

A Comprehensive Evaluation of Students' Voice in the Facilitation of Learning at St. Paul University Manila's Senior High School: Basis for a Student Voice Inclusion Model

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Abstract

In the realm of Philippine education, the status of student voice remains a subject of academic inquiry and policy discourses. The central goal of this study is to comprehensively evaluate the extent to which the voice of senior high school students at St. Paul University Manila is included in academic and non-academic decision-making processes of the school. The study collected pertinent data from A total of 164 respondents who participated in the survey, comprising 145 senior high school students, 7 full-time teachers, 8 support personnel, and 4 administrators. For the qualitative phase, 54 participants were involved in the interview process. This group included 35 SHS students, 7 full-time teachers, 8 support personnel, and 4 administrators., as their perspectives are integral to formulating an effective student voice inclusion model. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, specifically utilizing the exploratory sequential design. Surveys and interviews were used to gather data on the perceptions and experiences of stakeholders regarding student voice. The findings indicate that senior high school students, teachers, support personnel, and administrators recognize student voice as an essential element that fosters inclusion, connection, and impacts overall well-being. The study identifies various facilitators and challenges to student voice within the school community, with communication barriers being a significant obstacle. The proposed student voice inclusion model emphasizes creating dedicated spaces for student expression, promoting active student participation in class discussions, valuing and engaging with student ideas, and translating student feedback into tangible actions. The study provides recommendations, including organizing workshops, establishing a task force, implementing a structured feedback mechanism, creating a Student Voice Committee, and developing a formal policy to guide student voice inclusion. The findings and recommendations contribute to the understanding and implementation of student voice in educational settings, promoting inclusivity and empowerment.

Keywords: student voice, senior high school, comprehensive evaluation, voice inclusion model



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INTRODUCTION

In 2012, the Philippine government enacted Republic Act No. 10533, also known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act, which institutionalized the K-12 curriculum in the country. As per Section 5 of said law, the curriculum is now required to be "learner-centered, inclusive, and both developmentally relevant and appropriate." Deviating from traditional and teacher-centered approach, a Learner-Centered Curriculum places the students at the center of the educational experience. It recognizes that learners with unique talents, interests, and learning styles

aim to create a supportive and engaging environment catering to their needs.

The emphasis on learner-centered curriculum triggers discussion to the extent to which learners' inputs are heard of and how they meaningfully participate in both academic and non-academic reforms. This idea is dubbed by scholars as "student voice," a concept which has long been deliberated upon in various literatures and has even been more emphasized recently due to increasing recognition of its transformative potential on the institutional and pedagogical practices of educational institutions (O'Reilly, 2019).

Student voice has been defined by many scholars based on various research and policy contexts, but this research adopted the comprehensive definition laid down by Mitra (2018) which refers to “the ways in which students participate in educational decision-making.” Insofar as Fleming (2018) is concerned, “student voice is more than a voice”; the full realization of student voice necessitates the fulfillment of four components: (1) space, (2) voice, (3) audience, (4) response and action. Hence, Fleming (2018) also underscored that there are two fundamental pathways for student voice to be heard: pedagogical and school policy wide. In the context of this study, academic decisions are those that are pedagogical in nature, such as those related to classroom style teachings, assessments, and other pursuits related to academic learning and teaching. By non-academic, this refers to those learning policies or programs outside of the classroom that are not directly toward formal education and learning (e.g., uniform policy, involvement in student clubs, volunteer work etc.).

In the Philippines, student voice is embedded in the Department of Education’s policy documents. For instance, the Department Order No. 44 series of 2015 otherwise known as the Guidelines on the Enhanced School Improvement Planning (SIP) Process explicitly stated that the educational planning process must be “learner-centered and participatory...and analyzing data by listening to the voice of the learners and other stakeholders.” The order thus empowers learners to participate in the decision-making processes by having their voice heard on issues and concerns related to their own learning and school improvement.

But despite the inclusion of student voice in the letters of international conventions and even in domestic education policymaking, its full realization remains a challenge for many educational institutions. A report from the Council of Europe (2023) shows that across the world, an average of 92% of any school’s population is composed of students and yet majority of school decisions—be it pedagogical

or policy-related—are often done by the 8% who are adults in the school. Hanover (2022) identified exclusionary practices in schools such as discrediting students’ voices, expressing surprise that the students are thoughtful and well-prepared, and even viewing student presentations as sheer academic exercises rather than opportunities for reform.

In the realm of Philippine education, the status of student voice remains a subject of academic inquiry and policy discourses. While there have been notable efforts to promote student voice in recent years, the current state of student participation in decision-making in their academic and non-academic learning journey remains limited and predominantly critiqued as tokenistic (Tadle, 2023). Particularly in St. Paul University Manila – Senior High School Department, the school administration has already integrated learner-centered approach in its curriculum and has even encouraged active collaboration between students and teachers within and beyond the school premises. However, a comprehensive assessment as to how student voice is integrated in the school’s education process has yet to be carried out by the institution.

