



## Assessment of Students' Awareness and Attitude towards Gender Sensitivity

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**Abstract.** Schools and other community services are now familiar with gender sensitivity training, which has become widespread nationwide. This training is now crucial since it will assist the schools in incorporating gender stereotypes into the curriculum and developing students' proper attitudes. Therefore, the College of Education conducted Gender Sensitivity Training for selected students and student leaders during 2018-2019. As part of the training evaluation, this study aims to assess the students' gender sensitivity awareness and attitude after attending the training. The study utilized quantitative and qualitative research in collecting, analyzing, and gathering the necessary data, implementing a survey questionnaire to obtain data for quantitative research and qualitative data through thematic data analysis with the data obtained from the focus group discussion. A total of 62 students were the participants in the study. The results significantly impact how training was conducted at higher education institutions. Overall, the results showed that the participants are highly aware of gender rights and appreciate learning about gender equality, which they use in their daily lives. In conclusion, it was shown that gender sensitivity training is crucial for raising awareness and transforming one's attitude toward gender issues and difficulties. The result of the study recommends that Gender sensitivity awareness and training may assimilate into the curriculum for students that will undergo internship as well as embedded in instructional activities specifically in using gender-neutral language. Also, gender sensitivity awareness can be a part of student orientations and extra-curricular activities. Lastly, a similar study should be conducted on an institute-wide level for all faculty, staff, and students, and a gender sensitivity manual should be crafted for the exclusive use of the University.

**Keywords:** Gender Sensitivity Training; Gender Awareness; Attitude; Gender Issues; and Gender Sensitivity

### 1. Introduction

Gender Sensitivity is being able to give consideration and understanding to the socio-cultural norms and prejudice in order to recognize several concerns related to rights, roles and responsibilities of women and men in the community and the relationships between them (UN-REDD, 2022). Gender sensitivity is recognizing that gender biases impede development and that gender bias prevents people from attaining their full potential and

which will enable them to become effective contributors to development. Students' awareness and attitudes towards gender sensitivity is not widely practiced in society. Gender awareness does not happen automatically (Dorji, 2020). Despite advancements and gains made in the Philippines toward achieving gender equity, the majority of our nation's educational institutions do not examine their curricula based on gender sensitivity (Masangya et al., 2022). Gender sensitivity in relation to gender equality arises from the advancement of human rights and is an essential factor for democratic citizenship (NCPE, 2008). Several laws protect the rights of every individual against gender equality as highlighted in the 1987 Constitution (Article II Section 14) which stipulates that "the state shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men". To further strengthen this existing policy which ensures equal rights and opportunities for men and women, the Republic Act No. 9710 otherwise known as The Magna Carta of Women (MCW) was established prior to the government's pledge of commitment to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The MCW is said to be the local translation of the provisions of the CEDAW, particularly in defining gender discrimination, state obligations, substantive equality of men and women.

Education is often considered to be one of the key institutions that should be addressed in order to promote equal opportunities and mainstream gender equality (Mägi et al., 2016). In order to promote the significant role of the academe in ensuring gender equality in higher education, the Magna Carta of Women Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR, 2010) identifies the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as the agency mandated to (1) develop and promote gender-sensitive curriculum; (2) develop gender-fair instructional materials; (3) ensure that educational institutions implement a capacity building program on gender, peace and human rights education for their officials, faculty and non-teaching staff and personnel; (4) promote partnerships between and among players of the education sector; (5) encourage advertising industry and other similar institutions to provide free use of space and installation of displays for schools, colleges and universities for campaigns to end discrimination and violence against women; and (6) guarantee that educational institutions provide scholarship programs for marginalized women and girls set the minimum standards for programs and institutions of higher learning. (CHED Memorandum Order No.01 Series of 2015; MCW IRR, Rule IV, Section 16)

