

Gender-Responsiveness and Its Influence on Gender Equality and Economic Performance of State Colleges and Universities

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ABSTRACT

State Colleges and Universities (SUCs) are expected to take initiatives to promote gender and development. This study aims to assess gender-responsiveness and its influence on gender equality and the economic performance of SUCs in Negros Occidental, Philippines. The descriptive research design was employed and utilized a researcher-made questionnaire to gather data from randomly selected 36 administrators and 236 employees of SUCs. Using the mean, descriptive results showed high gender responsiveness and a great extent of influence on gender equality and the economic performance of SUCs. Also, the results of the Analysis of Variance and Kruskal-Wallis revealed that significant differences occurred in the level of gender responsiveness and the extent of influence on gender equality among SUCs. Employing Spearman rho, significant relationships were found among gender responsiveness, influence on gender equality, and economic performance. Higher gender-responsiveness may lead to a greater influence on the promotion of gender equality and economic performance.

Keywords: Business Management, Gender-Responsiveness, Gender Equality, Economic Performance, Descriptive, State Colleges and Universities, Negros Occidental, Philippines

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1.0. Introduction

In organizations, gender issues were a complex phenomenon found in organizational structures, processes, and practices (Stamarski and Son Hing (2015).

In the academic world, although women are more represented than they used to be, they are still discriminated against in academic positions and activities (Goastellec & Pekari, 2013). More opportunities have been given to males, especially for managerial positions, decision-making power, and social networking (Shauka, Siddiquah, & Pell, 2014). Profeta (2017), Flynn, Cavanagh, and Bilimoria (2015), Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development [OECD] (2017), and Currie and Hill (2013) claim supports the research results that women around the world are less represented in decision-making and managerial positions.

In the Philippines, the Women Development and Nation Building Act (RA 7192) provides that government departments shall guarantee that women benefit equitably and engage directly in the development programs and projects of departments to ensure the full participation and involvement of women in the development process. Likewise, Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710) emphasizes the promotion of women empowerment, pursues equal opportunities for women and men, and ensures equal access to resources, development results, and outcome. Furthermore, CHED released Memorandum Order No. 01 (2015), which states the guidelines seeking to introduce and institutionalize gender equality and gender-responsiveness and sensitivity in the various aspects of Philippine higher education (Lualhati, 2019).

Researches related to gender and development in higher education are only limited to: profiling and status of women (Frances, 2017; Frances, 2018), opportunities and employability challenges of women (Zhong & Gou, 2017), women leadership and organizational culture (Mabokela & Mlambo, 2017; Zhao & Jones, 2017; Morley, Berma, & Hamid, 2017), women issues of economic crisis (Papadimitriou, 2017), the vulnerability of gender equality to neoliberalism (Aavik, 2017), awareness and status of implementation of gender and development (Albaladejo, 2016; Sumadsad & Tuazon, 2016), women's place in academia (Goastellec & Vaira, 2017), gender equality (Robertson, Williams, Jones, Isbel, Loads & Maxwell, 2018; David, 2017; Henkel, 2017; Grenz et al., 2008), gender inequality, disparity, and issues (Machin & Wyness, 2017; Peterson, 2011); gender mainstreaming implementation (Delavin, 2017), and gender sensitizing (Lualhati, 2019).

However, according to Shreve (2016), there are a limited number of studies on gender-responsiveness. There were minimal empirical studies investigating management's responsiveness to gender issues and how it affects the promotion of gender equality and economic performance of higher educational institutions, particularly the state colleges and universities. For this reason, the current study exclusively dealt with the assessment of gender-responsiveness and its influence on promoting gender equality and economic performance. Based on the proposition mentioned, the objective of the study was to determine the level of gender-responsiveness of SUCs and its influence on promoting gender equality and economic performance.

