



Original article

Incorporating male and female perceptions on gender views of select Northern Cebuanos in developing ICT-based information education and communication drive on gender awareness

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ABSTRACT

Much has been said about gender equality which has become the topic of the modern world, especially women empowerment. While this is the talk of the century little is done in the dissemination of research outputs to correct the gray areas of gender equality. In particular, this paper mainstreams the gender equality perspective of Cebuano men and women accompanied by views on a variety of topics related to gender equality to develop an ICT-based information education and communication drive that helps promote gender equality. The researchers employed a gender audit survey to know the perceptions of both male and female on gender views such as household division of labor, gender-related and health-related practices, views about sex, and men and women's views on education and work and family decision-making. Significant results were found among male and female respondents such that their perceptions on household division of labor were congruent. However, they vary on different aspects in gender and health relates practices, views on sex, views on education and work and family decision making. A Kruskal-Wallis Test was employed and it reflected in the results that there is a significant relationship between gender and the perceptions at .295 given the 95% confidence level. The male and female respondents may have different gender views. However, they both hold the same aspiration: easy access and acceptable information on gender equality via ICT. Therefore, the development of an ICT-based information education and communication drive would be very effective in delivering reliable information on gender equality.

KEYWORDS: *gender and equality, perspective, Cebuano, information, education*

1 INTRODUCTION

Achieving gender equality and empowering women

are essential to raising everyone's quality of life. The Philippines and 192 other United Nations (UN) member states have agreed to achieving Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, by 2030 (SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls). For SDG5, there are nine objectives and fourteen indicators. The major objective of SDG5 aims is to achieve genuine and ongoing gender equality for women and girls in all spheres of life. The goals include eradicating discrimination, violence against women and girls, early and forced marriage, equal leadership opportunities for men and women, and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights for all people (Department of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development, n.d).

The result of ongoing inequity between men and women in all aspects of life is gender discrimination. By the middle of 2020, around 80 million people had been forcefully relocated due to violence, persecution, and other human rights abuses (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, n.d). The scope and severity of prejudice against women varied according to culture, politics, ethnicity, area, nation, and economy. Because of the underlying biological and societal variables, these crises disproportionately impact women and children's well-being. Women could have limited access to resources like money, equipment, and training to defend themselves in emergencies. Just over 50% of the world's refugees and internally displaced people are women and girls; however, in 2014, just 4% of projects in the UN inter-agency appeals specifically targeted women and girls (UN Women, n.d).

It is crucial to use gender-appropriate approaches for gathering information about women and girls in humanitarian settings since these crises can worsen gender inequities and dangers for women and girls (United Nations Children's Fund, 2012). When attempting to comprehend gender equality, gender-appropriate tools are essential because they offer sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that are particular

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to the sociocultural, health, and safety requirements of women and girls (Dazé & Church, 2019). In the past few decades, various approaches or strategies have been used to promote the advancement of women and gender equality generally. Still, it has been discovered over time that these approaches have failed to address gender issues adequately and have not been able to improve the status of women as intended. As a result, there have been some noticeable changes in recent years to the national and worldwide initiatives to promote gender problems.

The abilities required to engage, interact, and work in modern society properly have changed significantly due to the fast development of current information and communication technologies (ICT). Researchers and decision-makers have focused on digitalization as a potentially effective way to increase gender equality in the job sector. (United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 2019). All facets of the planning and implementation of ICT policy and regulatory frameworks must identify and address gender concerns. Despite the significance of national ICT policy decisions on women's access and use, most nations' ICT policies pay little consideration to gender equality viewpoints. Civil society organizations and national machinery for women's empowerment have been comparatively underutilized. To guarantee that the needs and interests of both women and men are effectively acknowledged and that gender equality goals are included in project design, gender issues must be addressed in the early phases of ICT initiatives. ICTs enable a greater exchange of information and knowledge, and their increased accessibility and use raise awareness of other cultures' norms, traditions, and customs (Mishra & Kiran, 2015).

