engagement with innovative practices like differentiation. A stable environment may allow teachers to invest more effort into customizing instruction and exploring student interests.

Academically, a majority (63.5%) hold Master's units and 21.7% have completed a Master's degree, indicating a high level of preparedness. Graduate studies often emphasize learner-centered instruction, reflective practice, and curriculum design—all critical to effective differentiation.

In terms of rank, most teachers are Teacher III (44.3%) or Teacher I (36.5%), with few in Master Teacher roles. Despite limited formal leadership roles, those in higher ranks can serve as

informal instructional leaders by modeling best practices in differentiated instruction and mentoring peers.

Experience levels vary, with 38.3% having 6–10 years, 33.9% with 1–5 years, and 14.8% over 16 years. This mix creates opportunities for collaboration across experience levels, where seasoned teachers share strategies and newer ones contribute fresh ideas, enhancing the consistent application of differentiated strategies.

However, training participation is uneven—50.4% have attended five or fewer relevant seminars, while 34.8% have attended more than 16. This gap indicates the need for standardized, ongoing professional development to ensure all teachers are equipped to apply differentiated instruction effectively. Consistent training can help teachers continually adapt content, process, and assessments to meet diverse student needs and foster inclusive classrooms.

Table 3 Frequency Distribution on the Demographic Profile of the Teachers

Age	Frequency	Percent
46>	22	19.1
41-45	44	38.3
36-40	22	19.1
31-35	9	7.8
5.00	18	15.7
Total	**115**	**100.0**
Sex	**Frequency**	**Percent**
male	24	20.9
female	91	79.1
Total	**115**	**100.0**
Civil Status	**Frequency**	**Percent**
single	16	13.9
Married	96	83.5
separated	2	1.7
widowed	1	.9
Total	**115**	**100.0**
Highest Educational Attainment	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Doctorate Units	5	4.3
Master's Degree	25	21.7
Master's Units	73	63.5
Bachelor's Degree	12	10.4
Total	**115**	**100.0**
Position/Designation	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Master Teacher II	3	2.6
Master teacher I	4	3.5
Teacher III	51	44.3
Teacher II	15	13.0
Teacher I	42	36.5
Total	**115**	**100.0**
Teaching Experience	**Frequency**	**Percent**
16>	17	14.8
11-15	15	13.0
6-10	44	38.3

1-5	39	33.9
Total	**115**	**100.0**
Number of Relevant Trainings/Seminars Attended	**Frequency**	**Percent**
11-15	17	14.8
16>	40	34.8
5.00	58	50.4
Total	115	100.0

The overall mean score was 2.99 (SD = 1.11), interpreted as moderate, indicating that school heads generally perceived their efforts toward inclusion as present but not fully developed. "Inclusive Teaching Strategies" and "Student Engagement" had the highest mean scores (3.19), showing relative strengths, while lower scores in "School Policy" (2.81) and "Support Systems" (2.77) revealed weaknesses in institutional support. This suggested that inclusive practices were being pursued but were not yet consistently or deeply implemented across schools. Variations in scores also reflected disparities in resources and leadership.

Table 8 Summary Results on the Level of School Heads' Perceived Level of Fostering Inclusion in The School

Indicators	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Inclusive Teaching Strategies	14	3.19	1.22	
Student Engagement and Participation	14	3.19	1.09	
School Policy On Inclusivity	14	2.81	0.97	
Support Systems and Resources	14	2.77	1.15	
Grand Mean	14	2.99	1.11	Moderate

Legend	Range	Description
	4.21-5.00	Very High
	3.41-4.20	High
	2.61-3.40	Moderate
	1.81-2.60	Low
	1.00-1.80	Very Low

Teachers' overall perception of fostering inclusion was moderate, with a grand mean of 3.23 (SD = 1.03). The highest-rated domain was Support Systems and Resources (M = 3.41), followed by School Policy on Inclusivity (M = 3.32), indicating stronger visibility of structural efforts. However, Student Engagement and Participation received the lowest rating (M = 3.07), suggesting a need to improve classroom practices that actively involve students. These results showed that while schools made progress in infrastructure and policy, instructional strategies—particularly those promoting culturally responsive and student-centered learning—required further development. Variability in responses also pointed to inconsistencies in implementation and access to support.

