

Research Article

## Evaluating Gender Equality Implementation and Challenges in the Regional Training Center-Bataan

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### Abstract

This study evaluated the implementation of gender equality and the challenges encountered at the Regional Training Center-Bataan. Using a mixed-method research design, data were gathered through surveys, document analysis, and in-depth interviews involving 100 respondents comprising cadets, personnel, and instructors. Findings revealed that gender equality programs were highly implemented across content delivery, frequency of activities, resource allocation, and stakeholder participation. However, gaps such as the absence of a local GAD focal person, centralized reporting systems, and insufficient educational resources were identified. The study recommends the institutionalization of a dedicated GAD office, enhanced training modules, and strengthened partnerships with gender advocacy organizations. Overall, the study concludes that while substantial progress has been made, sustainable gender equality requires localized action, participatory engagement, and continuous policy reinforcement.

**Keywords:** Gender Equality, Challenges, Educational Resources, Gender Equality Programs.

### Introduction

Gender equality remains a cornerstone of sustainable development and social justice. Anchored in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5, gender equality ensures that all individuals, regardless of gender, enjoy equal rights, opportunities, and participation in all spheres of life. In the context of maritime education and training institutions, gender equality plays a crucial role in cultivating inclusive learning environments, enhancing organizational performance, and fostering equitable professional growth.

Globally, initiatives such as the International Maritime Organization's Women in Maritime program aim to increase women's representation in the sector. Despite these efforts, women remain underrepresented in leadership and technical positions due to persistent structural barriers, cultural norms, and gender bias. In the Philippines, significant legislative measures such as the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710) and the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development have advanced gender mainstreaming in public institutions. However, gaps in implementation and monitoring remain, particularly in specialized institutions like maritime training centers.

At the Regional Training Center-Bataan (RTC-Bataan), the challenge lies in translating these national policies into localized practices that reflect inclusivity and gender sensitivity. While gender-related programs and institutional policies exist, limited evaluation has been conducted to determine their effectiveness. The need to understand how gender equality is practiced, perceived, and institutionalized within RTC-Bataan serves as the impetus for this study. The research specifically aims to: (1) assess the level of implementation of gender equality programs in RTC-Bataan; (2) identify the challenges encountered in implementing these initiatives; and (3) propose recommendations to strengthen gender mainstreaming at the institutional level. The study also seeks to answer the central question: 'How is gender equality implemented and what challenges are faced in ensuring inclusive practices at the Regional Training Center-Bataan.'

This study is organized as follows: The methods section describes the research design, participants, and data collection techniques. The results section presents key findings from both quantitative and qualitative

analyses. The discussion section interprets these results in light of broader policy frameworks, highlighting implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

## Related Literature

### Foreign Literature

UN Women (2024) advocates for strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships as a critical driver for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. By engaging with NGOs, academic institutions, and government agencies, organizations can access technical expertise, increase program reach, and reinforce advocacy capacity. In the context of RTC-Bataan, such partnerships align with its practice of collaborating with external stakeholders like the Commission on Human Rights and the Philippine Commission on Women, thereby enhancing the breadth and depth of its gender mainstreaming initiatives.

UNESCO (2024) highlights the importance of gender-transformative education in achieving safer, more inclusive, and more equitable learning environments. By emphasizing responsive teaching methods and curricula that actively challenge gender stereotypes, UNESCO provides a global framework for evaluating institutional practices. The report stresses that gender-sensitive teaching enhances both engagement and learning outcomes, particularly for women and marginalized learners. The Global Partnership for Education (2023) presents evidence on how gender-responsive teaching serves as a lever for systemic transformation. The report underscores that equitable teaching practices not only improve academic performance but also foster a culture of fairness, inclusivity, and respect within educational institutions. Findings reveal that when fairness is consistently applied, it reinforces student confidence, encourages participation, and reduces gender-based disparities in classrooms.

Trust and accountability further influence the effectiveness of gender-sensitive programs, particularly in hierarchical or uniformed environments such as military and paramilitary organizations. Raton-Hibanada *et al.*, (2025) found that when institutions promptly address gender-based concerns and embed fairness in training and policy, they enhance student engagement, organizational trust, and the credibility of gender-related initiatives. Finally, external advocacy efforts, such as gender seminars and awareness campaigns, remain an area that requires further strengthening. As Raton-Hibanada *et al.*, (2025) also observed, outreach activities that extend beyond internal institutional practices play a crucial role in reinforcing inclusivity and building broader community engagement with gender issues. Expanding such initiatives helps ensure that gender sensitivity is not limited to internal compliance but is also projected as a social commitment to inclusivity and equity.

According to the United Nations Development Programme Philippines (2024), institutionalizing gender and development requires more than adopting policies; it demands the active application of inclusive facilities, communication strategies, and equitable program structures. This perspective highlights that the visible and consistent application of gender equality principles allows institutions to demonstrate not only compliance but also commitment to creating inclusive environments. The European Institute for Gender Equality (2022) emphasizes the significance of visibility and communication in reinforcing gender mainstreaming within institutions. According to their framework, the consistent dissemination of educational materials such as posters, handbooks, and visual reminders plays a vital role in sustaining a culture of awareness and accountability.