As reflected in CHED memo order 01 s. 2015 Policy and Coverage Section 1: states that in pursuant to its mandate of supervision of higher education and specifically, to section 13 of the MCW, CHED "shall ensure that gender stereotypes and images in educational materials and curricula are adequately appropriately revised. The gender-sensitive language shall be used at all times. Capacity building on gender and development (GAD) peace and human rights, education for teachers, and all those involved in the education sector shall be pursued toward this end. Partnerships between and among players of the education sector, including the private sector, churches, and faith groups, shall be encouraged". To say that one is gender-sensitive, they must refrain from discriminating against or stereotyping a person based on their sex or gender. Instead, they view rights, responsibilities, and opportunities to be offered equally and are not determined by sex (United Nations Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, 2001; NCPE, 2008). It suggests equal access to opportunities by emphasizing a person's ability rather than their gender (NCPE, 2008).

All these are linked as part of the Gender and Development Policy of the Philippine government. However, despite all these policies and efforts of the government that adheres to the principle of gender equality, the issue of sexism is still prevalent in schools today where young women suffer subtle discrimination such as sexual harassment and violence (Licuanan, 2011). Therefore, it is important to mainstream gender equality in the curricula,

school culture, teaching materials, and methods in order to prevent the reproduction of gender stereotypes that influence the well-being and choices of students.

True to its mandate, the College of Education conducted Phase 1 of this research study which was the gender sensitivity training to an invited speaker from CHED Region 10 and trained the select students from different student organizations. The training aimed to enhance the level of gender awareness among college students. Phase 2 of the study aims to assess the students' gender sensitivity awareness and attitude after attending the gender sensitivity training. The result of the study might help the implementers to assess if the conducted training is effective. The study might also provide a platform for curriculum makers to assess if the training can be implemented in the curriculum.

## 2. Materials and Methods

A mixed methods research design is employed in this study, where a procedure in collecting, analyzing, and "mixing" both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to gather the necessary data—applying the quantitative research data gathering process by utilizing a survey questionnaire. In addition, qualitative data were gathered through focus group discussions. An online survey was used via Google forms to assess the relevance of the GST. And purposely selected participants were subjected to focus group discussion (FGD). Most participants considered themselves heterosexual Cebuanos, belonging to the age interval 21-23 years old, who were 4th-year students of the BTLED program in the Department of Teacher Technology Education (DTTE).

In total, there were 62 participants, composed of 34 first-year students and 28 Student leaders from the different student organizations of the College. The participants were chosen according to their availability and accessibility to join the 3-day training. They answered the online survey questionnaires using google forms to determine if the respondents have increased general sensitivity, understanding, and knowledge about gender (in)equality. To further evaluate the effectiveness of the training, the student's awareness of gender sensitivity, and how students have applied what they have learned from the training, a focus group discussion (FGD) was also done through google meet. Focus group discussions (FGDs) are conducted to understand better the perspectives and opinions guiding gender activities. Where the assessment questionnaire gives a simple response, FGDs can help us explore the causality behind these answers.

The questionnaire used is a researcher-made questionnaire that serves as the main instrument in gathering the data. Since the constructed instrument is researcher-made, it must be thoroughly tested to guarantee validity (Carmines & Zeller, 1979; Saw & Ng, 2001; Rodriguez et al., 2017). For this reason, content validity was done to measure how well items correspond or reflect a specific domain and are measured using quantitative techniques (Rodriguez et al., 2017). Eleven (11) students were tapped to check the consistency of the items in each variable. The result of the calculated content validity index is 0.85; a content validity greater than or equal to 0.8 has excellent content validity (Rodriguez et al., 2017). Regarding the practicality of the instrument and the pilot study conducted, respondents were asked to comment on wording, timing, and understanding of the items. They are also asked to comment or suggest content that they feel is more suitable.