The pressing need for comprehensive reforms, policy advocacy, and collaborative efforts among stakeholders to elevate the status of student voice in the Philippine education system and foster an inclusive and empowering learning environment for all students inspired the thematic focus of this study. While there is a robust academic discussion pertaining student voice on the global front, the researcher has found no study in the Philippine educational context that provides baseline quantitative data that measure the extent of student voice inclusion. There is also a lack of studies that qualitatively digs into the meaningful participation in the decision-making processes that concern their academic and non-academic learning.

To address these gaps, this study zoomed into the case of the senior high school students at St. Paul University Manila, where the researcher himself serves as the Academics

and Activities Coordinator of the Senior High School Department. The researcher's capacity as coordinator of academics and activities leverages reflexivity as an asset in providing contextual insights and drives him to develop evidence-based solutions for enhancing the school's student voice program. The findings of this research will serve as a foundation for designing student voice inclusion models for senior high school.

LITERATURES

Conceptualizing Student Voice. The importance of the integration of student voice in school affairs has been consistently emphasized in various literatures. Simmons et al. (2014) present evidence of how actively engaging students in matters concerning their wellbeing leads to insights that can inform school improvement. Similarly, Kahne et al. (2022) emphasizes the positive relationship between schools being responsive to students' critiques and improved academic outcomes. O'Reilly (2019) underscores the impact of student voice initiatives at the elementary level on school communities and highlights the importance of increasing opportunities for students to use their voices.

The inclusion of student voice in the educational process is not only imperative for enhancing educational outcomes, but is also recognized as a fundamental right. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, specifically Article 12, underscores this importance by affirming the right of children to freely express their views in all matters affecting them, with due consideration given to their age and maturity (United Nations, 1989). Fleming (2018) elaborates on the significance of this provision, asserting that its realization hinges upon providing children with opportunities for expression, attentive listenership, and meaningful avenues for action. Mitra (2018) further elucidates institutional practices aimed at fostering student voice, such as the establishment of student governments, the implementation of student surveys and feedback mechanisms, and the promotion of student-led initiatives. These practices serve to

empower students, recognizing them as active participants in shaping their educational experiences and environments.

Despite the wealth in empirical evidence, there remains no one standard way of defining student voice as it is multi-faceted and complex, encompassing various dimensions that concern the positioning of students and their voices within the realm of education. But as adapted in this study, Fleming (2018) highlighted that student voice involves not only the actual voice that speaks and the words spoken but also encompasses who speaks, the right to speak, what is heard, and the subsequent actions arising from the expression of that voice. Succinctly put, student voice includes four important components: (1) space where students can express, (2) voice to express, (3) audience to listen, (4) response and actions to their inputs, recommendations or grievances.

Meanwhile, scholars like Cato (2018) foregrounds the lack of consensus in defining student voice and its purpose. Literature reveals diverse forms, purposes, and perspectives, making it challenging for practitioners to adopt a unified understanding. Definitions range from emphasizing human rights perspectives to considering it a source of feedback to inform teaching practices. This variation in viewpoints sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of the concept, with students and teachers offering distinct perspectives. Similarly, Holquist (2019) said while there is no single definition of student voice, scholars generally agree that it involves opportunities for students to actively participate in and influence educational decisions. These efforts emphasize the importance of including all students, providing meaningful engagement, fostering open dialogue, and involving students in decision-making processes.

The study emphasizes that students' voices regarding their educational journey and their individual measures of success should be central to educational deliberations. Moreover, it highlights the necessity of taking into account the diverse array of backgrounds and experiences among students to uphold

principles of equity and inclusivity. By actively integrating students' perspectives into educational dialogues and decision-making processes, institutions can ensure a more holistic and representative approach to addressing the multifaceted needs and aspirations of all learners.

Macken (2019) offers insight into the definition of student voice, suggesting that it represents a paradigm shift in education where students are empowered to participate actively in decision-making processes. Student voice entails recognizing learners as co-creators of knowledge and giving them an agency in shaping their educational experiences. This definition aligns with propositions that student voice should prioritize students' thoughts, feelings, visions, and actions, fostering a departure from depersonalization and standardization in education.

The concept of student voice has undergone significant evolution, embracing diverse perspectives and practices over time. Hunter and O'Brien's (2018) research sheds light on this evolution, highlighting a shift towards regarding students not merely as passive recipients of knowledge but as active co-collaborators and creators of knowledge themselves. This transformation was particularly evident in a high school setting where students participated in a workshop aimed at exploring the constituents of an ideal school environment. The notion of democratic fellowship emerged prominently, as students' insights were actively solicited to enhance their own learning milieu, signaling a growing inclination towards assuming greater responsibility in shaping their educational experiences. Similarly, Bragg (2021) emphasizes the multifaceted nature of student voice, extending beyond a mere rights-based perspective. She advocates for educators to adopt more nuanced understandings of social contexts, power dynamics, and the institutional frameworks within schools, urging for a holistic approach to embracing student voice within educational settings.

