

Original Article

Institutional Readiness for Gender Mainstreaming in Higher Education: An Evidence-Based Framework for Institutionalizing Gender and Development Mechanisms

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Abstract. This study assessed the institutional readiness of San Pablo Colleges for gender mainstreaming and explored the experiences and views of stakeholders to guide the development of a Gender and Development (GAD) Institutionalization Framework. The study addressed the gap between existing gender mainstreaming mandates and actual institutional practice in higher education. A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was used. Quantitative data were gathered through surveys from [insert number] purposively selected stakeholders, while qualitative data were collected through interviews with [insert number] participants. Descriptive statistics were used to measure readiness across five domains: policy and governance, programs and activities, human resource capacity and participation, resource allocation and support mechanisms, and monitoring and evaluation systems. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, and the findings were integrated through triangulation. Results showed that San Pablo Colleges had a moderate level of institutional readiness for gender mainstreaming, with an overall mean of [insert value]. The strongest areas were human resource capacity, inclusive participation, and a generally respectful institutional culture. However, key gaps were found in the lack of a formal GAD structure, fragmented implementation, limited training, weak monitoring systems, and insufficient resource allocation. Based on these findings, the study proposed a GAD Institutionalization Framework centered on the creation of a centralized GAD Office, clearer policies, coordinated programs, regular capacity-building activities, proper budget support, and data-based monitoring and evaluation. The study concludes that gender mainstreaming efforts are already present in the institution but need stronger structures, resources, and systems to become fully institutionalized.

Keywords: *Gender and Development; Gender Mainstreaming; Higher Education; Institutional Readiness; Mixed methods.*

The institutionalization of gender mainstreaming in higher education has emerged as a critical global priority in advancing inclusive and sustainable development. Anchored in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 4 (Quality Education), higher education institutions

are increasingly expected to move beyond symbolic commitments and toward the systematic integration of gender perspectives across governance, instruction, research, and institutional culture. Contemporary scholarship underscores that gender equality is not merely a programmatic concern but an organizational and structural imperative requiring embedded systems, coordinated governance mechanisms, and sustained institutional accountability rather than isolated initiatives (Ojwala et al., 2022; O'Connor, 2023). Empirical studies further affirm that while many universities demonstrate strong commitments to gender equity, the absence of formalized structures and coherent institutional strategies often constrains long-term impact and sustainability (Crimmins et al., 2023; Titili et al., 2024).

A persistent global concern is the “implementation gap” in gender mainstreaming, where policy recognition does not necessarily translate into institutional practice. A growing body of literature highlights that gender initiatives in higher education are frequently fragmented, dispersed across units, and insufficiently supported by systematic monitoring, evaluation, and capacity-building mechanisms (Kataeva et al., 2024; Castellsagué, 2024; Condrón et al., 2025). This fragmentation limits institutional effectiveness and underscores a fundamental structural issue: the absence of integrated governance systems and centralized coordinating mechanisms. Without such structures—commonly referred to as Gender Equality Units or Gender and Development (GAD) Offices—gender mainstreaming efforts often remain symbolic rather than transformative, thereby weakening institutional accountability and long-term sustainability.

In the Philippine higher education context, gender mainstreaming is reinforced by national legal and policy frameworks that require institutions to integrate gender-responsive principles into their systems and operations. Republic Act No. 9710, or the Magna Carta of Women, mandates all government and educational institutions to adopt gender mainstreaming as a strategy for promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination. This mandate is further operationalized through national directives issued by the country's gender equality authority and economic planning bodies, as well as policies from the higher education regulatory agency, which collectively require institutions to establish coordinating mechanisms, integrate gender-responsive planning and budgeting, and institutionalize monitoring and evaluation systems. These policy frameworks converge on a critical institutional requirement: the establishment of formal structures—such as GAD Offices or Gender Equality Units—to ensure policy coherence, coordinated implementation, and accountability within higher education institutions.

Despite these mandates, higher education institutions exhibit varying levels of readiness for gender mainstreaming. While foundational practices are often present, institutional efforts remain constrained by fragmented implementation, limited coordination, insufficient resource allocation, and underdeveloped monitoring and evaluation systems. Moreover, institutional culture, leadership commitment, and organizational capacity significantly shape how gender policies are interpreted and operationalized, reinforcing the need to assess not only compliance but also the depth of institutional preparedness (Hinton-Smith, 2025). In this regard, institutional readiness emerges as a critical multidimensional construct encompassing governance structures, human resource capacity, program implementation, resource support, and accountability mechanisms.

Given these considerations, this study addresses a critical gap in the literature by examining gender mainstreaming through an integrated organizational lens within a higher education context. The quantitative strand systematically assesses the institutional readiness of San Pablo Colleges across five key domains: policy and governance, programs and activities, human resource capacity and participation, resource allocation and support mechanisms, and monitoring and evaluation systems. Complementarily, the qualitative strand explores stakeholder perceptions, structural challenges, emerging opportunities, and institutional dynamics that shape the implementation of gender mainstreaming initiatives. Through a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, the study generates a comprehensive, rigorous, and context-sensitive analysis of institutional preparedness for gender-responsive governance.

Beyond its descriptive scope, the study advances substantive theoretical and practical contributions to the field. Theoretically, it enriches the growing scholarly discourse on institutional theory and gender governance by elucidating how organizational readiness conditions mediate the transition from mere policy compliance toward full institutionalization of gender equality principles. Practically, the study proposes an evidence-based, contextually grounded framework for institutionalizing Gender and Development (GAD) mechanisms—structurally aligned with Gender Equality Units—designed to facilitate coherent, sustainable, and system-wide

gender mainstreaming in higher education institutions. These contributions are consistent with emerging empirical evidence demonstrating that meaningful student engagement with gender equality goals requires not only sustained awareness-building but also robust institutional support structures and formalized advocacy frameworks capable of translating policy mandates into actionable and empowered institutional practice (Alvero et al., 2025). Collectively, the study bridges the persistent gap between legislative gender equality mandates and on-the-ground institutional practice, offering a replicable and scalable governance model for higher education institutions committed to gender-responsive transformation.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, which involves the simultaneous collection and independent analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, followed by their integration for comprehensive interpretation. This design was appropriate as it enabled the researcher to capture both the measurable extent of institutional readiness and the nuanced perspectives of stakeholders regarding gender mainstreaming within San Pablo Colleges. The design consists of two complementary strands. The quantitative strand measures institutional readiness using structured indicators, while the qualitative strand explores participants' perspectives, experiences, and insights through open-ended responses. Both strands were implemented concurrently using a single instrument composed of closed-ended and open-ended items, ensuring that data from both approaches were obtained from the same participants within the same timeframe. After separate analyses, the quantitative and qualitative results were integrated during the interpretation phase through triangulation to identify convergence, divergence, and complementarity of findings. This integration strengthened the study's validity and depth by providing a more comprehensive understanding of institutional readiness for gender mainstreaming.

Research Participants

The study involved administrators, faculty members, administrative and support staff, and students of San Pablo Colleges, who served as key stakeholders in assessing the institution's readiness for gender mainstreaming. The target population consisted of all officially affiliated members of the institution during the study. A total of $n = 307$ participants were included in both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportionate and equitable representation across four stakeholder groups: administrators, faculty members, non-teaching personnel, and students. The population was divided into these strata, and respondents were randomly selected from each group in proportion to its relative size within the institution. This approach enhanced the representativeness, reliability, and generalizability of the findings while minimizing sampling bias. Notably, all 307 participants who completed the quantitative survey were also invited to respond to the qualitative component through structured written interview questions embedded within the same instrument. This approach is consistent with convergent parallel mixed-methods designs in which both quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously from the same set of respondents. It allowed for a more robust integration of findings, as individual responses could be directly compared and triangulated across data strands.