There were two parts to the questionnaire; the first part is the Student's Information/Profile consisting of the sexual orientation, age, religion, ethnicity, year level, department, degree program, and date attended the Gender Sensitivity Training. Part 2 shows the Assessment of Students' Attitude and Awareness after the Gender Sensitivity Training consists of two parts: Assessment of Students' Awareness on Gender Concerns and Issues and Assessment of Students' Attitude after the Gender Sensitivity Training. Statements are rated on a scale of 4 (Highly Aware) to 1 (Highly not aware) and 4 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree), respectively. The respondents also evaluated their level

of agreement to questions related to what they had learned during the said training. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked for some suggestions to improve Gender Sensitivity Training.

As part of the data collection process, a focus group discussion was conducted among the participants for the first and second training sessions. Data gathered were thematically analyzed and correlated with the survey results.

Ethical considerations in research are principles that adhere to a specific code of conduct when collecting human data. As part of the ethical consideration of this research, a letter of permission to conduct data gathering was obtained from the Dean of the College, and to show respect to the rights and dignity of research participants, researchers obtained participants signed informed consent forms outlining every information of the investigation as their agreement to participate in the study. Furthermore, participants were oriented that any information they submitted would be kept private and that their identities would not be revealed as linked from the information gathered. The researchers protected the privacy of the information provided by research subjects and the anonymity of respondents. Thus, the participants' privacy and responses were not individually examined and included in the report.

### 3. Methodology

This study utilized both a survey questionnaire and a focus group discussion to gather the data. A survey questionnaire was formulated, validated and sent to the purposely selected research respondents. A focus group discussion questionnaire was also crafted and validated to substantiate the result of the data gathered from the survey questionnaire. The Presentation of the data gathered follows the statement of the problem.

*What is the level of awareness of the respondents on gender terminologies?*

Gender-related terminologies were tackled during the training since it is essential to understand the concepts and issues in gender diversity and sexual orientation. As the terms also evolved as the public used them in current trends and issues that are happening in reality. Also, students have heard or are acquainted with terms but have yet to learn and understand their true meaning. According to the American Psychological Association (2015), Words and their meanings can evolve or change as our comprehension of intricate concepts connected to gender and sexuality evolves. We understand that education in which sentences or words are the most precise and gracious, and adopting this resolve has the vital purpose of being useful. APA added that given how quickly vocabulary evolves, it is understood that even the changes, even this collection of words and definitions, might be a substantial future change. Consequently, it is crucial to state something clearly and consciously about the terms.

**Table 1: Students' Awareness on Gender Related Terminologies**

	Mean	Description
1. A lesbian is a woman is physically and romantically attracted to other woman	3.73	Highly Aware
2. Transgender people are people whose gender identity is different from the gender they were thought to be at birth	3.68	Highly Aware
3. Gay people are characterized by sexual or romantic attraction to people of one's same sex	3.62	Highly Aware
4. Queer people are people whose sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual	3.25	Highly Aware
5. Bisexual people are people who are characterized by sexual or romantic attraction to people of one's same sex and of the opposite sex	3.77	Highly Aware

6. The term gender refers to the behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex	3.60	Highly Aware
7. Culture is that complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society	3.67	Highly Aware
8. Sex can be classified to be either feminine or masculine	3.58	Highly Aware
9. Gender is universal and fixed	3.43	Highly Aware
10. Family is the smallest unit of society	3.68	Highly Aware
11. Masculinity refers to a way of living for men or a way of being male as defined by society	3.57	Highly Aware
12. "Sex: refers to the biological assignment of an individual, which is often based on scientific knowledge, the biological determination is often made at birth by looking at prenatal images or directly inspecting genitalia at birth.	3.63	Highly Aware
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>Highly aware</b>