Thus, gender-aware approaches and tools for consultation and involvement are being developed by ICT advocates and practitioners to assess women's needs and priorities and ensure that ICT is effectively used as a tool for women's empowerment. These consist of planning and assessment procedures as well as training programs. In order to create an effective ICT-based Information Education and Communication drive, it is also critical to understand the respondents' perspectives on gender equality.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed the mixed method and partly used a gender audit survey developed by International Center for Research on Women and Instituto Promundo. The questionnaire used by researchers was not fully similar to the surveys stated above, however portions from the questionnaires are pulled out that best fit for the study. The researchers also made sure that the questionnaire used is relevant to the Philippine setting and to the study. The majority of the studies in this review were cross-sectional surveys. The assessment tools

examined five dimensions of gender views (*including household division of labor, gender-related and health-related practices, views about sex, and men and women's views on education and work and family decision-making*). The existence of gender bias and discrimination was explored.

Research Participants and Environment

There were 249 respondents who were randomly chosen from the researchers. Random sampling was used and the best method to use for cross-sectional surveys, as it allows the results to be generalizable to the population. A random sample is a subset of the population in which each member has an equal probability of being chosen. The study was conducted in the Northern part of the Province of Cebu, Philippines that cover areas such as Bogo City, San Remigio, Medellin, and Daanbantayan.

Data processing and analysis

The data gathered from the questionnaires was encoded in Microsoft Excel, and the file was imported into statistical software. The demographic data of the respondents were presented using frequency distribution to visually organize and present frequency counts of the gathered information. The data were treated using weighted means as an initial analysis on their perceptions on five dimensions of gender views. Finally, the researcher employed Kruskal-Wallis Test to know the statistical significance of both male and female on their perceptions on the five dimensions of gender views. The researchers used 0.05 confidence level for the test employed.

Ethical Considerations

The conduct of the research followed the Helsinki Declaration (World Medical Association, 2001). The researchers' review application was made through filling out ethic review forms. The researchers also submitted the following requirements like research proposal, similarity index certificate, technical panel endorsement, informed consent forms and updated curriculum vitae of the authors. Authors also filled-out risk assessment form, application form, and informed consent of evaluation.

The respondents were informed of the aims, methods, benefits, potential risks, the participants' right to withdraw at any time without reprisal, and other information they needed. Informed consent will be obtained from the respondents. The researchers kept the consent and profile of the participants. Strictly, only the researchers of the study would have access to the profiles. Lastly, the researchers informed the participants about sensitive topics related to gender and ensured them that the data gathered were kept confidential and used for research purposes only. The researchers also informed the participants that the researchers would not force them to answer such questions.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 249 respondents participated in the study, which was composed of 127 females and 122 males. Most of the respondents were between 40 - 59 years old (33.86% female; 44.26%, male), roman catholic (81.89%, female; 85.25%, male), and with 4-6 household members (48.01%, female; 52.46%, male). Majority of the male respondents have a male boss (57.38%), while female respondents were self-employed (56.69%). Both of the respondents have met a female boss in their job (59.06, female; 73.77, male). Female respondents won't mind if they have a female boss (51.97%), which is the opposite of the male respondents (74.59%). The result of this tabulation is congruent to (Delgado-Iglesias, 2019) that sexism prevails in the perception of the male respondents. It would be understandable but not tolerable that men would feel emasculated when led by a woman because men think of themselves as someone who leads and manages as they were trained to be. However, in this generation, women are more involved in business, and there are still negative stereotypes of women's leadership that affect the performance of these women (Duehr & Bono, 2006; Fischbach et al., 2015).