The inclusion criteria required participants to: (1) be currently and officially affiliated with San Pablo Colleges as an administrator, faculty member, administrative and support staff, or enrolled student; (2) have at least one (1) year of continuous affiliation with the institution to ensure adequate exposure to institutional policies and practices; (3) be 18 years old and above; (4) possess at least a basic level of awareness or exposure to institutional programs and activities, including those related to gender and development; and (5) provide informed consent indicating voluntary participation. The exclusion criteria included individuals with less than one year of affiliation, those on extended leave or inactive status during the data collection period, and respondents who submitted incomplete or invalid responses.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-developed instrument comprising integrated quantitative and qualitative components, designed to generate complementary data within a single administration. This integrative structure

is consistent with the convergent parallel mixed-methods design, ensuring that both numerical indicators and contextual insights are obtained simultaneously from the same set of participants. The quantitative component was a structured 4-point Likert-scale questionnaire that measured institutional readiness across the five domains identified in the research design. The development of the instrument was guided by established Gender and Development (GAD) frameworks, including gender mainstreaming evaluation models and institutional gender audit tools used in higher education contexts. These frameworks ensured that the items were conceptually grounded and aligned with recognized standards of gender-responsive governance and institutional assessment.

To establish the content and face validity of the instrument, it was rigorously evaluated by a panel of five (5) experts in gender studies, educational research, and higher education administration. A structured validation checklist focusing on relevance, clarity, coherence, and alignment with the study objectives was utilized. The evaluation yielded an overall Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.94, indicating excellent validity and high agreement among experts regarding the adequacy and representativeness of the items. Based on the validators' feedback, minor revisions were implemented, including refinement of wording, elimination of ambiguity, and enhancement of contextual appropriateness to improve item precision.

Prior to full-scale implementation, the instrument underwent pilot testing among 30 respondents from a comparable higher education institution who were not part of the actual sample. This phase aimed to assess the instrument's clarity, readability, and overall functionality, as well as to identify any potential issues in item interpretation. Feedback from the pilot test informed minor adjustments to improve survey flow and respondent comprehension. The reliability of the quantitative component was established using Cronbach's alpha (a measure of how consistently the survey items work together). The instrument obtained an overall reliability coefficient of $\alpha = 0.96$, indicating excellent internal consistency. Dimension-wise reliability coefficients were also found to be highly acceptable: policy and governance ($\alpha = 0.93$), programs and activities ($\alpha = 0.95$), human resource capacity and participation ($\alpha = 0.94$), resource allocation and support mechanisms ($\alpha = 0.92$), and monitoring and evaluation systems ($\alpha = 0.94$). These values exceed the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, confirming that the instrument consistently and reliably measures the intended constructs of institutional readiness.

The qualitative component was embedded within the same instrument as Part II (open-ended questions) rather than as a separate interview guide. This design allowed respondents to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives immediately after responding to the quantitative items, thereby enhancing the data's depth and contextual richness. The open-ended questions included:

- *How do you perceive the current institutional culture of San Pablo Colleges in promoting gender equality and inclusivity in academic, administrative, and student-related practices?*
- *Based on your experiences, how consistent and coordinated are the institution's efforts in addressing gender-related concerns across different offices, departments, and programs?*
- *In what ways do existing policies, programs, and leadership initiatives effectively support – or limit – the promotion of gender fairness, safety, and inclusive participation within the institution?*
- *What structural, administrative, or cultural challenges affect the integration of gender mainstreaming into the institutional systems and decision-making processes of San Pablo Colleges?*
- *What existing institutional strengths, resources, or initiatives could be strengthened to support a more systematic and sustained approach to gender mainstreaming?*
- *What institutional mechanisms or structures do you believe are necessary to ensure coordinated implementation, accountability, and long-term sustainability of gender mainstreaming efforts?*

These questions were also presented in Filipino to ensure clarity, inclusivity, and accessibility among respondents. Collectively, they were designed to elicit in-depth insights into institutional culture, coordination mechanisms, implementation challenges, and opportunities for strengthening gender mainstreaming practices. Overall, the integration of validated quantitative measures and contextually rich qualitative items within a single instrument enabled a comprehensive and triangulated assessment of institutional readiness, thereby enhancing the methodological rigor, credibility, and explanatory power of the study.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data-gathering process was conducted systematically and ethically to ensure the accuracy, integrity, and credibility of the data collected. Prior to data collection, formal approval was secured from the Office of the President of San Pablo Colleges, followed by coordination with relevant academic and administrative units to facilitate participants' access. This preliminary step ensured institutional support and smooth implementation of the research procedures. The validated research instrument was administered using Google Forms, an online survey platform selected for its efficiency, accessibility, and capacity to securely manage large datasets. The survey link was disseminated through official institutional communication channels, including email and internal messaging platforms, to reach the identified participants across stakeholder groups. This mode of administration enabled broad participation while minimizing logistical constraints associated with face-to-face data collection.

Prior to accessing the instrument, all participants were presented with an informed consent statement embedded at the beginning of the online form. The consent form clearly outlined the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the voluntary nature of participation, and the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were required to provide consent before proceeding with the questionnaire, thereby ensuring compliance with ethical research standards.

Data collection was conducted over a two-week period, allowing participants to complete the survey at their convenience. During this period, responses were automatically recorded and securely stored within the platform's database. The researcher monitored response rates and, when necessary, issued follow-up reminders through official channels to encourage participation and ensure adequate representation across groups. Upon completion of the data collection period, all responses were systematically downloaded, screened, and cleaned. This process involved checking for incomplete, duplicate, or inconsistent entries to ensure data quality and integrity. Valid responses were then organized and encoded for subsequent quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD), to determine the level of institutional readiness of San Pablo Colleges for gender mainstreaming. For the qualitative data, responses from the open-ended section of the questionnaire were analyzed using thematic analysis following the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006). This approach involved a systematic process of data familiarization, initial coding, categorization of codes, and the development of overarching themes that captured recurring patterns in participants' insights, experiences, and perceptions regarding gender mainstreaming practices. The use of this framework is justified by its methodological rigor and flexibility in analyzing qualitative data related to institutional processes and stakeholder perspectives. To ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings, strategies such as triangulation, peer debriefing, and audit trail documentation were employed to enhance credibility, dependability, and confirmability. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings was conducted during the interpretation phase through triangulation, enabling the identification of convergence, divergence, and complementarity of results. This mixed-methods analytical approach strengthened the overall validity and robustness of the study by corroborating statistical trends with qualitative evidence, thereby providing a comprehensive and empirically grounded basis for proposing the establishment of a Gender and Development (GAD) Office at San Pablo Colleges.

Ethical Considerations

The study strictly adhered to established ethical standards in the conduct of research involving human participants. Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the Research, Evaluation, and Publication Office (REPO) of the institution, which oversees research ethics and compliance. This approval ensured that the study met institutional requirements related to participant protection, data integrity, and responsible research practices. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and all respondents were provided with a comprehensive informed consent statement prior to accessing the survey instrument. The consent form clearly outlined the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the expected duration of participation, and the rights of participants, including their right to refuse participation or withdraw at any time without penalty or disadvantage. Only those who indicated their consent were allowed to proceed with the questionnaire, thereby ensuring ethical compliance. The study maintained strict measures to uphold confidentiality and anonymity. No personally identifiable information (e.g., names, contact details, or identification numbers) was collected in the survey. Responses were anonymized at the point of collection, and all data were reported in aggregate form to

prevent the identification of individual participants or specific groups. This approach ensured that participants could provide honest and unbiased responses without fear of repercussions.

Access to the collected data was restricted solely to the researchers, whom are bound by ethical obligations to maintain data confidentiality. All electronic data was stored in password-protected files and secure digital storage systems, with appropriate safeguards to prevent unauthorized access, alteration, or disclosure. Backup copies were likewise secured to ensure data integrity throughout the research process. The study complied with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012, ensuring the responsible collection, processing, and storage of personal data. In alignment with this law, data handling procedures emphasized transparency, legitimate purpose, and proportionality. All collected data were used exclusively for academic and research purposes and were not shared with any third parties without proper authorization. Upon completion of the study, all data will be retained only for the period necessary for academic reporting and validation, after which they will be securely disposed of through appropriate data destruction methods (e.g., permanent deletion of digital files). These measures collectively ensured that the study upheld the principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, thereby maintaining the highest standards of ethical research practice.

