

Gender-Responsive Governance and Conflict Management Practices in Selected Maritime Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines: Basis for the Development of the Training Plan

⁽¹⁾ Niño Elson O. Salabas,
and ⁽²⁾ Sylvino V. Tupas

⁽¹⁾ VMA Global College, Bacolod City, Negros Occidental.
⁽²⁾ John B. Lacson Foundation Maritime University, Iloilo, Philippines.

Emails: ninosalabas135@gmail.com, sylvino.tupas@jblfmu.edu.ph

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to examine the relationship between gender-responsive governance and conflict management practices, with a focus on how school leaders handle conflicts across various domains—competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. The analysis considers the key variables, including age, gender, length of service, and educational attainment. Based on the findings, a Gender-Responsive Governance and Conflict Management Practices Enhancement Training Program will be designed to address identified gaps and challenges effectively.

Methods: This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design with a quantitative approach to examine gender-responsive governance and conflict management practices among selected Maritime Higher Education Institutions (MHEIs) in the Philippines. A total of 73 school leaders from various MHEIs participated in the study. Data were collected using two questionnaires: the first, based on the Gender Responsiveness Governance Tool developed by USAID, assessed the level of gender-responsive governance; the second, adapted from the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI), evaluated the conflict management practices of the respondents. The data were analyzed using statistical methods, including mean, standard deviation, t-test for independent samples, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and Pearson's correlation coefficient (r).

Findings: Results revealed that respondents' level of gender-responsive governance according to age, gender, length of service, educational qualification, and management level was "high." Generally, the topmost management practice of the respondents was collaborating except for those respondents with shorter lengths of service (adopted compromising style), those with bachelor's degrees (adopted compromising style), and those with doctorate degrees (adopted competing style). Statistically, no significant difference existed in the level of gender-responsive governance of the respondents when grouped and compared according to age, gender, length



of service, educational qualification, and management level. Moreover, the results showed a significant but weak to moderate degree of relationship between gender-responsive governance and conflict management practices of the respondents. In other words, respondents' gender-responsive governance was, to some degree, reflective of their conflict management practices.

Research Implications: The findings of this study underscore the importance of gender-responsive governance and its integration with conflict management practices in organizations. Despite no statistically significant differences based on demographic characteristics such as age, gender, length of service, educational qualification, and management level, the study highlights that a strong commitment to gender equality is a pervasive feature across diverse respondent groups. This suggests that management universally embraces gender-responsive governance principles, regardless of these variables. Besides, the finding implies that fostering a gender-responsive environment may enhance the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies, as inclusive decision-making processes that prioritize collaboration and fairness are more likely to lead to positive outcomes. Future research could explore deeper into how various conflict management styles, particularly the collaborating style, influence gender equality and fairness in the workplace. Additionally, further investigation could examine how specific demographic factors—such as length of service or educational qualifications—may influence the adoption of particular conflict management styles, even when their effect on gender-responsive governance appears neutral.

Practical Implications: Practically, the findings suggest that organizations can benefit from promoting gender-responsive governance practices across all management levels, as these practices contribute to creating an inclusive, fair, and equitable workplace. The strong preference for collaborative conflict management among respondents indicates that encouraging open, inclusive dialogue can resolve workplace conflicts more effectively, which is particularly important in diverse work environments where gender equality is a priority. Organizations could consider training programs that emphasize both gender-responsive governance and collaborative conflict resolution techniques. Such programs would help leaders develop the skills necessary to address conflicts with a mindset that prioritizes fairness and inclusivity, benefiting both men and women in the workplace. Furthermore, even though no significant differences were observed in relation to respondents' personal characteristics, understanding how demographic factors might influence management practices could assist in tailoring strategies to address potential barriers to achieving gender equality and conflict resolution in the workplace. Incorporating these insights into organizational practices will not only foster better conflict management but also enhance overall workplace harmony, leading to improved employee satisfaction and retention.

Key-words:

Gender-responsive governance, Conflict management practices, MHEIs, Enhancement program.

INTRODUCTION

Among the universally recognized and crucial aspects of leadership are gender-responsive governance and effective conflict management practices. These elements are essential in creating equitable environments and ensuring harmonious relationships in workplaces and institutions. In the context of maritime higher education institutions, such practices are especially significant. They establish equality among workers, fostering environments beneficial to both men and women. According to the Australian Government (2018), these leadership approaches enhance organizational productivity and performance because they are both fair and morally right. Similarly, Hall (2020) highlights several benefits of gender-responsive governance and effective conflict management, including economic growth, improved productivity, greater innovation, diversity of perspectives, more flexible working arrangements, stable and happier workforces, better client targeting, enhanced quality of life, and strengthened institutional reputation.