Table 1. Profile of the respondents

Parameter	Female		Male	
Age	f	%	f	%
60 and above	7	5.51	3	2.46
50-59	43	33.86	19	15.57
40-49	29	22.83	64	44.26
30-39	23	18.11	33	27.05
20-29	10	7.87	8	6.56
19 and below	15	11.81	5	4.10
Total	127	100.00	122	100.00
Religion				
Roman Catholic	104	81.89	104	85.25
Born Again	6	4.72	4	3.28
Seventh Day Adventist	10	7.87	5	4.10
Baptist	7	5.51	9	7.38
Total	127	100.00	122	100.00
Number of Household Members				
1-3	25	19.69	22	18.03
4-6	61	48.01	64	52.46
7-9	33	25.98	31	25.41
10 and above	8	6.30	5	4.10
Total	127	100.00	122	100.00
Current Boss Gender				
Male	30	23.62	70	57.38
Female	25	19.69	21	17.21
Self-Employed	72	56.69	31	25.41
Total	127	100.00	122	100.00
Have you ever had a female boss?				
Yes	75	59.06	90	73.77
No	52	40.94	32	26.23
Total	127	100.00	122	100.00
Would you mind if you had a female boss?				
Yes	61	48.03	91	74.59
No	66	51.97	31	25.41

In the aspect of household division of labor, female respondents strongly agreed while males agreed that it is the responsibility of women to prepare food (4.51, female; 4.16, male), clean the house (4.40, female; 4.03, male), wash the clothes (4.51, female, 3.96, male), clean the bathroom or toilet (4.41, female; 3.82, male), and take care of the siblings (4.31, female; 3.74, male). The idea that a woman's most significant function is as a housewife, including taking care of the household and cooking for the family, is one that both respondents agree on (4.28, female; 3.84, male). Also agreed that it is the mother's obligation to change diapers, bathe children, and feed them (3.33 female; 3.58, male). Further, both somewhat agree or disagree that the man should have the final word about decisions at home (2.28, female; 2.75, male). This implies that women are constantly associated with domestic workers (homemakers), whose job is seen to include household chores. The majority of women in sophisticated post-industrial cultures consider it fair that women perform the majority of home tasks (Fuwa & Tsutsui, 2010).

Table 2. Household Division of Labor

Household Division of Labor	Female		Male	
	Mean	DI	Mean	DI
1. It is the Woman's Responsibility or Job To:				
1.1 Prepare food	4.51	SA	4.16	A
1.2 Clean the house	4.40	SA	4.03	A
1.3 Wash clothes	4.51	SA	3.96	A
1.4 Clean the bathroom/toilet	4.41	SA	3.82	A
1.5 Take care of you or your siblings	4.31	SA	3.74	A
2. A woman's most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family.	4.28	SA	3.84	A
3. Changing diapers, giving kids a bath, and feeding the kids are the mother's responsibility.	3.33	A	3.58	A
4. A man should have the final word about decisions at his home.	2.28	N	2.75	N

The table below presents the gender and health-related practices between men and women. Highlighted in Table 3 is that the females concur that they tolerate violence in order to keep the family together (3.62) because they think that man is always tougher than them (3.41). Male respondents may feel they are more physically robust than women (3.90), but they still respect gender equality (3.83), and with that, gender equality helps women more than them (3.45). Intimate partner violence (IPV) is one of the most widespread forms of violence against women, which continues despite an international commitment to achieving gender equality. IPV, which consists of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse by a current or former intimate partner, sometimes involves more than one type of violence against the impacted women (Fulu & Heise, 2015). The estimated global prevalence of IPV is 1 out of 3 or 30% of the women who are physically abused by their intimate partner (WHO, 2021); however, this conceals significant

variation in frequency between and within regions, countries, and even between neighborhoods (Heise & Kotsadam, 2015).