Also, Ortega-Sanchez *et al.*, (2022), shows that gender inequalities are still present in the process of curricular decision making and teacher practices. These inequalities are expressed through the selection of educational content, the application of methodological strategies, the selection of teaching resources, interpersonal relationships, specific task assignments, or even seating choices within the classroom. These ongoing gender-related issues drive the need for teachers to receive specific and transversal training in this area. Such training should be aimed at revealing gender relations as a type of power relationship for the promotion of social change. The literature in the field of teacher training indicates that the maintenance of gender stereotypes and biases in teacher discourses and practices reinforces the sex-gender system and, consequently, inequalities. Further research is therefore still needed to study the discourses that emerged from the teaching practices around gender. Moreover, research in this field should encourage critical reflection on teacher training plans and the teaching curriculum itself. The adoption of co-educational approaches and the promotion of education in and for gender equality entails transforming the traditional teaching curriculum to overcome the androcentric constructive bases of historical, social, and literary knowledge. Such transformation would also motivate the incorporation of "polysemic views" in the understanding and interpretation of social reality.

According to McKinsey and Company (2023), the ninth year of the Women in the Workplace report conducted in partnership with LeanIn.Org, this effort is the largest study of women in corporate America and Canada. This year, we collected information from 276 participating organizations employing more than ten million people. At these organizations, we surveyed more than 27,000 employees and 270 senior HR leaders, who shared insights on their policies and practices. The report provides an intersectional look at the specific biases and barriers faced by Asian, Black, Latina, and LGBTQ+ women and women with disabilities. This year's research reveals some hard-fought gains at the top, with women's representation in the C-suite at the highest it has ever been. According to the Kochhar *et al.*, (2017) a growing body of evidence shows that economic growth is a gendered process, and that gender inequalities can be barriers to shared prosperity. For instance, gender discrimination in wages can boost price competitiveness by lowering unit labor costs in less developed countries characterized by the manufacture of labor-intensive and price-elastic goods for exports. Growth patterns that exploit women's position as a source of flexible labor may result in jobs that do little to transform their bargaining power within the economy or lessen the burden of their unpaid care work. And growth that generates forms of employment that favor male workers, as in many of the oil economies of the Arab States, can also buttress existing ideologies of the male breadwinner, leaving pre-existing gender inequalities largely intact. Such evidence makes clear that unless the gender dimensions of inclusive growth are made explicit, and unless policies for inclusive growth aim to improve women's well-being and address gender gaps, it is unlikely that growth will benefit women and men equally.

In addition, UN Women (2015) stated in their research that gender equality is fundamental to the achievement of human rights and is an aspiration that benefits all of society, including women. The universal advantages of gender equality have been well-documented, and several international frameworks have affirmed its centrality to human rights and sustainable development. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, for example, unanimously adopted by 189 countries in 1995 and still the strongest global consensus for advancing and protecting women's equality and justice, recognizes that persistent inequalities pose "serious consequences for the well-being of all people". Yet, despite the promise of equality, progress towards it has been slow, fragile, incremental, and reversible-and dramatically undermined by the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, in every region of the world, women are still more likely to be poor, illiterate, hungry, unhealthy, underrepresented in leadership positions, legally constrained, politically marginalized, and endangered by violence.

The World Economic Forum (2020) states that this year's report highlights the growing urgency for action. Without the equal inclusion of half of the world's talent, we will not be able to deliver on the promise of the Fourth Industrial Revolution for all of society, grow our economies for greater shared prosperity or achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. At the present rate of change, it will take nearly a century to achieve parity, a timeline we simply cannot accept in today's globalized world, especially among younger generations who hold increasingly progressive views of gender equality. Fortunately, the pathways to accelerating gender parity have also become more evident. Companies must treat people with dignity and respect and offer equal opportunities to all members of the society, leveraging gender diversity and investing in all of their talent through ongoing upskilling and reskilling. Governments must create policies that provide talent development, integration and deployment opportunities for all genders, diversify the leadership pool and provide support to families and caregivers, in both youthful and aging societies alike. And business and government must work together on creating a new economic and social narrative for action and on coordinating and speeding up the process of change.

Women continue to face disproportionate barriers to fully contributing to, and benefiting from, economic prosperity and rising living standards. Overcoming those barriers offers an enormous and unique economic, social, and financial opportunity. Strong and growing evidence suggests that identifying effective ways to support women as entrepreneurs, managers, workers, and consumers will increase gender equity, improve firm performance and financial returns, reduce poverty, and promote more inclusive and robust economic growth. Many development finance institutions (DFIs) are already increasing their focus on gender equity in their investment strategies and internal administration, and supporting new pooled funds, special initiatives, and communities of practice, such as Banking on Women, the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative, and the Gender Finance Collaborative. Many of these initiatives are in early stages which aim to start building a baseline of their gender policies and practices, analyze the data, and make recommendations where stronger policies and practices are needed (International IDEA, 2015).

Monteiro *et al.*, (2025) reinforces the view that gender equality in education must go beyond simply ensuring equal access to schools. Their research on gender-responsive pedagogy highlights the importance

of equitable treatment within the learning environment, including the use of inclusive language, fair and bias-free assessment practices, and deliberate efforts to challenge gender stereotypes in curricula and classroom interactions. They argue that achieving true gender equality requires structural and pedagogical reforms that embed inclusivity, intersectionality, and equity into teacher education and institutional policies. This perspective aligns with the current study's findings, where high ratings in fair treatment and inclusive delivery indicate that the institution is promoting not just access, but meaningful equity in the educational experience.

