

## Culturally Responsive Leadership and its Impact on Teacher Retention Intentions and Student Inclusivity

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<p><b>Corresponding Author Hamedi B. Kumaka</b></p> <p>Doctor of Education, Educational Management, Cotabto Foundation College of Science and Technology</p> <p><b>Article History</b></p> <p>Received: 16/ 01/ 2025                  Accepted: 30/ 01/ 2025                  Published: 02 / 02 /2025</p>	<p><b>Abstract:</b> Culturally responsive leadership (CRL) is essential in fostering inclusive educational environments and improving teacher retention. This study explores the relationship between CRL, teacher retention intentions, and student inclusivity in diverse school settings. Using a mixed-methods approach, survey and interview data were collected from school administrators, teachers, and students to examine leadership strategies that support cultural responsiveness. Quantitative findings indicate a positive correlation between CRL and teacher retention, as inclusive leadership practices enhance job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Qualitative data further reveal that CRL fosters a sense of belonging among students, promoting equity and active participation in learning. The study underscores the need for professional development in culturally responsive leadership to sustain diverse and inclusive school communities.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Culturally Responsive Leadership, Teacher Retention, Student Inclusivity, Educational Leadership, Diversity in Education, Equity in Schools, Inclusive Learning Environments, Teacher Job Satisfaction, School Leadership Practices, Organizational Commitment</p>
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### Introduction

Culturally responsive leadership (CRL) is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in addressing the diverse needs of students in multicultural educational settings, fostering an inclusive environment where cultural diversity is embraced, all students receive the support necessary to thrive academically and socially, and teachers are empowered to implement practices that reflect and respect the cultural backgrounds of their students.

However, the problem is that many administrators lack the cultural competence necessary to lead effectively in diverse environments, as leadership programs often prioritize managerial skills over cultural awareness (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016). This gap is not limited to Western contexts; in the Philippines, Maligalig et al. (2010) found that fewer than 30% of school leaders in Mindanao had received any diversity training, which impacts their ability to foster inclusive education.

Anent this, teacher retention in diverse schools is a growing concern. Ingersoll and May (2011) found that teachers in schools with high minority populations in the U.S. are 50% more likely to leave their positions within the first five years due to inadequate support from culturally responsive leadership. This issue is echoed in the Philippines, where teachers report feeling unsupported and disconnected from their students, contributing to high turnover rates (Santiago II, Santos, & Santiago-Centeno, 2022).

Similarly, student inclusivity remains a significant concern. OECD (2015), show that students from ethnic minorities are less likely to actively participate in classroom discussions. Furthermore, the lack of culturally relevant curricula has been shown to negatively impact minority students' academic success and school attendance (Sleeter, 2011). In the Philippines, the Department of Education (2020) has highlighted disparities in curriculum representation, which further underscores the importance of culturally responsive leadership in ensuring inclusivity.

While the literature on CRL has grown, there is a noticeable gap in empirical research exploring the direct impact of CRL on teacher retention intentions and student inclusivity, particularly in culturally sensitive contexts such as the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Studies like those by Khalifa et al. (2016) focus primarily on Western contexts, where the sociopolitical landscape differs significantly from the challenges faced in regions like BARMM. The unique cultural dynamics in such regions—including issues related to cultural trauma and community tensions—are underexplored in current literature, pointing to the need for localized research in the Philippine context.

Moreover, while studies such as Ingersoll and May (2011) have explored teacher turnover in diverse schools, there is limited research connecting culturally responsive leadership practices specifically to teacher retention intentions. Existing studies on teacher retention generally address leadership styles in broad terms, but few focus on how culturally responsive leadership directly influences teachers' decisions to stay or leave their positions. Santiago II et al. (2022) highlighted factors affecting teacher turnover in the Philippines but did not examine how culturally inclusive leadership might mitigate these challenges.

Finally, much of the existing literature on student inclusivity has concentrated on curricular reforms rather than leadership practices. While Gay (2010) and Sleeter (2011) emphasize the role of culturally relevant curricula in fostering inclusivity, less attention has been paid to how leadership behaviors can directly promote an inclusive school environment. There is a need for more research that examines how school leaders use culturally responsive strategies not only in curriculum development, but also in policy implementation, student support services, and extracurricular activities.

This study aims to address these gaps by exploring how culturally responsive leadership influences teacher retention intentions and student inclusivity in the Philippine educational context, particularly in regions with complex socio-cultural dynamics.

### Statement of the Problem

The general objective of this study is to contextualize the practices of culturally responsive leadership and determine its impact on teacher retention intentions and student inclusivity in BARMM Region for the school year 2024-2025. Specifically, this study seeks answers to the following questions:

#### Phase 1: Exploring Teachers' Perspectives on Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices Among School Heads

- What are the themes describing practices on culturally responsive leadership among school heads as perceived by teachers?

#### Phase 2: Culturally Responsive Leadership and Its Impact on Teacher Retention Intentions and Student Inclusivity

- What are the underlying factors identified through Exploratory Factor Analysis in the questionnaire assessing culturally responsive leadership, and what is the reliability level of the instrument?
- What is the level of practice of culturally responsive leadership in terms of (indicators to be developed) as perceived by teachers?
- What is the status of teachers' intention retentions in terms of job satisfaction, professional development opportunities, and workplace climate and support?
- What is the level of practice of student inclusivity in terms of cultural representation in curriculum, student participation, and equity in resources and opportunities?
- Is there a significant relationship between culturally responsive leadership and teacher retention intentions?
- Do culturally responsive leadership practices significantly influence teachers' retention intentions?

- Is there a significant relationship between culturally responsive leadership and student inclusivity?
- Do culturally responsive practices significantly influence student inclusivity?

#### Phase 3: Policy that can be Formulated based on the Results of the Study

- What policy brief can be formulated to enhance culturally responsive leadership practices, improve teacher retention, and foster greater student inclusivity based on the findings of the study?

