

# Enhancing Gender Role Adaptability through Development Programs in Higher Education Institutions

Nikkithea L. Beduya, Ledesma R. Layon, Iris L. Gulbe, Richard Woo Beduya, Tracy L. Mantos, Hannibal R. Layon, Honey Lou O. Layon

**Abstract** - Gender diversity remains a pressing challenge in higher education, particularly in contexts where traditional norms strongly influence institutional practices. This study examines adaptability development programs across Cebu Technological University's North Cell campuses, focusing on LGBTI students, peers, and faculty (n = 166). Using purposive sampling and descriptive statistical analysis, findings reveal a broadly neutral level of acceptance of gender-diverse students.

The study contributes to global discourse by contextualizing gender role adaptability within Philippine higher education. It highlights the persistent influence of traditional norms and underscores the need for structured adaptability development programs to foster inclusivity, resilience, and student well-being. Recommended measures include safe-zone initiatives, gender-sensitive policies, and faculty development programs.

**Novelty Statement:** This research is among the first to systematically examine adaptability development programs for gender role inclusivity in Philippine higher education, offering evidence-based recommendations for institutional reform.

**Keywords:** Gender Role Adaptability, Higher Education, Inclusivity, LGBTI Students, Development Programs

## I. INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions are critical spaces for identity formation, social development, and intellectual growth. Yet, gender-diverse students—particularly those identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI)—often face exclusion, discrimination, and institutional barriers that hinder academic and psychosocial development (Kosciw et al., 2020).

Traditional gender norms continue to shape educational environments worldwide, reinforcing rigid expectations regarding gender expression and social roles. Butler's Gender Performativity Theory (1990) emphasizes that gender identity is socially constructed and continuously shaped by cultural expectations. Similarly, Social Role Theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012) explains how societal expectations influence perceptions of appropriate behaviors, often resulting in resistance toward gender-nonconforming individuals.

Nikkithea L. Beduya, Ledesma R. Layon, Iris L. Gulbe, Richard Woo Beduya, Tracy L. Mantos, Hannibal R. Layon, Honey Lou O. Layon, Cebu Technological University (CTU), Cebu, Philippines

In the Philippine context, LGBTI students frequently encounter stigmatization influenced by religious beliefs and cultural traditions (Manalastas et al., 2017). Such experiences negatively affect academic engagement, mental health, and social integration. Conversely, supportive institutional climates have been shown to improve academic performance, psychological resilience, and student retention (Rankin et al., 2010).

This study investigates acceptance levels of gender roles among LGBTI students, peers, and faculty members across selected CTU campuses. It further proposes adaptability development programs to enhance inclusivity and resilience in higher education institutions.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### A. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design to examine perceptions and acceptance levels toward gender roles among selected higher education stakeholders. Descriptive research is widely used in social science research to systematically describe existing phenomena and identify patterns within specific populations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

### B. Participants

The respondents included three groups representing key academic stakeholders:

- LGBTI Students (n = 54)
- Peers/Schoolmates (n = 59)
- Faculty and Administrators (n = 53)

The inclusion of multiple stakeholder groups allows for a comprehensive evaluation of institutional acceptance toward gender diversity, consistent with recommendations by educational inclusion research (Vaccaro et al., 2015).

### C. Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was utilized to select participants who possessed direct experiences or knowledge regarding gender diversity within the academic setting. This method is appropriate when the research requires participants with specific characteristics relevant to the study objectives (Etikan et al., 2016).

#### *D. Data Collection Instrument*

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire that assessed:

- Sexual orientation and demographic characteristics
- Religious affiliation and influence
- Attitudes toward gender roles
- Beliefs and social practices
- Behavioral reactions toward LGBTI students

The instrument was developed based on gender inclusivity frameworks used in educational climate studies (Rankin et al., 2010).

#### *E. Data Analysis*

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Weighted mean and percentage distribution were utilized to determine acceptance levels and identify patterns across respondent groups. These descriptive statistical measures are commonly applied in social perception studies to evaluate attitudinal responses (Field, 2018).

### III. RESULTS

#### *A. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

The findings revealed that bisexual students represented the largest proportion of respondents (46.3%), followed by homosexual students (37%). Most respondents belonged to the 18–20 age group, indicating that early adulthood is a critical developmental period for gender identity exploration. Previous studies suggest that younger individuals experience increased vulnerability when navigating gender identity due to social pressures and identity development challenges (Russell & Fish, 2016).