The Council of Europe (2021) developed the Gender Equality Strategy 2018–2023 to promote equal opportunities, prevent gender-based violence, and support institutional mechanisms for gender equality. One of its core principles is the integration of gender perspectives into everyday institutional operations. The findings of this study—showing consistent application of gender-responsive practices—suggest alignment with this strategic framework and reinforce the role of institutions in modeling gender equality at all levels. Moreover, González-Pérez *et al.* (2020) explicates in their study the impact of female role models in STEM education. They argue that proactive exposure to successful women in traditionally male-dominated fields, such as science and technology, can significantly influence girls' confidence and career aspirations. Their findings reveal that when young girls are introduced to female professionals—teachers, scientists, engineers, and other public or private sector workers—it creates a ripple effect, challenging deeply rooted gender norms and offering visible, attainable examples of success. This exposure not only enhances students' engagement and expectations in subjects like mathematics but also disrupts gender stereotypes, particularly in communities where traditional roles and sex segregation are prevalent.

In addition, gender inequality remains a pressing global issue, with women facing various forms of discrimination, marginalization, and limited opportunities in many societies. Achieving gender equality is a matter of social justice and has far-reaching implications for economic development, health, and overall societal well-being. Education has long been recognized as crucial in promoting gender equality and empowering women. It is a fundamental right that can equip individuals with the knowledge, skills, and tools to challenge societal norms, advocate for their rights, and participate actively in economic, social, and political spheres. Moreover, education can contribute to breaking the intergenerational cycle of gender inequality by empowering girls and women to make informed choices for themselves and future generations (Dhimans, 2023).

According to the Philippine Commission on Women (2022) the year 2020 was to be celebrated as a milestone year for progress toward realizing global commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment. It marked 25 years since the ground-breaking of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), 20 years since the adoption of the United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (WPS), and five years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It was also about a year after the launch of the Philippines Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Plan 2019–2025 during which event, government agencies committed to the plan's implementation. However, the COVID-19 pandemic stalled mostly everything and threatens to roll back the gains achieved in the past decades for women. Early data are showing that the pandemic is deepening pre-existing inequalities, exposing vulnerabilities in social, political, and economic systems, which are, in turn, amplifying the impacts of the pandemic.

### **Local Literature**

The Philippine Commission on Women's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Plan 2019–2025 serves as a national blueprint for mainstreaming gender and development across institutions. It emphasizes the importance of institutionalizing gender-responsive systems, engaging both internal and external stakeholders, and strengthening leadership commitment to GAD objectives. The plan highlights that internal champions—such as instructors and officers—play a crucial role in influencing training content and policies to ensure inclusivity and equity. This framework directly supports the RTC Bataan's high level of implementation in stakeholder engagement, as it reflects the PCW's prescribed strategies for embedding gender principles into organizational culture (Philippine Commission on Women, 2023).

In her address at the High-Level Ministerial Conference on Women, Peace, and Security, Pangandaman (2024) underscored that gender and development should not be confined to budget tags but must be mainstreamed into the entire institutional budget framework. This perspective reinforces the necessity of top-down commitment from leadership to sustain gender programs. For RTC Bataan, this insight affirms the significance of officers' active promotion of gender equality and their role in ensuring that resources are

consistently allocated for GAD initiatives, thereby strengthening institutional sustainability. The United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific (2024) presented best practices on empowering women leaders in local governance, emphasizing mentorship, capacity building, and inclusive planning as key strategies for institutional transformation. These practices resonate with RTC-Bataan's consistent efforts to integrate gender-responsive pedagogy and leadership training into its programs. The recommendations highlight the transformative potential of education and leadership development in reshaping organizational norms toward inclusivity.

Embedding gender education in the academic calendar and instructional design enhances the institutional culture of accountability and responsiveness to gender issues. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (2023) stresses that consistent integration of gender-responsive practices across teaching, training, and service delivery fosters environments that are inclusive, equitable, and empowering, thereby strengthening institutional commitments to gender equality. Equally important is the establishment of timely and reliable mechanisms for addressing gender-related reports. According to the Commission on Human Rights (2022), proactive implementation of the Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313) reinforces institutional trust by providing effective grievance redress systems. This ensures that gender justice is not only a matter of policy but also a practical reality in everyday operations, thereby creating safer and more inclusive environments.

The Magna Carta of Women, or Republic Act 9710, and the Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework of the Philippine Commission on Women provide the foundation for institutionalizing gender equality in public and educational institutions. These frameworks emphasize that gender and development implementation must go beyond compliance with policies and must be integrated into institutional practices, programs, and services. Similarly, the Department of the Interior and Local Government National Capital Region (2025) underscore the need for gender mainstreaming in infrastructure development. The agency highlights that institutional spaces and facilities must be designed and managed with gender sensitivity to guarantee accessibility and safety for all. Training centers and public institutions that adopt these approaches demonstrate inclusivity in their infrastructure, thereby improving participation, reducing unconscious bias, and strengthening credibility in gender equality efforts. In addition, the Philippine Commission on Women (2023) underscores the role of information dissemination and visibility as part of its Gender Mainstreaming Resource Manual. The Commission stresses that institutional communication is essential to maintaining awareness and reinforcing inclusivity. Training centers and other public institutions are encouraged to regularly provide accessible and visible educational materials, since these promote a stronger culture of inclusivity and gender awareness.