#### Significance of the Study

The results of this study may bear relevance to the following:

- **To Policymakers.** This study highlights the need for integrating cultural competence into leadership training programs and policies to address the diverse needs of students and teachers. Its findings can guide the development of inclusive educational policies, particularly in culturally sensitive regions like BARMM.
- **To School Administrators.** The study provides practical insights on how culturally responsive leadership can improve teacher retention and student inclusivity. Administrators can use these findings to implement professional development programs and foster a more supportive school environment.
- **To Teachers.** Teachers can benefit from understanding how culturally responsive leadership creates a supportive environment, empowering them to address diverse student needs effectively. This study encourages reflective practices to enhance inclusivity and equity in the classroom.
- **To Future Researchers.** This study serves as a foundation for exploring culturally responsive leadership's impact on teacher retention and student inclusivity in non-Western contexts. It also opens avenues for further research in quantitative and localized studies in the Philippines.

#### Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study will contextualize culturally responsive leadership (CRL) practices by focusing exclusively on the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), specifically in the divisions of Maguindanao Del Sur and the Special Geographic Area. The themes to be developed are based solely on this region to reflect its unique socio-cultural context.

The study will be conducted in three phases. In the first phase, it will explore teachers' perspectives on culturally responsive leadership practices among school heads to develop contextualized themes. A total of 20 teachers will be invited for in-depth interviews. These themes will then serve as the foundation for designing a questionnaire to assess the level of culturally responsive leadership in the region.

The second phase will examine the impact of culturally responsive leadership on teacher retention intentions and student inclusivity. It will also identify underlying factors through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and determine the reliability level of the developed questionnaire. A total of 321 respondents will participate in completing the survey to gather quantitative data on these aspects.

Finally, in the third phase, a policy framework will be crafted based on the findings of the study to provide actionable recommendations for improving culturally responsive leadership practices in the BARMM context.

**Operational Definition of Terms**

- **Cultural Representation in Curriculum.** This refers to the extent to which the school curriculum includes and reflects diverse cultural perspectives, histories, and contributions, ensuring that students from various cultural backgrounds see themselves represented and acknowledged in their education.
- **Cultural Responsiveness.** This refers to leadership and practices in schools that are rooted in and reflective of the culture of the community they serve. It ensures that policies, teaching methods, and interactions are aligned with the community's cultural values, traditions, and needs to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment.
- **Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL).** This refers leadership practices that are sensitive to and inclusive of the diverse cultural backgrounds of both students and staff. It involves school leaders using culturally relevant strategies to create an environment where all students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally, while empowering teachers to implement inclusive practices that reflect cultural diversity.
- **Equity in Resources and Opportunities.** This refers to the equitable distribution of educational resources and opportunities, ensuring that all students have access to the same level of support, extracurricular activities, learning materials, and other resources that contribute to their academic and social development.
- **Job Satisfaction.** This refers to the level of contentment teachers experience with various aspects of their job, including their work environment, compensation, leadership, and relationship with students.
- **Professional Development Opportunities.** This refers to the availability and accessibility of learning and growth opportunities for teachers, such as training, workshops, conferences, and other forms of career advancement that enhance their skills and knowledge.
- **Student Inclusivity.** This refers to the practices, policies, and conditions that ensure all students, regardless of cultural background or individual differences, feel respected, valued, and have equal access to educational opportunities.
- **Student Participation.** This refers to the degree to which students actively engage in classroom activities, discussions, and decision-making processes, with a particular focus on ensuring that students from marginalized.
- **Teacher Retention Intentions.** In this study, teacher retention intentions refer to the likelihood that teachers plan to remain in their current teaching position and profession, influenced by factors such as job satisfaction, opportunities for professional growth, and the support they receive in their work environment.
- **Workplace Climate and Support.** This refers to the overall environment and support system within the school, including the degree to which teachers feel

valued, supported by school leaders, and empowered to perform their roles effectively.

**Review of Related Literature**

This section contains some detailed information on related studies and literature that have a direct bearing on the development of the conceptual framework and in providing directions for the study.

**Culturally Responsive Leadership**

Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL) emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural differences and tailoring leadership strategies to meet the needs of diverse students. As argued by Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis (2016), CRL involves understanding the cultural assets that students bring to the classroom and using that knowledge to create inclusive learning environments. School leaders who practice CRL focus on fostering relationships with students, teachers, and communities, prioritizing equity and justice in their decision-making. This approach is essential in creating schools where all students, regardless of their backgrounds, can thrive academically and socially.

Leaders who embrace CRL are committed to challenging systemic inequities and fostering an environment where all students can succeed. Culturally responsive leaders must confront issues related to race, class, and social justice, working to dismantle systems that marginalize certain groups of students. These leaders take intentional actions to ensure that all students, particularly those from marginalized communities, have equal access to resources and support, ensuring an equitable educational experience for all (Howard, 2019).

Moreover, in their study, Brown and Kysilka (2011) emphasize that school leaders must work towards creating an atmosphere where cultural differences are not only accepted but celebrated. Leaders who engage in CRL foster an environment where students feel safe and valued, and where they can express their cultural identities without fear of discrimination. By modeling these inclusive behaviors, leaders set the tone for the entire school community.

In a similar vein, culturally responsive leadership requires ongoing reflection and professional development. Leaders must engage in continuous learning to improve their cultural competence. This means developing the ability to understand and address the cultural needs of students and teachers alike. Through professional development, school leaders can ensure that their staff is prepared to work in diverse environments, making CRL an ongoing, dynamic process (Villegas & Lucas, 2012).

CRL also advocates for a curriculum that reflects diverse cultural perspectives. Banks (2015) suggested leaders must ensure that the curriculum represents a wide range of cultures, perspectives, and historical experiences. This not only enriches students' learning experiences but also helps to prepare them for a globalized society. By implementing culturally relevant curriculum practices, leaders ensure that students from all cultural backgrounds can relate to the content being taught, increasing engagement and academic achievement (Banks, 2015).