Table 1 presents the students' awareness of gender-related terminologies. On the average the students are highly aware that a lesbian is a woman who is physically and romantically attracted to other women, that transgender people are people whose gender identity is different from the gender they were thought to be at birth, that gay people are characterized by sexual or romantic attraction to people of one's same sex, that queer people are people whose sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual, that bisexual people are people who are characterized by sexual or romantic attraction to people of one's same sex and of the opposite sex, that the term gender, which they considered as gender universal and fixed, refers to the behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex, that masculinity refers to a way of living for men or a way of being male as defined by society, that family is the smallest unit of society and culture is a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society, and that sex can be classified to be either feminine or masculine in which "sex" refers to the biological assignment of an individual, which is often based on scientific knowledge. The overall mean signifies that, on average, the students are highly aware of gender related terminologies. However, some students are just aware, while few are unaware of gender-related terminologies. The results imply that most students who attended the training were already informed or acquainted with the terms related to gender sensitivity issues. Moreover, some of these students learned the terminologies during the training and were enlightened about the new terms related to gender sensitivity. This result is also relevant to the statement from Gender in Education Network in Asia-Pacific (GENIA) Toolkit: Promoting Gender Equality in Education (2019) that the terminology of gender is complex and can sound very technical to non-specialists. Often, terminology comprehension and group problem-solving are barriers to mutual understanding. Therefore, a basic understanding of gender terms and concepts and education is crucial for policy analysis practice, creating programs, and setting a shared comprehension and dialogue. Furthermore, the terminology may alter as comprehension of gender evolves. For instance, there has been a trend to favor the comprehension of gender identity and sexual orientation as more flexible and flowing (UNESCO, 2019).

#### *What is the level of awareness of the respondents on gender rights?*

Gender sensitivity is based on the concession of the importance of gender and awareness of the fact that our society is gender-structured (Krišová, 2020; Jarkovská, 2007). Thus, awareness of Gender Rights aims to advance a general understanding of



gender-related issues, including violence against women, different gender social roles, etc. Additionally, it aims to demonstrate the social effects of values and norms and how stereotypes are reinforced and systems of inequality are supported (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019). Hence, table 2 presents students' Awareness about Gender Rights.

**Table 2: Students' Awareness about Gender Rights**

	Mean	Description
1. Men and women should be equal	3.77	Highly Aware
2. Men and women have the same rights in our country	3.62	Highly Aware
3. Gender awareness plays an important role in informing women and men about gender equality	3.77	Highly Aware
4. Inequalities between men and women are a result of biological differences between them	3.38	Highly Aware
5. I am aware of the rights of women and children as stipulated in the Republic Act 9262	3.37	Highly Aware
6. All human rights are equally important because one right cannot be fulfilled without other rights	3.65	Highly Aware
7. An individual who is part of LGBT+ community is fully conscious or aware on how society would look at them	3.62	Highly Aware
8. Gender roles are how a society views different genders and how they should act	3.50	Highly Aware
9. Gender refers to the differentiated social roles, behaviors, capacities and intellectual, emotional and social characteristics attributed by a given culture to men and women.	3.60	Highly Aware
10. Gender equality threaten cultures, traditions, and identities	3.38	Highly Aware
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.57</b>	<b>Highly aware</b>

Table 2 presents the students' awareness about gender rights. On average, the students are highly aware that men and women should be equal and have the same rights as stipulated in the Republic Act 9262. Gender awareness plays a vital role in informing women and men about gender equality, and inequalities are a result of biological differences between them. All human rights are equally important because one right cannot be fulfilled without other rights, and an individual who is part of the LGBT+ community is fully conscious or aware of how society would view them. Gender roles are how society views different genders and how they should act. These roles are differentiated social roles, behaviors, capacities, and intellectual, emotional and social characteristics attributed by a given culture to men and women. Further, that gender equality threatens cultures, traditions, and identities.

The overall mean signifies that most students are highly aware of gender rights. It is also supported in the study by Scherf et al. (2020), as perceived by the respondents that both genders must exercise the same rights as they consider equal human beings. This finding demonstrates that students are now aware of how to assert their gender rights, acknowledge their absolute human rights, and participate in and benefit from social, cultural, economic, and political growth. Everyone should be aware of gender rights to understand how to handle gender-related issues and become more understanding of gender inequalities. Furthermore, respondents acknowledged that people come from different genders, and it is crucial to comprehend these differences to improve mutual understanding.