Results and Discussion

Extent of Institutional Readiness for Gender Mainstreaming

In Terms of Policy and Governance

Table 1 reveals that the institution exhibited a moderate level of readiness in policy and governance for gender mainstreaming, as indicated by a composite mean of 3.23 (SD = 0.58), interpreted as Ready to a Moderate Extent (RME). The standard deviation of 0.58 suggests a relatively high level of consistency among respondents' perceptions, indicating that stakeholders share similar views regarding the institution's policy and governance practices in gender mainstreaming. This implies that the observed level of readiness reflects a stable and commonly experienced institutional condition rather than fragmented or highly varied perceptions.

Table 1. *Extent of institutional readiness for gender mainstreaming in terms of policy and governance*

The institution...	Indicators	M	SD	VD/VI
1.	adopts written policies promoting gender equality and inclusivity.	3.26	0.58	SA
2.	integrates gender mainstreaming principles into its vision and mission statements.	3.20	0.59	A
3.	ensures leadership commitment to gender equity initiatives.	3.26	0.56	SA
4.	incorporates gender perspectives into institutional planning processes.	3.24	0.58	A
5.	enforces policies against gender-based discrimination and harassment.	3.27	0.59	SA
6.	communicates gender-related policies clearly to stakeholders.	3.21	0.57	A
7.	aligns institutional policies with national GAD mandates and frameworks.	3.24	0.55	A
8.	establishes clear accountability mechanisms for gender-related concerns.	3.24	0.59	A
9.	reviews and updates gender policies regularly.	3.16	0.66	A
10.	promotes shared governance in gender-related decision-making.	3.27	0.58	SA
Composite mean		3.23	0.58	RME

Note: 4.00 – 3.26 – Strongly Agree (SA)/ Ready to a Great Extent (RGE); 3.25 – 2.51 – Agree(A)/ Ready to a Moderate Extent (RME); 2.50 – 1.76 – Disagree (D)/ Ready to a Low Extent (RLE); 1.75 – 1.00 – Strongly Disagree (SD)/ Not Ready at all (NRA)

The highest-rated indicators—enforcement of policies against gender-based discrimination and harassment and promotion of shared governance in gender-related decision-making (both M = 3.27, SD ≈ 0.58–0.59)—demonstrate a strong institutional commitment to equity protection and inclusive participation. The relatively low variability in responses further indicates a broad consensus among stakeholders on the effectiveness of these mechanisms. This trend is consistent with existing literature, which emphasizes that the presence of formal policies and participatory governance structures serves as a foundational step in advancing gender mainstreaming in higher education institutions (Palma, 2025; Quibo-quibo & Suico, 2024; Baog & Cagape, 2026; Ojwala et al., 2022).

On the other hand, the lowest-rated indicator—regular review and updating of gender policies (M = 3.16, SD = 0.66)—points to a critical limitation in terms of policy responsiveness and sustainability. The slightly higher standard deviation for this item suggests greater variability in respondents' perceptions, indicating that experiences related to policy review processes may differ across units or stakeholder groups. This implies that while policies are present, the mechanisms for continuous monitoring, evaluation, and refinement are not yet

uniformly practiced or fully institutionalized. This finding aligns with recent studies indicating that gender mainstreaming efforts often encounter challenges in sustaining momentum due to insufficient policy review systems and gaps in institutional learning and adaptation (Duma, 2022; Kataeva et al., 2024; Miralles-Cardona et al., 2025a; Miralles-Cardona et al., 2025b). Such patterns reflect the broader reality that gender mainstreaming tends to progress unevenly—strong in policy formulation but comparatively weaker in cyclical improvement and long-term integration across institutional structures.

The results imply that the institution is operating at a transitional phase of gender mainstreaming, where foundational policies and governance mechanisms are in place but require further strengthening to achieve full operational effectiveness. The relatively consistent responses across indicators suggest a shared recognition of both strengths and gaps, which provides a solid basis for targeted institutional interventions. There is a need to institutionalize systematic and periodic policy review mechanisms, such as gender audits and evidence-based evaluations, to ensure that policies remain responsive and contextually relevant. Furthermore, the institution's strengths in enforcement and participatory governance may be leveraged through the formal establishment of a Gender and Development (GAD) Office or equivalent governing body tasked with overseeing policy implementation, coordination, and accountability. Finally, adopting a continuous quality improvement (CQI) approach—characterized by regular assessment, feedback integration, and alignment with national and institutional priorities—will be essential in advancing from moderate readiness toward a higher level of institutional maturity in gender mainstreaming.

In Terms of Programs and Activities

Table 2 indicates that the institution demonstrated a moderate level of readiness in terms of programs and activities, as reflected in the composite mean of 3.20 (SD = 0.60), interpreted as Ready to a Moderate Extent (RME). The standard deviation of 0.60 indicates a generally consistent pattern of responses among participants, suggesting that stakeholders share relatively similar perceptions regarding the implementation of gender-related programs and activities. This consistency implies that the observed level of readiness reflects a broadly experienced institutional condition rather than isolated or highly variable practices.

Table 2. *Extent of institutional readiness of san pablo colleges for gender mainstreaming in terms of programs and activities*

Indicators		M	SD	VD/VI
The institution...				
1.	implements programs that promote gender awareness and sensitivity.	3.21	0.63	A
2.	integrates gender perspectives into academic curricula where appropriate.	3.25	0.58	A
3.	conducts seminars and trainings on gender equality.	3.09	0.69	A
4.	organizes activities supporting marginalized gender groups.	3.15	0.59	A
5.	encourages student participation in gender-related initiatives.	3.23	0.59	A
6.	incorporates gender analysis in program development.	3.19	0.59	A
7.	promotes inclusive participation in institutional events.	3.24	0.57	A
8.	collaborates with external organizations for gender advocacy programs.	3.18	0.63	A
9.	ensures that extracurricular activities promote gender inclusivity.	3.23	0.57	A
10.	evaluates the impact of gender-related programs and activities.	3.22	0.61	A
Composite mean		3.20	0.60	RME

The highest-rated indicator, integration of gender perspectives into academic curricula (M = 3.25, SD = 0.58), underscores the institution's effort to embed gender responsiveness within instructional practices. The relatively low variability in responses further indicates a strong consensus among respondents on this aspect, highlighting curriculum integration as a well-recognized strength of the institution. This finding is consistent with recent studies emphasizing that integrating gender perspectives into curricula is a critical pathway for promoting inclusive education and shaping gender-sensitive attitudes among learners (Leal Filho et al., 2022).

Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator, conducting seminars and trainings on gender equality (M = 3.09, SD = 0.69), points to a relative limitation in the consistency and sustainability of capacity-building initiatives. The comparatively higher standard deviation suggests greater variability in participants' experiences, indicating that access to or participation in such trainings may not be uniform across stakeholder groups. This implies that while gender-related trainings are implemented, they may not be conducted regularly or systematically across the institution. This finding aligns with literature indicating that although higher education institutions initiate gender-related activities, insufficient continuity and institutional support may hinder the deepening of gender

mainstreaming practices (Gul et al., 2025; Nkosi & Maphalala, 2025), resulting in uneven awareness and engagement.

The results suggest that the institution has established a functional but still developing programmatic framework for gender mainstreaming. The relatively consistent responses across most indicators indicate a shared recognition of existing initiatives, providing a stable foundation for enhancement. However, the variability observed in capacity-building activities highlights the need for more systematic and sustained training programs. Institutionalizing regular gender-related seminars and professional development initiatives is essential to strengthen stakeholder capacity and ensure consistent implementation of gender-responsive practices. While curriculum integration remains a key strength, it should be reinforced through complementary co-curricular and extension programs that promote inclusivity beyond the classroom. Furthermore, the institution may benefit from establishing a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system to assess program effectiveness and impact. Strengthening partnerships and expanding stakeholder participation can further enhance the reach, coherence, and sustainability of gender-related initiatives, thereby advancing the institution toward a higher level of readiness in gender mainstreaming.

In Terms of Human Resource Capacity and Participation

Table 3 shows that the institution demonstrated a high level of readiness in human resource capacity and participation, as evidenced by a composite mean of 3.30 (SD = 0.54), interpreted as Ready to a Great Extent (RGE). The standard deviation of 0.54 indicates a high level of consensus among respondents, suggesting that perceptions regarding human resource policies and practices are consistently shared across stakeholder groups. This consistency strengthens the validity of the finding that gender mainstreaming is substantially embedded in areas related to participation, leadership, and equitable workplace culture.

