

Assessing the Effectiveness of the Gender Equality Program Initiative in Promoting Employee Empowerment

¹Keith Llyod B. Emata, ¹Mary Grace R. Emata, ¹Jennicel Q. Boyonas,

¹Lord Cydric V. Sinatao, & ²Jessa J. Salait, MPSM, MBM

¹Bukidnon State University, Malitbog Campus

²Bukidnon State University, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This research assesses the effectiveness of a gender equality program in empowering employees. It examines the program's impact on perceptions, opportunities, and workplace relationships while identifying strengths and areas for improvement to foster a more inclusive environment. The study used a quantitative and qualitative research design with 62 respondents. This study involved Casual, Permanent, and Contractual Employees of the Local Government Unit of Malitbog, Bukidnon, ranging from research design and sampling techniques to instrumentation and statistical treatments. The study revealed that the largest group of respondents—20 (32.3%) of whom were between the ages of 20 and 30—consists of 33(53.2%) of whom have served for one to three years; the majority of respondents—53.2%—are permanent or regular; the overall mean score was 3.46 (SD = 0.58); and the highest-rated indicator in Table 5, Magna Carta for Women, had a mean score of 3.52 (SD = 0.57), which was classified as strongly agree and interpreted as Very good. The assessment of gender equality program initiatives in the workplace regarding HIV/AIDS prevention received an overall mean score of 3.28 (SD = 0.68), and the highest-rated indicator in the table is "I believe gender equality programs have helped reduce stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS (mean = 3.29, SD = 0.61)," which is classified as a strong agree and interpreted as very good. The mean score for Table 6 is 3.43 (SD = 0.60), and the highest-rated indicator is "I feel safe from gender-based violence in my workplace (mean = 3.53, SD = 0.53)," which is rated as very good. The evaluation of workplace gender equality program initiatives in terms of gender sensitivity. The highest-rated indication in the table, "I believe my organization fosters a culture of respect for all genders" (Mean = 3.68, SD = 0.47), is classified as "Strongly Agree" and interpreted as "Very Good," with an overall mean score of 3.53 (SD = 0.56). The study concludes that the significant role of gender equality program initiatives in promoting employee empowerment within organizations. These programs have been positively perceived by employees, particularly in enhancing decision-making participation, providing workplace support, and improving gender sensitivity.

Keywords: Age; Gender; Length of Service/Employment; Employment Status; Magna Carta for Women (RA 9710 Gender Based Violence (GBV) HIV/AIDS Prevention; Gender Sensitivity HIV/AIDS Prevention; Gender Sensitivity; Decision Making Participation; Workplace support

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is one of the biggest challenges we face today. Men and women still experience different opportunities, treatment, and representation in many areas of life, which prevents us from building a fair and inclusive society. The United Nations (UN) sees gender equality as essential to sustainable development and includes it in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Scholar Sylvia Walby says that gender inequalities are deeply rooted in our society. To address these issues, we need focused efforts to create equal opportunities and empower everyone, a crucial step towards a more just and equitable world.

In the workplace, gender equality initiatives play a vital role in fostering inclusivity and empowering employees. These programs aim to create equitable opportunities and eliminate biases that hinder professional growth and satisfaction. (Rodel L. Asuncion 2022) examined gender parity in educational and professional settings, revealing persistent gender imbalances and the need for targeted strategies to address these disparities. Their findings emphasize the importance of assessing the effectiveness of

such programs to identify gaps and refine approaches, ultimately promoting a more inclusive and empowering environment for all employees. Programs designed to promote gender equality in the workplace have become crucial for fostering inclusive and fair environments. These initiatives aim to address systemic biases and create opportunities for all employees, regardless of gender. A research study focused on the effects of gender equality initiatives in the construction sector, highlighting how specific interventions can reduce gender inequalities and improve workplace culture. Emma Heffernan (2019), the study's conclusions emphasize the importance of adopting evidence-based approaches to achieve meaningful change.

In recent times, organizations have embraced creative strategies to foster gender equality. Rodel L. Asuncion (2020) investigated how effective flexible work arrangements are in promoting gender inclusivity. His study indicated that these policies not only facilitate work-life balance but also empower employees by ensuring equal chances for career growth. These results underscore the responsibility and commitment required for ongoing assessment and modification of workplace policies to guarantee their efficacy. Leadership is not just important, it is pivotal in promoting gender equality initiatives. As Michaela Guthridge (2022) discovered, leaders hold the key to the success of gender equality programs. Their active support can significantly increase the likelihood of organizations meeting their diversity and inclusion goals. This underscores the weight of responsibility that leaders carry in creating a fair and empowering environment.

Furthermore, a study by Michaela Guthridge in 2022 underscored the importance of leadership and organizational commitment in the effectiveness of gender equality programs. The research found that initiatives led by strong leadership were more successful in achieving their goals and fostering lasting change. This highlights the need for continuous evaluation to ensure that such initiatives are not only well-structured but also implemented effectively to empower employees and promote inclusivity.

This study mainly focused on the evaluation of gender equality initiatives and their role in empowering employees across various sectors. Specifically, the study addressed how these initiatives were designed, implemented, and perceived within organizations, and their direct impact on employee engagement, morale, and career progression. By concentrating on the personal experiences of employees, this research sought to illuminate the nuanced ways in which gender equality initiatives fostered empowerment, thereby enhancing overall workplace culture and productivity.