The Philippine Commission on Women, the National Economic and Development Authority, and the Department of Budget and Management (2023) further reinforce these ideas through their Gender and Development Planning and Budgeting Guidelines. The guidelines prioritize the use of institutional funds to support inclusive infrastructure, equitable participation, and gender-sensitive facilities. By doing so, institutions can ensure that gender equality is reflected not only in principles and policies but also in practice. Furthermore, Quezon City serves as a model for gender-responsive local governance in the Philippines. As the largest city in Metro Manila, it has implemented progressive gender mainstreaming initiatives through its dedicated Gender and Development (GAD) Office, established in 2001. Under the leadership of Mayor Joy Belmonte, the city has expanded access to gender-sensitive services, including the Quezon City Protection Center, which provides comprehensive support for survivors of gender-based violence. The city also doubled the required GAD fund allocation to 10% of its budget, supporting social hygiene clinics and public hospitals. In addition, Quezon City enacted several pioneering ordinances such as the SOGIE Ordinance, the Gender Fair Ordinance, and the localized Safe Spaces Act. These efforts have earned the city recognition as a GAD Local Learning Hub by the Philippine Commission on Women, embedded in all aspects of urban governance (League of Cities of the Philippines, 2021).

Also, studies analyze how effectively government budgets are allocated to initiatives that support women's rights and address gender disparities. The report highlights successes in integrating gender perspectives into budgetary processes, showcasing improvements in areas such as health, education, and social services. However, it also identifies persistent challenges, including inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and calls for stronger institutional support to enhance accountability. Through its insights and recommendations, the report aims to guide policymakers in refining GAD budgeting practices, ensuring that resources are effectively utilized to achieve gender equality and empower women in the Philippines (Department of Budget and Management, 2015). According to the Department of Education's Gender-

Responsive Basic Education Policy (DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017), integrating Gender and Development (GAD) into teaching and learning is essential to fostering inclusive, equitable, and non-discriminatory education. The policy encourages the use of gender-fair language, non-stereotypical content, and inclusive classroom practices, empowering educators to promote gender sensitivity across all levels of basic education. While such initiatives are being mainstreamed nationally, there remains a gap in assessing how GAD integration directly correlates with gender-responsive pedagogy at the local level. This highlights the continuing need for deeper awareness and capacity building among teachers and school leaders. Persistent challenges-such as gender bias, unequal participation, and institutional barriers-further emphasize the importance of ongoing research and localized implementation of gender-responsive strategies in education.

According to Gil (2021) having the purpose of GFPS or other similar GAD mechanisms, it projects that the academe plays a vital role in promoting gender-based programs that would elevate the community's existing inequalities. Academic institutions help to address the disparity of gender within our country (Esteban-Pulmano, 2016). Academic institutions should shed off institutionalized discrimination and gender-based inequalities and create a support system for the oppressed to promote inclusivity. To fully eradicate cases of gender inequality incidents of sexual harassment, the CHED implemented Memorandum s. 2011 which directs all heads of public and private higher education institutions, CHED Commissioners, the CHED Executive Director, and the CHED Central and Regional Office Directors to submit reports on compliance to Republic Act No. 7877, otherwise known as the "Anti-Sexual Harassment Act." Thus, the directives mentioned above require the different higher education institutions to provide a safe place for students of diverse gender to grow academically.

According to the Philippine Commission on Women (2022), gender mainstreaming is a strategy for making women's and men's concerns integral to the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and societal spheres. In line with Republic Act No. 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women, institutions are required to adopt Gender and Development (GAD) mechanisms and tools. The high level of implementation reflected in this study supports PCW's vision by demonstrating that gender-sensitive practices are being consistently incorporated in the delivery of training and educational programs.

### **Synthesis of the Related Studies**

The synthesis of international and local literature on gender equality highlights common themes and distinct strategies that can be applied to the Regional Training Center in Bataan. These themes include policy frameworks, implementation challenges, best practices, and measurable outcomes.