Table 3. *Extent of institutional readiness for gender mainstreaming in terms of human resource capacity and participation*

Indicators		M	SD	VD/VI
The institution...				
1.	provides training for employees on gender sensitivity and awareness.	3.20	0.59	A
2.	ensures equitable hiring and promotion practices.	3.26	0.52	SA
3.	encourages leadership opportunities regardless of gender.	3.33	0.53	SA
4.	promotes equal participation of all genders in committees and organizations.	3.36	0.53	SA
5.	supports professional development opportunities equitably.	3.33	0.52	SA
6.	prevents gender bias in performance evaluation systems.	3.31	0.56	SA
7.	addresses gender-related grievances promptly and fairly.	3.29	0.54	SA
8.	builds internal expertise on gender mainstreaming.	3.25	0.55	A
9.	fosters a culture of respect across gender identities.	3.32	0.54	SA
10.	promotes representation of diverse genders in decision-making roles.	3.32	0.53	SA
Composite mean		3.30	0.54	RGE

The highest-rated indicator, promotion of equal participation of all genders in committees and organizations (M = 3.36, SD = 0.53), reflects a strong institutional commitment to inclusivity and shared governance. The low variability further indicates a broad agreement among respondents that participatory structures are effectively implemented. This finding aligns with literature emphasizing that equitable participation in institutional structures is a key marker of advanced gender mainstreaming, as it demonstrates that gender equality principles are operationalized within decision-making processes (Crimmins et al., 2023; Miralles-Cardona et al., 2025a).

Similarly, high ratings in indicators related to leadership opportunities regardless of gender (M = 3.33, SD = 0.53) and equitable professional development opportunities (M = 3.33, SD = 0.52) suggest that the institution fosters an enabling environment that supports gender equity in career advancement. The relatively low standard deviations across these indicators further indicate strong agreement among participants, reinforcing the view that inclusive leadership pathways and fair access to development opportunities are well-established practices within the institution. These findings are consistent with research highlighting that equitable access to leadership and development opportunities is essential in addressing structural inequalities and sustaining gender balance in organizations (Kataeva et al., 2024).

However, the lowest-rated indicator, providing training for employees on gender sensitivity and awareness (M = 3.20, SD = 0.59), although still interpreted as moderate readiness, points to a relative gap in continuous capacity-

building initiatives. The slightly higher variability in responses suggests that experiences related to training may not be uniformly distributed across all participants. This implies that while institutional structures supporting gender equity are largely in place, efforts to deepen gender awareness and competencies among personnel may not be consistently implemented. Existing frameworks emphasize that ongoing training and capacity development are critical to reinforcing institutional transformation and ensuring that gender mainstreaming is internalized at both the individual and organizational levels (European Institute for Gender Equality [EIGE], 2022).

The findings indicate that the institution has reached a relatively advanced stage of readiness in human resource capacity and participation, particularly in promoting inclusivity, equitable leadership, and representation. The high level of agreement among respondents further suggests that these strengths are widely experienced across the institution. To sustain and enhance this level of readiness, it is necessary to institutionalize regular, comprehensive gender sensitivity training programs to strengthen awareness and reinforce inclusive practices among all stakeholders. Additionally, maintaining transparent and equitable systems for hiring, promotion, and performance evaluation should remain a priority to ensure consistency and fairness. The institution may also consider designating gender focal persons or champions within various units to support the implementation and monitoring of gender mainstreaming initiatives. By strengthening both structural mechanisms and continuous capacity development, the institution can further advance toward a more transformative and fully institutionalized approach to gender mainstreaming.

In Terms of Resource Allocation and Support Mechanisms

Table 4 indicates that the institution demonstrated a moderate level of readiness in terms of resource allocation and support mechanisms, as reflected in the composite mean of 3.20 (SD = 0.60), interpreted as Ready to a Moderate Extent (RME). The standard deviation of 0.60 suggests a generally consistent pattern of responses among participants, indicating that stakeholders share similar perceptions regarding the availability and adequacy of resources supporting gender mainstreaming. This consistency implies that the moderate level of readiness reflects a commonly experienced institutional condition rather than isolated or uneven practices.

Table 4. *Extent of institutional readiness for gender mainstreaming in terms of resource allocation and support mechanisms*

The institution...	Indicators	M	SD	VD/VI
1.	allocates funds specifically for gender-related initiatives.	3.09	0.65	A
2.	provides facilities that ensure gender safety and inclusivity.	3.18	0.65	A
3.	offers accessible reporting mechanisms for gender concerns.	3.18	0.61	A
4.	supports gender-responsive research and extension activities.	3.23	0.60	A
5.	provides counseling services sensitive to gender issues.	3.24	0.56	A
6.	invests in capacity-building for gender mainstreaming efforts.	3.19	0.59	A
7.	ensures logistical support for gender programs.	3.18	0.59	A
8.	includes gender considerations in budgeting processes.	3.17	0.62	A
9.	provides communication platforms for gender advocacy.	3.24	0.59	A
10.	ensures equitable access to institutional resources regardless of gender.	3.29	0.56	SA
Composite mean		3.20	0.60	RME

The highest-rated indicator, ensuring equitable access to institutional resources regardless of gender (M = 3.29, SD = 0.56), reflects a strong institutional commitment to fairness and inclusivity in resource distribution. The relatively low variability further indicates a high level of agreement among respondents, suggesting that equitable access is widely recognized and consistently practiced across the institution. This finding aligns with research emphasizing that equitable access to institutional resources is a core dimension of gender-responsive systems, as it directly influences participation, opportunity, and overall institutional climate (Bustamante-Mora et al., 2024; Rosa & Clavero, 2022).

Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator, allocation of funds specifically for gender-related initiatives (M = 3.09, SD = 0.65), highlights a relative limitation in dedicated financial support for gender mainstreaming efforts. The slightly higher standard deviation indicates greater variability in responses, suggesting that perceptions of financial support may differ across units or stakeholder groups. This implies that while some gender-related initiatives receive support, funding may not be systematically or consistently allocated across the institution. Existing literature underscores that inadequate or inconsistent funding remains one of the primary barriers to the

effective implementation and sustainability of gender mainstreaming programs, particularly in higher education settings (Raton-Hibanada et al., 2025; Hinton-Smith, 2025). Without explicit and sustained budgetary allocation, gender-related initiatives may rely on ad hoc resources, thereby limiting their scalability and long-term impact.

The findings suggest that the institution has established foundational support mechanisms and equitable access practices, as evidenced by the consistent responses across most indicators. However, the variability observed in funding allocation highlights a critical area for improvement. There is a need to strengthen institutional investment in gender mainstreaming through the allocation of dedicated and sustained funding for gender-related programs, research, and capacity-building initiatives. Integrating gender considerations more explicitly into institutional budgeting and planning processes can further enhance accountability and strategic alignment. While existing facilities, services, and communication platforms provide a solid foundation, these should be reinforced through more systematic and coordinated support structures, including gender-responsive infrastructure, reporting mechanisms, and advocacy channels. Strengthening resource allocation and support systems will be essential in advancing the institution from moderate readiness toward a more fully institutionalized and sustainable model of gender mainstreaming.

In Terms of Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

Table 5 indicates that the institution demonstrated a moderate level of readiness in terms of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, as reflected in the composite mean of 3.17 (SD = 0.60), interpreted as Ready to a Moderate Extent (RME). The standard deviation of 0.60 suggests a generally consistent pattern of responses among participants, indicating that stakeholders share relatively similar perceptions regarding the institution's monitoring and evaluation practices for gender mainstreaming. This consistency implies that the moderate level of readiness reflects a commonly experienced institutional condition rather than highly varied or fragmented practices.

