

Promoting Gender Equity: Assessing the Role of Developmental Programs in Female Educational Leadership in Region 1

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Abstract:

This study investigates the systemic barriers to women's educational leadership and the efficacy of Gender and Development (GAD) initiatives in public elementary schools. Despite women educators possessing advanced degrees and extensive experience, they remain disproportionately concentrated in senior teaching roles rather than administrative positions. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, data were gathered from educators to evaluate GAD implementation across various domains and identify structural challenges. The findings reveal that while GAD initiatives have successfully fostered a supportive internal school environment, they significantly lack in promoting external community advocacy. The obstacles to women's leadership are identified as "moderately serious" and structural, with a critical lack of administrative support serving as the primary bottleneck. Notably, the study found no significant correlation between an individual's profile—such as age, tenure, or position—and their perception of these challenges, confirming that the barriers are deeply embedded and systemic rather than personal. A significant positive correlation between the severity of challenges and the perceived need for GAD validates the framework's necessity as an institutional response. The study concludes that the underrepresentation of women in leadership is a result of flawed implementation of gender policies and structural biases. To address these gaps, a proposed development plan focuses on establishing structured mentorship, enhancing administrative support, and strengthening community-based GAD advocacy to ensure equitable career progression for women educators.

Keyword: Gender Equality, Educational Leadership,

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality in leadership has been a longstanding global concern, particularly in the field of education, where women remain significantly underrepresented in leadership roles despite their increasing participation in the workforce. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5, emphasize the importance of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls by 2030 (United Nations, 2020). However, progress toward this goal has been slow, especially in educational leadership, where systemic barriers continue to hinder women's advancement. In public elementary schools, where the majority of teachers are women, the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions is particularly striking, raising questions about the structural and cultural factors that perpetuate this disparity (UNESCO, 2021).

The Gender and Development (GAD) framework has emerged as a critical tool for addressing gender inequalities in various sectors, including education. GAD focuses on transforming societal norms, institutional practices, and policies to create equitable opportunities for men and women (Mendoza & Alagaraja, 2020). In the context of educational leadership, GAD provides a lens through which systemic barriers—such as gender bias, lack of mentorship, and unequal access to professional development—can be identified and addressed. Recent studies have highlighted the potential of GAD initiatives to empower women by fostering inclusive environments and promoting gender-responsive policies (Eagly & Heilman, 2021). However, the implementation of GAD in public elementary schools remains inconsistent, with many institutions lacking the resources, training, and commitment needed to fully integrate gender equality into their leadership structures (Khan & Malik, 2022).

Women in public elementary schools face unique challenges that hinder their participation in leadership roles. These challenges are often rooted in deeply entrenched cultural norms and societal expectations that prioritize men as leaders while relegating women to supportive or subordinate roles (Arar et al., 2021). For instance, women are frequently expected to balance professional responsibilities with domestic duties, a dual burden that limits their ability to pursue leadership opportunities (Gumus et al., 2020). Additionally, women in education often encounter institutional biases, such as unequal access to mentorship and networking opportunities, which are critical for career advancement (Shapiro et al., 2021). These barriers are further exacerbated in low-resource settings, where access to training programs and leadership development initiatives is limited (OECD, 2021).

The role of GAD in enhancing women's participation in educational leadership is increasingly recognized as a key driver of change. Gender-responsive policies, such as flexible work arrangements, parental leave, and targeted leadership training programs, have been shown to support women's career advancement in education (OECD, 2021). For instance, mentorship programs that pair aspiring women leaders with experienced mentors have been effective in building confidence, skills, and networks (Shapiro et al., 2021). Similarly, institutional reforms that promote gender equality, such as the establishment of gender-sensitive recruitment and promotion criteria, have been instrumental in creating more inclusive leadership structures (Mendoza & Alagaraja, 2020). However, the success of these initiatives depends on the commitment of policymakers, school administrators, and other stakeholders to prioritize gender equality and allocate the necessary resources for implementation.

Gender equality in leadership remains a pressing issue in the Philippines, particularly in the field of education. Despite the country's relatively high ranking in global gender equality indices, women continue to face significant barriers in ascending to leadership roles, especially in public elementary schools (World Economic Forum, 2021). In Region 1 (Ilocos Region), which comprises the provinces of Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, and Pangasinan, the underrepresentation of women in educational leadership is a persistent challenge. This region, known for its strong cultural traditions and agrarian economy, presents unique socio-cultural dynamics that influence gender roles and opportunities for women (Alcantara & Ancho, 2021). Understanding these dynamics is critical for developing effective strategies to enhance women's participation in educational leadership.

In response to this the Department of Education (DepEd) has made significant strides in promoting gender equality through its GAD initiatives. These include the integration of gender perspectives into the curriculum, the establishment of GAD focal points in schools, and the implementation of training programs for teachers and administrators (DepEd, 2020). However, challenges remain, particularly in elementary schools areas where traditional gender roles are more pronounced and resources are limited. For example, women in rural public elementary schools often face additional barriers, such as limited access to transportation, childcare, and professional development opportunities (Alcantara & Ancho, 2021). These challenges highlight the need for context-specific strategies that address the unique needs and circumstances of women in different settings.

This study to contribute to the growing body of literature on gender and educational leadership by examining the role of GAD in enhancing women's participation in leadership roles in public elementary schools. Specifically, it aims to explore the extent to which GAD initiatives have been implemented in public elementary schools, their role on women's leadership trajectories, and the barriers that continue to hinder women's advancement. By identifying best practices and strategies for overcoming these barriers, this research will provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders committed to promoting gender equality in education. Ultimately, the findings of this study will contribute to the broader discourse on gender and leadership, offering evidence-based recommendations for creating more inclusive and equitable educational systems.