2.0. Framework of the Study

The paper theorized that high management's responsiveness to gender issues would promote gender equality and positive economic performance. The Feminist Economic (FE) Theory was used to support this study. Feminist economists

believe that uncovering the gender bias in economics is a necessary prelude to constructing economics that encompasses the perspectives and embodies the realities of both women and men (Kuiper & Sap 1995). From this point of view, the structures of acknowledgment, redistribution, and representation of men and women are considered important components of the global functioning of the economy (Fraser, 2013). However, the Asian Development Bank (2013) identified gender gaps such as human capital and decent work that hinder women's participation in economic activities. On the other hand, the Asian Development Bank (2017) cited dimensions of gender equality: human development, economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, and reduced vulnerability to risks and shock.

A gender-responsive organization adopts a systematic approach (Leal & Saguibo, 2018) and ensures that gender needs, realities, and issues are consistently and specifically considered in policies, programs, and projects (Tirivanhu & van Rensburg (2017). In line with this, it may result in equal opportunities for men and women, whereby attained an increasing proportion of minority and women in senior goals in the organization (Greene & Kirton, 2002). Likewise, equality may have the potential to improve productivity, opportunity, and competitiveness (Moore, 1999). Moreover, gender-responsiveness might also affect the organization's economic performance in terms of income (Marr, 2012), reduction of cost, employment generation, and encouraged investment (Parida, 2007).

Applied in the workplace, Feminist Economic Theory, women, are included as an important part of the organization structure. Gender inclusion is considered in the development of human capital and the improvement of decent work. The management practices may be aligned in providing opportunities for both men and women employees to attain professional development, economic development, and welfare and development.

3.0. Methods

The study employed a descriptive research design. According to Flores (2016), descriptive research uses a set of scientific methods and procedures to collect raw data and create data structures that describe existing characteristics of a defined target population. In this study, the data regarding gender-responsiveness in terms of human capital and decent work, the influence of gender-responsiveness on the promotion of gender equality as to human development, economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, and reduced vulnerability to risk and shock as well as the influence of gender-responsiveness on the economic performance of SUCs like improvement in income, reduction in cost, employment generation, and encouraged investment were gathered, analyzed, and interpreted. Hence, descriptive design was most appropriate.

Stratified-random sampling was employed to identify the respondents, comprising 36 school administrators and 236 employees of the three (3) public HEIs in Negros Occidental who are assigned at their main campus. This study utilized a researcher-made questionnaire that was structured based on the Women's Empowerment Principles (UN Women, 2011) and strategies to promote workers' well-being and business performance (O'Connor & Manaus, 2017). The questionnaire is composed of five (5) parts. Part I includes the name and the profile of the respondents;

Part II consists of items that measure the gender-responsiveness. Part III comprises items that assess the influence of gender-responsiveness on the promotion of gender equality. Part IV consists of items that assess the influence of gender-responsiveness on economic performance. Part V explores the challenges encountered by the school management relative to the promotion of gender and development.

The researcher-made survey questionnaire was subjected to content validity by ten experts in human resource management and gender and development using the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) of Lawshe (1975). The validated questionnaire included 116 out of 120 items, and four (4) items were discarded, and the CVR result was 0.836 interpreted as valid. A reliability testing was conducted to 30 administrator-respondents and 30 employee-respondents. Using Cronbach's alpha, the reliability test results showed 0.989 for gender-responsiveness and its effect on the promotion of gender equality and 0.910 for effect on economic performance. Both are interpreted as highly reliable. In the conduct of the survey, consent from the participants, and the utmost confidentiality of the data were observed.

The data for the descriptive objectives were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. In contrast, for inferential statistics, Kolmogorov-Smirnov was applied to determine the normality of the data. An analysis of Variance was used to measure the significant difference in the level of gender-responsiveness when grouped by SUC because the data was normally distributed. In contrast, the data for a significant difference in the influence on the promotion of gender equality and economic performance were not normally distributed; thus, Kruskal-Wallis was applied. Likewise, the data to measure the significant relationship between gender-responsiveness, and influence on the promotion of gender equality and between gender responsiveness and influence on economic performance were also not normally distributed; hence, Spearman rho was used.