Table 5. *Extent of institutional readiness for gender mainstreaming in terms of monitoring and evaluation systems*

Indicators		M	SD	VD/VI
The institution...				
1.	collects sex-disaggregated data for planning purposes.	3.12	0.62	A
2.	monitors gender equity indicators regularly.	3.13	0.62	A
3.	evaluates the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming efforts.	3.17	0.61	A
4.	documents gender-related initiatives systematically.	3.18	0.58	A
5.	uses gender audit tools for institutional assessment.	3.15	0.61	A
6.	reports gender accomplishments transparently.	3.15	0.61	A
7.	incorporates stakeholder feedback in gender evaluations.	3.20	0.61	A
8.	reviews gender-related performance indicators periodically.	3.20	0.60	A
9.	aligns monitoring systems with national GAD evaluation standards.	3.16	0.58	A
10.	uses evaluation results to improve gender mainstreaming strategies.	3.21	0.60	A
Composite mean		3.17	0.60	RME

The highest-rated indicator, use of evaluation results to improve gender mainstreaming strategies (M = 3.21, SD = 0.60), reflects a positive orientation toward evidence-informed decision-making. The relatively low variability indicates a broad consensus among respondents that evaluation outputs are being utilized to refine gender-related initiatives. This finding is consistent with studies emphasizing that effective gender mainstreaming depends on the integration of monitoring results into institutional planning and strategic decision-making processes (Kataeva et al., 2024; Leal Filho et al., 2022).

In contrast, the lowest-rated indicator, collection of sex-disaggregated data for planning purposes (M = 3.12, SD = 0.62), highlights a relative limitation in data-driven governance and gender analytics. The slightly higher standard deviation suggests greater variability in responses, indicating that practices related to data collection may not be consistently implemented across all units or stakeholder groups. Although still within the moderate range, this finding implies that foundational M&E processes—particularly systematic and standardized data collection—are not yet fully optimized. Contemporary research underscores that sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data systems are essential for identifying disparities, informing targeted interventions, and ensuring accountability in institutional gender mainstreaming efforts (Condrón et al., 2023; Lima & Guedes, 2024). Without robust data infrastructures, institutions may encounter challenges in accurately measuring progress and sustaining evidence-based improvements.

The findings suggest that the institution has established foundational M&E mechanisms, as reflected in the relatively consistent perceptions across indicators. However, the variability observed in data-related practices highlights a critical need to strengthen data-driven governance systems. Priority should be given to enhancing the regular collection, management, and utilization of sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data to support informed planning and decision-making. Additionally, adopting standardized monitoring indicators and evaluation tools aligned with national and institutional frameworks can improve consistency, comparability, and accountability. While the use of evaluation results is a notable strength, it should be complemented by more structured, cyclical monitoring processes, including periodic reviews and the systematic integration of stakeholder feedback. Strengthening the M&E system will be essential in ensuring continuous improvement, transparency, and sustainability of gender mainstreaming initiatives, thereby advancing the institution toward a higher level of readiness.

Stakeholders' Perceptions of Institutional Culture and Practices on Gender Equality and Inclusivity

Table 6 indicates that stakeholders generally perceived San Pablo Colleges as having a respectful, moderately inclusive institutional culture, in which fairness, civility, and equal participation are commonly experienced in day-to-day academic, administrative, and student-related interactions. The qualitative responses suggest that inclusivity is often practiced through interpersonal respect, openness to participation, and the visible absence of overt gender-based hostility, yet these strengths appear to be driven more by lived culture and values than by a fully formalized gender-mainstreaming system. This pattern is consistent with recent higher education literature showing that institutions may demonstrate positive gender-sensitive dispositions and supportive campus climates even when formal structures remain underdeveloped. For instance, Tarrayo et al. (2024) found generally positive perceptions toward institutional commitment to gender sensitivity, although these coexisted with lingering stereotypical views and uneven curricular depth, while Bordieri et al. (2024) showed that diversity climate in higher education can be experienced positively overall but still vary across groups and institutional contexts. Likewise, Kataeva et al.'s (2024) bibliometric review of gender mainstreaming underscored that organizational culture and institutional commitment remain central to how gender equality is perceived and enacted in higher education settings.

At the same time, the themes reveal that stakeholders also perceived limited formalization, inconsistent implementation, and uneven visibility of gender equality practices across offices and departments. Several responses pointed to the absence of a clearly articulated GAD framework, insufficient communication of policies, and varying levels of awareness and coordination, suggesting that gender inclusivity is not yet consistently embedded in institutional systems. This interpretation is supported by studies emphasizing that favorable attitudes alone do not ensure systematic integration. Merma-Molina et al. (2025) reported that educators may be supportive of gender equality while still demonstrating limited conceptual knowledge, indicating that institutional commitment can remain superficial when not accompanied by structured educational action. Similarly, Condrón et al.'s (2025) scoping review found that gender equality training in higher education remains fragmented and lacks coherent long-term evaluation, which helps explain why institutions may appear supportive in principle but inconsistent in implementation. Bustamante-Mora et al. (2024) likewise concluded that higher education initiatives addressing gender inequities often depend on how well policies are translated into sustained institutional strategies rather than isolated activities.

Table 6. Major themes on stakeholders' perceptions of institutional culture and practices on gender equality and inclusivity

Theme	Description	Sample Evidence
1. Generally Respectful and Inclusive Institutional Culture	Stakeholders commonly perceived the institution as fostering respect, fairness, and equal treatment across genders in academic, administrative, and student contexts. Inclusivity is often practiced in daily interactions and participation.	<i>"Everyone is treated equally and with respect, no matter their gender..."</i>
2. Presence of Gender-Responsive Practices but Limited Formalization	While gender equality is practiced informally through values, policies, and activities, stakeholders noted the absence or limited visibility of a formalized and comprehensive Gender and Development (GAD) framework.	<i>"There is no formally articulated Gender and Development (GAD) policy..."</i>
3. Inconsistent Implementation Across Departments	Efforts to address gender-related concerns vary across offices and programs, resulting in uneven application of gender-responsive practices and lack of unified institutional direction.	<i>"Efforts... are present but not always fully coordinated across departments..."</i>
4. Limited Awareness and	Stakeholders reported limited awareness of existing gender-related	<i>"Hindi naman po ito"</i>

Theme	Description	Sample Evidence
Communication of Gender Initiatives	policies and programs, indicating gaps in communication, dissemination, and institutional visibility of gender mainstreaming efforts.	<i>masyadong nababanggit ng paaralan...</i>
5. Constraints on Gender Expression and Inclusivity Practices	Some institutional policies (e.g., uniforms, self-expression) were perceived as limiting full inclusivity, particularly for LGBTQ+ individuals, reflecting tensions between inclusivity and institutional norms.	<i>"They are strict when it comes to uniforms..."</i>
6. Need for Stronger Institutional Structures and Coordination	Stakeholders emphasized the need for clearer policies, structured programs, and centralized coordination (e.g., GAD Office) to ensure consistency, accountability, and sustainability of gender mainstreaming efforts.	<i>"Stronger coordination and clearer guidelines would help..."</i>
7. Emerging but Developing Commitment to Gender Mainstreaming	The institution is perceived as progressively moving toward inclusivity, but gender mainstreaming remains at a developmental stage requiring stronger integration into systems and practices.	<i>"The school is slowly becoming more progressive..."</i>

Moreover, the result suggests that stakeholders recognized an ongoing tension between inclusive aspirations and institutional constraints, particularly regarding policy clarity, self-expression, and the practical reach of gender-responsive mechanisms. Some responses suggested that the institution is becoming more open and progressive, yet full inclusivity remains tempered by rules, traditions, and uneven departmental practices. This finding aligns with Tamada et al. (2024), who argued that a genuinely gender-neutral academic climate cannot be achieved merely through surface indicators or symbolic inclusion, but requires deeper institutional efforts and evaluative mechanisms. It also resonates with recent work on higher education leadership and gender equality, which shows that institutional change depends not only on goodwill but also on structured coordination, accountability, and long-term integration of gender concerns into governance and everyday practice. Taken together, the findings imply that San Pablo Colleges possesses a promising cultural foundation for gender equality, but this foundation still needs to be strengthened through clearer policy articulation, stronger cross-unit coordination, regular training, and more visible institutional mechanisms if gender mainstreaming is to move from an emerging culture of respect to a fully institutionalized practice.

