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Research Paper

Gender Equality and Workplace Inclusivity among Employees of a Government Agency in the Philippines

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Abstract

Gender equality and workplace inclusivity are essential to fostering fair, respectful, and supportive work environments where employees receive equal opportunities and are encouraged to participate and contribute. This study aimed to determine the perceived levels of gender equality and workplace inclusivity among employees of a Philippine government agency. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was employed using a census approach involving 40 employees from an identified work unit of the government agency. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to analyze data collected via a researcher-structured questionnaire. Results showed that employees perceived high levels of gender equality and workplace inclusivity. All six dimension-level Pearson correlations between the gender equality dimensions (equal opportunities and fair treatment) and the workplace inclusivity dimensions (respect and acceptance, participation and involvement, and organizational support) were positive and statistically significant, ranging from $r = .615$ to $r = .862$ ($p < .001$). Although respondents generally perceived limited gaps in workplace policies and practices, areas requiring continuous improvement were identified in accountability and monitoring mechanisms, program evaluation processes, organizational support systems, employee feedback utilization, and safe reporting procedures. Based on these findings, a strategy roadmap for strengthening gender equality and workplace inclusivity was prepared to support the continuous enhancement of gender-responsive and inclusive workplace practices. The findings may serve as a basis for government leaders, human resource managers, and gender and development focal persons in formulating and enhancing evidence-based policies, programs, and interventions that promote gender equality, workplace inclusivity, employee well-being, and organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: *Equal Opportunities, Fair Treatment, Gender Equality, Organizational Support, Philippine Government Agency, Workplace Inclusivity*

INTRODUCTION

In a world where people come from different paths in life and hold diverse perspectives, gender equality and workplace inclusivity have become increasingly important. Organizations that promote fair and inclusive workplace cultures are better positioned to create healthy work environments that support both employee well-being and organizational success. Gender equality means equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for women and men, while workplace inclusivity means creating an environment where individuals feel welcomed, respected, valued, and able to contribute meaningfully to common goals. According to Van Knippenberg et al. (2024), inclusive organizational climates foster belonging, participation, and positive workplace outcomes, thereby contributing to employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. Consequently, understanding the role of gender equality and workplace inclusivity has become increasingly important for organizations seeking to enhance workforce well-being and sustain long-term organizational performance.

Recent international studies consistently show that gender equality and workplace inclusivity are fundamental to employee well-being and organizational success. Persistent gender inequalities in recruitment, performance evaluation, compensation, promotion, leadership

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opportunities, and participation in organizational decision-making continue to hinder women's career advancement, underscoring the need for gender-responsive policies and equitable access to leadership positions (Son Hing et al., 2023; Plückelmann et al., 2024). Likewise, gender-inclusive human resource management practices, participative decision-making, and inclusive leadership help create supportive work environments characterized by trust, empowerment, psychological safety, and employee involvement (Galdiero et al., 2024). These organizational conditions have been linked to workplace happiness, job satisfaction, employee engagement, organizational commitment, innovation, improved performance, and lower turnover intentions (Islam et al., 2024). Collectively, the evidence suggests that gender equality and workplace inclusivity contribute to both positive employee experiences and sustainable organizational outcomes.

Several studies and policy-oriented publications further highlight the mechanisms through which organizations can promote inclusive workplaces. Employees with greater awareness of gender equality and gender mainstreaming are more likely to embrace inclusive practices and exhibit less bias, while policies that support equal pay, equal opportunities, and protection from discrimination help strengthen workplace inclusion (Sharma & Kaur, 2023). Similarly, inclusive organizational policies, diversity initiatives, and gender-responsive programs enhance employees' sense of acceptance, empowerment, and participation, particularly among diverse employee groups (Randel et al., 2021; Brimhall, 2020). Gender mainstreaming and inclusive workplace initiatives have likewise been recognized as effective strategies for reducing discrimination and improving employee well-being, engagement, and organizational outcomes (Sharma & Kaur, 2023). These findings demonstrate that workplace inclusivity serves not only as a social imperative but also as a strategic organizational approach that promotes collaboration, workforce engagement, and institutional sustainability.

Despite the growing body of international and local literature, research on the relationship between gender equality and workplace inclusivity in Philippine government agencies remains limited. Existing studies have primarily focused on private-sector organizations, general workplace settings, or policy-level outcomes, leaving a gap in understanding how government employees' awareness and experiences of gender equality shape their perceptions of workplace inclusivity and overall well-being. This gap is particularly significant because government institutions are mandated to implement gender mainstreaming programs and serve as key agents of gender-responsive governance and public service delivery. Consequently, context-specific evidence is needed to better understand how gender equality and workplace inclusivity are experienced in the public sector and how these factors can be leveraged to strengthen employee well-being, organizational performance, and the effective implementation of gender-responsive policies.

In the Philippines, government agencies are expected to uphold gender equality and workplace inclusivity through policies and programs that promote equal opportunities, eliminate gender-based discrimination, and encourage gender-responsive workplace practices. Despite these initiatives, challenges related to equal opportunities, fair treatment, workplace experiences, and participation in organizational activities continue to affect employees and may hinder the achievement of fully inclusive workplaces. Organizational initiatives that promote gender equality and workplace inclusivity have been shown to strengthen employee participation, belonging, engagement, and other positive workplace outcomes (Jerónimo et al., 2022; Lau et al., 2023; Van Knippenberg et al., 2024). Furthermore, inclusive organizational climates and equitable workplace practices have been associated with enhanced employee well-being, organizational commitment, and workplace effectiveness (Van Knippenberg et al., 2024). Therefore, this study provides evidence-based information that may assist agency leaders, human resource managers, and gender and development (GAD) focal persons in strengthening existing workplace policies, programs, and interventions to improve employee well-being, workplace inclusivity, and organizational

effectiveness.

