

Integrating Anti-Bullying and Gender Sensitivity Strategies Through MAPEH Activities

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the extent to which anti-bullying and gender sensitivity strategies were integrated through Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) activities in selected public secondary schools in the Schools Division of Albay. It also examined differences in the assessments of school heads, teachers, and School Parent-Teachers Association representatives, identified helping factors and barriers, and developed a practical teacher guide. A descriptive-survey design was employed with 96 respondents composed of six school heads, 60 teachers, and 30 parent representatives from the Camalig, Guinobatan, and Jovellar districts. Data were collected through a validated questionnaire-checklist supported by informal interviews, observations, and documentary or library review. Weighted mean and the Kruskal-Wallis H test were used for

analysis. Anti-bullying strategies were very much implemented in Physical Education ($M = 4.62$) and much implemented in Music ($M = 4.02$), Arts ($M = 3.98$), and Health ($M = 4.09$). Gender sensitivity strategies were very much implemented in Arts ($M = 4.25$) and much implemented in Music ($M = 4.03$), Physical Education ($M = 3.90$), and Health ($M = 4.06$). Assessments differed significantly for anti-bullying strategies in Physical Education ($H = 15.58$) and for gender sensitivity strategies in Arts ($H = 10.47$), Physical Education ($H = 25.76$), and Health ($H = 10.60$). Supportive teachers, families, communities, inclusive activities, and positive school rules facilitated implementation, whereas inconsistent enforcement, limited training and resources, stakeholder resistance, and gender stereotypes created barriers. The findings informed the Simplified MAPEH Anti-Bullying and Gender Sensitivity Teacher's Guide to promote safer, more inclusive, and gender-responsive learning environments.

Keywords: *anti-bullying, gender sensitivity, MAPEH activities, inclusive education, school safety, gender-responsive education*

INTRODUCTION

Bullying and gender-based inequalities remain serious barriers to safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments. Learners may experience verbal, physical, relational, or online forms of aggression, while gender stereotypes can restrict participation, reinforce unequal treatment, and weaken a learner's sense of belonging. These experiences can affect well-being, attendance, classroom engagement, academic performance, and relationships within the school community. Philippine studies have likewise documented the continued presence of bullying and the need for sustained prevention and response mechanisms in public schools (Gonzales & Madrigal, 2021; Inocencio & Inocencio, 2021).

The Philippine policy environment requires schools to protect learners and promote gender equality. Republic Act No. 10627 mandates elementary and secondary schools to adopt policies that prevent and address bullying, while Republic Act No. 9710 establishes a national commitment to women's rights and gender equality. These mandates are reinforced by the Department of Education's Child Protection Policy and Gender-Responsive

Basic Education Policy, which call for safe, inclusive, non-discriminatory, and gender-responsive school practices (Department of Education, 2012, 2017).

MAPEH provides a particularly relevant setting for translating these commitments into everyday learning. Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health activities involve collaboration, performance, movement, communication, creativity, competition, and reflection. These experiences can be used to model respectful behavior, build empathy, challenge stereotypes, promote equitable participation, and teach learners how to respond to bullying. Studies on MAPEH implementation and instructional support emphasize that the learning area can foster holistic development when activities are well planned, inclusive, and supported by appropriate teacher competencies and materials (Didulo, 2024; Dulay, 2022; Lucas & Morbo, 2025).

Despite the educational potential of MAPEH, the source thesis identified limited local evidence on the combined integration of anti-bullying and gender sensitivity strategies across all four components. The researcher also observed that bullying and discriminatory behaviors may emerge during group performances, sports, artistic tasks, and health discussions when participation, leadership, and roles are not managed equitably. Examining the extent of implementation from the perspectives of school heads, teachers, and parents was therefore necessary to identify strong practices, inconsistencies, and institutional needs.

Accordingly, the study assessed the implementation of anti-bullying and gender sensitivity strategies through MAPEH activities in selected public secondary schools in the Schools Division of Albay. It determined whether stakeholder assessments differed, identified helping factors and barriers, and used the findings to develop a simplified teacher guide. The study contributes a practical, curriculum-based approach for strengthening child protection, gender responsiveness, and inclusive participation through routine school activities.

