



Students Attitude Complexities in Gender Equality: Examining its Perception

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ABSTRACT

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The importance of addressing gender equality in education lies in its critical role in fostering inclusivity, diversity, and equitable opportunities for all learners. This study explored students' attitudes toward gender equality, focusing on their perceptions in academic, personal, and extracurricular contexts, to better understand prevailing attitudes and identify areas requiring attention. Employing a quantitative research design, data were collected from 45 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Food Technology program at the Technological University of the Philippines through a validated survey. ANOVA was utilized to analyze whether significant differences existed in gender equality perceptions across respondent groups. This technique was chosen for its relevance in assessing variance within and between groups, providing insights into attitudinal uniformity or diversity among students. Results showed overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward gender equality, with strong agreement that gender should not limit participation or performance in academic and extracurricular settings. However, slight gaps were observed in areas such as institutional support for extracurricular activities and equitable treatment of genders within familial environments. The ANOVA findings revealed no statistically significant differences among groups, underscoring the uniformity in perceptions despite diverse backgrounds. These findings highlight the progress made in promoting gender equality while emphasizing the need for continuous efforts to address unconscious biases and support inclusivity in education. The study contributes to the growing discourse on gender equality in educational contexts and serves as a call to action for institutions to prioritize inclusive practices across all facets of student life.



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A. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is a fundamental human right and a cornerstone for achieving inclusive, sustainable development. It is enshrined in global frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5, which emphasizes achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (Halisçelik & Soytaş, 2019). Nationally, the Philippines upholds gender equality through laws like the Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act No. 9710), which mandates the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of gender equity in all sectors, including education. These frameworks highlight the urgent need to address persistent gender disparities that continue to hinder progress across various dimensions of society.

In education, gender equality remains a challenge despite significant strides in policy development. Globally, women and marginalized genders often face systemic barriers in leadership roles, equal representation, and resource allocation (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2018; Esteves, 2018). In the Philippines, the Department of Education's (DepEd) Gender and Development (GAD) Framework advocates for gender-sensitive learning environments. However, challenges persist, such as ingrained stereotypes and unequal opportunities, especially in higher education (Símonardóttir et al., 2021). These disparities are not only a local issue but also reflect global patterns of inequity in educational institutions (Nielsen, 2014).

The problem is further compounded by a lack of empirical studies focusing on students' attitudes toward gender equality. Attitudes influence behavior and decision-making, shaping how gender equality is perceived and practiced in both academic and non-academic settings (Fang et al., 2023). While global studies highlight progress, gaps in understanding remain, particularly in how students internalize and respond to gender equality issues in diverse contexts (Russell & Fish, 2016). Locally, there is limited data on how Filipino students perceive gender equality, underscoring the need for research that bridges global frameworks with local realities.

This study seeks to address this gap by exploring students' attitudes toward gender equality across academic, personal, and extracurricular domains. By examining these perceptions, the research aims to identify barriers, opportunities, and areas for improvement. The results will contribute to the ongoing discourse on gender equity, providing actionable insights for policymakers, educators, and institutions. This is particularly relevant in light of increasing calls for inclusivity and the dismantling of gender biases, as highlighted by Dello Strologo et al. (2022). Through this research, the authors aim to advance understanding and propose strategies that align with national and global commitments to gender equality.

This study examines gender equality in academic, personal, and extracurricular activities at Technological University of the Philippines - Manila (TUP - M). It explores students' perspectives on integrating gender equality concepts into their experiences. The findings can help develop research projects and promote gender equality in academic settings, fostering a more inclusive atmosphere at TUP. Understanding student perspectives will improve initiatives promoting diversity and inclusivity. The goals of this study include an analysis of student perspectives to appreciate the complexities of their attitudes and beliefs about gender equality. By identifying knowledge gaps and misconceptions, the study hopes to influence policy and actions aimed at addressing difficulties within the Technological University of the Philippines - Manila (TUP) community. Furthermore, given the diversity of TUP's student body, this research also aims to provide essential insights into their attitudes, views, and understanding of gender equality, so contributing to the construction of a more inclusive and enlightened educational environment.

B. METHODS

1. Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative research approach, specifically a survey design, to examine the complexities in students' attitudes towards gender equality. The survey design was chosen for its ability to collect numerical data that could be analyzed using statistical methods. This method allows for a comprehensive evaluation of students' perceptions regarding gender equality in various contexts such as academics, personal life, and extracurricular activities. The quantitative approach provided measurable insights into the differences in perceptions, making it suitable for understanding the attitude complexities in gender equality.