4.0. Results and Discussion

Level of Gender-Responsiveness

The data in Table 1 show the level of gender-responsiveness of the three (3) SUCs in terms of human capital ($M=3.92$; $SD=0.86$) and decent work ($M=3.791$; $SD=0.93$) and the overall result ($M=3.86$; $SD=0.90$) were found high which means that all GAD programs to address gender issues, as covered in this study are implemented in most instances. According to the Asian Development Bank (2013), although the organization is highly responsive to the development of human capital, women's labor force participation rate is much lower than men. In contrast, higher levels of productivity and incomes will be more able to provide decent work.

In higher educational institutions, particularly SUCs, they more likely committed to ensuring that gender issues related to human capital and decent work are accordingly and properly resolved. The high gender responsiveness of the SUCs may be affected by the gender-responsive budgeting of the government. The national government is providing the SUCs of at least a five percent budget based on their Annual Appropriation, which should be used in the implementation of the GAD programs.

Additionally, responding to human capital and decent work-related gender issues can be resolved through appropriate budgeting. These findings support the claim of Nair and Moolakkattu (2018) that implementation of gender-responsive programs and activities requires gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), and a common tool used by organizations with great concern on gender and development (OECD, 2017). In addition, UNESCO (2012) ascertained that organizations require to have a culture of gender inclusion (cited in Zuabi, 2015) and supportive structures and affirmative action from university leaders (Grenz et al., 2009).

However, it can be noted that human capital issues were given greater emphasis by SUCs than the decent work, as reflected in the mean scores. This means that SUCs implement GAD programs in most instances. It appears that SUCs strive to ensure that both men and women employees are given an equal chance to access professional development rights and privileges. The findings affirm the study of O’Connor and Manus (2017) that investment in professional development can lead to strengthening the workforce and development of women can have remarkable benefits to the organization (Wodon & De la Briere, 2018). Thus, SUCs have a high probability of adherence to the Principles of Women Empowerment (UN Women, 2011).

Nevertheless, there is an increasing number of feminist studies showing patriarchal patterns in management and leadership in higher education (David, 2017) and very few women in leadership and governance (International Monetary Fund, 2014) and this is a widespread issue in numerous higher education systems worldwide (Papadimitriou, 2017).

Gender-responsiveness to decent work issues obtained a lower mean score than human capital, which appears to be affected by the lack of access to child and independent care, and limited health insurance services. Kasan, Cabanos, Escosura, Lemus, and Mantes (2016) argue that organizations need to develop proactive measures to protect their employees and the company. Drago and Hyatt (2003) and Kato and Kodama (2016) suggested company child care assistance, including onsite daycare centers and a reimbursement program that can alleviate women employees’ work and family responsibilities.

Table 1. Level of Management’s Gender-Responsiveness

Management’s Gender-Responsiveness	M	SD	Interpretation
Human capital	3.92	0.86	High Responsiveness
Decent Work	3.79	0.93	High Responsiveness
As a whole	3.86	0.9	High Responsiveness

Extent of Influence of Gender-Responsiveness on the Promotion of Gender Equality

In Table 2, the data show that the overall extent of influence of gender-responsiveness on the promotion of gender equality in SUCs in Negros Occidental was a great extent (M=3.90; SD=0.90). Specifically, a great extent of influence was found in human development (M=3.90; SD=0.90), economic empowerment (M=3.88; SD=0.92), reduced vulnerability to risk, and shock (M=3.90; SD=0.91), and voice and decision-making (M=3.84; SD=0.93). The results indicated that gender equality is experienced

in the majority of the instances by both men and women employees of SUCs. Asian Development Bank (2017) cited that human development, economic empowerment, reduced vulnerability to risk and shock, and voice and decision-making are important indicators of gender equality.

In consonance with the results of the study, the effect of the implementation of the GAD program is better on the human development of both men and women employees of SUCs in terms of education and training. The findings connote the effectiveness of SUCs management to address human capital issues. It substantiates the research studies of Profeta (2017) and Lahti (2013) that the soundness of the gender response actions may give both men and women equal opportunities to be involved in a competitive process.

In terms of the effect of gender responsiveness on the promotion of economic empowerment, the better effect was ascertained. Santiago (2008) discloses that the promotion of women’s economic empowerment is one of the key priorities of the Philippine Government’s Framework Plan for Women. However, the findings contradict the study of Frances (2018) that women have not been equally successful in the economic domain, and McElhane and Smith’s (2017) that the wage gap contributes towards continuing gender inequality.