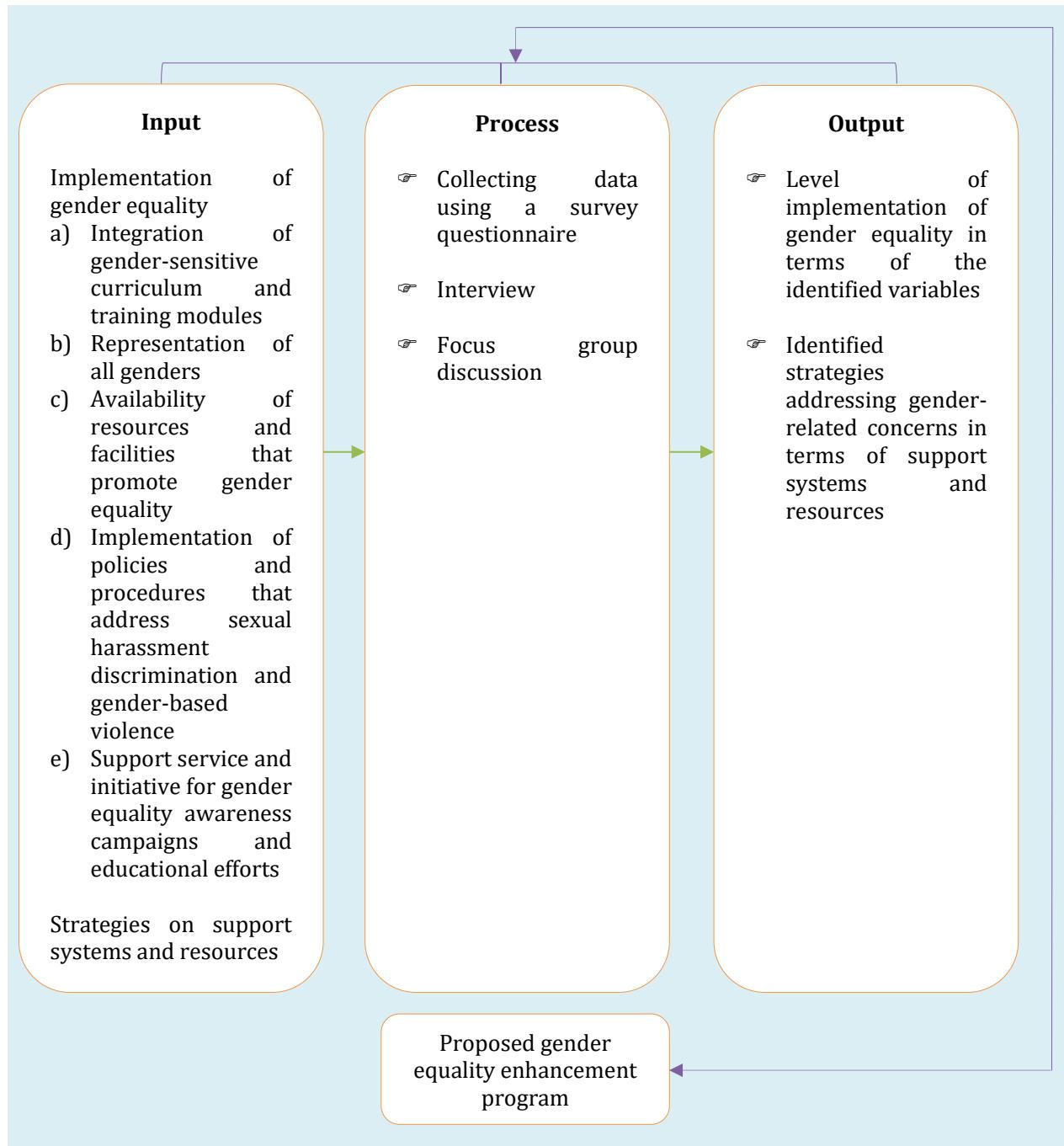
### **Theoretical Framework**

To effectively evaluate the implementation and challenges of gender equality at the Regional Training Center Bataan, a robust theoretical framework is essential. This framework can be constructed by integrating several key theories: gender mainstreaming, intersectionality, the capability approach, and institutional theory. Gender mainstreaming theory underscores the importance of integrating a gender perspective into all stages of policy and program implementation-including planning, execution, monitoring, and evaluation-to achieve gender equality (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2020). For the training center, this means incorporating gender considerations across curriculum development, recruitment strategies, and organizational policies, ensuring that equality is embedded into all institutional actions. The capability approach, which assesses what individuals are able to do and be-their capabilities-emphasizes empowering individuals to achieve their full potential (Schweiger, 2025). At the training center, this approach invites evaluation of whether all individuals, regardless of gender, have equal access to training materials, mentorship, and opportunities for growth.

Institutional theory, specifically feminist institutionalism, examines how formal structures, norms, and informal practices shape organizational behavior and either enable or constrain gender equity (Grahn, 2023). This perspective helps the center identify both embedded barriers and opportunities within its formal and informal systems, suggesting where institutional change can promote greater inclusivity. By combining these theories-gender mainstreaming, intersectionality, the capability approach, and feminist institutionalism-a comprehensive framework emerges. This framework involves analyzing institutional policies for inclusivity, understanding the intersectional experiences within the organizational culture, assessing equitable resource access, and measuring how gender equality initiatives impact individual and institutional outcomes. Through this multifaceted lens, RTC Bataan can more effectively identify challenges and implement strategies to foster a more inclusive, equitable environment.

## Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for evaluating gender equality implementation and challenges at the Regional Training Center in Bataan integrates several key concepts and components. At its core, the framework employs gender mainstreaming, which involves embedding gender perspectives into all policies, programs, and organizational practices. This ensures that gender considerations are central to decision-making processes within the center. This aligns with the ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework 2021–2025, which emphasizes integrating gender across organizational planning and practice.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual paradigm.

Complementing this is intersectionality, which examines how overlapping social identities such as gender, race, and class intersect to impact individuals' experiences of discrimination and privilege. This approach helps ensure that policies address the diverse needs of all participants, particularly marginalized groups. The Capability Approach, developed by Amartya Sen, is also central to the framework. It focuses on enhancing individuals' abilities to achieve their goals by providing opportunities and removing barriers. Evaluating the center's gender equality initiatives through this lens involves assessing whether they effectively support all genders in reaching their full potential. Current educational perspectives on the Capability Approach highlight its focus on agency, empowerment, and human development. Additionally, Institutional Theory

explores how established norms, rules, and practices within the organization influence gender equality outcomes. This theory helps identify how existing practices might support or hinder gender equality and highlights areas where institutional changes are necessary. Recent institutional gender studies advocate for revising formal and informal norms toward equality. The legal basis of the study is grounded in several important frameworks. The Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act No. 9710) provides a comprehensive framework for gender equality and mandates the integration of gender perspectives into all policies. The study will assess the center's compliance with this law and its impact on gender equality practices. The Gender and Development (GAD) Budgeting mandates also play a critical role, requiring the allocation of funds for gender equality programs. Evaluating how the center uses GAD budgeting to support gender initiatives is essential. The Philippine Framework Plan for Women (2019–2025) outlines strategic goals for promoting gender equality, which the study will use to measure the alignment of the center's practices with national objectives. Additionally, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 on Gender Equality, provide a global context for assessing the center's contribution to international gender equality targets (Philippine Commission on Women, 2022).

