

Awareness, Implementation, and Challenges of Gender Mainstreaming in the Provincial Government District Office of Occidental Mindoro

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ABSTRACT

Gender mainstreaming is a critical strategy for promoting gender equality and inclusive development by ensuring that gender perspectives are integrated into policies, programs, and governance processes within government institutions. Local government units play a vital role in translating national and international gender equality commitments into concrete actions at the grassroots level. In keeping with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on Gender Equality, this study focused on determining the level of awareness, extent of implementation, and challenges of gender mainstreaming in the offices of the Provincial Government of Occidental Mindoro, Second District. Data was gathered using a survey questionnaire to assess the awareness, implementation, and challenges of gender mainstreaming within the offices of provincial government.

The respondents consisted of personnel from various departments of the Provincial Government who are involved in policy-making, program implementation, and gender-related initiatives. Results revealed that respondents demonstrated a high level of awareness of gender mainstreaming concepts and perceived a high level of implementation across all key dimensions, reflecting sustained efforts to integrate gender-responsive governance within the provincial government. However, respondents also reported a high level of challenges in the implementation of gender mainstreaming, particularly in areas related to commitment and political will, institutional and policy constraints, socio-cultural barriers, and concerns regarding implementation and sustainability. Further analysis showed a positive relationship between awareness and the challenges encountered, indicating that increased awareness of gender issues leads to greater recognition of existing barriers. Similarly, higher levels of implementation were associated with increased challenges. Notably, gender roles and relations and gender socialization emerged as significant predictors influencing the challenges of implementation, suggesting that stronger awareness in these areas contributes to fewer challenges and smoother gender mainstreaming processes. Among implementation factors, policies were found to be the only significant predictor of challenges, underscoring the importance of robust and well-enforced policies in minimizing barriers to effective gender mainstreaming.

Keywords: Gender Mainstreaming; Gender and Development; Gender-Responsive Governance.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

A. *Background of the Study*

Gender mainstreaming is complex and strategic; it holds the intention of moving the principles of gender equality and empowerment for women and girls from an add-on/afterthought to a core aspect of decision making. This is done through the careful incorporation of a gender lens at every level of all policies, programs, agenda and institutional processes to achieve realization not just an equality agenda but more broadly also the fulfilment of women's rights (UN Women 2020) The multifaceted lens to the approach is recognized as a necessity in order for gender indicators to be integrated into all aspects of policy design and governance frameworks. Nevertheless, in spite of its substantial theoretical salience and the broad endorsement for its inclusion, little is known about the practical implications or efficacy of gender mainstreaming in the working contexts within local government. It is therefore, the study aims to carefully evaluate how much the organization; employees know about gender mainstreaming, challenges faced by employees in applying gender mainstreaming in practice and critically analyze how gender mainstreaming is incorporated and applied within an organization.

In the context of government, gender mainstreaming is understood as a process that embeds gender considerations into public decision-making, planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring to ensure that policies and services equitably benefit all genders. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2016) emphasizes that gender mainstreaming strengthens public sector effectiveness by promoting inclusive policy outcomes and accountability in governance systems. Similarly, UN Women (2018) underscores that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 on gender equality, requires governments to institutionalize gender-responsive governance mechanisms.

Despite its recognized importance, the implementation of gender mainstreaming in government institutions faces several challenges. Limited institutional capacity, insufficient technical expertise on gender analysis, and inadequate training of personnel often result in inconsistent application of gender policies. Weak political support or leadership commitment may affect prioritization and resource allocation, while a lack of reliable gender-disaggregated data hinders evidence-based planning and monitoring. Cultural and organizational resistance, including entrenched gender norms and stereotypes, further impede the integration of gender perspectives into institutional processes. Financial and structural constraints, such as limited funding and competing development priorities, also contribute to the uneven implementation of gender mainstreaming initiatives (European Institute for Gender Equality [EIGE], 2017; UN Women, 2022). Understanding these barriers is essential for strengthening institutional mechanisms in Occidental Mindoro's provincial government offices. Identifying the challenges and opportunities for effective gender mainstreaming can improve policy implementation, promote equitable development outcomes, and advance gender equality within local governance structures.

Numerous studies show that the concept of gender mainstreaming has been researched intensively at both national and global levels but there exists an alarming and profound void in our understanding of gender mainstreaming's practical application stuff like institution settings (in terms) grassroots provinces especially in places such as Occidental Mindoro. The policy framework of gender mainstreaming has attracted much attention in the past. However, it is far from clear whether there will be traction for down-to earth analysis on such issues as how gender mainstreaming finds expression within local educational institutions or within government offices and community programs (Bustelo, 2017). Moreover, as Caywood & Darmstadt (2024) point out, the dominant part of research into gender mainstreaming is done by high-income countries and their authors; correspondingly less attention is paid to low- middle-income regions scholars and practitioners. They identify specific knowledge gaps, challenges of implementation and a distinct lack of cooperation across the world. This situation calls for urgent development of more inclusive and carefully positioned research agendas that can reduce the disparities between Global North and South in order to produce insights into gender mainstreaming practices across various different environments.

B. *Objectives of the Study*

This study aims to examine the extent of gender mainstreaming within the Provincial Government District Office of Occidental Mindoro by assessing the respondents' level of awareness, implementation practices, and the challenges they encounter. Specifically, it aims:

- *To Determine the Level of Awareness on Gender Mainstreaming of the Respondents in the Provincial Government District Office of Occidental Mindoro, in Terms of:*
 - Gender roles and relations;
 - Gender perceptions and expectations;
 - Gender stereotyping; and
 - Gender socialization.

➤ *To Determine the Level of Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming in the Provincial Government District Office of Occidental Mindoro as Perceived in Terms of:*

- Policies;
- People;
- Enabling mechanism; and
- Programs, activities, and projects (PAPs).

➤ *To Assess the Level of Challenges Encountered by the Respondents in the Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming in the Provincial Government District Office in Terms of:*

- Commitment and political will;
- Institutional and policy-related challenges;
- Socio-cultural and normative barriers; and
- Implementation and sustainability challenges.

➤ *To Examine the Relationship Between Awareness of Gender Mainstreaming and the Challenges Faced by Respondents in Implementing Gender Mainstreaming within the Provincial Government District Office.*

➤ *To Determine the Relationship Between the Level of Gender Mainstreaming Implementation and the Challenges Encountered by Respondents in the Provincial Government District Office.*

➤ *To Identify which Factors of Awareness on Gender Mainstreaming serve as Key Predictors of the Challenges Faced by the Provincial Government Office.*

➤ *To Identify which Factors of Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Serve as Key Predictors of the Challenges Faced by the Provincial Government Office.*

C. *Significance of the Study*

This study is significant in several aspects, benefiting various stakeholders, including government officials, policymakers, employees, and researchers.

➤ *Provincial Government Office and Policymakers*

This study provides valuable insights into the level of awareness and challenges encountered in implementing gender mainstreaming policies within the provincial government. The findings can serve as a basis for enhancing Gender and Development (GAD) programs, ensuring that policies align with national laws such as the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710) and international gender equality commitments. Moreover, it supports the development of strategies that promote inclusive governance and strengthen gender-responsive decision-making.

➤ *Provincial Government Employees*

By assessing the awareness and challenges faced by employees, this study aims to foster a more inclusive and equitable workplace. The results can guide the development of training programs and initiatives that improve gender sensitivity and responsiveness among government personnel. Additionally, it can help address barriers to effective gender mainstreaming within the institution.

➤ *Local Communities and Beneficiaries*

A well-implemented gender mainstreaming framework ensures that government programs and services are inclusive and equitable. This study can contribute to improving public service delivery by integrating gender-sensitive approaches in planning and implementation. It may also empower marginalized groups, particularly women and LGBTQ+ individuals, by ensuring that their concerns are addressed in government policies and programs.

➤ *Future Researchers*

The findings of this study can serve as a reference for future research in the field of gender mainstreaming, public administration, and governance. It provides empirical data that can be used to develop frameworks for gender-responsive policies in other government offices. Additionally, it contributes to the growing body of knowledge on gender equality and its implementation in local governance.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents the relevant literature and studies that strengthen the importance of the present study.

➤ *Awareness of Gender Mainstreaming*

Gender mainstreaming is an internationally acknowledged approach aimed at achieving gender equality by integrating gender perspectives into all aspects of organizational work, such as policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation (UN Women, 2021). Employee awareness plays a vital role in fostering inclusive and equitable workplace environments. This awareness encompasses individuals', particularly employees' and managers', knowledge, understanding, and attitudes toward embedding gender equality within institutional frameworks. The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) asserts that enhancing awareness is a fundamental step in the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming, as it helps individuals identify gender-related biases and take intentional actions to address them (ECOSOC, 1997). When awareness is lacking, initiatives related to gender mainstreaming may be misinterpreted, poorly executed, or disregarded altogether.

Building on this, Caywood and Darmstadt (2024) conducted a comprehensive review marking 25 years of gender mainstreaming, arguing that persistent gaps in institutional awareness continue to undermine implementation. Their work stresses the need for inclusive and collaborative frameworks that integrate awareness-building as a continuous rather than one-time intervention. Similarly, Novovic (2023) found that global governance frameworks have remained largely ineffective at advancing gender equality through development cooperation, partly because awareness of gender mainstreaming goals remains limited and uneven among government personnel.

Research consistently shows that government employees in the Philippines generally exhibit high awareness of Gender and Development (GAD) concepts and gender mainstreaming policies. Surveys in San Pablo City and Pila, Laguna, found that most LGU employees and officials are highly or satisfactorily aware of GAD concepts, activities, and related policies, with many rating their awareness as "very satisfactory" or "high" (Romero et al., 2020; Pere & Villacruel, 2024; Laurente & Acero, 2025). Awareness is often linked to participation in GAD-related trainings and seminars, though the impact of these activities on a deeper understanding of gender issues and roles is sometimes limited (Pere & Villacruel, 2024). However, while awareness of GAD activities and policies is rated "very satisfactory," awareness of specific gender issues and roles is only "satisfactory," indicating room for deeper understanding (Romero et al., 2020).

High GAD awareness among LGU employees is associated with increased job satisfaction and positive organizational citizenship behaviors, supporting more inclusive and productive work environments (Laurente & Acero, 2025). However, the number of trainings or seminars attended does not always translate into higher effectiveness or deeper awareness of gender issues, suggesting that the quality and content of these activities matter as much as their frequency (Romero et al., 2020; Pere & Villacruel, 2024). Persistent challenges remain at the barangay level, including gaps in documentation, case management, and the issuance of protection orders, highlighting the need for ongoing training and system improvements (Matahum & Tanigue, 2025).

A survey by the International Labour Organization (2020) across several Southeast Asian nations found that less than half of the respondents could accurately describe the goals of gender mainstreaming, despite attending gender-related seminars or orientations. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2023), the biggest obstacles to impactful gender equality strategies include limited enforceability of frameworks, absence of sex-disaggregated data, limited involvement from line ministries, and funding shortfalls—all of which directly hinder meaningful awareness-building across government institutions. The ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework (2021–2025) similarly notes that limited awareness of the importance of gender equality, together with insufficient resources and poor coordination, hampers effective implementation across Member States (ASEAN, 2021).

➤ *Gender Roles and Relations*

Gender roles and relations in Philippine provincial governance continue to evolve, yet traditional expectations still shape the political landscape. While women have gained greater recognition as key contributors to governance and development (Calva, 2024), they remain underrepresented in decision-making bodies (Necosia, 2020). The dynamics of gender relations influence not only women's participation but also the power structures that dictate their roles within local governments.

There are various social and personal factors which influence women participation in politics. The important aspects of family support for women's leadership is not only in motivating them to take up positions with such but also their intrinsic motivation, due to the strong desire these women have on community development and empowerment which are also factors that help promote gender equality (Zapata 2018). Yet, patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes continue to thwart ambitions like these because politics is viewed as a male domain. Although gender mainstreaming policies are applied, institutions around the world still promote traditional expectations about gender roles in public administration. Women are still shown to be less represented in leadership positions, and a speech still suppresses the thought that "some ladies do better in some offices" which indicates traditional gender

roles and relations within provincial administrations. Gender disparities are only compounded by an imbalance of responsibilities and lack of gender inclusiveness for women at levels in leadership (Tagesse & Abebe, 2023).

Women remain underrepresented in high-level government positions and are less likely to be appointed to "core" or "masculine" portfolios, such as finance or defense. Even as more women enter government, they are often steered toward roles perceived as more "feminine" or less influential. Progressive party ideologies and gender-balanced political contexts can improve women's access to a broader range of offices, but disparities persist (Field, 2020; Convery & Kenny, 2024; Barnes & O'Brien, 2025).

Despite growing recognition of their role in governance, women still face significant challenges. Ideological factors, including deeply ingrained gender stereotypes, create barriers that discourage women from entering or advancing in politics. Political culture, often characterized by male-dominated networks and patronage systems, further limits women's access to opportunities (Necosia, 2020). Economic constraints also play a role, as many women lack the financial resources necessary to fund political campaigns.

The Philippine government plays a crucial role in shaping gender norms within governance structures. While some government initiatives promote gender equality, others, such as award and recognition systems, often reinforce traditional gender roles rather than challenge them (Llige, 2023). These institutionalized practices subtly influence gender relations by upholding existing power imbalances and limiting transformative opportunities for women in politics. Despite the persistent challenges, the landscape of gender relations in Philippine provincial governance is gradually shifting. In some areas, women's involvement is becoming more normalized, signaling progress toward greater gender inclusivity (Calva, 2024). As more women assume leadership roles, the traditional power dynamics within governance structures are slowly transforming, paving the way for a more equitable political environment.

While progress has been made, achieving full gender equality in governance requires continuous effort, policy reforms, and a cultural shift in how leadership is perceived. By challenging existing gender roles and fostering supportive political structures, the Philippines can move closer to a more inclusive and representative governance system.

➤ *Gender Perceptions and Expectations*

Gender perceptions and expectations in the Philippine provincial government are shaped by cultural norms, political structures, and evolving gender roles. While significant progress has been made towards gender equality, challenges persist, particularly in political representation and societal expectations. The Philippine government has implemented various policies to promote women's empowerment since the 1987 Constitution. These policies focus on economic empowerment and gender-responsive governance (Philippine Commission on Women, 2020).

Despite some positive strides towards gender equality in the Philippines, women are still underrepresented in politics. They face challenges like "money politics" and the control of political families, making it difficult for them to seek political roles (Necosia, 2024; Zapata, 2018). Local governance is much more often the domain of women politicians, who claim that family support (or status) and charitable work are one of the key determinants in getting them engaged in politics (Necosia, 2024). The respondents working in provincial government offices saw gender mainstreaming as a policy that is concerned mainly with women rather than as a tool for ensuring gender equality in general. Such a perception is nurtured by the constant gender stereotypes and expectations around who should be in leadership positions with women often underrepresented in senior positions and decision-making processes. Social norms, institutional culture still shape expectations of gender roles and make attitudes toward more equitable distribution of responsibilities difficult (Ampaire et al., 2019; Indriyany et al., 2020; Caywood & Darmstadt, 2024).