Over the years, the discourse on student voice has even challenged traditional educational

paradigms and fostered a shift towards more inclusive and participatory learning environments. Mosley and Valdez (2022) highlight the evolving nature of student engagement, particularly among marginalized students who are demanding a fundamental transformation in education. Student voice encompasses the expression of students' ideas, perspectives, values, and cultural backgrounds regarding their education. This expression extends to interests, desires, choices, aspirations, and solutions, creating opportunities for collaborative decision-making between students and adults (Mosley & Valdez, 2022). This definition emphasizes the co-determination of learning content, processes, indicators of success, and measurement methods.

The notion of student voice has evolved to transcend a mere representative interpretation of democracy, as highlighted by Granville (2021). This perspective underscores the limitations of a purely representative approach and emphasizes the significance of participatory democracy. The inclusion of students' authentic voices within the national curriculum policy-making process is integral to ensure a comprehensive educational experience. The literature reveals that traditional partners in education policy formulation, such as teachers, school management bodies, and interest groups, have historically overshadowed the student perspective (Granville, 2004). Recognizing this gap, recent discourse (Fleming, 2015; DoE, 2021) has emphasized the imperative of integrating student voice in policymaking. The challenge, however, lies in establishing effective mechanisms to authentically incorporate student perspectives into the policy discourse and curriculum interpretation at the school level.

Challenges in the Inclusion of Student Voice. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) acknowledges children's right to express their views, and Lundy (2007) identifies four conditions necessary for meaningful student voice: space for expression, a voice to express views, an audience to listen, and a response and action to their expressed views.

Biddle (2019) examines participation through a lens that encompasses children being listened to, supported in expressing their views, having their views taken into account, being involved in decision-making processes, and sharing power and responsibility. Mayes (2018) highlights the various roles students can play, including data sources, active respondents, co-enquirers, knowledge creators, joint authors, and participants in intergenerational learning.

While literature overwhelmingly supports the incorporation of student voice, challenges are recognized. Cato (2018) indicates differences between student and teacher perspectives on the nature and purpose of student voice. These differences, rooted in initiation and anonymity dynamics, play a crucial role in shaping the characteristics of student voice. Furthermore, opposition to student voice is evident in the media, exemplified by critiques of school reform projects that prioritize student input. However, these dissenting attitudes are relatively rare, as most researchers and writers endorse greater student involvement in educational decisions. The literature highlights that effective integration of student voice requires careful consideration of representation, listening, and organizational culture.

Indeed, the integration of student voice into educational frameworks encounters various hurdles. Dobson and Dobson (2021) shed light on how the prevailing cultural shift toward high-stakes accountability and performance-driven education can sideline student input. The prioritization of exam outcomes frequently constrains opportunities for students to express their viewpoints. Despite the potential advantages, initiatives aimed at promoting student voice often encounter obstacles due to inadequate training and support for both students and educators. Moreover, it is imperative to recognize the diversity of student perspectives and tailor initiatives to accommodate these differences effectively.

Granville's (2021) exploration of student voice exposes an often-overlooked facet of schooling—the socialization function. Education, within the confines of school rules

and societal norms, becomes a vehicle for imposing values, norms, and culture. This imposition of power extends to the hidden dynamics of everyday interactions, transactions, and protocols within the educational landscape. Moreover, the incorporation of student perspectives into education policy presents a twofold challenge: the extent to which student voices are heard and influential in policy outcomes, and how these perspectives translate into curriculum enactment at the grassroots level. Literature resonates with the need for educators, particularly teachers, to cultivate a compassionate understanding of students' complex lives outside the classroom, acknowledging their challenges, and advocating on their behalf to create a supportive learning environment. Students' call for authentic human connections with educators, an inspiring learning environment, and adaptability in addressing diverse needs further accentuates the challenges and aspirations of incorporating student voice.

Ganesan (2021) further emphasizes that educators' hesitancy to prioritize student voice may stem from underlying trust issues and apprehensions regarding relinquishing control within the classroom. Such reluctance to trust students echoes historical educational paradigms that traditionally positioned students as passive recipients of knowledge rather than active participants in their learning journey. Additionally, Jidesjo (2021) sheds light on the differing perceptions of the relevance problem between students and teachers, adding layers of complexity to the integration of student voice initiatives. These nuanced challenges underscore the importance of fostering a culture of trust and collaboration between educators and students to effectively incorporate student perspectives into educational decision-making processes.

