Constructs of Gender-Responsive Public Organizations Using Confirmatory Analysis: Input for Policy Recommendation

Annabelle Roda-Dafielmoto*[1], Lorraine Grace Ugsang[2]
[1, 2] University of Mindanao
*Corresponding Author e-mail: *ardafielmoto@gmail.com*

Abstract

Aim: This study explores the main elements of gender responsiveness in public organizations, guided by both global and national gender equality mandates. It focuses on selected five regional offices located at the Prime Government Center in Koronadal City, all of which are recipients of the Gender and Development (GAD) Seal. The study aims to identify the key constructs of gender-responsive public organizations by examining the real and best practices in GAD implementation within these agencies.

Methodology: Using a mixed-method sequential exploratory design, the qualitative phase involved interviews with five Gender and Development Focal Persons and five Chief Administrative Officers from five regional offices in Region XII. The quantitative phase engaged three hundred fifty respondents for Exploratory Factor Analysis and seven hundred for Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

Results: Five critical constructs emerged: Ethical Leadership, Workplace Culture, Empowerment Through Recognition, Flexible Work Arrangement, and Budget Allocation. Through nine iterative refinements, the model achieved strong validity and reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha exceeding 0.98.

Conclusion: A refined two-factor structure highlighted Ethical Leadership and Empowerment Through Recognition as core constructs of gender-responsive governance. The validated framework advances Sustainable Development Goal 5 by supporting inclusive, equitable public policies in Region XII. Findings underscored the transformative role of ethical leadership and the power of recognition in institutionalizing gender equality.

Keywords: *constructs, gender-responsive, public organizations, confirmatory factor analysis, Gender and Development, SDG 5*

INTRODUCTION

Global and national frameworks underscore the urgency of gender-responsive public organizations to achieve gender equality and empower women (UNDP, 2021; EIGE, 2021; UN, 2021; UN Women, 2021; PCW, 2020). In the Philippines, while the Magna Carta of Women (2009) mandates allocating at least five percent of an agency's budget for Gender and Development (GAD), public institutions still exhibit fragmented approaches due to the absence of a unified guiding framework. The Philippine Commission on Women (2019) stresses that gender mainstreaming must anchor these efforts to ensure consistency, alignment of resources, and measurable progress.

Despite a growing body of research, most studies offer thematic insights without proposing validated frameworks. Park (2020) links women's presence in institutions to effectiveness but lacks a tested model. Similarly, the United Nations Development Programme (2021) notes persistent leadership gaps but falls short of offering tools to measure organizational gender responsiveness. Financial systems

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and procurement processes promoting gender equity have been studied (Viswanatha & Mullins; Orser et al., 2021), but remain reliant on narrative rather than empirical models.

Local studies echoed this fragmentation. Libre (2020) and Mendoza et al. (2020) highlighted implementation gaps and underrepresentation, while Romero et al. (2020) revealed limitations in GAD training. Dulin et al. (2020) and Abelgas and Salagubang (2020) focused on specific sectors, further confirming the need for an integrated approach. Santos and Villanueva (2023), Villarin and Cruz (2022) emphasized the lack of monitoring mechanisms and the tendency to prioritize outputs over transformative change.

Anchored on Organizational Theory and Gender and Development Theory, the study aims to address these gaps by identifying the core constructs of gender-responsive public organizations in Region XII using confirmatory factor analysis. It seeks to propose an empirically grounded, unified framework to guide policy formulation, leadership practices, accountability structures, and resource allocation (Díaz-Fuentes & Fernández-Gutiérrez, 2020). It contributes to both theory and practice by integrating Organizational Theory and Gender and Development (GAD) Theory into a validated framework for gender-responsive public organizations. It fills research gaps left by earlier studies that offered mostly descriptive insights (Park, 2020; UNDP, 2021) by using a mixed-method approach and robust statistical techniques (Díaz-Fuentes & Fernández-Gutiérrez, 2020).