In the Bicol Region, significant gender disparities remain in labor market participation, health, and political representation, with cultural barriers and limited access to leadership roles hindering women's advancement (Rañon, 2024). Similarly, in Oriental Mindoro Province, women's political participation is constrained by socioeconomic factors, including poverty and lack of resources, alongside institutional barriers such as gender bias and patriarchal systems (Joung & Tamayo, 2024). These findings align with broader regional patterns, where structural barriers, entrenched patriarchal norms, and cultural perceptions undermine women's political ambitions despite legal equality frameworks (Utami et al., 2024). The Philippine government itself reinforces traditional gender norms through institutional mechanisms, as demonstrated by the Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas, which frames women as sacrificing mother figures while emphasizing men's contributions in masculine-related fields (Llige, 2023).

According to Bansal (2024), political participation is essential in gender mainstreaming, however she reveals that cultural narratives about public duty directly affect woman's ability to access public office and government promotion which once established show very difficult to change; women as primary responsible groups of domestic work prevent their ambition for a good role at the legislative level. Additionally, the OECD (2023) emphasizes that social and cultural norms are still one of the most enduring obstacles to gender equality in governance setting, especially where social expectations regarding women's public involvement remain dominated by traditional gender roles.

➤ *Gender Stereotyping*

Gender stereotypes continue to shape workplace roles and responsibilities within provincial offices, significantly influencing leadership representation and the distribution of administrative tasks. These stereotypes are deeply rooted in organizational structures and societal norms, often hindering the advancement of women and reinforcing traditional gender roles. Numerous studies have highlighted the persistent underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, attributing this trend to prevailing stereotypes that associate effective leadership with traditionally masculine traits such as assertiveness, decisiveness, and analytical thinking (Alqahtani, 2020; Macias-Alonso et al., 2018). The perception that leadership is inherently aligned with male characteristics can result in women being viewed as less competent or ill-suited for senior roles (Macias-Alonso et al., 2018). Furthermore, organizational structures often mirror male-normed cultures, creating environments where women face structural and cultural barriers to upward mobility (Alqahtani, 2020).

Schuh et al. (2022) found that despite decades of progress, organizational gender stereotypes remain deeply entrenched, particularly in hierarchical structures such as government institutions, where perceptions of leadership as inherently masculine persist. Their research highlights that these stereotypes are maintained through everyday workplace interactions, informal norms, and mentorship patterns that disproportionately favor male employees. Similarly, Koenig and Eagly (2021) demonstrated that prescriptive gender stereotypes—expectations about how women should behave—create a backlash against women who exhibit agentic leadership traits, further reinforcing occupational segregation in both public and private organizations.

In contrast to leadership roles, women are often overrepresented in administrative positions, largely due to stereotypes that associate them with qualities such as attention to detail, nurturing behavior, and organizational skills (Alqahtani, 2020). While these tasks are essential to the functioning of any office, they are frequently undervalued and offer limited pathways for career advancement. This contributes to the perpetuation of occupational segregation and reinforces gender inequality in the workplace (Ye, 2023). Gender stereotypes negatively affect women's job performance, increase stress levels, and influence their focus on interpersonal relationships, while impacts on men are primarily concentrated in female-dominated or highly male-dominated occupations (Xiao & Wang, 2023).

Despite progress in workplace rights protection, women continue facing barriers to senior positions and unequal treatment due to cognitive biases rooted in gender stereotypes (Ye, 2023). A bibliometric analysis of workplace gender stereotyping literature from 1986–2022 shows dramatic knowledge evolution, particularly since 2010, with three main research areas emerging: distinguishing characteristics between men and women, women in leadership roles, and workplace challenges faced by women (Raj et al., 2023). Data analytics of multi-domain articles from 1901–2021 demonstrates that occupational gender segregation in the Philippines has decreased over time but remains persistent, with unequal distribution favoring males across occupational categories (Sy et al., 2022).

A study published by Mendoza (2023) examined industrial workplaces in the Philippines to explore how gender stereotypes influence hiring, promotion, and other human resource practices. The findings revealed that assumptions such as "men are more practical and more productive" often lead to the preferential hiring of men, even when women possess equal qualifications and competencies. This bias demonstrates how gender stereotypes continue to shape perceptions of competence and suitability for certain roles within Filipino workplaces. The study highlights that these stereotypes not only limit women's access to leadership positions but also reinforce the notion that certain types of work are inherently "male" or "female."

Brechenmacher et al. (2021) further note that in many developing countries, including the Philippines, gender stereotypes in government offices are compounded by an absence of formal accountability mechanisms, enabling biased HR practices to continue unchallenged. These findings point to the importance of structured organizational policies and inclusive HR practices in combating the effects of stereotyping, enabling women to perform on par with their male counterparts and promoting gender equity in the public sector.

Despite this growing awareness and progress, these issues are firmly entrenched due to their deep cultural and institutional roots. As such, governments must implement inclusive workplace policies and openly challenge the traditional biases present within many civil services in order to increase equitable leadership and administrative opportunities for all genders.

➤ *Gender Socialization*

Gender socialization significantly influences policy-making and decision-making processes within provincial governments by perpetuating traditional gender roles and affecting representation. According to Eagly and Wood (2016), gender socialization shapes individuals' preferences, self-concepts, and occupational aspirations by reinforcing cultural norms about what is "masculine" or "feminine." These learned norms often translate into distinct patterns of participation in the labor force and in leadership positions. This phenomenon is reinforced through various institutions, shaping a gendered approach in policy-making that often marginalizes women's perspectives and needs.

Cookson et al. (2023) note in a UN Women review that social norms thoroughly shaped at the process of socialization continue to be an important determinant for women's standing in governance and public life. They contend that an engagement with norm-

change strategies rather than purely technical compliance frameworks is necessary in terms of policy approaches, given the persistence of socialized beliefs about gender roles mediated through informal channels even when formal policies support equality.

The underrepresentation of women in governance is a critical concern, as it undermines democratic principles given that diverse perspectives are crucial for effective governance. Harry (2024) further emphasizes the importance of gender quotas and initiatives aimed at increasing women's political participation, noting their effectiveness in some regions and the necessity for structural reforms to achieve gender parity in political decision-making. In the context of workplaces, gender socialization plays a critical role in determining how men and women are perceived and treated. Studies have shown that women are often socialized to value cooperation, empathy, and modesty—traits associated with caregiving or support roles—while men are encouraged to exhibit assertiveness, independence, and competitiveness, traits typically linked to leadership and decision-making (Ridgeway, 2011). As a result, men are often viewed as more suitable for managerial or technical positions, whereas women are seen as better suited for administrative or caregiving roles.

Within the Philippine context, gender socialization continues to influence professional dynamics in both private and public sectors. Traditional gender expectations—such as viewing men as primary breadwinners and women as nurturers—affect the division of labor and opportunities available to each gender. In many government offices, women are frequently found in clerical or support positions, while men dominate supervisory or decision-making roles. This reflects how early gender socialization translates into institutional patterns of inequality. Moreover, despite national policies promoting gender equality and mainstreaming, socialized beliefs about gender-appropriate work persist subtly through language, workplace interactions, and informal organizational norms.

Gender socialization has been recognized as a significant factor behind better representation of women in Indonesia's Ministry for Foreign Affairs but there are still cultural barriers that restrict effective participation (Prajuli et al., 2021). Analysis of literature on representative bureaucracy shows that it lacks any real discussion on how public sector decision-making is influenced by the wider socio-political context (Kennedy et al., 2020). Patriarchal political culture, limited financial resources and gender stereotypes inherent in Minangkabau culture restrict women's legislative representation in West Sumatra; hence, the government has applied strategies such as gender mainstreaming and affirmative action to have a counter-stereotypical effect on society (Pratama et al., 2025) Here the very context of cultural and institutional basis mode towards gendered policy follows a similar trend as cob-webs, wherein culture renders gender issues invisible to ongoing discussions & procedures in consistent manners around priority groups (Arat-Koç 2023).

Ninyuk (2024) assessing gender equality in public administration argues that structural and cultural stereotypes embedded among personnel hinder women's access to managerial or strategic positions, thereby limiting the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming. These findings suggest that people—from high-level leaders to frontline staff—are agents of change or gatekeepers. Leadership commitment, staff competence, awareness, and organizational culture shape whether gender mainstreaming becomes a meaningful transformation or remains a formal requirement.

➤ *Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming*

Gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted approach for gender equality, as it aims at ensuring that gender perspectives are incorporated in the process of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs. Gender mainstreaming According to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC, 1997) gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action including legislation, policies or programmes in all areas at all levels. Its goal is for both women and men to benefit equally and for inequality not to be replicated.” Such a concept was institutionalized after the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) called on governments to Institutionalize gender mainstreaming as one of the key strategies in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women.

In the Philippine context, gender mainstreaming has been adopted as a national policy through Republic Act No. 9710, also known as the Magna Carta of Women (MCW), which mandates all government agencies and local government units (LGUs) to integrate gender perspectives in their plans, programs, and budgets. The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) leads this initiative by developing tools such as the Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF) and the Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG) to assess the level of gender mainstreaming across institutions (PCW, 2020).

Studies reveal, however, that implementation varies among local government units, particularly at the provincial level. According to Soriano and Dela Cruz (2019), while provincial offices demonstrate awareness of gender mainstreaming, challenges persist in translating policy commitments into practice. Common barriers include limited technical capacity, inadequate gender analysis, insufficient budget allocation for Gender and Development (GAD) programs, and a lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Moreover, some LGUs still perceive gender mainstreaming as a compliance requirement rather than a transformative process that enhances governance and social inclusion.

In a related study, Macapagal et al. (2021) found that the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming in provincial governments depends on strong leadership commitment, continuous capacity building, and institutional support. They emphasized

that gender mainstreaming should not be confined to the preparation of GAD Plans and Budgets (GPBs), but should influence all aspects of governance—planning, policymaking, service delivery, and human resource management. Integration at this level helps ensure that gender equality becomes a core principle of good governance rather than a peripheral concern.

At the global level, Novovic (2023) calls for a "gender mainstreaming 2.0" approach embedded in new paradigms of global cooperation that valorize local gender expertise and national ownership, recognizing that top-down implementation without local agency has consistently failed to produce lasting change. Gupta et al. (2023) similarly argue for transformative approaches that go beyond mainstreaming rhetoric to restructure organizational culture, arguing that gender equality requires changes to power dynamics and not merely procedural compliance. The OECD (2023) Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality emphasizes that sustainable implementation requires institutionalized gender mainstreaming capacity, gender-responsive governance tools, and inclusive accountability structures built into all levels of public administration.

The implementation of gender mainstreaming in provincial government offices thus reflects both progress and persistent challenges. While structures and policies are in place, institutionalizing gender-responsive governance requires sustained effort, adequate resources, and attitudinal change among leaders and staff. Continuous assessment through frameworks like the GMEF and active collaboration between the PCW and local stakeholders are essential to achieving full gender mainstreaming in the provincial context.

➤ *Policies*

The Government of the Philippines has adopted an integrated set of legal and policy frameworks for gender mainstreaming at all levels of governance over the past 10 years, including, among many others, the Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act No. 9710), which provides comprehensive women's rights protection laws; Gender and Development (GAD) Budget Policy; and Harmonized GAD Guidelines (HGDG). However, as with much of the legislative gender agenda, what cannot yet be seen is the realignment of these commitments on the ground through effective translation into sustainable change to deliver results at local level.

The development and implementation of gender responsive policies at the local level are foundational measures for effective gender mainstreaming. The aim is that all Local Government Units (LGUs), such as provincial governments, will apply gender considerations in their development plans through the implementation of GAD codes and local ordinances (PCW, 2020). These policies are usually in accordance with national frameworks, such as the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Plan (GEWE Plan) and Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF). Studies from Indonesia reveal that urban local governments with stronger institutional capacity and stakeholder involvement are more successful in integrating gender perspectives than rural areas, which lack resources, gender-disaggregated data, and adequate staff training (Munna & Darwis, 2025).

Onamu et al. (2024) examined the nature of gender mainstreaming policies in Nakuru and Narok Counties in Kenya, finding that while formal policy frameworks existed, their effectiveness depended heavily on institutional accountability mechanisms and consistent political support. This mirrors findings from the Philippine context, where PCW (2020) highlights that institutional policies must not only exist but be implemented effectively to eliminate gender-based disparities in access to public services, leadership positions, and resource allocation.

Purnama et al. (2024) examined how gender mainstreaming is integrated into national development plans in Indonesia, finding that while gender is formally included in policy documents, a clear roadmap with dedicated resources for implementation is frequently lacking. This gap between policy text and funded implementation results in gender equality commitments remaining largely symbolic. A strong policy framework supports gender mainstreaming, with local governments empowered to establish gender-responsive regulations that protect women's rights and promote equality (Evenson et al., 2022).

Mayasari et al. (2025) highlighted that even when policies such as Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) and gender equality frameworks exist, organizational culture, inadequate oversight mechanisms, and limited capacity-building hinder actual implementation. The authors argued that enabling mechanisms must include not only formal policies but also structural reforms, continuous staff development, and inclusive institutional practices to ensure gender equality policies become effective in the bureaucracy. Despite a clear commitment to gender mainstreaming, these challenges highlight the need for continued advocacy and strategic focus. Strengthening data collection and ensuring gender issues remain a priority in policymaking are crucial steps toward achieving more inclusive and equitable governance.

➤ *People*

In implementing gender mainstreaming within government institutions, scholars increasingly emphasize that policies and frameworks alone are insufficient—the people in the organization matter greatly. For example, a recent empirical study on local government in Indonesia (Salatiga City, 2017–2022) shows that the actual integration of gender mainstreaming depends heavily on the capacity, commitment, and involvement of personnel within the government office (Takayasa, 2023).

Capistrano and Dela Cruz (2019) found that while there is growing awareness of gender issues among provincial government employees, actual integration into policies and programs remains limited due to inadequate training and a lack of understanding of

GAD mandates. The political will of local leaders emerges as a critical success factor (Munna & Darwis, 2025). Similarly, Spanish municipalities show limited implementation of mainstreaming strategies, with influencing factors including the mayor's gender, political orientation, and the existence of equality councils (Otero-Hermida & Bouzas Lorenzo, 2019). Indonesian case studies further highlight that implementation remains symbolic and uncoordinated due to institutional fragmentation and weak political commitment (Hanani et al., 2025).