Holquist (2019) noted other challenges in incorporating student voice effectively. These challenges include shifting power dynamics between adults and students, the reproduction of social order power relationships, and the need to create a structured space for students

to engage in meaningful student voice efforts. Moreover, while the concept of student voice is rooted in empowerment, the term itself may not fully capture the multifaceted nature of students' active involvement in decision-making processes.

Meanwhile, McCleary (2019) discussed that while literature acknowledges the potential benefits of integrating student voice in education, numerous challenges and cautionary tales arise when discussing its implementation. The concerns surrounding tokenistic participation and adult manipulation are recurrent themes. Lodge (2005) underscores the paradoxical nature of student voice, where young people are simultaneously viewed as potential change agents and perceived as lacking the capacity to lead change efforts. This tension extends to the level of involvement students are allowed in addressing deeper educational issues. Woodward (2018) and Milner (2018) caution against adults speaking on behalf of students, stressing the necessity of directly representing students' authentic voices. Additionally, Holdsworth (2021) warns against superficial inclusion that merely allows students to be heard without effecting substantive change, illustrating the need for meaningful strategies that genuinely empower students. Simmons et al. (2014) critique instances where student voice is confined to surface-level policy discussions rather than influencing matters central to teaching and learning, raising questions about the purpose of education itself.

Trowler's (2018) research sheds light on the challenges institutions face when responding to student voice. While there is a growing interest in student voice, the lack of published evidence of "good practice" suggests a gap between real-world implementation and scholarly documentation. Furthermore, Bragg (2021) points out the skepticism that some hold toward student voice, advocating for a change in the discourse surrounding it. The challenge lies in navigating the power dynamics between adults and students, with some perceiving student voices as a threat to authority. This inherent tension underlines the importance of creating

more inclusive and open dialogues within educational settings.

Bishop (2018) points out the need to question the purpose and extent of student involvement. Market-driven discourses may reduce student voice to mere consumer feedback, failing to harness its transformative potential. Furthermore, institutional culture and traditional power dynamics can hinder genuine collaboration between students and educators. Establishing effective communication, guidelines, and inclusive participation mechanisms is essential to counteract these challenges. Ensuring representation from diverse voices and sharing power in formal settings can enhance the impact of student voice. However, fostering a culture of partnership requires continuous efforts and a commitment to evolving practices (Bishop, 2018).

One of the key challenges in integrating student voice into educational settings lies in setting up the conditions for student-driven school change. Collaborative partnerships between students and staff offer several benefits, as highlighted by Gilett-Swan (2022). However, this process disrupts traditional modes of reviewing and designing school wellbeing provisions. To address these challenges, establishing buy-in from students and staff, designating an advocate/intermediary to facilitate communication, building capacity in school-based teams, and implementing enduring processes and structures are suggested strategies.

The central goal of this study was to comprehensively evaluate the extent to which the voice of senior high school students of St. Paul University Manila was included in academic and non-academic decision-making processes of the school. Particularly, this study addressed the following questions:

1. How was student voice defined and understood by Senior High School Students, Senior High School Teachers, School Support Personnel (Finance, Registrar, Library, ICT, Guidance, GSO, Canteen,

Security, Laboratories, Dormitory, Clinic), and School Administrators (Coordinator, Principal, VP CFSS, SAO)?

2. Based on the narratives in defining and understanding student voice, what scenarios or processes challenged student voice?
3. What was the inclusion level of student voice on matters concerning their learning as perceived by the stakeholders in terms of the following components - Space, Voice, Audience, and Response and Action?
4. Based on the results of the study, what voice inclusion model can be developed?

METHODS

Research Design. The researcher approached this study through mixed method design, particularly an Exploratory Sequential Design. This design started with qualitative data collection and analysis, followed by quantitative data collection and analysis. The qualitative phase helps researchers explore a research problem, generate hypotheses, or develop survey instruments (Harvard Catalyst, 2023). In this case, the researcher baselined this study by first looking into the convergences and divergences of the stakeholders' understanding of student (problem 1).

The next line of qualitative inquiry involved identifying the scenarios or processes which facilitated or challenged student voice (problem 2). Insights and themes that emerged in the qualitative phase of the study were used to inform the constructs or indicators that was used in measuring student voice inclusion. The quantitative phase of this study further measured the extent to which student voice is considered in the academic and non-academic decision-making (i.e., inclusion level) based on the parameters outlined by Fleming (2018) and Lundy (2007) such as space, voice, audience, response and action. Results were used as basis in formulating a proposed student voice inclusion model in the Senior High School Department of St. Paul University-Manila.

Instrumentation. For the qualitative component of the study, the researcher crafted semi-structured guide questions to facilitate the collection of data through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). These questions were carefully designed to explore participants' definitions and understandings of student voice, the challenges they encountered in promoting its inclusion, and their recommendations for improving student voice practices. To ensure depth and clarity in the responses, the interview instrument incorporated both overarching and probing questions, allowing participants to provide focused and context-specific insights.