#### *B. Acceptance of Gender Roles in Wardrobe*

The results indicate that traditional gender-conforming uniform practices received highly favorable acceptance across respondent groups. Male students wearing male uniforms and female students wearing female uniforms obtained high acceptance ratings. These findings suggest strong adherence to institutional dress norms that align with socially constructed gender expectations.

Conversely, cross-gender uniform practices received significantly lower acceptance ratings, particularly among faculty respondents. This finding supports previous research indicating that institutional policies often reinforce traditional gender expressions, limiting gender flexibility in academic environments (Taylor & Peter, 2011).

The resistance toward cross-gender attire reflects broader societal influences, particularly in cultures where gender roles are closely linked to moral, religious, and social expectations (UNESCO, 2016).

#### *C. Attitudes Toward Religiosity*

The study revealed strong religious influence among respondents, with most participants indicating that they were raised in religious households. Religious participation, including worship attendance and adherence to religious teachings, was moderately supported across groups.

However, perceptions regarding religious acceptance of LGBTI individuals showed variability. While some respondents acknowledged religious support for gender diversity, others expressed disagreement, reflecting ongoing tensions between religious doctrines and gender inclusivity. Previous research indicates that religious environments often shape attitudes toward gender diversity, influencing institutional acceptance levels (Yip, 2005).

#### *D. Beliefs on Traditional Gender Roles*

The findings revealed strong endorsement of traditional gender roles among LGBTI students and faculty members. Respondents generally agreed that men and women possess distinct societal roles related to family responsibilities, childbearing, and economic support. However, peer respondents demonstrated relatively more progressive perspectives, indicating generational differences in gender role perceptions.

These findings align with Social Role Theory, which suggests that gender expectations are deeply rooted in cultural and social systems (Eagly & Wood, 2012). Additionally, global studies have documented gradual shifts toward gender inclusivity among younger populations due to increased exposure to diversity education and digital media (Pew Research Center, 2020).

### IV. DISCUSSION

Findings reveal that traditional gender norms continue to influence perceptions in higher education, resulting in neutral acceptance levels of LGBTI students. This underscores the need for adaptability development programs to foster inclusivity.

Institutional strategies should include gender-sensitive dress policies, diversity awareness training, peer-led inclusivity campaigns, and faculty development programs. Such initiatives align with global evidence that inclusive campus climates improve student engagement, well-being, and academic success (Rankin et al., 2010; Vaccaro et al., 2015).

Generational differences in acceptance highlight the potential of youth-led initiatives to drive cultural change. Adaptability programs can bridge gaps between traditional norms and inclusive practices, positioning higher education institutions as leaders in social transformation.

### V. CONCLUSION

Acceptance of LGBTI students within CTU campuses remains generally neutral, with traditional norms exerting

significant influence. To strengthen inclusivity, higher education institutions should implement adaptability development programs that provide personalized support, safe-zone initiatives, and integration of gender inclusivity education into curricula. These measures can enhance student well-being, academic performance, and institutional commitment to diversity.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Cebu Technological University – North Cell Campuses (Tuburan, Danao, Carmen, and Daanbantayan) for their institutional support and cooperation in the conduct of this study. The authors also extend their appreciation to the LGBTI students, peers, faculty members, and administrators who willingly participated and shared their valuable insights, which significantly contributed to the completion of this research.

Special recognition is given to colleagues and academic mentors who provided technical guidance, constructive feedback, and encouragement throughout the research process. The authors likewise acknowledge the support of their respective families and professional networks whose encouragement made the completion of this study possible.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] J. Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York, NY, USA: Routledge, 1990.
- [2] J. W. Creswell and J. D. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: Sage Publications, 2018.
- [3] A. H. Eagly and W. Wood, "Social role theory," in *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology*, P. A. M. Van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski, and E. T. Higgins, Eds. London, U.K.: Sage Publications, 2012, pp. 458–476.  
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446249222.n49>
- [4] I. Etikan, S. Musa, and R. Alkassim, "Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling," *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 1–4, 2016.  
<https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>
- [5] A. Field, *Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS Statistics*, 5th ed. London, U.K.: Sage Publications, 2018.
- [6] J. G. Kosciw, C. Clark, N. Truong, and A. Zongrone, "The 2019 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in U.S. schools," *GLSEN Research Report*, New York, NY, USA, 2020.
- [7] E. J. Manalastas, B. A. Torre, and F. A. Pionilla, "The psychology of sexual orientation and gender diversity in the Philippines," *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, vol. 50, no. 2, pp. 101–126, 2017.
- [8] Pew Research Center, "Global attitudes toward gender and LGBT issues," Washington, DC, USA, 2020.
- [9] S. Rankin, G. Weber, W. Blumenfeld, and S. Frazer, "2010 State of higher education for LGBT people," *Campus Pride National Climate Survey Report*, Charlotte, NC, USA, 2010.
- [10] S. T. Russell and J. N. Fish, "Mental health in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth," *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, vol. 12, pp. 465–487, 2016.  
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-clinpsy-021815-093153>
- [11] C. Taylor and T. Peter, "Every class in every school: Final report on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Canadian schools," *Egale Canada Research Report*, Toronto, ON, Canada, 2011.

