# Sexism in Higher Education Institutions in Countryside Philippines 

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#### Abstract

$\boldsymbol{A} \boldsymbol{b} \boldsymbol{s t r a c t}$ : Sexism is prejudice or discrimination especially against women and girls and today to all gender. This study through descriptive-correlational-comparative design explored the if sexism still exists in the workplace specifically in a Higher Academic Institution in Catbalogan City, Samar. A total of 30 participants expressed their experiences using a validated questionnaire. The study found out that women respondents experienced gender biases in the workplace, specifically in the institution's regulations and procedures despite the governments push in promoting gender equality. Younger respondents felt the existence of gender biases in the workplace slightly. Overall, the difference in responses between considering age and gender is not significant with both saying they can neither deny nor confirm that gender bias is not existent. There is a need to implement Gender and Development Programs as mandated by existing laws and memoranda from authorities such as the Philippine Council for Women, the Commision on Higher Education, and the Civil Service Commision to minimize gender-based discrimination.


Keywords: GAD, Gender Equality, Workplace, Management Redirection, discrimination

## 1. Introduction

Humans have always been fascinated with the extent of their abilities and how they fare with other members of the society. Such scenario would bring us to the age-old question "Who is better, is it the male or female?" Such inquiry brushes with the realm of sexism or gender discrimination. Sexism is prejudice or discrimination based on sex or gender, especially against women and girls. In a society, sexism is usually applied to women and girls than its counterpart gender. It functions to maintain patriarchy, or male domination, through ideological and material practices of individuals, collectives, and institutions that oppress women and girls by sex or gender (Masequesmay, 2016).

According to Cudd and Leslie (2005:87) "sexism refers to a historically and globally pervasive form of oppression against women." This shows that such form
of oppression had been around since the dawn of human civilization that sets limits to the capability of the women. Hornsby (2005:12) agreed on that notion when she said "that sexism is a thought or practice which may permeate language and which assumes women's inferiority to men.

Masequesmay (2008) expanded the notion about sexism by referring to it as prejudice or discrimination based on sex or gender, especially against women and girls which also states that it is an ideology or practice that maintain patriarchy or male domination. This form of discrimination is not only experience or exclusive to women but also such act may be felt by the opposite sex (Foster, 201).

Truly the notion about sexism is expanding to unknown territories. Sexism may be associated with belief that one sex is better than another sex. It imposes limits on
what men and boys can and should do and what women and girls can and should do. In the early 21 st century, sexism was expanded to include oppression of any sex, including men and boys, intersexual people, and transgender people (Masequesmay, 2016) from a more women or girl directed discrimination.

In many cultures, women are usually submissive to men, many times this attitude has been handed down from their ancestors. Women's role is typically degrading due to societal expectations. In the past, Spanish influences identified women as housewives and nurturers of their family specifically of their children. Women were expected to be at home, taking care of their children, while the men go to work to provide for the family. These views have changed over the years, women roles have increased a significant amount, the remnants of this culture still exist. Even if gender roles have changed significantly lately, men and women still have certain expectations and responsibilities to uphold. There are some things only men do and some things only women do. To fully understand these shifting roles, we must take a moment to reflect on the history of gender roles in the Philippines (Coleman, 2014).

Traditions in the Philippines are sexist handed down from its years of being under different countries in the past that have practiced sexism. The sexism was reduced when the 1987 Constitution recognizes the issue and includes two prominent provisions to respect the roles of women. The first provision states that "The State recognizes the role of women in nation-building and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men." Also, Article XIII-Labor: Section 14 stipulated that "The state shall protect working women by providing safe
and healthful working conditions taking into account their maternal functions, and such facilities and opportunities that will enhance their welfare and enable them to realize their full potential in the service of the nation" (Anonuevo, 2000). Although the Constitution highlights these new laws, its implementation was not seriously observed. Women were still not treated fairly in the workplace and organization, specifically, the society as a whole.

Even if laws are requiring equal treatment between women and men, many Filipinos still carry the sexist mindset handed down to them by their culture and traditions. Women are expected to work in gardens and care for the house and children (Coleman, 2014).

The main difference today and in the past is the thining of the gender line between professions. Historically, women were expected to undertake household roles rather than pursue work. Career choices for the women in the past are few. If women so desire to pursue a career, it would be as teachers or nurses. Today this glass ceiling has been broken as men working as teachers and nurses have been accepted. Today anyone can work in any field, but the preference of a man or a woman over a career still is skewed to what it was before. In the United States of America, for every ten female nurses, there is only one male nurse (Rappleye, 2015) and according to World Bank, there are more female teachers than men. These numbers are better than before. Before male children used to be more desired but today, female children are also welcomed (Baringer, 2014), but the reason is still sexist that is to provide help in the home during the parents' old age.