In addition to curriculum and instruction, culturally responsive leaders must also engage with families and communities. Dantley and Tillman (2010) argue that successful CRL requires school leaders to build strong, trusting relationships

with families, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds. Engaging with families in a meaningful way allows leaders to gain insights into students' home lives and cultural values, which can help inform school practices. Through such partnerships, leaders can also advocate for family involvement in decision-making, ensuring that all voices are heard and respected (Dantley & Tillman, 2010).

Culturally responsive leadership also involves mentoring and supporting teachers to create inclusive classrooms. School leaders must provide ongoing support and professional development opportunities for teachers to build their cultural competence. This mentorship helps teachers understand the importance of being responsive to the cultural and emotional needs of their students. When teachers are supported in developing their cultural awareness, they are better able to create inclusive and engaging classroom environments that meet the diverse needs of their students (Arar & Haj, 2020).

Gorski (2018) stresses that CRL is not simply about improving classroom instruction but also about challenging the broader educational system that perpetuates inequities. This includes advocating for policies that ensure all students, regardless of their background, have equal access to resources, support, and opportunities. By engaging in these systemic changes, leaders can make lasting improvements to the educational environment and promote long-term success for all students (Gorski, 2018).

Culturally responsive leadership requires that leaders create an inclusive school climate where every student feels valued. As stated by Ladson-Billings (2014), culturally responsive leaders must establish a school climate that reflects the values of diversity, inclusion, and equity. This involves implementing policies and practices that address students' cultural, emotional, and academic needs. It also requires leaders to continuously evaluate the school's environment, ensuring that it fosters a sense of belonging for all students, particularly those from underrepresented groups (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

Finally, CRL encourages leaders to support student agency and leadership. Brown (2016) mentioned that culturally responsive leaders empower students to take an active role in their own education and in advocating for their needs. This involves providing students with leadership opportunities and encouraging them to voice their opinions on issues that affect their learning. By fostering student agency, leaders ensure that students develop the skills and confidence needed to succeed academically and socially (Brown, 2016).

### **Teachers Retention Intentions**

Teacher retention intentions refer to the factors and motivations that influence a teacher's decision to remain in the profession over time. These intentions are shaped by a variety of personal and professional elements, including job satisfaction, support from colleagues and administration, opportunities for professional development, and the overall work environment. Studies have shown that teachers who perceive their schools as providing strong professional support and positive work conditions are more likely to express a commitment to stay in the field (Borman & Dowling, 2012).

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction plays a crucial role in influencing teachers' decisions to stay in the profession. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011)

found that when teachers experience high levels of job satisfaction, they are more likely to remain in their positions, reducing turnover rates. Teachers who feel valued and supported are less inclined to leave, which underscores the importance of creating positive and conducive work environments. The study emphasizes that schools must focus on improving teachers' job satisfaction as a strategy for retaining talented educators. Overall, job satisfaction is a key factor in shaping teachers' retention intentions, making it a priority for school leadership to address.

In their study, Klassen and Chiu (2011) explored the relationship between job satisfaction and teachers' intention to leave or remain in the profession. Their findings highlight that teachers who are satisfied with their work environment are significantly more likely to continue teaching. Dissatisfaction, on the other hand, can lead to higher turnover rates, which disrupts the educational process. This underscores the necessity of policies that enhance job satisfaction, such as professional development opportunities and a positive school culture. Improving job satisfaction is thus a crucial step toward reducing teacher attrition.

McCarthy et al. (2010) conducted a study that demonstrated a clear link between job satisfaction and teacher retention. Teachers who reported higher levels of job satisfaction were less likely to leave the profession, indicating that satisfaction directly influences retention rates. Factors such as work-life balance, school leadership, and classroom conditions were identified as significant contributors to job satisfaction. The study suggests that addressing these factors could help reduce teacher turnover. Consequently, improving job satisfaction should be a central goal for educational institutions aiming to retain their staff.

Pressley et al. (2023) examined the impact of administrative support on teachers' job satisfaction and retention. They found that strong leadership and support from school administrators played a significant role in improving teachers' well-being. When teachers feel supported by their administrators, their job satisfaction increases, which in turn boosts their intention to remain in the profession. This is particularly important in high-stress environments, where support can mitigate burnout and job dissatisfaction. Their findings highlight that effective leadership is essential for creating an environment where teachers are motivated to stay.

Finally, it was concluded that job satisfaction is one of the most consistent predictors of whether teachers will stay in or leave the profession. The study suggests that interventions aimed at improving job satisfaction, such as reducing workload and increasing compensation, can significantly reduce teacher turnover. By focusing on these areas, schools can improve retention rates and ensure a more stable teaching workforce. Overall, their research supports the idea that job satisfaction is a critical factor in addressing teacher attrition (Nguyen et al., 2020)

### **Professional Development Opportunities**

Professional development opportunities are essential for enhancing teacher satisfaction and retention. In a study by Ingersoll and Strong (2011), it was found that teachers who participated in ongoing professional development programs were more likely to remain in their roles. These opportunities help teachers improve their skills, feel more competent, and develop stronger connections with their profession. Furthermore, the study emphasized that professional development tailored to teachers' needs and interests results in a more satisfied and committed teaching workforce.

Overall, supporting teachers' professional growth is a key factor in reducing attrition rates.

In a different study, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) highlighted the direct correlation between professional development and teacher retention. They pointed out that teachers who engage in high-quality, sustained professional learning experiences are more likely to stay in the profession long-term. These opportunities not only improve instructional skills but also create a sense of professional fulfillment and confidence. The study concluded that districts that invest in continuous professional development programs see a reduction in turnover and an increase in teacher job satisfaction.

Furthermore, research by Goe et al. (2013) found that teachers who have access to effective professional development opportunities are more likely to stay committed to teaching, especially in high-needs schools. The study revealed that teachers who felt supported through professional growth initiatives were less likely to leave their jobs. Professional development programs that encourage collaboration, peer feedback, and shared learning experiences were identified as particularly effective in retaining teachers. The research highlights the importance of creating professional learning communities to foster teacher engagement and retention.