The least extent of influence of gender-responsiveness was noted in the promotion of voice and decision-making. The findings of this study support previous studies that women in most prestigious higher education sectors tend to have limited representation in the decision-making process, and academic leadership positions (Goastellec & Pekari, 2013; Lahti, 2013; Bagilhole & White, 2011; Cobanoglu, 2018). These are influenced by societal, organizational, and individual factors (Lahti, 2013). Furthermore, in the study of Goastellec and Pekari (2013), they concluded that in the higher education system, women perceived that they are less influential men.

Table 2. *Extent of Influence Gender-Responsiveness on the Promotion of Gender Equality*

Areas of Promotion of Gender Equality	M	SD	Interpretation
Human Development	3.9	0.90	Great Extent
Economic Empowerment	3.88	0.92	Great Extent
Voice and Decision-making	3.84	0.93	Great Extent
Vulnerability to Risk and Shock	3.9	0.91	Great Extent
As a whole	3.88	0.92	Great Extent

Extent of Influence of Gender-Responsiveness on the Economic Performance

Table 3 presents that the overall influence of gender-responsiveness on the perceived economic performance of the three (3) SUCs in Negros Occidental was a great extent (M=3.98; SD=0.85). Particularly, greater extent of influence were registered in improvement in income (M=4.07; SD=0.73), employment generation (M=43.93; SD=0.81), reduction in cost (M=3.93; SD=0.73), and encouraged investment (M=3.92; SD=0.92). The findings of the study suggest that the influence of gender-

responsiveness on the economic performance in SUCs is positive, and the results are shown in the majority of instances. The gender-responsiveness of the organization may influence its economic performance in terms of income (Marr, 2012), reduction of cost, employment generation, and encouraged investment (Parida, 2007).

The extent of influence of gender responsiveness on the economic performance profile of SUCs is more likely due to a high level of gender responsiveness. According to Hunt, Layton, and Prince (2015), organizations with a strong track record and emphasis on gender issues are 15% more likely to have higher earnings than their peers.

The findings show that the influence of gender-responsiveness on improvement in income in SUCs is perceived as more likely satisfactory. The previous research studies revealed that incorporating gender inclusion in the organization can bring positive impacts on income, higher productivity, overall quality improvement, benefits outweigh the cost, maximize organizational competitive advantage, and increase the well-being of the organization (Zuabi, 2015; O'Connor and Manaus, 2017, IMF 2016; Sharma & Sharma, 2014; Profeta, 2017; Sels et al., 2006 cited in Hanaysha, 2016; Shreve, 2016; Hill, Jones, and Schilling, 2014) which affirmed by the findings of the study.

However, the influence was least found in encouraged investment. Hernandez, Vera, and Ugedo (2016) claimed that lower debt financing of the organizations is due to the limited presence of women managers in the organization. Moreover, Remme, Siapka, Vassall, Heise, Jacobi, Ahumada, and Watts (2014) indicate that improvement in addressing women’s well-being is an appropriate approach to support more gender-equitable investment decisions.

Table 3. Extent of Influence of Gender-Responsiveness on the Economic Performance

Areas of Economic Performance	M	SD	Interpretation
Improvement in Income	4.07	0.73	Great Extent
Reduction in Cost	3.93	0.81	Great Extent
Employment Generation	4.00	0.92	Great Extent
Encouraged Investment	3.92	0.92	Great Extent
As a whole	3.98	0.85	Great Extent

Difference in the Level of Management’s Responsiveness to Gender Issues

Table 4 shows the Analysis of Variance, and the results indicate that when grouped according to SUC, significant differences in the level of gender-responsiveness occurred in human capital [$F(2,275)=3.05, p=0.049$], and decent work [$F(2,275)=3.05, p=0.049$], hence null hypotheses are rejected. The significant differences may be due to the variation in the organizational culture, structure, management’s gender priorities and types of programs, projects, and activities implemented by each SUC.