In governance, it provides a practical model that guides agencies in applying gender equality mandates such as the Magna Carta of Women and GAD Budget Policy (PCW, 2020), focusing on ethical leadership, workplace culture, and resource use (UN Women, 2021; Santos & Villanueva, 2023). Locally, it highlights the best practices of five GAD Seal-recipient agencies in Region XII, offering replicable strategies for other local offices (Villarin & Cruz, 2022). Globally, it supports Sustainable Development Goal 5 by presenting a scalable model aligned with international frameworks, contributing sound perspectives to global gender governance discourse (UN, 2021; EIGE, 2021).

Objectives:

This study aims to examine and strengthen the development of gender-responsive public organizations by identifying key defining factors, evaluating their structural relationships, and proposing an evidence-based framework supported by relevant policy recommendations.

Specifically, it sought to:
1. identify the factors that define gender-responsive public organizations;
2. determine the structure loadings of the identified factors;
3. develop an alternative framework for gender-responsive public organizations; and
4. propose contextualized policy recommendations based on empirical findings to enhance the framework's real-world applicability and policy relevance.

METHODS

Research Design
This study utilized an exploratory mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative phases. It was conducted in selected five regional offices located in a Gender and Development Zone in the Prime Regional Government Center in Koronadal City, South Cotabato.

Population and Sampling
Respondents for the qualitative phase through key informant interview were five GAD Focal Persons and five Chief Administrative Officers from selected five regional offices. By purposive sampling, they were selected based on the following criteria: regular or permanent employment, membership in the

GAD Focal Point System, and lead role in the implementation of GAD programs in their respective organizations (Santos & Cruz, 2021; Dela Peña, 2022).

For the quantitative phase, stratified random sampling using sex as stratified variable was employed. Respondents for exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were permanent employees, with willingness to participate in the survey. For the Exploratory Factor Analysis respondents, computed sample size was three hundred fifty where sixty percent or two hundred ten were males and forty percent or one hundred forty were females (Raosoft, 2020). For the CFA respondents, the population size was eight hundred eighty-one. The computed sample size was seven hundred where sixty percent or four hundred twenty were males and forty percent or two hundred eighty were females (Raosoft, 2020).

Instruments

In the qualitative phase, the researchers utilized a semi-structured interview guide to identify measures that may affect gender responsiveness in public organizations. The researchers ensured that these factors were substantially explored, examined, and clarified with the key informants (Creswell, 2014; Bernard, 2021). The interviews were recorded, and the resulting transcripts were analyzed through thematic analysis to develop the statements for the quantitative survey (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

The quantitative phase of the research involved survey questionnaire for the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analyis (CFA). The significant statements derived from the qualitative phase served as the foundation for the EFA tool, which was subjected to validity and reliability tests (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021). The contents of the survey questionnaire were validated by a panel of experts and tested for internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha.

The survey questionnaires utilized the 5-point Likert scale to determine the level of agreement of participants with various statements presented. The Likert scale consisted of five options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The questionnaires were fielded to the five regional offices. The use of the Likert scale is a common method in social research to measure attitudes, opinions, and perceptions (Joshi et al., 2015).

Data Collection

The data-gathering process commenced with a formal request submitted to the participating regional offices in Region XII to secure authorization for the study. Once approval was granted, the researchers provided a clear explanation of the study's objectives and procedures, emphasizing its relevance to promoting gender-responsive public organizations. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring ethical compliance.

Treatment of Data

The qualitative data were processed through manual coding and thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and meaningful categories. Moreover, the quantitative data were encoded and statistically treated using SPSS and AMOS software. EFA was used to identify underlying factor structures, while CFA confirmed the structure's fit and reliability. Model validity was assessed through measures such as factor loadings, model fit indices, and Cronbach's Alpha, with reliability scores exceeding 0.98, indicating high internal consistency.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher followed strict ethical standards throughout the study. The data-gathering tool was reviewed and approved by the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee (UMERC). Informed consent was obtained, and all participation and data management followed approved protocols.

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RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This section shows the results of the study presented in a logical manner per research objective.