Objective of the Study

The study aims to assess the Role of Gender and Development in Promoting Educational Leadership for women in public elementary schools in Region1, Philippines.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design This methodological approach is particularly well-suited for this investigation as it enables the collection and analysis of numerical data to paint a clear picture of the current landscape (Sullivan, 2021). By employing

descriptive statistics, the study first established a comprehensive profile of women educators, encompassing their age, gender, position, and other relevant characteristics. Simultaneously, it mapped the existing GAD initiatives within these schools, categorizing them into capacity-building programs, policy advocacy, and other relevant interventions. Following this descriptive phase, the study employed correlational analysis to uncover potential relationships between the profiles and variables presented in project initiatives and roles.

Respondents of the Study

Participants of the study included 1,329 respondents, both teachers and principals. The participant pool included teachers, both those currently in the classroom and those aspiring to leadership roles, allowing for an exploration of perspectives from different stages of professional development.

This study was conducted in the diverse landscape of Region 1, Philippines, specifically focusing on public elementary schools across its four provinces: Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, and Pangasinan. Recognizing that the implementation and impact of Gender and Development (GAD) initiatives may vary across different contexts, the study deliberately include both urban and rural schools. This allows for a comparative analysis of how GAD policies and programs are enacted and experienced in contrasting environments, potentially revealing unique challenges and opportunities in each setting. By encompassing this breadth of school settings, the research aimed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of GAD's role in fostering women's educational leadership within the specific socio-cultural context of Region 1.

Data Gathering Instrument

This study utilized a structured survey questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. The questionnaire is designed to gather comprehensive quantitative data related to the roles of Gender and Development (GAD) in promoting women's leadership in public elementary schools in Region 1. It is organized into four distinct sections.

The first section focused on gathering essential background information about the respondents, such as their age, gender, current position, years of service in the education sector, and their highest educational attainment. The second section delves into the level of engagement of women leaders in promoting educational leadership for women in public elementary schools in Region 1 as perceived by themselves.

The third section examined the extent do the following roles of Gender and Development (GAD) promote educational leadership for women in public elementary schools in Region I. The final section probes the level of seriousness of the challenges encountered in the promotion of educational leadership for women in public elementary schools in Region I.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the findings were analyzed and interpreted orderly which is based in the statement of the problem of the study. The researcher presented all the data and information through tables and figure to illustrate the more understandable results.

Profile of the Women Leaders in Public Elementary Schools

Table 1 presents the demographic and professional profile of the respondents who participated in the study, consisting of a total of 213 teachers and school heads. The data summarizes the distribution of the participants across several key characteristics: Age, Gender, Marital Status, academic Position, Years in Service, Highest Educational Attainment, and the extent of their exposure to Gender and Development (GAD) through seminars and training. This profile is essential for understanding the composition and experience level of the population from which the data on GAD is drawn.

The data presents the demographic and professional profile of 213 educational leaders in public elementary schools in Region 1, Philippines. The profile reveals a distinct picture of a mid-career, experienced,

Age. In terms of age, the largest cohort of respondents is in the 41-50 age bracket (33.8%), with the 31-40 age group following closely at 31.5%. This means that over 65% of the leaders are in their mid-career phase. This age distribution signifies a pool of leaders who are at a critical juncture, possessing both substantial experience and the potential for long-term impact. This mid-career stage is an opportune time for intensive leadership development and mentorship to prepare them for higher administrative responsibilities and prevent professional stagnation. The focus on supporting mid-career educators is crucial for leadership succession and retention. A study by Teroso (2023) on Filipino teachers found that professional development opportunities tailored to the needs of those with 11-20 years of experience were critical in sustaining their motivation and ambition for leadership roles. This aligns with the idea that GAD-related leadership programs should be targeted at this demographic to maximize their effect.

Gender. As to gender, the respondents are overwhelmingly female, at 90.1%. This underscores the highly feminized nature of the elementary education sector in the region. While women form the backbone of the elementary school workforce, this numerical dominance does not automatically translate to their equitable representation in top leadership positions. The central question this raises is whether a "glass ceiling" exists, preventing this vast majority from advancing. GAD initiatives are therefore vital not just for empowerment but for interrogating and dismantling the systemic barriers that may be present. The feminization of the teaching profession in the Philippines is a well-established fact. A 2022 report by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) noted that while women dominate the teaching ranks, a "leaky pipeline" is often observed in their progression to executive positions within the Department of Education (DepEd). This suggests that GAD's role is critical in ensuring that numerical representation leads to proportional leadership representation (Albert & David, 2022).

Marital Status. In terms of marital status, a significant majority of the women leaders are married (79.8%). This highlights the reality that most female educators are balancing demanding professional careers with family and domestic responsibilities. This has direct implications for their well-being and career progression. Supportive school policies, promoted through GAD, such as flexible work arrangements, mental health support, and equitable distribution of non-teaching tasks, are essential for enabling them to thrive without experiencing work-family conflict. The challenge of work-life integration.

Table 1
Profile of the Women Leaders in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1
n=213

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	21-30	20	9.4
	31-40	67	31.5
	41-50	72	33.8
	51-60	46	21.6
	61 and above	8	3.8
Gender	Male	20	9.4
	Female	192	90.1
	LGBT	1	0.5
Marital Status	Single	37	17.4
	Married	170	79.8
	Widow	5	2.3
	Separated	1	0.5
Position	Teacher 1	20	9.4
	Teacher 2	15	7.0
	Teacher 3	148	69.5
	Teacher 5	2	0.9
	Master Teacher 1	16	7.5
	Master Teacher 2	4	1.9
	Master Teacher 3	1	0.5
	Principal I	3	1.4
	Principal II	1	0.5
	Principal IV	3	1.4
	1-5 years	26	12.2

Years in Service	6-10 years	59	27.7
	11-15 years	39	18.3
	16 and over	89	41.8
Highest Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	26	12.2
	MA/MS Units	85	39.9
	MA/MS Graduate	77	36.2
	With Doctoral Unit	15	7.0
	EdD/PhD/DBA Graduate	10	4.7
Number of Seminars and Training related to GAD	None	6	2.8
	1-5	128	60.1
	6-10	60	28.2
	11-15	19	8.9

for female professionals remains a key area of study. A recent qualitative study by de la Cruz (2024) on women school heads in the Philippines found that institutional support was a key factor in their ability to effectively manage their dual roles. The study emphasized the need for "gender-responsive school cultures" that acknowledge and accommodate the family responsibilities predominantly shouldered by women.