The city of Catbalogan in the Philippines supports the idea of sexism,
primarily on the notion of gender equality. An excerpt of Mayor Stephany Uy-Tan's message during the Women's Month Culmination of the Department of Agrarian Reform dated March 30, 2015, states that it's a huge breakthrough for the city government to have women occupying high positions in the government. But despite this breakthrough, gender discrimination and abuse remain a sad reality. This is the reality that taught us that such acceptance is just the first step. The biggest challenge is how to change the tradition or practices that decide the position of women in the society. It is not about getting into the system; it's about reforming the system. Let us push for gender equality, and fight against discrimination for justice to prevail.

## 2. Objectives

The study explored the prevalence of sexism in the workplace through the college instructor's perception on how gender equality is promoted in their respective higher educational institution. Specifically, it sought to:
2.1 Determine the socio-demographic profile of the participants
2.2 Assess the general situation in the participants' workplace relative to its implementation of gender equality
2.3 Test the relationship and difference between the general situation in the workplace relative to the implementation of gender equality as perceived by the male and female participants
2.4 Determine possible management redirection for the higher educational institution to fully eliminate prevalence of sexism in the workplace.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design:

This study is a descriptive-correlational-comparative design was employed in determining the profile of the participants. Moreover, correlational and comparative designs were employed in determining the relationship and difference between the male and female participants' perception on the general situation in their workplace relative to the implementation of gender equality.

### 3.2 Research Environment:

The study was conducted in the Higher Educational Institutions in Catbalogan City, Samar, Philippines particularly Saint Mary's College of Catbalogan, Samar College, and Samar State University.

### 3.3 Participants:

The researcher employed purposive sampling to identify the participants of this study. Five male and five female faculty members in each higher educational institution were the participants of this study. They are full-time faculty members and have already incurred at least two years of teaching experience in their respective institution.

### 3.4 Instrument:

A researcher-made questionnaire was the main instrument in the study. It consists of three parts; Part I of the questionnaire was intended to gather data on the profile of the participants regarding their age, sex, civil status, educational qualification, monthly income, and higher educational institution. Part II, on the other
hand, was designed to harness data about their perception of the general situation in their workplace relative to the implementation of gender equality. It has fifteen questions on which the participants were required to answer using a 5 -point scale where one (1) is absolute no, two (2) is mostly no, three (3) is neither yes or no, four (4) is mostly yes, and five (5) is absolute yes. Lastly, Part III of the questionnaire solicited their views on situations which gender equality and discrimination have taken place. It also required participants to share some of their suggestions on how to improve the implementation of gender equality and eliminate the prevalence of sexism in their workplace. The instrument was subjected to face validity by selected experts then piloted to 20 teachers from a secondary school in Catbalogan. The instrument has Cronbach Alpha of 0.72 .

### 3.5 Data Collection:

After the approval of the school administrators of the Higher Educational Institutions, the researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the participants to ensure a hundred percent retrieval of the accomplished questionnaires. Follow-up interviews were also conducted by the researcher to clarify ambiguous responses given by the participants.

### 3.6 Ethical Consideration:

In the collection of data needed in the study, the participants were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality of their responses in the questionnaire given to them.

### 3.7 Statistical Treatment of the Data:

Descriptive statistical tools were used to describe the profile of the
participants as well as their perception of the general situation in their workplace relative to the implementation of gender equality. These statistical tools are following: frequency count, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and weighted mean.

Moreover, inferential statistical measures, particularly Pearson ProductMoment Correlation Coefficient and Fisher's t -test, were used in testing the relationship and difference between the male and female participants' perception on the general situation in their workplace relative to the implementation of gender equality. The researcher made use of the 0.05 level of significance in determining the direction of the hypothesis. The data analysis was facilitated using the Microsoft Excel Data Analysis.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Participants Socio-Demographic Profile

All respondents are above 20 with 55 as the oldest, and the mean age is 30.97 years old with a standard deviation of 9.49. Purposely, there are a total of fifteen male and female. Most of the male participants were single while more than half of the female participants were married. Most of the participants have pursued graduate programs. Most of the respondents have salaries below PhP 29,000, and most of them belong to the younger group.

A t-test comparing the age of male and female participants suggests a nonsignificance difference. Participants' responses, therefore, will not be influenced by age or their sex. Two-way Chi-square test relating gender and civil status show nonsignificance value. This means that the participants are similarly distributed.