Identification of Factors of Gender-Responsive Public Organizations

Thematic analysis revealed that inclusive structures, policies, and workplace cultures were central to achieving Gender and Development (GAD) goals. These public offices promote respect and non-discrimination through merit-based hiring and inclusive practices that address intersecting inequalities (Crenshaw, 2020), aligning with international frameworks like Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women (CEDAW) and Sustainable Development Goal 5 (UN Women, 2023). Internal policies such as the Equal Opportunity Policy, Anti-VAW Act, and Safe Spaces Act, supported by accessible infrastructure, safeguard vulnerable groups (Barrera et al., 2022). Flexible work arrangements adopted across agencies further promote work-life balance and gender equity, consistent with ILO standards (ILO, 2021). From this analysis, five defining factors of gender-responsive public organizations in Region XII emerged: ethical leadership, which ensures alignment with legal mandates (UN Women, 2023); inclusive workplace culture, reflected in supportive infrastructure and caregiving policies (ILO, 2021; Barrera et al., 2022); empowerment through recognition, which drives cultural change and inclusive planning (Rao & Kelleher, 2021); flexible work arrangements that accommodate the needs of women, solo parents, senior citizens, and PWDs (ILO, 2020; UN Women, 2021); and resource allocation, where adherence to GAD budgeting and certification ensures accountability and institutionalization (DILG, 2023; USM, 2024).

Structure Loading of Factors of Gender-Responsive Public Organizations

This section presents the structure loading of factors that define gender-responsive public organizations, based on the perceptions of respondents. Understanding how various organizational elements contribute to gender responsiveness requires reliable data on individual attitudes and experiences. To capture this information, the 5-point Likert scale was utilized to ascertain the agreement or disagreement of the respondents based on the following options: *Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree,* and *Strongly Disagree* (Joshi et al., 2015).

Table 1. Factor 1 **Ethical Leadership**

Items	r-value
1. A gender-responsive public organization has ethical leadership.	0.713
2. A gender-responsive public organization is compliant with gender-related laws.	0.709
3. The organization recognizes gender-responsive achievements to motivate and inspire all employees.	0.66
4. A gender-responsive public organization is inclusive.	0.659
5. Individual participation in promoting gender equality within the organization fosters a culture of openness, inclusivity, and respect for all genders.	0.61
6. There should be facilities for lactating mothers, employees' small kids, Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens.	0.608
7. There are opportunities for individuals of all genders to participate in training and capacity-building programs	0.604
8. Flagship or major projects and programs should be gender-responsive as evaluated using gender tools (i.e. Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines, Project Implementation, Management, Monitoring and Evaluation).	0.602

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Factor 1 highlighted the critical role of ethical leadership and legal compliance in building a gender-responsive public organization, with the highest factor loadings (0.713 and 0.709) underscoring their importance. Ethical leadership, grounded in fairness and inclusivity, fosters gender equality, while adherence to gender-related laws provided a stable, accountable foundation for inclusive governance (Hair et al., 2022; Kabeer, 2022). Recognizing gender-responsive achievements (0.66) promotes a culture of continuous improvement, and fostering inclusivity and participation (0.659 and 0.61) ensured diverse voices are heard. Practical support measures such as lactation rooms and accessible facilities for children, Persons with Disabilities, and senior citizens (0.602–0.608) demonstrated a commitment to equity. Equal access to training and prioritization of gender-responsive projects further integrate gender considerations into daily operations, enhancing both service delivery and institutional inclusiveness (PCW, 2022; UN Women, 2021).

Table 2. Factor 2 **Workplace Culture**

Items	r-value
1. The organization provides continuous trainings to improve and sustain respect among genders.	0.667
2. The organization promotes inclusivity and respect for all genders through team-building activities.	0.643
3. The organization encourages the use of gender-fair languages in all communication.	0.636
4. The organization trains personnel in handling gender-related conflicts or issues.	0.634
5. There are programs that reinforce the implementation of breastfeeding station, child-minding area, PWD ramp, male and female comfort rooms for employees.	0.63
6. The organization ensures gender-neutral leisure spaces that welcome and include individuals of all genders.	0.611
7. The organization establishes support systems (i.e. Grievance Committee, CODI) for employees who experienced gender-related discrimination.	0.598
8. There are policies in place (i.e. anti-VAWC, Safe Space Act, SH Act) to prevent and address sexual harassment and gender-based violence.	0.585
9. The organization has a written policy anchored on Equal Opportunity Policy to promote gender equality and inclusivity.	0.575
10. The organization reviews and updates its written policy on gender equality to ensure it remains relevant and aligned with best practices.	0.555
11. There is an allocated budget for the operation of women's protection and gender sensitivity programs.	0.516
12. Gender equality specialized teams (i.e. GFPS, TWG, EXECOM) are established within the organization to drive initiatives promoting respect and inclusivity for all genders.	0.458