Table 13 Summary Results on the Level of of Teachers' Perceived Level Of Fostering Inclusion In The School

Indicators	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Support Systems and Resources	115	3.41	0.91	Moderate
School Policy On Inclusivity	115	3.32	0.91	Moderate
Inclusive Teaching Strategies	115	3.13	1.27	Moderate
Student Engagement and Participation	115	3.07	1.03	Moderate
Grand Mean	115	3.23	1.03	Moderate

Legend	Range	Description
	4.21-5.00	Very High
	3.41-4.20	High
	2.61-3.40	Moderate
	1.81-2.60	Low
	1.00-1.80	Very Low

School heads perceived a moderate level of equity in diverse learning environments, with a grand mean of 2.94 (SD = 0.81). Among the four domains, Inclusive Teaching Practices received the highest mean score (M = 3.09), while Culturally Responsive School Climate had the lowest (M = 2.80). This indicated an imbalance, where instructional equity was prioritized over cultural and emotional inclusion. Although the moderate standard deviation suggested consistent perceptions, it also underscored a need for broader and deeper equity efforts. The findings emphasized that systemic changes—such as policy reform, leadership development, and school culture enhancement—were essential to advancing equity from principle to practice.

Table 18 Summary Results on the Level of School Heads' Perceived Level Of Equity In Diverse Learning Setting

Indicators	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Inclusive Teaching Practices	14	3.09	0.88	Moderate
Student Participation And Engagement	14	2.96	0.78	Moderate
Resource Accessibility	14	2.91	0.90	Moderate
Culturally Responsive School Climate	14	2.80	0.66	Moderate
Grand Mean	**14**	**2.94**	**0.81**	**Moderate**

Legend	Range	Description
	4.21-5.00	Very High
	3.41-4.20	High
	2.61-3.40	Moderate
	1.81-2.60	Low
	1.00-1.80	Very Low

Teachers perceived a moderate level of equity in diverse learning environments, with a grand mean of 3.28 (SD = 0.74). The highest-rated dimensions were Culturally Responsive School Climate (M = 3.52) and Student Participation and Engagement (M = 3.42), while Inclusive Teaching Practices received the lowest score (M = 2.99). This suggested progress in school climate and student engagement but highlighted the need to strengthen instructional equity. The relatively consistent perceptions pointed to uneven implementation, particularly in areas like differentiated instruction. The findings emphasized the need for stronger policy enforcement, targeted teacher training, and effective resource allocation to improve inclusive teaching practices.

Table 23 Summary Results on the Level of School Heads' Perceived Level Of Equity In Diverse Learning Setting

Indicators	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Culturally Responsive School Climate	115	3.52	0.53	Moderate
Student Participation and Engagement	115	3.42	0.61	Moderate
Resource Accessibility	115	3.17	0.78	Moderate
Inclusive Teaching Practices	115	2.99	1.05	Moderate
Grand Mean	115	3.28	0.74	Moderate

Legend	Range	Description
	4.21-5.00	Very High
	3.41-4.20	High
	2.61-3.40	Moderate
	1.81-2.60	Low
	1.00-1.80	Very Low

The Model Summary in Table 24 showed a strong initial correlation (R = 0.756) between school heads' profile variables and their perceived level of fostering inclusion. However, the R^2 value of 0.572—though suggesting that 57.2% of the variance could be explained—dropped significantly to an Adjusted R^2 of only 0.072 after accounting for the small sample size and multiple predictors. This indicated that only 7.2% of the variance could be reliably attributed to the profile variables, pointing to possible overfitting and limited predictive power. Additionally, the Standard Error of 0.754 reflected moderate prediction error, further reinforcing the model's limited applicability beyond the sample.