For the quantitative component of the study, the researcher employed a researcher-developed questionnaire composed of two parts. The first section gathered demographic information from the respondents, while the second section featured a four-point Likert scale designed to measure the perceived level of inclusion of student voice in their respective educational contexts.

Part I of the questionnaire elicited data about the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Part II was a four-point Likert Scale that is meant to measure the level of inclusion of student voice. This part of the questionnaire was divided into four variables (space, voice, audience, response and action) based on the components of student voice according to Fleming (2018) and in alignment to the sub-variables presented in the first chapter of this paper. Each of the sub-variable has ten constructs which were all formulated based on indicators that emerged in the literature review.

The Likert Scale ranged from 4- Strongly Agree, 3 - Agree, 2 - Disagree, and 1 - Strongly Disagree. The instrument undergone content validation by three (3) experts in the field of education. The instrument was then piloted to 30 senior high school students for reliability testing. Gaining a Cronbach result of not less than 0.7 consistency level across all educators, the survey questionnaire was finally reproduced for distribution to the target respondents of the study.

On the other hand, the survey and interview questionnaires used in the study underwent a validation process which involved reviewing the content and structure of the questionnaires to ensure that they effectively captured the intended constructs and research objectives. The expertise and experience of the individuals involved in the validation process provided credibility and reliability to the validation process. As professionals in their respective fields, their insights and input contributed to the overall rigor and quality of the survey and interview questionnaires.

Population and Sampling. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of student voice inclusion, the study adopted a multi-stakeholder approach that involved senior high school students, teachers, school support personnel, and administrators. This approach allowed the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data to inform the development of a student voice inclusion model.

Participant selection was guided by specific inclusion criteria. Senior high school students eligible for the study were those enrolled in Grade 11 or Grade 12 at St. Paul University Manila during the academic year 2023–2024, who voluntarily signed the informed consent form. Teacher-participants were either full-time or part-time faculty members teaching within the Senior High School Department for the same academic year and who also consented to participate. Support personnel included active employees assigned to various departments within the Senior High School, with responsibilities involving regular interaction with students, and who agreed to participate by signing the informed consent form. School administrators were defined as heads of academic and/or non-academic offices within the Senior High School Department, also for the 2023–2024 academic year, and who likewise provided informed consent.

For the quantitative component, a total of 145 students participated, corresponding to the calculated sample size at a 95% confidence level. For the qualitative component, 35 students were purposively selected to

participate in focus group discussions (FGDs), conducted by a trained research assistant. These participants included a diverse group composed of student leaders – such as class presidents and student trustees – and students with no formal leadership roles to ensure balanced representation.

In addition, the sample included seven of the nine full-time senior high school teachers, excluding the researcher and one administrator. Eight support personnel who had direct interactions with students, along with all four administrators of the department, were also included. The study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method, to intentionally select individuals who met the predetermined inclusion criteria and could provide relevant insights from their respective roles within the school community.

Data Source and Collection. The researcher sent a letter to the University President to seek permission in conducting key informant interviews among the target participants, as well as to request for pertinent documents that were relevant to the study at hand. Prior to the interview, the data collectors secured a complete informed consent form from the respondents, particularly the teachers, personnel, and administrators. For senior high school students who were minors at the time of data collection, the researcher ensured ethical compliance by securing both parental or guardian informed consent and student assent. This dual process upheld the ethical standards for involving minors in research and ensured that participation was voluntary and fully informed from both the students and their legal guardians.

As soon as authorization was obtained, the data collector sent letters to the target participants to schedule the interview based on their most convenient time. Upon approval of the request letter, the interviewee asked consent to record the interview session. Should the participant refuse to be recorded, the researcher respected this and still considered the participant for interview. To build rapport with the participants, the researcher initiated a light conversation

with the participants prior to the conduct of the actual interview. While the interview was being conducted the researcher took note of important observation/s. The researcher ensured the protection of the participants' identities and rights in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Data analysis. For Qualitative Data, the researcher primarily used thematic analysis in analyzing the qualitative that was generated during the key informant interviews (KIIs), with primary focus on their understanding of student voice, the decision-making processes, challenges in student voice inclusion, as well as their recommendations. The analysis process began with transcribing the audio recordings verbatim to ensure accuracy and preserve the authenticity of the participants' responses. In addition to the transcripts, the researcher also documented personal observations and reflections in a journal, paying close attention to the participants' reactions and the way they responded during the interviews. To structure the data, conceptual categories were used to bracket and organize participant responses. These categories were then compared and refined, with similar responses grouped together until overarching patterns and themes emerged. Finally, the identified themes were examined in relation to existing literature, enabling the researcher to confirm, validate, or potentially contribute new knowledge to the field.