"In the collective effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the targets of the UN 2030 Agenda, countries and stakeholders worked together in partnership (Leal Filho et al., 2022) to pursue a transformative and inclusive approach towards a resilient and sustainable future in economic, social, and environmental terms." The relevance of this research is underscored by the increasing body of literature highlighting the benefits of gender equality in the workplace. While previous studies have examined the prevalence and types of initiatives, there remains a gap in empirical research that assesses their actual effectiveness from the perspective of employee empowerment. The basic human right, gender equality, is also a precondition for a world that is prosperous, peaceful, and sustainable. Although there has been improvement in recent years, gender equality will not be achieved globally by 2030. Human rights and UN values are fundamentally based on gender equality and explain the roles and responsibilities that are socially constructed and deemed suitable for men and women in various societies. Men and women should have equal power and access to opportunities for financial independence, education, and other opportunities, as well as individual growth.

The empowerment of women is essential to achieving gender equality. It entails raising the self-esteem of women, their ability to make decisions, their access to resources and opportunities, and their strength and control more than their own lives within and beyond the house, as well as their capacity to bring about change. (Deguma et.al, 2018) However, gender issues do not just affect women.

However, on how men and women interact in society. To achieve gender equality, men's and boys' behaviors and attitudes are crucial. The Philippine Commission on Women carried out a more extensive campaign to advance gender equality, which has been a sociocultural problem in the Philippines in recent years. The rigid law's implementation might have encouraged Filipino women to come forward and report abuses opposing them.

The goal of evaluating the effectiveness of a gender equality program initiative in promoting employee empowerment is to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, support a more comprehensive program and policy design, provide evidence of what works and what doesn't, and build accountability and credibility for organizations. Gender equality is a fundamental human right for achieving peaceful societies, sustainable development, and realizing full human potential. Empowering women has also been demonstrated to drive economic growth and enhance productivity. Studying how effective gender equality programs are in empowering employees is important for several reasons. It helps us understand if these programs meet their goals, like reducing discrimination in the workplace and empowering workers. This research can also highlight areas that need improvement, allowing organizations to enhance their strategies for better results. Guthridge et al. (2022), by looking at the effects of these programs, companies can create a workplace where every employee feels valued and supported. Moreover, the results of this study provide useful insights that can shape future policies and investments in gender equality, making these efforts more effective. In the end, evaluating these programs helps boost employee empowerment, which leads to higher productivity, better morale, and greater success for the organization.

This study is anchored to Kanter's theory of structural empowerment and explains how organizational behavior affects employee empowerment. It suggests that employees are more empowered when they have access to information, resources, support, and growth opportunities. Psychological empowerment includes feelings of competence, autonomy, job significance, and the ability to influence the organization. When employees feel empowered, they tend to commit more to their organization, take accountability for their work, and perform better (Degner, 2005). Kanter's theory has been widely used in nursing practice, showing that providing resources helps employees perform their roles more effectively. The real empowerment happens when organizations genuinely engage with their employees and encourage their growth. As employees gain more control and participate in decision-making, their sense of empowerment increases. Effective, shared governance relies on four key principles: equity (everyone working together toward shared goals), ownership (recognizing how individual performance contributes to the organization's success), partnership (building respectful relationship and improving communication), and accountability (being responsible for decisions and outcomes) (Batson, 2004; Porter-O'Grady et al., 1997). When these principles are integrated into team behaviors, it empowers the workforce to achieve the organization's goals.

MATERIALS & METHODS

This chapter provided a comprehensive overview of the various data-gathering and analysis approaches that were relevant to our study. This study involved Casual, Permanent, and Contractual Employees of the Local Government Unit of Malitbog, Bukidnon, ranging from research design and sampling techniques to instrumentation and statistical treatments. Additionally, the chapter provided information on the implementation of data collection, including relevant details about the participants and the subsequent analytical procedures.

In this study, the researchers used a quantitative and qualitative research design. Quantitative research dealt with numbers and logic, aiming to understand their extent and looking for results that could be projected to a larger population. The qualitative research design gathered data through methods such

as interviews, observations, focus groups, and analysis of documents or artifacts. These mixed methods allowed researchers to collect detailed, descriptive information about participants' perspectives, experiences, and contexts. Moreover, it employed a descriptive research method since the study aimed to assess the effectiveness of the Gender Equality Program Initiative in Promoting Employee Empowerment.

This research was conducted in the province of Bukidnon, particularly in the Municipality of Malitbog, residing in Barangay Poblacion. To have less hassle, the researchers only chose the Permanent/Regular and Job Order/Contractual employees in the fiscal year 2024-2025 in the Local Government Unit of Malitbog, Bukidnon. Sampling Design The target population of this study was the Permanent/Regular and Job Order/Contractual employees in the fiscal year 2024-2025 in the Local Government Unit of Malitbog, Bukidnon. The researchers decided to concentrate on the frontline offices, which were the Engineering and Mayor's offices. The target respondents were sixty-two (62) employees. This study adopted the Rao Soft Sample Size Calculator, a software that primarily calculates or generates the sample size for a research or survey. By using this tool, the researchers identified the needed respondents for the study. This explained that with a confidence level of 95%, the researchers' sample size needed to be sixty-two (62) respondents. This was the minimum recommended size of the survey.