With regards to finances and budgeting, both respondents disagree (2.39) to somewhat agree that spouses should have separate bank accounts and that a joint bank account is much preferable (3.50, female; 3.66, male), and that the wife would be in charge of the budget (3.55, female; 3.50, male), ensuring that they both agreed on it (3.94, female) (4.05, male). The family has been extensively studied as a decision-making entity. The degree of interdependence between family members is inherent in family decision-making. Thus, one person's decision directly affects the well-being of the other person(s). In the advanced age of globalization, many essential family income sources exist. One is to plan and manage the family budget, which can help save money and buy necessary things.

Compared to their opposite sex, both respondents were somewhat in favor of being treated equally at work (3.36, male; 3.86, women). Additionally, respondents somewhat agreed (3.27, female) or disagreed (2.99, male) with separating men's and women's schools. Women who answered to the study believed that there were equal opportunities for hiring for both sexes (3.70), that there were no wage or salary differences between men and women (3.82), and that training opportunities were equally successful in today's Filipino society (4.03, female, 3.86) as well as to research activities (4.14, female). Nevertheless, respondents agree upon equal treatment in terms of appraisal/performance management (4.00, 3.69), promotion opportunities (3.97, 3.86), family-friendly policies (4.05, 3.80), flexible working hours (3.62, 3.52), facilities (games & sports, etc.) (3.75, female), IT services (4.20, 3.55), medical aspects (4.17, 3.52) and policies & procedures (e.g.grievance & disciplinary policies) (4.09, 3.47) to men and women. Laws should consider the distinctions between men and women in the workplace because the genders differ significantly. At various points throughout history, legislation has addressed worker rights in the workplace. In fact, the law establishes different flexible and predictable norms that govern society. Because they impact a large segment of the population, one of these regulations deals with gender equality in the workplace. However, they vary in how each gender's rights are applied in two important ways. First, as per the legal system, men and women shouldn't be treated differently in the workplace based on their human rights. The second, though, is that because of their biological differences, men and women should be treated differently at work (Nedzel, 2016).

Most of today's legislative frameworks tend to support workplace equality for women. One of these instances is how the International Labor Organization (ILO; 2007) employs terminology inclusive of all genders when referring to employees to advance gender

equality. In addition, the ILO supports gender equality in a number of contexts, including pay fairness, social discourse, and labor norms and institutions (ILO 2007). Since international laws do not recognize gender inequalities, they are reflected in the workplace.

Furthermore, health facilities were granted separately to specific genders (3.46, female, 3.77, male), and they are also satisfied with the available health services as equally friendly to men and women (3.69, female, 3.62, male). Gender differences in health and the use of health services and facilities are a long-standing concern for the U.S medical system. Such differences have been documented in physician and home care use, hospital service, outpatient surgery, and preventive services (Dunlop et al., 2002).

Table 3. Gender-related and Health-related Practices

Gender and Health Practices	Female		Male	
	Mean	DI	Mean	DI
1. When women work they are taking jobs away from men	2.16	D	2.84	M
1.1 When women get rights they are taking rights away from men	2.21	D	2.84	M
1.2 Rights for women mean that men lose out	2.50	D	2.93	M
1.3 A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together	2.65	A	2.65	M
1.4 A man is always tougher than the woman	2.41	A	2.90	A
1.5 Gender equality, meaning that men and women are equal, has already been achieved today	2.66	M	3.83	A
1.6 Work to achieve gender equality today benefits mostly women.	2.40	M	2.45	A
2. Do you believe that in the household				
2.1 Couple should have separate bank accounts	2.38	D	2.83	M
2.2 Couple should have one bank account	3.50	A	3.86	A
2.3 The wife should be in-charge of the budget	3.55	A	3.50	A
2.4 The husband should be in-charge of the budget	2.72	M	2.91	M
2.5 Both should agree with the budget	3.04	A	4.01	A
3. Do you feel that you are treated equally at work place when compared with the opposite sex?	3.36	A	3.86	M
4. Do you think that female and male students should have separate schools?	3.27	M	2.99	M
5. Do you think that men and women today are given equal job hiring opportunities?	3.70	A	3.52	M
6. Do you believe that a certain percentage of all supervisory and management positions must be occupied by women?	2.96	M	2.99	M
7. Do you believe that there should be no wage/salary disparities between men and women?	3.82	A	3.80	M
8. Is there equal access to training opportunities in Filipino society today?	4.03	A	3.86	M
8.1 Do you believe that men and women should be given equal opportunities in research activities?	4.14	A	3.86	M
9. Based on your experience, do you feel that men & women today are treated equally in the following areas?				
9.1 Appraisal/Performance Management	4.00	A	3.69	A
9.2 Promotion Opportunities	3.97	A	3.86	A
9.3 Family-Friendly Policies	4.05	A	3.80	A
9.4 Flexible Working hours	3.62	A	3.52	A
9.5 Facilities (games & sports, etc.)	3.75	A	3.77	M
9.6 IT Services	4.20	A	3.55	A
9.7 Medical aspects	4.17	A	3.52	A
9.8 Policies & Procedures (e.g grievance & disciplinary policies)	4.09	A	3.47	A
10. Do you believe that there should be separate health facilities for men and women on specific times/days for male/female health services?	3.46	A	3.77	A
11. Do you feel that the health services available to you are equally friendly towards men and women?	3.69	A	3.62	A