Conversely, non-gender-responsive governance and poor conflict management practices can result in unequal access to opportunities, rewards, and respect, fostering conflicts that hamper productivity and performance. For instance, in Yemen, a lack of cooperation among school administrators led to animosity and hindered the realization of institutional goals (Muthanna and Sang, 2017). In Pakistan, faculty incivility and dissatisfaction with university resources created conflict-inducing attitudes among faculty members (Ali et al., 2019). Similarly, in the Philippines, gender biases and sexism persist in higher education institutions, leaving women and girls feeling undervalued despite mandates to promote gender equality (Evangelista, 2017).

Effective conflict management is integral to cultivating a positive workplace environment and sustaining high productivity levels. Fermin (2023) emphasizes that leaders who successfully manage conflicts ensure all employees feel valued, regardless of the resolution. Baker (2022) also notes that conflict management enables employees to stay focused on their tasks, preventing disruptions. As Herrity (2023) identifies, there are five primary conflict management styles—competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating—each with unique approaches to resolving workplace disputes. Organizational leaders play a critical role in this process by clearly communicating roles and responsibilities, thereby minimizing potential conflicts (Juneja, 2020).

Given these circumstances, interventions are essential to prevent conflicts from escalating and undermining organizational objectives. It is imperative for school leaders to adopt gender-responsive governance and effective conflict management strategies to address challenges and ensure organizational unity and productivity. This study specifically explores these practices in selected maritime higher education institutions in the Philippines, where the maritime profession remains predominantly male-dominated.

Gender-related issues, if left unaddressed, can negatively affect management sectors, interpersonal relationships, and organizational success. Tertiary institutions are particularly prone to conflicts arising from gender-related concerns, making it essential to implement gender sensitivity, equality, and equity programs as mandated by law. Addressing such issues is crucial for fostering social development and bridging gender gaps. As a school leader, the proponent believes that resolving gender-based workplace conflicts through appropriate management practices is vital, prompting the need for this study.

This study aims to examine gender-responsive governance and conflict management practices in maritime higher education institutions in Western Visayas during the school year 2022–2023. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions: (1) What is the level of gender-responsive governance of the respondents when grouped according to the following variables such as age, sex, Length of Service, and Educational Qualification? (2) What is the dominant conflict management practice of the respondents when taken as a whole and when grouped according to selected variables and domains such as Competing, Collaborating, Compromising, Avoiding, and Accommodating? (3) Is there a significant difference in the level of gender-responsive governance of the respondents when grouped and compared according to selected variables? (4) Is there a significant relationship between gender-responsive governance and conflict management practices? (5) Based on the findings, what training program can be proposed?

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive correlational research design was employed to determine gender-responsive governance and conflict management practices among school leaders in selected maritime higher education institutions in the Philippines during the school year 2022–2023. Hence, this research design

is most appropriate for this study as it aids in the elaboration of relationships among the data that would be gathered as basis for making quantitative analysis and interpretations.

Respondents of this study were the 73 school leaders employed in various Maritime Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines. The school leaders were employees holding administrative positions that had the function of dealing with governance and conflict management, such as school president/vice-president, school administrators, deans, program head, human resource head, students' affairs and services head, among others. They are categorized as top and middle management. Of the 73 respondents, there were 14 young respondents, or 19%; 19 old respondents, or 81%; 55 males, or 75%; 17 females or 17%; 1 gay or 1%; 51 with short length of service or 70%; 22 with long length of service or 30%; 22 with Baccalaureate or 30%; 29 with Masters or 40%; 22 with Doctorate or 30%; 18 Top Management Level or 25%; and 55 Middle Management Level of 75%.

This study utilized two sets of questionnaires: the first questionnaire was adapted from the Gender Responsiveness Governance Tool by USAID to determine the level of gender-responsive governance of the respondents. The instrument has 10 questions answerable by a 5-point Likert scale where one means very low, two means low, 3 means moderate, four means high, and five means very high. The second questionnaire was also adapted from the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) to determine the conflict management practices among the respondents. Indicator A is competing with seven items; Indicator B is collaborating with seven items; Indicator C is compromising with seven items; Indicator D is avoiding with seven items; and Indicator E is accommodating with seven items; hence, a total of 35 items. The instrument was answerable by a 5-point Likert scale where one means not dominant, two means less dominant, three means fairly dominant, four is more dominant, and five means topmost.