For Quantitative Data, the data was tabulated and processed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). To analyze and interpret the quantitative data collected, the study employed frequency distribution and weighted mean as the primary statistical tools. Frequency distribution was used to present the number of responses for each category within the Likert scale, providing a clear picture of patterns in participant responses. This was particularly useful in addressing the descriptive research question related to the perceived inclusion of student voice. Additionally, the weighted mean was calculated to determine the overall extent to which student voice was perceived to be included in both academic and

non-academic school decisions. The interpretation of these means followed a predefined range based on a four-point Likert scale, allowing for consistent analysis across all items.

RESULTS

Student Voice. The analysis revealed a shared understanding across stakeholder groups regarding the significance of student voice in shaping meaningful educational experiences. Senior high school students primarily defined student voice as the expression of personal and collective opinions related to their academic life, often emphasizing representation in decision-making processes. Teachers highlighted the importance of listening to students and valuing their feedback in both academic and non-academic contexts, viewing student voice as a pathway to empowerment and engagement. Support personnel focused on addressing students' holistic needs, recognizing the role of student input in fostering a supportive and inclusive school environment. Administrators, on the other hand, underscored the institutional mechanisms for student participation, such as student councils and feedback systems, emphasizing collaboration and democratic governance.

Table 1
Understanding of Student Voice Matrix

Category	Definition/Understanding of Student Voice	Importance/Role	Key Themes
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expression of opinions and perspectives - Collecting opinions and suggestions for decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allows students to express their needs and ideas - Provides feedback for improvements - Advocates for student well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expression and advocacy - Representation in decision-making - Contribution to policy changes
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actively listening to students' perspectives - Gathering feedback from students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhances instruction - Empowers students - Fosters positive student-teacher relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student engagement and participation - Shared decision-making - Academic and non-academic input
Support Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allowing students to express suggestions and ideas - Applying student feedback to improve services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guides and improve support services - Informs strategic planning and service adjustments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student input in service improvement - Valuing student opinions - Advocating on student needs
Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding students' needs and motivations - Gathering comprehensive feedback from the student body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shapes school policies and regulations - Ensures the school environment meets student needs - Enhances overall institutional practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic planning based on feedback - Inclusive decision-making - Policy and service improvements

While all groups acknowledged the importance of student engagement and participation, their perspectives reflected their specific roles within the school community. Students

emphasized voice and representation, teachers focused on responsive teaching practices, support personnel prioritized welfare and inclusivity, and administrators emphasized policy and structural support. Together, these views highlight the multifaceted and collaborative nature of student voice in promoting a more responsive, inclusive, and empowering educational environment.

Challenges to Student Voice. The study revealed significant challenges across stakeholder groups in effectively implementing student voice within the school environment. Senior high school students commonly expressed fear of repercussions, lack of trust in school leadership, and limited access to decision-makers.

Table 2
Understanding of Factors that Hinder Student Voice Matrix

Category	Facilitators	Discussions
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication barriers - Fear of repercussions - Perceptions of tokenism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frustration at the inability to effectively exchange ideas and opinions with school administrators and decision-makers, citing instances where their efforts felt futile. - Apprehension about potential repercussions from teachers or administrators and voiced concerns that their opinions may not receive the attention they deserve. - voices are superficially acknowledged but not genuinely valued in decision-making processes.
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rigid protocols - Veracity determination - Student Hesitancy - Academic Freedom - Aligning student suggestions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Timelines may not align with the curriculum requirements or competencies that need to be achieved. - Students may abuse their ability to voice their opinions or make false claims. This challenges the educators' ability to discern genuine issues from those driven by personal agendas. - When students are shy or lack confidence. This can hinder meaningful student participation and limit the range of perspectives heard. - Students may not fully grasp the extent of their academic freedom or how it relates to expressing their opinions and participating in decision-making processes. - Task of balancing student preferences with broader educational objectives and ensuring that student voice contributes to positive outcomes for both individuals and the school community.
Support Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adherence to Ethical Guideline - Student feedback vs. institutional policies - Scheduling and availability - Budget constraints and limited resources - Decision-making and policy compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The need to adhere to ethical guidelines and maintain confidentiality - The challenge of striking a balance between student feedback and institutional policies is another obstacle identified - In the context of meetings with student representatives, it was mentioned that finding suitable times when representatives and faculty members are available can be problematic - The availability of adequate resources and funding becomes a factor to consider in promoting meaningful student participation and engagement. - This highlights the delicate balance that educational institutions must maintain between meeting student needs and adhering to established policies and regulations.
Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limitation of online sessions and physical presence - Administrative resistance and closed-mindedness - Practical constraints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This limitation underscores the significance of in-person interactions in order to maximize student involvement. - Some administrators, both at higher and lower levels, may resist involving students or perceive their participation as a threat. - Budget limitations and scheduling conflicts may require flexibility and compromises to accommodate student.