There were sixty-two (62) selected respondents who were involved in this study. They were randomly selected from demographic information such as age, gender, length of service, and employment status.

This study used a modified survey questionnaire drawn from the various readings and literature on the topic. The questionnaire consisted of 4 parts. Part 1 gathered information about the demographic profile of the respondents, Part 2 aimed to assess the effectiveness of the Gender Equality Program Initiative in promoting employee empowerment, Part 3 addressed the level of employee empowerment, and Part 4 examined the perception of employees regarding the Gender Equality Program Initiative. With this instrument, the researchers were able to gather the data directly, effectively, and efficiently.

The researchers chose to use a four-point Likert scale in scoring procedures. This enabled respondents to express their opinions and attitudes about the study simultaneously. The researchers were able to obtain the specific responses of the respondents and understand their views and perspectives on the current issues of the research study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of?

1.1 Age

1.2 Gender

1.3 Length of Service/Employment

1.4 Employment Status

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age. The largest group consists of 20 respondents (32.3%) who are between 20 and 30 years old. The second largest group, comprising 18 respondents (29.0%), falls within the 31 to 40 years old age range. A smaller group of 10 respondents (16.1%) is aged between 41 and 50 years, while 14 respondents (22.6%) fall within the 51 to 60 years old range. This distribution suggests a relatively balanced representation across the different age groups, with a slight concentration of

respondents in the 20-30 and 31-40 age groups. The absence of participants in the younger or older age ranges indicates that the study sample may be more aligned with middle-aged individuals.

Table 1
The Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Demographic Profiles of the Respondents in terms of Age

Profile	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age	20-30 yrs old	20	32.3
	31-40 yrs old	18	29.0
	41-50 yrs old	10	16.1
	51-60 yrs old	14	22.6
Total		62	100

Table 2 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents in terms of sex. The data shows an equal distribution between male and female respondents, with both groups consisting of 31 individuals, each representing 50% of the total sample. This balanced representation indicates that the study includes an equal number of both genders, which helps to ensure that the findings are not biased towards one sex. The equal participation of males and females in this study suggests that the results may offer insights that are applicable to both sexes. A balanced gender distribution also allows for a more comprehensive analysis, ensuring that both male and female perspectives are well-represented. This distribution is particularly important when examining topics where gender might influence outcomes or responses.

Table 2
The Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Demographic Profiles of the Respondents in Terms of Sex

Profile	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	31	50%
	Female	31	50%
	Total	62	100%

Table 3 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents in terms of length of service or employment. The largest group consists of 33 respondents (53.2%) with 1 to 3 years of service, followed by 8 respondents (12.9%) who have 4 to 6 years of service. A smaller proportion of respondents, 7 individuals (11.3%), have 7 to 10 years of service, while 10 respondents (16.1%) have between 11 to 15 years of service. The remaining respondents (1.6% each) have been employed for 16 to 20 years, 21 to 25 years, 26 to 31 years, or 32 to 36 years. This distribution suggests that the majority of the respondents are relatively early in their careers, with more than half (53.2%) having between 1 and 3 years of service. The data shows that longer service categories (16+ years) are minimally represented, highlighting that the workforce sample is predominantly composed of individuals with shorter tenure. This may suggest that younger or newer employees are more likely to participate in this type of study, whereas employees with longer tenure are underrepresented.

Table 3
The Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Demographic Profiles of the Respondents in Terms of Length of Service/Employment

Profile	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Length of Service	1-3 yrs	33	53.2
	4-6 yrs	8	12.9
	7-10yrs	7	11.3
	11-15 yrs	10	16.1
	16-20 yrs	1	1.6
	21-25 yrs	1	1.6
	21-25 yrs	1	1.6
	26-31 yrs	1	1.6
	32-36 yrs	1	1.6
	Total	62	100

Table 4 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents based on their employment status. The majority of the respondents (53.2%) are employed on a permanent or regular basis, with 33 individuals falling into this category. A smaller portion of the sample consists of casual workers, accounting for 8 respondents (12.9%). Meanwhile, 21 respondents (33.9%) are employed under job order or contractual arrangements. This distribution highlights a significant representation of permanent employees in the study. The data reveals that while permanent employees make up the largest group, a substantial portion of respondents also come from non- permanent employment types, particularly those working under job order or contractual terms. This suggests that the study includes a mix of employees with varying job stability, which could influence their perspectives and experiences. The inclusion of casual and contractual 41 workers in the sample is important, as it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the different challenges and benefits faced by workers with diverse employment statuses.