Factor 2 underscored the significance of cultivating a respectful, inclusive, and safe workplace culture for all genders within public organizations. The factor loadings, ranging from 0.667 to 0.458, highlight critical components such as continuous training, team-building, conflict resolution, and the use of gender-fair language. The highest loading (0.667) emphasized the effectiveness of sustained training initiatives that foster mutual respect and gender sensitivity among employees (Hair et al., 2022). Additional important elements included supportive infrastructure like breastfeeding stations, institutional policies against gender-based violence and discrimination, written commitments to gender equality, and

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allocated resources for implementing gender sensitivity programs (UN Women, 2021; PCW, 2022). Collectively, these dimensions illustrated the need for a multi-faceted approach—combining education, inclusive organizational practices, and strong policy mechanisms—to establish a truly gender-responsive workplace culture.

Table 3. Factor 3 **Empowerment Through Recognition**

Items	r-value
1.The organization demonstrates a commitment to non-discrimination anchored on the Equal Opportunity Principle.	0.764
2. The organization integrates cultural sensitivity in its processes.	0.71
3. The leadership acknowledges the significance of fostering respect based on the diverse backgrounds of all employees.	0.683
4. The organization observes gender inclusivity in its hiring and selection process.	0.679
5. The organization ensures adherence to Magna Carta of Women and other gender equality laws and regulations (CEDAW, BPfA, E.O 273, R.A. 11313, R.A. 7192) to promote a culture of respect and inclusivity.	0.678
6. The organization promotes gender-neutral job descriptions.	0.621
7. The organization prioritizes the needs of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), Indigenous Peoples (IPs), LGBTQ and other marginalized groups.	0.502
8. The organization observes flexible schedules to accommodate gender needs.	0.49

Factor 3 highlighted a holistic approach to fostering diversity, inclusion, and legal compliance within public organizations. The highest factor loading (0.764) reflects a strong institutional commitment to the Equal Opportunity Principle, emphasizing non-discrimination and equal access for all employees. Key practices supporting this commitment include cultural sensitivity (0.71), inclusive leadership (0.683), and gender-inclusive recruitment (0.679), which collectively help build a workplace where individuals from varied backgrounds feel respected and empowered (UN Women, 2021; PCW, 2022). Compliance with gender equality laws (0.678) and the use of gender-neutral job descriptions (0.621) contributed to a fair and unbiased environment, while addressing the needs of marginalized groups (0.502) and offering flexible work schedules (0.49) demonstrate responsiveness to the diverse needs of the workforce (Kabeer, 2022; ILO, 2022). Overall, these elements affirm that a gender-responsive public organization not only promotes gender equality but also cultivates an inclusive, respectful, and adaptive organizational culture.

Table 4. Factor 4 **Flexible Work Arrangement**

Items	r-value
1. The organization ensures policies on gender respect through the allocation and utilization of flexible work options.	0.672
2. Gender-responsive flexible work arrangements are implemented to promote equality and inclusivity.	0.662
3. The organization provides flexible work arrangements, such as remote work or flexible hours, to support work-life balance for employees of all genders.	0.659
4. Gender-inclusive policies and practices that aim to create a supportive environment where employees can balance their professional responsibilities with personal commitments, fostering equality and inclusivity in the workplace.	0.539

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5. The organization creates work arrangements that align with the work-life balance of all genders.	0.492
6. The organization practices flexible schedules to accommodate gender needs.	0.49
7. The organization encourages employees to suggest alternative work arrangements to accommodate their personal responsibilities, regardless of gender.	0.482
8. The organization adopts the 8-hour working arrangement.	0.415