Figure 1. Dot Plot of Participants Age Profile by Gender

### 4.2 Participants' Perception on Gender Equality in their Workplaces

### 4.2.1 According to their Sex

As shown in table 2, both male and female participants were uncertain in the following situations in their workplace relative to the implementation of gender equality:
a. ensuring that a certain percentage of all supervisory and management positions are occupied by women
b. developing campaigns to attract female professionals
c. consider gender in delegating job assignments
d. number of men who are performing supervisory and management activities greater than the number of women
e. male members of staff at your workplace progress quicker than females
f. the employer pays male and female workers doing the same job the same salary
g. consider gender in providing access to health-related services

These responses imply that the main difference between today and the past is the thinning of gender line between professions. Today the roles have shifted towards more equality with women and men entering into jobs dominated by men or women. This significant change of attitude towards career choices has already allowed both genders to make their own decisions and not feel as limited (Baringer, 2014) with less worry of being discriminated for the option the had.

Moreover, both male and female participants shared the same perception of mostly yes on the following situations in their workplace:
a. facilitates and promotes the establishment of Gender Awareness Guidelines
b. ensure equal hiring opportunities for all
c. ensure that there are no wage disparities between men and women
d. ensure equal access to training opportunities
e. successful in promoting gender equality in the workplace

These responses imply that employers are taking time to reduce the gender gap. This further implies that job Flexibility becomes the norm and employers make all jobs flexible to allow those with caring responsibilities to work varied or shorter hours and still realize their career potential. If implemented, this proposal could make a real difference to occupational and vertical segregation (Perrons,2015).

Furthermore, the male participants' perceived that their workplace has uncertain view on the following situations while female participants have not mostly experienced the following situations:

Table 2. Perception on the General Situation in their Workplace Relative to the Implementation of Gender Equality According to their Sex

| Question | Male Responses |  | Female Responses |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | WM | Interpretation | WM | Interpretation |
| 1. Does your institution facilitates and promotes the establishment of Gender Awareness Guidelines? | 4.13 | Mostly Yes | 3.93 | Mostly Yes |
| 2. Are there any outstanding gender biases in your Institution's regulations or procedures? | 3.00 | Neither Yes or No | 2.40 | Mostly No |
| 3. Does your institution ensure equal hiring opportunities for all? | 3.60 | Mostly Yes | 3.53 | Mostly Yes |
| 4. Does your institution ensure that a certain percentage of all supervisory and management positions are occupied by women? | 2.93 | Neither Yes or No | 2.67 | Neither Yes or No |
| 5. Does your institution develop campaigns to attract female professionals? | 3.13 | Neither Yes or No | 3.00 | Neither Yes or No |
| 6. Does your institution develop or ensure the existence of support systems for professional women? | 3.80 | Mostly Yes | 3.47 | Neither Yes or No |
| 7. Does your institution ensure that there are no wage disparities between men and women? | 4.07 | Mostly Yes | 3.53 | Mostly Yes |
| 8. Does your institution ensure equal access to training opportunities? | 4.00 | Mostly Yes | 4.13 | Mostly Yes |
| 9. Is the number of men who are performing supervisory and management activities greater than the number of women? | 2.67 | Neither Yes or No | 2.87 | Neither Yes or No |
| 10. Does your institution consider gender in delegating job assignments? | 2.93 | Neither Yes or No | 3.40 | Neither Yes or No |
| 11. Does your institution consider gender in delegating teaching loads? | 2.00 | Mostly No | 2.53 | Neither Yes or No |
| 12. Do you feel as though male members of staff at your workplace progress quicker than females? | 2.67 | Neither Yes or No | 3.40 | Neither Yes or No |
| 13. Are you aware if your employer pays male and female workers doing the same job the same salary? | 3.27 | Neither Yes or No | 3.40 | Neither Yes or No |
| 14. Do you feel that becoming pregnant and taking maternity leave would have a negative effect on a female's career prospects at your workplace? | 2.27 | Mostly No | 2.60 | Neither Yes or No |
| 15. Have you ever been a victim of gender discrimination in the workplace? | 2.73 | Neither Yes or No | 2.33 | Mostly No |
| 16. Does your institution consider gender in providing access to health-related services? | 3.20 | Neither Yes or No | 3.13 | Neither Yes or No |
| 17. Do you think that your institution has been successful in promoting gender equality in the workplace? | 4.00 | Mostly Yes | 3.60 | Mostly Yes |
| Grand Mean | 3.20 | Neither Yes or No | 3.17 | Neither Yes or No |

a. There are outstanding gender biases in their Institution's regulations or procedures.
b. Never been a victim of gender discrimination in the workplace.