According to Arce et al. (2022), people can also become a barrier. In a Philippine study concerning mainstreaming in the public-school system, researchers found that despite existing policies, many school heads and employees lacked full awareness of gender mainstreaming's four "entry points" (policy, people, enabling mechanisms, programs/activities), resulting in incomplete implementation. Moreover, Linga (2020) assessed several provincial governments and concluded that gender mainstreaming in terms of people is hindered by weak leadership engagement, where GAD focal persons operate in isolation, often without full support from top management or elected officials.

Ninyuk (2024), assessing gender equality in public administration, argues that structural and cultural stereotypes embedded among personnel hinder women's access to managerial or strategic positions, thereby limiting the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming. Presto (2025) further examined contradictions in gender inclusivity in the Philippine workplace, noting that while legal frameworks provide some protection, day-to-day workplace interactions continue to reflect entrenched gender norms that limit equitable participation. These findings suggest that people—from high-level leaders to frontline staff—are agents of change or gatekeepers. Leadership commitment, staff competence, awareness, and organizational culture shape whether gender mainstreaming becomes a meaningful transformation or remains a formal requirement.

Consequently, in the context of a Provincial Government Office, examining "people" involves several dimensions: presence of designated gender focal persons; level of awareness and training among staff; leadership commitment; staffing and recruitment practices; and underlying attitudes or organizational culture. These human factors are crucial for translating gender policies into actual, sustained, equitable practices.

➤ *Enabling Mechanism*

According to the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), enabling mechanisms are the institutional structures, procedures, tools, and resources inside government offices that allow gender mainstreaming to move from policy rhetoric to routine practice. In public institutions, these mechanisms commonly include gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) and GAD/Gender-tagged budgets, gender focal point systems or dedicated units, formal mainstreaming policies and guidelines, monitoring and evaluation systems (including gender audits and sex-disaggregated data), and continuous capacity building for staff. Together they form the "scaffolding" that institutionalizes gender perspectives across planning, programming, budgeting, implementation, and reporting in government offices.

A body of empirical work from Bandiyono and Saputro (2020) shows that Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is one of the most powerful enabling mechanisms when it is backed by institutional commitment and integrated into public finance systems. Studies on Indonesian and Philippine public institutions indicate that GRB works best where ministries, agencies, or local governments possess formal guidance for gender tagging, trained budget officers, and processes that link gender objectives to actual budget lines; otherwise, gender-sensitive intentions remain unfunded and sporadic.

Siswiraningtyas and Yuhertiana (2021) emphasized that without structured programs and projects, gender mainstreaming policies often fail to produce measurable impact, despite formal adoption. Their study of GRB constraints found that organizational culture, lack of gender analysis capacity, and weak monitoring systems frequently undermine formal commitments to gender-responsive budgeting. Capacity building and knowledge management are repeatedly cited as enabling mechanisms that determine implementation quality. Staff across planning, budgeting, and line units need sustained training in gender analysis and GRB methods; short, one-off workshops are insufficient (OECD, 2023).

According to Capistrano and Dela Cruz (2019), many provincial LGUs have established GFPS and formulated GAD plans, but lack full functionality due to inadequate staffing, limited technical expertise, and insufficient institutional support. In a 2020 evaluation, Linga (2020) emphasized that sex-disaggregated data and GAD database systems are still underdeveloped in most provinces, hindering evidence-based planning and monitoring of GAD initiatives. He noted that enabling mechanisms are often treated as "compliance tools" rather than essential systems for gender equity. On the other hand, provinces that institutionalized gender mainstreaming through ordinances, multi-sectoral partnerships, and performance-based incentives showed better outcomes. Gonzales and Cruz (2021) documented that Quezon and Ilocos Norte provinces have progressed to higher GMEF levels due to the establishment of functional GFPS, consistent GAD monitoring systems, and capacity development programs supported by local ordinances.

Mayasari et al. (2025) highlighted that even when policies such as GRB and gender equality frameworks exist, organizational culture, inadequate oversight mechanisms, and limited capacity-building hinder actual implementation. The authors argued that enabling mechanisms must include not only formal policies but also structural reforms, continuous staff development, and inclusive

institutional practices to ensure gender equality policies become effective in the bureaucracy. A more recent study of local government documented that successful gender mainstreaming required fulfillment of several prerequisites: commitment, policies, institutions, resources, analytical tools, disaggregated data, and stakeholder participation—conditions that, when satisfied, yield measurable development gains at the local level (Takayasa, 2023).

➤ *Projects, Activities, and Programs (PPAs)*

Projects, Programs, and Activities (P/P/As) in gender mainstreaming are concrete interventions through which government offices operationalize gender equality policies. These initiatives translate the commitments, policies, and enabling mechanisms of gender mainstreaming into actionable programs that address gender disparities, promote equal opportunities, and improve service delivery. According to the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW, 2020), P/P/As serve as the primary means through which GAD objectives are achieved, ranging from policy revisions, capacity-building trainings, advocacy campaigns, provision of services, and the integration of gender perspectives in organizational planning and budgeting.

Empirical studies have indicated that P/P/As play a central role in ensuring the 'real' gender mainstreaming of development processes and results, beyond mere rhetorical commitments and declarations. Using a sample from Indonesian government institutions, Bandiyono and Saputro (2020) show that where gender-responsive projects and programs are integrated into formal budgeting mechanisms, institutional performance and outcomes were significantly enhanced. These ranged from capacity-building workshops to support for women entrepreneurs and social welfare initiatives aimed at addressing the unique needs of both men and women. Likewise, Siswiraningtyas and Yuhertiana (2021) stated that Gender Mainstreaming policies will only serve a ceremonial function, impervious to measurement because structured programs and projects are rarely implemented.

Local government case studies provide further evidence of the effectiveness of well-implemented P/P/As. In Tangerang Regency, Indonesia, specific programs such as women's livelihood projects, gender-sensitivity seminars for government staff, and community-based advocacy campaigns were instrumental in translating policy into action. However, the study also highlighted that projects without adequate enabling mechanisms, such as dedicated budgets or trained focal persons, tend to have limited sustainability and impact (Takayasa, 2022). Similarly, research in Salatiga City demonstrated that P/P/As that were linked with monitoring and evaluation systems, and aligned with GAD planning and budgeting, contributed to more sustained gender mainstreaming outcomes (Takayasa, 2023).

In the Philippine context, government offices implement diverse P/P/As as part of their GAD mandates. For example, LGUs such as the Quezon Provincial Gender and Development Office have institutionalized projects that include livelihood support for women, gender-sensitivity training for public officials, gender-responsive monitoring systems, and community advocacy programs (Quezon Provincial Government, 2021). According to Capistrano and Dela Cruz (2019), P/As in many provincial LGUs are limited to standalone gender events (e.g., Women's Month celebrations, gender sensitivity trainings) rather than integrated, outcome-oriented interventions that address systemic gender issues like gender-based violence, maternal health, or economic empowerment.

Linga (2020) emphasized that GAD P/As are often not linked to the provincial development plan and are developed without sufficient data-driven gender analysis, leading to fragmented and often repetitive initiatives. There is a tendency to submit "GAD-tagged" P/As to meet the 5% budget requirement without evaluating their actual gender impact. However, Gonzales and Cruz (2021) reported that provinces with strong GAD planning processes and multi-sectoral collaboration (e.g., Quezon and Ilocos Norte) have shown progress toward institutionalizing gender-responsive P/As, using tools like the Harmonized GAD Guidelines (HGDG) to ensure gender responsiveness from planning to impact evaluation.

In addition, projects and programs are most effective when integrated with enabling mechanisms, such as dedicated GAD budgets, gender focal persons, and monitoring and evaluation systems. PCW (2020) highlights that the success of gender mainstreaming depends not only on the existence of programs but also on their alignment with the office's policies, budgetary support, and institutional capacity. This reinforces the notion that P/P/As, while central to gender mainstreaming, require complementary mechanisms to achieve meaningful and sustainable outcomes.

➤ *Challenges of Gender Mainstreaming*

Gender mainstreaming, the practice of integrating gender perspectives into all aspects of policy, decision-making, and governance, has become a central strategy for achieving gender equality. Despite widespread commitment to gender equality by governments and international organizations, the implementation of gender mainstreaming within government remains a complex and often contested process.

Lack of political will is one of the greatest barriers to successful gender mainstreaming. Despite often being codified in international frameworks and national legislation, political will to introduce and implement gender-sensitive policies is frequently lacking. While many governments have formally adopted gender mainstreaming, without sustained political leadership, the policies are often implemented with insufficient resources, attention and long-term plans to make an impact (Novovic 2023). Key systemic gaps (OECD, 2023): limited enforceability of strategic frameworks for gender equality; absence of data and own resources; limited involvement from line ministries. For example, Mihrete and Bayu (2021) studying the Women and Children Affairs Office in

Ethiopia showed that the most crucial predictor of implementation failure manifested regardless of formal policy environment was a lack of political commitment from senior leadership.

Another major obstacle to gender mainstreaming is institutional capacity. Many government agencies, particularly in developing countries, do not have the requisite resources, expertise, or infrastructure to integrate gender considerations effectively into their operations. The absence of gender specialists or dedicated units within government bodies means that gender issues are sidelined in favor of more immediate political or economic concerns. Without proper institutional mechanisms, gender mainstreaming efforts are often superficial or tokenistic, failing to address the structural barriers that perpetuate inequality (Onamu et al., 2024; Hanani et al., 2025).

The resistance to change within government structures is another critical barrier. In many contexts, especially in societies with deeply rooted patriarchal norms, gender mainstreaming challenges traditional power relations, and the resistance from policymakers, bureaucrats, and even the general public can be substantial. Shrestha et al. (2025) examined forces of resistance in Nepal's forest bureaucracy, finding that institutional hierarchies, masculine organizational cultures, and perceived threats to professional identity were key drivers of resistance to gender mainstreaming. In some cases, policymakers may view gender mainstreaming as incompatible with local cultural values, further complicating acceptance and adoption (Arat-Koç, 2023).

An essential component of successful gender mainstreaming is the gender analysis of policies. However, many governments fail to integrate gender analysis into the policy-making process. Without this crucial step, policies may be blind to the unequal impacts they have on different groups, especially women and marginalized gender groups. Development policies that do not consider women's unequal access to land, credit, and education may exacerbate existing disparities (Kim Anh Duong & Van Tuan Luong, 2021). The OECD (2023) further notes that the limited availability of gender-disaggregated data and research is among the most cited barriers to effective implementation of gender equality strategies.

Gender mainstreaming also requires collaboration among multiple sectors of government like health, education, labor, finance. But coordination failures tend to lead to piecemeal approaches to gender equality. Governments might not yet have an overall strategy, or gender may not be integrated into the priorities of every sector. Without an agency or a responsible body to coordinate, government ministries are working in silos, each implementing separate gender-related initiatives that lack common vision or shared objectives. Hanani et al. (2025), on local government in Indonesia, identified institutional fragmentation and poor inter-departmental coordination as the main reasons why gender mainstreaming remained largely symbolic in practice not translating formal adoption of policies into action.

Cultural and social norms play a critical role in shaping the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming efforts. In many societies, entrenched gender norms dictate the roles that men and women should play in public and private life. Policymakers may face significant societal pressure when proposing policies that challenge traditional gender roles, leading to a watering down of gender mainstreaming efforts. Furthermore, cultural perceptions of gender equality can often undermine the legitimacy of gender-sensitive policies, especially if these policies are seen as threatening to traditional values (Pratama et al., 2025). The monitoring and accountability mechanisms necessary to track the success of gender mainstreaming are often weak or non-existent. Without effective monitoring systems, it is difficult to assess whether gender mainstreaming efforts are achieving their desired outcomes. Governments may adopt gender mainstreaming policies but fail to monitor their impact or hold relevant institutions accountable for progress (Mayasari et al., 2025).

While gender mainstreaming has become a central objective in the quest for gender equality, its implementation within government remains a complex and challenging process. Political will, institutional capacity, resistance to change, inadequate gender analysis, budgeting issues, poor coordination, cultural norms, and lack of accountability are all significant barriers to progress. However, overcoming these obstacles is not impossible. Governments can take meaningful steps toward gender equality by ensuring robust enabling mechanisms, fostering political commitment, and building a culture of gender responsiveness across all levels of governance.

➤ *Commitment and Political Will*

Commitment and political will are crucial for effective gender mainstreaming within government frameworks. Despite various initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality, significant barriers remain, often stemming from insufficient political commitment and inadequate implementation of policies. Women's political participation is essential for gender equality and mainstreaming efforts. Increased representation of women in political roles can lead to more effective gender-sensitive policies (Bansal, 2024). Ramparsad (2019) identifies political will as the most influential component in creating enabling environments for gender mainstreaming, emphasizing that multiple stakeholders must possess this commitment to ensure institutional reforms. This finding is reinforced by Ramparsad (2021), who argues that political will across policy implementation, national gender machinery, and civil society is the overriding factor enabling gender mainstreaming within state structures.

However, Freidenvall and Ramberg (2019) reveal that even in model municipalities, lack of political will remains a key obstacle, though it can be compensated by robust governance systems. Their study also identifies complacency and competing

priorities as additional barriers. Similarly, Jordansson and Peterson (2019) emphasize that the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming plans depends critically on leadership commitment and organizational support, highlighting the ongoing importance of sustained political dedication.

In Nigeria, despite the adoption of gender-focused policies, cultural resistance and limited political commitment impede progress. Institutional inefficiencies and inadequate funding further exacerbate the challenges faced in implementing gender mainstreaming initiatives (Uche & Udochukwu, 2024).

While significant strides have been made in policy formulation, the lack of genuine political will and commitment often undermines these efforts. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to enhance institutional frameworks and foster community engagement.

➤ *Institutional and Policy-Related Challenges*

Research on the implementation of gender mainstreaming in provincial government offices identifies several institutional challenges. Weak efforts to institutionalize gender integration lead to slow adoption of gender analysis in planning and budgeting (Nurdin, 2024). At lower levels of government, policy breakdown often occurs due to a lack of political will, limited resources, and insufficient institutional support for gender mainstreaming, which constrains effective implementation (Mutua, M. K., 2019).

The complexity and lack of understanding of gender mainstreaming as a concept also help explain many obstacles to the translation of policies into action in local contexts (Moser, C. & Moser, A., 2016). On the other hand, establishing gender mainstreaming structures (e.g., gender focal points, working groups and technical teams) has been found to improve coordination, capacity-building and innovation in designing programs with gender-responsiveness (Njuki et al., 2016).

Despite these dedicated efforts, competing development priorities at local level often take precedence over gender issues and weak alignment and guidance at central government level continues to undermine the effective implementation (Rao, A. & Kelleher, D., 2018). In North Kalimantan, Indonesia, the barriers are inadequate budget allocation and technical capacity, weak inter-unit coordination and regulatory constraints despite formal support from implementers (Novita Limbong et al., 2025).