Factor 4 underscored an organization's dedication to gender equality through the implementation of flexible work arrangements, with correlation values (r-values) revealing how these policies support a respectful and inclusive workplace. The highest correlation (0.672) is associated with the formal institutionalization of flexible work policies, affirming their effectiveness in fostering equity (ILO, 2022; UNDP, 2021). Gender-responsive flexibility (r = 0.662) and support for work-life balance across genders (r = 0.659) further reinforce a positive workplace culture. Additionally, inclusive policies (r = 0.539) enhance the work environment, though lower correlations—such as accommodating gender-specific needs (r = 0.49), openness to alternative arrangements (r = 0.482), and reliance on traditional 8-hour shifts (r = 0.415)—highlight areas where improvement is needed (Kabeer, 2022; OECD, 2021). These findings suggested that while progress has been made, public organizations must continue advancing gender-responsive flexibility to ensure genuine inclusion and equity in the workplace.

Table 5. Factor 5 **Resource Allocation**

Items	r-value
1. Employees are aware of the specific budget allocation dedicated to gender-responsive programs and services and perceive it as a positive step towards addressing gender disparities.	0.791
2. Individuals of all genders are involved in the budgeting process and decision-making related to resource allocation.	0.748
3. There is gender impact assessment during the budget planning phase to ensure that the budgeting process is gender-responsive.	0.726
4. Gender-responsive budgeting in the organization ensures that resources are allocated equitably to address the unique needs and challenges faced by different genders within the organization.	0.707
5. The budget allocation for gender-responsive initiatives, including at least percent allocation of the organization is transparent and effectively utilized.	0.68

Factor 5 highlighted the critical role of gender-responsive budgeting in promoting equity within public organizations, as evidenced by strong factor loadings ranging from 0.672 to 0.791. The highest loading (0.791) showed that employees value having dedicated budgets for gender programs, while inclusive budgeting practices (0.748) promote fairness and representation (PCW, 2022; UN Women, 2020). Additional elements such as conducting gender impact assessments (0.726), allocating resources based on gender-specific needs (0.707), and ensuring transparency in fund usage (0.680) contributed to greater equity, efficiency, and accountability (OECD, 2021; UNDP, 2021). These findings affirm that gender-responsive budgeting not only fosters workplace inclusion but also strengthens the organization's overall commitment to gender equality. Furthermore, the five key factors—Ethical Leadership, Workplace

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Culture, Empowerment Through Recognition, Flexible Work Arrangement, and Resource Allocation—were extracted using a Likert scale and Varimax rotation, which converged in nine iterations, confirming the model's robustness and conceptual clarity (Hair et al., 2022).

The Baseline Model

The Baseline Model, derived from Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), used Varimax rotation. This model identified three latent constructs (factors), namely, ethical leadership, workplace culture and empowerment through recognition, based on how survey items naturally clustered together.
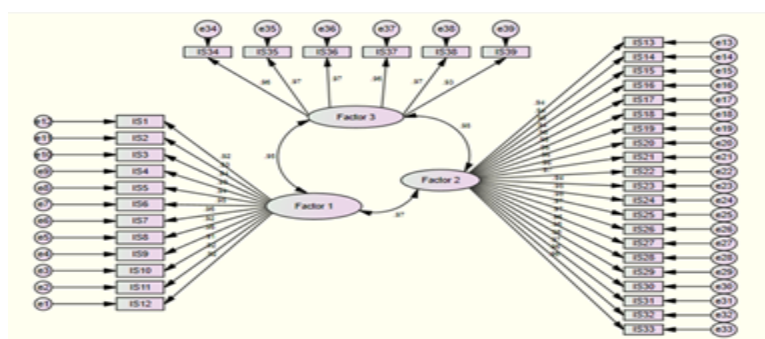

Figure 1. Baseline Model

The baseline model presented a three-factor structure linking 39 observed variables (IS1–IS39) to three latent constructs (Factors 1–3), each with associated error terms (e1–e39). Standardized factor loadings indicate strong relationships between items and their respective latent factors, with Factor 1 (IS1–IS12) and Factor 2 (IS13–IS33) showing particularly high internal consistency, while Factor 3 (IS34–IS39) appears more distinct. Correlations between Factors 1 and 2 suggest shared variance, implying conceptual overlap, whereas Factor 3 is less correlated, indicating a more unique construct. However, interpretation was constrained by the absence of item content and model fit indices such as CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and χ², which are critical for confirming the adequacy of the factor structure (Brown, 2020; Kline, 2023; Schumacker & Lomax, 2021).