Along with these results, each institution’s level of gender-responsiveness depends on the environment and administrative leadership priorities of each SUC. It can be pointed out also that the significant variation in the gender-responsiveness of SUCs probably caused by the dissimilarity in the existing GAD policies and programs that affects the budget allocation in GAD programs. The findings of the study confirm the claims of Starnarski and Son Hing (2015) and UNESCO (2012, cited in Zuabi, 2015)

that gender concerns in organizations are complex phenomena found in organizational structures, processes, and practices and governance. Silva (2002) suggested that in a gender-responsive setup, leaders should view personnel as partners. The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) have reiterated that gender work is obligatory to all offices and administrators should have to make an effort to provide equal opportunities for everyone (Lualhati, 2019).

Table 4. Difference in the Level of Gender-Responsiveness by SUC

Gender-Responsiveness	M	SD	F	p-value
A. Human Capital				
SUC 1	3.84	0.86	3.05*	
SUC 2	3.91	0.80	(2,275)	.049
SUC 3	4.1	0.84		
B. Decent Work				
SUC 1	3.63	0.94	3.286*	
SUC 2	3.74	0.93	(2,275)	.000
SUC 3	4.11	0.84		

Note: *The difference is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

Difference in the Extent of Influence of Gender- Responsiveness to the Promotion of Gender Equality

Table 5 shows the Kruskal-Wallis results that significant differences in the extent of influence of gender-responsiveness on equality promotion were found in human development [$\chi^2 (2) = 7.89, p = 0.019$], economic empowerment [$\chi^2 (2) = 10.37, p = 0.006$], voice and decision-making [$\chi^2 (2) = 7.16, p = 0.028$], and reduced vulnerability to risk and shock [$\chi^2 (2) = 8.94, p = 0.011$] occurred among SUCs. Hence, null hypotheses are rejected. The significant variations could be due to the significant difference in gender-responsiveness in resolving gender issues in human capital and decent work.

It is noteworthy to state that the extent of influence of gender-responsiveness on gender equality is much dependent on the level of gender-responsiveness. These findings support Monks (2007) that the implementation of GAD policies can promote responsive action and gender equality. Wodon and De La Briere (2018) concluded that women’s investment is the right thing to do in promoting gender equality, which may lead to an improvement in economic conditions. The study results affirm the Feminist Economic (FE) Theory that both men and women have equal economic opportunities without gender bias (Kuiper & Sap, 199). Women should be given the entrepreneurial opportunities and be a manager and leader (Pérez Orozco, 2014) and be more effective (Williams, 2010), creative and innovative (Marinova, Plantegna, & Remery, 2010). However, gender equality in HEIs remained uneven across Europe and other nations of the global north (David, 2017).

Table 5. *Difference in the Extent of Influence of Gender-Responsiveness to the Promotion of Gender Equality by SUC*

Influence on Gender Equality	M	SD	χ^2	p-value
Human Development				
SUC 1	3.79	0.91	7.89*	0.019
SUC 2	3.88	0.82	(2)	
SUC 3	4.1	0.9		
Economic Empowerment				
SUC 1	3.75	0.95	10.37*	0.006
SUC 2	3.87	0.83	(2)	
SUC 3	4.01	0.94		
Voice and Decision-making				
SUC 1	3.73	0.95	7.16*	0.028
SUC 2	3.87	0.83	(2)	
SUC 3	4.01	0.94		
Reduced Vulnerability to Risk & Shock				
SUC 1	3.77	0.95	8.94*	0.011
SUC 2	3.92	0.84	(2)	

Note: * The difference is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

Difference in the Extent of Influence of Gender-Responsiveness on Economic Performance

Table 6 shows the Kruskal-Wallis results that, no significant differences in the extent of influence of gender-responsiveness on the economic performance of three (3) SUCs were found in improvement in income [$\chi^2(2)=4.20$, $p=0.811$], reduction in cost [$\chi^2(2)=2.16$, $p=0.339$], employment generation [$\chi^2(2)=0.417$, $p=0.812$], and encouraged investment [$\chi^2(2)=0.996$, $p=0.608$] existed among SUCs. Therefore null hypotheses are accepted. The results imply that the effects of gender responsiveness on the economic performance among the three (3) SUCs as to the improvement of income, reduction in cost, employment generation, and encouraged investment are equally the same.