The conceptual paradigm of the study maps out the relationships between these components. It starts with analyzing existing policies and frameworks, and the center's organizational practices, cultural norms, and resource allocation. These inputs are processed through the implementation of gender equality policies, identifying challenges, and employing specific strategies to address these challenges. The outcomes are measured in terms of their impact on individuals, organizational performance, and community benefits. Continuous evaluation and adjustments ensure that policies and practices are refined based on feedback to improve gender equality. This framework provides a structured approach to understanding and enhancing gender equality at the Regional Training Center Bataan by integrating theoretical concepts, legal requirements, and a clear paradigm for evaluation and improvement.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study on gender equality at the Regional Training Center Bataan extends to multiple stakeholders and has far-reaching implications. For the training center's administration, the study offers a critical evaluation of existing gender equality policies and practices, pinpointing areas for improvement. This will enable the administration to enhance policy implementation and foster a more inclusive and equitable environment, thereby boosting institutional effectiveness and staff morale. Staff and trainers will benefit from increased awareness and training on gender sensitivity, leading to a more supportive and equitable work environment. This, in turn, can enhance their job satisfaction and effectiveness in delivering training programs. Trainees and participants will gain from a more inclusive training atmosphere where they have equitable access to resources and opportunities, which will support their personal and professional growth.

Policy makers and government agencies will find the study valuable as it sheds light on the practical challenges and successes of gender equality policies in an educational setting. This information can guide the refinement of policies and frameworks, contributing to more effective gender equality measures at a broader level. The community and society at large will benefit from the improvements made within the training center, as these changes can serve as a model for other institutions and promote a culture of gender inclusivity. Lastly, the study will be a significant resource for future researchers and academics, providing a detailed case study and valuable data that can inform subsequent research and policy development. By addressing gender equality challenges and promoting inclusive practices, the study aims to make meaningful contributions to both the training center and the wider educational and social landscape.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The study delves into the implementation and challenges encountered in promoting gender equality within the Regional Training Center Bataan. By examining various facets such as curriculum integration, representation, resource availability, policy implementation, support services, and awareness campaigns, the study aims to provide comprehensive insights into the current state of gender equality within these institutions.

1. How may the demographic profile of the Regional Training Center Bataan personnel and trainee be described in terms of:

- 1.1. Gender;
- 1.2. Rank; and
- 1.3. Designation.

2. What gender-related programs or strategies are implemented on the Regional Training Center Bataan?
3. What is the level of implementation of gender equality in the Regional Training Center Bataan in terms of:
  - 3.1. Content and delivery;
  - 3.2. Frequency and duration of implementation;
  - 3.3. Resources; and
  - 3.4. Stakeholder's engagement.
4. Is there a significant difference in the implementation of gender equality as perceived by the personnel when grouped according to profile?
5. What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of gender equality at Regional Training Center Bataan?
6. What support system may be developed to optimize the implementation of gender-based programs at Regional Training Center Bataan?

### **Research Methods**

This study employed a mixed-method research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of gender equality implementation at RTC-Bataan. The quantitative phase involved the administration of structured surveys among 100 respondents, including cadets, instructors, and personnel. The qualitative phase comprised in-depth interviews with 10 purposively selected participants and document analysis of institutional gender-related policies.

The survey utilized a five-point Likert scale to measure perceptions of gender equality across four domains: content and delivery, frequency of activities, resources, and stakeholder engagement. The reliability of the survey instrument was tested using Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha = 0.89$ ), indicating high internal consistency. Qualitative interviews followed a semi-structured guide focusing on lived experiences, perceived barriers, and recommendations for improvement.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Mann-Whitney U Test for quantitative comparisons, while thematic analysis was employed for qualitative data. All research procedures adhered to ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and respect for participants' rights. The methodological framework ensures replicability by clearly outlining sampling strategies, instruments, and data analysis protocols.

### **Population of the Study**

The study focuses on evaluating gender equality implementation and challenges at the Regional Training Center Bataan, with one hundred (100) respondents that includes cadets, instructors, and personnel associated with the academy and training center. Cadets are chosen for their role as future professionals in the maritime sector, offering valuable insights into their perceptions and experiences related to gender equality during their training. Instructors, as primary educators, are essential for understanding how gender dynamics influence the educational environment and the effectiveness of existing policies. Their perspectives can reveal the impact of gender equality initiatives on cadet experiences and outcomes. Additionally, staff members provide a broader organizational viewpoint, highlighting systemic issues and opportunities for improvement in gender equality practices across the training center.

This strategic combination of cadets, instructors, and personnel aims to deliver a nuanced and holistic analysis of gender equality dynamics within the unique context of the Philippine Coast Guard Academy and Regional Training Center in Bataan. For the qualitative method of the study, a total of ten (10) participants were purposely selected to ensure diverse yet relevant perspectives regarding the implementation of gender equality at the Regional Training Center Bataan. The participants were drawn from two primary groups: five (5) trainees and five (5) instructors, and administrative personnel. This stratification was intended to capture both the recipient and implementer perspectives of gender-related policies and programs within the institution.

The inclusion of five trainees aimed to represent the experiences, awareness, and perceptions of those undergoing the training process, as they are direct beneficiaries of the center's instructional content and

institutional culture. These participants provided valuable insights into how gender sensitivity is embedded in classroom interactions, drills, and day-to-day activities within the training environment. The remaining five participants consisted of instructors and administrative personnel who are directly or indirectly involved in the design, delivery, or oversight of programs and policies related to gender and development (GAD). Their inclusion was crucial in examining institutional strategies, policy enforcement, and the practical challenges faced in gender mainstreaming. The selected individuals held various roles, ensuring a range of operational viewpoints and institutional responsibilities, thus contributing to a more holistic understanding of the GAD implementation landscape.