Table 4
The Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Demographic Profiles of the Respondents in Terms of Employment Status

Profile	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Employment Status	Permanent/Regular	33	53.2
	Casual	8	12.9
	Job Order/Contractual	21	33.9
	Total	62	100

2. What are the types of Gender Equality Program Initiative implemented in the workplace?

2.1 Magna Carta for Women (RA 9710)

2.2 Gender Based Violence (GBV)

2.3 HIV/AIDS Prevention

2.4 Gender Sensitivity

Table 5
Types of Gender Equality Program Initiatives Implemented in the Workplace in terms of
Magna Carta for Women

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
The Magna Carta for Women has contributed to a more equitable work environment.	3.50	0.59	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I am aware of the specific provisions within the Magna Carta for Women that relate to my workplace.	3.44	0.56	Strongly Agree	Very Good
My organization actively promotes awareness and understanding of the Magna Carta for Women.	3.48	0.54	Strongly Agree	Very Good
The Magna Carta for Women has empowered me to address gender-related concerns at work.	3.52	0.57	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I have observed positive changes in my workplace as a result of Magna Carta for Women -related initiatives.	3.45	0.64	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I believe the Magna Carta for Women has led to increased opportunities for women in my organization.	3.48	0.59	Strongly Agree	Very Good
My organization effectively addresses gender-based discrimination and harassment.	3.47	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I feel more confident in reporting gender-related issues due to the Magna Carta for Women	3.44	0.59	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I believe the Magna Carta for Women has fostered a more inclusive workplace culture.	3.39	0.64	Strongly Agree	Very Good
The principles of the Magna Carta for Women are adequately reflected in my organization's policies and practices.	3.48	0.59	Strongly Agree	Very Good
AVERAGE MEAN	3.46	0.58	Strongly Agree	Very Good

Legend: 1.00 – 1.75 Strongly Disagree (Poor), 1.76 – 2.50 Disagree (Fair), 2.51 – 3.25 Agree (Good), 3.26 – 4.00 Strongly Agree (Very Good)

Table 5 presents the assessment of gender equality program initiatives in the workplace related to the Magna Carta for Women. The overall mean score of 3.46 (SD = 0.58), categorized as "Strongly Agree" and interpreted as "Very Good," reflects a general consensus among respondents that the Magna Carta for Women has positively impacted their work environments. This indicates that the respondents perceive the Magna Carta as playing a significant role in improving gender equality within their organizations. The high ratings across all indicators demonstrate widespread acknowledgment of the law's effectiveness. Research by Adams and Johnson (2018) highlights that such initiatives contribute to fostering more equitable workplaces by promoting awareness and addressing gender imbalances. The highest-rated indicator in the table is "The Magna Carta for Women has empowered me to address gender-related concerns at work," with a mean score of 3.52 (SD = 0.57), categorized as "Strongly Agree" and interpreted as "Very Good." This suggests that employees feel empowered to confront and resolve gender-related issues in their workplace, which is a critical aspect of achieving gender equality. The Magna Carta's provisions appear to be significantly effective in giving employees the tools and confidence to address gender concerns. Similarly, the positive response to "The Magna Carta for Women has contributed to a more equitable work environment" (Mean = 3.50, SD = 0.59) further

reinforces the law's impact on promoting fairness and equality in the workplace. As noted by Martinez and Reyes (2020), empowerment initiatives are essential in driving cultural change and improving gender equality in organizations. The lowest-rated indicator is "I believe the Magna Carta for Women has fostered a more inclusive workplace culture," which received a mean score of 3.39 (SD = 0.64), categorized as "Strongly Agree" but interpreted as having slightly less impact in terms of inclusivity. While respondents still strongly agreed with the statement, this lower score suggests that there is a perception that the Magna Carta's initiatives could go further in promoting inclusivity across all levels of the organization. This finding aligns with recent research by Torres and Kim (2022), which emphasized that while gender equality laws have made significant progress in addressing discrimination, there remains room for improvement in fostering truly inclusive work cultures. Despite this, the overall assessment of the Magna Carta's effectiveness remains highly favorable, showing that it continues to play a key role in advancing gender equality in the workplace.

Table 6
Types of Gender Equality Program Initiatives Implemented in the Workplace in terms of Gender Based Violence

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
I feel safe from gender-based violence in my workplace.	3.53	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very Good
My organization has clear policies prohibiting gender-based violence.	3.52	0.50	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I am aware of the reporting procedures for gender-based violence in my workplace.	3.39	0.58	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I believe my organization takes reports of gender-based violence seriously.	3.35	0.63	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I feel confident that my organization would take appropriate action if I reported gender-based violence.	3.45	0.64	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I have witnessed my organization taking action against gender-based violence.	3.39	0.61	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I believe the organization's gender equality programs have reduced the occurrence of gender-based violence.	3.44	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I feel comfortable discussing concerns about gender-based violence with my supervisor/manager.	3.39	0.66	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I believe my organization provides adequate support to employees who have experienced gender-based violence.	3.44	0.64	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I think gender equality initiatives have created a more respectful and inclusive work environment, reducing the likelihood of gender-based violence.	3.40	0.69	Strongly Agree	Very Good
AVERAGE MEAN	3.43	0.60	Strongly Agree	Very Good

Legend: 1.00 – 1.75 Strongly Disagree (Poor), 1.76 – 2.50 Disagree (Fair), 2.51 – 3.25 Agree (Good), 3.26 – 4.00 Strongly Agree (Very Good)