Communication barriers, perceptions of tokenism, procedural inefficiencies, and concerns over privacy further discouraged student participation. Students also noted frustration over the absence of tangible responses to their concerns and the lack of inclusive platforms for quieter individuals.

Teachers echoed these issues, highlighting systemic constraints such as rigid academic structures, conflicting timelines, and the difficulty of managing diverse student voices. They also identified challenges in validating student concerns and reconciling suggestions with institutional goals, especially when students lacked clarity on the boundaries of academic freedom.

Support personnel pointed to structural limitations, such as ethical guidelines that restrict disclosure, scheduling conflicts, budget constraints, and limited resources. They emphasized the difficulty of balancing student input with institutional policies, often constrained by confidentiality and operational demands.

Administrators acknowledged that online learning settings, cultural norms, and misconceptions about student voice—as a right without accountability—complicate meaningful engagement. They cited internal resistance, lack of openness to change, logistical constraints, and managing social media backlash as key barriers. While some student-centered initiatives were in place, administrators emphasized the need to balance student expectations with institutional realities.

Despite these varied challenges, all stakeholder groups recognized the importance of fostering a more inclusive, responsive, and empowering environment where student voice is genuinely valued. Addressing issues of communication, trust, participation, and procedural support is essential to strengthening student voice in school governance and decision-making processes.

Inclusion Level of Student Voice. The analysis in Table 3 reveals notable variations in how different stakeholders perceive the inclusion of student voice in the facilitation of learning at St. Paul University Manila's Senior High School. Overall, students and support personnel tend to rate the level of inclusion of student voice similarly, with mean ratings indicating a high level of inclusion. Students perceive a high level

of inclusion, emphasizing the importance of expressing opinions, contributing to decision-making, and advocating for their needs and concerns. Support personnel, including guidance counselors and librarians, also recognize the significance of student feedback in improving support services and guiding strategic planning.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics (Mean or Average) of the Perceived Level of Inclusion of Student Voice (N=162)

	As perceived by:				Total
	Students	Teachers	Support Personnel	Administration	
Space	3.14 (H)	2.76 (H)	3.09 (H)	3.50 (VH)	3.12 (H)
Voice	3.05 (H)	2.76 (H)	3.09 (H)	3.57 (VH)	3.04 (H)
Audience	3.16 (H)	2.75 (H)	3.17 (H)	3.70 (VH)	3.15 (H)
Response	2.83 (H)	2.23 (L)	3.00 (H)	3.43 (VH)	2.82 (H)

Legend: 1.00-1.75= Very low (VL) level 1.76-2.50= Low (L) level
2.51-3.25= High (H) level 3.26-4.00= Very high (VH) level

However, teachers' perceptions of inclusion vary more widely, with some indicating lower levels of inclusion compared to students and support personnel. This discrepancy may stem from practical challenges teachers face in integrating student voice within the constraints of curriculum and classroom management. Yet, those who rate inclusion higher likely employ methods such as gathering student feedback for instructional improvement and fostering positive student-teacher relationships.

Administrators, on the other hand, report the highest mean ratings, suggesting a strong perception of student voice inclusion. This aligns with their strategic role in shaping policies and creating an inclusive school environment. Administrators emphasize the importance of systematic feedback mechanisms and inclusive decision-making processes, ensuring that student voices are considered in institutional planning and policy development.

Despite these variations, there are notable similarities across all categories. All stakeholders recognize the importance of student voice in improving educational experiences and outcomes. They also emphasize empowerment and advocacy as key

components of student voice, acknowledging its role in fostering student engagement and well-being. Additionally, there is a shared understanding of the importance of including students in decision-making processes, whether through feedback mechanisms, representation in committees, or direct input into policy changes.

These findings align with previous qualitative insights where each group described their understanding and implementation of student voice. Students consistently advocated for direct involvement in decision-making processes, while teachers recognized the value of student feedback for instructional improvement. Support personnel underscored the importance of student feedback in improving support services, and administrators highlighted the strategic importance of student voice in shaping policies and ensuring an inclusive school environment.

While there are variations in perceptions of inclusion across different stakeholder groups, there is a shared recognition of the importance of student voice in education. Continued efforts to bridge gaps and ensure effective integration of student voices across all facets of the educational experience are essential for creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Student Voice Inclusion Model. The model consists of four key components: accountability, open communication, responsibility, and collaboration. These components align with the thematic findings of the study, such as the expression of opinions and perspectives, student engagement, and active learning.

The accountability and responsibility component of the model aligns with the finding that students, teachers, and support personnel perceive student voice as a means of expressing opinions and perspectives. The model ensures that student voice is expressed in a constructive manner by holding students accountable for their expressions and teaching them the responsibility of thoughtful and respectful communication.