Purposeful sampling was strategically employed to ensure that study participants possessed direct, relevant experience or knowledge of gender equality implementation at Regional Training Center Bataan. This intentional selection of information-rich cases enhances the depth and contextual relevance of qualitative insights, which are invaluable for triangulating quantitative findings and providing detailed, context-specific accounts of challenges and successes in gender equality practice (Memon *et al.*, 2025). Purposive sampling aligns with qualitative research principles that prioritize depth, richness, and relevance over statistical representativeness facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

### **Data Gathering Tools**

The data was gathered through a mixed-methods approach to assess gender equality implementation and challenges at the Regional Training Center in Bataan. Cadets, instructors and personnel were first to get organized surveys with questions about gender equality, participation rates, and resource accessibility in order to gather quantifiable data. Likert scale items were incorporated into these surveys to measure gender-related attitudes and experiences. Demographic information was acquired in order to put responses in perspective. In-depth interviews such as instructor, cadets and personnel of various genders, together with document analysis were conducted to gather qualitative data. This will make it easier to comprehend each person's unique experiences as well as the particular difficulties the center faces. The environment of the center will also be evaluated through observational methods.

In determining the reliability of the survey instrument used to assess gender equality implementation and related challenges at the Regional Training Center Bataan, a Cronbach's alpha test was conducted. This instrument included multiple Likert-scale items designed to measure cadets', instructors', and personnel's attitudes and experiences across constructs such as perceptions of gender fairness, participation opportunities, and institutional support. The computed Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire instrument was  $\alpha = 0.89$ , indicating high internal consistency. Current psychometric guidance interprets Cronbach's alpha as follows:  $\geq 0.9$  indicates *excellent* reliability; 0.8–0.9 is considered *good*; 0.7–0.8 is deemed *acceptable*; 0.6–0.7 is classified as *questionable*; and  $< 0.6$  is regarded as *poor* or *unacceptable* (ScienceDirect Topics, 2025). Based on this standard, the observed  $\alpha = 0.89$  supports the conclusion that the instrument reliably measures the intended constructs related to gender equality implementation. In terms of validity, the instrument was reviewed by subject matter experts for content validity, ensuring that the questions were aligned with the study's objectives and covered the dimensions of gender equality relevant to the Regional Training Center Bataan training environment. The combination of high internal consistency and expert validation suggests that the instrument is both reliable and valid for capturing the intended data.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

To facilitate the collection of data, the following steps were undertaken:

Prior to the commencement of the study, the researcher sought the necessary permissions from the relevant authorities of the Regional Training Center Bataan to ensure compliance with institutional protocols. Once authorization was granted, a debriefing session was organized for all prospective participants to clearly explain the study's purpose, objectives, and significance. This session served as an opportunity to outline the scope of the research, the expected time commitment, and the voluntary nature of participation. Informed consent forms were then distributed, containing information on participants' rights, including the freedom to withdraw at any point without repercussions and the assurance that all responses would be kept strictly confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

Following ethical clearance, the researcher developed and validated two primary data collection tools: a structured survey questionnaire for the quantitative component and a semi-structured interview guide for the qualitative component. Both instruments were carefully aligned with the research objectives and reviewed by subject-matter experts to ensure content validity, clarity, and relevance. The quantitative phase

involved the administration of the questionnaire to a total of one hundred (100) respondents, selected to represent the target population. The qualitative phase employed purposive sampling to select ten (10) participants-five (5) trainees and five (5) members of the instructional and administrative staff-chosen for their direct involvement and knowledge of gender equality practices within the institution.

Data collection was conducted through a mixed-method approach. For the quantitative aspect, survey questionnaires were personally distributed to the respondents to ensure a high retrieval rate, with the researcher available to clarify any questions. For the qualitative aspect, in-depth face-to-face interviews were scheduled at mutually convenient times and held in private, distraction-free locations within the training center to ensure confidentiality and comfort. Each interview followed the semi-structured guide, allowing for probing questions when further clarification or elaboration was needed. With prior consent, interviews were audio-recorded to preserve accuracy and supplemented with field notes to capture non-verbal cues and contextual information.

Once data collection was completed, the quantitative responses were encoded, tallied, and statistically analyzed, while the qualitative data underwent transcription, coding, and thematic analysis. Document analysis was also applied to triangulate findings, strengthen data validity, and provide richer insights. This systematic procedure ensured that the information gathered was credible, relevant, and comprehensive, forming a strong basis for the interpretation of results and the formulation of conclusions and recommendations.

### **Treatment of the Data**

The analysis of data from the Regional Training Center Bataan will employ a mixed-method approach, integrating both statistical and qualitative analysis techniques to evaluate the implementation and challenges of gender equality. For the quantitative data gathered from surveys, descriptive statistical tools were used to assess participants' attitudes, awareness of policies, and experiences related to gender issues, providing a clear overview of the overall perceptions within the population. The median was used to measure the central tendency of the ordinal data collected from Likert-type scale items, as it provides a more appropriate summary measure than the mean for non-interval data (Sullivan and Artino, 2013). Additionally, independent samples t-test was utilized to determine the differences in the implementation of gender sensitivity as perceived by the personnel when grouped according to their profiles.

On the qualitative side, thematic analysis was utilized to analyze interview data, allowing researchers to identify recurrent themes and patterns in participants' narratives regarding their experiences and challenges related to gender dynamics. Meanwhile, document analysis was employed to evaluate gender-related programs and strategies implemented. This combination of statistical tools, document analysis and thematic analysis will facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing gender equality at Regional Training Center Bataan, ultimately guiding the development of actionable insights and recommendations for improvement.