Table 6 presents the assessment of gender equality program initiatives in the workplace regarding gender-based violence. The overall mean score of 3.43 (SD = 0.60), categorized as "Strongly Agree" and interpreted as "Very Good," reflects a general consensus among 45 respondents that their organizations have effective measures in place to address gender-based violence. The results indicate that employees feel supported and safe in their workplaces with respect to gender-based violence. This suggests that organizations are making considerable progress in creating a safe and respectful

environment for all employees. Research by Smith and Brown (2019) highlights that the implementation of clear policies and effective communication channels is crucial for fostering a safe workplace free from gender-based violence. The highest-rated indicator in the table is “I feel safe from gender- based violence in my workplace” (Mean = 3.53, SD = 0.53), categorized as “Strongly Agree” and interpreted as “Very Good.” This result suggests that employees feel secure in their work environment, reflecting a high level of confidence in their organization's efforts to combat gender-based violence. In addition, “My organization has clear policies prohibiting gender- based violence” (Mean = 3.52, SD = 0.50) further supports the idea that organizations have established strong frameworks to prevent such issues. These findings align with recent studies by Johnson and Davis (2021), who found that the presence of clear, well-communicated policies is vital for preventing gender-based violence in the workplace and ensuring employees feel protected. On the other hand, the lowest-rated indicator is “I feel comfortable discussing concerns about gender-based violence with my supervisor/manager” (Mean = 3.39, SD = 0.66), which, although still categorized as “Strongly Agree,” suggests that there may be some reservations among employees about fully addressing such concerns with management. This could indicate a slight gap in communication or a need for further training to ensure that employees feel more comfortable bringing up sensitive issues with their supervisors. Similarly, indicators like “I have witnessed my organization taking action against gender-based violence” (Mean = 3.39, SD = 0.61) reflect a relatively lower score, suggesting that while organizations have policies in place, there may be less visibility or frequency of action being taken in response to reported incidents. According to White and Thompson (2022), enhancing transparency in addressing gender-based violence can further empower employees to speak out and report such concerns. Overall, the data shows that while employees generally feel safe and supported, improvements can be made to increase comfort levels in discussing these issues openly.

Table 7 presents the assessment of gender equality program initiatives in the workplace regarding HIV/AIDS prevention. The overall mean score of 3.28 (SD = 0.68), categorized as “Strongly Agree” and interpreted as “Very Good,” reflects a generally favorable perception of the organization’s efforts in HIV/AIDS prevention and support. This indicates that employees are satisfied with their organization's initiatives and policies in addressing HIV/AIDS-related concerns. The data highlights that organizations are providing valuable resources and support for HIV/AIDS awareness, education, and testing. According to Williams and Lee (2018), effective workplace HIV/AIDS prevention programs significantly enhance employee well-being and reduce stigma associated with the disease. The highest-rated indicator in the table is “I believe gender equality programs have helped reduce stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS” (Mean = 3.29, SD = 0.61), categorized as “Strongly Agree” and interpreted as “Very Good.” This suggests that gender equality initiatives are seen as highly effective in not only supporting employees living with HIV/AIDS but also in reducing the stigma often associated with the disease. Similarly, “I believe my organization's policies support employees living with HIV/AIDS” (Mean = 3.29, SD = 0.66) received a high score, further emphasizing the organization’s commitment to creating an inclusive environment for individuals affected by HIV/AIDS. As noted by Garcia and Thomas (2019), reducing stigma through comprehensive gender equality programs plays a key role in fostering an inclusive and supportive work culture. These results show that respondents feel their organizations are positively impacting attitudes towards HIV/AIDS through these initiatives. On the other hand, the lowest-rated indicator is “I feel comfortable discussing HIV/AIDS-related topics in the workplace” (Mean = 3.21, SD = 0.68), which is categorized as “Agree” and interpreted as “Good.” While this is still a positive response, it suggests that there is room for improvement in creating a fully open and comfortable environment for discussing HIV/AIDS in the workplace. The data indicates that although gender equality programs have made significant strides, some employees may still feel hesitant to openly address HIV/AIDS-related issues with their colleagues or supervisors. This finding aligns with research by Carter and Harris (2020), which

highlights the need for continued efforts to normalize conversations around HIV/AIDS to ensure all employees feel empowered and supported. Despite this, the overall perception of HIV/AIDS prevention programs remains very positive.

Table 7
Types of Gender Equality Program Initiatives Implemented in the Workplace in terms of HIV/AIDS Prevention

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
My organization provides education and awareness programs on HIV/AIDS prevention.	3.24	0.78	Agree	Good
I feel comfortable discussing HIV/AIDS-related topics in the workplace.	3.21	0.68	Agree	Good
My organization promotes access to HIV testing and counseling services.	3.23	0.82	Agree	Good
I believe my organization's policies support employees living with HIV/AIDS.	3.29	0.66	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I have observed positive changes in attitudes towards HIV/AIDS in my workplace due to gender equality programs.	3.24	0.72	Agree	Good
I believe gender equality programs have helped reduce stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS.	3.29	0.61	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I feel confident that my organization provides a supportive environment for employees affected by HIV/AIDS.	3.34	0.65	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I believe my organization's HIV/AIDS policies are inclusive and equitable.	3.26	0.63	Agree	Good
Gender equality initiatives have improved access to resources and support for HIV/AIDS prevention.	3.35	0.60	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I feel empowered to advocate for HIV/AIDS prevention in my workplace.	3.34	0.60	Strongly Agree	Very Good
AVERAGE MEAN	3.28	0.68	Strongly Agree	Very Good

Legend: 1.00 – 1.75 Strongly Disagree (Poor), 1.76 – 2.50 Disagree (Fair), 2.51 – 3.25 Agree (Good), 3.26 – 4.00 Strongly Agree (Very Good)

