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FOSTERING GENDER SENSITIVITY: AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS AMONG POLICE OFFICERS OF THE POLICE TRAINING CENTER, CORDILLERA ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

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Abstract

This study explored the level of gender sensitivity and equality awareness among police recruits at the Police Training Center Cordillera Administrative Region (PTC-CAR) in Baguio City, Philippines. Grounded in institutional theory, the research aimed to assess recruits' awareness across five dimensions—awareness and knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, policy and legal frameworks, communication, and access and opportunities—and to evaluate the perceived importance, effectiveness, and institutional implementation of gender sensitivity in their training experience. Using a descriptive-quantitative research design, the study gathered data through a structured survey questionnaire administered to police recruits currently enrolled at PTC-CAR. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, and findings were interpreted using institutional perspectives on cognitive, normative, and regulative processes. The results showed generally high levels of gender awareness, especially in the cognitive and attitudinal domains. However, gaps were noted in the institutional application of gender policies and access to gender-sensitive opportunities. Recruits acknowledged the relevance of gender sensitivity to their professional development but also highlighted the need for more visible, culturally grounded, and practically applied training methods. From the analysis emerged ten key influencing factors and ten curriculum enhancement recommendations designed to deepen internalization, strengthen institutional accountability, and embed gender sensitivity into the culture of police training. The study concludes that sustainable gender responsiveness in policing requires not only policy compliance but also continuous engagement, leadership modeling, peer influence, and curriculum reform. The findings offer implications for police education, institutional legitimacy, and future reforms in gender mainstreaming within security training institutions.

Keywords: gender sensitivity, equality awareness, police recruits

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INTRODUCTION

Gender sensitivity and gender equality have emerged as essential components of modern policing, influencing how law enforcement personnel engage with diverse communities and address issues of equity within their organizations. Globally, law enforcement institutions are recognizing that gender-responsive practices not only enhance professional conduct but also strengthen community trust and institutional legitimacy. Specialized mechanisms such as women's protection units and community-oriented gender training programs highlight how the integration of gender perspectives into policing can lead to more effective responses to gender-based violence and other equity-related concerns.

International practices demonstrate the significance of institutional reforms in mainstreaming gender sensitivity. In Canada, gender equity frameworks have been implemented to address the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions within police organizations, underscoring how recruitment and promotion policies can reshape institutional culture (Public Safety Canada, 2022). Similarly, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has introduced its Gender, Equality, and Diversity in Policing Program, which provides training modules on gender-based violence prevention and community policing (UNODC, 2021). In India, empirical studies reveal that gender-sensitive training for police recruits improves attitudes toward victims of gender-based crimes and fosters greater community trust (Chakraborty & Kumar, 2019). These examples collectively illustrate that sustained training, cultural reforms, and organizational accountability are key to embedding gender sensitivity in policing.

In the Philippines, legal and institutional frameworks have also been established to advance gender equality in law enforcement. The Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act 9710) provides the foundation for gender-responsive governance, while the Philippine National Police (PNP) has created Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPDs) in police stations nationwide (Garcia, 2020; Labrador, 2021). The PNP has further institutionalized Gender and Development (GAD) programs aimed at mainstreaming gender considerations across its operations. These reforms demonstrate policy-level commitments, but their translation into daily practice remains uneven, particularly when comparing urban and rural policing environments.

Urban centers such as Metro Manila have benefited from more advanced gender training and access to resources, while police officers in rural and conflict-affected areas often lack exposure to comprehensive gender-sensitive education (Santos & Cruz, 2019). Studies conducted in rural communities show that many officers lack a clear understanding of how gender perspectives should inform their daily responsibilities, resulting in inadequate responses to gender-based crimes (Garcia, 2020). These disparities highlight the influence of both institutional limitations and cultural norms, particularly in indigenous communities where traditional patriarchal values continue to shape law enforcement practices.

The role of culture in shaping gender-sensitive policing is especially critical in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR). This region is home to diverse indigenous groups with distinct traditions and gender norms, which may either facilitate or inhibit the acceptance of gender equality principles. While national frameworks emphasize universal gender-responsive standards, these may not always align with local cultural contexts, leading to inconsistencies in how policies are implemented. As such, tailoring training programs to account for indigenous practices and community dynamics is essential for ensuring that gender sensitivity in policing is not only theoretical but also practical and culturally relevant.

Another major gap in the existing literature is the limited evaluation of the effectiveness of gender sensitivity

training in the Philippines. While policy implementation has been studied, fewer works have examined whether such programs translate into meaningful attitudinal and behavioral change among officers over the long term (Labrador, 2021). Existing assessments are concentrated in urban settings, leaving rural and resource-constrained regions largely underexplored. This lack of systematic evaluation raises concerns about whether current approaches adequately foster the cultural and institutional transformation envisioned by gender mainstreaming policies.