Table 4 shows the views of the respondents on sex. Both respondents somewhat agree that it is the responsibility of a woman to avoid getting pregnant (2.70, female, 3.02 male). Females agree that both genders should decide on what type of contraceptive to use (3.46), yet, males' response is still in doubt (2.66). When it comes to a working person as a sex worker or prostitute, the respondents concede that it is morally wrong (4.33, female; 3.87, male) and violates one's right (4.03, female; 3.65, male). On the other hand, both respondents somewhat agree or disagree that being a sex worker or prostitute is an own choice (3.00 female; 2.95, male), and thinks it is wrong, yet nothing can be done to change it (3.24, female; 2.86, male). However, females insist it is wrong (2.01) and cannot be a job like any other (1.84). For instance, respondents also agree that it is morally wrong (4.28, female, 3.73, male) and a violation of rights (3.91, female, 3.56, male) for a young man or woman under age 18 to work as a sex worker or prostitute. Women see it as wrongdoing and cannot be a job like any other, while men somewhat agree or disagree with it (see Table 3). Poverty is the main driver of prostitution (Sanchez, 2021). In the Philippines, prostitution is considered an indecent job. These workers receive discrimination from society and even from their family members. Prostitutes not only suffer fear of having a sexually-transmitted disease but also suffer from social distress (Sanchez, 2021).

Respondents opposed the purchase of sex (2.20, female, 2.60, male) as they think that it is against the law (3.78, female, 3.56, male) as well as working as a sex worker or a prostitute (4.21, female, 3.51, male). Prostitution is illegal in the Philippines because it is considered an act of violence against women stated in the Magna Carta of Women or Republic Act No. 9710 (Philippine Commission on Women, 2021). However, prostitution still exists because it is somewhat tolerated in some countries.

Table 4. Views About Sex

	Female			
	Mean	DE	Mean	DE
1. It is a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant.	2.70	SI	3.02	SI
2. A man and a woman should decide together what type of contraceptive to use.	3.46	A	2.66	N
3. What do you think about an adult man or woman working as a sex worker or prostitute?				
I think it is wrong morally	4.33	SA	3.87	A
I think it violates her rights	4.03	A	3.65	A
I think it is her own choice	3.00	N	2.95	N
I think it is wrong but there is nothing that can be done about it.	2.86	SI	3.24	SI
I see nothing wrong with it	2.01	D	3.02	SI
It's a job like any other	1.84	D	2.84	SI
4. What do you think about a young man or woman under age 18 working as a sex worker or prostitute?				
I think it is wrong morally	4.28	SA	3.73	A
I think it violates her rights	3.91	A	3.56	A
I think it is her own choice	3.09	N	2.81	SI
I think it is wrong but there is nothing that can be done about it	3.02	N	2.87	SI
I see nothing wrong with it	2.42	D	2.63	SI
It's a job like any other	2.23	D	2.54	SI
5. It is alright for men or women who purchase sex.	2.20	D	2.60	D
6. Do you think it should be against the law to purchase sex from a sex worker or prostitute?	3.78	A	3.56	A
7. Do you think it should be against the law to work as a sex worker or prostitute?	4.21	SA	3.51	A