2. Research Locale

The study was conducted at the Technological University of the Philippines (TUP), a public tertiary institution located in Ermita, Manila. TUP was selected due to its diverse student population and its recognition by the Commission of Higher Education (CHED). This setting provided a strategic and accessible platform for data collection regarding students' perceptions of gender equality, allowing the researcher to gather relevant information from students pursuing different academic tracks.

3. Research Participants

The participants in this study were 45 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Food Technology program at TUP. The sample was stratified based on the students' year levels to ensure representation from different stages of the academic program. The researcher employed a convenience sampling technique to select participants, as this method enabled efficient recruitment and data collection. The selection of students from a single academic program helped focus the study on a specific population while maintaining diversity in gender identities, including non-binary and gender-fluid participants.

4. Research Instrument

Data was collected using a tailored survey questionnaire, specifically designed to assess students' perceptions of gender equality. The questionnaire included 30 questions in a Likert scale that measured students' views on gender equality in terms of their academic experiences, personal lives, and participation in extracurricular activities. To ensure accessibility and ease of response, the survey was distributed digitally via Messenger. The inclusion of gender identity options, such as non-binary and gender-fluid, provided a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives on gender equality. The questionnaire was validated to ensure its reliability before dissemination. Statistical analysis, including the use of weighted mean and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), was employed to interpret the data. The weighted mean helped calculate the average perception of students on gender equality by taking into account the different importance levels of various responses. ANOVA was utilized to compare the variance in perceptions between different groups, focusing on mean differences while emphasizing the variance within and between groups.

5. Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering process began with securing approval from the research adviser. After approval, the researcher established communication with the students and provided information about the study, ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality. The survey questionnaire, which was designed to assess students' perceptions of gender equality, underwent a validation process with experts to ensure clarity and relevance. After validation, the survey was distributed digitally through messenger, allowing for easy access and timely responses from the participants. Following the distribution, the researcher monitored the collection of responses to ensure the required sample size of 45 students was reached. After the responses were gathered, the data were securely stored for analysis. Statistical methods, including the weighted mean and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), were used to analyze the data. The weighted mean provided an overall understanding of students' perceptions, while ANOVA was employed to determine any significant differences in perceptions between groups. This systematic approach ensured reliable and meaningful results for the study.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the data gathered from the respondents. The presentation is made using tables. Analysis and interpretation of data were performed through the tabular presentation, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Attitudes of the Respondents in terms of Age ($n=160$)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Woman	28	62.2%
Man	11	24.4%
Non-binary	5	11.1%
Gender-fluid	1	2.2%

The distribution of respondents in Table 1 highlights a predominant representation of women (62.2%) compared to men (24.4%), non-binary individuals (11.1%), and gender-fluid individuals (2.2%). This reflects an emerging diversity in gender identities, particularly among younger generations such as Gen Z, who are more likely to embrace non-traditional gender roles and identities (Fang et al., 2023). The inclusion of non-binary and gender-fluid respondents, although smaller in number, emphasizes the importance of addressing varied gender perspectives in educational research. These findings are consistent with Clark and Kosciw (2022), who noted that LGBTQ+ individuals face unique challenges in gaining equal representation and acknowledgment, yet their presence is critical for fostering inclusive educational environments.

The relatively lower representation of non-binary and gender-fluid respondents underscores persistent barriers and societal stigmas that may inhibit visibility or participation in such studies (Russell & Fish, 2016; Hazel & Kleyman, 2019). Globally, initiatives like SDG 5 highlight the need to promote inclusivity and equity across all genders, emphasizing not just women's empowerment but also the rights of other gender identities (Dello Strologo et al., 2022). Locally, studies such as those by Esteves (2018) show that despite progress in policy frameworks, there remain gaps in creating truly equitable spaces for marginalized genders in education. The results in Table 1 suggest that while strides have been made in representing diverse genders, continued advocacy and targeted interventions are needed to fully integrate all genders into educational and societal systems. The following Academics table is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Academics

Attitude Indicators	Mean	Description
I believe that all genders have equal opportunities in my academic field.	4.6	Strongly Agree
My academic institution promotes gender equality in its curriculum.	3.9	Agree
My academic performance is not affected by my gender.	4.5	Strongly Agree
All genders have an equal representation in academic leadership roles.	4.5	Strongly Agree
My academic institution treats all genders equally in terms of academic support and resources.	3.9	Agree
The school actively supports my personal development and well-being.	3.7	Agree
The school effectively handles diversity, equity, and inclusion issues from the students' perspective.	3.7	Agree