Literature Review

Bullying Prevention and Safe School Environments

School bullying is best addressed through coordinated approaches that combine clear policies, adult supervision, learner participation, social-emotional support, and opportunities to practice respectful behavior. Reviews of school-based interventions show that effective programs are not limited to disciplinary responses; they involve prevention, bystander engagement, developmental guidance, and whole-school participation (de Araújo Lira Bezerra et al., 2023; Fraguas et al., 2020; Rawlings & Stoddard, 2019). Creative and metacognitive activities can also help learners recognize harmful behavior, reflect on its effects, and develop constructive responses (Diac et al., 2025).

The broader school climate influences whether anti-bullying measures become part of everyday practice. Positive culture, supportive relationships, consistent rules, and opportunities for student voice strengthen well-being and reduce the normalization of aggression (Bentsalo et al., 2025; Hui et al., 2011). Studies focusing on vulnerable learners further emphasize that interventions should be inclusive and responsive to differences in ability, identity, and social position (Badger et al., 2024; Hikmat et al., 2024). These findings support the use of MAPEH activities as recurring, participatory spaces where cooperation, empathy, fairness, and safe behavior can be demonstrated rather than merely discussed.

Gender Sensitivity and Gender-Responsive Education

Gender sensitivity in education requires teachers and institutions to recognize how stereotypes, expectations, language, and classroom routines can shape learners' opportunities and participation. Gender-responsive pedagogy promotes equal access to roles, materials, leadership, and learning experiences while challenging assumptions that certain abilities, subjects, movements, or forms of expression belong only to one gender. Research on gender equality and responsive approaches shows that deliberate classroom practices can improve awareness, inclusion, and equitable participation (Bert et al., 2022; Canuto & Espique, 2023; Hasiyatining Sih & Musaddad, 2025).

In the Philippine basic education context, gender mainstreaming requires supportive policy, teacher preparation, and school-level implementation. Studies have highlighted the importance of integrating gender-

responsive practices into instruction, monitoring, curriculum, and institutional plans (Duma, 2022; Famela, 2024; Lomibao, 2024; Villegas et al., 2025). Teacher beliefs and language practices also matter because they influence how learners interpret gender roles and whether all students feel respected in learning activities (Tarrayo, 2021). Consequently, gender sensitivity should be embedded in daily instructional decisions rather than treated as a separate or occasional campaign.

MAPEH Activities as Platforms for Inclusion

MAPEH activities offer multiple pathways for social learning. Group singing and musical performance can develop cooperation and shared responsibility; visual arts can provide space for learners to represent diverse identities and challenge stereotypes; physical education can model fair play, teamwork, inclusive leadership, and respect for differences; and health activities can support dialogue, reflection, conflict resolution, and help-seeking. The effectiveness of these activities depends on teacher competence, instructional quality, and the availability of relevant materials (Didulo, 2024; Dulay, 2022).

Physical and extracurricular activities can also promote engagement, self-efficacy, and positive peer relationships when competition is managed constructively and participation is equitable. Research on empowering motivational climates in physical education underscores the value of teacher development, supportive feedback, and learner-centered practice (Milton et al., 2025). Studies on MAPEH learning materials and extracurricular participation similarly suggest that well-designed activities can strengthen both academic and social outcomes (Idio, 2025; Lucas & Morbo, 2025). These findings justify the study's integration of anti-bullying and gender sensitivity principles across all four MAPEH components.

Theoretical and Stakeholder Foundations

The thesis drew on Gender Role Theory, Gender Schema Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Social Dominance Theory. Gender Role Theory explains how socially assigned roles influence expectations and behavior, while Gender Schema Theory describes how learners organize beliefs about what is considered appropriate for males and females. Social Learning Theory emphasizes observation, modeling, practice, and reinforcement, making teachers and peers important models of respectful behavior. Social Dominance Theory explains how group-based hierarchies may sustain exclusion and unequal treatment (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009; Sidanius et al., 2004).