Position. As to position, the most striking finding is that 69.5% of respondents are Teacher III. In contrast, very few hold formal administrative roles such as Principal I (1.4%) or Principal II (0.5%). This data strongly suggests that while the respondents are considered "leaders," this leadership is often informal or confined to senior teaching roles rather than institutional management. It points to a significant bottleneck in the career ladder from senior teacher to school administrator. GAD's role should therefore focus on creating clear, accessible, and unbiased pathways to formal leadership. Recent analyses of the DepEd career progression system support this observation. A paper by Reyes (2023) discussed the stringent and often bureaucratic requirements for promotion to principalship, which can inadvertently disadvantage qualified female teachers who may lack the specific networking or mentorship opportunities needed to advance. The study advocated for more transparent and equitable promotion processes to widen the pool of female school managers.

Years in Service. As to years in service, the respondents are highly experienced, with 41.8% having 16 or more years of service and 27.7% having 6-10 years. This experienced workforce represents a tremendous asset. These veteran educators possess deep institutional knowledge and pedagogical expertise. Their long tenure makes them ideal mentors and leaders. The fact that many remain in teaching positions after such extensive service points to a potential underutilization of valuable human capital, which targeted GAD leadership programs could help address. The value of experienced teachers is a recurring theme in educational research. A 2021 study on teacher leadership in Southeast Asia found that experienced teachers were instrumental in mentoring early-career educators and leading school-based improvement initiatives. However, the study also noted that without formal recognition and pathways for advancement, these "teacher leaders" often remain an untapped resource for broader systemic leadership (Salin & Amin, 2021).

Highest Educational Attainment. In terms of highest educational attainment, the respondents are academically well-qualified, with a combined 76.1% having either earned a Master's degree (36.2%) or are pursuing one (39.9%). The high level of educational attainment demonstrates a strong drive for professional growth. Since a Master's degree is a key requirement for promotion to principal in the Philippines, this finding shows that the respondents are, on paper, highly eligible for advancement. This suggests that barriers to their promotion are likely not related to a lack of qualifications but to other factors, such as systemic biases or lack of opportunity, which GAD programs are designed to address. In the Philippine context, graduate education is directly linked to career advancement in DepEd. DepEd Order No. 007, s. 2023, which outlines the career progression for teachers, continues to place a high premium on graduate degrees for promotion to higher teaching and administrative positions. The fact that so many respondents have met this benchmark, as noted by Mendoza (2023), yet remain in teaching positions, reinforces the need to look beyond qualifications to understand leadership barriers.

Seminars and Trainings. As to GAD-Related seminar and training, most respondents have a foundational awareness of GAD, with 60.1% having attended 1-5 GAD-related seminars and 28.2% having attended 6-10. The data indicate that GAD initiatives have achieved broad reach at an introductory level. However, the concentration in the 1-5 seminar range may suggest that the training is often basic and may not be sufficient to equip women with the advanced skills needed for transformative leadership. There is a clear need to move from awareness-level seminars to deeper, more sustained leadership

development programs focused on practical application of GAD principles in school management. Evaluating the effectiveness of GAD training is an ongoing concern. A review by the Philippine Commission on Women (2022) emphasized that for GAD training to be effective, it must be continuous, context-specific, and tied to organizational outcomes. "One-off" seminars are insufficient; what is needed is a structured, ladderized program that builds skills progressively, especially in areas like gender-responsive budgeting, policy-making, and organizational leadership.

Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) Promote Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1 in terms of Instructional Leadership

Table 2 presents the summary of responses concerning the Extent of Implementation of Gender and Development (GAD) Programs and Activities focused on enhancing women's participation in educational leadership. This section of the findings evaluates the institutional efforts within the schools to foster a gender-responsive environment for professional growth and career advancement.

Table 2
Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) Promote Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1 in terms of Instructional Leadership
n=213

Indicator	VHE		HE		ME		LE		VLE	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The school provides equal opportunities for professional development for both male and female educators	112	52.6	81	38.0	18	8.5	2	0.9	0	0.0
Female teachers are encouraged and supported to pursue leadership roles within the school.	107	50.2	83	39.0	21	9.9	2	0.9	0	0.0
The school actively works to address any gender disparities in student achievement and participation.	135	63.4	64	30.0	12	5.6	2	0.9	0	0.0
Mentorship programs are available to support aspiring female school leaders.	94	26.9	83	23.7	88	25.1	85	24.3	0	0.0
The school recognizes and celebrates the contributions of women leaders in education.	114	53.5	83	39.0	14	6.6	2	0.9	0	0.0
Gender is not a barrier to my professional growth and advancement within this school.	138	64.8	63	29.6	10	4.7	2	0.9	0	0.0
Encourage the use of gender-responsive instructional materials	124	58.2	75	35.2	11	5.2	3	1.4	0	0.0
Mean	4.47 – High Extent									

Note: Highest frequencies are in bold face

1.00-1.50 Very Low Extent (VLE)

1.51-2.50 Low Extent (LE)

2.51-3.50 Moderate Extent (ME)

3.51-4.50 High Extent (HE)

4.51-5.00 Very High Extent (VHE)

The overall mean of 4.47 indicates that respondents perceive the roles of GAD in promoting instructional leadership for women to a High Extent. This suggests a generally positive and equitable environment regarding professional growth and academic management. The high rating implies that foundational policies and practices for gender fairness are likely in place and recognized by staff. It suggests that women feel they are on an equal footing with their male colleagues in day-to-day instructional roles and opportunities. For schools to foster leadership, they must first establish a climate of equity and organizational justice. A study by Torrecampo (2023) found that a perceived sense of fairness in school policies is a direct antecedent to teachers' motivation to pursue leadership roles. This climate of equity is a critical first step before more targeted leadership interventions can be effective.

Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) Promote Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1 in terms of Capacity Building and Training

Table 3 presents the summary of responses concerning the Extent of Implementation of Gender and Development (GAD) Programs and Activities focused on promoting a supportive and healthy work environment for school personnel, with a particular emphasis on women's well-being.

Table 3
Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) Promote Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1 in terms of Capacity Building and Training
n=213

Indicator	VHE		HE		ME		LE		VLE	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The school provides a supportive and healthy work environment for all staff, including pregnant and nursing mothers.	92	43.2	77	36.2	36	16.9	6	2.8	2	0.9
The school offers access to health services and information relevant to women's health needs.	122	57.3	71	33.3	21	9.9	2	0.9	0	0.0
The school promotes awareness of women's health issues and provides resources for prevention and treatment.	101	47.4	79	37.1	25	11.7	6	2.8	2	0.9
Flexible work arrangements are available to accommodate the health needs of female staff.	92	43.2	88	41.3	27	12.7	3	1.4	3	1.4
The school actively works to prevent and address any forms of harassment or discrimination that could negatively impact women's health.	95	44.6	80	37.6	26	12.2	9	4.2	3	1.4
My health and well-being are valued and supported by the school administration.	94	44.1	85	39.9	26	12.2	5	2.3	3	1.4
Promote access to online learning platforms for women	93	43.7	89	41.8	22	10.3	7	3.3	2	0.9
Mean	4.26 – High Extent									

Note: Highest frequencies are in bold face

1.00-1.50 Very Low Extent (VLE)

1.51-2.50 Low Extent (LE)

2.51-3.50 Moderate Extent (ME)

3.51-4.50 High Extent (HE)

4.51-5.00 Very High Extent (VHE)

The indicator "The school offers access to health services and information relevant to women's health needs" received the strongest agreement, with 57.3% of respondents rating it VHE. This suggests that the most visible and successfully implemented aspect of GAD in this domain is health education and information dissemination. Schools are effectively promoting awareness of women's health, which is a tangible and relatively straightforward GAD initiative to implement. Workplace health promotion programs are a key component of a supportive organization. A 2022 report from the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) on GAD implementation in public institutions noted that health and wellness seminars were among the most frequently and successfully conducted GAD activities, indicating their high visibility and positive reception among employees.

The indicator "Flexible work arrangements are available to accommodate the health needs of female staff" had one of the lowest VHE ratings in this category at 43.2%. It also had a higher combined frequency in the "Moderate," "Low," and "Very Low" extent categories compared to the top-rated items. This finding points to a gap between providing information and providing structural support. While schools are good at disseminating health information, they are perceived as less effective at implementing concrete, policy-based accommodations like flexible work. This is a critical issue for women who often

juggle multiple roles, and a lack of flexibility can be a major barrier to taking on more demanding leadership positions. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the conversation around flexible work arrangements, highlighting their importance for retaining talent, especially women. A 2023 study by Reyes on the post-pandemic education sector in the Philippines argued that a lack of flexible policies is a significant driver of burnout among female educators. The study concluded that institutional rigidity can hinder the career progression of highly qualified women who require more adaptable work conditions.

Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) Promote Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1 in terms of Gender Responsiveness School Management

Table 4 presents the summary of responses concerning the Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) Promote Educational Leadership for Women specifically in terms of Gender-Responsive School Management. This section evaluates the perceived success of the school administration in integrating gender perspectives into core management functions and institutional policies.

With a strong overall mean of 4.44, respondents perceive that their schools integrate gender responsiveness into management practices to a High Extent. This suggests that GAD is seen as more than just a peripheral program; it's viewed as part of the school's core operational strategy, particularly concerning economic opportunities. This high level of perceived implementation implies that school management is actively working to create an environment where women's economic advancement is a priority. This moves beyond basic equity to active empowerment, which can significantly boost morale, motivation, and the leadership potential of female educators. Effective school leadership is increasingly defined by its ability to be inclusive and empowering. A 2023 study by Villanueva found that when school management actively champions gender-responsive policies, it not only enhances the well-being of female teachers but also improves overall school performance by fostering a more collaborative and motivated faculty.

Table 4
Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) Promote Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1 in terms of Gender Responsiveness School Management
n=213

Indicator	VHE		HE		ME		LE		VLE	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The school supports initiatives that promote the economic empowerment of women in the community.	129	60.6	65	30.5	15	7.0	3	1.4	1	0.5
The school's policies and practices support women's economic advancement within the education sector.	120	56.3	73	34.3	15	7.0	4	1.9	1	0.5
Female teachers are given equal opportunities to participate in income-generating activities related to their profession.	129	60.6	66	31.0	15	7.0	2	0.9	1	0.5
Women educators are provided with information and resources on financial literacy and economic independence.	114	53.5	77	36.2	18	8.5	3	1.4	1	0.5
The school actively seeks partnerships with organizations that support women's economic empowerment.	126	59.2	69	32.4	14	6.6	3	1.4	1	0.5
Monitor gender-based indicators in school planning	113	53.1	75	35.2	19	8.9	5	2.3	1	0.5
Establish GAD focal points in school management structure	116	54.5	73	34.3	17	8.0	6	2.8	1	0.5
Mean	4.44 – High Extent									