The instruments were subjected to face and content validation by a jury of five (5) experts in the fields of research, conflict management, and gender sensitivity using the criteria set forth by Carter Good and Douglas Scates. The result revealed a validity index of 0.964, which is higher than 0.70, thus assuming that the research instrument is interpreted as valid. The validated instruments were subjected to a reliability test using Cronbach Alpha. The pilot respondents for this purpose were the 25 school leaders of non-maritime schools in Bacolod City. The reliability index for part 1: Gender-Responsive Governance was

0.921 while part 2: Conflict Management Practices was 0.791, both higher than 0.70, thus making the validated instrument reliable.

As to data gathering, permission was secured through written communication from the School Administrators in the selected Maritime Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines. When given permission, the researcher immediately administered the survey questionnaires to the respondents through face-to-face or online methods. Upon completion, the proponent put into record all generated data and information from the respondents for computation, tabulation, and analysis.

For data analysis, mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of responses on gender-responsive governance and conflict management practices. T-test for independent samples was used to determine whether or not significant differences existed in the levels of gender-responsive governance and conflict management practices when respondents were grouped according to age, gender, length of service, and management level, while One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used for educational qualification. Pearson r was used to determine the significant relationship between gender-responsive governance and prevailing conflict management practices. Computations were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

RESULTS

Level of Gender-Responsive Governance

Data in Table 1 reveal the level of gender-responsive governance among school leaders, categorized by age, gender, length of service, educational attainment, and management level. In terms of **age**, younger respondents rated gender-responsive governance very highly ($M=4.27$, $SD=.435$), indicating a strong alignment with and engagement in gender equality principles. For **gender**, female respondents rated gender-responsive governance at 4.22 (very high), while male respondents rated it at 4.00 (high), suggesting a slightly higher level of commitment among females. Regarding **length of service**, the overall rating for gender-responsive governance was "high" ($M=4.04$). Those with longer service rated it slightly higher ($M=4.11$) than those with shorter service ($M=4.01$), reflecting a general commitment to impartial governance regardless of tenure. Concerning **educational attainment**, leaders with a master's degree rated gender-responsive governance the highest ($M=4.22$), followed by those with a doctorate

(M=4.00) and those with a baccalaureate degree (M=3.90). This indicates that higher educational attainment may be associated with a stronger emphasis on gender-responsive governance.

This last topic, across **management levels**, top management rated gender-responsive governance at 4.17 (high), while middle management rated it slightly lower at 4.00 (high), showing a consistent,

though slightly higher, commitment among top management. Overall, the perception of gender-responsive governance is consistently high across all groups (M=4.04, SD=.612), with younger individuals, females, and those with higher educational attainment particularly emphasizing its importance. These variations likely reflect differences in awareness, experience, or commitment to gender equality in governance.

Table 1: Level of Gender-responsive governance of the respondents

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Age			
Young	4.27	.435	Very High
Old	3.99	.641	High
Gender			
Male	4.00	.648	High
Female	4.22	.426	Very High
Length of Service			
Short	4.01	.645	High
Long	4.11	.537	High
Educational Qualification			
Baccalaureate	3.90	.803	High
Masters	4.22	.401	Very High
Doctorate	4.00	.547	High
Management Level			
Top	4.17	.614	High
Middle	4.00	.611	High
Total	4.04	.612	High

Topmost Conflict Management Practice

In general, the dominant management practice of the respondents was collaborating except those respondents with shorter length of service (adopted

compromising style); those with bachelor's degree (adopted compromising style); and those with doctorate degree (adopted competing style), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Top most conflict management practice of the respondents

Variable	Competing	Collaborating	Compromising	Avoiding	Accommodating
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Age					
Young	3.46	3.88	3.88	3.44	3.56
Old	3.67	4.01	3.84	3.60	3.65
Gender					
Male	3.55	3.87	3.80	3.53	3.60
Female	3.88	4.36	3.98	3.67	3.73