Table 8 presents the assessment of gender equality program initiatives in the workplace regarding gender sensitivity. The overall mean score of 3.53 (SD = 0.56), categorized as "Strongly Agree" and interpreted as "Very Good," indicates that employees generally perceive their organizations as having strong gender sensitivity initiatives. This reflects a high level of satisfaction with the gender equality programs implemented, suggesting that the organizations are successfully promoting an inclusive and respectful environment for all genders. Research by Patel and Singh (2020) highlights that organizations with robust gender sensitivity training tend to see improvements in workplace culture, leading to higher employee engagement and satisfaction. The data shows that these initiatives are contributing significantly to a positive work environment where employees feel respected and empowered. The highest-rated indicator in the table is "I believe my organization fosters a culture of respect for all genders" (Mean = 3.68, SD = 0.47), categorized as "Strongly Agree" and interpreted as "Very Good." This result suggests that employees strongly feel that their workplace upholds respect for all genders, creating an environment where diversity is valued and celebrated. Similarly, "My workplace promotes equal opportunities for all employees regardless of gender" (Mean = 3.63, SD = 0.55) received a high score, further emphasizing the effectiveness of the organization's efforts to

provide fair and equal opportunities to everyone. According to Zhang and Liu (2021), fostering a culture of respect is crucial for improving employee morale and productivity, and this is reflected in the survey results. These findings indicate that gender sensitivity is a core value within the workplace, leading to a positive and inclusive atmosphere. On the other hand, the lowest-rated indicator is “I believe gender equality programs have improved communication between genders” (Mean 52 = 3.44, SD = 0.62), although still categorized as “Strongly Agree,” suggesting there may be some areas for improvement in enhancing communication between genders. While the overall perception of gender equality initiatives is positive, the data indicates that some employees might still feel that communication barriers exist between genders. This could point to a need for further focus on programs aimed at fostering open dialogue and collaboration across genders. As noted by Fisher and Williams (2022), improving communication between genders is vital for eliminating misunderstandings and enhancing team dynamics in the workplace. Despite this, the overall trend shows a positive outlook on the effectiveness of gender sensitivity programs in improving workplace culture.

Table 8
Types of Gender Equality Program Initiatives Implemented in the Workplace in terms of Gender Sensitivity

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
My workplace promotes equal opportunities for all employees regardless of gender.	3.63	0.55	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I believe gender sensitivity training is effective in promoting workplace equality.	3.53	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I feel comfortable discussing gender-related issues with my colleagues.	3.56	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I believe my organization fosters a culture of respect for all genders.	3.68	0.47	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I feel empowered to challenge gender stereotypes in the workplace.	3.53	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very Good
Gender-sensitive language is used consistently in my workplace.	3.45	0.59	Strongly Agree	Very Good
My organization considers gender diversity in its decision-making processes.	3.44	0.59	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I have observed positive changes in workplace behavior due to increased gender sensitivity.	3.50	0.57	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I believe gender equality programs have improved communication between genders.	3.44	0.62	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I feel that gender sensitivity initiatives contribute to a positive work environment	3.50	0.65	Strongly Agree	Very Good
AVERAGE MEAN	3.53	0.56	Strongly Agree	Very Good

Legend: 1.00 – 1.75 Strongly Disagree (Poor), 1.76 – 2.50 Disagree (Fair), 2.51 – 3.25 Agree (Good), 3.26 – 4.00 Strongly Agree (Very Good)

3. What is the level of employees' empowerment in terms of:

3.1 Decision-Making Participation

3.2 Workplace support

Table 9
The Level of Employee's Empowerment in terms of Decision-Making Participation

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
I feel that the gender equality program has increased opportunities for all employees to participate in decision-making processes.	3.56	0.64	Strongly Agree	Very Good
In the gender equality program, my input in decision-making has been valued more.	3.55	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very Good
The gender equality program has effectively removed barriers that previously prevented certain employees from participating in key decisions.	3.52	0.54	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I have witnessed a noticeable increase in the diversity of voices contributing to decision-making since the program began.	3.42	0.56	Strongly Agree	Very Good
The gender equality program has led to more inclusive discussions before decisions are made	3.45	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I believe the gender equality program has empowered employees to challenge existing norms in decision-making.	3.45	0.56	Strongly Agree	Very Good
The leadership actively seeks input from employees at all levels before making important decisions.	3.55	0.56	Strongly Agree	Very Good
The gender equality program has created a more transparent decision-making process.	3.53	0.56	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I am confident that the gender equality program will continue to improve employee participation in decision-making in the future.	3.52	0.57	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I believe the gender equality program has empowered employees to challenge existing norms in decision-making.	3.50	0.59	Strongly Agree	Very Good
AVERAGE MEAN	3.50	0.57	Strongly Agree	Very Good

Legend: 1.00 – 1.75 Strongly Disagree (Poor), 1.76 – 2.50 Disagree (Fair), 2.51 – 3.25 Agree (Good), 3.26 – 4.00 Strongly Agree (Very Good)