Table 6. Model Fit Indices

	X2	X2/df	IFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	PCLOSE
Baseline Model	3902.44	5.583	0.919	0.937	0.933	0.09	0.00
1. Modification 1 Correlation of error term	1481.34	2.806	0.96	0.981	0.974	0.057	0.001
2. Modification 2 Deletion of Factor 2	214.884	2.171	0.989	0.994	0.991	0.046	0.798
Acceptable Values		<3.00	0.90	0.90	0.90	<0.08	>0.05
Good Fit Values	p<0.05		0.95	0.95	0.95	<0.08	>0.05

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The initial statistical model showed poor fit, as indicated by a high chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio ($X^2/df = 5.583$), RMSEA above 0.08, and a PCLOSE of 0.00—highlighting significant model misspecification (Hair et al., 2022; Brown, 2020). After adjusting for correlated error terms, the model improved substantially, with X^2/df reduced to 2.806 and fit indices (IFI, CFI, TLI) exceeding the 0.95 threshold. Although RMSEA improved to 0.057, it was still slightly above ideal. A second modification, which removed Factor 2, yielded excellent fit: X^2/df dropped to 2.171, RMSEA to 0.046, and PCLOSE rose to 0.798, confirming a well-fitting model. These iterative adjustments underscore the importance of addressing model errors to enhance structural validity (Taherdoost et al., 2022; Nardo et al., 2021).

The Final Model

The Final Model, developed through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), anchored upon and validated the structure proposed in the baseline model. It confirmed that the factor structure was statistically sound and data fitted the hypothesized model well.
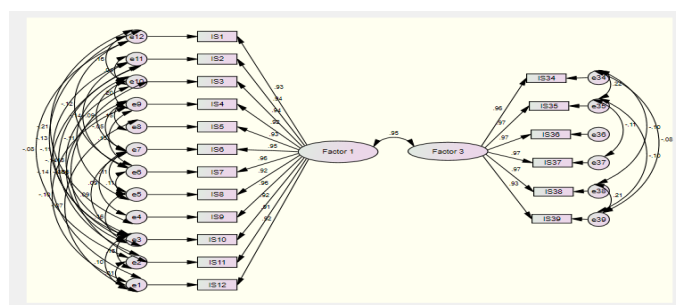

Figure 2. Final Model

This confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model demonstrated two latent constructs—Factor 1 (Ethical Leadership) and Factor 3 (Empowerment Through Recognition)—measured by observed variables IS1–IS12 and IS34–IS39, respectively, with high standardized loadings (mostly >0.90), indicating strong internal consistency and construct validity (Hair et al., 2022; Alamer & Marsh, 2022). Both factors exhibited excellent measurement properties, with unstandardized loadings exceeding 0.97, low standard errors, and critical ratios far above the 1.96 threshold ($p < 0.001$), confirming convergent validity (Taherdoost et al., 2022).

The strong correlation between Factor 1 and Factor 3 ($r = 0.95$) suggested convergent validity but raises concerns about discriminant validity, implying they may reflect related dimensions of a broader concept like inclusive culture or transformational leadership (Guenole & Brown, 2020; Nardo et al., 2021). While the model shows statistical robustness and conceptual clarity, the absence of global fit indices (e.g., RMSEA, CFI) limits a full evaluation of overall model fit, necessitating further analysis to assess whether these constructs should remain distinct or be unified (Kline, 2023; Xu & Tracey, 2022; Aritonang et al., 2021).

Formulation of Framework for Gender Responsive Public Organizations in Region XII

To build a gender-responsive framework for public organizations in Region XII, five core elements are essential: Ethical Leadership, Workplace Culture, Empowerment through Recognition, Flexible Work Arrangements, and Resource Allocation. Ethical leadership lays the groundwork for inclusive governance by promoting fairness, transparency, and respect for rights, with leaders shaping organizational norms and advancing gender-sensitive planning and accountability (Brown et al., 2021; UN Women, 2020). A

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gender-sensitive workplace culture reinforces these values through inclusive practices, training, and equitable leadership, helping dismantle systemic biases (Connell & Pearse, 2020; ILO, 2021). Empowerment through recognition validates contributions from women and gender minorities via inclusive awards and evaluations, while flexible work arrangements—such as remote work and adaptable schedules—support work-life balance, especially for women caregivers and mothers (ILO, 2022). Finally, equitable resource allocation through gender-responsive budgeting ensures that resources address the needs of all genders, enhancing transparency and institutional impact (UNDP, 2021; PCW, 2022).