Length of Service					
Short	3.49	3.85	3.78	3.47	3.55
Long	3.95	4.29	3.99	3.77	3.83
Educational Qualification					
Bachelor	3.31	3.84	3.78	3.48	3.54
Masters	3.68	4.13	3.88	3.68	3.67
Doctorate	3.87	3.93	3.87	3.49	3.67
Management Level					
Top	3.93	4.14	3.86	3.62	3.71
Middle	3.52	3.93	3.84	3.55	3.61
Total	3.63	3.98	3.85	3.56	3.63

Difference in the Level of Gender-Responsive Governance

Statistically, there is no significant evidence to show the differences among school leaders in the level

of gender-responsive governance when grouped according to age ($p=.123$), gender ($p=.247$), length of service ($p=.526$), educational attainment ($p=.140$) and management level ($p=.268$).

Table 3: Comparative statistics between the levels of gender responsive of the respondents when grouped and compared according to variables

Variables	n	Mean	df	t	p
Age					
Young	14	4.27	71	1.563	.123
Old	59	3.99			
Gender					
Male	55	4.00	72	2.799	.247
Female	17	4.22			
Length of Service					
Short	51	4.01	71	0.637	.526
Long	22	4.11			
Management Level					
Top	18	4.17	71	1.116	.268
Middle	55	4.00			
Variable	n	Mean	df	F	p
Educational Qualification					
Bachelor	22	3.90	72	2.023	.140
Master	29	4.22			
Doctorate	22	4.00			

* $p < 0.05 \alpha$, significant

Relationship between Gender-Responsive Governance and Conflict Management Practices

Data in Table 4 showed a significant relationship between gender-responsive governance and conflict management practices of the respondents.

The results reveal a weak to moderate positive correlation between gender-responsive governance and conflict management practices, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.236$. This indicates that improvements in gender-responsive governance are associated with slight improvements in conflict management practices. However, the strength of this

relationship is not particularly high. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.0557$) shows that approximately 5.57% of the variance in conflict management practices can be explained by gender-responsive governance, suggesting that other factors significantly influence conflict management strategies. Despite the modest correlation, the relationship is statistically significant, as indicated by the p-value ($p = 0.044$), which is

below the standard threshold of 0.05. This statistical significance implies that the observed relationship is unlikely to have occurred by chance. In general, while gender-responsive governance plays a role in shaping conflict management practices, its impact is limited, and further exploration of additional influencing factors would provide a more comprehensive understanding of conflict management dynamics.

Table 4: Relational Statistics Between Gender-Responsive Governance and Conflict Management Practices

Variables Correlated	r	r ²	p-value
Gender-Responsive Governance and Conflict Management Practices Variables Correlated	0.236	0.0557	0.044*

*significant at .05 alpha level of significance

TRAINING PROGRAM

TRAINING DESIGN (COMPREHENSIVE 2 DAY TRAINING SCHEDULE)					
Title	Gender-Responsive Governance and Conflict Management Practices Among School Leaders in Selected Maritime Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines: Basis for Training				
Rationale	This training is designed to enhance leadership effectiveness, promote gender equity, and improve conflict resolution among school leaders within maritime educational settings.				
Key Result Areas	Objectives	Activities/ Projects	Persons Involved	Timeline	Expected Output
Gender Responsive Governance	Enhance understanding of gender-responsive governance principles among school leaders.	Workshops on gender-responsive governance principles and practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School administrators Unit heads GAD directors Gender Equity Expert 	Day 1 (Morning)	Improved knowledge of gender-responsive governance among participants.
	Develop skills for integrating gender equity into governance practices.	Case studies on successful gender-responsive governance models.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School administrators Unit heads GAD directors Gender Equity Expert 	Day 1 (Morning)	Action plans for implementing gender-responsive practices in their institutions.
	Foster an inclusive environment that supports gender diversity.	Role-playing exercises to practice gender-responsive decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School administrators Unit heads GAD directors Gender Equity Expert 	Day 1 (Afternoon)	Increased awareness and commitment to gender equity.
		Panel discussions with experts on gender equity in governance.		Day 1 (Afternoon)	