Table 9 presents the assessment of employee empowerment in terms of decision-making participation under the gender equality program. The overall mean score of 3.50 (SD = 0.57), categorized as "Strongly Agree" and interpreted as "Very Good," indicates that employees feel highly empowered to participate in decision-making processes within the framework of the gender equality program. This suggests that the program has been effective in increasing opportunities for all employees to contribute to important organizational decisions. Research by Roberts and Allen (2021) shows that empowering employees to participate in decision-making can enhance job satisfaction, reduce turnover, and foster a more inclusive work environment. The data reflects a positive outcome from the gender equality initiatives, highlighting increased participation and engagement in organizational processes. The highest-rated indicator in the table is "I feel that the gender equality program has increased opportunities for all employees to participate in decision-making processes" (Mean = 3.56, SD = 0.64), categorized as "Strongly Agree" and interpreted as "Very Good." This suggests that the program is viewed as highly successful in opening up decision-making channels for employees, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued. Similarly, "In the gender equality program, my input in 55 decision-making has been valued more" (Mean = 3.55, SD = 0.53) also received a high rating, indicating that employees feel that their contributions are taken seriously. As noted by Chen and Zhao (2019), increasing employee involvement in decision-making is crucial for building trust and transparency in organizations. These results underline the positive

influence of gender equality programs on fostering a more inclusive and participatory workplace culture. On the other hand, the lowest-rated indicator is “I have witnessed a noticeable increase in the diversity of voices contributing to decision-making since the program began” (Mean = 3.42, SD = 0.56), although still categorized as “Strongly Agree,” suggesting that there may be room for further improvement in ensuring a broader diversity of perspectives in decision-making. While the data still reflects a positive outlook, some employees may feel that certain groups or perspectives are not as prominently represented as others. This finding aligns with research by Brooks and Davis (2020), which emphasizes that true inclusivity in decision-making requires continuous efforts to ensure that all voices, especially from underrepresented groups, are effectively heard. Despite this, the overall data highlights that the gender equality program has made a significant impact on empowering employees to engage in organizational decision-making processes.

Table 10
The Level of Employee Empowerment in terms of Workplace Support

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
My workplace is welcoming and inclusive of individuals of all gender identities.	3.53	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I feel confident in voicing my opinions related to gender is being heard and acknowledge in the workplace.	3.56	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very Good
My workplace foster environment where there is no gender discrimination when discussing gender concerns.	3.48	0.57	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I am motivated by the programs support for gender equality.	3.58	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I am encouraged in the workplace to take leadership role related to gender.	3.50	0.65	Strongly Agree	Very Good
My organization supports open communication about the gender equality program and its initiatives.	3.53	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very Good
My organization is committed to improving gender equality initiatives.	3.58	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I have observed positive changes in how employees of various genders are treated since the gender equality program was implemented.	3.53	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very Good
I have the opportunity to participate in programs and initiatives related to gender issues.	3.50	0.62	Strongly Agree	Very Good
My workplace allocates adequate resources to support gender initiatives.	3.50	0.57	Strongly Agree	Very Good
AVERAGE MEAN	3.53	0.56	Strongly Agree	Very Good

Legend: 1.00 – 1.75 Strongly Disagree (Poor), 1.76 – 2.50 Disagree (Fair), 2.51 – 3.25 Agree (Good), 3.26 – 4.00 Strongly Agree (Very Good)

Table 10 presents the level of employee empowerment in terms of workplace support for gender equality initiatives. The overall mean score 57 of 3.53 (SD = 0.56), categorized as "Strongly Agree" and interpreted as "Very Good," indicates that employees feel highly supported by their organizations in fostering gender equality. This suggests that the gender equality programs are effectively creating an inclusive environment where employees feel confident in voicing their opinions and participating in gender-related initiatives. Research by Johnson et al. (2019) highlights that workplace support for gender equality can significantly improve employee engagement, satisfaction, and overall workplace culture. These findings suggest that the organization's commitment to gender equality is contributing to a more positive and supportive work environment. The highest-rated indicators in the table include “I am motivated by the program's support for gender equality” (Mean = 3.58, SD = 0.53) and “My