These responses imply that men and women have contrasting viewpoints as to gender equality. Liswood (2015) stated that "men assume policy leads to positive impact while women see that these policies are not leading to positive outcomes. For example, men saw that there was a program to mentor women, which they viewed as an affirmative program to help women's progress. Women saw no results from the mentoring program. For men, it was the potential and the effort that gave them a sense of well-being. For women, their conclusion of dissatisfaction was based on performance".

Lastly, male participants have not mostly experienced the following situations while female participants were uncertain responses:
a. consider gender in delegating teaching loads
b. becoming pregnant and taking maternity leave would have a negative effect on a female's career prospects at your workplace

These responses imply that aside from contrasting viewpoints in gender equality, men and women have different interpretations as to the confirmation bias. It is the phenomenon of sorting facts and observations in a way that confirms what we already believe. So if men think progress is being made for women, they will place more weight on the facts they see and believe confirm the advancement, and pay less attention to the impact of the impediments. Women will similarly focus more on the facts that confirm lack of progress and less on the advancements (Ferguson,2015).

### 4.2.2 According to Age

The participants were grouped according to their age. One group comprised
of participants who were above 30 years old while the other group consisted of participants who were 30 years old and below.

As shown in table 3, most of the participants were early to middle adults which implies begin to share themselves more intimately with others. They explore relationships leading toward longer-term commitments with someone other than a family member like working on a company with others or creating social groups (McLeod,2013).

Older participants believe that their institutions promote equality compared to the younger group. This may be because the younger group has a new set of concepts of what is gender bias and what is not. Older participants believe that their institutions do not consider gender in hiring and in fact, it provides support for women for their maternity and as a nursing parent. The response was different as compared to the younger group where they are not sure whether such policies are practiced. Younger participants express that gender also is considered in the rank promotion, assigning teaching functions while the older group mostly says it is not practiced. Participants above 30 say their agencies are successful in implementing equality, but for participants below 30 year old say they are uncertain.

### 4.3 Participants' Account on the Gender Discrimination They Experienced in their Workplace.

P1 and P3, participants from the same higher educational institution, elaborated that gender discrimination in their workplace was exhibited by the namecalling of his workmates based on the gender preference of their co-workers.

Table 3. Perception on the General Situation in their Workplace Relative to the Implementation of Gender Equality According to their Age

| Question | Above 30 years old Participants' Responses |  | 30 years old and Below Participants' Responses |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | WM | Interpretation | WM | Interpretation |
| 1. Does your institution facilitates and promotes the establishment of Gender Awareness Guidelines? | 4.35 | Mostly Yes | 3.40 | Neither Yes or No |
| 2. Are there any outstanding gender biases in your Institution's regulations or procedures? | 2.85 | Neither Yes or No | 2.40 | Mostly No |
| 3. Does your institution ensure equal hiring opportunities for all? | 3.65 | Mostly Yes | 3.40 | Neither Yes or No |
| 4. Does your institution ensure that a certain percentage of all supervisory and management positions are occupied by women? | 2.70 | Neither Yes or No | 3.00 | Neither Yes or No |
| 5. Does your institution develop campaigns to attract female professionals? | 3.25 | Neither Yes or No | 2.70 | Neither Yes or No |
| 6. Does your institution develop or ensure the existence of support systems for professional women? | 3.70 | Mostly Yes | 3.50 | Neither Yes or No |
| 7. Does your institution ensure that there are no wage disparities between men and women? | 3.90 | Mostly Yes | 3.60 | Mostly Yes |
| 8. Does your institution ensure equal access to training opportunities? | 4.15 | Mostly Yes | 3.90 | Mostly Yes |
| 9. Is the number of men who are performing supervisory and /or management activities greater than the number of women? | 2.70 | Neither Yes or No | 2.90 | Neither Yes or No |
| 10. Does your institution consider gender in delegating job assignments? | 3.30 | Neither Yes or No | 2.90 | Neither Yes or No |
| 11. Does your institution consider gender in delegating teaching loads? | 2.10 | Mostly No | 2.60 | Neither Yes or No |
| 12. Do you feel as though male members of staff at your workplace progress quicker than females? | 2.75 | Neither Yes or No | 2.30 | Mostly No |
| 12. Are you aware if your employer pays male and female workers doing the same job the same salary? | 3.40 | Neither Yes or No | 3.20 | Neither Yes or No |
| 13. Do you feel that becoming pregnant and taking maternity leave would have a negative effect on a female's career prospects at your workplace? | 2.45 | Mostly No | 2.40 | Mostly No |
| 14. Have you ever been a victim of gender discrimination in the workplace? | 2.75 | Neither Yes or No | 2.10 | Mostly No |
| 15. Does your institution consider gender in providing access to health-related services? | 3.40 | Neither Yes or No | 2.70 | Neither Yes or No |
| 16. Do you think that your institution has been successful in promoting gender equality in the workplace? | 4.00 | Mostly Yes | 3.40 | Neither Yes or No |
| Grand Mean | 3.26 | Neither Yes or No | 2.96 | Neither Yes or No |

P20 exposed that men mostly were accepted on jobs which can be performed by either men or women.