Beyond gaps in training, the issue of intersectionality remains underexamined in Philippine law enforcement. Gender sensitivity is often approached as a universal construct, yet the experiences of women and marginalized groups are also shaped by ethnicity, class, religion, and other socio-cultural factors (Natarajan, 2020). For example, women from indigenous backgrounds may face compounded vulnerabilities in accessing justice and protection. Thus, integrating intersectional perspectives into police training is necessary to ensure that law enforcement personnel are equipped to engage effectively with diverse communities.

Given these challenges, the Police Training Center–Cordillera Administrative Region (PTC-CAR) in Baguio City provides a strategic site for examining how gender sensitivity and equality are introduced to police recruits. As an institution tasked with preparing officers to serve in culturally diverse and resource-limited contexts, PTC-CAR plays a pivotal role in embedding values of inclusivity, equity, and human rights in future law enforcement personnel. Yet limited research has explored how effectively concepts of gender sensitivity are integrated into its curriculum, or how recruits internalize these principles during their formative years of training.

This study is therefore situated within the broader national and international discourse on gender mainstreaming in law enforcement, while addressing the specific local context of the Cordillera region. By investigating the awareness and perceptions of recruits at PTC-CAR, the study aims to assess institutional strengths, identify training gaps, and propose strategies to enhance curriculum design. In doing so, it contributes to a deeper understanding of how gender sensitivity can be localized, sustained, and institutionalized within Philippine policing.

Ultimately, fostering gender-responsive policing requires more than compliance with policies or one-time training interventions. It calls for a holistic approach that integrates leadership modeling, peer influence, continuous education, and culturally grounded practices into the everyday realities of police work. Addressing these dimensions is essential not only for the professional development of recruits but also for ensuring equitable service delivery, strengthening public trust, and aligning Philippine policing with global standards of inclusivity and human rights.

Objectives

The study seeks to address how gender-sensitive and aware police officers are at the Police Training Center-CAR and how the gender studies curriculum can be improved to address identified gaps.

Specifically, it answers the following objectives:

1. To determine the level of awareness on gender sensitivity among recruits at PTC CART in terms of the following dimensions:
   1.1 Awareness and Knowledge
   1.2 Attitudes and Beliefs
   1.3 Policy and Legal Frameworks
   1.4 Communication
   1.5 Access and Opportunities?
2. To find out the extent of importance of gender sensitivity in the recruits' training and professional

development.

3. To look into the extent of perception of the trainees on the training center's policies as gender-sensitive.

4. To determine the extent of the effectiveness of gender sensitivity in increasing the trainees' knowledge and awareness.

5. To find out the factors that influence gender sensitivity and equality awareness of recruits.

6. To recommend curriculum enhancements to improve gender sensitivity and equality awareness among police recruits and officers.

METHODS

Research Design

A descriptive-survey design was employed to gather primary data from a representative sample of police recruits and officers at the Philippine National Police Training Institute, Cordillera Administrative Region Training Center. A structured questionnaire was utilized to capture demographic information such as age, gender, rank, and length of service, as well as to measure perceptions of gender sensitivity and equality. The survey focused on key areas including awareness of gender sensitivity policies, perceptions of gender equity in training, and gender-sensitive behaviors and attitudes. To ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument, it underwent expert validation by professionals in gender studies and law enforcement, followed by a pilot test with a smaller group of recruits and officers, which helped refine the questions for clarity and accuracy.

To complement the survey findings and address the specific problem of identifying factors influencing gender sensitivity and equality awareness among recruits and officers, the study also employed a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews. This method allowed for deeper exploration of personal insights, experiences, and perceptions that cannot be fully captured through survey responses. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative approaches enabled a more comprehensive understanding of how gender sensitivity is perceived and practiced within the training environment, as well as the contextual factors that shape these attitudes.

Data Gathering Tools

For this study, the primary data-gathering tool was a structured survey questionnaire designed to assess the level of gender sensitivity and awareness among trainees at the Police Training Center–CAR. The instrument was developed to capture relevant information on the trainees' understanding of gender equality and their attitudes toward gender issues within the law enforcement context. It consisted of closed-ended questions, including multiple-choice and Likert scale items, covering areas such as attitudes toward gender equality, perceptions of gender roles in policing, and awareness of gender-based violence and discrimination.