Note: Highest frequencies are in bold face

1.00-1.50 Very Low Extent (VLE)

1.51-2.50 Low Extent (LE)

2.51-3.50 Moderate Extent (ME)
4.51-5.00 Very High Extent (VHE)

3.51-4.50 High Extent (HE)

The indicators "The school supports initiatives that promote the economic empowerment of women in the community" and "Female teachers are given equal opportunities to participate in income-generating activities related to their profession" tied for the highest rating, with 60.6% of respondents perceiving them to a "Very High Extent". This indicates that the most visible and highly-regarded GAD initiatives are those that provide tangible economic benefits. By extending support to the wider community, the school positions itself as a leader in social development, which in turn provides its female educators with opportunities to lead and engage beyond the classroom walls. The role of schools is expanding beyond education to become hubs for community development. Research by Santos (2024) on school-community partnerships in the Philippines highlights that programs focused on livelihood and economic empowerment for women create a powerful synergy, enhancing the school's social relevance and providing teachers with invaluable leadership experience in managing real-world projects.

The indicator with the relatively lowest agreement was "Monitor gender-based indicators in school planning," although its "Very High Extent" rating of 53.1% is still quite strong. This finding suggests a potential gap between action and analysis. While schools are actively implementing GAD-related economic programs, they may be less systematic in using gender-disaggregated data to inform their planning and measure the impact of these initiatives. A lack of data-driven monitoring can make it difficult to identify gaps, refine strategies, and demonstrate long-term success, potentially hindering the sustainability of GAD efforts. The principle of "what gets measured gets done" is central to effective GAD implementation. A 2022 policy brief from the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) emphasized that for GAD programs to be truly transformative, educational institutions must move beyond activity implementation to a more robust system of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) that uses gender-disaggregated data to inform strategic planning and budgeting (David & Albert, 2022).

Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) Promote Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1 in terms of Community Engagement and Advocacy

Table 5 presents the summary of responses concerning the Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) Promote Educational Leadership for Women specifically in terms of Community Engagement and Advocacy. This final section of the findings evaluates the perceived extent to which the school extends its GAD mandate beyond the internal institutional setting and into the wider community. It assesses the school's efforts to encourage and support women's participation in external decision-making bodies, promote awareness of women's rights in the civic sphere, ensure women's representation in school-community governance (such as the Parent-Teacher Association), and foster a culture where women's voices are respected and visible in community events. The data gathered provides a crucial perspective on the school's role as a platform for social change and advocacy for women's leadership within Region 1.

Table 5
Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) Promote Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1 in terms of Community Engagement and Advocacy
n=213

Indicator	VHE		HE		ME		LE		VLE	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Female teachers are encouraged and supported to participate in school governance and decision-making processes.	0	0	102	47.9	18	8.5	4	1.9	89	41.8
The school promotes awareness of women's rights and encourages their participation in civic and political life.	0	0	103	48.4	18	8.5	5	2.3	87	40.8
Women are represented in leadership positions within the school's parent-teacher association or similar governing bodies.	0	0	90	42.3	17	8.0	4	1.9	102	47.9

The school provides opportunities for women educators to develop their leadership skills and engage in policy advocacy.	0	0	102	47.9	15	7.0	3	1.4	93	43.7
The school fosters a culture of respect for diverse perspectives and encourages women's voices to be heard.	0	0	110	51.6	21	9.9	5	2.3	77	36.2
The school actively addresses any barriers preventing women from participating in school governance and leadership.	0	0	102	47.9	13	6.1	4	1.9	94	44.1
Promote visibility of female leaders in school-community events	0	0	108	50.7	14	6.6	6	2.8	85	39.9
Mean	2.62 – Moderate Extent									

Note: Highest frequencies are in bold face

1.00-1.50 Very Low Extent (VLE)	1.51-2.50 Low Extent (LE)
2.51-3.50 Moderate Extent (ME)	3.51-4.50 High Extent (HE)
4.51-5.00 Very High Extent (VHE)	

The statement "The school fosters a culture of respect for diverse perspectives and encourages women's voices to be heard" was the most positively rated indicator, with 51.6% of respondents perceiving it to a "High Extent" (HE). Notably, this was the only indicator to cross the 50% threshold for HE. This is a crucial foundational strength. It means that at a cultural level, schools have successfully created an environment where women feel psychologically safe and their opinions are valued. This internal culture of respect is the necessary first step before women can be expected to confidently engage in external advocacy. The respect exists, but it is not yet being activated in the community. A psychologically safe and inclusive environment is a prerequisite for leadership development. As argued by Franco (2024), when schools cultivate a culture where female educators' voices are actively solicited and respected, it builds the confidence necessary for them to engage in external-facing roles. Without this internal validation, advocacy and community engagement are unlikely to occur.

The indicator "Women are represented in leadership positions within the school's parent-teacher association or similar governing bodies" was rated the lowest, with a plurality of respondents (47.9%) perceiving it to a "Very Low Extent" (VLE). This finding is highly significant as it points to a concrete failure in a key area of school-community interface. The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) is the primary bridge to the community. The lack of female leadership here suggests that traditional gender roles—where men often assume public-facing leadership titles—remain entrenched in school governance structures, even when the teaching staff is predominantly female. It highlights a major disconnect between the school's internal workforce and the community's leadership structure. The composition of PTA leadership often reflects broader community norms rather than the school's internal demographics. A 2022 study on school governing councils in Southeast Asia found that traditional gender stereotypes often influence the election of officers, with fathers being pushed into presidential roles while mothers are relegated to secretarial or treasury positions. This perpetuates a visibility gap and reinforces the notion that formal community leadership is a male domain (Limsila & Prasert, 2022).

Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) Promote Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1

Table 6 provides a powerful summary of the overall findings regarding the Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) in Promoting Educational Leadership for Women across the Public Elementary Schools in Region 1. This table consolidates the mean scores for the four distinct domains analyzed in the previous tables: Instructional Leadership, Capacity Building and Professional Development, Gender-Responsive School Management, and Community Engagement and Advocacy. The Overall Mean is presented to give a holistic assessment of GAD implementation.

Table 6
Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) Promote Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1

Domain	Mean	Description
A. Instructional Leadership	4.47	High Extent
B. Capacity Building and Professional Development	4.26	High Extent
C. Gender-Responsive School Management	4.44	High Extent
D. Community Engagement and Advocacy	2.62	Moderate Extent
Overall Mean	3.95	High Extent

Note: Highest frequencies are in bold face

1.00-1.50 Very Low Extent (VLE) 1.51-2.50 Low Extent (LE)

2.51-3.50 Moderate Extent (ME) 3.51-4.50 High Extent (HE)

4.51-5.00 Very High Extent (VHE)

The domains of Instructional Leadership (4.47), Gender-Responsive School Management (4.44), and Capacity Building (4.26) all received "High Extent" ratings. This demonstrates that respondents perceive GAD as being successfully implemented in areas related to fair professional practices, equitable school policies, and staff well-being. This is a significant achievement. It implies that GAD programs have effectively built the foundational elements of an empowering environment. They have cultivated a strong internal culture where women feel supported, respected, and given equitable opportunities for growth within the school's own structure. This internal strength is a crucial prerequisite for any external leadership ambitions. Creating a positive and equitable internal climate is the first step in any meaningful organizational change. A 2023 study by Villanueva on school leadership found that a gender-responsive internal culture is directly linked to higher teacher motivation and a greater willingness among women to assume leadership responsibilities within their schools.

The Overall Mean of 3.95 is rated as "High Extent". While technically accurate, this aggregate score is misleading. Relying on the overall mean alone would obscure the severe weakness in community engagement. It presents a deceptively positive picture of GAD implementation. This highlights the critical importance of disaggregating data to understand the nuances of a program's performance. The success of GAD is not uniform; it is highly effective in some areas and significantly lacking in another. Effective program evaluation requires a look beyond composite scores. A policy brief from the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) emphasized that for multifaceted programs like GAD, a granular analysis is necessary to identify specific areas of strength and weakness, which is essential for targeted, evidence-based policy improvements (David & Albert, 2022).

Level of Seriousness of the Challenges Encountered in the Promotion of Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1

Table 7 presents the summary of responses regarding the Level of Seriousness of the Challenges Encountered in the promotion of educational leadership for women in public elementary schools in Region 1. Unlike the previous tables that measured the *extent of implementation* of GAD roles, this section provides a crucial counterpoint by assessing the *barriers and obstacles* perceived by the respondents.

Table 7
Level of Seriousness of the Challenges Encountered in the Promotion of Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1

Indicator	n=21									
	VH		H		M		N		A	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
There is limited administrative support for GAD implementation in public schools	27	12.7	68	31.9	58	27.2	31	14.6	29	13.6
GAD-related policies are inconsistently applied across divisions.	29	13.6	62	29.1	57	26.8	32	15.0	33	15.5
GAD principles are poorly integrated into school improvement and leadership plans.	30	14.1	54	25.4	57	26.8	41	19.2	31	14.6

Schools lack gender-disaggregated data for leadership and decision-making.	31	14.6	54	25.4	55	25.8	33	15.5	40	18.8
Female educators are underrepresented in decision-making and leadership roles	31	14.6	51	23.9	54	25.4	33	15.5	44	20.7
Schools have limited access to leadership training designed for women.	34	16.0	51	23.9	53	24.9	36	16.9	39	18.3
GAD funds are underutilized due to lack of awareness and capacity	30	14.1	58	27.2	47	22.1	30	14.1	48	22.5
Gender-sensitive instructional and leadership resources are insufficient.	25	11.7	63	29.6	48	22.5	40	18.8	37	17.4
Mentorship programs for aspiring female leaders are lacking.	27	12.7	54	25.4	59	27.7	36	16.9	37	17.4
Awareness of GAD and its leadership role is low among educators.	23	10.8	54	25.4	63	29.6	30	14.1	43	20.2
Gender stereotypes influence leadership selection and promotion decisions	28	13.1	53	24.9	65	30.5	27	12.7	40	18.8
Traditional norms discourage women from taking up leadership positions	23	10.8	56	26.3	56	26.3	38	17.8	40	18.8
Some educators misunderstand GAD as irrelevant	22	10.3	53	24.9	57	26.8	35	16.4	46	21.6
Female educators often lack self-confidence to apply for leadership roles.	24	11.3	58	27.2	56	26.3	33	15.5	42	19.7
Women leaders fear backlash or resistance in male-dominated environments.	26	12.2	55	25.8	57	26.8	33	15.5	42	19.7
Gender-related stress and lack of mental health support affect women's leadership potential.	27	12.7	59	27.7	54	25.4	37	17.4	36	16.9
Mean	2.99 – Moderately Serious									

Note: Highest frequencies are in bold face

1.00-1.50 Least Serious (LS)

1.51-2.50 Somewhat Serious (SS)

2.51-3.50 Moderately Serious (MS)

3.51-4.50 Highly Serious (HS)

4.51-5.00 Very Highly Serious (VHE)

The overall mean of 2.99 signifies that the challenges encountered are collectively perceived as Moderately Serious. This indicates that while the obstacles are not seen as insurmountable, they are persistent and significant enough to actively hinder the promotion of women into leadership roles. A "Moderately Serious" rating across a wide range of issues implies that there is no single, simple solution. The challenges are interconnected, spanning administrative, financial, and cultural domains. This means that effective intervention requires a comprehensive, multi-pronged strategy rather than focusing on just one or two issues. The multifaceted nature of barriers facing women in educational leadership is a consistent theme in recent research. A 2023 study by Garcia and Cruz on women school heads in the Philippines found that challenges are rarely isolated; instead, institutional gaps, resource limitations, and socio-cultural biases interact to create a complex "labyrinth" that aspiring female leaders must navigate.