Contextualized Policy Recommendation for Public Organizations in Region XII

The final model for gender-responsive public organizations in Region XII emphasized Ethical Leadership and Empowerment through Recognition, offering policy directions rooted in the region's diverse tri-people context—Indigenous Peoples, Moros, and Christian settlers. Culturally responsive leadership training, anchored in fairness, inclusiveness, and accountability, should be institutionalized, supported by ethics-based performance evaluations to measure leaders' commitment to GAD principles (Brown et al., 2021; Crenshaw, 2021; UN Women, 2020; OECD, 2021; Magpayo, 2023). Empowerment through recognition must be embedded in Human Resource systems through gender-fair promotions, inclusive awards, and budgeted recognition programs (Kabeer, 2022; World Bank, 2021; PCW, 2022). To scale best practices, the GAD Zone model of Koronadal City should be expanded across regional offices using localized GAD Seal standards that reflect national policy and regional diversity (DILG XII, 2023; Santos & De Vera, 2024; United Nations, 2020). Multi-sectoral collaboration—including civil society, universities, and indigenous women's groups—is vital to co-create inclusive tools (Connell & Pearse, 2020; PCW, 2022), while monitoring efforts must use culturally sensitive, gender-disaggregated data to evaluate progress. These strategies together aim to institutionalize inclusive governance in Region XII and support the achievement of SDG 5.

Conclusion

The study demonstrated the strong reliability of its instrument for measuring gender-responsive practices in public organizations, with high Cronbach's alpha values (0.988 for Ethical Leadership, 0.986 for Empowerment through Recognition, and 0.992 overall), supporting the development of a robust framework for Region XII grounded in five core constructs: Ethical Leadership, Workplace Culture, Empowerment through Recognition, Flexible Work Arrangement, and Resource Allocation (Hair et al., 2022). Informed by Organizational Theory (Scott, 2014) and GAD Theory (Kabeer, 2022; Rathgeber, 1990), the framework aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 5 by advancing inclusive governance and gender equality (UN Women, 2021; United Nations, 2020). Institutionalizing this framework requires mandatory gender-sensitivity training, ethics-based leadership evaluations (Brown et al., 2021; UN Women, 2020), HR systems that reward inclusive recognition (Kabeer, 2022; PCW, 2022), and expansion of local best practices such as the Koronadal GAD Zone (DILG XII, 2023; Magpayo, 2023). Strengthening the GAD Seal through multi-sectoral partnerships and adopting inclusive, data-driven monitoring systems are also essential for fostering transformational and equitable public institutions (Connell & Pearse, 2020; Santos & De Vera, 2024; OECD, 2021; UN Women, 2020).

Recommendations

To enhance the understanding and implementation of gender-responsive governance in public organizations, future research should focus on several key areas. Longitudinal studies are needed to evaluate the lasting effects of ethical leadership and empowerment through recognition on outcomes like gender equity, innovation, and service quality (Brown et al., 2021; World Bank, 2021). Comparative regional studies—particularly between Region XII and other diverse areas—can offer insights into how cultural contexts shape the effectiveness of GAD strategies (Crenshaw, 2021; Magpayo, 2023). Further,

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research on intersectionality should examine how overlapping identities such as gender, ethnicity, religion, and disability influence access to leadership and recognition, especially in tri-people communities (Kabeer, 2022; Crenshaw, 2021). Evaluating flexible work arrangements in public service is also vital, as hybrid models affect gender equality and employee well-being (ILO, 2022; UNDP, 2021). Lastly, developing localized gender-responsive budgeting tools will help monitor progress and ensure accountability in promoting gender equity (PCW, 2022; UNDP, 2021).

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