This study aimed to assess perceived gender equality and workplace inclusivity among employees of a government agency in the Philippines. Specifically, it sought to determine employees' perceptions of gender equality and workplace inclusivity, examine differences in perceived gender equality across selected demographic characteristics, investigate the relationship between gender equality and workplace inclusivity, identify gaps in workplace policies and practices, and develop a strategic roadmap to strengthen gender equality and workplace inclusivity. The study is anchored in Social Exchange Theory (SET), which posits that employees are more likely to respond positively when they perceive fair treatment, respect, and support from their organization. In the workplace, gender equality and inclusive practices may foster positive work experiences, strengthen employees' sense of belonging, and encourage greater participation and commitment to organizational goals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To support the study's objectives, relevant literature on gender equality, workplace inclusivity, and their relationship was reviewed. The literature presented in this section provides the conceptual and empirical foundation for understanding the study's key variables, particularly the underpinning theory for the study, gender equality in the workplace, workplace inclusivity, and the relationship between these variables and their respective dimensions.

Social Exchange Theory (SET)

SET explains how relationships are developed and maintained through social exchanges between individuals and organizations. The theory suggests that people form relationships by exchanging resources, support, and other benefits, and that these exchanges are influenced by the expectation of receiving something in return. A key concept of SET is reciprocity, which holds that favorable treatment from one party may prompt the other party to respond with favorable attitudes or behaviors. Ahmad et al. (2023) explained that reciprocity is an important principle of SET because individuals tend to respond to the treatment and benefits they receive in social relationships. In the workplace, this means that employees may develop positive attitudes and behaviors when they experience support, fair treatment, and positive interactions from their organization.

In the workplace, SET suggests that employees consider how they are treated when forming their attitudes and behaviors toward the organization. When employees feel fairly treated, respected, and supported, they are more likely to develop positive feelings toward their workplace. They may also be more willing to participate, cooperate, and fulfill their responsibilities. Innstrand and Grødal (2022) found that employees who experience inclusion and support tend to show more positive work-related outcomes. Ayalew and Walia (2024) likewise emphasized the importance of fair treatment and positive workplace relationships in promoting favorable employee experiences and behaviors.

This study is anchored in SET because it provides a basis for understanding the connection between gender equality and workplace inclusivity. When employees feel they are given equal opportunities, treated fairly, respected, accepted, and supported regardless of gender, they may develop more positive perceptions of their workplace and become more willing to participate and contribute. Jerónimo et al. (2022) likewise found that workplace inclusion is associated with employee engagement. Therefore, SET provides a useful framework for understanding how employees' experiences of equality and inclusion may relate to their participation, engagement, and overall workplace experiences.

Gender Equality in the Workplace

Gender equality in the workplace means providing employees with equal opportunities and treating them fairly, regardless of gender. It encompasses equal access to employment opportunities, training, promotions, and other career-related benefits, as well as protection from discrimination. Tricco et al. (2024) and Quilapio et al. (2024) emphasized that workplace policies and interventions that promote gender equity foster more inclusive work environments and improve employee experiences. However, Son Hing et al. (2023) noted that gender inequities and discriminatory practices may persist within organizational processes and workplace systems despite efforts to promote equality. Alibudbud (2023, 2024) also emphasized the importance of inclusive policies and practices in addressing discrimination and supporting employee well-being.

Taken together, these studies show that gender equality is not only about having policies in place but also about how employees experience fairness and equal treatment in their daily work. This is important to the present study because it seeks to determine how government employees perceive gender equality in terms of equal opportunities and fair treatment. Examining these experiences can help identify whether existing workplace practices are experienced equally by employees and whether there are areas that may still need improvement.

Workplace Inclusivity

Workplace inclusivity describes a work environment in which employees feel respected, supported, and treated equally. Previous studies (Innstrand & Grødal, 2022; Wijaya & Senen, 2024) found that perceived inclusion is positively related to organizational commitment and engagement. Jerónimo et al. (2022) showed that diversity practices increase employee participation within the framework of inclusivity. Moon and Christensen (2020) noted that training programs may promote understanding of inclusion and equality, which can contribute to greater fairness within organizations. Organizational initiatives that promote gender equality and inclusive workplace cultures have been associated with positive organizational outcomes and can help reduce barriers to participation and advancement (Andrade, 2022; Benavides et al., 2024). Collectively, these studies indicate that inclusivity is not only about compliance but also about fostering respect, acceptance, and engagement, which this study seeks to assess among government employees.

Relationship Between Gender Equality and Workplace Inclusivity

Several studies indicate that gender equality and workplace inclusivity are closely interconnected. Equal treatment and equitable opportunities can help employees feel respected, valued, and accepted within their organizations, fostering a more inclusive work environment. Innstrand and Grødal (2022) found that perceived inclusion was positively associated with organizational commitment and work engagement, suggesting that supportive, inclusive workplace conditions contribute to favorable employee outcomes. Likewise, Jerónimo et al. (2022) reported that employees' perceptions of diversity practices were positively related to employee engagement through the mediating role of workplace inclusion, emphasizing the importance of inclusive organizational environments in enhancing employee experiences.