The contents of the questionnaire were adapted from established tools and frameworks on gender awareness and sensitivity, particularly those previously applied to law enforcement officers. By drawing from published references and proven instruments, the study ensured that the questionnaire was both relevant and valid for assessing gender-related awareness in the specific context of police training. The inclusion of both general and law enforcement-specific gender issues made the tool comprehensive and contextually appropriate.

To ensure reliability, a pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents at the Police Regional Training Center 1, who had similar profiles to the actual study participants. This process helped identify ambiguities, refine the wording of questions, and confirm the effectiveness of the tool. The internal consistency of the instrument was measured using

Cronbach's alpha, with a value of 0.7 or higher indicating acceptable reliability, thus ensuring that the items consistently measured the constructs of gender sensitivity and awareness.

In addition to reliability testing, the questionnaire underwent content validation by three experts in gender studies, law enforcement, and research methodology. These experts reviewed the items for clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness, as well as assessed potential cultural biases. Their feedback was integrated into the final version of the questionnaire, ensuring that the instrument was scientifically valid and aligned with the objectives of the study. Through this rigorous process of development, reliability testing, and validation, the study ensured the accuracy and meaningfulness of the data gathered on gender sensitivity and awareness among police trainees.

Data Gathering Procedures

The data collection began after the approval of the research proposal by the Philippine College of Criminology (PCCR) Graduate School and the issuance of a research clearance from the Graduate Research Committee. An endorsement letter was then secured from the Dean and Graduate Research Coordinator, addressed to the Director of the Cordillera Administrative Region Training Center (CARTC), requesting cooperation and explaining the purpose of the study. The researcher personally delivered the letter to the CARTC Director's office at Teacher's Camp, Baguio City, and was directed to coordinate with the center's Gender and Development (GAD) Focal Person.

` A coordination meeting with the GAD Focal Person was conducted to review the content and sensitivity of the questionnaire, schedule the survey, and identify eligible respondents. Informed consent forms were distributed, outlining the study's objectives, voluntary nature, and assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. To further ensure clarity and reliability, a pilot test with a separate batch of trainees was conducted, and necessary revisions were made based on feedback.

The finalized survey was administered on-site at the CARTC, with the schedule carefully arranged to avoid disruption of training activities. The survey was conducted in classroom settings, where the researcher provided orientation on answering procedures and emphasized the importance of honest and independent responses. Each session lasted approximately 20–30 minutes, and the researcher remained present to address questions and monitor independent completion.

Completed questionnaires were immediately retrieved after administration. Out of all the instruments distributed, 97% were successfully collected and considered valid for analysis. The high retrieval rate was attributed to the structured scheduling, on-site distribution, and strong cooperation extended by CARTC officers and staff.

Ethical Considerations

In conducting this research, ethical standards were strictly observed to safeguard participants' rights and uphold the integrity of the study. Informed consent was obtained from all trainees, who were fully briefed on the purpose of the research, the nature of the questions, and the use of their responses. They were assured that participation was voluntary, with the freedom to withdraw at any time without penalty. Consent forms were signed to document their agreement. Confidentiality and anonymity were also ensured by avoiding the collection of personal identifiers and by securely storing data accessible only to the research team.

The study was carefully designed to minimize harm and risk. Although the survey topics were not inherently sensitive, questions were framed respectfully and with cultural sensitivity to avoid discomfort. The research emphasized non-discrimination and inclusivity, treating all trainees equally regardless of gender, rank, or background. Participation was voluntary, with no coercion or pressure, and trainees were assured that their decision to participate or not would

have no effect on their training or evaluation. These measures promoted fairness and protected participants from any potential risks.

Transparency and integrity guided the entire research process. The objectives, methods, and findings were communicated honestly, without manipulation or selective reporting of data. Participants were assured that their responses would only be used for this study and presented in aggregate form to protect individual identities. Additionally, the study underwent ethical review by the Graduate Research Committee, which evaluated its compliance with institutional standards. Recommendations from the review were incorporated to strengthen the study's ethical safeguards. By observing these measures, the research ensured participant protection while producing credible and trustworthy results.

RESULTS and DISCUSSIONS

Level of Awareness on Gender Sensitivity in terms of Identified Variables

Awareness and knowledge. The findings reveal that police recruits at CARTC generally demonstrated a high level of awareness and knowledge on gender sensitivity, with an overall mean of 3.99 interpreted as "Aware." Several indicators were rated "Highly Aware," particularly on fundamental concepts such as differentiating gender from sex (M = 4.46), distinguishing gender equality from equity (M = 4.68), and recognizing the influence of gender issues on policing and community engagement (M = 4.73). These results suggest that institutional training and policies have been effective in building cognitive awareness of gender-related concepts. However, some indicators were only rated "Slightly Aware," including understanding gender sensitivity specifically in the context of law enforcement (M = 3.24) and identifying gender stereotypes in media (M = 3.36), indicating gaps in contextual application of gender knowledge. Overall, the data suggests that while recruits possess strong foundational understanding, further emphasis is needed on translating theoretical knowledge into practical, context-specific awareness relevant to law enforcement.