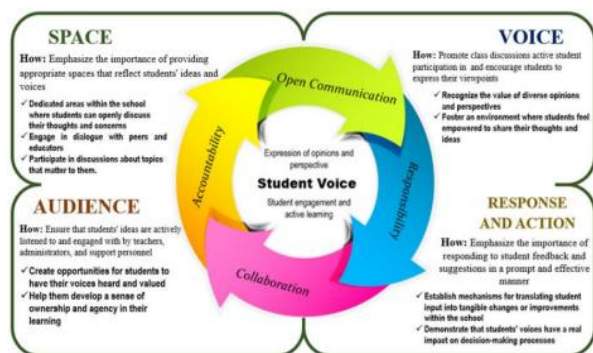


Figure 1
The Proposed Voice Inclusion Model

The open communication and collaboration components are supported by the finding that student voice contributes to student engagement and active learning. Creating dedicated spaces for student input, both physical and virtual, allows students to openly share their thoughts and engage in meaningful dialogue. This fosters an atmosphere where students feel empowered to participate in class discussions and contribute to the learning process.

To happen, it is imperative to have space, voice, audience, and response action. These elements form the foundation for fostering an inclusive and empowering environment where student perspectives are valued and translated into meaningful changes.

Creating dedicated spaces for student input aligns with the findings that students, teachers, and support personnel perceive student voice as a means of expressing opinions and perspectives. The study highlights the need for physical and virtual spaces where students can openly share their thoughts and engage in meaningful dialogue.

Furthermore, promoting student voice within the classroom is supported by the findings that students and support personnel perceive the inclusion of student voice in the facilitation of learning. However, the slightly lower agreement from teachers indicates a potential area of improvement. The model emphasizes the importance of creating an atmosphere where students feel empowered to participate in class discussions and contribute to the learning

process, aligning with the goal of promoting student voice within the academic realm.

In addition, ensuring an engaged audience resonates with the findings that students, teachers, support personnel, and administrators recognize the value of actively listening to and valuing student ideas. The study indicates a shared understanding among stakeholders of the significance of student perspectives and the need for their voices to be respected and heard.

Finally, responsive action is supported by the findings that students and support personnel perceive the inclusion of student voice in addressing student concerns and enhancing facilities and services within the school. The study highlights the importance of prompt and effective responses to student feedback, which aligns with the model's emphasis on translating student input into tangible changes and improvements.

Overall, the findings of the study validate the relevance and applicability of the proposed voice inclusion model. They provide insights into the current state of student voice practices within the school and highlight the need for implementing the strategies outlined in the model to enhance student voice inclusion. The school can foster an inclusive and empowering environment where student voice is valued and integrated into decision-making processes by adopting this comprehensive model and addressing the identified challenges. The continuous process of accountability, open communication, responsibility, and collaboration ensures that student voice remains a central focus in matters concerning their learning.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, senior high school students, teachers, support personnel, and administration define student voice as an expression of opinions and perspectives that are important for their involvement in the school's decision-making processes. They understand that student voice fosters inclusion,

connection, and impacts their well-being while promoting community harmony and influencing decision-making.

Several scenarios and processes have facilitated and challenged student voice within the school community. The school actively integrates student voice through flexible counseling services, student-driven psychological testing, addressing student concerns, facilities and services enhancements, and student representation in strategic planning. However, the major challenge to student voice is communication barriers. This challenge should be addressed to ensure meaningful inclusion of student voice and foster an empowered school environment.

The students and support personnel agree that there is inclusion of student voice in the facilitation of learning at St. Paul University Manila's Senior High School. However, the teachers have slightly lower agreement, while the administration showed the highest mean rating with strong agreement.

The proposed voice inclusion model aims to enhance student voice in learning by focusing on four key components: creating dedicated spaces for student expression, promoting active student participation in class discussions, valuing and engaging with student ideas, and translating student feedback into tangible actions.

With this, it is recommended that the schools organize regular workshops, training sessions, or professional development programs. These initiatives should aim to create awareness and provide education on the concept of student voice, its significance in fostering a positive school environment, and effective strategies for incorporating student input into decision-making processes. 2. Addressing the challenges faced in facilitating student voice is also recommended; thus, the school shall establish a dedicated task force or committee focused on student voice and empowerment. This task force should comprise representatives from different stakeholder groups, including students, teachers, support

personnel, and administrators. The task force can work collaboratively to identify and address communication barriers, resistance to change, and limited avenues for student input.

It is highly recommended to implement the proposed voice inclusion model; it is recommended that the school establishes a Student Voice Committee or similar structure. This committee should consist of students, teachers, support personnel, and administrators who are committed to promoting student voice and empowering students in decision-making processes. The committee can regularly meet to discuss and implement strategies aligned with the voice inclusion model, such as creating dedicated spaces for student input, organizing student-led initiatives, and ensuring that student ideas are valued and acted upon.

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