Within the public sector and other organizational settings, gender-responsive policies and diversity management practices have also been linked to inclusive workplace climates. Van Knippenberg et al. (2024) emphasized that diversity management and inclusive organizational climates contribute to positive workplace experiences and employee participation. Similarly, Andrade (2022) argued that organizational initiatives promoting gender equality and inclusion can reduce barriers to employee participation and strengthen organizational outcomes. Collectively, these studies suggest that gender equality and workplace inclusivity may be mutually reinforcing characteristics.

Despite evidence supporting a positive association, other studies suggest that the relationship between gender-related workplace conditions and inclusivity may not always be significant or may vary across contexts. For example, Mousa (2021), in a study of academics at Egyptian public universities, found no significant relationship between gender diversity and organizational inclusion, although both variables independently predicted workplace happiness. This finding indicates that the mere presence of gender diversity does not necessarily translate into perceived inclusivity and that other organizational factors may influence inclusion outcomes. Furthermore, Jerónimo et al. (2022) found that inclusive leadership did not significantly moderate the relationship between diversity practices and employee engagement, despite positively influencing perceptions of inclusion. This suggests that mechanisms linking diversity- or gender-related initiatives to inclusive workplace outcomes may not be universally applicable across organizations. Similarly, Turi et al. (2022) reported that the effects of diversity-related factors on organizational outcomes were influenced by mediating and moderating variables, including leadership expertise and diversity beliefs. Their findings imply that diversity-related initiatives do not consistently produce the same outcomes across organizational settings and may depend on contextual and organizational conditions. Taken together, these studies highlight the complexity of diversity and inclusion processes and suggest that the relationship between perceived gender equality and workplace inclusivity may not be uniformly significant across different organizational environments.

Given the conflicting findings in the literature, current evidence does not conclusively establish that perceived gender equality is consistently associated with workplace inclusivity across organizational settings. While several studies have reported positive links between equality-related practices and inclusive workplace experiences, other research has found weak, inconsistent, or non-significant relationships, suggesting that the association may be influenced by contextual factors such as organizational culture, leadership practices, workforce composition, and institutional policies. Moreover, empirical evidence on this relationship within Philippine government agencies is limited, where public-sector structures, gender mainstreaming initiatives, and workplace dynamics may shape employees' perceptions differently. As a result, further investigation is necessary to determine whether perceived gender equality and workplace inclusivity are significantly related in this specific context. Findings from this study may inform the development of evidence-based policies and interventions aimed at enhancing gender responsiveness, fostering inclusive workplace environments, promoting employee well-being, and strengthening organizational effectiveness in the public sector.

Given the inconclusive nature of existing evidence and the limited research in Philippine government settings, the study adopts a conservative statistical approach by initially assuming no relationship between the variables. Accordingly, the following null hypothesis is formulated:

H_0: There is no significant relationship between the dimensions of perceived gender equality (equal opportunities and fair treatment) and workplace inclusivity (respect and acceptance, participation and involvement, and organizational support) among employees of a government agency in the Philippines.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design, appropriate for describing and examining employees' perceptions of gender equality and workplace inclusivity using numerical data and statistical techniques (Lim, 2025). Quantitative research enabled the systematic collection and analysis of numerical information to measure variables, identify patterns, examine relationships, and generate objective findings that were statistically interpreted and generalized within the context of the study (Lim, 2025). The respondents consisted of 40 employees

from the identified department or unit of the government agency, representing the study's target population. Given the relatively small and manageable size of the population, a census approach was used. This approach was appropriate because it involved gathering data from all members of the target population, thereby minimizing sampling error and ensuring that the results accurately represented the perceptions and experiences of employees within the department. The study included all employees in the identified department or unit of the government agency. Their inclusion was based on their membership in the target population and their shared exposure to organizational policies, programs, and workplace practices concerning gender equality and workplace inclusivity. By employing a census approach, the study enhanced data completeness and minimized sampling bias, as all members of the population were invited to participate.

A self-structured questionnaire served as the primary research instrument for collecting data on respondents' demographic profiles, perceived gender equality, and workplace inclusivity. The instrument was developed based on the study's objectives, conceptual framework, and relevant literature on gender equality and workplace inclusivity. Specifically, equal opportunities and fair treatment were used to measure perceived gender equality, while respect and acceptance, participation and involvement, and organizational support were used to measure workplace inclusivity. These dimensions were widely recognized as key indicators of gender equality and inclusive workplace environments in contemporary organizational research (Nishii, 2021; Sharma & Kaur, 2023). The questionnaire items were developed from relevant literature on gender equality and workplace inclusivity. The gender equality items reflected the dimensions of equal opportunity, fairness, and non-discrimination, while the workplace inclusivity items covered respect, belongingness, employee participation, and organizational support (Sharma & Kaur, 2023). Several items were adapted from validated instruments (Jansen et al., 2022; Nishii, 2021; Sharma & Kaur, 2023) and modified to ensure their appropriateness for the context of the identified government agency. The questionnaire employed a four-point Likert scale consisting of Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), and Strongly Agree (4). This scale enabled respondents to indicate the extent of their agreement with each statement. The responses were interpreted using the following scale ranges: 3.26-4.00 = Strongly Agree, 2.51-3.25 = Agree, 1.76-2.50 = Disagree, and 1.00-1.75 = Strongly Disagree. The four-point Likert scale was intentionally adopted to avoid central tendency bias and to encourage respondents to indicate either agreement or disagreement with each statement. Since the participants were employees with direct experience of the workplace conditions being evaluated, a neutral option was deemed unnecessary, allowing for clearer identification of perceptions regarding gender equality and workplace inclusivity.