*Did the respondents apply what they have learned during the Gender sensitivity training in their daily life?*

Gender sensitivity training comprises lessons on the terminologies of gender, how different genders' perspectives have been applied to their daily lives, and the urgent need to close the gender gap to promote equality. Alternatively, it may emphasize the barriers certain genders face in higher education. The effectiveness of gender sensitivity training can significantly impact the participants. Change in participants' language, behavior, and attitudes after the workshop are the main objective of the training. Gender awareness, as applied in different aspects of life, must start in the home. For example, parents should be advised to treat their sons and daughters equally in doing feminine and masculine household chores. Both girls and boys should be treated with respect and equal freedom of choice.

Moreover, the curriculum in schools should place a strong emphasis on teaching pupils how to conduct themselves with gender awareness. A gender-responsive school is one where the academic, social, physical, and community settings are designed to consider the unique needs of both girls and boys. Teachers need to receive gender sensitivity training as a requirement in order to promote and disseminate these concepts among the students' knowledge, attitude, skills, and methodologies that promote gender equality. Thus, table 2 presents gender awareness as applied in different aspects of life.

**Table 3: Students' Gender Awareness as Applied in Different Aspects of Life**

	Mean	Description
1. I have practiced gender equality at home	3.65	Always Applied
2. In our family, we are free to choose any field of studies regardless of our different genders	3.72	Always Applied
3. Assigning gender based occupational segregation such as teachers and nurses are for women, and those pilots, doctors, and engineers are for men or discriminating one's gender in a certain occupation is no longer practice in my field of studies.	3.37	Always Applied
4. I have used the proper way of an individual's correct pronoun as an easy way to show respect in communicating to individuals.	3.60	Always Applied
5. I have accepted that members of LGBTQ community will go to bathrooms of their gender preference.	3.35	Always Applied
6. I agreed that LGBTQ community should have an all-in gender bathroom of their own.	3.03	Always Applied
7. I have observed that teachers create a classroom environment that supports equal opportunities for all students regardless of gender.	3.68	Always Applied
8. I have observed that gender-sensitive people demonstrate values and attitudes that promote gender equality and sensitivity.	3.70	Always Applied
9. I have observed that gender-sensitive students treats and respect everyone equally regardless of gender preferences.	3.68	Always Applied
10. Watched talk shows/ entertainment/ movies which are hosted or portrayed by hosts or characters from LGBTQ community without prejudice.	3.43	Always Applied
11. I am okay with individuals who wear clothing according to their gender preferences.	3.63	Always Applied
12. I have accepted having a gay or lesbian or transgender friend.	3.80	Always Applied
Overall Mean	3.55	Always Applied

On the average, the students consistently applied gender equality at home ( $M=3.65$ ) wherein they are free to choose any field of studies regardless of genders; they are always aware that discriminating one's gender ( $M=3.72$ ) in a particular occupation is no more extended practice in their field of studies; they use proper way of an individual's correct pronoun because as an easy way to show respect in communicating to individuals ( $M=3.60$ ); they accept that members of LGBTQ community will go to bathrooms of their gender preference ( $M=3.03$ ); they observe that teachers create a classroom environment that supports equal opportunities for all students regardless of gender ( $M=3.68$ ); they observe that gender-sensitive persons demonstrate values and attitudes that promote gender equality and sensitivity just like gender-sensitive students who treat and respect everyone ( $M=3.70$ ); they watch talk shows/entertainment/movies which are hosted or portrayed by hosts or characters from LGBTQ community without prejudice ( $M=3.43$ ); they are okay with individuals who wear clothing according to their gender preferences ( $M=3.63$ ); and they accept having a gay or lesbian or transgender friend ( $M=3.80$ ). However, on average, they often agree that the LGBTQ community should have an all-in-gender bathroom of their own ( $M=3.03$ ).