Relationship Between Profile and the Extent of the Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) Promote Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region I and Their Profile

Table 8 presents the summary of responses regarding the Level of Seriousness of the Challenges Encountered in the promotion of educational leadership for women in public elementary schools in Region 1. Unlike the previous tables that measured the *extent of implementation* of GAD roles, this

section provides a crucial counterpoint by assessing the *barriers and obstacles* perceived by the respondents. The challenges are categorized into institutional, resource-based, and socio-cultural factors, covering issues such as limited administrative support, resource insufficiency (including GAD funds and gender-disaggregated data), policy inconsistency, and the influence of cultural norms and gender stereotypes on leadership selection and women's self-confidence. The data gathered provides a vital diagnostic tool for prioritizing intervention strategies to make GAD programs more effective.

Table 8
Relationship Between the Profile and the Extent of the Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) Promote Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region I and Their Profile

Profile of the Women Leaders in Public Elementary Schools in Region I		Gender and Development (GAD) Promote Educational Leadership for Women				
		Instructional Leadership	Capacity Building and Training	Gender Responsiveness School Management	Community Engagement and Advocacy	Overall
Age	r	0.088	0.153*	0.117	-0.064	0.092
	Sig.	0.200	0.026	0.089	0.355	0.181
Gender	r _{pb}	0.024	0.003	0.05	0.161*	0.149*
	Sig.	0.728	0.667	0.389	0.019	0.030
Marital Status	r _{pb}	-0.040	-0.021	-0.040	0.066	0.007
	Sig.	0.572	0.764	0.562	0.347	0.923
Position	T _b	0.054	0.046	0.041	-0.056	0.042
	Sig.	0.341	0.407	0.477	0.321	0.444
Years in service	T _b	-0.009	0.024	0.007	-0.105	-0.030
	Sig.	0.871	0.662	0.897	0.057	0.571
Highest educational attainment	T _b	0.036	0.058	0.040	-0.003	0.058
	Sig.	0.520	0.294	0.473	0.951	0.284
Number of Seminars and Training related to GAD	T _b	0.039	0.029	-0.016	0.040	0.038
	Sig.	0.496	0.606	0.780	0.490	0.490

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

^aAdjusted to binary variable (Gender=Male/Female, Civil Status = Single/Married)

This table investigates the statistical relationship between the demographic profiles of the respondents and their perception of GAD's effectiveness in promoting educational leadership. The results show that out of all profile variables, only age and gender have a significant correlation with specific GAD roles, while factors like marital status, position, and years of service do not.

Table 8 also presents the relationship between the roles of Gender and Development (GAD) in promoting educational leadership for women in public elementary schools in Region I and their profile. Results show that only age and gender have significant relationships with GAD roles. Age has a weak but positive correlation with capacity building and training ($r=0.153$, $p=0.026$), while gender is significantly related to community engagement and advocacy ($r_{pb}=0.161$, $p=0.019$) and the overall GAD leadership role ($r_{pb} = 0.149$, $p = 0.030$). The result indicates that females have a higher perceived extent of GAD roles particularly in community engagement and advocacy. Moreover, older respondents perceive greater involvement of GAD in enhancing training opportunities. Other variables such as marital status, position, years in service, educational attainment, and GAD-related trainings showed no significant relationships.

The correlation between the Extent of the Roles of GAD (implementation success) and the Profile of the Respondents, the findings would likely show no significant correlation across most, if not all, domains. This implies that the perceived success and implementation level of GAD programs—whether in Instructional Leadership, Capacity Building, or Gender-Responsive Management—is uniform across the teaching force, irrespective of an educator's age, position, tenure, or educational attainment. This uniformity suggests that GAD implementation is primarily driven by top-down institutional mandates and standardized school-wide efforts rather than being influenced by the personal characteristics or individual capacity of the staff (Mendoza & Alagaraja, 2020). For instance, if the school mandates GAD training (Capacity Building), all teachers are exposed, and their perception of the program's *extent* is shaped by the quality of the program itself, not by their years in service. This result validates the idea that GAD mainstreaming is an institutional responsibility; its success or failure rests on the commitment of the school administration to consistently enforce and resource these programs across the entire faculty body.

Relationship Between Challenges Encountered in the Promotion of Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1 and Profile of the Respondents

Table 9 presents the results of the correlation analysis conducted to determine the Relationship Between the Challenges Encountered in the promotion of educational leadership for women and the various Profile Variables of the Respondents (Age, Gender, Marital Status, Position, Years in Service, Highest Educational Attainment, and Number of GAD Seminars/Training).

Table 9
Relationship Between Challenges Encountered in the Promotion of Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1 and Profile of the Respondents

Profile of the Women Leaders in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1		Challenges Encountered
Age	r	0.109
	Sig.	0.113
Gender ^a	r _{pb}	-0.096
	Sig.	0.162
Marital Status ^a	r _{pb}	0.008
	Sig.	0.908
Position	T _b	-0.021
	Sig.	0.696
Years in service	T _b	0.034
	Sig.	0.521
Highest educational attainment	T _b	-0.046
	Sig.	0.384
Number of Seminars and Training related to GAD	T _b	0.058
	Sig.	0.296

^aAdjusted to binary variable (Gender=Male/Female, Civil Status = Single/Married)

Table 9 shows the relationship between the challenges encountered in the promotion of educational leadership for women in public elementary schools in Region I and the respondents' profile variables. The results indicate that none of the profile variables have significant relationships with the challenges encountered, as all significance values are greater than 0.05. This indicates that the challenges faced by women leaders in promoting educational leadership are generally experienced across different demographic and professional backgrounds.