To establish the instrument's validity and reliability, the questionnaire underwent expert review and validation by two Attorney Group Supervisors with expertise in organizational policies and workplace practices. The validators evaluated the relevance, clarity, and appropriateness of the questionnaire items in relation to the study's objectives and variables, and their recommendations were incorporated into the final version of the instrument. Expert validation is essential for establishing the face and content validity of research instruments (Elangovan & Sundaravel, 2021). Subsequently, a pilot test was conducted among 15 employees from a different department of the identified government agency who were not included in the actual study. The pilot test assessed the clarity, relevance, and comprehensibility of the questionnaire items and identified necessary revisions prior to the conduct of the actual study. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with acceptable coefficients indicating satisfactory internal consistency (Yusoff et al., 2021). The results indicated good to excellent reliability across all dimensions, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.854 to 0.955. Specifically, equal opportunities obtained a coefficient of 0.886, fair treatment 0.908, respect and acceptance 0.919, participation and involvement 0.938, organizational support 0.955, policy gaps 0.904, and practice and

implementation gaps 0.854. These results indicated that the instrument possessed satisfactory internal consistency and was considered reliable for use in the actual study.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

Dimension	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Perceived Gender Equality			
Equal Opportunities	5	0.886	Good
Fair Treatment	5	0.908	Excellent
Workplace Inclusivity			
Respect and Acceptance	5	0.919	Excellent
Participation and Involvement	5	0.938	Excellent
Organizational Support	5	0.955	Excellent
Workplace Policy and Practice Gaps			
Policy Gaps	5	0.904	Excellent
Practice and Implementation Gaps	5	0.854	Good

After completing validation and pilot testing, approval was obtained from the relevant government agency before the study began. The finalized questionnaire was administered via Google Forms from September 16-17, 2026, to all employees included in the study. Before participating, respondents received an informed consent form and were assured of the confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary nature of their participation, in accordance with ethical research standards (Mondal et al., 2023). Complete anonymity was maintained by disabling the collection of email addresses and other identifying information in Google Forms. The survey link was distributed uniformly to eligible participants, and no response-tracking mechanism was used. Respondents were explicitly informed that neither agency leaders nor immediate supervisors would have access to individual responses and that only aggregated results would be presented in the study. These procedures were designed to enhance objectivity, foster psychological safety, and reduce response bias arising from perceived organizational monitoring.

After data collection, responses were organized, coded, and analyzed using appropriate statistical software. Frequency counts, percentages, and weighted means were used to describe respondents' profiles and assess perceptions of gender equality, workplace inclusivity, and workplace policy and practice gaps. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was employed to determine significant relationships between the dimensions of gender equality and workplace inclusivity at the 0.05 level of significance. Ninety-five percent confidence intervals for the coefficients were computed using the Fisher z-transformation. Before conducting the correlation analysis, the assumptions of Pearson correlation, including linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and the absence of significant outliers, were examined. Linearity and homoscedasticity were assessed through scatterplots of each dimension pair; outliers were screened using boxplots and standardized (z) scores; and normality was evaluated using the Shapiro-Wilk test and Q-Q plots. Given the small population size (N = 40) and the four-point ordinal response format, Spearman's rank-order correlation (ρ) was also computed as a robustness check on the Pearson coefficients. Satisfying these assumptions is necessary to ensure the validity of parametric statistical analyses, including Pearson correlation (Hair et al., 2022).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data gathered from the survey questionnaire were systematically presented, analyzed, and interpreted in accordance with the study's objectives.

Respondents' Profile

The demographic profile of the selected employees in the government agency includes their age, sex, civil status, and job level.

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
20 -29 years old	16	40
30–39 years old	20	50
40–49 years old	2	5
50–59 years old	1	2.5
60 and above	1	2.5
Total	**40**	**100**
Sex		
Female	28	70
Male	12	30
Total	**40**	**100**
Civil Status		
Single	33	82.5
Married	5	12.5
Separated	1	2.5
Widowed	1	2.5
Total	**40**	**100**
Job Level		
Rank-and-file	36	90
Supervisory	2	5
Managerial	2	5
Total	**40**	**100**

The demographic profile showed that 40 respondents were predominantly 30–39 years old (50%), followed by those aged 20–29 years (40%), indicating that 90% of participants were within the 20–39 age range. In terms of sex, female respondents comprised 70%, while males comprised 30%, showing greater representation of women in the study. Regarding civil status, the majority were single (82.5%), followed by married respondents (12.5%), while separated and widowed respondents each accounted for 2.5%. In terms of job level, 90% were rank-and-file employees, while only 5% each were in supervisory and managerial positions. Overall, the respondent profile indicates that the study primarily reflects the perspectives of young to middle-aged, female, single, and rank-and-file employees. These characteristics provide important context for interpreting the findings on gender equality and workplace inclusivity, as demographic characteristics such as age,

gender, and organizational position can be associated with differences in employees' perceptions and workplace experiences (Banono, 2023).