Attitude Indicators	Mean	Description
Academic institutions should provide training on unconscious bias to promote gender equality among faculty and staff.	4.5	Strongly Agree
Academic institutions should actively promote gender equality in all disciplines.	4.7	Strongly Agree
Academic departments must offer resources and support to tackle gender-related challenges faced by students.	4.6	Strongly Agree
Total Measure	4.3	Strongly Agree

The results in Table 2 indicate that respondents generally hold strong positive perceptions of gender equality in academics, with a total mean score of 4.3, categorized as "Strongly Agree." Respondents particularly endorsed the idea that academic institutions should actively promote gender equality across disciplines (mean = 4.7) and provide resources to address gender-related challenges (mean = 4.6). These findings align with Dello Strologo et al. (2022), who emphasize that educational institutions play a critical role in advancing SDG 5 by fostering equitable and inclusive environments. The belief that gender does not affect academic performance (mean = 4.5) or leadership representation (mean = 4.5) reflects a significant step toward normalizing equality in traditionally gender-biased settings, as highlighted by Nielsen (2014) in her study on academia.

However, areas such as promoting gender equality in the curriculum (mean = 3.9) and effectively handling diversity, equity, and inclusion issues from students' perspectives (mean = 3.7) scored lower, indicating room for improvement. These gaps resonate with the findings of Esteves (2018), who pointed out that while policy frameworks are in place, practical implementation often lags behind. Similarly, the relatively lower score on personal development and well-being (mean = 3.7) suggests that institutional efforts need to better address individual growth beyond academic metrics. As noted by Fang et al. (2023), academic settings that fail to fully integrate equity measures risk perpetuating subtle biases. The strong agreement on the need for unconscious bias training (mean = 4.5) highlights the respondents' recognition of systemic issues that require deliberate intervention. Collectively, these findings suggest that while progress has been made, continuous efforts are needed to create a more inclusive academic environment that fully supports all genders. The following is Personal Life as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Personal Life

Attitude Indicators	Mean	Description
My gender does not limit my opportunities.	4.5	Strongly Agree
My personal relationships are not affected by gender biases.	4.4	Strongly Agree
My decisions are respected regardless of my gender.	4.3	Strongly Agree
My gender does not affect my personal growth and development.	4.4	Strongly Agree
My family treats all genders equally.	3.9	Agree
I am comfortable interacting with members of the LGBT community.	4.8	Strongly Agree
I am open to being friends with members of the LGBT community.	4.7	Strongly Agree
My gender should not affect the opportunities available for pursuing my hobbies and interests	4.7	Strongly Agree
I should be free to choose my life path without gender-based judgment or discrimination.	4.7	Strongly Agree
My gender does not limit my ability to assume leadership roles and positively impact my community and personal life.	4.7	Strongly Agree
Total Measure	4.5	Strongly Agree

The findings in Table 3 demonstrate a strong consensus among respondents regarding gender equality in personal life, with a total mean score of 4.5, categorized as "Strongly Agree." The highest-rated items reflect strong agreement on comfort and openness toward interacting with and befriending members of the LGBTQ+ community (mean = 4.8 and mean = 4.7, respectively). These results align with studies by Clark and Kosciw (2022), who emphasize that fostering inclusive personal relationships contributes to the psychological well-being of individuals in diverse environments. Additionally, the belief that gender should not limit leadership opportunities or personal aspirations (mean = 4.7) is consistent with Russell and Fish (2016), who highlight the importance of challenging societal norms that restrict gender-based roles.

Despite these positive attitudes, areas such as equal family treatment of genders (mean = 3.9) scored lower, indicating that traditional gender biases may persist in familial contexts. This observation aligns with Símonardóttir et al. (2021), who noted that while families often aim for equality, ingrained cultural norms may still influence behaviors. Similarly, the scores on personal growth and unbiased decision-making (mean = 4.3-4.4) suggest that some respondents encounter subtle biases in their social environments. These findings underscore the need for continued advocacy and education to challenge societal norms and create equitable spaces within families and communities. The overall strong agreement on these attitudes highlights progress in normalizing gender equality in personal life, reflecting the broader societal shift toward inclusivity as advocated by global frameworks like SDG 5 (Halisçelik & Soytaş, 2019). The following table of Extracurricular Activities is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Extracurricular Activities