A study by Akiba et al. (2019) examined the impact of professional development on teacher retention in various educational contexts. It was found that teachers who had opportunities for professional growth, including mentoring, specialized training, and workshops, were more likely to stay in their schools. The study also emphasized that professional development should be relevant and aligned with teachers' daily challenges to be effective in boosting retention. Teachers who felt their professional development was practical and directly applicable to their teaching environment were more likely to remain in the profession.

Lastly, a more recent study by Robinson et al. (2021) explored the role of professional development in teacher retention during the pandemic. Their research indicated that teachers who had access to online professional development and resources during school closures reported higher levels of job satisfaction and lower intentions of leaving the profession. The study stressed that even during challenging times, providing ongoing support through professional development helps teachers adapt to changes, maintain morale, and feel valued in their roles. Thus, professional development remains a critical factor for retention, particularly in times of crisis.

### **Workplace Climate and Support**

Workplace climate plays a pivotal role in shaping teachers' retention decisions. A study by Kothen and Evers (2016) found that teachers who perceive their work environment as supportive and collaborative are significantly more likely to stay in their roles. Positive relationships with colleagues and administrators were highlighted as key factors that contribute to a supportive workplace climate. The research emphasized that fostering a school culture that encourages open communication and collaboration can help reduce teacher turnover. Thus, the workplace climate is a critical determinant of teacher retention intentions.

In a similar vein, a study by Johnson et al. (2014) explored the relationship between supportive work environments and teacher retention. They identified that teachers who received strong

emotional and professional support from their peers and school leaders were more committed to staying in their positions. The study revealed that teachers who felt isolated or unsupported were more likely to leave the profession. This underlines the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive work culture where teachers feel valued and connected to the school community.

Further research by Grissom and Strunk (2012) found that workplace support is directly correlated with teachers' job satisfaction and retention. Their study highlighted the significance of mentorship programs and administrative backing in preventing teacher burnout and attrition. Teachers who had access to these forms of support reported higher levels of job satisfaction and were more likely to remain in the profession. The study concluded that fostering a culture of mutual support within schools is essential for improving teacher retention rates.

A 2018 study by Murnane et al. examined the impact of workplace climate and support on teacher retention, especially in urban schools. They found that teachers in schools with a positive and supportive climate were more likely to remain, even in challenging environments. Factors such as administrative support, peer collaboration, and professional development opportunities were found to enhance teachers' perceptions of their workplace. The study recommended that school leaders prioritize creating supportive environments to retain effective teachers, especially in high-needs schools.

In more recent research, Vandenberghe et al. (2020) explored the effect of organizational support on teacher retention intentions. They discovered that a supportive workplace, characterized by fair treatment, recognition, and opportunities for growth, directly influenced teachers' commitment to their schools. Teachers who felt that their efforts were appreciated and their professional development was supported reported higher levels of job satisfaction and were more likely to stay. The study emphasized that providing both emotional and practical support to teachers is crucial in maintaining a stable and committed teaching workforce.

### **Student Inclusivity**

Student inclusivity refers to the practice of creating an educational environment where all students feel valued, respected, and fully integrated into the learning community. This concept encompasses equitable access to resources, opportunities, and participation, regardless of students' backgrounds, abilities, or identities. Booth and Ainscow (2011) define student inclusivity as a systemic approach to addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners by reducing barriers to participation and achievement. Inclusive practices promote a sense of belonging, ensuring that every student feels acknowledged and supported within the classroom and the broader school culture. By fostering inclusivity, schools contribute to both academic success and the social-emotional well-being of their students (Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

### **Cultural Representation in Curriculum**

The integration of cultural representation in the curriculum plays a crucial role in fostering inclusivity among students. A study by Ladson-Billings (2014) explored how culturally relevant teaching practices positively impacted student engagement and inclusivity. By incorporating diverse cultural perspectives, teachers not only validate the experiences of students from different backgrounds but also create an environment where all students feel

represented. This practice encourages greater academic involvement and helps to reduce feelings of alienation. The research underscores the importance of curriculum development that embraces cultural diversity as a tool for promoting student inclusivity.

In another study, Banks (2015) examined the role of multicultural education in enhancing student inclusivity. The findings suggested that when students see their cultures reflected in the curriculum, they develop a stronger sense of belonging and identity. This sense of inclusion has been linked to improved academic performance and social integration. Moreover, Banks emphasized that curriculum adjustments to include diverse cultural narratives not only benefit minority students but also enrich the educational experience for all students by broadening their perspectives. The research highlights the transformative power of culturally responsive curricula in promoting inclusivity.

A more recent study by Grant and Sleeter (2020) focused on the impact of cultural representation on the academic outcomes of students in multicultural classrooms. They found that when teachers incorporated cultural diversity into their teaching materials, students from marginalized groups were more likely to excel academically. Furthermore, the inclusion of varied cultural perspectives was found to promote empathy and respect among peers, fostering a more inclusive classroom environment. The study advocates for the implementation of culturally inclusive curricula as a way to enhance academic and social outcomes for all students, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds.

A study by Gay (2018) argued that culturally responsive teaching, which includes integrating diverse cultural perspectives into the curriculum, is essential for achieving student inclusivity. Gay's research demonstrated that when educators recognize and address the cultural backgrounds of their students, they are better equipped to engage all learners. By acknowledging the cultural identities of students, teachers can provide more meaningful learning experiences that resonate with diverse groups. The study suggests that culturally inclusive curricula can bridge gaps in educational achievement, particularly for students who have historically been marginalized.

In their 2019 research, Wilson et al. explored the effects of culturally representative curricula on students' sense of belonging and participation in school activities. Their findings indicated that students who learned about their own cultures and those of their peers were more likely to feel included and valued within the school community. This inclusivity, in turn, led to better overall academic performance and lower dropout rates. The study emphasizes that curriculum inclusivity does not only promote positive academic outcomes but also supports the development of a supportive and respectful school culture.