Although rank-and-file employees (90%) and women (70%) constituted the majority of respondents, the findings may still be considered representative of the agency because these groups make up a substantial share of the workforce and are directly exposed to the day-to-day implementation of gender equality and workplace inclusivity initiatives. Their strong participation provides meaningful insights into how organizational policies and practices are experienced at the operational level. Moreover, the inclusion of managerial staff and male employees, despite their smaller numbers, ensured that perspectives from different employment levels and genders were represented, allowing the study to capture a reasonably balanced and comprehensive assessment of workplace conditions within the agency.

Perceived Gender Equality

Perceived gender equality refers to employees' assessment of how fairly men and women are treated and how equally they are provided with opportunities in the workplace. In a government agency, gender equality is reflected in equitable access to employment, career advancement, training opportunities, decision-making processes, and workplace benefits, regardless of gender. Assessing employees' perceptions of gender equality is important because it provides insights into how organizational policies and practices contribute to a fair and inclusive work environment, which, in turn, supports workplace inclusivity.

Table 3. Level of Perceived Gender Equality

Dimension	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Equal Opportunities	3.68	Strongly Agree
Fair Treatment	3.79	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean	**3.74**	**Strongly Agree**

The findings in Table 3 indicate that employees perceive a high level of gender equality within the government agency, as evidenced by an overall mean score of 3.74 (Strongly Agree). The Fair Treatment dimension had the highest mean score (M = 3.79), followed by Equal Opportunities (M = 3.68), both interpreted as Strongly Agree. These results suggest that employees believe the agency provides equitable treatment and fair access to employment, career advancement, training, and other workplace opportunities regardless of gender. The consistently high ratings across both dimensions reflect a positive organizational climate that promotes fairness, non-discrimination, and equal participation, which are essential components of an inclusive workplace. This finding supports the view that inclusive organizational climates and equitable workplace practices contribute to positive employee experiences, participation, and a stronger sense of belonging in the workplace (Van Knippenberg et al., 2024).

Workplace Inclusivity

Workplace inclusivity refers to employees' perceptions of being valued, respected, and supported in the workplace. It fosters an environment where employees can actively participate and contribute while feeling a sense of belonging. In this study, workplace inclusivity is assessed through three dimensions: respect and acceptance, participation and involvement, and organizational support. Table 4 presents the respondents' level of workplace inclusivity across these dimensions, providing an overview of how employees perceive the inclusiveness of the government agency's work environment.

Table 4. Level of Workplace Inclusivity

Dimension	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Respect and Acceptance	3.69	Strongly Agree
Participation and Involvement	3.72	Strongly Agree
Organizational Support	3.62	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean	**3.67**	**Strongly Agree**

The findings revealed that employees perceived their workplace as respectful, participative, and supportive, as reflected in the overall mean, which was interpreted as Strongly Agree. This result suggests that employees felt valued, engaged, and empowered to contribute to organizational goals, which may enhance employee commitment, collaboration, and effectiveness. Among the dimensions, participation and involvement had the highest mean, indicating that the organization has cultivated an environment in which employees perceive themselves as active contributors to workplace decisions and activities. Meanwhile, respect and acceptance suggest that the workplace is characterized by positive interpersonal relationships and a culture of professionalism. This finding implies that employees experience a sense of belonging and inclusion, which can strengthen teamwork and support employee well-being. Although organizational support received the lowest mean among the three dimensions, it remained highly favorable. This result suggests opportunities to further strengthen organizational support systems, particularly those related to employee welfare and responsiveness to employee concerns. Enhancing these aspects may help reinforce a more inclusive workplace culture. Overall, the results align with previous studies emphasizing that inclusive workplaces foster respect, belonging, employee participation, and organizational support, which contribute to higher levels of employee well-being, engagement, and organizational effectiveness (Jansen et al., 2022; Randel et al., 2021; Gamboa et al., 2024; Rivera et al., 2023; Almendras et al., 2025).

Relationship Between Gender Equality and Workplace Inclusivity

The study examined the relationship between perceived gender equality and workplace inclusivity among employees of a government agency in the Philippines. Specifically, it tested the null hypothesis that no significant relationship exists between the dimensions of perceived gender equality (equal opportunity and fair treatment) and workplace inclusivity (respect and acceptance, participation and involvement, and organizational support) among employees of a government agency in the Philippines. Before conducting the correlation analysis, the assumptions required for Pearson Product-Moment Correlation were examined. These assumptions included normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and the absence of significant outliers. Normality, assessed through the Shapiro-Wilk test and Q-Q plots, showed no marked departure across the four dimension scores. The scatterplots indicated approximately linear relationships with comparable spread, and the boxplots and z-scores showed no extreme outliers. These results supported the suitability of Pearson correlation, with Spearman's rank-order correlation reported as a robustness check given the small population (N = 40) and four-point ordinal items. Table 5 presents the results of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis conducted to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the dimensions of perceived gender equality and workplace inclusivity among employees of a government agency in the Philippines.