The overall mean ( $M=3.55$ ) signifies that, on average, the students consistently applied gender sensitivity in different aspects of life. This implies that participants have valued knowledge of gender equality by applying it in their daily lives in the family, school, and community. However, the LGBTQ community should have an all-in-gender bathroom with less stereotypical attitudes. Statistically, most students have agreed that the LGBTQ community should have an all-in-gender bathroom of their own. This means that students have accepted the concept of an all-in-gender bathroom. The study by Porta supports this, et al. in 2015, in which results state that the youth have emphasized the significance of gender-neutral bathrooms in fostering a sense of safety and inclusivity. In addition, support from adults and gay-straight alliances has contributed significantly to a welcoming environment and fostered encouragement efforts for gender-neutral bathrooms (Porta et al., 2017).

*What is the attitude of students towards gender roles and issues after the gender sensitivity training?*

**Table 4: Students' Attitude after the Gender Sensitivity Training**

	Mean	Description
1. I have improved my knowledge and attitude on gender sensitivity issues.	4.73	Favorable Attitude
2. I have used language and expressions that are gender sensitive in everyday life.	4.58	Favorable Attitude
3. I have shown genuine respect for the gender preferences of other students, members of the family, and the community.	4.75	Favorable Attitude
4. I actively engaged in activities that promote gender equality and sensitivity.	4.45	Favorable Attitude
5. I have shown attitudes and values that foster respect and tolerance for everyone.	4.67	Favorable Attitude
6. I applied some principles in gender sensitivity training at home, classroom, and with group peers.	4.60	Favorable Attitude
7. I accept and treat everyone without bias, especially in terms of gender.	4.67	Favorable Attitude
8. I can integrate a gender perspective into daily routines at school, home, and beyond.	4.52	Favorable Attitude
9. I practiced shared responsibilities at home, school, and the community.	4.65	Favorable Attitude



10. I have enhanced my self-awareness of the gender concerns and issues affecting relationships at various levels within the family, community, and larger society.	4.65	Favorable Attitude
11. I became more open-minded about the gender orientation of other individuals.	4.67	Favorable Attitude
12. I have gained more knowledge about the importance of gender equality in society.	4.65	Favorable Attitude
13. I can freely socialize with other people without judging their sexual identity.	4.60	Favorable Attitude
14. I have developed an understanding of basic gender concepts and gender roles in society.	4.52	Favorable Attitude
15. I have determined and recognized that identities are always multiple and interconnected, so gender cannot be viewed in isolation.	4.70	Favorable Attitude
16. I have changed into a gender-sensitive student by treating and respecting everyone equally regardless of gender preferences.	4.70	Favorable Attitude
Overall Mean	4.63	Favorable Attitude

Table 4 presents the students' attitudes after the gender sensitivity training. On the average the students strongly agree that they have improved their knowledge and attitude on gender sensitivity issues ( $M=4.73$ ) by using language and expressions that are gender-sensitive in everyday life ( $M=4.58$ ) as a sign of genuine respect for the gender preferences of other students, members of the family, and the community ( $M=4.75$ ), that they have actively engaged in activities that promote gender equality and sensitivity ( $M=4.45$ ) by showing good attitudes and values that foster respect and tolerance for everyone ( $M=4.67$ ) and applying some principles in gender sensitivity training at home, classroom, and with group peers ( $M=4.60$ ), that they accept and treat everyone without bias especially in terms of gender ( $M=4.67$ ), that they have practiced shared responsibilities at home, school, and the community ( $M=4.65$ ) by integrating a gender perspective into daily routines, and that they have enhanced their self-awareness of the gender concerns and issues affecting relationships at various levels within the family, community, and larger society ( $M=4.65$ ).

Moreover, they become more open-minded about the gender orientation of other individuals ( $M= 4.67$ ) because they have gained more knowledge about the importance of gender equality in society ( $M=4.65$ ). They can freely socialize with other people without judging their sexual identity ( $M=4.60$ ) since they have developed an understanding of basic gender concepts and gender roles in society ( $M=4.52$ ) and have determined and recognized that identities are always multiple and interconnected, so gender cannot be viewed in isolation ( $M=4.70$ ). Also, they have changed into gender-sensitive students by treating and respecting everyone equally regardless of gender preferences ( $M=4.70$ ).