Challenges and Opportunities in Integrating Gender Mainstreaming in Institutional Systems and Structures

For Table 7, the results suggest that stakeholders viewed the integration of gender mainstreaming in San Pablo Colleges as constrained primarily by structural and administrative gaps, particularly the absence of a dedicated coordinating body, weakly formalized procedures, uneven implementation across units, and limited institutional accountability. The recurring call for a GAD office, formal committee, clearer guidelines, and stronger inter-office coordination indicates that stakeholders do not simply perceive gender mainstreaming as a matter of attitude, but as a question of institutional design and governance capacity. This interpretation is consistent with recent research in higher education showing that gender equality efforts often stall when institutions rely on fragmented, individualized, or symbolic measures rather than on formal structures with authority, policy leverage, and monitoring functions. Hodgins et al. (2022) found that organizational resistance in higher education persisted even when change initiatives were in place, often because interventions were low in ambition and overly individualized. Similarly, Titili et al. (2024) showed that universities may express commitment to gender mainstreaming while still struggling with the level of institutional embedding needed for sustained implementation, while Miralles-Cardona et al. (2025b) identified limited institutional support, lack of clear guidelines, and weak implementation strategies as major barriers to effective gender mainstreaming in university teaching.

Table 7. Major Themes on challenges and opportunities in integrating gender mainstreaming in institutional systems and structures

Theme	Description	Sample Evidence
1. Absence of Formalized Gender Mainstreaming Structures	Stakeholders consistently identified the lack of a dedicated Gender and Development (GAD) office, formal policies, and centralized coordination mechanisms as a major structural barrier to systematic implementation.	<i>"There is a lack of clear, unified structures for gender mainstreaming..."</i>
2. Inconsistent Coordination and Fragmented Implementation	Gender-related initiatives are often implemented unevenly across departments, resulting in fragmented efforts and limited institutional coherence.	<i>"Efforts can depend on the department... differences in awareness affect consistency..."</i>

Theme	Description	Sample Evidence
3. Limited Training, Awareness, and Capacity Building	Insufficient gender-sensitivity training and low awareness among stakeholders hinder the effective integration of gender perspectives into institutional processes and decision-making.	<i>"Limited training and low awareness about gender issues can hinder integration..."</i>
4. Influence of Cultural and Religious Norms	Traditional beliefs, cultural expectations, and religious values were perceived as influencing attitudes toward gender roles, sometimes constraining inclusivity and open discourse.	<i>"Religion and traditional beliefs affect openness to gender issues..."</i>
5. Resource Constraints and Limited Institutional Prioritization	Limited budget allocation, insufficient personnel, and competing institutional priorities restrict the sustainability and expansion of gender mainstreaming initiatives.	<i>"Limited budget and lack of dedicated resources affect implementation..."</i>
6. Existing Institutional Strengths and Foundational Supports	Despite challenges, stakeholders recognized strong foundations such as student organizations, guidance services, leadership support, and values-based culture that can be leveraged for gender mainstreaming.	<i>"Student organizations, guidance services, and leadership support are strong foundations..."</i>
7. Need for Institutionalization through Policies, Systems, and Accountability Mechanisms	Respondents emphasized the need for formal structures such as GAD offices, clear policies, monitoring systems, and accountability frameworks to ensure sustainability and effectiveness.	<i>"A dedicated GAD office, clear policies, and monitoring systems are necessary..."</i>
8. Opportunities for Capacity Development and Program Expansion	Stakeholders highlighted opportunities to strengthen gender mainstreaming through seminars, curriculum integration, student engagement, and awareness campaigns.	<i>"More seminars, training, and programs can strengthen gender mainstreaming..."</i>

The findings also point to cultural and capacity-related barriers, including traditional beliefs, religious conservatism, uneven awareness, and limited training, which appear to shape how gender concerns are discussed, prioritized, and acted upon across the institution. Stakeholders' references to "old mindsets," hesitancy around gender discourse, and inconsistencies in awareness suggest that formal policy alone would be insufficient without broader institutional learning and culture change. This pattern is supported by Crimmins et al., (2023) whose study found multiple intersecting barriers to women's full engagement and advancement in higher education despite formal gender equity recognition. In a related way, O'Connor (2023) argued that the persistence of gender inequality in higher educational institutions cannot be explained away by claims of neutrality or managerial modernization, because gendered power relations remain embedded in institutional life. Castellsagué (2024) likewise showed that the gender perspective in university cooperation projects may be neglected or poorly implemented, even where institutions outwardly support inclusion, because structural and cultural barriers continue to shape practice. Together, these studies reinforce the view that the challenges identified in Table 7 are not incidental but reflect deeper issues of institutional culture, training, and organizational resistance.

At the same time, it reveals important opportunities for institutional transformation. Stakeholders consistently identified existing strengths—such as student organizations, guidance services, supportive faculty, values-based formation, and ongoing awareness initiatives—as viable entry points for a more systematic and sustainable gender-mainstreaming agenda. Their recommendations for regular training, gender-responsive planning, clearer reporting systems, dedicated budgets, and long-term monitoring suggest that the institution already possesses a base on which stronger systems can be built. This interpretation aligns with Lopes et al., (2024) who found that formal gender equality plans can help legitimize and institutionally leverage efforts that had previously depended mainly on individual initiative. It also resonates with Raton-Hibanada et (2025), who showed that higher education initiatives on gender equality, diversity, and inclusion face real challenges but also contain clear opportunities through stakeholder collaboration, targeted capacity building, and sustainability-focused programming. Overall, the qualitative evidence indicates that San Pablo Colleges is not starting from institutional absence, but from a condition of partial readiness: the challenge is less about creating gender mainstreaming from nothing than about converting scattered strengths into a coherent system of policy, coordination, accountability, and sustained implementation.

Triangulation of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings (see Table 8) reveals a clear pattern of convergence across domains, indicating that San Pablo Colleges demonstrates an overall moderate level of institutional readiness for gender mainstreaming, with identifiable strengths and systemic gaps.

Table 8. *Integration matrix of quantitative and qualitative findings on institutional readiness for gender mainstreaming*

Domain	Quantitative Findings	Qualitative Themes	Nature of Integration	Integrated Interpretation
Policy and Governance	Moderate readiness (M = 3.23); strong in enforcement and shared governance; weak in policy review mechanisms	Limited formalization; absence of clear GAD framework; need for structured coordination	Convergence + Expansion	Quantitative evidence of existing policies is reinforced by qualitative accounts; however, qualitative data expand this by revealing that policies are not fully institutionalized, highlighting the need for formal structures (e.g., GAD Office) and systematic review mechanisms.
Programs and Activities	Moderate readiness (M = 3.20); strong in curriculum integration; weak in training consistency	Limited awareness; inconsistent implementation; need for expanded seminars and programs	Convergence	Both strands consistently indicate that gender initiatives exist but lack continuity and uniformity, suggesting that programmatic efforts are present yet insufficiently sustained and institutionalized.
Human Resource Capacity and Participation	High readiness (M = 3.30); strong inclusivity, leadership opportunities, and participation	Respectful and inclusive culture; strong participation; emerging commitment to gender equality	Strong Convergence	Quantitative strength in HR practices is validated by qualitative perceptions of an inclusive institutional culture, indicating that gender mainstreaming is most advanced in interpersonal and participatory dimensions.
Resource Allocation and Support	Moderate readiness (M = 3.20); strong in equitable access; weak in dedicated funding	Resource constraints; limited institutional prioritization; need for dedicated budget	Convergence	Both datasets confirm that while access is equitable, financial and logistical support for gender initiatives remains insufficient, limiting sustainability and scalability.
Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	Moderate readiness (M = 3.17); strength in using results; weakness in data systems	Lack of formal monitoring systems; need for accountability mechanisms; fragmented evaluation practices	Convergence + Expansion	Quantitative findings on moderate M&E capacity are deepened by qualitative insights revealing systemic gaps in data governance, accountability, and standardized evaluation processes.
Institutional Culture and Practices	Implied through moderate-high ratings across domains	Respectful, inclusive culture but with limited formalization and uneven communication	Complementarity	Qualitative findings complement quantitative trends by showing that cultural readiness exceeds structural readiness—gender inclusivity is practiced informally rather than systematically embedded.
Structural and Systemic Challenges	Reflected indirectly through moderate ratings across domains	Absence of GAD office; fragmented implementation; cultural constraints; limited training	Expansion	Qualitative data explain the underlying causes of moderate quantitative ratings, identifying structural, cultural, and capacity-related barriers that are not directly captured in numerical scores.
Opportunities for Advancement	Suggested through consistent moderate-to-high means (foundation exists)	Strong institutional foundations; opportunities for training, policy development, and system strengthening	Complementarity + Developmental Insight	Integration indicates that the institution is at a transitional stage, with sufficient foundational strengths that can be leveraged to move toward full institutionalization of gender mainstreaming.