The researcher integrated these perspectives into the RISE framework—Respect, Identify, Support, and Educate—to guide the design of inclusive MAPEH activities. Respect establishes equitable norms; Identify focuses attention on bullying, bias, and exclusion; Support emphasizes protection, participation, and constructive response; and Educate promotes continuous learning about safety, gender, and inclusion. Within MAPEH, these principles can be enacted through mixed-gender teams, rotating leadership, collaborative performances, stereotype-challenging art, reflective health activities, and peer support.

Implementation also depends on stakeholders who shape policy, resources, supervision, and community expectations. School heads establish institutional priorities, teachers translate policies into learning activities, parents reinforce behavior and participation, and community partners contribute support and contextual knowledge. The study therefore assessed three respondent groups and examined both helping factors and barriers. This approach recognizes that sustainable implementation requires shared responsibility rather than isolated classroom action.

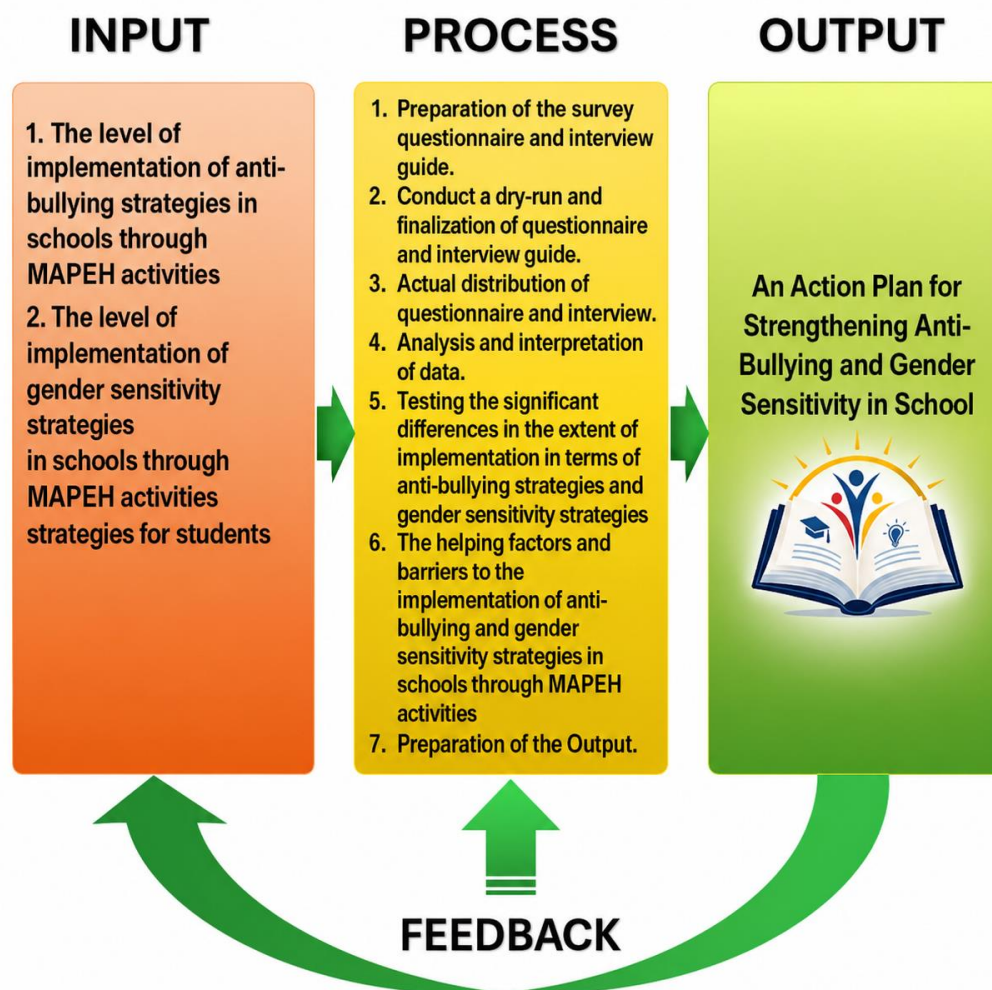


Figure 1. *Conceptual Paradigm of the Study*

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-survey research design. This design was used to describe the existing extent of implementation of anti-bullying and gender sensitivity strategies through MAPEH activities, compare the assessments of three stakeholder groups, identify helping factors and barriers, and provide an empirical basis for a practical instructional output. The questionnaire findings were supported by informal interviews, observations, and documentary or library review.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in selected public secondary schools in the Camalig, Guinobatan, and Jovellar districts within the Schools Division of Albay. These schools provided the institutional contexts in which Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health activities were implemented and assessed in relation to child protection, bullying prevention, inclusion, and gender sensitivity.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The respondents were 96 education stakeholders composed of six school heads, 60 teachers, and 30 School Parent-Teachers Association representatives. The source methodology reported the use of Slovin's formula

with a 0.05 margin of error to determine the sample and a random selection procedure using the fishbowl technique to provide eligible participants an opportunity to be selected. The inclusion of the three groups enabled comparison of administrative, instructional, and parental perspectives.

Research Instrument

The principal instrument was a researcher-developed questionnaire-checklist based on the study objectives and related literature. Part I assessed the implementation of anti-bullying strategies through Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health; Part II assessed gender sensitivity strategies across the same components; and Part III identified helping factors and barriers. Responses used a five-point scale: 4.20–5.00, Very Much Implemented; 3.40–4.19, Much Implemented; 2.60–3.39, Moderately Implemented; 1.80–2.59, Less Implemented; and 1.00–1.79, Least Implemented.