Table 24 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.756	.572	.072	.754

The ANOVA results revealed that the overall regression model was not statistically significant (F = 1.145, p = 0.443), indicating that the profile variables of school heads did not significantly predict their perceived level of fostering inclusion. The regression sum of squares (4.549) was only slightly greater than the residual sum of squares (3.407), suggesting that most of the variance remained unexplained by the model. These findings implied that demographic factors alone were insufficient predictors of inclusive leadership, highlighting the potential importance of other factors such as institutional culture, targeted training, and support systems.

Table 25 ANOVA Analysis

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.549	7	.650	1.145	.443
	Residual	3.407	6	.568		
	Total	7.956	13			

The multiple regression analysis in Table 26 showed that none of the school heads' demographic or professional characteristics significantly predicted their perceived capacity to foster inclusion, as all p-values exceeded 0.05. Although variables like age (β = -1.135, p = 0.274) and highest educational attainment (β = -1.425, p = 0.180) had negative coefficients, these

relationships were not statistically significant and should be interpreted with caution. Other variables such as gender, civil status, designation, experience, and training attendance also failed to show meaningful influence.

These results suggested that individual characteristics did not reliably account for perceived inclusivity efforts. Instead, the findings aligned with existing literature, which emphasizes that inclusive leadership is more effectively driven by institutional support, school culture, and professional development than by personal demographics. Therefore, future initiatives should prioritize systemic strategies and targeted training over assumptions based on profile variables.

Table 26 Multiple Regression Analysis on test of relationship between the profile of the school heads and their perceived level of fostering inclusion

Variables	Beta	p-value	Decision
age	-1.135	.274	Not Significant
gender	-.125	.876	Not Significant
Civil status	.169	.734	Not Significant
Highest educational attainment	-1.425	.180	Not Significant
Position/Designation	1.567	.220	Not Significant
Administrative Experience	.298	.808	Not Significant
Number of Relevant Trainings/Seminars Attended	.202	.699	Not Significant

Table 38 showed that teachers (M = 3.23) perceived a higher level of fostering inclusion compared to school heads (M = 2.99). Teachers also had less variation in their responses (SD = 0.54) than school heads (SD = 0.78), and their smaller standard error indicated a more precise estimate of their mean perception. These findings suggested that teachers, being more directly involved in classroom activities, may view inclusion more positively, while school heads might be more aware of systemic barriers. The disparity also reflected differing roles, with teachers focusing on daily practices and school heads on broader institutional challenges.

Table 38 Group Statistics

Variable	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Level of fostering inclusion	Teachers	115	3.2335	.54309	.05064
	School Heads	14	2.99	.782	.209

Discussion

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The analysis of the demographic profiles of school heads and teachers revealed several key insights relevant to fostering inclusion and equity. School heads, predominantly aged 46 and above, brought considerable experience that positioned them well to lead systemic inclusive education reforms, such as those aligned with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

framework. However, their limited participation in relevant training suggested a need for more targeted professional development to fully realize this potential.

Teachers were similarly experienced and well-qualified, with most holding master's units or degrees and occupying mid-career roles. While their background supported the application of differentiated instruction, a gap in ongoing training indicated that professional development opportunities needed to be expanded and aligned with inclusive teaching and classroom management strategies.

Gender dynamics showed that the teaching and leadership workforce was predominantly female, potentially contributing to nurturing and empathetic environments. Still, promoting greater diversity across gender, age, and experience remained important to ensure inclusive and representative leadership, especially when addressing complex and intersectional student needs.

The academic qualifications and positions held by both groups suggested strong potential for leadership in inclusive education. Head teachers could serve as policy influencers and mentors, while experienced teachers, particularly those at Teacher III level, could lead peer support for differentiated instruction. To maximize this, capacity-building efforts should empower both formal and informal leaders.

The workforce's varied experience levels also provided an opportunity for intergenerational collaboration. Experienced educators contributed stability, while younger professionals offered innovation. Mentoring systems and shared leadership could harness this diversity to strengthen inclusive practices.