Conflict Management	Understand various conflict management styles (avoiding, accommodating, compromising, competing, and collaborating).	Lectures on conflict management theories and styles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School administrators • Unit heads • GAD directors • Facilitator 	Day 2 (Morning)	Enhanced conflict management skills among school leaders.
	Develop effective conflict resolution skills.	Workshops on practical conflict resolution techniques.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School administrators • Unit heads • GAD directors • Facilitator 	Day 2 (Morning)	Increased ability to handle conflicts constructively.
	Apply appropriate conflict management techniques in different scenarios within the institution.	Simulations to practice managing conflicts in a controlled environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School administrators • Unit heads • GAD directors • Facilitator 	Day 2 (Afternoon)	Development of a conflict management framework tailored to their institution.
		Group discussions to share experiences and best practices.		Day 2 (Afternoon)	

DISCUSSION

The results revealed that respondents' level of gender-responsive governance, as measured across variables such as age, gender, length of service, educational qualification, and management level, was "high." This indicates that respondents from all groups supported the principles of fairness and equality within their institutions. They prioritized addressing employees' needs based on gender, aiming to create safe, harassment-free workplaces where both men and women are treated equitably. Such a commitment to fairness is critical for eliminating discrimination and fostering an environment of inclusivity. As Rajesh (2017) emphasized, gender-responsive governance is essential to effective leadership, as it ensures consideration of diverse perspectives, including those of the opposite gender. This approach is important because men and women often think differently and have varied viewpoints, underscoring the need for gender-sensitive governance. Furthermore, research from the University of Greenwich (Onaran, 2018) suggests that the return of skilled women to the workforce has a positive impact on productivity. Similarly, Accenture's findings (Shook & Sweet, 2020) indicate that a culture of equality fosters innovation and growth, enhancing an organization's ability to attract and retain top talent (Hall, 2020). These findings highlight that gender-responsive governance not only improves gender equality but also contributes to higher productivity and organizational

cohesion. Regardless of their educational background, respondents adopted gender-responsive governance as both a leadership strategy and an advocacy for equality in the workplace. This approach was shown to promote productivity, job satisfaction, and a happier workforce. As Coxon (2018) noted, gender-responsive governance fosters a sense of happiness and well-being among employees, benefiting not just women but the entire workforce. This contributes to an overall improvement in the quality of life for all employees. However, these findings contrast with those of Baird et al. (2018), who found that more than half of working women felt that men were treated better than women in the workplace. Both gender groups tended to perceive that the others received better treatment, with women being less likely to believe that both genders were treated equally. This negative perception can harm career prospects, hinder employee development, and reduce workplace efficiency. Moreover, as Chang and Milkman (2019) observed, decision-making differences between men and women often lead to disparate outcomes in the workplace, further emphasizing the need for gender-responsive governance.

Regarding conflict management, the dominant approach among respondents was collaboration, with a few exceptions. Respondents with shorter tenures adopted a compromising style; those with bachelor's degrees favored compromising, and those with doctorate degrees leaned toward a competing

style. In terms of age, younger respondents predominantly used a compromising style, while older respondents favored collaboration. The younger group tended to seek mutually acceptable solutions that partially satisfied both parties involved, encouraging significant sacrifices from each side (Chandolia & Anastasiou, 2020). This aligns with the findings of Jack and Ukaigwu (2018), who observed that school administrators also preferred compromising strategies in conflict resolution. Older respondents, on the other hand, preferred collaboration, aiming to find solutions that fully addressed the conflict and satisfied all parties involved (Chandolia & Anastasiou, 2020). Jack and Ukaigwu's study also found that school administrators leaned toward collaborating or integrating strategies more than other approaches. For gender, both male and female respondents favored collaboration as their top conflict management practice. This suggests that both genders preferred resolving conflicts through cooperative efforts that sought to satisfy all parties involved (Chandolia & Anastasiou, 2020). Similarly, the studies of Jack and Ukaigwu (2018) confirm that collaboration was the preferred strategy among school administrators. Concerning length of service, the dominant conflict management practice among respondents was collaboration. This indicates that respondents consistently favored collaborative approaches to resolving conflicts, aiming to address issues in a way that satisfied all parties involved (Chandolia & Anastasiou, 2020). This result aligns with Jack and Ukaigwu's (2018) study, which found that collaborating or integrating strategies were most commonly used by school administrators in conflict management. Collaboration is particularly effective when long-term relationships and positive outcomes are prioritized.