Table 5. Correlation Between Dimensions of Gender Equality and Workplace Inclusivity

Gender Equality Dimension	Workplace Inclusivity Dimension	r	95% CI	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Equal Opportunities	Respect and Acceptance	0.719	[0.525, 0.842]	< .001	Reject Ho	Strong Positive
Equal Opportunities	Participation and Involvement	0.708	[0.509, 0.835]	< .001	Reject Ho	Strong Positive
Equal Opportunities	Organizational Support	0.615	[0.375, 0.778]	< .001	Reject Ho	Strong Positive
Fair Treatment	Respect and Acceptance	0.809	[0.665, 0.895]	< .001	Reject Ho	Very Strong Positive
Fair Treatment	Participation and Involvement	0.862	[0.753, 0.925]	< .001	Reject Ho	Very Strong Positive
Fair Treatment	Organizational Support	0.703	[0.501, 0.832]	< .001	Reject Ho	Strong Positive

Note. N = 40; CI = confidence interval for Pearson's r, computed using the Fisher z-transformation. Because no composite correlation between the overall gender equality and workplace inclusivity scores was computed, the relationship is reported at the dimension level.

The results revealed significant positive relationships between all dimensions of gender equality and workplace inclusivity, with dimension-level Pearson correlations ranging from r = .615 to r = .862 (p < .001). These findings indicate that employees who perceived higher levels of equal opportunities and fair treatment also tended to report higher levels of respect and acceptance, participation and involvement, and organizational support, suggesting that equal opportunities and fair treatment are closely associated with an inclusive work environment when access to career opportunities, participation, and workplace resources is not influenced by gender. This strengthens employees' sense of belonging and trust in the organization when consistent opportunities and fair treatment are maintained. Therefore, to sustain the inclusive workplace, the agency should continue to strengthen equitable access to opportunities, foster respectful interpersonal relationships, and address perceived unfair treatment so employees can participate and contribute regardless of gender. Additionally, the results suggest that when employees experience fairness and equal treatment regardless of gender, they are more likely to feel respected, valued, and included within the organization. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that gender-equitable workplace practices contribute to greater employee inclusion, participation, and organizational support (Lau et al., 2023).

The results indicate that all dimensions of gender equality and workplace inclusivity are positively and significantly related, with higher ratings on the gender equality dimensions associated with higher ratings on the workplace inclusivity dimensions. The strongest relationship was observed between Fair Treatment and Participation and Involvement (r = .862, 95% CI [0.753, 0.925], p < .001), suggesting that employees who perceive equitable treatment are more likely to engage actively in workplace activities and decision-making. Fair Treatment also showed strong positive correlations with Respect and Acceptance and with Organizational Support, highlighting the importance of fairness in fostering an inclusive and supportive work environment (Randel et al., 2021).

Although the correlation between Fair Treatment and Participation and Involvement was

very high, the two constructs remain conceptually distinct. Fair Treatment reflects employees' perceptions of equality, respect, and impartiality, whereas Participation and Involvement concerns their active engagement in organizational processes. The strong association is theoretically expected because employees who perceive fairness are more likely to feel empowered to express their ideas and contribute to workplace affairs. This finding aligns with studies showing that organizational justice promotes employee participation (Qi et al., 2023) and that fair treatment enhances organizational support and engagement (Ahamed et al., 2023).

Overall, the findings demonstrate that all dimensions of gender equality are positively associated with workplace inclusivity. Specifically, equal opportunities showed significant positive relationships with respect and acceptance, participation and involvement, and organizational support. These results indicate that when employees perceive fair access to career advancement, training, and other workplace opportunities, they are more likely to engage in organizational activities, contribute to decision- making, and develop stronger perceptions of inclusion. Similarly, equitable access to opportunities appears to foster greater respect and acceptance among employees, strengthening their sense of belonging and value within the organization. Although the weakest relationship was observed between equal opportunities and organizational support ($r = .615$, 95% CI [0.375, 0.778], $p < .001$), the relationship remained statistically significant, indicating that perceptions of equitable opportunities are also associated with employees' perceptions that the organization provides support for their needs and concerns. These findings are consistent with Van Knippenberg et al. (2024), who emphasized that inclusive organizational climates are strengthened through equitable opportunities, fair treatment, employee participation, and organizational practices that promote inclusion and belonging. Likewise, fair treatment demonstrated positive relationships with all dimensions of workplace inclusivity, suggesting that consistent and equitable treatment by supervisors and colleagues is associated with employees' perceptions of respect, participation, and organizational support. The findings imply that gender equality is not limited to providing equal opportunities but is also closely connected to employees' everyday experiences of being respected, participating in workplace activities, and receiving organizational support. This interpretation highlights the importance of organizational conditions that enable employees to feel accepted, valued, and included.

The findings indicate that the dimensions of gender equality and workplace inclusivity are closely interconnected. These findings align with SET, which posits that employees who experience fair treatment, support, and positive workplace relationships are more likely to develop favorable attitudes and behaviors toward their organization. The significant positive relationships across all dimensions suggest that initiatives promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment may foster greater respect, acceptance, participation, involvement, and organizational support among employees. These findings underscore the importance of sustaining gender-responsive policies and inclusive workplace practices to foster a work environment where employees feel valued, engaged, and supported (Jerónimo et al., 2022; Lau et al., 2023; Randel et al., 2021).