Ultimately, the findings highlighted the urgent need to address the limited access to relevant training among both school heads and teachers. Sustained, needs-based professional development aligned with inclusive frameworks like UDL was essential to building equitable and responsive school environments. By incorporating these demographic insights into strategic planning, educational leaders could better support inclusive education at both the structural and instructional levels.

Level of Fostering Inclusion in the School

The data gathered from both school heads and teachers indicated a shared, moderate perception of inclusion efforts across four domains: inclusive teaching strategies, student engagement, school policy on inclusivity, and support systems. School heads rated themselves moderately (grand mean = 2.99), while teachers gave slightly higher ratings (grand mean = 3.23), especially in support and resource availability. This gap reflected a difference between policy intentions and classroom realities.

Both groups viewed inclusive teaching and student engagement as only moderately practiced. Teachers rated differentiated instruction more favorably (M = 3.64) than school heads

(M = 3.57), but noted inconsistent implementation due to uneven access to resources. Engagement strategies were seen as emerging, with teachers expressing lower confidence in participatory methods and diverse learner involvement.

School policy on inclusivity received moderately favorable ratings, though school heads (M = 2.81) rated themselves lower than teachers (M = 3.32), revealing possible gaps in policy clarity, monitoring, and community alignment. The most significant contrast appeared in support systems, where teachers rated this highest (M = 3.41), while school heads gave it a more modest score (M = 2.77), suggesting differing perspectives on resource adequacy and support sustainability.

Overall, inclusive education was observed to be in a transitional phase with partial implementation. There was a need for strategic leadership, deeper integration of culturally responsive pedagogy, more dynamic and inclusive policies, and equitable resource allocation.

Regarding equity in diverse learning settings, findings revealed a moderate level of perceived equity from both groups. Inclusive teaching practices, particularly in adapting lessons for varied abilities, remained underdeveloped. Culturally responsive school climate showed the greatest perceptual divide, with school heads rating it lowest (M = 2.80) and teachers highest (M = 3.52), highlighting the need for improved communication and alignment.

Resource accessibility was also rated moderately (M = 2.91 for heads; M = 3.17 for teachers), reflecting continued disparities in materials and infrastructure. While student engagement was viewed more positively by teachers (M = 3.42) than heads (M = 2.96), the underuse of student voice mechanisms remained a concern.

The overall equity rating was moderate, with school heads at 2.94 and teachers at 3.28, showing a modest yet meaningful perception gap. The findings emphasized the need for leadership grounded in classroom realities and a systemic, collaborative approach to achieving high equity in diverse learning environments.

Tests of Relationships and Differences of the Testable Variables

The statistical analyses from the study revealed that demographic and professional characteristics—such as age, sex, educational attainment, position, experience, and training—did not significantly predict the perceived capacity of school heads and teachers to foster inclusion or equity in diverse learning settings. Although initial correlation coefficients suggested some relationships, the adjusted R^2 values and significance levels from ANOVA and multiple regression analyses demonstrated that these relationships were not statistically meaningful.

The results emphasized that systemic and contextual factors, rather than individual attributes, played a more influential role in shaping inclusive and equitable practices. Notably, the quantity of training attended by educators showed no significant correlation with their perceived

inclusivity, raising concerns about the quality and effectiveness of existing professional development programs.

Higher educational attainment also did not correspond to higher perceptions of inclusivity or equity; in some models, it even reflected a negative—but insignificant—relationship. This suggested that advanced theoretical knowledge might not always translate into effective inclusive practice, and those with more qualifications might hold more critical views of their institutions.

The study highlighted the importance of institutional culture, leadership, and school-wide systems in promoting inclusion and equity. It concluded that effective inclusive education required collaborative efforts, sustained mentoring, and coherent leadership—not merely reliance on personal characteristics.