The first draft was reviewed by an English teacher, an Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao teacher, a master teacher, a head teacher, and five MAPEH teachers. Revisions addressed relevance, clarity, comprehensibility, linguistic correctness, and freedom from assumptions or suggestions. A dry run with another group of teachers was conducted before finalization, following the source study's validation procedure and criteria (Sevilla et al., 1992).

Data Gathering Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent, concerned public schools district supervisors, and secondary school principals. The researcher personally distributed, administered, and retrieved the questionnaire-checklists. Informal interviews were conducted during the administration and retrieval process, while observation and library research were used to support the primary data and the development of the study output.

Data Analysis

Weighted means were computed to determine the extent of implementation for each MAPEH component and respondent group. The Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to determine whether the assessments of school heads, teachers, and parent representatives differed significantly. The tests used two degrees of freedom, a 0.05 level of significance, and a critical chi-square value of 5.99. Helping factors and barriers were summarized from the respondents' selections and the supporting qualitative information.

Ethical Consideration

The study followed the institutional permission process documented in the appendices. The request letters stated that respondents' appraisals would be treated confidentially and used only for academic purposes. Findings were presented in aggregate form by stakeholder group and MAPEH component. The researcher's personal administration and retrieval of the instruments also supported the secure handling of the completed questionnaires.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Anti-Bullying Strategies through MAPEH

Table 1. *Extent of Implementation of Anti-Bullying and Gender Sensitivity Strategies by MAPEH Component*

MAPEH Component	Anti-Bullying Mean	Interpretation	Gender Sensitivity Mean	Interpretation
Music	4.02	Much Implemented	4.03	Much Implemented
Arts	3.98	Much Implemented	4.25	Very Much Implemented
Physical Education	4.62	Very Much Implemented	3.90	Much Implemented
Health	4.09	Much Implemented	4.06	Much Implemented

The three respondent groups assessed anti-bullying strategies in Physical Education as Very Much Implemented ($M = 4.62$), the highest among the four components. Music ($M = 4.02$), Arts ($M = 3.98$), and Health ($M = 4.09$) were all Much Implemented. The result indicates that movement-based and cooperative activities provided the most consistently visible platform for bullying prevention. Team games, sports, dances, peer coaching, and fair-play routines naturally require learners to manage competition, leadership, cooperation, and interpersonal conflict, allowing anti-bullying principles to be practiced in real time.