The results from Table 9, which examined the correlation between the Profile of the Respondents and the Challenges Encountered in promoting women's educational leadership, demonstrate a critical finding: none of the demographic or professional characteristics of the respondents showed a

statistically significant relationship with the perceived seriousness of the challenges. This uniformity in perception implies that the challenges to women's leadership are structural and systemic, rather than being unique to certain age groups, marital statuses, positions, or experience levels within the schools.

This finding is highly significant because it supports the argument that the barriers—such as limited administrative support, resource insufficiency, and prevailing gender stereotypes—are deeply embedded in the organizational culture and institutional framework of the schools, affecting all female educators regardless of their personal attributes (Madden, 2017). The challenges are not perceived as a personal failure or a hurdle unique to one's career stage, but as a universal reality of the system (The Ilocos Norte & Sur study). Consequently, interventions aimed at increasing women's leadership must focus on policy reform and organizational restructuring—like enhancing GAD fund utilization and ensuring consistent policy application—rather than on targeted efforts based on demographic distinctions (Mendoza & Alagaraja, 2020). The systemic nature of the challenges, as highlighted by this non-significant correlation, underscores the need for top-down, broad-based solutions to dismantle these enduring institutional obstacles.

Relationship Between Challenges Encountered in the Promotion of Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1 and Extent of the Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) Promote Educational Leadership for Women

Table 10 presents the results of the correlation analysis, specifically examining the Relationship Between the Challenges Encountered in promoting women's educational leadership and the Extent of the Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) as implemented across four key domains (Instructional Leadership, Capacity Building, Gender-Responsive School Management, and Community Engagement and Advocacy). This statistical analysis, utilizing Pearson's r , is critical for determining whether the perceived seriousness of the challenges is significantly related to the perceived level of GAD implementation in each area. The table provides the computed correlation coefficient (r) and the significance value (Sig.) for each domain, allowing the study to establish the interplay between the barriers women face and the success or struggle of the GAD programs designed to address them.

Table 10

Relationship Between Challenges Encountered in the Promotion of Educational Leadership for Women in Public Elementary Schools in Region 1 and Extent of the Roles of Gender and Development (GAD) Promote Educational Leadership for Women

Roles of GAD	Challenges Encountered	
	r	Sig.
A. Instructional Leadership	.710**	0.000
B. Capacity Building and Professional Development	.763**	0.000
C. Gender-Responsive School Management	.742**	0.000
D. Community Engagement and Advocacy	.284**	0.000
Overall Mean	.163*	0.017

Table 10 presents the relationship between the challenges encountered in promoting educational leadership for women in public elementary schools in Region I and the extent of the roles of Gender and Development (GAD). Results reveal significant positive correlations across all dimensions, with the strongest relationships observed in capacity building and professional development ($r=.763$, $p=0.000$), gender-responsive school management ($r=.742$, $p=0.000$), and instructional leadership ($r=.710$, $p=0.000$). The findings indicate that as challenges increase, the need for GAD interventions in these areas also becomes more critical. A moderate correlation is also noted in community engagement and advocacy ($r=.284$, $p=0.000$).

The correlation analysis in Table 10 reveals a crucial and complex implication: there is a significant positive relationship between the perceived Extent of GAD Roles (implementation) and the perceived Level of Seriousness of the Challenges Encountered in promoting women's leadership. This finding, particularly the strong correlation in Capacity Building and Gender-Responsive School Management suggests that as schools actively increase their GAD efforts, they simultaneously experience a heightened awareness of, or direct confrontation with, the systemic barriers and institutional deficiencies. This phenomenon is consistent with global Gender and Development literature, which posits that the process of gender mainstreaming often generates resistance to change from existing power

structures and exposes the true extent of deep-seated issues like resource limitations, policy inconsistencies, and entrenched cultural norms. For instance, providing targeted leadership training (Capacity Building) may make the existing underrepresentation of women in decision-making (a Challenge) more salient, thereby increasing the perception of the challenge's seriousness. The weaker correlation in Community Engagement further implies that the internal, institutional efforts are the primary battleground where GAD implementation meets resistance, confirming that genuine transformation is not a smooth process but an active struggle against systemic constraints.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that despite the advanced qualifications and extensive service of women educators, they remain overwhelmingly concentrated in senior teaching roles rather than administrative positions, suggesting that systemic bottlenecks actively impede their career progression. While Gender and Development (GAD) initiatives have successfully fostered a supportive internal school environment, a critical strategic imbalance persists due to a failure in promoting external community engagement and advocacy. The obstacles to women's leadership are characterized as moderately serious and structural, with a lack of administrative support identified as the most critical hurdle; notably, the minimal perception of GAD's "irrelevance" suggests that the issue lies in flawed implementation rather than a lack of belief in its purpose.

Furthermore, the uniformity in how these issues are perceived—regardless of an individual's age, position, or tenure—confirms that these challenges are deeply embedded within the educational system itself rather than being tied to personal profiles. A significant positive correlation between the severity of these challenges and the perceived need for GAD interventions validates the program's role as a necessary and critical institutional response to systemic barriers. Because there are no significant correlations between individual profile variables and the challenges encountered, it is evident that these barriers are purely systemic and affect all women educators equally. To address these gaps, the proposed development plan focuses on rectifying limited administrative support, establishing structured mentorship, and strengthening weak advocacy efforts to ensure more equitable leadership opportunities.

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