A key statistical finding was the strong, positive correlation between fostering inclusion and promoting equity, observed in both groups. School heads showed the strongest correlation between equity and support systems ($r = .892$, $p = .000$), while teachers demonstrated the highest correlation between equity and inclusive teaching practices ($r = .972$, $p = .000$). These results affirmed that equity thrived where inclusive pedagogies and systemic support were actively implemented.

However, some negative correlations also emerged. For example, school heads exhibited a significant inverse relationship between school inclusivity policy and resource accessibility ($r = -0.534$, $p = .049$), and teachers showed a negative correlation between inclusive teaching strategies and a culturally responsive school climate ($r = -0.339$, $p = .000$). These findings pointed to a disconnect between policy and practice, or between individual strategies and institutional culture.

When comparing perceptions, the analysis found no statistically significant difference in the perceived level of fostering inclusion between school heads ($M = 2.99$) and teachers ($M = 3.23$), indicating relatively aligned views despite differences in daily roles. However, there was a significant difference in perceptions of equity, with teachers ($M = 3.274$) scoring higher than school heads ($M = 2.939$), confirmed by a t-test ($p = 0.031$). This gap suggested differing perspectives due to role-specific experiences—teachers focusing on classroom realities, and school heads on policy and systemic issues.

Overall, the findings underscored the need for school leaders and educators to move beyond personal attributes and invest in systemic reforms, inclusive policies, and culturally responsive practices. The results called for collaborative, context-sensitive strategies to embed inclusion and equity into all levels of the educational system.

Challenges encountered in advancing inclusion and equity in diverse learning environments

The ranking of challenges perceived by school heads in advancing inclusion and equity, as presented in Table 42, revealed that "Inadequate Support for Special Education" was identified as

the most pressing barrier. School heads emphasized the need for more staffing, targeted resources, and improved funding to effectively support students with special needs. This finding aligned with existing literature that underscored the foundational role of special education in fostering inclusive and equitable schools.

The second-ranked challenge, "Resistance to Change," reflected the difficulty school leaders faced in transforming institutional culture toward inclusive education. Resistance from staff, parents, or the community was cited as a significant obstacle, often rooted in a lack of awareness or fear of increased responsibilities. To mitigate this resistance, school leaders acknowledged the importance of transformational leadership strategies that promote collaboration, capacity-building, and innovation.

"Parental Involvement and Awareness" emerged as the third major challenge. School heads reported that limited family engagement hampered efforts to promote inclusive values and support student learning. They recommended community outreach and education programs to raise awareness and foster active parental participation in inclusion efforts.

Tied in the fifth rank were "Large Class Sizes," "Biases and Stereotypes," and "Student Behavioral and Emotional Challenges." These challenges highlighted the complexity of fostering inclusion and the necessity of addressing both structural and psychosocial barriers. School heads noted that overcrowded classrooms made it difficult to provide individualized instruction, while biases undermined efforts to build a welcoming learning environment. Behavioral challenges, in particular, called for additional resources and specialized training for educators.

The analysis of Table 43 revealed the challenges most strongly perceived by teachers. "Insufficient Resources" was ranked as the top concern, underscoring the need for adequate funding, assistive technologies, and instructional materials to support inclusive teaching. Teachers stressed that resource scarcity hindered their ability to accommodate diverse learners effectively.

"Biases and Stereotypes" was ranked second, reinforcing the view that cultural, racial, and ability-based prejudices continued to impact classroom inclusion. Teachers highlighted the importance of anti-bias training and the promotion of culturally responsive teaching strategies to combat these issues.

Structural constraints such as "Large Class Sizes" and "Assessment and Curriculum Rigidities" followed closely. Teachers reported that overcrowded classrooms limited individualized instruction, while inflexible curricula and standardized assessments restricted their ability to meet diverse student needs. These findings indicated a need for educational reforms that support differentiated instruction and adaptable learning environments.

Other key challenges included "High Teacher Workload" and "Inadequate Support for Special Education," which reflected the overwhelming demands placed on teachers. Excessive administrative tasks and a lack of specialized support services made it difficult for teachers to

focus on inclusive practices. Teachers expressed the need for reduced workloads, additional personnel, and access to ongoing professional development.