Quantitative results show moderate readiness in policy and governance, programs and activities, resource allocation, and monitoring and evaluation, while human resource capacity and participation emerged as relatively strong. These numerical patterns are corroborated by qualitative themes describing a generally respectful, inclusive, and participatory institutional culture, albeit one that is not yet fully formalized. This convergence suggests that gender mainstreaming within the institution is present but not yet fully institutionalized, a condition commonly observed in higher education contexts where gender equality is recognized in principle but inconsistently embedded in systems and structures (Kataeva et al., 2024; Bustamante-Mora et al., 2024).

A notable area of strong alignment between the two strands is human resource capacity and institutional culture. Quantitative findings indicate high levels of perceived inclusivity, equitable participation, and leadership opportunities, which are reinforced by qualitative accounts emphasizing respect, fairness, and equal engagement across genders. This alignment demonstrates that gender inclusivity is already embedded in interpersonal practices and organizational culture. Such findings are consistent with studies showing that institutional climate plays a critical role in shaping perceptions of gender equality and inclusion in higher education (Bordieri et al., 2024). However, the literature also cautions that a positive institutional climate does not necessarily translate into structural equity, as gender disparities may persist in governance, leadership access, and decision-making processes despite inclusive day-to-day interactions (O'Connor, 2023). Thus, while San Pablo Colleges demonstrates a strong cultural foundation, this must be translated into formal, system-driven mechanisms to

ensure sustainability.

Despite these strengths, the qualitative findings expand and deepen the quantitative results by uncovering structural limitations that constrain institutional readiness. While survey data already point to moderate ratings in policy review, training consistency, funding allocation, and monitoring systems, qualitative themes reveal underlying issues, including the absence of a formal Gender and Development (GAD) structure, fragmented implementation across departments, limited awareness, and weak institutional coordination. This suggests that gender mainstreaming efforts are currently decentralized and inconsistently applied, relying more on individual or unit-level initiatives rather than a unified institutional framework. This interpretation aligns with recent studies indicating that higher education institutions often struggle to institutionalize gender equality due to weak governance structures, limited accountability mechanisms, and insufficient integration into organizational systems (Miralles-Cardona et al., 2025; Hodgins et al., 2022). Similarly, research on gender equality training highlights that initiatives are frequently fragmented and lack long-term evaluation, thereby limiting their transformative impact (Condrón et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the integrated findings highlight that resource allocation and monitoring systems remain underdeveloped, particularly in dedicated funding, sex-disaggregated data collection, and systematic evaluation. These gaps are critical because contemporary research emphasizes that sustainable gender mainstreaming requires not only policy commitment but also institutional investment, data-driven governance, and continuous monitoring (Leal Filho et al., 2025; Rosa & Clavero, 2022). Without these elements, gender initiatives risk remaining symbolic or episodic rather than strategic and transformative. The qualitative evidence, which underscores stakeholders' calls for clearer policies, structured programs, and accountability mechanisms, further reinforces the need for a more coordinated and evidence-based approach.

Overall, the integrated analysis positions San Pablo Colleges in a transitional phase of gender mainstreaming, characterized by foundational cultural readiness but the absence of fully institutionalized systems. This finding is consistent with global and regional studies indicating that many higher education institutions are at similar stages, in which gender equality is supported at the level of values and practices but not yet fully embedded in governance, planning, and evaluation frameworks (Kataeva et al., 2025; Raton-Hibanada et al., 2025). The results therefore underscore a critical institutional imperative: the need to shift from fragmented, value-driven practices toward a coherent, system-driven gender mainstreaming framework. This includes establishing a formal GAD office, institutionalizing regular capacity-building programs, ensuring dedicated funding, strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems, and embedding gender considerations into strategic planning processes.

In sum, the convergence of findings affirms that while San Pablo Colleges has already cultivated a supportive and inclusive institutional culture, advancing gender mainstreaming depends on its ability to translate this cultural readiness into structured, coordinated, and sustainable institutional mechanisms. Such transformation is essential to move from moderate readiness toward a fully gender-responsive and institutionally embedded system, consistent with international standards and contemporary higher education frameworks on gender equality.

Proposed Gender and Development (GAD) Institutionalization Framework for San Pablo Colleges

The proposed Institutional Readiness and Gender Mainstreaming Framework for Higher Education is developed as the integrative and evidence-based output of the study. It is grounded in the convergence of quantitative findings, which identified varying levels of institutional readiness across key domains, and qualitative insights, which revealed stakeholder experiences, systemic gaps, and priority areas for improvement. As such, the framework represents a data-driven institutional model that translates empirical findings into a structured pathway for advancing gender mainstreaming within San Pablo Colleges.

The study established that while participants generally perceived the institution as moderately to highly ready across domains, key gaps persist in areas such as policy sustainability, capacity-building, resource allocation, and monitoring systems. These findings align with global literature emphasizing that gender mainstreaming in higher education often progresses unevenly, with stronger performance in policy presence and participation, but weaker institutionalization in coordination, funding, and evaluation mechanisms (Crimmins et al., 2023; Kataeva et al., 2024). In response, the framework adopts a system-oriented and developmental structure that moves beyond fragmented initiatives toward a coherent and institutionalized approach.

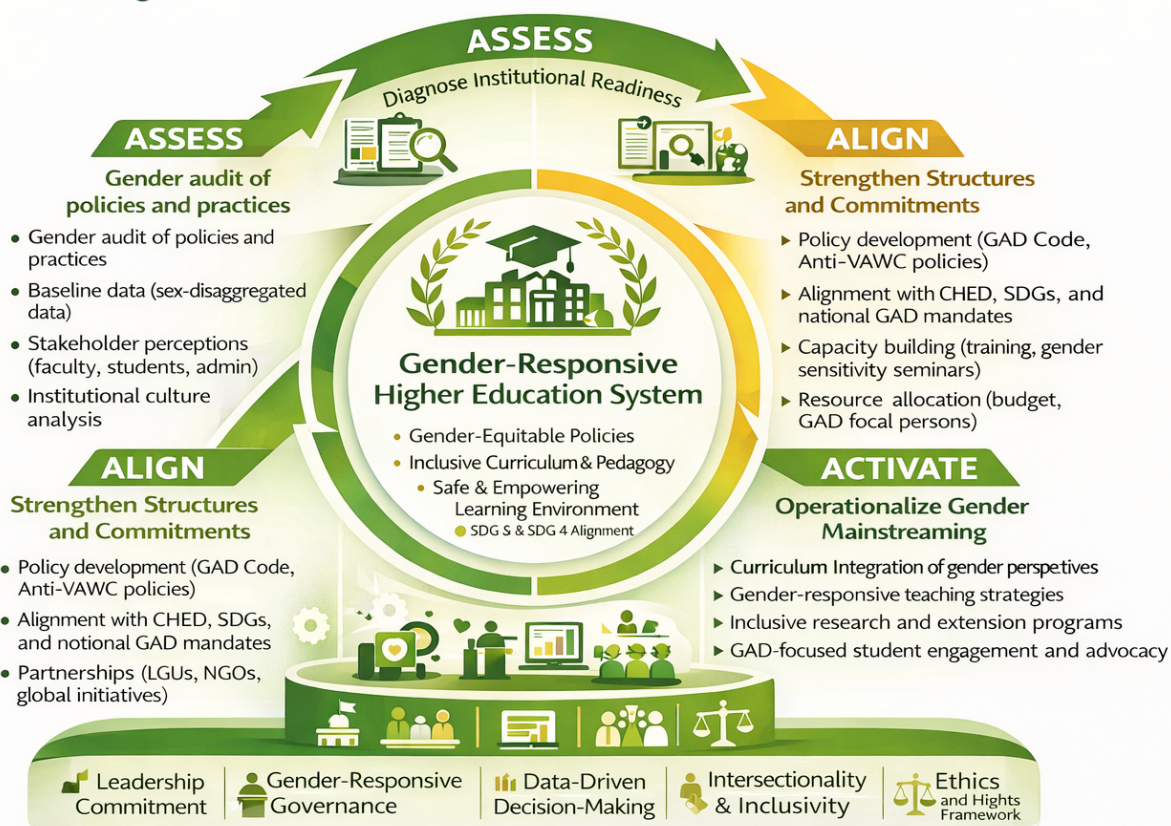


Figure 1. Institutional Readiness and Gender Mainstreaming Framework for Higher Education

At the core of the framework is the Gender-Responsive Higher Education System, representing the ultimate institutional goal: an environment where policies, programs, and practices are equitable, inclusive, and empowering for all stakeholders. This central element reflects the study's finding that gender mainstreaming must be embedded in institutional identity and operations rather than implemented as isolated or compliance-driven activities. Supporting this core are key outcome conditions – gender-equitable policies, inclusive curriculum and pedagogy, safe learning environments, and alignment with broader development goals – which define what a fully institutionalized gender-responsive institution looks like.