### **Student Participation**

Student participation fosters inclusivity by providing all learners an opportunity to engage actively with classroom activities. Skinner et al. (2013) found that when students were encouraged to participate, their sense of belonging within the learning environment improved significantly. This participation also contributed to higher levels of academic engagement and emotional connection with peers. The study emphasized that inclusive classrooms often stem from teachers creating spaces where students feel safe to express their thoughts. By actively

engaging students, schools can bridge the gap between marginalized and well-represented learners (Skinner et al., 2013).

A study by Fielding (2012) highlighted that participatory teaching strategies build a more inclusive educational culture. Teachers who allow students to contribute ideas or collaborate on curriculum decisions ensure diverse perspectives are acknowledged. This engagement increases student ownership of learning, promoting inclusivity by integrating varied cultural and personal experiences. Fielding's findings suggest that students who feel valued and included in the learning process are more likely to connect with peers and perform better academically. Participation is thus essential for fostering a sense of community within the classroom (Fielding, 2012).

Collaborative group work and peer interactions significantly contribute to student participation and inclusivity. Vygotsky's framework, revisited in Daniels (2016), supports the idea that social participation enhances learning for students from all backgrounds. Daniels' research observed that inclusive group settings allowed students to share unique insights, which broadened the understanding of all participants. This participatory method not only benefits individual academic performance but also helps in reducing biases and increasing mutual respect among classmates. Such strategies provide an equal platform for all students, reinforcing inclusivity (Daniels, 2016).

Research by Armstrong and Spandagou (2011) emphasized the link between participation and inclusivity for students with disabilities. Their study found that inclusive classrooms where students with disabilities were given equal opportunities to participate helped dismantle barriers to social integration. Furthermore, such participation allowed peers to develop empathy and understanding of diverse abilities. Armstrong and Spandagou argued that facilitating student participation requires both curriculum adaptation and teacher training, which together ensure equitable engagement for all learners. Participation thus becomes a mechanism for fostering inclusivity in diverse classrooms (Armstrong & Spandagou, 2011).

In the context of digital learning, student participation has shown to be a critical element of inclusivity. Hrastinski (2019) explored the role of online forums and discussions in creating inclusive virtual classrooms. The study observed that students who were hesitant to participate in face-to-face settings were more active in digital platforms. These interactions helped them feel part of the learning community, ultimately fostering inclusivity. Hrastinski concluded that designing participatory digital tools enables all students to engage, ensuring equitable learning opportunities regardless of physical or social barriers (Hrastinski, 2019).

### **Equity in Resources and Opportunities**

Equity in resources and opportunities is fundamental to fostering inclusivity in education. Darling-Hammond (2010) argued that unequal access to educational resources, such as technology, qualified teachers, and extracurricular programs, perpetuates disparities in academic outcomes. Her study highlighted that schools serving low-income communities often face significant resource deficits, which hinder students' ability to engage and thrive. Ensuring equitable resource allocation addresses these disparities and creates an environment where all students have an equal chance to succeed. This underscores the importance



of targeted investments in underserved schools to promote inclusivity and academic equity (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Resource equity directly influences students’ sense of belonging and inclusion within their schools. A study by Milner (2012) found that schools with sufficient learning materials and well-maintained facilities saw higher levels of student engagement and inclusivity. Students from marginalized groups were more likely to feel valued when their schools provided resources comparable to those in more affluent communities. Milner’s research emphasized that resource gaps not only affect academic performance but also undermine students’ confidence and their perception of fairness within the educational system. Bridging these gaps is crucial for building inclusive learning environments (Milner, 2012).

Opportunities for advanced coursework and extracurricular activities also reflect equity and inclusivity in education. Oakes and Saunders (2014) examined the disparities in access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses and gifted programs, finding that students from minority and low-income backgrounds were often underrepresented. This lack of access limited their opportunities for academic advancement and social integration. The study advocated for systemic changes to ensure that all students, regardless of socioeconomic status, have access to programs that enhance their learning and development. Such equity in opportunities is vital for fostering a culture of inclusion in schools (Oakes & Saunders, 2014).

Access to technology has become an increasingly critical factor in achieving equity and inclusivity. Warschauer et al. (2014) explored the digital divide in schools, revealing that students from underprivileged backgrounds often lacked access to essential technological tools and internet connectivity. This disparity negatively impacted their ability to engage in modern learning practices and contributed to feelings of exclusion.

Equity in opportunities is closely linked to teacher distribution and quality. Podolsky et al. (2016) highlighted that schools in low-income areas are more likely to employ less experienced or underqualified teachers, which affects the quality of education students receive. This inequity perpetuates cycles of disadvantage and exclusion for students in these schools. Their research recommended policy changes that incentivize experienced educators to work in underserved areas, thereby ensuring all students have access to high-quality teaching (Podolsky et al., 2016).

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study centers on Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL) as the independent variable and its impact on two dependent variables: teacher retention intentions and student inclusivity. To underpin this framework, two key theories are utilized: Transformational Leadership Theory by Bass (1985) and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy by Gay (2010).

Transformational Leadership Theory, as proposed by Bass (1985), emphasizes the role of leaders in inspiring and motivating their followers to exceed expectations through individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and fostering a shared vision. When applied to CRL, transformational leadership aligns with the need for school leaders to actively engage in culturally responsive practices. These leaders can inspire teachers by creating supportive environments that respect cultural diversity and