Similarly, the Ethiopian public sectors experience challenges, including the absence of gender focal persons, compartmentalization, lack of commitment and training, insufficient theoretical and technical skills, and budget limitations (Mihrete & Bayu, 2021). Nepal's forest bureaucracy demonstrates that policy changes toward gender mainstreaming remain limited due to inadequate institutional adaptation, lack of organizational restructuring, and deeply embedded patriarchal socio-cultural norms (Shrestha et al., 2025). Indonesia's broader experience reveals that weak institutionalization efforts by government and regional authorities have caused stagnation in gender mainstreaming implementation, particularly affecting the integration of gender analysis into planning and budgeting processes (Nurdin, 2024).

Despite the Philippines' recognition as having Asia's highest gender equality levels, implementation challenges persist in translating policy frameworks into effective practice (Dewi, 2021). Student organizations at the University of Northern Philippines demonstrated gender mainstreaming efforts across four entry points but faced challenges due to insufficient awareness among leaders about comprehensive gender integration requirements (Arce et al., 2022). These studies emphasize that successful gender mainstreaming requires addressing institutional challenges, clarifying conceptual ambiguities, and enhancing political commitment at all government levels to overcome barriers in provincial offices.

➤ *Socio-Cultural and Normative Barriers*

Gender mainstreaming in politics encounters substantial socio-cultural and normative challenges, particularly in developing nations. Women encounter obstacles in accessing political systems owing to patriarchal frameworks, cultural constraints, and insufficient backing from political party leadership (Zakar et al., 2018). The political climate in the Philippines is better for women, but they still make up a small group when it comes to making decisions and shaping policies (Necosia, 2020). Some of the things that get in the way are political culture, economic problems, and not having enough experience (Necosia, 2020). Other industries, like fisheries, face similar problems. For example, women often play secondary roles in processing and marketing, while men make the big decisions (Azhar et al., 2021).

In North Kalimantan Province, Indonesia, socio-cultural factors surfaced as significant impediments to implementation, alongside institutional and capacity limitations (Novita Limbong et al., 2025). Likewise, Ethiopia's Hadiya Zone demonstrated that insufficient commitment from leadership and inadequate technical expertise among gender specialists impeded effective implementation (Simie, 2019). Indonesia's national development planning encounters cultural impediments that result in discrepancies between gender rhetoric and practical execution, with structural and cultural challenges hindering advancement (Purnama et al., 2024). Nepal's forest bureaucracy illustrates the profound entrenchment of patriarchal socio-cultural norms at both central and district levels, which impede gender mainstreaming initiatives, notwithstanding progressive policy reforms (Shrestha et al., 2025).

Research reveals widespread challenges, including conceptual clarity issues, political resistance, and organizational culture barriers that limit transformative potential (Caywood & Darmstadt, 2024). In Pacific Island nations like Fiji and Samoa, parliaments remain overwhelmingly male-dominated, rooted in hegemonic masculinist cultures that resist gender equality reforms (Baker & Palmieri, 2024). The effectiveness of gender mainstreaming depends heavily on local contexts and culturally relevant implementation processes, with some reforms becoming mere "tick-a-box" exercises under autocratic regimes (Baker & Palmieri, 2024). Studies from Kenya demonstrate limited familiarity with gender mainstreaming concepts, with 40.3% of respondents unfamiliar with these policies, highlighting the need to challenge patriarchal norms and promote gender-friendly political cultures (Onamu et al., 2024). Indonesian research confirms that structural and cultural barriers create significant gaps between gender rhetoric and actual implementation in national development plans (Purnama et al., 2024).

To address these challenges, recommendations include expanding social entrepreneurship initiatives and intensifying efforts to mainstream gender in policy, human resources, and material resources (Azhar et al., 2021; Domogen et al., 2022). Additionally, there is a call for capacity-building programs for women leaders and for strengthening a women-friendly political culture (Necosia, 2020).

➤ *Implementation and Sustainability Challenges*

Gender mainstreaming in the Philippines encounters numerous challenges in its execution across diverse sectors. In the education sector, there is an increasing awareness of gender-inclusive practices; however, the incorporation of Gender and Development (GAD) concepts into educational modules is still limited and inconsistent (Domogen et al., 2022). The implementation of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) at the government level differs greatly from one region to the next. Political will and building capacity are two important factors in making the implementation more effective (Moreno, 2023). The Philippines has made great strides toward gender equality, even though it has faced many challenges. It is now the highest-ranked Asian country in this area. A lot of this progress can be traced back to the use of gender mainstreaming in a number of important laws and programs, including the Magna Carta of Women and the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development, both of which have been instrumental in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (Dewi, 2021).

An analysis utilizing the Enhanced-Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (E-GMEF) at a state college indicated substantial variations in the implementation of gender mainstreaming initiatives across various domains. This underscores the necessity for a more comprehensive integration of gender-responsive policies, alongside heightened awareness and training, to guarantee that initiatives for gender equality are effectively implemented across all sectors and regions (Ranon, 2024). Similarly, South Kalimantan Province faces limited human resource capacity, insufficient sex-disaggregated data, weak cross-sectoral coordination, and non-gender-inclusive bureaucratic cultures, with implementation remaining largely procedural rather than transformative (Mudzrika et al., 2025). Pekanbaru's experience demonstrates suboptimal implementation in achieving sustainable development goals, particularly in eliminating sexual violence (Siregar et al., 2023). Even in Swedish model municipalities, significant barriers persist, including complacency, congestion of competing perspectives where gender equality often loses priority, and lack of political will, though robust governance systems can partially compensate for these deficiencies (Freidenvall & Ramberg, 2019).

➤ *Theoretical Framework*

This study is based on a number of theories that explain why gender mainstreaming is important, what makes it hard to put policies into action, and how organizations change in government institutions. These theories serve as a basis for examining the awareness, challenges, and efficacy of gender mainstreaming initiatives within the governmental sector.

One of the primary theoretical foundations of this study is the Gender and Development (GAD) Theory, which emphasizes that gender perspectives must be integrated into institutional policies, programs, and planning processes to address the unequal distribution of roles, responsibilities, and access to resources between men and women (Moser, 1993; Rathgeber, 1990). GAD theory posits that gender inequality arises from social structures rather than biological disparities, necessitating systemic interventions integrated within organizational functions. Institutional Theory is another relevant theoretical framework that elucidates how entrenched norms, regulations, and organizational structures affect policy implementation and behavioral transformation (Scott, 2001). In this context, gender mainstreaming is considered effective only when gender-responsive practices are institutionalized within standard government procedures, rather than regarded as isolated or compliance-oriented tasks.

To explain how organizations move toward gender-responsive systems, this study also references Lewin's Change Management Theory. Lewin (1951) suggests that change happens in three phases: first, unfreezing existing norms; second, implementing new practices; and third, refreezing these changes into the organizational culture. This theory shows how gender mainstreaming initiatives can face resistance, need training and awareness, and rely on leadership support to last.

Mazmanian and Sabatier's Policy Implementation Theory provides the theoretical framework for this study. The theory identifies key factors influencing effective policy implementation, including clarity of policy goals, resource availability, supportive leadership, administrative structures, and stakeholder engagement (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983). It offers an explanation for barriers encountered by government offices in mainstreaming gender, such as limited capacity, insufficient knowledge, and lack of enforcement mechanisms.

Finally, as a legal and policy basis, the study incorporates the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), which formally established gender mainstreaming as a global strategy for achieving gender equality. The Beijing Platform highlights that gender perspectives must be integrated into all government policies, planning, decision-making, budgeting, and institutional processes to eliminate discrimination and inequitable power relations (UN, 1995). This international declaration provides normative justification for mainstreaming gender within public institutions and supports the need for awareness, capacity building, and institutional commitment.

➤ *Conceptual Framework*

Gender mainstreaming is a critical strategy for promoting gender equality by integrating gender perspectives into policies, programs, and institutional practices. However, its successful implementation depends on various factors, including awareness and the challenges encountered in the process.

This study aims to provide insights into how awareness influences implementation and how challenges act as potential obstacles. This framework will serve as a foundation for analyzing the key determinants of successful gender mainstreaming and proposing strategies to overcome existing barriers.

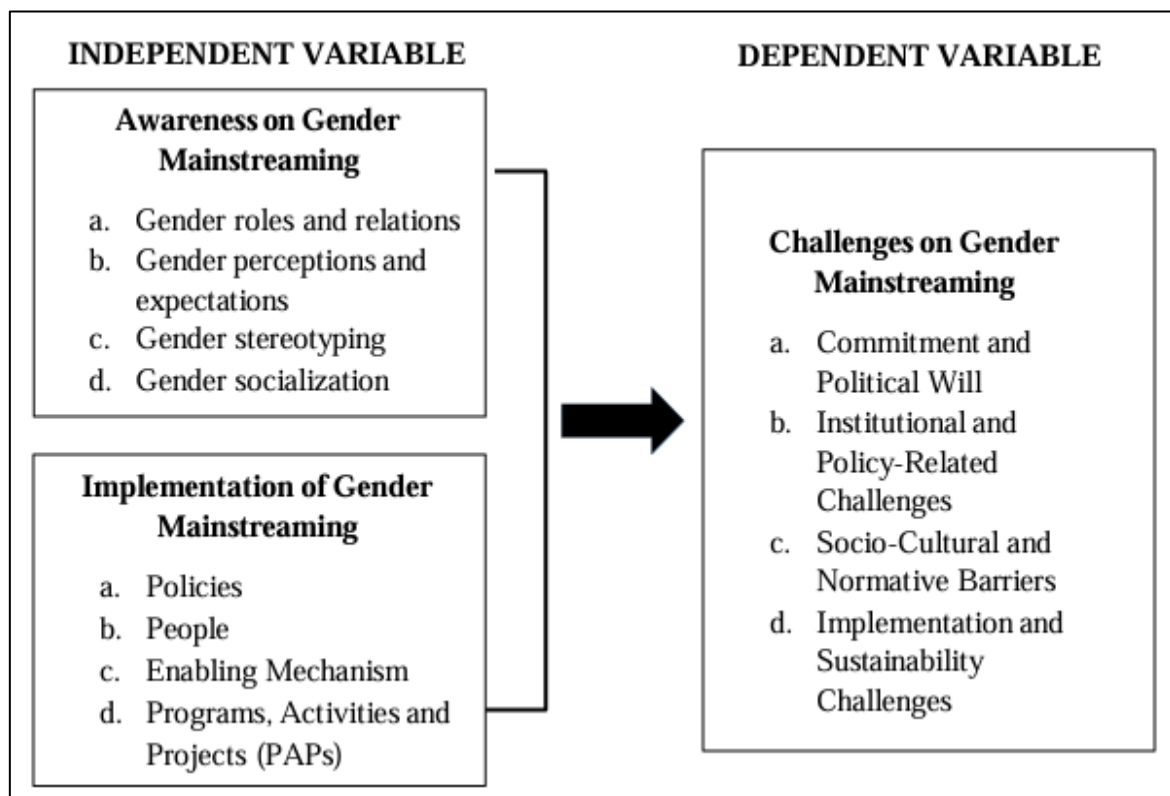


Fig 1 Research Paradigm.

➤ *Operational Definition*

To ensure clarity and consistency, the following key terms used in this study are defined based on their specific application in the research:

- Gender Mainstreaming. The systematic integration of gender perspectives in policies, programs, and institutional practices within the Provincial Government District Office to promote gender equality and inclusive governance.
- Awareness on Gender Mainstreaming. The level of understanding and knowledge among government employees and officials regarding gender mainstreaming principles, policies, and initiatives. This is measured through surveys assessing familiarity with gender-related programs and laws, using a 4-point Likert Scale, interpreted as follows:

- ✓ Strongly Agree
- ✓ Agree
- ✓ Disagree
- ✓ Strongly Disagree

And to interpret the means, the following range and adjectival description was used:

- ✓ 3.50- 4.00- Very High
- ✓ 1.50 – 3.49- High
- ✓ 1.50- 2.49- Low
- ✓ - 1.49- Very Low

- Gender Roles. This refers to the socially constructed responsibilities, behaviors, tasks, and roles that a society considers appropriate for individuals based on their gender (typically male, female, or other gender identities)
- Gender relations. It describes the ways in which individuals of different genders interact with each other within a given social, cultural, or institutional context.
- Gender Perceptions. This term refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions people hold about the characteristics, roles, and behaviors appropriate for men, women, and other gender identities.
- Gender Expectations. These are the social norms and standards that dictate how individuals should think, behave, and perform based on their gender.
- Gender Stereotyping. This is the practice of assigning specific traits, roles, or behaviors to individuals based solely on their gender.
- Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming. The process of executing gender mainstreaming policies, strategies, and programs within the Provincial Government Office, including training, policy development, and enforcement mechanisms. The level of implementation is assessed using a 4-point Likert Scale, interpreted as:

- ✓ Strongly Agree
- ✓ Agree
- ✓ Disagree
- ✓ Strongly Disagree

And to interpret the means, the following range and adjectival description was used:

- ✓ 3.50- 4.00- Very High
- ✓ 2.50 – 3.49- High
- ✓ 1.50- 2.49- Low
- ✓ 1.49- Very Low

- Policies. This refers to the formalized strategies, frameworks, and guidelines designed to integrate gender perspectives into all stages of policy development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation across all sectors of governance and society.
- People. It pertains to the individuals and groups involved in, affected by, or responsible for the integration of gender equality into policies, programs, and decision-making processes.
- Enabling Mechanisms. Are the tools, systems, frameworks, and processes that facilitate the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming in policies, programs, and institutions.
- Programs, Activities, and Projects. These are the practical initiatives that integrate gender equality into various sectors and decision-making processes.
- Challenges. The obstacles, difficulties, or resistance faced in the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies. This includes institutional barriers, lack of resources, cultural norms, and policy gaps identified through qualitative and quantitative analysis. The level of challenges is measured using a 4-point Likert Scale, interpreted as:

- ✓ Strongly Agree
- ✓ Agree
- ✓ Disagree
- ✓ Strongly Disagree

And to interpret the means, the following range and adjectival description was used:

- ✓ 3.50- 4.00- Very High
- ✓ 2.50 – 3.49- High
- ✓ 1.50- 2.49- Low
- ✓ 1.49- Very Low

- Commitment. This refers to the sincere and continuous dedication of government institutions, leaders, and stakeholders to integrate gender perspectives into all policies, programs, and activities.
- Political Will. It refers to the genuine intention and determination of political leaders and decision-makers to prioritize, support,

and sustain gender mainstreaming efforts.

- **Institutional and Policy-Related Challenges.** This refers to the structural, organizational, and regulatory barriers that hinder the effective integration of gender perspectives into the mandates, functions, and operations of government agencies or institutions.
- **Socio-Cultural and Normative Barriers.** These refer to the traditional beliefs, cultural practices, and societal norms that shape how gender roles are perceived and maintained within communities, institutions, and organizations.
- **Implementation and Sustainability Challenges.** These pertain to the difficulties faced in putting gender mainstreaming strategies into action and ensuring that they are maintained over the long term.