For a qualitative method, as the data saturation was reached, the researcher obtained a total of eight (8) participants being interviewed as anchored in the study of Hennink and Kaiser (2022) that data saturation was attained within the ten in-depth interviews conducted. Notably, thematic repetition became evident by the eighth interview, with no additional codes or novel insights emerging from the final two interviews. The sample, composed of both trainees and personnel, provided sufficient depth and perspective within a relatively homogeneous institutional context. This outcome is consistent with contemporary qualitative research, which suggests that saturation is typically achieved between six and twelve interviews in studies with narrowly defined research objectives and participants sharing common experiences. Therefore, the inclusion of ten participants was deemed methodologically sufficient to ensure data richness, thematic completeness, and interpretive credibility.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Conducting the research "Evaluating Gender Equality Implementation and Challenges in the Regional Training Center- Bataan" requires adherence to ethical principles to ensure the integrity, fairness, and safety of all participants. The following ethical considerations will guide the study:

**Informed Consent:** All participants will be provided with clear and detailed information about the study's objectives, methods, potential risks, and benefits. They will voluntarily sign a consent form before participation, ensuring their autonomy and willingness to take part.

**Confidentiality and Anonymity:** Participants' identities and personal information will be kept confidential. Any data collected will be anonymized to protect privacy, and responses will be used solely for research purposes.

**Non-Discrimination and Inclusivity:** The study will respect and acknowledge diverse gender identities and perspectives. The research will ensure that all participants, regardless of gender, are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.

**Minimization of Harm:** The research will take precautions to avoid any psychological, emotional, or social harm to participants. Sensitive topics, such as experiences of discrimination or gender-based violence, will be approached with care, and participants will be provided with resources for support if needed.

**Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw:** Participants will have the right to refuse participation or withdraw from the study at any point without consequences. No coercion or pressure will be applied to secure participation.

**Accuracy and Integrity:** The research findings will be presented honestly and without bias. Data will not be manipulated or misrepresented, and all sources will be properly acknowledged.

**Compliance with Legal and Institutional Guidelines:** The study will adhere to relevant ethical guidelines, including those set by the institution, the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710), and other national and international frameworks on gender equality research.

**Beneficence and Social Responsibility:** The study aims to contribute positively to gender equality initiatives at Regional Training Center Bataan by identifying gaps and recommending improvements. The findings will be shared with stakeholders to help create an inclusive and equitable environment.

By adhering to these ethical principles, the research will ensure a responsible, respectful, and meaningful evaluation of gender equality implementation in Regional Training Center Bataan.

## **Results**

The findings revealed a high level of gender equality implementation across the evaluated dimensions. Respondents rated all indicators as 'Always Implemented,' indicating strong institutional compliance with gender-sensitive practices. Gender equality was most evident in fair treatment, inclusive communication, and equitable opportunities for leadership and participation.

Quantitative analysis showed no significant difference in perceptions between male and female respondents. However, cadets rated implementation lower (Median = 3) than officers and personnel (Median = 4), suggesting gaps in awareness at the trainee level. Document analysis confirmed the existence of institutional policies such as the establishment of VAWC Desks, GAD Focal Points, and Anti-Sexual Harassment Committees.

Qualitative data identified seven recurring challenges: (1) lack of localized support services, (2) centralized reporting of gender cases, (3) insufficient educational resources, (4) limited awareness dissemination, (5) absence of a full-time GAD focal person, (6) cultural resistance, and (7) lack of local policy autonomy. Despite these challenges, the institution demonstrated a strong commitment to gender equality and policy compliance.

## **Discussion**

The results indicate that RTC-Bataan has made significant progress in promoting gender equality through structured programs and policies aligned with national mandates. However, persistent structural and cultural barriers hinder the full realization of inclusivity. The centralized nature of gender case management and lack of localized GAD leadership reflect the need for decentralization and empowerment at the institutional level.

The findings align with global literature emphasizing that gender mainstreaming succeeds when accompanied by participatory leadership, adequate resources, and localized implementation mechanisms. The lack of educational resources and awareness sessions points to the need for continuous training and integration of gender-sensitive materials in the curriculum.

Limitations of the study include its focus on a single training center, which may limit generalizability. Future research could extend to multiple maritime institutions to capture comparative perspectives. It is recommended that RTC-Bataan establish a dedicated GAD office, strengthen partnerships with gender advocacy agencies, and institutionalize regular gender sensitivity workshops.

In conclusion, while gender equality initiatives at RTC-Bataan are well-implemented, sustainable progress requires a holistic approach involving policy refinement, cultural transformation, and continuous stakeholder collaboration.

## **Declarations**

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**Author Contribution:** The author solely carried out all aspects of this mixed method or the qualitative and quantitative research method, including the conceptualization of the study, formulation of the research design, development of research instruments, data collection, analysis and interpretation of results, and preparation of the full manuscript.

**Conflict of Interest:** The author declares no conflict of interest.

**Consent to Publish:** The author agrees to publish the paper in *International Journal of Recent Innovations in Academic Research*.

**Data Availability Statement:** The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy.

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**Institutional Review Board Statement:** The proposal for the study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the Philippine College of Criminology, 641 Sales Street, Sta. Cruz, Manila, Philippines.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Written informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in this study.

**Research Content:** The research content of this manuscript is original and has not been published elsewhere.

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