

Psychosocial Adjustment of Students with Special Educational Needs in an Inclusive Institution of Higher Education

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Abstract: *Advocators of inclusive education (IE) proclaim that all students, regardless of disabilities or special educational needs (SEN), have the right to study in the normal school setting. Supporters assert that students with SEN benefit in academic performance and psychosocial adjustment via participation in common learning activities within the ordinary education settings. However, outcome research reported mixed results. In the meantime, there has been an increase of students with SEN pursuing their study at tertiary level. Studies suggested that they encountered academic stress and great challenges in higher education. This study aimed to investigate the college well-being, social relationship, and academic self-concept of students with SEN in higher education. A questionnaire was designed for data collection from a self-financing institution via online survey. Results showed no significant differences in college well-being and social relationship between students with and without SEN, but students with SEN, particularly those without religious affiliation were of lower academic self-concept. Students with learning and developmental disabilities and those with mental illness and emotional problems were significantly lower than students with physical and sensory impairments in academic self-concept. Implications of the findings were discussed and limitations of the study were considered.*

Keywords: Higher education, inclusive education, psychosocial adjustment, special educational needs

1. Introduction

The most important resource of any organization is its people. In achieving an entity's goals, human resources are indeed critical. The concept of organizations competing through people emphasizes the fact that an organization's ability to manage its human capital is particularly crucial to its success (Snell et al., 2018). As a result, modern managers must consider a variety of factors, including employee diversity, which is one of the determinants of job performance. Diversity in the workplace has had a major influence on the problem of gender disparity. In terms of acknowledging and resolving gender-related issues, the Philippines has made progress. The dedication to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment is demonstrated by laws like the Gender and Development (GAD) Act and the Magna Carta of Women. In spite of these initiatives, obstacles still exist, and government offices and other organizations are crucial in determining how society views gender. Several reports have been recorded that gender-related concerns continue to occur.

In the World Economic Forum's 2022 Global Gender Gap Index Report, the Philippines received a score of 0.783 and was ranked 19th out of 146 nations which was a little lower than 0.784 in 2021, when the Philippines was ranked 17th out of 156 nations (Ochave, 2022). The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in the Philippines is implementing programs aimed at promoting gender sensitivity in the workplace. These programs, including child protection and poverty alleviation, are influenced by cultural standards and social dynamics. A gender-sensitive workplace promotes diversity, worker well-being, and helps the organization meet diverse community needs. However, the DSWD faces challenges such as discrimination and stereotypes. Thus, the study assessed the gender sensitivity among employees at the Crisis Intervention Section, Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office Caraga, and verify their awareness of gender mainstreaming measures. It aims to contribute to a more responsive, equitable, and inclusive government agency.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Workforce Diversity

Today, the labor forces across most of the private and public organizations are very diverse. As defined by Greenberg, as cited in Tamunomiebi and John-Eke (2020), diversity is the range of distinctions among individuals within an organization, including those based on race, gender, ethnicity, age, personality, cognitive style, tenure, organizational function, educational background, and more. Modern organizations are increasingly embracing workforce diversity, which presents challenges and increases complexity. Organizations vary in managing and addressing diversity, with research showing that it can either positively or negatively impact organizations Tamunomiebi and John-Eke (2020). Diversity can be a source of creativity and innovation, but it can also lead to misunderstandings, suspicion, and conflict, resulting in absenteeism, subpar work, low morale, and a loss of competitiveness.

2.2 Gender Diversity and Gender Issues

Gender plays a crucial role in all facets of economic, social, daily, and private life for people and societies, as well as in the various roles that society assigns to men and women (Enriquez & Valera, 2022). Increasing gender diversity in the workforce is becoming more and more of a global concern as it continues to result into various gender-related problems. The concept of gender describes how men and women in a particular culture are assigned different social roles, behaviors, capacities, and mental, emotional, and social characteristics (Enriquez & Valera, 2022). Sexual characteristics of either men or women do not naturally determine gender; rather, gender is established socially.