➤ *Hypotheses*

Below are the statements of hypotheses for the study:

- There is no significant relationship between the level of awareness of gender mainstreaming and the perceived success of its implementation in the Provincial Government District of Occidental Mindoro.
- None of the factors of implementation (policies, people, enabling mechanisms, and PAPs) significantly affect the challenges encountered in gender mainstreaming in the Provincial Government District Office of Occidental Mindoro.

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology to be utilized in this study, including the research design, study setting, respondents, research instrument, data collection, data analysis, scope and limitations, and ethical considerations.

➤ *Study Design*

This study employed a descriptive–correlational research design using multiple regression analysis to assess the levels of awareness, implementation, and challenges of gender mainstreaming within the Provincial Government Office, Second District of Occidental Mindoro. The study utilized a survey method to collect quantitative data from government employees, enabling the researcher to describe gender-related policies and examine the relationships and predictive effects among awareness, implementation strategies, and identified challenges.

➤ *Study Setting*

The study was carried out in the Provincial Government Office, Second District of Occidental Mindoro, the central administrative unit of local governance in SAMARICA (Sablayan, Magsaysay, Rizal, Calintaan), and the delivery of provincial-level public services in the Second District. This environment was selected since the Provincial Government has a significant role to play in the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies, adherence to national gender and development (GAD) requirements, and gender equality in its offices and programs.

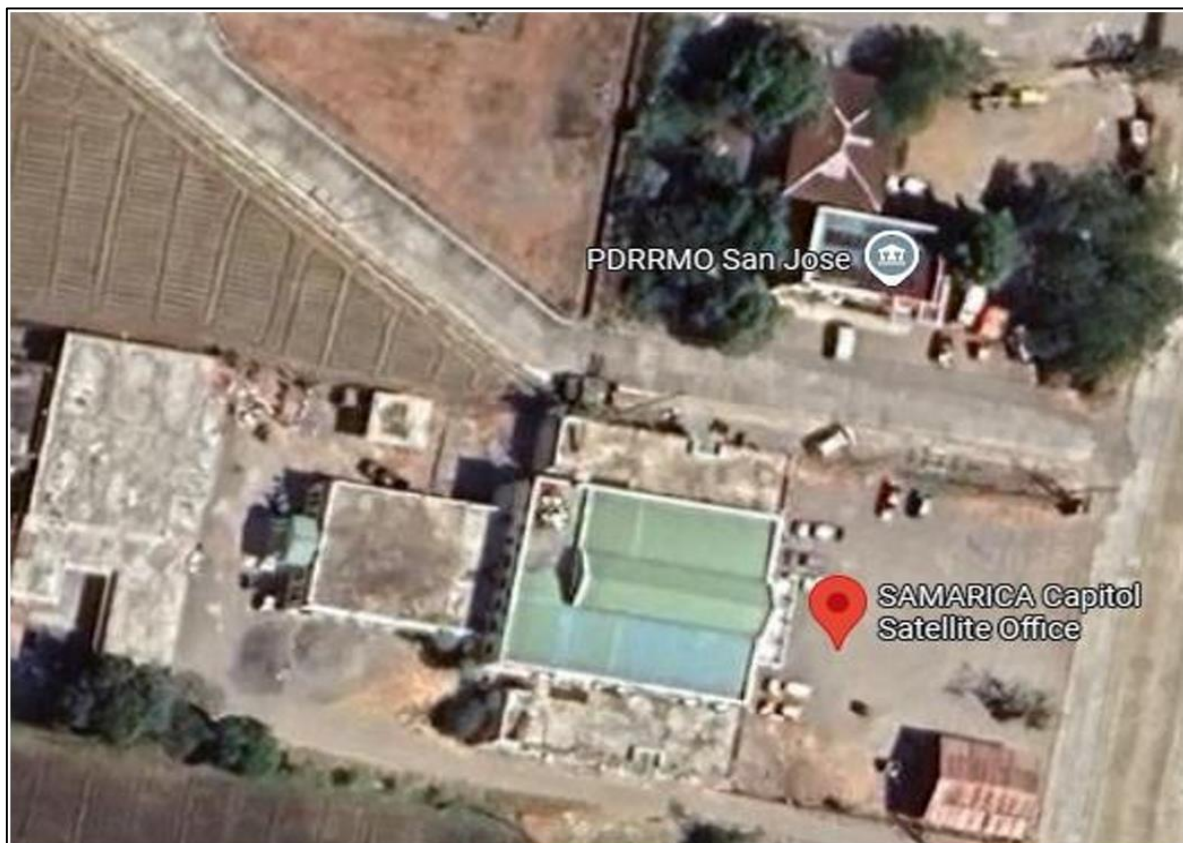


Fig 2 Research Site
(Source: Google Map).

➤ *Unit of Analysis and Sampling*

The unit of analysis for this study comprised 100 employees and officials from the Provincial Government Office of Occidental Mindoro who are directly or indirectly involved in gender mainstreaming efforts. These respondents were selected from a total population of 215 employees distributed across fifteen (15) provincial offices. The participants included personnel engaged in policy-making, program implementation, and gender-related initiatives from the following offices: the Provincial Government Office, Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office, Public Employment Service Office (PESO), Provincial Engineering Office, Provincial Treasurer's Office, Provincial Legal Office, Provincial Accounting Office, Provincial Assessor's Office, Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO), Provincial Youth Development Office, Provincial Equipment and Pool Office, Provincial Planning and Development Office, Provincial Disability Affairs Office, and the Warden's Office.

To ensure the generation of meaningful and reliable research insights, a sample size of 100 respondents was determined using a systematic and statistically grounded approach. The sample size was computed through Raosoft, an online sample size calculator, based on a 95% confidence level, a 5% margin of error, and an assumed response distribution of 50%. This method ensured that the selected sample adequately represents the target population and supports the validity of the study's findings. The researcher utilized a random sampling method, targeting all relevant employees within the provincial government office who are engaged in gender and development (GAD) programs, policymaking, or administrative functions, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of gender mainstreaming awareness, challenges, and implementation at the provincial office.

➤ *Research Instrument*

The primary data collection tool for this study was a researcher-made survey questionnaire, specifically designed to assess the awareness, implementation, and challenges of gender mainstreaming within the offices of provincial government. The questionnaire was carefully constructed based on the study's objectives, ensuring alignment with the key variables.

The survey questionnaire consisted of three main sections:

- Awareness of Gender Mainstreaming – Questions focused on gender roles, perceptions, stereotypes, and socialization among government employees.
- Implementation Strategies– Questions evaluating policies, personnel involvement, enabling mechanisms, and gender-related programs.
- Challenges Encountered – Items addressing political, institutional, socio-cultural, and implementation-related barriers.

The questionnaire utilized a Likert scale to measure responses and included closed- ended questions to collect quantitative data. It was administered through face-to-face distribution, which will allow for efficient dissemination and timely collection of responses from the respondents.

➤ *Data Collection Procedure*

The data collection process for this study followed a structured and ethical approach to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the findings. A semi-structured survey questionnaire was developed in alignment with the study's objectives and was subjected to expert validation to establish its content validity. Furthermore, to ensure the effectiveness and clarity of the research instrument, a pilot test was conducted prior to its full implementation. Upon securing the necessary permission from the Dean of the Graduate School and obtaining approval from the thesis adviser, the researcher initiated formal communication with the Executive Assistant of the Provincial Government Office to seek institutional cooperation for the conduct of the study. Following approval, the researcher identified and approached potential respondents, providing a clear explanation of the study's purpose, scope, and ethical considerations. Participants were furnished with comprehensive information to ensure their full understanding of the research objectives, potential implications, and the confidentiality of their responses. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, signifying their voluntary participation in the study. Subsequently, the survey questionnaire was administered, allowing respondents sufficient time to provide thoughtful and accurate responses. The completed questionnaires were then collected, systematically organized, and tabulated for analysis.

The gathered data were subjected to rigorous analysis using appropriate statistical tools to generate meaningful insights into the level of awareness, extent of implementation, and challenges associated with gender mainstreaming in the provincial government offices. The final phase of the study involved the presentation and in-depth discussion of the findings. Conclusions were drawn based on the results of the data analysis, highlighting significant patterns and relationships observed in the study. Throughout the entire research process, strict adherence to ethical standards was maintained, ensuring confidentiality, respect for participants, and the voluntary nature of their involvement.

➤ *Data Processing Procedure*

The collected data were coded and analyzed using statistical software to ensure efficient and accurate processing of the responses. The responses to the survey were carefully reviewed for completeness and consistency before being entered into the software.

To analyze the data, descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the responses and identify key trends in the awareness, implementation, and challenges of gender mainstreaming within the Provincial Government Office. In addition, inferential and analytical statistical tools were employed, including the weighted mean to determine the average level of responses, Pearson's r to examine the relationships between variables, and regression analysis to assess the influence of selected factors on gender mainstreaming practices.

➤ *Scope and Limitations*

This study focused exclusively on the awareness, implementation, and challenges of gender mainstreaming within the Provincial Government offices. The research specifically targeted government employees who are involved in or impacted by gender-related policies, programs, and initiatives. The study sought to examine the level of awareness of gender mainstreaming

among government employees, the effectiveness of the strategies used in promoting gender equality in the provincial government, and the challenges encountered during its implementation.

In terms of limitations, the study was confined only to selected Provincial Government offices, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other local government units or national agencies. The data gathered were based on the respondents' self-reports, which may be subject to bias, such as social desirability or personal interpretation of the questions. Acknowledging both the scope and limitations enhanced the transparency and credibility of the study, offering a foundation for future researchers' endeavors to address the constraints and contribute to a broader understanding of gender mainstreaming in provincial government units.

➤ *Ethical Considerations*

This study adhered to strict ethical guidelines to ensure the integrity of the research process and the protection of the participants' rights. Ethical considerations were carefully observed to uphold respect for the dignity, privacy, and overall well-being of all respondents. Before data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants. They were fully informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their right to voluntarily participate or withdraw at any time without any consequences. The researcher ensured that participation was entirely voluntary and free from any form of coercion.

Furthermore, all data collected were used solely for research purposes and were handled with strict confidentiality. Any identifying information was removed during the processes of data analysis and reporting to protect the identity of the respondents. The data were securely stored to prevent unauthorized access. In upholding the highest ethical standards throughout the research process, the researcher remained committed to ensuring transparency, confidentiality, and respect for all individuals involved in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the interpretation of the data gathered from the respondents. The discussion of the statistical presentation follows the order of the variable as presented in the first chapter of the study.

A. Results

➤ Respondents' Awareness of Gender Mainstreaming

Table 1 presents the Level of Awareness of the respondents on Gender Mainstreaming in the Provincial Government District Office of Occidental Mindoro as perceived in terms of gender roles and relations, gender perceptions and expectations, gender stereotyping, and gender socialization.

➤ Gender Roles and Relations

The Gender Roles and Relations domain achieved a sub-mean score of 3.29, reflecting a high level of awareness. Within this domain, the indicators "I understand the difference between sex and gender" and "Men and women should have equal access to leadership positions" both received the highest mean score of 3.54, which is interpreted as very high. These results indicate that respondents demonstrate a strong understanding of key principles related to gender equality. In contrast, the indicator "Traditional gender roles affect career growth in government" received the lowest mean score of 2.97, suggesting that while this concept is acknowledged, it is perceived less strongly than the other indicators.

➤ Gender Perceptions and Expectations

The Gender Perceptions and Expectations domain got a sub-mean of 2.80, which is also considered high. The indicator "Society's expectations of gender roles impact workplace opportunities" received the highest mean of 3.01, indicating that respondents strongly agreed with it. This shows that people know that social norms can affect their work lives. The indicator "Men are often expected to take leadership roles over women" had the lowest mean score of 2.49.

➤ Gender Stereotyping

The study found a sub-mean of 2.81 for the Gender Stereotyping domain, which is also seen as high. The statement "My agency actively works to break gender stereotypes in policies and programs" received the highest mean score of 3.26 from respondents. This shows that they are aware of the agency's efforts to promote gender equality. The mean of 2.64, which corresponds to "Men are expected to take on technical and leadership roles," is the lowest. This means that people agree with this stereotype, but not as strongly as the other indicators in this dimension.

➤ Gender Socialization

The Gender Socialization domain recorded a sub-mean of 3.01, which is interpreted as high. Respondents demonstrated the greatest awareness for the indicator "Family, media, and education shape gender roles in society," which achieved the highest mean of 3.22. In contrast, the indicator "My workplace culture reinforces traditional gender norms" received the lowest mean of 2.98. As shown in Table 1, respondents exhibit strong awareness of gender mainstreaming across all examined dimensions, as indicated by the grand weighted mean of 2.97, also interpreted as high.

Table 1 Respondents' Awareness of Gender Mainstreaming.

Indicator	Mean	Std.	Interpretation
Gender Roles and Relations			
I understand the difference between sex and gender.	3.54	.558	Very High
Gender roles influence decision-making in the workplace.	3.07	.728	High
Men and women should have equal access to leadership positions.	3.54	.610	Very High
Traditional gender roles affect career growth in government.	2.97	.745	High
My workplace promotes gender equality in roles and responsibilities.	3.33	.620	High
Sub Mean	3.29	.652	High
Gender Perceptions and Expectations			
Society's expectations of gender roles impact workplace opportunities.	3.01	.745	High
Gender expectations influence promotions and assignments.	2.79	.701	High

There is an expectation for women to take on caregiving roles in the workplace.	2.79	.782	High
Men are often expected to take leadership roles over women.	2.49	.859	Low
My agency challenges traditional gender expectations in policies and programs.	2.92	.677	High
Sub Mean	2.80	.752	High
Gender Stereotyping			
Gender stereotypes affect how employees are treated in the workplace.	2.75	.833	High
Women are often expected to take on administrative or support roles.	2.67	.842	High
Men are expected to take on technical and leadership roles.	2.64	.785	High
Gender stereotypes influence recruitment and hiring decisions.	2.75	.770	High
My agency actively works to break gender stereotypes in policies and programs.	3.26	.562	High
Sub Mean	2.81	.758	High
Gender Socialization			
Family, media, and education shape gender roles in society.	3.22	.561	High
Gender socialization affects career choices and professional opportunities.	2.98	.696	High
My workplace culture reinforces traditional gender norms.	2.90	.541	High
Gender roles learned in childhood continue to affect professional opportunities.	2.94	.679	High
My workplace provides training to address gender socialization biases.	3.03	.658	High
Sub Mean	3.01	.627	High
Grand Weighted Mean	2.97	.697	High

Scale: 1.00 - 1.49- Very Low; 1.50- 2.49- Low; 2.50 – 3.49- High; 3.50- 4.00- Very High

➤ Gender Mainstreaming Implementation

Table 2 illustrates the extent of gender mainstreaming implementation in the Provincial Government District Office of Occidental Mindoro, as perceived across four areas: policies, people, enabling mechanisms, and programs, activities, and projects (PAPs).