Suggestions cited below to which a certain percentage or quota of university seats and positions, as well as representation in government, should be designated for women in regions where women are the minority were made in order to address gender inequalities arising in education and the workplace. The majority of the male respondents disagree with the system that it is necessary to ensure a fixed percentage of positions for women in government (52.89); however, female respondents were doubtful (36.11), same goes for a fixed proportion of places for women to study in universities (46.46, female; 48.76, male) and in executive positions (48.76, disagree, male) (46.46, neutral, female). Meanwhile, respondents agree that such laws promote equal salaries for men and women in the same position (50.39, 49.59). Reservation of work to have a similar proportion in the workplace would not be effective because it depends on the workforce demand. Both men and women should be certain that they will not be removed from the position they hold, degraded, or denied any promotion by the employer (Zainol et al., 2019).

Table 5. Views on Education and Work

In order to correct gender inequalities in education and the workplace, it has been suggested by some that a fixed proportion or quota of university places and jobs as well as representation in government should be reserved for women in areas where women are in the minority:

IDEAS	Female			Male		
	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
	f(%)	f(%)	f(%)	f(%)	f(%)	f(%)
There should be a quota system which guarantees a fixed proportion of places for women in government.	43 (33.85)	26 (20.47)	58 (45.67)	42 (34.71)	64 (52.89)	16 (13.11)
There should be a quota system which guarantees a fixed proportion of places for women to study in universities.	47 (37.01)	21 (16.54)	59 (46.46)	46 (38.02)	59 (48.76)	17 (13.93)
There should be a quota system which guarantees a fixed proportion of places for women in executive positions.	37 (29.33)	25 (19.69)	46 (36.11)	33 (27.27)	61 (50.41)	28 (22.95)
There should be such laws that promote equal salaries for men and women in the same position.	64 (50.39)	13 (10.24)	50 (39.37)	40 (32.97)	45 (37.19)	17 (13.93)

Majority of the respondents viewed that both mother and father must agree on who has the final word in the household decision that involves the family spending money on food and clothing (36.11) for females, 63.93 for males) and large investments such as buying a car, a house, or a household appliance (77.95 for females, 77.05 for males). As for female respondents, both couples had the final word about decisions involving the child's schooling and other activities (36.11), while for male respondents, it would come from the mother (42.98). Men and women have different experiences and expertise in financial decisions (Kim et al., 2017), hence, different views on making financial decisions. In a typical household, men do have more bargaining power and have more share of income and more financial knowledge (Babiarz et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2012). In a married couple with kids, their decision-making approach is influenced by the needs of the children (Kim et al., 2017).

Table 6. Views on Family Decision-making

IDEAS	Female			Male		
	Mother	Father	Both Must Agree	Mother	Father	Both Must Agree
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Who had the final word in your household about decisions involving you and your brothers and sisters (their schooling, their activities)?	11 (8.65)	19 (14.96)	97 (36.11)	52 (42.98)	23 (18.18)	48 (39.34)
Who had the final word in your household decisions involving how your family spends money on food and clothes?	36 (28.35)	10 (7.87)	81 (36.11)	39 (32.23)	5 (4.13)	78 (63.93)
Who had the final word in your household decisions involving how your family spends money on large investments such	10 (7.87)	18 (14.17)	99 (77.95)	9 (7.44)	19 (15.70)	84 (77.85)

A Kruskal-Wallis Test showed that there is a significant difference between female and male gender equality perspectives ($H(1) = 1.097, p = .295$, with a mean rank of 54.57 for female respondents and 48.43 for male respondents (see Table 7.1 and 7.2). This implied that both respondents showed differences in their gender views. Accurate information on gender views is recommended to deeply understand each of the roles and responsibilities of both genders. Furthermore, an information drive must be designed to expand individuals' views on gender.