- [12] UNESCO, "Out in the open: Education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression," Paris, France, 2016.
- [13] A. K. T. Yip, "Religion and sexuality: Theoretical explorations," *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 56, no. 1, pp. 47–65, 2005.



First A. Author — Nikkitha L. Beduya was born in Bogo City, Philippines. She earned the Bachelor of Science degree in Pharmacy from Southwestern University, Cebu City, Philippines; the Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education, major in English, from Central Philippine Adventist College, Negros Occidental, Philippines; the Diploma in Professional Education from Cebu Technological University – Daanbantayan Campus, Cebu Province, Philippines; and a Diploma in Early Childhood Education from Cebu Technological University – Main Campus, Cebu City, Philippines. She completed graduate studies, including the Master's in Education, major in Administration and Supervision; the Master of Arts in Teaching Science; the Doctor of Philosophy, major in Technological Management; and the Doctor in Developmental Education, all from Cebu Technological University, Cebu City, Philippines. Her major field of study is higher education administration. She is an Associate Professor and core faculty member of the College of Education, and a faculty member of the Graduate School Office at Cebu Technological University – Daanbantayan Campus, Philippines.

She is an Associate Professor and core faculty member of the College of Education, and a faculty member of the Graduate School Office at Cebu Technological University – Daanbantayan Campus, Philippines. She teaches educational research and sciences, advises theses and dissertations, and owns eight pharmacy chains. She has 13 years of managerial experience as a pharmacist in her field of specialization, including international practice as a Pharmacist in Dubai and as an ESL Teacher in South Korea. In addition, she is an international lecturer in Turkey. She serves as an excellent adviser to the *Supreme Student Government (SSG)*, the *Future Science and Technology Leaders of the Philippines (FSTLP)*, and *The Modern Fisher*, the official school publications. She has published Scopus-indexed works and has been granted numerous utility models and extension projects. Her research interests include adaptability development programs, gender roles in higher education, and LGBTI student inclusivity. Dr. Beduya became a Member (M) of the University Research and Academic Review Board (URUAR). She has received awards for research excellence and has served on committees for student development programs and inclusive education initiatives.

Second Author - Dr. Ledesma R. Layon is Dean of the Graduate School at Felipe R. Verallo Memorial Foundation College, Bogo City, Philippines. She previously served as Officer-in-Charge and President of Cebu Technological University – Main Campus, holding the academic rank of Professor VI. Her research interests include educational leadership, curriculum development, and institutional management. She has published Scopus-indexed works and holds several utility models.

Third Author - Dr. Iris L. Gulbe is an Associate Professor V and Chairperson of the BSIT Department at Cebu Technological University. She also teaches in the Graduate School Office, specializing in statistics and applied sciences. Her research interests include IT education, applied statistics, and instructional innovation. She has published Scopus-indexed works and has been granted multiple utility models.

Fourth Author - Engr. Richard Woo Beduya is a licensed Mechanical Engineer and entrepreneur, owning Woo Pharmacy with eight branches across Cebu Province, Philippines. He completed academic requirements for the Master's in Education, major in Administration and Supervision, at Cebu Technological University – Daanbantayan Campus. His research

interests include entrepreneurship, engineering education, and management.

Fifth Author - Dr. Tracy L. Mantos is an Associate Professor V and Chairperson for Internationalization at Cebu Technological University – Daanbantayan Campus, where she also coordinates SIAP and teaches in the Graduate School Office. Her research interests include internationalization, faculty mobility, and global education. She has published Scopus-indexed works and holds several utility models.

Sixth Author - Dr. Hannibal R. Layon is Instructor II and Chairman of Sports and Athletics at Cebu Technological University – Daanbantayan Campus. His research interests include sports development, health education, and student leadership. He has published Scopus-indexed works and has been granted several utility models.

Seventh - Dr. Honey Lou O. Layon is an Assistant Professor III and Chairperson of the Canvas program at Cebu Technological University – Daanbantayan Campus. Her research interests include hospitality management and educational leadership. She has published Scopus-indexed works and holds several utility models.