The lower, although still positive, means in Music, Arts, and Health show that anti-bullying strategies were present but could be more systematically embedded. Group singing, inclusive performances, collaborative art, role-play, reflection, and health campaigns were identified in the source tables as useful activities. Whole-school research emphasizes that repeated, participatory, and developmentally appropriate experiences strengthen prevention by connecting policy with daily behavior (de Araújo Lira Bezerra et al., 2023; Fraguas et al., 2020; Hui et al., 2011). Thus, the strong Physical Education practices can serve as models for other MAPEH areas while allowing each component to retain its distinctive learning processes.

Implementation of Gender Sensitivity Strategies through MAPEH

Gender sensitivity strategies were rated Very Much Implemented in Arts ($M = 4.25$), while Music ($M = 4.03$), Physical Education ($M = 3.90$), and Health ($M = 4.06$) were Much Implemented. Arts obtained the strongest assessment because visual and creative activities provide direct opportunities to portray diverse identities, question stereotypes, design inclusive messages, and represent equal participation. Posters, digital art, characters, slogans, exhibits, collages, and murals can make gender-related concepts visible and accessible to learners.

The findings also show that all four components were active sites for gender-responsive practice, although the level of implementation varied. Music can challenge stereotypes through inclusive song selection, rotating roles, and diverse performers; Physical Education can promote equity through mixed-gender teams and fair access to leadership; and Health can support reflection on gender roles, respectful language, relationships, and discrimination. These practices are consistent with studies that advocate integrating gender responsiveness into routine pedagogy, curriculum, and institutional plans rather than limiting it to special events (Canuto & Espique, 2023; Duma, 2022; Lomibao, 2024; Villegas et al., 2025).

Differences in Stakeholder Assessments

Table 2. *Kruskal-Wallis Tests of Differences across School Heads, Teachers, and Parent Representatives*

MAPEH Component	Anti-Bullying H	Decision	Gender Sensitivity H	Decision
Music	2.85	Not Significant	3.50	Not Significant
Arts	4.12	Not Significant	10.47	Significant
Physical Education	15.58	Significant	25.76	Significant
Health	0.73	Not Significant	10.60	Significant

For anti-bullying strategies, the assessments did not differ significantly in Music ($H = 2.85$), Arts ($H = 4.12$), or Health ($H = 0.73$), but differed significantly in Physical Education ($H = 15.58$). The agreement in three areas suggests that school heads, teachers, and parents generally observed a comparable level of implementation. The significant difference in Physical Education indicates that the groups did not experience or observe its practices in the same way, despite its high overall mean. Differences in exposure to classes, sports programs, competitions, supervision, and school events may have shaped their assessments.

For gender sensitivity strategies, Music showed no significant difference ($H = 3.50$), whereas Arts ($H = 10.47$), Physical Education ($H = 25.76$), and Health ($H = 10.60$) differed significantly. These findings point to uneven visibility or consistency across stakeholder groups. Some gender-responsive practices may be clearly recognized by teachers but less visible to parents, while administrators may assess institutional programs differently from classroom-level implementation. The significant differences support the need for common

standards, shared indicators, stakeholder orientation, and regular monitoring so that gender sensitivity is understood and applied consistently across MAPEH settings.

Helping Factors and Barriers

Table 3. *Helping Factors and Barriers Identified in the Study*

Area	Helping Factors	Barriers
Anti-Bullying	Supportive teachers; supportive parents and community; strong discipline rules; active MAPEH programs; positive student attitudes	Weak policy enforcement; limited teacher training; limited parental or community involvement; limited resources and materials; negative student attitudes
Gender Sensitivity	School and community support for inclusivity; stereotype-breaking activities; equal participation; willingness to respect gender differences; teacher fairness and respect	Limited teacher training; inconsistent school policies; resistance from some students or parents; limited activity support; gender stereotypes and cultural beliefs

Implementation was strengthened by supportive teachers, families, communities, school rules, active MAPEH programs, positive learner attitudes, equal participation, and activities that challenged stereotypes. These factors show that effective integration depends on both instructional practice and the surrounding school culture. Teachers provide models and learning experiences, school leaders establish expectations and resources, parents reinforce values, and learners determine whether inclusive norms are accepted in peer interactions. Positive climate research similarly emphasizes the combined contribution of relationships, institutional support, and shared participation (Bentsalo et al., 2025).