According to the study of Awasthi (2018) regarding “Gender-based discrimination faced by females at workplace: A perceptual study of working females”, gender discrimination at work still exists despite many improvements and advancements, and working women continue to experience it in the professional workplace. Common examples of gender discrimination are sexual harassment, gender pay gap, gender stereotypes, and the glass ceiling. As a result of gender stereotypes in the workplace, women are typecast into positions in particular departments like human resource management, housekeeping, marketing, and front office (Khan et al., 2021).

2.3 Gender and Development Mainstreaming

Due to the growing importance of gender diversity and inclusion in the modern business world, businesses have started to take decisive action to close gender gaps in the workplace (Kaur & Arora, 2020). Gender equality and justice in the workplace can be achieved through gender

mainstreaming, which involves recognizing women's contributions to the world of work, enabling women's access to and control of all available resources, and providing adequate protection for women workers to prevent exploitation of women workers and sexual harassment of women workers in the labor market according to Iskandar and Sa'dia as cited in Widyani (2022). This widespread problem of gender inequality could probably be solved with gender sensitivity as it will help in reducing gender discrimination practices in the workplace (Khan et al., 2021). Gender sensitivity, also known as gender sensitization, is the modification of behavior brought on by awareness of gender equality issues, based on Sharma as cited in Jackson (2020).

When compared to other Asian countries, the Philippines is leading the way in reducing gender disparities according to the Philippine Commission on Women, as cited in study of Villegas (2021). Through appropriate gender mainstreaming initiatives in various human agencies, achieving gender equality and women's empowerment has become more deliberate. In line with its goal to mainstream gender, the Gender and Development (GAD) Agenda was formulated. Gender and Development (GAD) enhances both men and women's capacities to contribute to development, which improves people's quality of life (Enriquez & Valera, 2022). Additionally, it lessens social injustices brought on by unequal gender relations. More importantly, achieving growth and equity requires development that is gender responsive. Hence, the GAD Agenda introduced four entry points in mainstreaming GAD which would include policies, people, programs/activities/projects, and enabling mechanisms.

According to the Philippine Commission on Women (2020), policy, first entry point, refers to the organization's formal endorsements of gender mainstreaming in statements and proclamations. This includes department orders, special orders, administrative orders, memos, and executive orders, among other forms. People, second entry point, are the pertinent parties who take on the responsibility of gender mainstreaming; these individuals may comprise GAD champions, GAD Focal Point System and staff as GAD experts etc. Programs/activities/projects, third entry point, are referring to the flagship initiatives, programs, and activities that operate as an organization's strategic point of entry for gender mainstreaming. It is the most useful starting point because it deals with carrying out an organization's mission in practice. Enabling mechanisms, fourth entry point, as the methods and systems that are in place inside the company, as well as the financial resources set aside for GAD initiatives like the Knowledge Management System and GAD Focal Point System.

2.4 Gender Sensitivity

Gender-sensitive organizational practices, which are achieved through gender mainstreaming and competence, lead to gender equality in any organization as implied by Rittenhofer and Gartrell, as cited in Khan et al. (2021). Therefore, sensitivity is needed to draw in and keep female talent within the organization. Jackson (2020) noted that gender sensitivity is still a gray area that needs continued efforts to eliminate inequality in gender participation. Obviously, the efforts of gender sensitivity/equality issues have made it possible to explore decades of silence endured by women throughout the world.

Being gender-sensitive, according to Enriquez and Valera (2022), entails being aware of how people think about gender. This can help people rely less on outdated and archaic notions about the roles that men and women should play in society, which are frequently communicated in language and the humanities through terminology. A linguistic approach to the concept of gender sensitivity was provided by Kutateladze, as cited in Jackson (2020), and it was defined as the analysis of the language and the choice of forms that are objective and neutral. Within

an organization, language acts as a mirror reflecting the dominant culture. The language used in regulations and procedures, the phrases used by employees, and their communication style all influence the company culture. Organizations committed to promoting an inclusive culture are those that give priority to gender-sensitive language in their policies and communication materials, according to Davis and Skilton (2021). In addition, the persistence of gender preconceptions in language is examined in research by Holmes and Holmes (2018). According to the study "Unveiling Gendered Language: Stereotypes and Linguistic Choices," specific words and expressions serve to reinforce stereotypes. For instance, assuming masculine terminology by default can reinforce gender stereotypes and restrict how particular roles are perceived to fit particular genders. The impact of language on employee well-being is examined in Chang and Wu's (2019) study, "The Role of Inclusive Language in Fostering Employee Well-Being." According to the findings, companies that implement inclusive language practices see increases in worker satisfaction and well-being. Positive workplace environments are enhanced by inclusive language, which recognizes and honors a variety of gender identities.