Table 7.1 Mean Rank

Male and Female Respondents	N	Mean Rank
Scores on Gender Views	Male 51	48.43
	Female 51	54.57
	Total 102	

Table 7.2 Test Statistics

	Gender Scores on Gender Views
Chi-Square	1.097
df	1
Asymp. Significance	.295

Emerging themes

Benefits of ICT on gender equality

Several developing nations have acknowledged the potential advantages of ICT as a tool for promoting gender equality. Respondents cited that ICT matters in gender equality because it provides several opportunities,

gives access to basic needs such as healthcare and education, and improves the quality of information gathered and shared for development planning.

As a tremendous facilitator, the Internet offers unprecedented opportunities to both men and women. ICT's potential can be realized with the support of several initiatives and collaborations. ICT provides time and space flexibility, which makes it a vital resource for women, especially in the least developed nations where they struggle with a lack of time, social isolation, and access to information and valuable resources (Ogato, 2013). Moreover, by facilitating communications and enhancing information availability, ICT may assist in addressing various health, social, and economic issues.

Better access to information and enhanced ICT can enhance peoples' capabilities to make choices in their lives in various areas. As a result, people will have more power over significant life decisions (Ogato, 2013); in this sense, information and ICTs can contribute to women's empowerment. Thus, ICT may be an effective tool for promoting economic and social development by generating new forms of economic activity, job possibilities, and other benefits, enhancements to networking, engagement, and advocacy within society, as well as improvements to the delivery of healthcare and other services. Notably, gender needs to be considered at the early stages of the diffusion of IT in order for everyone to participate fully in their use; with this, it is crucial to base any ICT-based program on gender equality in a locality.

Gender Equality Programs through ICT

Gender should be inculcated in programs or projects to ensure equality and proper distribution of workloads throughout the project duration. Respondents tend to raise the same concern on valuing ideas for both sexes and should not discredit any form of contribution to the project. For instance, in research projects, opinions, decisions, and related matters should include women's ideas and opinions (Njuki, 2016).

Project outcomes should be transferred to the community providing additional knowledge or skills to women. The respondents implied that knowledge sharing and skill transfer would have an impact on women, especially those who are unemployed or in rural areas. Technologies such as water management, embroidery, tailoring, solar energy, biogas, weaving, and fishery would greatly help the women in rural areas (Singh, 2010). Also, the participation of women in the digital economy can increase national capacity and achieve greater economic independence and development (Mishra & Kiran, 2015).

Further research on gender and the incorporation of gender and ICT would be a significant step in developing gender equality since there are limited programs related to this topic. The development of an ICT-based information and education system would benefit women

as it is relevant to this generation where it dominates the mainstream, as explained by the respondents. When developed and implemented, this system would help address issues related to women's rights and gender injustice (O'Donnell & Sweetman, 2018).

4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The overall insight that we can draw from the above discussion is that mainstreaming gender equality perspectives to develop ICT tools for information education and communication drive can influence public opinions in a positive way about gender equality. Their perceptions can significantly contribute to understanding the different gender views and would help implement information education and communication drive through the lens of ICT. Lastly, ICT itself cannot directly address gender inequality issues; however, it would help bring new information resources and serve as a portal to new communication platforms for the communities where the gender gap is prevalent. Development of an information system to help information education and communication to help improve gender equality. This should also serve as a database to store all gender-related programs for future use. Lastly it should also provide data analytics on gender equality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Sincere thanks to the CTU management, who provides the advice and financial support. The product of this research paper would not be possible without all of them.

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