The barriers reveal the institutional conditions that can weaken otherwise promising activities. Inconsistent enforcement can make policies appear symbolic; insufficient training may leave teachers uncertain about sensitive language, intervention procedures, or equitable activity design; and limited materials or stakeholder support can restrict sustained implementation. Gender stereotypes and resistance also require careful dialogue rather than one-time information campaigns. These concerns justify regular professional development, clearer monitoring, accessible activity resources, parent engagement, and structured opportunities for teachers to share successful practices.

Simplified MAPEH Anti-Bullying and Gender Sensitivity Teacher's Guide

Table 4. *Priority Contents of the Proposed Teacher's Guide*

MAPEH Area	Priority Activities and Applications
Music	Respect-themed songs; choral and peer-led performance; inclusive repertoire; rotating leadership; critical listening and lyric discussion
Arts	Posters, digital art, murals, exhibits, slogans, and character design that challenge bullying and gender stereotypes
Physical Education	Cooperative games; mixed-gender teams; fair role assignment; peer coaching; inclusive dances; conflict resolution and sportsmanship
Health	Role-plays; guided discussions; reflective letters and journals; equality charters; awareness campaigns; help-seeking and reporting activities
School and Community Support	Policy orientation; teacher capacity building; parent and community participation; monitoring tools; peer sharing; resource mobilization

The study produced the Simplified MAPEH Anti-Bullying and Gender Sensitivity Teacher's Guide, described in the thesis as a collection of readings, tips, and action plans. Its purpose is to help teachers translate child protection and gender-responsive principles into practical Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health activities. The guide draws on areas of strength identified in the findings—particularly anti-bullying practices in

Physical Education and gender sensitivity practices in Arts—while providing strategies for components that were implemented less consistently.

The guide also responds to the significant differences among respondent groups by encouraging common expectations, consultation, and peer-sharing. It can support lesson planning, school campaigns, MAPEH club activities, culminating performances, intramurals, health programs, and community partnerships. Its value lies in treating anti-bullying and gender sensitivity not as isolated additions but as principles embedded in participation, leadership, communication, creativity, competition, and reflection.

CONCLUSION

Anti-bullying and gender sensitivity strategies were already integrated across the four MAPEH components in the selected public secondary schools, but the strength and consistency of implementation varied. Anti-bullying practices were strongest in Physical Education, while gender sensitivity practices were strongest in Arts. Music and Health also provided meaningful opportunities for cooperation, reflection, respectful communication, and inclusive participation, although their strategies were generally rated as much implemented rather than very much implemented. The significant differences in several stakeholder assessments further indicate that implementation was not always experienced or recognized uniformly.

The study demonstrates that MAPEH can serve as a practical curriculum-based platform for school safety, child protection, gender responsiveness, and inclusive education. Effective implementation depends on supportive teachers and school leaders, family and community participation, clear and consistently enforced policies, sufficient resources, positive learner attitudes, and continuous professional learning. The Simplified MAPEH Anti-Bullying and Gender Sensitivity Teacher's Guide represents the study's principal contribution by organizing these findings into accessible activities and action-oriented support for teachers and stakeholders.

Recommendation

The Department of Education and school leaders should document and share the effective anti-bullying practices observed in Physical Education and the gender-sensitive practices observed in Arts, then adapt them across Music, Health, and other school programs. Regular training, workshops, lesson demonstrations, and peer-sharing sessions should strengthen teachers' ability to manage bullying, use gender-sensitive language, design equitable roles, respond to incidents, and facilitate reflective discussion. Schools should also use common monitoring indicators to address the significant differences found among stakeholder assessments.

The proposed teacher guide should be disseminated to MAPEH teachers with orientation, opportunities for classroom testing, and mechanisms for teacher, learner, and parent feedback. Schools should strengthen policy enforcement, resource provision, parent and community partnerships, and awareness activities that address stereotypes and resistance. Future research should evaluate the guide's implementation and outcomes using larger samples, additional school divisions, learner-level data, and qualitative or mixed-method designs that can examine changes in behavior, school climate, participation, and reported bullying experiences.

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