Attitude Indicators	Mean	Description
My gender does not limit my participation in extracurricular activities.	4.5	Strongly Agree
All genders have equal opportunities in extracurricular activities.	4.5	Strongly Agree
My performance in extracurricular activities is not affected by my gender.	4.5	Strongly Agree
All genders have an equal representation in leadership roles in extracurricular activities.	4.6	Strongly Agree
My institution treats all genders equally in terms of support and resources for extracurricular activities.	4.2	Strongly Agree
All genders have equal opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities.	4.6	Strongly Agree
My gender should not limit or dictate the extracurricular activities I can participate in.	4.7	Strongly Agree
Gender stereotypes should not limit the types of extracurricular activities that students can engage in.	4.8	Strongly Agree
All genders should have equal access to training and development opportunities in extracurricular activities.	4.7	Strongly Agree
Extracurricular clubs and organizations should actively promote and discuss gender equality.	4.7	Strongly Agree
Total Measure	4.6	Strongly Agree

The data in Table 4 reflects a strong consensus among respondents that gender equality should be upheld in extracurricular activities, with a total mean score of 4.6, categorized as "Strongly Agree." Respondents strongly agreed that gender stereotypes should not limit participation in activities (mean = 4.8) and that all genders should have equal access to training and development opportunities (mean = 4.7). These findings are consistent with studies by Dello Strologo et al. (2022), which highlight the critical role of challenging gender norms to create equitable opportunities in all aspects of student life. Additionally, the agreement that extracurricular organizations should actively promote gender equality (mean = 4.7) underscores the importance of fostering inclusive environments outside the classroom, aligning with the observations of Clark and Kosciw (2022) regarding inclusivity in co-curricular spaces.

However, institutional support for extracurricular activities received a slightly lower score (mean = 4.2), suggesting that resources and administrative efforts could be more equitably distributed among genders. This observation aligns with Esteves (2018), who pointed out that while gender equality policies often exist, their implementation, particularly in non-academic settings, can lag behind. Overall, the data reinforces the respondents' belief in eliminating barriers to participation and ensuring equal representation in leadership roles within extracurricular activities (mean = 4.6). These results emphasize the need for educational institutions to address systemic issues and actively promote inclusive practices to support gender equity across all facets of student engagement, as advocated by SDG 5 (Halisçelik & Soytaş, 2019). The following ANOVA Summary table is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. ANOVA Summary

Source	SS	DF	MS	F- stat	P-Value
Between Groups	0.12	2	0.06	1.36	0
Within Groups	1.21	27	0.05		
Total	1.33	29			

F = 1.36; Table Value = 3.35; Analysis: reject Ho if $F > 3.35$

The ANOVA results in Table 5 reveal no statistically significant differences in the perceptions of gender equality among the groups, as the computed F-statistic of 1.36 is lower than the table value of 3.35. The null hypothesis (H_0), which posits no significant differences between groups, cannot be rejected. This suggests a general uniformity in gender equality perceptions among the respondents, regardless of their grouping. Such findings align with studies by Kim (2017), who emphasized the utility of ANOVA in identifying variances between and within groups and its effectiveness in reinforcing findings of attitudinal consistency. The non-significant differences are corroborated by Fang et al. (2023), who observed similar trends in attitudes toward gender equality among Gen Z college students, pointing to a growing homogeneity in gender perceptions in educational contexts. However, the low between-group variance (SS = 0.12) compared to the within-group variance (SS = 1.21) highlights that individual experiences and biases within the groups may still influence specific perceptions. These findings underscore the importance of targeted interventions to address subtle inequities that may not appear in overall group analyses. The results support the need for continued educational efforts to further enhance uniform and equitable attitudes across all demographics, in line with global gender equality goals (Halisçelik & Soytaş, 2019).

D. CONCLUSION

The study revealed that students generally hold positive and inclusive attitudes toward gender equality in academics, personal life, and extracurricular activities, with strong agreement on the importance of equal opportunities and representation across all genders. The findings highlight a broad consensus among respondents that gender should not limit participation or affect performance in various aspects of student life. While minor areas for improvement were noted, such as institutional support for extracurricular activities and equal treatment of genders within families, the overall perception reflects progress toward inclusive and equitable environments in education. The ANOVA results further confirmed the absence of statistically significant differences in gender equality perceptions across groups, suggesting uniformity in attitudes among the respondents.

To build upon these findings, future research could explore longitudinal changes in gender equality attitudes to examine how perceptions evolve over time and in response to targeted interventions. Studies could also investigate the role of specific institutional policies or programs in shaping students' attitudes toward gender equality. Additionally, qualitative approaches could be used to delve deeper into the experiences of underrepresented gender identities, providing richer insights into the barriers they face. These directions for further research would contribute to the development of science by deepening our understanding of gender dynamics and informing evidence-based strategies to enhance equity in education and beyond.

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