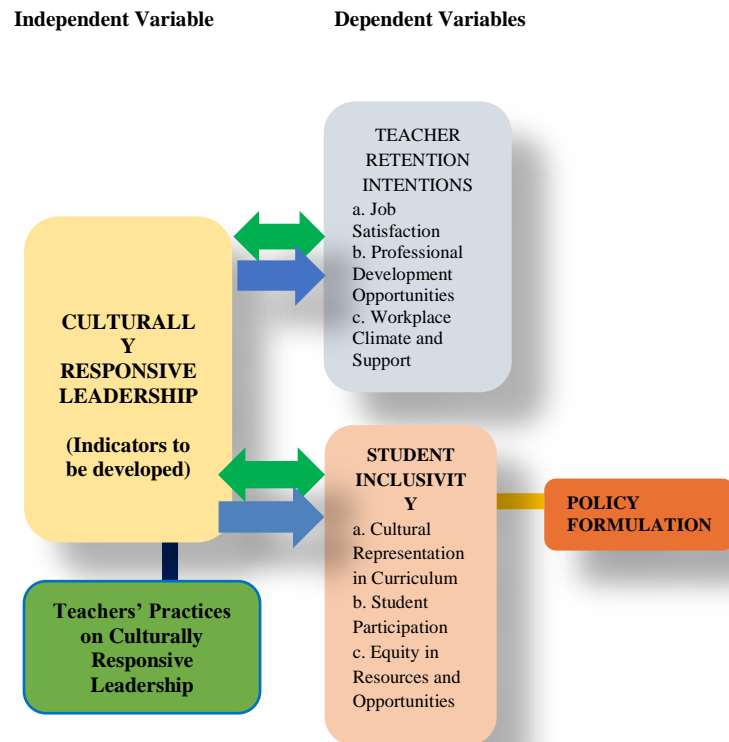
empower them to address the unique needs of their students. By fostering a shared vision of inclusivity and equity, transformational leadership provides the foundation for retaining teachers in culturally diverse schools.

On the other hand, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, as introduced by Gay (2010), focuses on incorporating students’ cultural backgrounds into all aspects of the educational process to enhance learning outcomes and engagement. This theory emphasizes the importance of creating culturally inclusive environments where students feel represented, respected, and empowered. When school leaders adopt culturally relevant approaches, they enable teachers to implement practices that foster inclusivity, which directly benefits students by promoting active participation and academic success.

In this study, CRL acts as the critical independent variable, defined as the practices and behaviors of school leaders that reflect cultural awareness, inclusivity, and responsiveness. The dependent variables—teacher retention intentions and student inclusivity—are directly influenced by CRL. Teachers are more likely to remain in their positions when they perceive strong leadership support that aligns with their cultural values and professional needs, as supported by findings from Ingersoll and May (2011). Simultaneously, students are more likely to feel included and thrive academically when school leaders prioritize culturally relevant curricula, policies, and support systems, as highlighted by Sleeter (2011).

This framework connects the transformational aspects of leadership with culturally responsive practices, demonstrating how leadership behaviors can foster an environment that supports both teacher retention and student inclusivity.

**Conceptual Framework**



**Figure 1.** Schematic representation of the independent and dependent variables of the study

**Hypotheses**

- There is no significant relationship between culturally responsive leadership, teacher retention intentions, and student inclusivity.
- Culturally responsive leadership practices do not significantly influence teacher retention intentions and student inclusivity.

**Methodology**

This chapter details the systematic approach employed in the study, including the research design, which outlines the framework for achieving the objectives. The locale of the study is described to contextualize the research setting, followed by an identification of the respondents and the sampling procedure used to select them. The research instruments are specified to ensure reliable data collection, while the data gathering procedure explains the step-by-step process of acquiring the necessary information. Also, the data analysis section outlines the methods used to interpret the collected data, ensuring validity and relevance to the research objectives. Finally, the researcher’s role and ethical considerations are also discussed in this chapter.

**Research Design**

This study will adopt a mixed-method design, specifically an exploratory sequential design, to investigate the relationship between culturally responsive leadership and its impact on teacher retention intentions and student inclusivity in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). An exploratory sequential design involves conducting a qualitative phase first to explore the research problem, followed by a quantitative phase to test and generalize the findings (Creswell, 2014).

In the first phase, qualitative data will be collected to identify and develop themes related to culturally responsive leadership in the context of BARMM. This phase will involve in-depth interviews or focus group discussions with educators, administrators, and other stakeholders to gain insights into their experiences and perceptions of culturally responsive leadership practices. The resulting themes will form the basis for developing a structured questionnaire in the next phase (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

The second phase will involve collecting quantitative data using a questionnaire developed from the qualitative themes identified in Phase 1. The questionnaire will undergo Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), a statistical method used to uncover underlying relationships among observed variables and organize them into factors (Field, 2013). This process will help refine the questionnaire and highlight the key dimensions of culturally responsive leadership, teacher retention intentions, and student inclusivity. Reliability analysis (Cronbach, 1951) will also be conducted to evaluate the consistency and stability of the instrument across different respondents.

In this phase, the study will assess the levels of culturally responsive leadership practices, teacher retention intentions, and student inclusivity among respondents. Additionally, it will examine the relationships between these variables to determine if culturally responsive leadership practices have a significant influence on teacher retention and student inclusivity. Correlation and regression analysis will be employed to explore these relationships and provide a deeper understanding of the impact of

culturally responsive leadership in the educational context of BARMM.

In the third phase, the study will formulate policy recommendations based on the findings from the previous phases. The goal is to identify strategies that can enhance culturally responsive leadership practices, improve teacher retention, and foster greater student inclusivity in BARMM. The policy recommendations will be grounded in the study's results, with a focus on addressing the specific needs and challenges identified in the region's educational context.

**Locale of the Study**

This study will take place in the divisions of Maguindanao Del Sur and the Special Geographic Area (SGA) within the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) during the qualitative phase. In the quantitative phase, however, only the SGA division will serve as the study's locale.

Maguindanao Del Sur, a province in BARMM, is recognized for its rich cultural heritage and predominantly rural communities. Its population engages in a blend of traditional and modern livelihoods, such as agriculture and trade. Despite its cultural vibrancy, the province grapples with challenges in infrastructure development, educational access, and socio-economic inequalities, making it a vital area for examining the implementation of culturally responsive leadership (Bangsamoro Information Office, 2019).

The Special Geographic Area (SGA) in BARMM comprises 63 barangays that opted to join BARMM through the 2019 plebiscite. These barangays, although geographically spread across six towns in Cotabato Province, are under BARMM’s administrative jurisdiction. The SGA is characterized by its rural and remote communities, where schools encounter unique challenges, including limited infrastructure, resources, and accessibility (Bangsamoro Information Office, 2019).