➤ Policies

The Policies domain got a sub-mean of 3.14, which is considered high, showing that gender-related policies were put into place very well. The indicator "Employees are aware of their rights under gender-related policies" had the highest mean, 3.20. This means that employees are getting the information they need about policies. The lowest mean score of 3.10 was found in two indicators: "There is a system for reviewing and updating gender policies" and "Compliance with gender-related policies is monitored and enforced." These areas still have high scores, but they show a weaker perception than other policy components.

➤ People

The People domain had the highest sub-mean of all the dimensions at 3.18, which is also a high number. The statement "Leadership actively supports gender mainstreaming efforts" received the most agreement, with a score of 3.26. This shows that leaders are very committed to gender mainstreaming. The mean of 3.14 for "Gender focal point system (GFPS) or similar committees are active" was the lowest. This means that people think that GFPS activity is a little less strong than other parts of gender mainstreaming that are related to people.

➤ Enabling Mechanism

The Enabling Mechanism domain got a sub-mean of 3.07, which is considered high. The highest mean of 3.16 was found in the statement, "There are partnerships with organizations supporting gender equality," which shows that the organization is working with others. The lowest mean, 3.03, came from the statement "Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for gender programs are in place." This suggests that gender-related monitoring systems may need to be improved.

➤ Programs, Activities, and Projects (PAPs)

This domain had a score of 3.02, which is considered high. The mean of 3.04, which was the highest, was found in "Gender concerns are integrated into government projects." This shows that gender issues are well integrated into project implementation.

The lowest mean of 2.99 was found for "Gender-sensitive programs and activities are conducted regularly." This shows that while the programs are being implemented well, they may need to be done more often. The study found a Grand Weighted Mean of 3.11 across all dimensions, which is considered high. This shows that the Provincial Government Offices are doing a good job of putting gender mainstreaming practices into place, but some areas, like monitoring mechanisms and program regularity, may need to be improved.

Table 2 Gender Mainstreaming Implementation.

Indicator	Mean	Std.	Interpretation
Policies			
Gender-related policies are effectively communicated to employees.	3.18	.479	High
Gender policies are integrated into workplace rules and regulations.	3.15	.500	High
There is a system for reviewing and updating gender policies.	3.10	.503	High
Compliance with gender-related policies is monitored and enforced.	3.10	.541	High
Employees are aware of their rights under gender-related policies.	3.20	.569	High
Sub Mean	3.14	.518	High
People			
Leadership actively supports gender mainstreaming efforts.	3.26	.505	High
Employees receive regular gender sensitivity training.	3.18	.593	High
Gender Focal Point System (GFPS) or similar committees are active.	3.14	.551	High
Gender balance is considered in hiring and promotions.	3.20	.603	High
There are designated staff members responsible for implementing gender programs.	3.15	.592	High
Sub Mean	3.18	.568	High
Enabling Mechanism			
There is an allocated budget for gender-related initiatives.	3.05	.592	High
Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for gender programs, they are in place.	3.03	.502	High
A reporting and grievance system for gender-related concerns exist.	3.06	.528	High
There are partnerships with organizations supporting gender equality.	3.16	.545	High
Gender-disaggregated data is collected and used in decision-making.	3.09	.605	High
Sub Mean	3.07	.554	High
Programs, Activities, and Projects			
Gender-sensitive programs and activities are conducted regularly.	2.99	.559	High
Gender concerns are integrated into government projects.	3.04	.549	High
Gender and Development (GAD) programs address workplace issues.	3.11	.490	High
Employees participate in gender-related community outreach.	3.16	.487	High
There are feedback mechanisms to assess the impact of gender initiatives.	3.10	.577	High
Sub Mean	3.08	.532	High
Grand Weighted Mean	3.11	.543	High

Scale: 1.00 - 1.49- Very Low; 1.50- 2.49- Low; 2.50 – 3.49- High; 3.50- 4.00- Very High

➤ *Challenges in Gender Mainstreaming Implementation*

Table 3 presents the level of challenges encountered in implementing gender mainstreaming within the Provincial Government Office of Occidental Mindoro, as assessed across four major dimensions: Commitment and Political Will, Institutional and Policy-Related Challenges, Socio-Cultural and Normative Barriers, and Implementation and Sustainability Challenges.

➤ *Commitment and Political Will*

This domain obtained a sub-mean of 3.23, interpreted as high. The highest mean, 3.28, was recorded for the indicator “Strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems for gender-related initiatives can be a priority,” indicating it is the most strongly perceived challenge. The lowest mean of 3.19 appeared in “There is potential to address misconceptions that lead to resistance against gender equality,” reflecting that this challenge, while still high, is perceived less strongly than others in this category.

➤ *Institutional and Policy-Related Challenges*

This domain got a score of 3.27, which is also a high score. The statement "Consistent enforcement of gender laws and policies can be ensured" received the highest mean score of 3.31, showing that this group sees it as the most important issue. The statement "A dedicated, well-resourced GAD office can be established at the provincial level" had the lowest mean score of 3.21, which means that it was seen as the least important challenge among the indicators.

➤ *Socio-Cultural and Normative Barriers*

This domain obtained a sub-mean of 3.25, interpreted as high. The highest mean, 3.25, was found in “Promoting equal participation of women and men in decision- making,” showing that this is the most prominent challenge. The lowest mean, 3.21, was recorded for “Efforts can be made to shift traditional gender roles and stereotypes that influence workplace culture,” indicating this is perceived as the least challenging among the indicators, though still high.

➤ *Implementation and Sustainability Challenges*

This domain had the highest sub-mean overall at 3.32, which is considered high. The highest mean of 3.38 was found in "Strengthening institutional mechanisms to address gender-based violence and discrimination can be a focus," which shows that this was the most strongly perceived challenge. The mean of 3.28 for "Government personnel can build capacity for gender analysis and mainstreaming" was the lowest, which means that this was the least important challenge in this area. The table shows a Grand Weighted Mean of 3.26, which is considered high. This means that the people who answered consistently see big problems in all areas related to putting gender mainstreaming into practice.

Table 3 Challenges in Gender Mainstreaming Implementation.

Indicator	Mean	Std.	Interpretation
Commitment and Political Will			
There is a need for increased awareness among provincial officials and employees about gender mainstreaming principles.	3.24	.605	High
There is an opportunity to enhance the commitment of local executives and department heads to gender mainstreaming.	3.24	.553	High
There is potential to address misconceptions that lead to resistance against gender equality.	3.19	.598	High
Gender mainstreaming can be more effectively integrated into plans, policies, and programs.	3.24	.515	High
Strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems for gender-related initiatives can be a priority.	3.28	.552	High
Sub Mean	3.23	.564	High
Institutional and Policy-Related Challenges			
A dedicated, well-resourced GAD office can be established at the provincial level.	3.21	.656	High
The budget for gender programs and utilization of the 5% GAD budget can be increased.	3.25	.672	High
Consistent enforcement of gender laws and policies can be ensured.	3.31	.545	High
There is potential for improved coordination among provincial, municipal, and barangay GAD offices.	3.30	.503	High
Clarifying agency responsibilities can strengthen GAD accountability.	3.30	.560	High
Sub Mean	3.27	.587	High
Socio-Cultural and Normative Barriers			
Efforts can be made to shift traditional gender roles and stereotypes that influence workplace culture.	3.21	.591	High
Overcoming resistance from leaders and religious groups can enhance the success of gender-sensitive programs.	3.23	.617	High
Increasing the participation of women and marginalized groups in decision-making processes is possible.	3.25	.539	High
Addressing gender biases and discrimination despite GAD policies is a key goal.	3.18	.657	High
Greater integration of gender issues in sectoral programs can be achieved.	3.26	.579	High
Sub Mean	3.22	.596	High

Implementation and Sustainability Challenges			
Government personnel can build capacity for gender analysis and mainstreaming.	3.30	.560	High
There is an opportunity to make integrating gender into planning and budgeting more manageable.	3.34	.536	High
Improving data collection and reporting mechanisms for GAD is possible.	3.33	.606	High
Developing long-term strategies for sustainable gender mainstreaming can be prioritized.	3.38	.565	High
Strengthening institutional mechanisms to address gender-based violence and discrimination can be a focus.	3.28	.587	High
Sub Mean	3.32	5.70	High
Grand Weighted Mean	3.26	.579	High

Scale: 1.00 - 1.49- Very Low; 1.50- 2.49- Low; 2.50 – 3.49- High; 3.50- 4.00- Very High

➤ *Relationship Between Respondents' Awareness and Challenges in Gender Mainstreaming*

Table 4 shows the connections between the respondents' awareness and the problems they faced when trying to make gender mainstreaming work. The correlation coefficient is .546 and the p-value is .000. This finding demonstrates a significant correlation between awareness and the challenges faced, indicating that as respondents' awareness of gender mainstreaming rises, the challenges they encounter also tend to escalate.

Table 4 Relationship Between Respondents' Awareness and Challenges in Gender Mainstreaming.

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Significance	Description
Gender roles and relations	Challenges on Gender Mainstreaming	.438**	.000	Significant
Gender perceptions and expectations		.340**	.000	Significant
Gender stereotyping		.352**	.000	Significant
Gender socialization		.560**	.000	Significant
Awareness on Gender Mainstreaming		.546**	.000	Significant

➤ *Relationship Between Implementation and Challenges in Gender Mainstreaming*

Table 5 presents the relationships between the implementation and challenges encountered by the respondents in gender mainstreaming, showing a .673 correlation coefficient and a p-value of .000. This result indicates that implementation has a significant relationship with the challenges encountered, suggesting that as the level of implementation increases, the challenges experienced by the respondents also tend to increase.

Table 5 Relationship Between Implementation and Challenges in Gender Mainstreaming.

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Significance	Description
Policies	Challenges on Gender Mainstreaming	.623**	.000	Significant
People		.592**	.000	Significant
Enabling Mechanism		.616**	.000	Significant
Programs, Activities and Projects		.633**	.000	Significant
Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming		.673**	.000	Significant

➤ *Factors of Awareness that Predict Challenges in Gender Mainstreaming*

Table 6 presents the regression analysis between awareness and the challenges faced by the provincial government offices in the implementation of gender mainstreaming. Based on the results, two out of the four factors significantly predict the challenges encountered by the respondents. The first predictor is gender roles and relations. This factor obtained a beta coefficient of 0.260, indicating that 26% of the challenges encountered by the respondents are influenced by their awareness of gender roles and relations. The findings suggest that the respondents' awareness in this area may reduce the challenges they face by 26%, with this effect being significant at the 0.005 level. Awareness of gender roles and relations significantly impacts the challenges faced in implementing gender mainstreaming. A higher level of awareness in this area can ease the difficulties encountered, as a deeper understanding of gender roles and relations contributes to smoother implementation and fewer obstacles.

Another important factor is how people learn about gender roles. The gender socialization factor, with a beta coefficient of 0.437, indicates that 43.7% of the respondents' challenges are shaped by their understanding of gender socialization. This means that how people learn about gender roles from a young age has a big effect on how well they can use gender mainstreaming. Being more aware of how gender socialization works can help with many of the problems people face because it affects how they think about and deal with gender-related issues. This relationship is very important, with a p-value of 0.000, which shows how important gender socialization is for breaking down barriers and making the process work better. By concentrating on gender socialization, gender mainstreaming initiatives can more effectively tackle foundational perceptions and societal norms, ultimately resulting in

more seamless and successful outcomes.

Table 6 Factors of Awareness that Predict Challenges in Gender Mainstreaming.

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Beta Coefficient	p-value	Interpretation
Gender roles and relations	Challenges on Gender Mainstreaming	.260	.005	Significant
Gender perceptions and expectations		.007	.952	Not Significant
Gender stereotyping		.083	.456	Not Significant
Gender socialization		.437	.000	Significant

➤ *Implementation Factors Predicting Challenges in Gender Mainstreaming*

Table 7 shows the results of the regression analysis that examined the relationship between gender mainstreaming and the problems that the provincial government office faces. Only the policies among the four factors are good at predicting the problems that will come up. This factor had a beta coefficient of 0.311, which means that 31.1% of the problems that the respondents faced were caused by the creation and enforcement of gender policies.

This shows how important it is to have well-structured and strictly enforced policies to deal with problems that come up when gender mainstreaming is put into action. Clear rules and accountability are made possible by good policy making and enforcement, which makes it easier to put policies into action. Strengthening these areas can make the implementation process go more smoothly, make it easier to deal with problems, and make gender mainstreaming work better in the government office.

Table 7 Implementation Factors Predicting Challenges in Gender Mainstreaming.

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Beta Coefficient	p-value	Interpretation
Gender roles and relations	Challenges on Gender Mainstreaming	.260	.005	Significant
Gender perceptions and expectations		.007	.952	Not Significant
Gender stereotyping		.083	.456	Not Significant
Gender socialization		.437	.000	Significant

B. *Discussions*

➤ *Respondents' Awareness of Gender Mainstreaming*

The results from the respondents' awareness of gender mainstreaming showed that all factors had consistently high mean scores. This means that most of the respondents were very aware of and understood the concept. This means that workers have a good basic understanding of gender equality, gender-responsive policies, and how they can help with these kinds of initiatives. These findings suggest that the awareness within the study's context is closely aligned with gender roles and relations, gender perceptions and expectations, gender stereotyping, and gender socialization, all of which are recognized to affect individuals' comprehension and participation in gender mainstreaming initiatives. The high level of awareness in these areas shows that the people who answered the questions not only know a lot about the technical side of gender mainstreaming, but they also know a lot about the larger social and cultural factors that affect gender dynamics in the workplace. This kind of awareness shows that you can understand how gender biases, norms, and expectations work and how gender-responsive policies and practices can help fix these problems. This alignment strengthens the notion that the respondents have a comprehensive grasp of gender mainstreaming.

The respondents' high level of awareness of gender mainstreaming shows that they are very familiar with the ideas, rules, and steps needed to include gender perspectives in institutional programs and services. This level of awareness shows that the organization has done a good job of getting the word out about the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710), especially Section 36, which says that all government agencies and LGUs must use gender mainstreaming as a main way to promote gender equality. Being aware of these issues also means that employees recognize gender issues, use gender analysis tools, and help carry out GAD initiatives as described in the law's Implementing Rules and Regulations. As a result, this increased awareness among the respondents makes the organization more gender-sensitive, makes it easier to follow national GAD guidelines, and makes it easier for the institution to provide fair and inclusive services.

➤ *Gender Roles and Relations*

The respondents' understanding of gender mainstreaming, especially when it comes to gender roles and relations, shows a very positive view on many levels. The average score for all indicators was very high, which shows that the institution has a strong base of understanding and support for gender equality. This indicates that respondents broadly acknowledge and support the principle that gender roles should not dictate access to opportunities, resources, or decision-making. A recent study examining the efficacy of gender and development (GAD) programs in the local government offices of San Pablo City revealed that most employees were "highly aware" of fundamental gender and development concepts. This indicates a strong understanding of gender roles as socially

constructed and the significance of gender equality among respondents (Pere & Villacruel, 2024).