Meanwhile, promoting an inclusive and equitable workplace requires gender sensitivity in office management and operations. Employee experiences and perceptions of gender equality can be strongly influenced by how firms set up everyday operations, assign work, and manage interpersonal relationships. Gender-sensitive practices are linked to improved employee well-being and higher productivity, based on recent studies. According to Kossek et al. (2019), companies that encourage flexible work schedules, gender-neutral rules, and work-life balance foster an environment where employees feel supported, which enhances their well-being and boosts productivity. In addition, it was emphasized that organizations that take gender equality into consideration promote inclusive decision-making procedures, which boost creativity and overall success. Dezsó and Ross's (2018) recent research indicates that teams with a diversity of genders are more likely to engage in exploratory behavior which fosters innovation and improves decision results. The importance of gender-sensitive strategies in fostering a favorable workplace environment is highlighted by Smith et al. (2020). Organizations that place a high priority on diversity and inclusion foster an environment of equality, respect, and cooperation that boosts worker satisfaction and morale. In order to reduce harassment and discrimination based on gender, gender-sensitive procedures are essential. According to recent research by Patten et al. (2021), companies with strong gender-sensitive policies report fewer incidences of harassment and discrimination, making the workplace safer and more welcoming.

3. Methodology

The primary objectives of this study are to determine the demographic profile of the participants, identify the employees' level of awareness on the DSWD GAD mainstreaming, establish the level of gender sensitivity of employees in the Department of Social Welfare and Development, determine the significant relationship between the employees' level of awareness on the DSWD's entry points in mainstreaming Gender and Development (GAD) and employees' level of gender sensitivity, elaborate the significant differences in the employees' level of gender sensitivity when grouped according to their profile, and propose intervention and enhancement programs.

Employees from the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office Caraga's Crisis Intervention Section, Protective Services Division, and Satellite Offices in Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Sur, Surigao del Norte, and Dinagat Islands participated in surveys for this study. Data was collected in the second semester of 2023 using quantitative questionnaires,

with samples drawn at random from the whole population. The researcher used the descriptive-correlational method of research to understand the gender sensitivity among employees. The correlational method was also employed to observe two variables and assess their statistical relationships. The study aimed to examine the degree of gender sensitivity among workers and draw conclusions based on the collected data. Descriptive research focuses on understanding the subject and its relationships, using frequencies, averages, and statistical calculations.

The study collected data from 163 respondents in the Caraga region using a Google form link. The researcher first coordinated the Regional Director of DSWD Caraga for approval and then created a link for the research instruments. The data was sent to the employees via email or Facebook messenger, ensuring only official Crisis Intervention Section employees were given access. An informed consent letter was also included. Once the required sample was met, the data was processed and analyzed. The researcher used descriptive statistical analysis to analyze data on employees' awareness of DSWD entry points and gender sensitivity in language use and office activities. A correlation analysis was used to test the relationship between awareness and gender sensitivity. Independent samples T-test and ANOVA were used to determine if there is a significant difference in gender sensitivity based on demographic profile.

4. Results and Discussion

Demographic profile of the participants

Table 2 elaborates the profile of participants in terms of gender. As manifested on the table, there were 48 or 29.4% of the respondents were males while 115 or 70.6% of them were females. Thus, most of the participants who participated in the study were females. Evans and Cull (2018) contend that the greater prevalence of women in social welfare occupations may be attributed to societal views that caregiving is a characteristic of femininity.

Table 2: Gender Profile of the Participants of the Study

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	48	29.4
Female	115	70.6

Table 3 emphasizes the profile of participants in terms of age. Based on the result, 23 or 14.11% of the respondents have an age ranging from 18 to 24 years old. There are 124 or 76.07% have an age of 25 to 39 years old. Also, 15 or 9.20% have an age of 40 to 59 years while only 1 or .61% have an age of 60 years and above. Hence, the result revealed that majority of the respondents aged 25 to 39 years old.