In terms of educational attainment, respondents with a bachelor's degree favored compromising, those with a master's degree preferred collaborating, and those with a doctorate degree used a competing style. Respondents with a bachelor's degree tended to seek mutually acceptable solutions that partially satisfied both parties, encouraging significant sacrifices from each side (Chandolia & Anastasiou, 2020). This is consistent with Jack and Ukaigwu's (2018) findings. Those with master's degrees preferred collaboration, focusing on finding solutions that allowed all parties to feel heard and valued. On the other hand, respondents with a doctorate degree adopted a competing style, aiming to resolve conflicts quickly, even if it meant pushing one's opinion at the expense of others (Chandolia & Anastasiou, 2020). This approach is less commonly observed in organizational conflict management. Finally, regardless of management level, the respondents' dominant conflict management

practice was collaboration. They prioritized resolving conflicts in a way that promoted a "win-win" situation for all parties involved, integrating solutions and perspectives and enhancing relationships. Active listening and non-threatening confrontation were key elements in their approach to conflict resolution. These results mirror the findings of Jack and Ukaigwu (2018), where school administrators also preferred the collaborating strategy in conflict management.

Statistical analysis revealed no significant difference in respondents' gender-responsive governance when grouped by age, gender, length of service, educational qualification, or management level. According to Rajesh (2017), gender-responsive governance is important as it makes people (or leaders in the instant case) considerate of the opposite gender's feelings. It looks into the fact that each individual thinks differently, thus having varying perspectives on certain matters. In other words, being gender-sensitive, the respondents recognized and accounted for the salient differences between men and women, which are necessary for understanding and providing for their varied needs. In fact, according to the Australian Government (2018), being gender-responsive is important not only because it is fair and the right thing to do but also because it is crucial to the workplace's entire productivity and organizational performance. In addition, the culture of equality or the same kind of workplace environment that helped everyone advance to higher positions was a powerful multiplier of innovation and growth (Shook and Sweet, 2020). In other words, gender-responsive governance is fundamentally linked to growth and innovation.

Additionally, a significant but weak to moderate degree of correlation was found between gender-responsive governance and conflict management practices. This indicates that improvements in gender-responsive governance are associated with slight improvements in conflict management practices. However, the strength of this relationship is not particularly high. Approximately 5.57% of the variance in conflict management practices can be explained by gender-responsive governance, suggesting that other factors significantly influence conflict management strategies. This statistical significance implies that the observed relationship is unlikely to have occurred by chance. In general, while gender-responsive governance plays a role in shaping conflict management practices, its impact is limited, and further exploration of additional influencing factors would provide a more comprehensive understanding of conflict management dynamics. For instance, Borden et al. (2020) found that gender roles influence conflict management styles, with male

employees tending to favor dominating strategies while females prefer avoiding them. Moreover, Moreira (2021) noted that participants with higher educational qualifications were less likely to adopt avoidant conflict management styles compared to those with lower levels of education.

CONCLUSION

The respondents demonstrated a strong commitment to gender-responsive governance by addressing the diverse needs of their personnel within their respective workplaces. Prior to making significant decisions, they carefully considered the general welfare of their people, ensuring fairness and equity for all, regardless of gender. This approach fostered an inclusive environment where subordinates—men and women alike—were treated equally, reflecting the principles of equality and fairness in their institutions.

In terms of conflict management, the respondents employed varied approaches, with the collaborating style being the most utilized and the avoiding style the least. The remaining approaches (accommodating, competing, and compromising) were employed moderately. By prioritizing collaboration, the respondents sought to resolve conflicts by actively engaging all involved parties, aiming to develop solutions that effectively addressed existing issues

and satisfied everyone. This proactive approach demonstrated their dedication to fostering harmonious workplace relationships.

Regardless of personal characteristics, the respondents consistently upheld principles of gender equality and fairness. Their management practices were responsive to the varied needs of their people, ensuring equitable treatment and opportunities. The study also revealed a significant association between gender-responsive governance and conflict management practices, with this relationship influenced by respondents' personal characteristics.

With that, it is suggested that Maritime Higher Education Institutions (MHEIs) develop and implement a series of seminars and training programs to promote gender equality and enhance conflict management strategies. These initiatives could improve institutional performance, reputation, and competitiveness while advancing broader gender equality goals within the maritime education sector. School administrators should take an active role in these efforts by facilitating programs and engaging with their teams to emphasize the importance of gender sensitivity and effective conflict resolution. Additionally, MHEIs are encouraged to adopt the proposed enhancement program on Gender-Responsive Governance and Conflict Management Practices to address identified challenges and further strengthen their institutions.

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