At the institutional level, this awareness is supported by formal mechanisms through the mandate of the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), many agencies, and local government units (LGUs) are encouraged or required to adopt gender mainstreaming via policies, gender-analysis tools, and long-term planning frameworks. This reinforces not only individual-level understanding but also structural commitment to gender equality. The high mean score reflects a meaningful cultural and normative shift among respondents inside the government offices toward recognizing equitable gender roles and relations, which lays a strong foundation for gender-responsive governance.

➤ *Gender Perceptions and Expectations*

The findings demonstrate a high level of awareness regarding gender perceptions and expectations among respondents. The consistently elevated mean scores across most indicators suggest a paradigm shift in gender perceptions among employees in government offices. These results indicate an increasing recognition that gender roles are socially constructed and should not strictly determine professional opportunities or responsibilities. This trend establishes a strong foundation of gender awareness and openness to institutional change, which aligns with the primary objectives of gender mainstreaming (GM) and the broader Gender and Development (GAD) Approach. As recently reaffirmed by the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), these frameworks require the integration of gender perspectives at all levels of governance.

The lower mean score, however, indicates persistent perceptions or norms that link leadership with masculine traits, thereby subtly reinforcing conventional gender-leadership stereotypes. Even though the people who answered the question seem to reject strict gender roles in many ways, this result shows that ideas about gender and leadership still exist. These patterns correspond with broader findings across multiple sectors: despite the existence of gender equity policies, structural and cultural barriers continue to impede women's access to strategic or leadership roles. For instance, in academic environments in the Philippines, despite approximately equal gender representation, men persist in prevailing in administrative and research-extension positions, whereas women are disproportionately represented in academic (teaching) roles (Tugonon & Adlawan, 2025). Furthermore, empirical evidence substantiates the significance of such awareness in influencing workplace culture and employee engagement. Laurente and Acero (2025) conducted a study on government employees that revealed a significant correlation between high levels of GAD awareness and increased job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). This underscores the positive impact of gender-sensitivity initiatives on workplace climate and employee morale. In this context, the findings indicate that government offices might already be fostering a more inclusive and equitable organizational atmosphere.

➤ *Gender Stereotyping*

The results indicate that gender stereotyping remains an influential factor in workplace dynamics. Respondents acknowledge that gender stereotypes shape how employees are treated, suggesting that preconceived assumptions about men's and women's roles continue to affect daily interactions and organizational expectations. This aligns with social role theory, which argues that gender norms are deeply rooted in societal structures and often manifest in professional environments where individuals are evaluated through gendered lenses.

The idea that women are often expected to work in administrative or support roles is based on long-held stereotypes about jobs. People often see these jobs as an extension of the traditional caregiving roles that women have, and studies have shown that these kinds of expectations can keep women in jobs with little power or chances to move up (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). Conversely, the notion that men should occupy technical and leadership positions perpetuates agentic stereotypes linking men to assertiveness, autonomy, and decision-making. This pattern is similar to what is happening in the job market as a whole, where men are often pushed into jobs that require leadership or specialized technical skills.

Respondents also say that gender stereotypes still affect hiring and recruitment decisions. This suggests that there are hidden biases in the way organizations work, where gender may affect how people think about an applicant's skills, commitment, or fit for the job instead of their actual qualifications. Such bias can have a big effect on the diversity of the workforce and can keep gender imbalances going in some fields or levels of leadership.

Despite this, respondents know that the organization is doing things to fight gender stereotypes. Respondents noted initiatives aimed at dismantling gender-based assumptions in policies and programs, indicating institutional recognition of the necessity for more equitable and inclusive practices. Literature has identified organizational initiatives such as gender-sensitization programs, equitable hiring practices, and the review of gender-neutral policies as effective strategies for alleviating the impacts of stereotyping and fostering a more equitable work environment (Girod et al., 2016). The results show that gender preconceptions are still common in the workplace, but they also show that people are still working to change these biases. Stereotypes still affect how people expect to behave in their jobs and how they are hired, but actions by organizations seem to be making the workplace more aware and welcoming.

➤ *Gender Socialization*

Responses also show that the culture of the workplace can help keep traditional gender roles in place. This indicates that organizational settings may inadvertently sustain societal expectations by integrating them into routines, interactions, and implicit norms. Workplaces can be seen as gendered institutions where rules and norms keep men and women unequal by subtly pushing them into different roles or behaviors. Such reinforcement may restrict employees' access to opportunities that deviate from socially constructed gender norms (Ely & Meyerson, 2016).

Moreover, the acknowledgment that gender roles acquired during childhood persist in influencing professional opportunities underscores the lasting effects of early socialization. Stanko et al. (2016) assert that gendered behaviors are cultivated through observation and reinforcement, leading to enduring expectations regarding workplace conduct and career appropriateness. These internalized norms can affect confidence, leadership choices, and career choices well into adulthood.

Another significant finding is the acknowledgment that the workplace provides training to address gender socialization biases. This suggests an organizational commitment from the respondents to fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment. Training programs focused on bias awareness have been shown to help employees identify and confront unconscious stereotypes, improving fairness in workplace interactions and decisions (Ramsay & Lorenz, 2016). Such initiatives are essential in counteracting long-standing gendered assumptions and promoting equal opportunity. The results demonstrate that although gender socialization continues to shape career choices, workplace behavior, and access to opportunities, there are institutional efforts underway to mitigate these influences.

➤ *Gender Mainstreaming Implementation*

The results show that the mean scores are consistently high across all of its factors. The highest average score was found in people, which shows that they strongly support working together. The findings show that the Provincial Government District office of Occidental Mindoro does a good job of gender mainstreaming in a number of important areas of the organization. When it comes to policy integration, employees are clearly told about gender-related rules and they are built into the rules and regulations at work. The existence of systematic mechanisms for reviewing, updating, and enforcing compliance with these policies indicates that the organization has established a robust policy framework that facilitates gender-responsive governance (Commission on Audit, 2020).

This implementation is further strengthened by the active role of people within the organization. The leadership appears to provide meaningful support for gender mainstreaming efforts, and employees participate in regular gender sensitivity initiatives. The active involvement of the Gender Focal Point System (GFPS), along with the consideration of gender balance in hiring and promotions, highlights the organization's commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable work environment. These practices align with national guidelines emphasizing the importance of human resource involvement in sustaining gender equality efforts (Philippine Commission on Women, 2016).

The provincial government has set up the institutional structures needed to support and keep gender-related programs going. This is shown by the fact that there is a dedicated budget, monitoring and evaluation systems, grievance procedures, and partnerships with outside groups. These mechanisms are already in place, but they could be made stronger to make them more useful and easier to use.

The area of programs, activities, and projects shows that the government conducts gender-sensitive initiatives and incorporates gender considerations into development projects. While these efforts are evident, the findings suggest that actual program implementation may still require more consistent application to fully translate policy commitments into practice. This reflects a common challenge in many local government units, where strong policy frameworks sometimes outpace operational execution (Reyes & Dacanay, 2021).

The findings portray an institution that has made considerable progress in embedding gender mainstreaming within its structures, processes, and culture. Continued efforts from top management to employees to enhance enabling mechanisms and strengthen program implementation will help ensure that gender equality principles translate into sustained and meaningful outcomes for employees and the wider community.

➤ *Policies*

The results show that the institution is very committed to gender-responsive governance because their gender-related policies always get high marks. The findings also show that these policies are well communicated to employees, which is an important first step in making gender issues more common in any organization. Staff members need to know about these policies and what their roles and responsibilities are in upholding them. Clear and timely communication makes sure that they do. This observation is in line with the Philippine Commission on Women (2016) guidelines, which say that for gender policies to work, they need to be widely known.

These findings demonstrate a significant integration of gender-related policies into workplace rules and regulations, suggesting that gender equality principles are not treated as standalone initiatives but are embedded within the institution's formal operational

systems. Such integration reflects compliance with national directives requiring gender considerations to be mainstreamed into government processes and structures (PCW, 2016). Embedding these policies within institutional procedures promotes consistency, strengthens accountability, and enhances long-term sustainability.

The findings also reveal that employees are generally aware of their rights under gender-related policies. Such awareness serves as a key indicator of an empowered workforce, as employees who understand their entitlements are more likely to report violations, participate in gender-related programs, and actively support institutional gender goals. This observation is consistent with the Harmonized GAD Guidelines, which emphasize the importance of cultivating employee awareness as part of gender mainstreaming and capacity-building efforts (PCW, 2016).

➤ *People*

The results show that the human resources part of gender mainstreaming in the Provincial Government is very well developed. This shows that the institution is very committed and that the staff is very involved. The results show that leadership is seen as a key part of supporting gender mainstreaming efforts. This is important because the involvement of leaders has a big impact on the culture of the organization and the success of gender-related projects. UN Women (2015) says that strong leadership advocacy is a key factor in keeping gender mainstreaming going at both the structural and operational levels.

The data also show that employees often take part in training on gender sensitivity. This shows that the offices are consistently using capacity-building interventions to help employees better understand gender issues, equality in the workplace, and how to be more inclusive. Regular training is in line with national guidelines that stress the importance of ongoing learning as a key part of improving gender mainstreaming skills in government institutions (Philippine Commission on Women, 2016).

Furthermore, the presence of an active Gender Focal Point System (GFPS) or similar committees highlights the institutional mechanisms in place for coordinating and monitoring gender initiatives. The GFPS plays a strategic role in planning, implementing, and evaluating gender-related programs, and its functionality is a strong indicator of organizational readiness and accountability. As noted by the Commission on Audit (2020), the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming efforts is significantly enhanced when a GFPS operates actively and is supported by management and staff.

Additionally, the existence of designated staff responsible for implementing gender programs further demonstrates that responsibilities for gender mainstreaming are clearly defined and institutionalized. Having dedicated personnel ensures that gender-related activities are not only planned but are systematically carried out, monitored, and evaluated. This aligns with PCW (2016) recommendations that emphasize the need for clear role assignments to ensure sustained implementation.

➤ *Enabling Mechanism*

The results show that the enabling mechanisms supporting gender mainstreaming within the Provincial Government are assessed at a high level across all indicators. These mechanisms—budget allocation, monitoring processes, grievance systems, partnerships, and data utilization serve as structural supports that allow gender-responsive policies to be implemented in a sustained and accountable manner.

The high rating for the allocation of gender-related budget reflects institutional compliance with national gender budgeting requirements. As stipulated in the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) guidelines (2016), allocating financial resources to gender initiatives is a mandatory component of the Gender and Development (GAD) planning process. Adequate budget support ensures that gender programs are not merely conceptual but can be operationalized through activities, training, capacity development, and service delivery. Effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are also rated highly. According to the Harmonized GAD Guidelines (PCW, 2016), monitoring is critical for assessing whether gender interventions produce measurable changes in organizational culture, employee capabilities, and public service outcomes. The presence of monitoring structures suggests that the Provincial Government District Office is tracking progress and identifying areas needing improvement—an essential element for enhancing effectiveness and accountability.

The reporting and grievance system for gender concerns likewise received a high assessment from the respondents. This aligns with PCW (2016) recommendations emphasizing that institutions must provide safe and accessible channels for reporting gender-related grievances, including cases of discrimination or harassment. Such systems ensure that complaints are addressed appropriately, contributing to a safe and inclusive work environment.

The monitoring and evaluation aspect that received the lowest mean reflects a possible explanation for this lower rating, which is that monitoring and evaluation are often among the most technically demanding components of gender mainstreaming. According to the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW, 2016), GAD M&E requires systematic tools, evidence-based prioritization, measurable indicators, adequate documentation, and continuous feedback processes. These tasks demand specific technical skills and dedicated institutional capacity, which may explain why this area appears relatively weaker.

➤ *Programs, Activities, and Projects*

The findings indicate that gender concerns are meaningfully incorporated into government projects. This suggests that planning, implementation, and evaluation processes are not gender-neutral but consciously consider the differing needs of women and men. This approach aligns with the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW, 2016), which emphasizes that mainstreaming gender into government programs ensures equitable outcomes, improved service delivery, and responsiveness to gender-specific issues.

The results also reveal that Gender and Development (GAD) programs within the provincial government successfully address workplace-related gender issues. This reflects compliance with the PCW (2016) Harmonized GAD Guidelines, which require GAD initiatives to be grounded in actual gender problems, including those affecting employee welfare, workplace dynamics, and staff development. Addressing workplace issues through structured programs supports the creation of a gender-sensitive organizational culture. Further, employees reveal that they are engaged in gender-related community outreach activities, showing that gender mainstreaming is not confined to internal organizational matters but extends to the broader community. This approach is consistent with PCW (2016), which highlights that GAD efforts should strengthen gender advocacy both within and outside institutions. Employee involvement contributes to gender awareness, collective responsibility, and public engagement in promoting gender equality.

The respondents also reveal that the presence of feedback mechanisms for evaluating gender initiatives demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement and accountability. According to PCW (2016), feedback systems are critical components of gender mainstreaming because they allow institutions to assess progress, identify achievement gaps, and refine approaches. Through these mechanisms, the provincial government ensures that gender programs remain effective, relevant, and adaptive to emerging needs.

➤ *Challenges in Gender Mainstreaming Implementation*

The results on the level of challenges encountered by the respondents in implementing gender mainstreaming revealed consistently high mean scores across all factors, indicating that respondents perceive a high level of challenges in implementing gender mainstreaming. It suggests that the obstacles to gender mainstreaming are widespread, systemic, and deeply felt across the institution. This pattern implies that GM efforts are not hampered by only a few isolated issues; rather, multiple interrelated factors hinder meaningful implementation. The uniformity of high scores across various dimensions suggests a broad consensus among respondents about the difficulty of embedding gender mainstreaming into organizational practice.

This outcome aligns with post-2015 research, which consistently shows that the success of gender mainstreaming is determined by interrelated institutional, organizational, and socio-cultural factors. Studies have noted that GM often remains under-implemented due to limited institutional capability, unclear operational frameworks, and insufficient support from leadership (Freedman, 2017; O'Donnell & Sweetman, 2018). Such challenges undermine the transformative intent of gender mainstreaming, reducing its impact to procedural compliance rather than structural change.

➤ *Commitment and Political Will*

The findings from the “Commitment and Political Will” dimension signal a strong concern among respondents about the institutional support for gender mainstreaming. Respondents’ consistent indication of high challenges suggests that, from their point of view, political and institutional commitment remains inadequate to support effective implementation of gender mainstreaming (GM). In other words, while GM may be recognized in principle, respondents believe that organizational buy-in, leadership support, and institutional prioritization are lacking or insufficient.