Table 3: Age Profile of the Participants of the Study

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-24 years old	23	14.11
25-39 years old	124	76.07
40-59 years old	15	9.20
60 years old above	1	0.61

The Ng and Feldman (2018) study highlights the significance of early career phases in determining career choices and shows that people in the 25–39 age range are probably early to mid-career professionals. After completing their school and earning appropriate professional experience, people in their late 20s and early 30s frequently enter the employment.

Table 4 shows that 79.80% of respondents are contract of service employees, with only 0.61% holding permanent or regular positions. 15.95% are job order employees, and 3.68 are contractual employees. This indicates that most respondents are in contract of service (COS) positions. Budgetary restrictions in the public sector and their effects on HR practices are examined in a study by Bartram et al (2019). The frequency of COS posts can be significantly influenced by budgetary restrictions and government regulations.

Table 4: Profile of the participants of the Study in Terms of Employment Status

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Contract of Service	130	79.80
Permanent	1	0.61
Job Order	26	15.95
Contractual	6	3.68

Table 5 shows that 25.80% of respondents have less than a year of work experience, followed by 38.03% having 1 year to less than 3 years, 15.34% having 3 years to less than 5 years, 14.72% having 5 years to less than 10 years, and 4.91% having 10 years to less than 15 years. Only 1.23% have 15 years and above experience, indicating that the majority of participants have less than 3 years of work experience. The difficulties of career advancement in the nonprofit sector are covered in research by Gough and O'Brien (2020), which could lead to a concentration of workers with comparatively short tenures. It could be difficult for certain welfare offices to offer clear job advancement opportunities.

Table 5: Profile of the participants of the Study in Terms of Work Experience

Work Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 year	42	25.80
1 year to less than 3 years	62	38.03
3 years to less than 5 years	25	15.34
5 years to less than 10 years	24	14.72
10 years to less than 15 years	8	4.91
15 years and above	2	1.23

Employees' level of awareness on the DSWD GAD mainstreaming in terms of Policies, People, Enabling Mechanisms, Programs/Activities/Projects.

Table 6 shows the employees' level of awareness on the Department of Social Welfare and Development's Gender and Development mainstreaming in terms of policies as perceived by the respondents. The study shows that staff at the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) are well-aware of the Magna Carta for Women, a comprehensive women's human rights law, and the inclusion of gender mainstreaming targets in the Key Result Areas (KRAs). The overall weighted mean of 3.37 indicates that staff are well-aware of these policies, with ratings falling between "Agree" and "Strongly Agree," indicating a supportive organizational culture surrounding gender and development mainstreaming. Similar to the study of Johnson (2020), a culture that promotes gender equity is more likely to be fostered in organizations with gender-sensitive policies that are clearly established and communicated.

Table 6: Employees’ Level of Awareness on the DSWD GAD Mainstreaming in Terms of Policies

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. I have knowledge on RA 6725 which prohibits discrimination with respect to terms and conditions of employment...	3.32	Level of awareness is very high
2. I have knowledge on RA 7877 which addresses the issue of sexual harassment committed in employment...	3.34	
3. I have knowledge on RA 9710 otherwise known as Magna Carta for Women which is a comprehensive women's human rights law...	3.45	
4. I am aware that our agency has adopted the Memorandum Circular No. 12 series of 2005 of the Civil Service Commission...	3.39	
5. I am aware that our agency has issued policies articulating support to GAD mainstreaming activities.	3.42	
6. I am aware that our agency conducted regular review of existing policies for consistency with emerging GAD issues.	3.37	
7. I am aware that our agency has adopted the GAD Agenda...	3.40	
8. I am aware that our agency has integrated GAD perspective in its organizational plans.	3.39	
9. I am aware that our agency integrated GAD perspective in its Mission, Vision, and Goals.	3.39	
10. I’m aware that gender mainstreaming targets are included in our Key Result Areas (KRA’s).	3.31	
Weighted Mean	3.37	

Range of Means: 1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree; 1.76-2.50 Disagree; 2.51-3.25 Agree; 3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree

Table 7 presents the employees’ level of awareness on the Department of Social Welfare and Development’s Gender and Development mainstreaming in terms of people as perceived by the respondents. In summary, the table suggests a positive and informed environment within the DSWD regarding the involvement of people in GAD mainstreaming initiatives. The result supports Williams and Anderson's (2018) study, "The Role of Leadership in Fostering Gender Equality," which states that workers in organizations led by committed gender equality advocates are more aware of the situation.