Although "Resistance to Change," "Parental Involvement," and "Lack of Inclusive Policies" were ranked lower by teachers, these challenges remained significant. The lower ranking may have reflected a focus on immediate, classroom-level issues rather than broader systemic concerns. Nonetheless, both school heads and teachers acknowledged that inclusive education required coordinated efforts across policy, practice, and community engagement.

In summary, the findings highlighted both shared and unique challenges perceived by school heads and teachers. While both groups pointed to resource limitations and systemic barriers, school heads were more concerned with leadership and policy-level issues, whereas teachers focused on practical classroom constraints. Addressing these challenges would require multi-layered strategies involving increased investment, collaborative leadership, and the development of a school culture that values and supports inclusion and equity.

Summary and Findings

1. School Heads' Profile: Half of the school heads were aged 46 and above, with 28.6% aged 41–45. The majority (64.3%) were female, and 85.7% were married. Most held at least Master's units (57.1%), while 21.4% had completed a Master's degree or held Doctorate units. In terms of position, 57.1% served as head teachers. Regarding experience, 35.7% had over 16 years in administration. Most (71.4%) had attended only 1–3 relevant trainings.

2. Teachers' Profile: The largest age group of teachers was 41–45 years (38.3%). Most were female (79.1%) and married (83.5%). A majority (63.5%) held Master's units, and most held the ranks of Teacher III (44.3%) or Teacher I (36.5%). Teaching experience varied, with 38.3% having 6–10 years. About half (50.4%) had attended five or fewer relevant seminars, while 34.8% had attended more than 16.

3. Inclusion by School Heads: The grand mean for inclusion was 2.99 (SD = 1.11), interpreted as moderate. The highest-rated domains were Inclusive Teaching Strategies and Student Engagement (both M = 3.19), while School Policy (M = 2.81) and Support Systems (M = 2.77) lagged behind.

4. Equity by School Heads: The overall mean for perceived equity was 2.94 (SD = 0.81), also moderate. Inclusive Teaching Practices scored highest (M = 3.09), while Culturally Responsive School Climate scored lowest (M = 2.80).

5. Inclusion by Teachers: Teachers reported a moderate overall level of fostering inclusion (M = 3.23, SD = 1.03). Support Systems and Resources (M = 3.41) and School Policy on Inclusivity (M = 3.32) were rated highest, while Student Engagement and Participation (M = 3.07) was rated lowest.

6. Equity by Teachers: Teachers rated Culturally Responsive School Climate (M = 3.52) and Student Participation and Engagement (M = 3.42) highest, with Inclusive Teaching Practices receiving the lowest rating (M = 2.99).

7. Correlation Findings: A strong positive correlation (R = 0.756) was found between profile variables of school heads and teachers and their perceived level of fostering inclusion.

8. Regression Results: None of the profile variables significantly predicted perceived capacity to foster inclusion, as all predictors had p-values above 0.05.

IV.   Conclusion

Based on the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are proposed to address the challenges perceived by both school heads and teachers in advancing inclusion and equity in diverse learning environments:

1. Inadequate Special Education Support – Both school heads and teachers see the lack of resources for special education as a major barrier, calling for more funding, personnel, and materials to support students with special needs.

2. Addressing Biases and Stereotypes – Continuous professional development in cultural competence, anti-bias education, and inclusive teaching is essential to help educators create more inclusive learning environments.

3. Structural Barriers – Large class sizes and rigid curricula limit individualized support. Schools should advocate for smaller classes, flexible curricula, and accessible infrastructure to accommodate diverse learners.

4. Transformational Leadership – School leaders must adopt inclusive, transformational leadership to build supportive, collaborative school cultures and reduce teacher workload while ensuring policy implementation.

5. Parental Involvement – Strengthening family engagement through communication and education programs can foster home-school collaboration and support inclusive education initiatives.

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