Workplace Policy and Practice Gaps

Workplace policies and practices play a vital role in promoting gender equality and fostering an inclusive work environment, particularly in government agencies expected to uphold principles of fairness, equal opportunity, and non-discrimination. Assessing perceived policy and practice gaps provides valuable insights into areas where existing measures may be insufficient or where implementation may not fully support employees' needs and experiences. In this study, workplace policy and practice gaps refer to employees' perceptions of deficiencies in organizational policies and their implementation related to gender equality and workplace inclusivity, serving as a basis for identifying areas that may require further improvement.

Table 6. Workplace Policy and Practice Gaps

Dimension/Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
A. Policy Gaps		
1. Agency policies lack clear provisions addressing gender-responsive workplace concerns	2.00	Disagree
2. Policies do not sufficiently specify procedures for preventing and addressing gender-based discrimination or exclusion	2.03	Disagree
3. Policies lack clear provisions for ensuring gender-responsive access to career development and advancement opportunities	2.13	Disagree
4. Policies need clearer accountability mechanisms for monitoring compliance with gender equality and workplace inclusivity standards	2.48	Disagree
5. The agency lacks comprehensive policy provisions that address emerging gender equality and workplace inclusivity concerns.	2.10	Disagree
Policy Gaps Mean	**2.15**	**Disagree**
B. Practice and Implementation Gaps		
1. The agency does not consistently monitor whether gender equality and workplace inclusivity policies are properly implemented	2.15	Disagree
2. The agency lacks a clear and accessible process for employees to raise related concerns	2.13	Disagree
3. More systematic procedures are needed to evaluate the effectiveness of gender equality and workplace inclusivity programs	2.50	Disagree
4. Employee feedback is not consistently utilized to identify and address workplace gaps	2.08	Disagree
5. The agency lacks a systematic process for translating identified concerns into specific workplace improvements	2.15	Disagree
Practice and Implementation Gaps Mean	**2.20**	**Disagree**

Overall Mean	**2.17**	**Disagree**

The findings indicate that respondents generally disagreed that substantial workplace policy and practice gaps exist in the agency, as reflected in the overall mean of 2.17 (Disagree). This suggests that employees perceive the agency's gender equality and workplace inclusivity policies, as well as their implementation, to be generally adequate and effective. The policy gaps dimension had a mean of 2.15 (Disagree), indicating that respondents do not perceive significant deficiencies in existing policies. However, the indicator on the need for clearer accountability mechanisms for monitoring compliance with gender equality and workplace inclusivity standards recorded the highest mean (Mean = 2.48), suggesting that strengthening accountability and oversight systems remains an area for improvement. Similarly, the practice and implementation gaps dimension had a mean of 2.20 (Disagree), reflecting generally favorable perceptions of policy implementation. Nevertheless, the indicator stating that more systematic procedures are needed to evaluate the effectiveness of gender equality and workplace inclusivity programs received the highest mean (Mean = 2.50), highlighting the importance of enhancing monitoring and evaluation practices. Overall, while the findings demonstrate that respondents perceive relatively few policy and implementation gaps, they also underscore opportunities to strengthen accountability, program assessment, and continuous improvement mechanisms. These findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing that effective monitoring, evaluation, accountability mechanisms, and organizational support systems are essential for sustaining inclusive workplaces and ensuring that gender equality and workplace inclusivity initiatives produce meaningful organizational outcomes (Dalessandro & Lovell, 2024; Lau et al., 2023; Son Hing et al., 2023; Concepcion et al., 2024).

Strategy Roadmap for Strengthening Gender Equality and Workplace Inclusivity

Table 7 outlines the proposed strategy and roadmap to strengthen gender equality and workplace inclusivity among employees of a government agency.

Table 7. Proposed Strategy Roadmap for Strengthening Gender Equality and Workplace Inclusivity

Indicator	Area for Improvement	Proposed Strategies	Expected Outcome	Target Timeline	Key Performance Indicators	Responsible Unit/Focal Person
Gender Equality – Equal Opportunities	Job assignments are distributed fairly regardless of gender.	Strengthen transparent and gender-neutral procedures for work assignment and task distribution.	Improved perceptions of fairness and equitable access to opportunities.	Short-Term (0-6 months)	Adoption of assignment guidelines; ≥90% employee agreement on fairness of task distribution	HRD Unit; Division Heads; GAD Focal Point System
Gender Equality – Fair Treatment	Employees receive equal respect from supervisors and colleagues regardless of gender.	Reinforce respectful, equitable, and gender-responsive interactions.	Enhanced workplace respect and reduced perceptions of bias.	Medium-Term (6-12 months)	Number of trainings conducted; reduction in complaints related to unfair treatment	HRD Unit; GAD Focal Point System
Workplace Inclusivity – Respect and Acceptance	Employees can express opinions without fear of discrimination.	Strengthen a psychologically safe environment for open communication.	Increased sense of belonging and openness.	Medium-Term (6-12 months)	Employee survey scores on psychological safety; number of feedback mechanisms utilized	HRD Unit; Supervisors
Workplace Inclusivity –	Employees have opportunities to	Expand opportunities	Higher employee	Medium-Term (6-	Percentage of employees	Management; HRD Unit