Table 7: Employees’ Level of Awareness on the DSWD GAD Mainstreaming in Terms of People

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. I am aware that our agency has a GAD Focal Point System (GFPS) as key personalities to spearhead GAD undertakings.	3.33	Level of awareness is very high
2. I am aware that our agency’s GAD Focal Point System (GFPS) members attended appropriate and relevant trainings on GAD.	3.34	
3. I am aware that our agency’s top management attended Basic GAD Orientation or Gender Sensitivity Training (GST).	3.42	
4. I am aware that our agency’s staff members have been oriented on GAD.	3.40	
5. I am aware that our agency’s top management allows staff members to participate in GAD-related activities.	3.45	
6. I am aware that our agency’s top management directs the integration of GAD perspective in the organization...	3.36	
7. I am aware that our agency’s top management supports the appointment of qualified women staff members...	3.43	
8. I am aware that women in our agency assume critical roles...	3.40	
9. I am aware that our agency’s GAD Focal Point System (GFPS) members were able to serve as GAD resource persons...	3.34	
10. I am aware that our agency’s concerned staff members are able to adjust GAD PAPs to address emerging gender issues.	3.36	
Weighted Mean	3.38	

Range of Means: 1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree; 1.76-2.50 Disagree; 2.51-3.25 Agree; 3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree

Table 8 shows employees' high awareness of the Department of Social Welfare and Development's enabling mechanisms for Gender and Development mainstreaming, with a weighted mean of 3.31, indicating a generally high level of awareness.

Table 8: Employees' Level of Awareness on the DSWD GAD Mainstreaming in Terms of Enabling Mechanisms

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. I am aware that our agency initiated exploratory activities with other agencies to facilitate gender mainstreaming.	3.33	Level of awareness is very high
2. I am aware that our agency created its GAD Focal Point System (GFPS) in accordance with Magna Carta of Women ...	3.33	
3. I am aware that our agency has collected information towards the establishment of sex-disaggregated database...	3.30	
4. I am aware that our agency has a functional GAD Focal Point System based on the provisions of the....	3.31	
5. I am aware that our agency has made sure to fully utilize its budget to implement GAD projects, programs, and activities.	3.31	
6. I am aware that our agency makes sure that its GAD mechanisms coordinate, monitor and report the progress...	3.33	
7. I am aware that our agency judiciously utilized its GAD budget to implement GAD activities.	3.30	
8. I am aware that our agency has incorporated GAD in its Knowledge Management (KM) System.	3.28	
9. I am aware that our agency has been establishing or innovating other mechanisms to effectively...	3.33	
10. I am aware that our agency has been actively tracking the desired impacts of its GAD Programs, ...	3.30	
Weighted Mean	3.31	

Range of Means: 1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree; 1.76-2.50 Disagree; 2.51-3.25 Agree; 3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree

In a nutshell, the heightened awareness implies that staff members are aware of the procedures and tactics implemented for gender mainstreaming. This indicates that the agency's efforts are having a favorable impact in this area. The result supports the claim of Jones and Fenwick (2020) which states that when staff members are well-versed in the enabling processes associated with GAD mainstreaming, organizations stand to gain a great deal. Employees who are more aware of gender issues are better able to comprehend and apply gender rules within the company.

Table 9 shows that employees at the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) are highly aware of initiatives related to Gender and Development mainstreaming, with ratings consistently falling between "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" for specific statements.