organization is committed to improving gender equality initiatives” (Mean = 3.58, SD = 0.53). These items received the highest scores, reflecting that employees feel highly motivated and confident in their organization’s dedication to enhancing gender equality efforts. The strong agreement with these statements indicates that the gender equality programs are seen as not only supportive but also actively driving positive change within the organization. A study by Turner and Adams (2020) supports these findings, showing that when employees perceive genuine organizational commitment to gender equality, they are more likely to be motivated and engaged in supporting these initiatives. The organization’s 58 commitment is thus a key factor in enhancing employee empowerment and involvement in gender-related efforts. The lowest-rated indicator, although still strong, is “My workplace fosters an environment where there is no gender discrimination when discussing gender concerns” (Mean = 3.48, SD = 0.57). While still categorized as “Strongly Agree” and interpreted as “Very Good,” this rating suggests that employees may still observe some level of gender-related concerns or discrimination in discussions. This could indicate areas where further improvements are needed, particularly in ensuring that gender concerns are discussed and handled in an entirely non-discriminatory manner. Research by Smith and Wills (2018) suggests that despite significant progress in workplace equality, lingering issues with subtle discrimination may still exist in some environments. Addressing these challenges may help further enhance the inclusivity and openness of the workplace regarding gender concerns.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights the significant role of gender equality program initiatives in promoting employee empowerment within organizations. These programs have been positively perceived by employees, particularly in enhancing decision-making participation, providing workplace support, and improving gender sensitivity. The findings reveal that employees feel more empowered to contribute to decision-making processes, voice their opinions, and participate in organizational discussions. Furthermore, the initiatives foster a more inclusive and respectful work environment by addressing gender discrimination and providing equal opportunities for all employees. However, some areas still need attention, such as increasing awareness and policies related to HIV/AIDS prevention and supporting marginalized employee groups. Employee empowerment, particularly in terms of participation in decision-making, has been notably strengthened by these gender equality initiatives. Many employees reported that their input was more valued and that there was an increase in the diversity of voices contributing to key decisions. This shift is significant as it shows that the initiatives have helped dismantle barriers that previously hindered certain employees from having a say in important matters. It reflects a move towards a more inclusive organizational structure, where all employees feel their contributions are recognized and appreciated. This empowerment has a direct impact on employee morale and motivation, further enhancing productivity and a sense of ownership in the workplace. While the gender equality programs have had a generally positive effect, there are still areas for improvement. Despite strong perceptions of safety from gender-based violence, employees indicated that more work could be done to improve HIV/AIDS-related support and stigma reduction in the workplace. The study suggests that the implementation of more comprehensive policies and educational programs related to these issues would further promote a supportive and inclusive environment for all employees. By addressing these gaps, organizations can ensure that their gender equality programs are comprehensive and that they cater to all forms of discrimination and marginalization. In conclusion, to maximize the effectiveness of gender equality programs in promoting employee empowerment, continuous evaluation and adaptation are key. Organizations should regularly assess the impact of these initiatives through employee feedback, surveys, and performance metrics to ensure they are addressing the evolving needs of the workforce. By fostering a culture of inclusivity and providing the necessary resources and support, organizations can create an environment where all employees feel valued, empowered, and

motivated to contribute to the overall success of the organization. This, in turn, will lead to greater job satisfaction, productivity, and a positive work culture for all.

Recommendations

1. **For the Employees:** Employees are encouraged to actively participate in the gender equality initiatives implemented within their organizations. They should continue to voice their opinions and contribute to decision-making processes, ensuring that their perspectives are valued. Furthermore, employees can take an active role in supporting and promoting gender equality programs by participating in relevant training and awareness programs. This will not only enhance their own empowerment but also contribute to creating a more inclusive and respectful workplace environment. Employees should also support their colleagues in challenging gender biases and discrimination, fostering a collaborative and supportive work culture.
2. **For the Future Researcher:** Future researchers are encouraged to further explore the long-term impacts of gender equality programs on employee empowerment and organizational culture. It would be valuable to conduct longitudinal studies to assess how the effectiveness of such initiatives evolves over time and how they impact various demographic groups within the workforce. Research could also delve deeper into areas that were identified as needing improvement, such as HIV/AIDS-related support and policies, to provide more comprehensive insights. Additionally, researchers could investigate the role of technology and social media in enhancing the reach and effectiveness of gender equality programs in the workplace.
3. **For the Head of Offices:** The head of offices should actively foster an inclusive culture by continually supporting and reinforcing gender equality initiatives. They should ensure that these programs are not only effectively implemented but also tailored to meet the specific needs of their employees. Regular evaluations and feedback mechanisms should be established to assess the success and areas for improvement of these programs. Heads of offices should also advocate for providing employees with the necessary resources, training, and support to fully participate in decision-making processes and challenge gender discrimination. This will enhance the overall workplace environment and ensure the success of gender equality initiatives.
4. **For the Local Chief Executive:** Local Chief Executives should take proactive steps to promote gender equality within local government units by implementing and supporting policies that align with gender equality objectives. They should work closely with various stakeholders to ensure that gender equality programs are inclusive and cater to the diverse needs of the local workforce. By advocating for gender-sensitive policies and creating programs that address gender-based violence, discrimination, and empowerment, they can contribute to a more equitable community. Furthermore, Local Chief Executives should allocate sufficient funding and resources to these initiatives to ensure their sustainability and effectiveness.

5. **For the Residents:** Residents should actively engage in gender equality initiatives at the community level and support policies that foster equal rights and opportunities for all individuals. They should promote awareness and understanding of gender equality, participate in training programs, and advocate for changes that address gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS, and other gender-related issues. By participating in these initiatives, residents can contribute to the creation of an inclusive and respectful community. Additionally, they should hold local government units accountable for the effective implementation of gender equality programs and advocate for continuous improvements to support the community's diverse needs.
6. **For the Rank & File Employees:** Rank-and-file employees are encouraged to actively participate in the gender equality programs and initiatives within their organizations. They should take advantage of opportunities to be involved in decision-making processes and offer feedback on how these initiatives can be improved. By engaging in these programs, rank-and-file employees can not only empower themselves but also contribute to the overall success of the organization's gender equality objectives. Moreover, these employees should work together to ensure that gender sensitivity is maintained and fostered within the workplace by supporting each other in raising awareness about gender equality issues.
7. **For the Sangguniang Bayan Members:** The Sangguniang Bayan members should continue to advocate for and implement policies that promote gender equality at the municipal level. They should ensure that gender equality is prioritized in local legislation and that programs addressing gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS, and other gender issues are adequately supported. Additionally, they should work towards strengthening the participation of women and marginalized groups in decision-making processes within the community. By collaborating with other local government units and stakeholders, the Sangguniang Bayan members can create a more inclusive, equal, and respectful environment for all residents.

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