Participation and Involvement	participate in decision-making.	for participation in committees and organizational activities.	involvement and engagement.	12 months)	participating in committees; employee engagement scores	
Workplace Inclusivity – Organizational Support	Employees feel safe raising concerns about unfair treatment.	Establish confidential and responsive reporting mechanisms.	Improved trust in organizational support systems.	Short-Term (0-6 months)	Functional grievance mechanism established; number of concerns resolved within prescribed period	GAD Focal Point; HRD Unit; Management
Workplace Policy and Practice – Policy Gaps	Policies require clearer accountability mechanisms.	Clarify monitoring responsibilities and compliance procedures.	Improved accountability and policy compliance.	Long-Term (Beyond 12 months)	Policy review completed; compliance reports submitted annually	Policy Review Committee; GAD Focal Point System
Workplace Policy and Practice – Practice and Implementation Gaps	Need for systematic evaluation of gender equality and inclusivity programs.	Develop regular monitoring and evaluation procedures.	Continuous program improvement and evidence-based decision-making.	Long-Term (Beyond 12 months)	Annual monitoring reports completed; percentage of recommendations implemented	Planning Unit; HRD Unit; GAD Focal Point System

Based on the study's findings, the proposed Strategy Roadmap for Strengthening Gender Equality and Workplace Inclusivity was developed from the areas identified for improvement in gender equality, workplace inclusivity, and workplace policy and practice gaps. Although employees generally reported high levels of gender equality and workplace inclusivity and low levels of policy and practice gaps, several indicators were identified as priority areas for enhancement. The proposed strategies focus on strengthening transparency in work assignment, promoting equitable treatment, enhancing psychological safety, increasing employee participation in decision-making, improving organizational support mechanisms, clarifying accountability structures, and institutionalizing regular monitoring and evaluation procedures. These initiatives are expected to improve fairness, employee engagement, organizational support, accountability, and the overall effectiveness of workplace inclusivity programs.

To make the roadmap operational rather than a general recommendation, each strategy is assigned a target timeline (short-term: within six months; medium-term: six to twelve months; long-term: beyond 12 months), key performance indicators (KPIs) for tracking progress, and a responsible unit or focal person. The KPI targets are proposed benchmarks that agency leaders may adjust, and progress may be verified by repeating this survey annually and comparing the results with this study's findings.

The proposed roadmap aligns with studies highlighting the importance of inclusive leadership, organizational support, employee participation, accountability mechanisms, and continuous evaluation for fostering inclusive and equitable workplaces (Dalessandro & Lovell, 2024; Jerónimo et al., 2022; Lau et al., 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined perceived levels of gender equality and workplace inclusivity among employees of a government agency in the Philippines, identified gaps in workplace policies and practices, determined the relationship between the two variables, and prepared a strategy roadmap for strengthening gender equality and workplace inclusivity based on the findings. The results revealed that employees perceived a high level of gender equality, particularly in equal opportunities and fair treatment. Similarly, workplace inclusivity was perceived to be highly evident, as reflected in favorable ratings for respect and acceptance, participation and involvement,

and organizational support. Furthermore, the study found statistically significant positive relationships across all dimensions of gender equality and workplace inclusivity, indicating that employees who perceived higher levels of equal opportunities and fair treatment also tended to report higher levels of workplace inclusivity. Although respondents generally disagreed that substantial policy and practice gaps existed, areas for improvement were identified, particularly in accountability and monitoring mechanisms, program evaluation processes, organizational support systems, the fair distribution of work assignments, and safe reporting channels. These findings served as the basis for preparing a strategy roadmap for strengthening gender equality and workplace inclusivity, aimed at strengthening existing organizational policies and practices.

The findings contribute to the literature by providing empirical support for SET, which posits that employees respond positively when they perceive fairness, respect, and support from their organization. The strong dimension-level associations between gender equality and workplace inclusivity reinforce the theoretical proposition that equitable workplace practices foster employee participation, acceptance, belonging, and organizational engagement. From a practical perspective, the findings underscore the importance of strengthening gender-responsive workplace policies, transparent work assignment systems, confidential grievance and reporting mechanisms, employee support programs, and regular monitoring and evaluation of inclusivity initiatives. Government agencies, human resource practitioners, GAD focal persons, and policymakers may use these findings to design evidence-based interventions that promote fairness, inclusion, employee well-being, and organizational effectiveness. Integrating gender equality and workplace inclusivity within a unified organizational framework may further enhance accountability, sustain positive workplace cultures, and support long-term organizational success.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings of this study should be interpreted in light of several limitations. The study was conducted among employees from a single department or unit of a government agency, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other government institutions and private-sector organizations. In addition, the study relied solely on self-reported survey responses, which reflected respondents' perceptions and may have been influenced by social desirability bias and personal interpretation. Moreover, the descriptive-correlational design was appropriate for examining relationships among variables but did not establish causal relationships between gender equality and workplace inclusivity. In addition, this study is limited by its focus on specific dimensions of gender equality and workplace inclusivity rather than the overall constructs. In addition, the relatively small census population (N = 40) may limit the stability of the correlation coefficients and the generalizability of the results to other organizational settings.

Future studies may include participants from multiple government agencies and private organizations to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Researchers may also employ mixed-methods, qualitative, longitudinal, or comparative designs to gain deeper insights into employees' experiences and generate stronger evidence on the relationship between gender equality and workplace inclusivity. Further investigations may evaluate the effectiveness of GAD initiatives, accountability mechanisms, safe reporting systems, and workplace inclusivity programs in promoting equitable, inclusive, and supportive work environments.

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