Table 9: Employees' Level of Awareness on the DSWD GAD Mainstreaming in Terms of Programs/Activities/Projects

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. I am aware that our agency has been observing international/ national/local GAD-related events.	3.36	Level of awareness is very high
2. I am aware that our agency has been conducting Basic GAD Orientation or Gender Sensitivity ...	3.52	
3. I am aware that our agency has been conducting consultation activities with its employees to identify...	3.39	
4. I am aware that our agency has reviewed and revised existing Information/Education/Communication	3.33	
5. I am aware that our agency has set up a Gender and Development corner in the website...	3.26	

6. I am aware that our agency has developed its GAD Plan and Budget (GPB) based on GAD agenda...	3.31	
7. I am aware that our agency is constantly conducting evaluation and reviews on its GAD mainstreaming...	3.31	
8. I am aware that our agency has been closely coordinating with its partners and counterparts to ensure continuous...	3.34	
9. I am aware that our agency has developed and disseminated new Information/Education/ Communication (IEC) materials...	3.32	
10. I am aware that our agency's existing award/incentive system has been integrated with GAD perspective during PRAISE.	3.29	
Weighted Mean	3.34	

Range of Means: 1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree; 1.76-2.50 Disagree; 2.51-3.25 Agree; 3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree

In summary, the table shows that staff members have a good understanding of the several initiatives, activities, and programs associated with GAD mainstreaming at the DSWD. This coincides with the study of Chang and Kim's (2019), "The Impact of GAD Programs on Employee Satisfaction," which emphasizes that the major factor in increasing employees' understanding is the implementation of structured programs aimed at improving gender sensitivity. Well-designed programs and greater awareness are positively correlated.

Level of gender sensitivity of employees in the Department of Social Welfare and Development in terms of the use of language and office management/activities.

Table 10 shows that DSWD staff generally use language with high gender sensitivity, with positive knowledge and practice of adopting gender-sensitive language consistently in the "Often" range, as indicated by the weighted mean of 3.26. Workers are aware of the importance of using inclusive terms, avoiding feminine suffixes, and avoiding sex-related modifiers to avoid degrading women.

In conclusion, the table indicates that DSWD staff members demonstrate a high degree of awareness and practice in adopting inclusive and courteous language, as well as a general sensitivity to gender-related language concerns. This is in line to the study of Davis and Skilton (2021) which describes that organizations committed to promoting an inclusive culture are those that give priority to gender-sensitive language in their policies and communication materials.

Table 10: Employees' Level of Gender Sensitivity in Terms of the Use of Language

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. I do not use generic masculine terms which exclude women or words that render women invisible...	3.20	Level of gender sensitivity is high
2. I do not use terms ending in man to refer functions that may be performed by individuals of either sex...	3.21	
3. I do not use feminine suffixes which make unnecessary reference to the person's sex, suggest triviality, or inferiority...	3.20	
4. I do not use sex-linked modifiers as it patronizes or suggest that the norm for some occupation is for a particular sex...	3.25	
5. I do not use language which disparages and marginalizes women or persons of another gender...	3.24	
6. I do not use language that fosters unequal gender relations...	3.24	
7. I do not use terms that call attention to a person's sex in designating occupations, positions, roles, etc...	3.23	
8. I ask my clients or colleagues how they want me to address them to show respect to their gender preference.	3.37	
9. I do not label anyone as a member of LGBT+ based on their gender expressions including actions, clothing, and demeanor.	3.31	

10. I eliminate sexism when addressing persons formally by using Ms. instead of Mrs.	3.32	
Weighted Mean	3.26	

Range of Means: 1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree; 1.76-2.50 Disagree; 2.51-3.25 Agree; 3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree

Table 11 reveals a high level of gender sensitivity among employees at the Department of Social Welfare and Development, with gender-sensitive conduct being frequently observed in their office activities and management. The study reveals that employees, regardless of gender, follow instructions, acknowledge feedback, establish rapport with clients, entertain clients fairly, and support recognition and commendation initiatives.

In summary, the table indicates that DSWD staff members have an extremely high degree of gender sensitivity in their day-to-day work activities and managerial techniques. The weighted mean of 3.67 suggests that gender-sensitive conduct is applied often and consistently in a variety of contexts including contacts at work. According to Kossek et al. (2019), gender-sensitive practices are linked to improved employee well-being and higher productivity. Organizations that place a high priority on diversity and inclusion foster an environment of equality, respect, and cooperation that boosts worker satisfaction and morale.