Together, these divisions provide a valuable lens for exploring the varied educational and socio-cultural contexts within BARMM, particularly in relation to implementing culturally responsive leadership in diverse rural and urban settings.

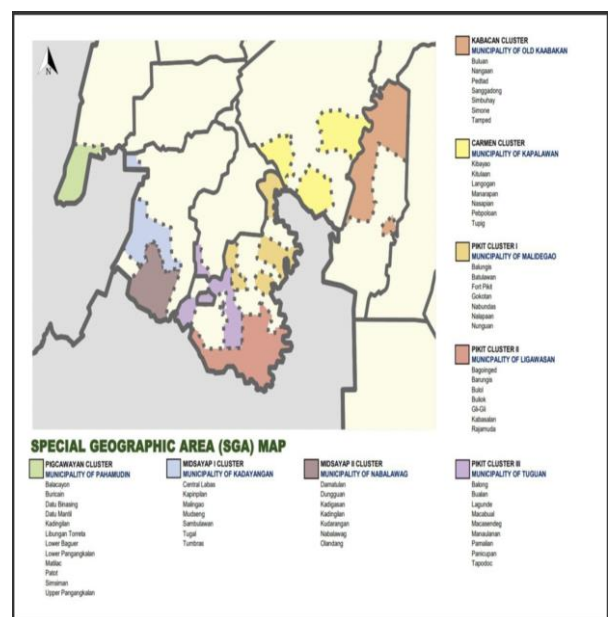


Figure 2. Map showing the location of the study (MindaNews,

2024)



**Respondents/Participants of the Study**

In the qualitative phase, the key informants will be divided into two groups representing the Schools Division of Maguindanao Del Sur and the Special Geographic Area (SGA) in BARMM. Each group will consist of 10 participants, selected based on their roles and experience in educational leadership, particularly in culturally responsive practices. These participants will primarily include senior teachers with extensive knowledge of the unique socio-cultural dynamics of their respective divisions. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) will be conducted to allow an in-depth exploration of their perspectives, experiences, and insights on culturally responsive leadership. These discussions aim to uncover key themes and practices that align with the local cultural context, providing a foundational understanding for the subsequent quantitative phase.

In the quantitative phase, 321 teachers from the Special Geographic Area Division will be surveyed using structured questionnaires. These teachers will be selected to ensure a representative sample across various schools within the division. The questionnaires will be designed to measure three critical dimensions: (1) the extent of implementation of culturally responsive leadership, (2) teachers’ retention intentions, and (3) student inclusivity. The data collected will provide a broader understanding of how culturally responsive leadership practices influence teacher retention and foster an inclusive environment for students. This phase will quantify the impact and prevalence of such leadership practices, complementing the qualitative insights from the FGDs.

Table 1 shows the data distribution of the respondents and informants within the divisions of Maguindanao Del Sur and SGA in BARMM.

**Table 1.** Distribution of research respondents/participants of the study

Special Geographic Area	No. of Teachers	No. of Respondents	No. of Informants
Kapalawan	157	34	
Old Kaabacan	136	31	
Kadayangan	172	25	
Nabalawag	183	38	
Pahamuddin 1	148	33	10
Pahamuddin 2	165	36	
Malidegao-1	192	27	
Malidegao-2	169	29	
Ligawasan	129	33	
Tugunan	178	35	
<b>Maguindanao Del Sur</b>	-	-	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1629</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>20</b>

**Sampling Procedure**

In the qualitative phase, the researcher will use purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique where participants are selected based on specific characteristics and relevance to the study’s focus. This approach ensures that participants can provide rich, detailed insights into culturally responsive leadership practices. Hence, the criteria to be set are as follows: a. regular-permanent teacher; and b. senior teacher with 10 above years of experience.

For the quantitative phase, the researcher will employ Slovin’s formula to determine the appropriate sample size for the study. Given that the population consists of 1, 629 teachers, the calculated sample size is 321. Then, the study will adopt proportional allocation sampling to determine the distribution of respondents across the different municipalities. This method ensures that the sample size from each municipality reflects its proportion in relation to the total population. The sample size for each municipality is calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Sample size per municipality} = \frac{\text{Total population}}{\text{Population of division}} \times \text{Total sample size}$$

In this study, the identified sample size in the Special Geographic Area (SGA) Division is 321. Based on this total sample size, it will be divided by the total population of the entire division, which is 1,629. The result will then be multiplied by the total population of teachers per municipality.

**Research Instrument**

In the qualitative phase, the study will utilize an interview guide that includes a primary question, and probing questions derived from the statement of the problem. This interview guide will be assessed by experts for content validity to ensure the questions are relevant and accurate. The themes identified in this phase will inform the development of a questionnaire focused on culturally responsive leadership practices.

In the quantitative phase, the study will employ a researcher-developed questionnaire, which will also undergo content validity assessment to verify that it accurately measures the intended constructs. To ensure reliability, the researcher will conduct a pilot test, which will evaluate the internal consistency of the questionnaire. This pilot test will assess how well the items collectively measure the same construct and examine their interrelatedness.

**Data Gathering Procedure**

The study will follow a structured approach, beginning with sending communication letters to the Schools Division Superintendents in BARMM Region specifically in the divisions of Maguindanao Del Sur and the Special Geographic Area. After receiving approval, these letters will be forwarded to the heads of the selected schools.

For data collection, 20 teacher-participants, will be purposefully selected for In-depth interviews to gain qualitative insights. Additionally, a survey will be administered to 321 teachers to gather quantitative data. Participation in the study will be entirely voluntary, with strict measures implemented to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all participants throughout the research process, thereby adhering to ethical standards and protecting participant information.

## Data Analysis

In Phase 1 of the study, which is the qualitative phase, the research will adopt a phenomenological approach to explore participants' experiences and perspectives on culturally responsive leadership in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). This approach is ideal for understanding the essence of participants' lived experiences (Creswell, 2013). Interviews will be conducted using in-depth interviews to gather rich, detailed responses. Given the phenomenological nature of the study, the interview responses will be fully transcribed and analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The goal of this analysis is to develop both global themes (which capture broad, overarching insights about culturally responsive leadership) and specific themes (which delve into more aspects of participants' experiences). This thematic analysis will provide a comprehensive understanding of the participants' viewpoints on the practice of culturally responsive leadership in their educational settings.