The first component, Assess, represents the diagnostic foundation of gender mainstreaming. Findings from the study highlighted the importance of understanding institutional conditions through data, stakeholder perspectives, and cultural analysis. Participants indicated variability in areas such as monitoring systems and policy review, underscoring the need for systematic assessment mechanisms. This component therefore includes gender audits, sex-disaggregated data collection, stakeholder consultations, and institutional culture analysis, consistent with literature emphasizing that evidence-based assessment is essential for identifying disparities and informing strategic interventions (Condon et al., 2023; EIGE, 2022).

The second component, Align, focuses on translating awareness into institutional commitment and structural coherence. The study revealed that while participants recognized the importance of gender mainstreaming, gaps remain in coordination, policy implementation, and resource allocation. This component therefore includes policy alignment, capacity-building, resource mobilization, and governance strengthening, ensuring that institutional systems are synchronized with gender-responsive goals.

Importantly, this phase also incorporates collaboration and partnerships, including engagement with government agencies, local government units (LGUs), non-government organizations (NGOs), and external advocacy groups. These partnerships are essential in higher education contexts, as they expand institutional capacity, provide technical expertise, and align institutional initiatives with national and global gender equality agendas (Leal Filho

et al., 2022). Thus, ALIGN operationalizes gender mainstreaming not only internally but also through multi-stakeholder collaboration.

The third component, Activate, represents the functional implementation phase of the framework. This component directly addresses the study's finding that gender mainstreaming must move beyond policy into practice-oriented application. Participants highlighted strengths in curriculum integration and inclusivity, but also identified gaps in training and program sustainability. In response, ACTIVATE operationalizes gender mainstreaming through inclusive curriculum and pedagogy, gender-responsive research and extension programs, student engagement initiatives, safe campus practices, and equitable service delivery systems.

Rather than serving as a philosophical goal, ACTIVATE defines concrete institutional actions that translate gender principles into everyday academic and administrative practices. This aligns with literature asserting that gender mainstreaming becomes meaningful only when embedded in teaching, learning, research, and community engagement processes (Miralles-Cardona et al., 2025a).

The fourth component, Sustain, ensures the continuity, accountability, and long-term institutionalization of gender mainstreaming efforts. The study identified limitations in monitoring and evaluation systems, particularly in the use of sex-disaggregated data and systematic program evaluation. In response, this phase includes monitoring systems, evaluation frameworks, policy review cycles, and institutional learning mechanisms.

Unlike a rejection of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), the framework integrates CQI principles with a transformative gender lens. While CQI emphasizes data-driven improvement, gender mainstreaming requires addressing systemic inequities, power relations, and institutional culture. Thus, the framework positions gender mainstreaming as an enhanced form of quality assurance, where CQI processes are augmented by principles of equity, inclusivity, and transformative justice (EIGE, 2022; Hinton-Smith, 2025). This positioning ensures that the framework remains both administratively rigorous and socially responsive, making it relevant for institutions operating under quality assurance systems.

Across all components, several cross-cutting enablers are embedded: leadership commitment, gender-responsive governance, data-driven decision-making, intersectionality, and human rights orientation. These elements reflect the study's finding that institutional readiness is not linear but systemic, requiring coordinated action across structures, people, and processes.

From a methodological perspective, the framework represents the triangulated integration of quantitative and qualitative findings. Quantitative results identified areas of relative strength (e.g., human resource capacity) and areas for improvement (e.g., monitoring systems and resource allocation), while qualitative insights provided explanations for these patterns, particularly regarding coordination gaps, training limitations, and the need for institutional mechanisms. This integration strengthens the validity of the framework as both an analytical and developmental model.

In practical terms, the framework provides a clear and actionable roadmap for institutional transformation. It enables decision-makers to assess current conditions, align institutional systems, implement gender-responsive practices, and sustain long-term progress. More importantly, it justifies the establishment of a Gender and Development (GAD) Office as a central coordinating mechanism. The study demonstrated that while initiatives exist, fragmentation and limited coordination remain key challenges, and a dedicated GAD Office can address these by ensuring policy coherence, program integration, capacity-building leadership, and monitoring accountability.

Overall, the proposed framework serves as a research-grounded institutional model for advancing gender mainstreaming in higher education. It reflects progression from assessment to alignment, activation, and sustainability, grounded in empirical findings and supported by contemporary literature. More than a conceptual representation, it provides a strategic and evidence-based guide for transforming institutional readiness into a fully institutionalized, gender-responsive system.

Conclusion

The findings of the study demonstrate that while San Pablo Colleges exhibits a generally coherent and shared level of preparedness for gender mainstreaming, the integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence reveals that policy presence alone does not translate into institutional transformation. Instead, the moderate readiness observed across domains reflects a condition in which gender inclusivity is largely sustained by organizational culture, interpersonal practices, and individual commitment rather than by fully institutionalized systems. The qualitative findings clarify why this occurs—highlighting the absence of formalized structures, fragmented implementation, and limited coordination as the critical constraints that prevent policy from becoming practice. Thus, the central conclusion is that the institution's current state is not defined by lack of effort, but by a missing structural mechanism that can integrate, sustain, and scale gender-responsive initiatives across the system. This positions gender-responsive governance—not merely compliance with Gender and Development (GAD) mandates—as the essential driver of transformation. Consequently, the proposed framework should be understood not as a response to localized findings but as a strategic institutional tool for systemic change, capable of transitioning the institution from value-based inclusivity to a fully embedded, accountable, and sustainable gender-responsive higher education system.

Considering these findings, it is recommended that San Pablo Colleges institutionalize gender-responsive governance by establishing a centralized, empowered coordinating body (e.g., the GAD Office or an equivalent equity governance unit) to operationalize, integrate, and sustain gender mainstreaming across all institutional functions. This body should not be limited to policy oversight but must serve as a strategic hub for coordination, capacity-building, resource allocation, monitoring and evaluation, and cross-unit accountability, thereby addressing the fragmentation identified in the study. Furthermore, the institution should adopt the proposed framework as a comprehensive transformation model, ensuring the alignment of policies, programs, and practices through systematic assessment, activation, and sustainability mechanisms. Priority actions include institutionalizing regular gender-sensitivity training, embedding gender considerations in budgeting and planning, strengthening sex-disaggregated data systems, and implementing cyclical monitoring and evaluation processes. Ultimately, the recommendation advances a shift from isolated initiatives toward a coherent, system-driven, and evidence-based institutional approach, positioning gender mainstreaming as a core dimension of quality assurance, governance, and inclusive educational excellence.

Contributions of Authors

Author 1: Led the conceptualization and research design of the study, supervised the overall research process, conducted data analysis and interpretation, and was primarily responsible for writing the original draft and finalizing the manuscript, including the development of the proposed framework.

Author 2: Assisted in data gathering and facilitated field data coordination, including communication with participants and support in the administration of research instruments.

Author 3: Assisted in data gathering and field data coordination, including logistical support during data collection and ensuring completeness of responses.

Author 4: Assisted in data gathering and field data coordination, including logistical support during data collection and ensuring completeness of responses.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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