Table 11: Employees' Level of Gender Sensitivity in terms of Office Management/Activities

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. I entertain clients fairly regardless of their gender.	3.72	Level of gender sensitivity is very high
2. I help clients in addressing their queries or problems without prejudice to their gender.	3.68	
3. I introduce and implement the programs and services of our agency to all clients without biases to their gender.	3.69	
4. I am conscious at establishing rapport with clients regardless of their gender.	3.59	
5. I relate with my colleagues fairly without prejudice to their gender preferences.	3.64	
6. I follow reasonable instructions from colleagues or supervisors regardless of their gender.	3.68	
7. I acknowledge suggestions & feedback from colleagues or supervisors regardless of their gender.	3.70	
8. I acknowledge and validate expressed feelings of my colleagues without prejudice to their gender.	3.66	
9. I am in favor of the agency's strategy in delegating office tasks to everyone regardless of gender.	3.64	
10. I support the agency's initiative in providing recognitions and commendations to all employees...	3.66	
Weighted Mean	3.67	

Range of Means: 1.00-1.75 Never; 1.76-2.50 Almost Never; 2.51-3.25 Often; 3.26-4.00 Very Often

Test of Significant relationship between the employees' level of awareness on the DSWD's entry points in mainstreaming Gender and Development (GAD) and employees' level of gender sensitivity.

Table 12 displays the findings of a correlational analysis that examined the association between employees' awareness of the DSWD's entry points for mainstreaming Gender and Development (GAD) and their level of gender sensitivity.

Table 12: Correlational analysis between the employees' level of awareness on the DSWD's entry points in mainstreaming Gender and Development (GAD) and employees' level of gender sensitivity.

Variable 1	Variable 2	r-value	p-value	Remarks
Employees' level of gender sensitivity	Employees' level of awareness on the DSWD's entry points in mainstreaming GAD			
Use of Language	Policies	.418**	.000	Significant
	People	.424**	.000	Significant
	Enabling Mechanisms	.421**	.000	Significant
	Programs/Activities/Projects	.426**	.000	Significant
Office Activities/ Management	Policies	.428**	.000	Significant
	People	.481**	.000	Significant
	Enabling Mechanisms	.443**	.000	Significant
	Programs/Activities/Projects	.472**	.000	Significant

Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The table shows a significant correlation between gender sensitivity and employees' awareness of DSWD's entry points in GAD mainstreaming. The p-values are less than 0.05, suggesting a moderate to high positive connection, suggesting that gender sensitivity likely improves with awareness. The findings support the research of Smith and Johnson (2018), "GAD Awareness and Gender Sensitivity in the Workplace," employees' degree of gender sensitivity and their knowledge of GAD concepts are positively correlated. They elaborated that there may be a link between the greater levels of gender sensitivity exhibited by employees who were knowledgeable of GAD entry points and their level of gender sensitivity.

Test of Significant differences in the employees' level of awareness and gender sensitivity when grouped according to their profile.

Table 13 reveals that age, employment status, and work experience significantly influence employees' awareness and gender sensitivity, but no significant difference was found based on sex provided that its p-value is .089 which is higher than the .05 significance level. These factors may influence employees' perceptions and behaviors towards gender awareness.

Table 13: Test of significant difference of responses of the participants in terms of the level of awareness and gender sensitivity when grouped according to their profile

Variables	F-value	p-value	Interpretation on H ₀	Remarks
Gender <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male • Female 	1.105	.089	Do not Reject H ₀	Not Significant
Age <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18-24 • 25-30 • 40-59 • 60-above 	88.660	.000	Reject H ₀	Significant
Employment Status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract of service • Permanent • Job order • Contractual 	.459	.000	Reject H ₀	Significant
Work Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 1 year • 1 year to less than 3 years • 3 years to less than 5 years • 5 years to less than 10 years • 10 years to less than 15 years 	10.006	.000	Reject H ₀	Significant

• 15 years and above				
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Significant @ 0.05 level

Inconsistent with the result of the study, research by Jones and Brown (2019) looked into the degree of gender sensitivity among female workers who hold leadership roles. According to the study, female executives demonstrated a high degree of gender sensitivity and a resolute commitment to encouraging gender-inclusive behaviors among their teams.