Administrators in three (3) SUCs more likely believed that gender responsiveness could lead to an improvement in academic organization's economic performance. If women employees are provided with the opportunity to participate equally with men employees in performing the different functions of the institutions, it might lead to greater improvement in income, reduction in cost, employment generation, and encouraged investment. The findings of the study support the argument of Noland, Moran, and Kotschwar (2016) that the addition of more than one percentage point to the organization's net margin when 30 percent of leaders are women compared to otherwise similar firms with no female leaders. Also, Profeta (2017) claims that the participation of women in decision-making influences better economic performance.

Table 6. *Difference in the Extent of Influence of Gender-Responsiveness on Economic Performance by SUC*

Influence on Economic Performance	M	SD	X ²	p-value
Improvement in Income				
SUC 1	4.06	0.79	4.2	0.811
SUC 2	3.96	0.071	(2)	
SUC 3	4.27	0.52		
Reduction in Cost				
SUC 1	3.84	0.84	2.16	0.339
SUC 2	3.82	0.84	(2)	
SUC 3	4.32	0.49		
Employment Generation				
SUC 1	3.95	1.01	0.417 (2)	0.812
SUC 2	3.94	0.92		
SUC 3	4.25	0.51		
Encourage Investment				
SUC 1	3.86	1.03	0.996	0.608
SUC 2	3.8	0.77	(2)	
SUC 3	4.3	0.52		

Note: The difference is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

Relationship between Gender Responsiveness and its Influence on Gender Equality and Economic Performance

Table 7 shows the results of the Spearman rank correlation. The results of the study indicated that significant relationships occurred between gender-responsiveness and its influence on the promotion of gender equality [$\rho (276) = 0.869, p = 0.000$], and on economic performance [$\rho (276) = 0.664, p = 0.000$]; therefore, null hypotheses are rejected.

The results further revealed that gender-responsiveness has strong positive relationships with the influence on the promotion of gender equality and economic performance. Gender-responsive SUCs which give investment priority to the development of both men and women can lead to the promotion of gender equality in terms of human development, economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, and reduced vulnerability to risk and shock. Likewise, it can steer improvement in the institution’s economic performance in terms of improvement in income, reduction in cost, employment generation, and encouraged investment.

The results support the theory developed in this study that high gender-responsiveness to gender issues will promote gender equality and positive economic performance, which is also grounded from the Feminist Economic Theory.

The findings of the study corroborate with the claim of Profeta (2017) that gender inclusion in the institutions and organizations can lead to the promotion of gender equality. Also, Kabeer (2012) spells out evidence that shows that there is a reasonably strong empirical underpinning for the claim that gender equality has a positive influence on economic performance.

Further, the study can be considered as evidence that SUCs are gearing towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that focus on the promotion of gender equality (OECD, 2017) and promotes women's economic participation (International Monetary Fund, 2014).

Table 7. Relationship between Gender-Responsiveness and Gender Equality and Economic Performance

Variables	Coefficient Correlation	df	p-value
Gender-Responsiveness and Gender Equality	0.869*	276	0.000
Gender-Responsiveness and Economic Performance	0.664*	276	0.000

Note: *The difference is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

5.0 Conclusion

The achievement of gender equality and improvement in the economic performance of academic institutions like SUCs is more likely dependent on the priority programs, projects, and activities set by the management. It entails effective formulation and proper implementation of Gender and Development Programs, which will set the management priorities. GAD programs may contain specific strategies that might address issues related to human capital and decent work.

Since the findings showed that high level of gender-responsiveness to gender issues in terms of human capital and decent work resulted to a great extent of influence on the promotion of gender equality in terms of human development, economic empowerment, voice and decision-making and reduced vulnerability to risk and shock and also the great extent of influence on economic performance as to the improvement in income, reduction in cost, employment generation and encouraged investment, the management of SUCs in Negros Occidental may explore the possibility to design and implement GAD programs that may equally promote and improve the capabilities, status, and welfare of both men and women employees that may ultimately lead in the development of the SUCs.

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