The overall mean ( $M=4.63$ ) signifies that, on average, the students have significantly favorable attitudes toward gender awareness after the gender sensitivity training. Results imply that students allowed themselves to change their perception and understanding, which led to favorable attitudes about gender trends, sexual orientation, and other issues after attending the training. Also, after the training, students have gained a favorable attitude on their understanding of how to practice and express respect to others in socializing with other genders regarding sensitive matters and issues related to the school setting and community.

#### *What is the importance of Gender sensitivity training as perceived by the students?*

Gender sensitivity training is now familiar to schools and other services in the community, which is also widely spread in the country. These trainings are now crucial to schools as it helps teachers and administrators in integrating gender stereotyping and

developing students' right attitude in classes and curriculum. The training can show good attitudes and values that foster respect and tolerance for everybody and apply some principles of the training in the classroom and with group peers. As a result, students can accept and treat everyone disinterestedly, especially regarding gender, and must practice shared responsibilities, reception, school, and community. Also, students can integrate the learnings from the training as it enhances their self-awareness of the gender concerns and issues affecting relationships at various levels within the family, school, and community.

The results of interview with students reveals that the GST training was able to increase awareness of gender roles. Rights, responsibilities, and terminologies.

*"It serves as an awareness that influence the society..."*

*"it can enhance our knowledge, our responsibility to understand each other"*

*"Gender Sensitivity training is like an enlightenment to everyone to stop the misconceptions about the genders so as we all know LGBTQ and we should also know their specific pronounce and how to respect them properly"*

Students Participants also claimed that they can apply the learnings they obtained during the GST in their individual lives.

*"GST is mainly created to make us aware as a student and also as a future educator. You should know how to handle diversity because we handle different students."*

*"GST is a fundamental course that emphasizes the three domains of learning that prepares us every individual, especially as a future teacher to handle different learners"*

*"It trains us how to be sensitive or how to appreciate others feelings more than the opposite gender and it is important because our perspective is different"*

Most importantly, the change of attitude was manifested by the participants by becoming more sensitive to the LGBTQ community in their classes and their communities. The data gathered also conform to the results, which shows a favorable change in students' attitudes toward gender roles and issues after the gender sensitivity training.

*How did the training influence the understanding of the students towards gender sensitivity?*

Gender-equality competence intends to change gendered perspectives on the different roles of men and women, disputing gender stereotypes to create an equal society (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2022). Therefore, the conduct of Gender Sensitivity Training was to change participants' attitudes favorably towards being gender sensitive and apply this learning in their workplace, field or area of expertise, and family life.

The students' understanding of the influence of gender sensitivity training goes beyond the four corners of the classroom, as what they claimed during the FGD. It extends to the family and the community as well.

*"different experience in age rank, every family really has a different approach to the youngest and the oldest."*

*"Through social media... I learn to reflect and deal with my comments before posting it."*

*"Do not give any gender role to a person without even confirming it to them."*

The GST is a manifestation of the support of the academe to transform every student to become gender-sensitive at all times, as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human rights as well as the existing Philippine laws that protect every individual from any form of discrimination.

## 5. Conclusion

Gender sensitivity training is essential to close the gap between genders and to support equality. This study assessed the students' awareness and attitude after the gender sensitivity training. Based on the data gathered for both the survey research and thematic analysis of the focus group discussion, data shows a positive impact on the conduct of GST in a higher education institution. The overall results signify that most students are highly aware of gender rights and have valued knowledge of gender equality by applying it in their daily lives in the family, school, and community. With this data, it is then concluded that conducting Gender Sensitivity Training is essential for improving awareness and changing into a favorable attitude towards Gender equality.

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