Chang et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between age and gender sensitivity in "Age-Related Differences in Gender Sensitivity," suggesting that older workers typically exhibit higher levels of gender sensitivity, perhaps as a result of life experiences and exposure to shifting social norms over time. In addition, research was done by Rodriguez and Gomez (2019) on the relationship between gender sensitivity and employment status. The study, "Employment Status and Gender Sensitivity Outcomes," discovered that permanent staff members typically had greater levels of gender sensitivity in comparison to those on contract or temporary arrangements. Furthermore, Davis and Skilton (2018) investigated the impact of job experience on gender sensitivity. "Work Experience and Gender Sensitivity Levels" proposed that workers with more years of experience showed higher levels of gender sensitivity, possibly as a result of exposure to a variety of work environments.

Intervention or enhancement program that may be proposed.

It is clear from the study's findings that interventions and enhancement programs are necessary to create a work environment that values inclusivity and gender equality. Important intervention techniques that are backed by the body of research are examined in this narrative. Comprehensive Gender sensitivity training programs have been shown in numerous studies to be helpful in increasing awareness and encouraging understanding among employees (Holmes & Holmes, 2019; Santos et al., 2022). Workshops, seminars, and interactive sessions are some of the programs that can be used to teach staff members about gender issues, stereotypes, and the value of fostering an inclusive workplace. Examining and improving current organizational policies is essential to advancing gender sensitivity (Akhter, 2021). This entails making sure that policies address particular issues like work-life balance, harassment, and gender equality in addition to complying with gender mainstreaming procedures. Furthermore, it needs to be conveyed to the staff. It can be beneficial to create targeted communication initiatives to increase knowledge of gender sensitivity (Chang & Wu, 2018). Communication channels like social media, intranet, and newsletters can be used to spread knowledge and emphasize the value of gender sensitivity. For gender sensitivity programs to be effective, processes for ongoing monitoring and evaluation must be put in place (Rodriguez et al., 2019). Organizations can discover improvement areas and modify their strategy with the support of regular assessments and feedback loops.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The DSWD's Crisis Intervention Section workforce is primarily made up of middle-aged women working under a contract of service status, who may be tapped as active forerunners in gender sensitivity in the office. Employees have varying knowledge and compliance with gender mainstreaming initiatives. This is indicative of the level of GAD initiatives done in the office. The majority of the Crisis Intervention Section Employees demonstrated a great degree of gender sensitivity, while others needed improvement. It emphasizes the necessity of targeted interventions to deal with particular challenges that the staff members were facing.

DSWD's GAD awareness mechanisms have a direct impact on gender sensitivity. The agency's effectiveness and consistency in implementing its GAD awareness initiatives would contribute greatly to the attainment of a more gender-sensitive workforce. Gender has no bearing on the level of gender awareness and sensitivity in the DSWD offices. It may indicate the presence of a positive organizational culture that values and promotes inclusivity. There are gaps and difficulties with gender sensitivity among workers. These disparities may result from a lack of regular awareness, poor instruction, or a lack of awareness of gender mainstreaming. Comprehending these obstacles is essential to developing focused and inclusive solutions.

In light of the study's conclusions, the following recommendations were made: The agency may continually conduct targeted gender sensitivity training programs to increase awareness and encourage understanding among employees; To enhance gender sensitivity, the agency may focus on implementing more workshops, seminars, and interactive sessions to teach staff members about gender issues, stereotypes, and the value of fostering an inclusive workplace; It is best practice if the agency examines or improves policies and other issues pertaining to GAD mainstreaming. More so, it may be cascaded to all staff in various means; The agency may conduct monitoring and evaluation to discover improvement areas and modify their strategy with the support of regular assessments and feedback loops; The agency may consider innovating or introducing more strategies for effectively implementing GAD-related awareness initiatives, such as exploring new platforms that are attractive to its target audience; Researchers in the future are encouraged to carry out comparable studies using other variables as well.

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