In Phase 2, the quantitative phase, the global and specific themes related to culturally responsive leadership practices identified in Phase 1 will inform the development of a questionnaire. This questionnaire will then undergo Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). EFA is a statistical technique used to identify the underlying structure of a large set of variables by examining correlations among them. It helps to reveal clusters or "factors" that represent different dimensions of the concept being measured. By using EFA, the study will ensure that the questionnaire effectively captures distinct aspects of culturally responsive leadership practices (Fabrigar et al., 1999). After EFA, the questionnaire will undergo reliability analysis, such as Cronbach's alpha, to assess the internal consistency and reliability of the scale, ensuring that the instrument is stable and consistent in measuring what it intends to measure.

Additionally, in the quantitative phase, both descriptive and inferential statistical methods will be employed. Descriptive statistics, such as means, will be calculated to assess the levels of culturally responsive leadership, teacher retention intentions, and student inclusivity. Inferential statistics, including correlation analysis, will be used to examine the relationships among these variables. Multiple regression analysis will then be applied to determine the extent to which culturally responsive leadership practices influence teacher retention intentions and student inclusivity, providing insights into how these factors interrelate.

In Phase 3, the findings from both the qualitative and quantitative phases will inform the formulation of policy Sbrief aimed at enhancing culturally responsive leadership practices, improving teacher retention, and fostering greater student inclusivity. The analysis in this phase will focus on identifying key areas where policies can be developed to address the challenges faced in implementing culturally responsive leadership in BARMM schools. This phase will utilize policy analysis methods to propose specific, actionable recommendations based on the study's results. The goal is to ensure that the findings contribute to the development of policies that support a more inclusive and culturally responsive educational environment for both teachers and students. These policies could include professional development programs for educators, curriculum adjustments that incorporate cultural competence, and support mechanisms to enhance teacher retention in diverse educational settings.

## Role of the Researcher

In this study, the researcher plays a vital role in ensuring that the participant selection process is accurate and systematic. The initial task involves determining the precise number of respondents from each of the two divisions included in the study. This step is crucial to ensure the sample's representativeness, with participants selected based on specific criteria such as demographic characteristics, teaching experience, or other relevant factors that align with the study's objectives. These criteria are designed to ensure the sample accurately reflects the population being studied.

Once participants are identified, the researcher will conduct an orientation for the key informants. During this session, the study's goals, objectives, and participant expectations will be explained in detail. This orientation aims to ensure that participants clearly understand the purpose of the study and their role in it, fostering informed consent and voluntary participation—both of which are critical ethical considerations in research.

During the data collection phase, the researcher will oversee the entire process, including administering surveys, conducting interviews, and managing other data collection methods. To ensure accuracy, the researcher will fully transcribe all participant responses, safeguarding against any loss of information. Comprehensive transcription is essential for preserving the data's integrity and enabling detailed analysis later.

Following transcription, the researcher will work closely with a debriefer, an expert in language analysis, to examine the data. The debriefer will review the transcriptions thoroughly, identifying patterns, themes, and key insights derived from the participants' feedback. This collaborative analysis will help uncover significant trends, recurring themes, and issues relevant to the study's research questions.

## Ethical Considerations

This study will adhere to strict ethical guidelines to ensure the protection and well-being of all participants involved.

- **Voluntary Participation:** Participation in the study will be voluntary, with participants being informed of the purpose and scope of the research beforehand. They will be given the opportunity to consent freely without any form of coercion.
- **Privacy and Confidentiality:** Measures will be in place to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants' information. All data collected will be securely stored and only accessed by authorized personnel.
- **Informed Consent Process:** The principle of respect for persons will be observed by ensuring that participants provide informed consent. Participants will be informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time without consequence.
- **Recruitment:** The recruitment process will be carried out by appropriate personnel, ensuring that participants are selected fairly and equitably.
- **Risks:** Potential risks, whether physical, psychological, or social-economic, will be assessed and minimized. Plans for managing adverse events will be established in case any issues arise during the study.
- **Benefits:** The study aims to provide direct benefits to participants through knowledge acquisition and health

education, as well as contribute to generalizable knowledge that may address participants' conditions or

- **Incentives or Compensation:** Any compensation or incentives offered to participants will be reviewed for appropriateness and will align with ethical standards, ensuring that it is not coercive.
- **Community Consideration:** The potential impact of the research on the local community will be considered, with efforts made to respect cultural traditions and avoid stigma or strain on local resources.
- **Collaborative Study Terms:** If applicable, the study will clearly define collaborative terms, including intellectual property sharing, transparency, and capacity building.
- **Falsification:** The study will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity by avoiding any form of falsification or misrepresentation of data.
- **Conflict of Interest (COI):** The study will ensure that there is no conflict of interest (COI), with all potential conflicts disclosed transparently.
- **Focus Group Participant Identification:** In the case of focus groups, participants will be reminded to keep shared information confidential, and this will be clearly stated in the consent form.
- **Deceit:** There will be no misleading or deceitful practices used in the study. Participants will be fully informed of all relevant aspects of the research.
- **Observation:** Ethical considerations for observation will be in place, including appropriate notices to inform the public of research activities in public or quasi-public places.
- **Permission from Organization/Location:** Written permission will be sought from the organization or location where the research will take place. The person granting the permission will have the authority to do so, and the research activities will be organized well in advance.
- **Technology Issues:** Ethical provisions will be made for the use of online panels and data collection in online environments. All provisions for data collection, online communication, and participant understanding of these technologies will be clearly stated and accessible.
- **Authorship:** The criteria for authorship will be based on substantial contributions to the study's design, data acquisition, analysis, interpretation, drafting, and critical revision. Authors will be credited only for their significant intellectual contributions and for final approval of the published version.

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