P24, a female participant, stated that most of the men co-workers' proposals were easily approved than theirs.
4.4 Summary of the Participants' Suggestion on How to Improve the Implementation of Gender Equality and Eliminate Sexism in the Workplace

P1 suggested that respect should be given to co-workers no matter what their gender preference is.

Because there is no law in the Philippines that deter discrimination, Dinagat Islands Representative Kaka J. Bagao has pushed anew his House Bill (HB 51) seeking to impose anti-discrimination against members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community. The Anti-Discrimination Bill defines and penalizes practices that unjustly discriminate LGBT in the criteria for hiring, promotion, transfer, designation, work
assignment, re-assignment, dismissal of workers and other human resource movement and action (Pedrejas, 2016).

P3, P8, P9, P10, P11, and P12 suggested that equal opportunities should be given to both men and women in their workplace through job assignments, promotions, and workloads.

P23 proposed that there should be an intensive implementation of Anti-Red Tape Act (ARTA) in their institution.

Department of Labor and Employment (2007) has declared Republic Act No. 9485, also known as Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007, to promote integrity, accountability, proper management of public

Table 4. Results of the Pearson r Test

| Regression Statistics |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | ---: | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Multiple R |  | 0.799479 |  |  |  |  |
| R Square | 0.639166 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Adjusted R Square |  | 0.615111 |  |  |  |  |
| Standard Error |  | 0.332829 |  |  |  |  |
| Observations |  | 17 |  | Fignificance F |  |  |
|  | 1 | SS |  | MS |  |  |
| Regression | 15 | 1.943341 | 2.943341 | 26.57042 |  |  |
| Residual | 16 | 4.604627 | 0.110775 |  |  |  |
| Total |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Table 5. Results of the t-Test

|  | Male | Female |
| :--- | ---: | ---: |
| Mean | 3.17254902 | 3.2 |
| Variance | 0.287810458 | 0.419444444 |
| Observations | 17 |  |
| Hypothesized Mean Difference | 0 |  |
| Df | 31 |  |
| t Stat | -0.134584281 |  |
| P(T<=t) one-tail | 0.446905296 |  |
| t Critical one-tail | 1.695518783 |  |
| P(T<=t) two-tail | 0.893810591 |  |
| t Critical two-tail | 2.039513446 |  |

affairs and public property as well as to establish effective practices aimed at the prevention of graft and corruption in government. As P23 elaborated that this policy will help in promoting gender equality by giving employees equal access to opportunities such as usage of facilities, application for certain position, and express their opinions freely.

P24 suggested that their institution should promote GAD.

Gender and Development as defined by Baden and Reeves (2000) is an approach which focuses on the socially constructed basis of differences between men and women and emphasizes the need to challenge existing gender roles and relations.
4.5 Relationship and Difference on the Perception of the Male and Female Participants on the General Situation in their Workplace Relative to the Implementation of Gender Equality

Evaluating responses of men over women reveals a Pearson r of 0.7795 and pvalue of 0.0001 with 17 degrees of freedom suggests significant relationship. This suggests that the participants share a similar response on most of the statements provided. This was further proven from $t$ test comparing the responses of men over women which is not significant as shown on table 4 and 5.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The following conclusions were derived based on the results and findings of this study:
5.1 The perception of the male and female participants on the general situation in
their workplace relative to the implementation of gender equality have no significant difference.
5.2 Employers and the community as a whole should implement an antidiscrimination policy, which defines discrimination and describes acceptable workplace behavior as it relates to gender-related topics such as pregnancy and marital status.
5.3 Employers and the community as a whole should create a well-defined diversity and inclusion program. These programs promote gender diversity through recruitment and retention efforts, employee awareness and genderspecific accountability.
5.4 Employers and the community as a whole should implement gender-related education and training programs. These programs are designed to raise employee awareness of gender issues and how these issues impact inter-office relationships. Education and training initiatives help employees explore attitudes and belief systems about gender topics. They encourage dialogue among participants that focus on gender. The programs help establish interpersonal relationships and discourage sex discrimination in the workplace.
5.5 Employers and the community as a whole should perform a workplace audit to identify internal practices that lead to this practice.

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