The respondents’ feedback points to a perceived gap between awareness and action, although there is some awareness of GM principles among officials and employees, this awareness has not translated into robust political will or structural support. Their perception suggests that gender mainstreaming remains more rhetorical than operational, implying that GM initiatives may exist on paper, but in practice, they are not embedded as institutional priorities. Respondents’ concerns reflect the lack of clear institutional commitment (e.g., leadership endorsement, integration into strategic plans/policies, accountability mechanisms), which they view as necessary prerequisites for meaningful GM.

Thus, from the perspective of those directly involved or tasked with implementing GM, there is a widespread sense that institutional commitment, leadership, sustained support, and prioritization are inadequate, potentially undermining the effectiveness and sustainability of any gender-mainstreaming efforts.

The perceptions of the respondents captured in the study reflect patterns documented in contemporary research on gender mainstreaming. Several recent studies emphasize that political/institutional will and organizational culture are among the most critical and often missing conditions for successful GM. (Caywood & Darmstadt, 2024). According to Gupta (2023), studies conducted within humanitarian and public-service organizations show that without strong commitment from senior management and institutional buy-in, GM tends to remain symbolic: policies may exist, but actual practice falls short — often because gender equality is not viewed as a core organizational priority (Duong & Luong, 2021). Research on public policy contexts also indicates that GM deployment is typically hindered by weak political will, lack of resources (human, financial, technical), and limited

expertise—conditions that match the concerns raised by the respondents.

➤ *Institutional and Policy-Related Challenges*

The mean results show that all of the respondents rated all of the institutional and policy-related indicators highly, which suggests that they all agree that these areas are both very difficult and very important for improving gender and development (GAD) implementation. Their answers show that they clearly understand that institutional support, policy enforcement, and clear administration are all important for effective gender mainstreaming.

The respondents' high ratings indicate that they see the establishment of a dedicated and well-resourced GAD office at the provincial level as an essential step toward improving the efficiency and visibility of gender-focused initiatives. This reflects the longstanding recommendation in gender governance literature that institutional mechanisms must be fully empowered to lead and coordinate GAD programs (Philippine Commission on Women, 2016).

Similarly, the respondents' strong agreement on the need to increase GAD budget allocation and ensure its proper utilization highlights their perception that financial resources remain a key factor in the success of gender-responsive programs. This supports national policy guidelines asserting that GAD budgets should be strategically used to address gender issues and not treated as a mere compliance requirement (PCW–NEDA–DBM Joint Circular, 2012).

The consistently high ratings also point to concerns regarding the enforcement of gender laws and policies. Respondents believe that while laws are in place, implementation remains uneven, limiting the intended impact of gender legislation. This aligns with findings by Reyes (2018), who notes that gaps between policy formulation and on-the-ground execution continue to pose obstacles in local governance settings. Furthermore, respondents rated the potential for better coordination among provincial, municipal, and barangay GAD offices, indicating that fragmented efforts and a lack of systematic communication hinder the effectiveness of gender interventions. This concern is echoed in literature emphasizing the need for integrated and collaborative approaches to local gender governance (Manalili, 2020).

Lastly, the high rating given to the need for clarifying agency responsibilities to improve accountability suggests that respondents view unclear roles and overlapping functions as sources of inefficiency. This confirms the observations of Briones (2019), who argues that clearly defined roles and accountability structures are vital for transparent and effective gender mainstreaming.

➤ *Socio-Cultural and Normative Barrier*

The consistently high ratings given by respondents for all items related to socio-cultural and normative barriers show that everyone agrees that cultural norms, beliefs, and social expectations are still important factors in the success of gender and development (GAD) initiatives. Their answers show that they think it is both necessary and possible to fight against fixed gender roles and stereotypes in their situation. This acknowledgment is in line with research that shows that changing social norms is a key step toward achieving gender equality, since cultural expectations often shape how people act, what they can do, and how they participate in public life (Kabeer, 2016).

Respondents also agreed that overcoming opposition from religious groups and community leaders can make it much easier to put gender-sensitive programs into action. This shows that local leaders have a lot of power to shape how people in the community feel, and their support or opposition can make or break gender initiatives. This observation aligns with Connell's (2019) findings, which emphasize that social institutions, such as religious organizations, are crucial in either perpetuating or contesting gender hierarchies.

The high ratings of the respondents for the item on increasing the participation of women and marginalized groups in decision-making demonstrate respondents' belief that inclusive governance is achievable and essential. This perspective matches global evidence showing that gender-inclusive decision-making structures lead to more equitable policies and improved development outcomes (UN Women, 2020).

Respondents also rated highly the need to address gender biases and discrimination, despite the existence of established GAD policies. Their responses imply that while policies are in place, discriminatory attitudes and practices persist at the interpersonal and organizational levels. This aligns with social norm theory, which holds that policy shifts must be accompanied by changes in social behavior and community values to be fully effective (Bicchieri, 2017).

Finally, the respondents strongly agreed that greater integration of gender issues in sectoral programs can be achieved, recognizing that mainstreaming gender concerns across all government sectors is essential for long-term progress. This sentiment echoes national and international guidelines emphasizing that gender issues should not be isolated within GAD offices but woven into all areas of program planning and implementation (PCW, 2016).

➤ *Implementation and Sustainability Challenges*

The consistently high ratings across all indicators on implementation and sustainability challenges suggest that respondents strongly acknowledge the importance of strengthening both the operational and long-term aspects of gender and development (GAD) initiatives. Their responses reflect a shared understanding that effective gender mainstreaming requires not only policies but also sustained capacity-building, improved systems, and institutional commitment.

Respondents highly agreed that government personnel can build capacity for gender analysis and mainstreaming, emphasizing the essential role of well-trained staff in translating gender frameworks into practical and impactful programs. This aligns with findings by Tunney (2021), who asserts that the success of gender initiatives depends significantly on personnel competencies and continuous professional development.

The high rating given to the potential of integrating gender into planning and budgeting processes indicates that respondents see this integration as both necessary and achievable. This view supports the long-standing recommendation that gender budgeting should be institutionalized to ensure that resource allocation genuinely addresses gender gaps (Budlender & Hewitt, 2017). Their responses suggest optimism that these processes can be improved and made more manageable through strengthened internal systems.

Respondents also recognized that improving GAD data collection and reporting mechanisms is possible, reflecting their awareness that reliable data is essential for informed planning and monitoring. Literature highlights that the lack of sex-disaggregated data remains a major challenge in measuring gender outcomes, making enhanced data systems a critical step forward (UN Women, 2018).

Furthermore, the high ratings given to developing long-term strategies for sustainable gender mainstreaming indicate that respondents understand the importance of continuity and strategic direction. Sustainable GAD programming requires long-term vision rather than short-term compliance-based activities, a point emphasized by the Philippine Commission on Women (2016) in its guidelines for institutionalizing GAD efforts.

Lastly, respondents strongly agreed that strengthening institutional mechanisms to address gender-based violence and discrimination should remain a central focus. This reflects persistent concerns about gender-based violence as both a social and institutional challenge. Research consistently shows that robust institutional mechanisms—such as referral systems, clear protocols, and dedicated offices—are vital in ensuring protection, justice, and support for survivors (Dayal & Kaur, 2020).

➤ *Relationship between Respondents' Awareness and Challenges in Gender Mainstreaming*

The findings show a significant relationship between the awareness and challenges encountered by the respondents, as determined through statistical analysis. Across various levels of awareness, including gender roles and relations, gender perceptions and expectations, gender stereotyping and gender socialization, statistically significant correlations were observed with the perceived challenges encountered by the respondent's commitment and political will, institutional and policy-related challenges, socio-cultural and normative barriers, and implementation and sustainability challenges.

The results of the study indicate a statistically significant relationship between respondents' levels of gender awareness and the challenges they encounter within the context of gender mainstreaming. This suggests that as individuals become more aware of gender-related concepts—such as gender roles and relations, gender perceptions and expectations, gender stereotyping, and gender socialization—their recognition of existing gender-related challenges also increases. Such findings are consistent with the theoretical premise that awareness shapes one's ability to identify, interpret, and critically evaluate gender inequalities embedded in organizational systems and social structures (Yesil et al, 2021).

These findings from the employees align with recent literature that emphasizes the significance of gender awareness as a fundamental component of effective gender mainstreaming (UN Women, 2018; EIGE, 2020). The correlation between elevated awareness and enhanced recognition of gender-related challenges indicates that improving awareness is essential for bolstering institutional capacity to identify, address, and respond to gender issues. This has big effects on making policies, training programs, and changes to organizations that are meant to promote gender equality.

➤ *Relationship between Implementation and Challenges in Gender Mainstreaming*

The findings indicate statistically significant positive correlations among various components of institutional gender mainstreaming, including policies, people, enabling mechanisms, and programs/activities/projects, as well as the challenges faced in gender mainstreaming. Additionally, a strong and significant correlation is observed with the implementation of gender mainstreaming itself.

The consistently significant relationships among all variables demonstrate that challenges in gender mainstreaming are systemic and interconnected. Weaknesses in policies, people, mechanisms, and programs make each other worse, which makes it harder to put them into action.

This pattern aligns with the Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF) used in the Philippines, which highlights that deficiencies in any gender mainstreaming dimension affect overall institutional performance (PCW, 2016).

Thus, as indicated by the respondents, strengthening each component—not only the implementation phase—is necessary within government offices to mitigate challenges and advance gender mainstreaming. According to their responses, this includes reinforcing policy frameworks, enhancing personnel capacity, improving enabling mechanisms such as the GAD Focal Point System and budgeting processes, and ensuring that programs, activities, and projects consistently adhere to GAD mandates.

➤ *Factors of Awareness that Predict Challenges in Gender Mainstreaming*

The findings indicate that, as per the respondents, gender roles and relations, and gender socialization are significant predictors of the challenges encountered in gender mainstreaming within the Provincial Government Office. These findings underscore that entrenched gender norms and socialized expectations, developed over time, persist in shaping government employees' interactions with gender-responsive programs. This supports the idea that problems with gender mainstreaming are not just technical but they are also strongly influenced by long-standing social and cultural structures.

UN Women (2015) emphasizes that persistent gender norms and unequal relationships between men and women often impede the implementation of gender equality initiatives, even when policies and institutional mechanisms exist. This supports the significance of gender roles and relations in predicting challenges, as respondents themselves recognize the influence of traditional gender arrangements on workplace behavior and institutional decision-making.

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE, 2016) also says that gender socialization is still one of the most important things that affects how people think and act in organizations. The significant predictive capacity of gender socialization in this study corresponds with EIGE's conclusions that early-acquired gender norms persist in shaping professional behavior and the acceptance of gender equality reforms. UNDP (2016) elucidates that governments frequently encounter obstacles in mainstreaming gender due to employees bringing into the workplace the socialized beliefs and culturally ingrained assumptions acquired throughout their lives. These internalized norms can influence the comprehension, endorsement, or opposition to GAD programs within institutions.

The OECD (2016) also says that effective gender mainstreaming needs to look at more than just policies and structures. It also needs to look at organizational cultures that are shaped by social norms. This is similar to the need to confront deeply held gender beliefs among government workers. These findings indicate that obstacles to gender mainstreaming in the Provincial Government Office primarily arise from cultural and social foundations inherent in gender roles and socialization patterns, as confirmed by the respondents.

➤ *Implementation Factors Predicting Challenges in Gender Mainstreaming*

The results showed that only policies significantly predicted the problems that the Provincial Government Office faces when it comes to implementing gender mainstreaming. The four areas of gender mainstreaming implementation are policies, people, enabling mechanisms, and programs/activities/projects. This indicates that the respondents view policy-level issues as the primary source of the difficulties encountered in implementing gender mainstreaming. This pattern shows how important policy frameworks are for shaping how institutions act and how gender-responsive governance works. UN Women (2015) stresses that the ability of government institutions to effectively carry out gender equality initiatives is directly affected by how clear, consistent, and enforceable policies are. When policies are not spread out well, are not always understood the same way, or are not strongly linked to national GAD mandates, employees feel confused, get mixed messages, and run into problems at work.

Furthermore, the OECD (2016) stresses that strong policy environments reduce implementation challenges by providing clear mandates, standardized processes, and uniform expectations across government offices. This strengthens organizational accountability and ensures that gender mainstreaming is not dependent on individual initiative but embedded in the institutional system. The significance of policies in this study aligns with these global governance perspectives, reinforcing that policy gaps or inconsistencies are likely contributing to implementation challenges in the Provincial Government Office. In contrast, people, enabling mechanisms, and PAPs were not significant predictors, suggesting that respondents may perceive these components as functional but limited in their impact when policy infrastructure is weak. EIGE (2016) explains that even when personnel are trained and enabling structures exist, gender mainstreaming efforts will still encounter challenges if the overarching policy framework does not provide strong direction. This is consistent with UNDP (2016), which notes that institutional mechanisms and activities cannot fully compensate for policy deficiencies.

The non-significance of "people" also suggests that employees may feel inadequately capacitated, or at least not the primary source of difficulty. In the same way, the moderate performance of enabling mechanisms and PAPs shows that these parts help with implementation but are not seen as the main causes of the problems. This shows that policies have a stronger effect on defining institutional practice.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this final chapter, the researcher draws conclusions based on the findings of this study and provides a set of recommendations for future research and practice.

➤ *Conclusions*

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

- Respondents in the provincial government offices demonstrate high awareness of gender mainstreaming, particularly regarding gender roles, perceptions, stereotyping, and socialization.
- Gender mainstreaming is highly implemented across policies, people, enabling mechanisms, and Programs, Activities, and Projects (PAPs).
- Significant challenges exist in commitment, policies, socio-cultural barriers, and sustainability, which may hinder full integration of gender-responsive governance.
- Higher awareness of gender concepts among staff is associated with greater recognition of implementation challenges, enabling them to identify systemic and cultural barriers.
- Stronger implementation efforts correlate with increased visibility of barriers, highlighting the need for more strategic and sustainable integration.
- Awareness of gender roles and socialization significantly predicts the challenges encountered in implementation.
- Among implementation components, policies significantly predict challenges, emphasizing the importance of clear, enforced, and integrated gender-related policies.

➤ *Recommendations*

In view of the aforementioned conclusions, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Conduct one annual gender awareness workshop for all staff to translate high awareness into practical workplace actions.
- Allocate at least 5% of each unit's annual budget to sustain gender-responsive programs, activities, and projects (PAPs).
- Develop an annual action plan targeting at least two identified barriers (e.g., policy gaps, socio-cultural issues) to improve gender mainstreaming.
- Implement an annual staff survey to track recognition of gender-related challenges and monitor progress over time.
- Conduct an annual review of implementation, identifying at least three key barriers and planning corresponding corrective actions.
- Integrate discussions on gender roles and socialization in at least one annual training, using pre- and post-assessments to measure understanding.
- Review and update gender-related policies at least once every two years to improve clarity, enforcement, and integration in daily operations.

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