Attitudes and Beliefs. The findings in Table 3 reveal that police recruits at PTC-CAR generally demonstrate a positive disposition toward gender sensitivity, reflecting values of equality, inclusivity, and professionalism. Their attitudes suggest recognition of the importance of gender equality, respect for all genders, and the rejection of discriminatory behaviors, with strong agreement on the idea that gender sensitivity strengthens public trust and should be prioritized in training. However, there remain areas that show less internalization, particularly in respecting diverse gender identities and challenging personal biases, indicating that some deeper issues surrounding inclusivity and self-reflection are not yet fully embraced. This supports existing literature that while training effectively promotes general awareness of gender equality, it often struggles to address ingrained cultural norms and unconscious biases. These results highlight the role of institutions in shaping values and behaviors but also point to the need for continuous reinforcement through mentoring, policy enforcement, and reflective practice to ensure deeper attitudinal transformation in the policing context.

Policy and Legal Framework. The findings reveal that police recruits at CARTC demonstrated a generally strong awareness of gender-related policies and legal frameworks, reflecting the Philippine National Police Training Center's efforts to integrate gender-sensitive content into its curriculum. Many trainees showed familiarity with laws on gender-based violence, access to resources on gender laws, and understanding of the consequences of non-compliance, indicating that formal structures and regulative frameworks are shaping their knowledge and attitudes.

Notably, recruits expressed high awareness of legal protections for LGBTQIA+ individuals, a significant outcome given the traditionally conservative culture of law enforcement. However, awareness was not evenly distributed across all areas, as knowledge of broader national policies such as the Magna Carta of Women and internal grievance mechanisms appeared less developed. This unevenness suggests partial institutionalization, where compliance with gender mandates exists but deeper comprehension and practical integration remain limited. Consistent with institutional theory, the results highlight that while formal exposure to gender-sensitive laws and policies is present, sustained reinforcement and internalization are still necessary to bridge the gap between policy structures and everyday practice.

On Communication. The findings on communication reveal that police recruits at PTC CAR exhibit a high level of awareness regarding gender-sensitive practices, reflecting the institution's success in embedding gender norms into both formal training and informal interactions. Recruits consistently demonstrated attentiveness to using respectful and inclusive language, avoiding sexist remarks, and fostering equitable group discussions, signaling a departure from the traditionally masculine and hierarchical communication style often associated with police culture. Importantly, they also expressed confidence in addressing gender-related issues and responding appropriately to gender-insensitive behavior, suggesting that corrective practices are becoming routinized and institutionalized within their training environment. While awareness was slightly less pronounced in areas such as actively listening to gendered perspectives and avoiding stereotypical language, these subtler aspects of communication highlight the ongoing challenges of overcoming implicit bias and unconscious patterns in everyday discourse. Overall, the results underscore the centrality of communication as a site where institutional norms are reproduced and sustained, with PTC CAR functioning as a norm-setting environment that not only equips recruits with technical competencies but also instills value-laden behaviors essential to gender sensitivity and equality.

Access and Opportunity. The findings indicate that police recruits at the Police Training Center–Cordillera Administrative Region (PTC CAR) generally demonstrated strong awareness of gender sensitivity in terms of access and opportunities, highlighting positive perceptions of safety, fairness in leadership roles, encouragement of participation, mentoring, and equitable treatment of LGBTQIA+ individuals. These results suggest that the institution fosters an inclusive and supportive training environment, reflecting normative institutional pressures that promote shared expectations of equity and fairness. However, a notable concern emerged regarding the perception that male and female trainees do not have equal chances of being recognized for their achievements, pointing to a possible disconnect between formal policies on gender equality and actual practices—a phenomenon consistent with institutional theory's concept of decoupling. This gap underscores the persistence of implicit biases and symbolic barriers that may hinder genuine equity, despite structural mechanisms designed to promote inclusivity. Thus, while PTC CAR demonstrates progress in institutionalizing gender-responsive practices, addressing issues of recognition remains crucial to achieving deeper institutional integration of equity values beyond compliance with external mandates.

Level of Awareness on Gender Sensitivity: All Dimensions

Extent of Importance of Gender Sensitivity in Training and Professional Development

The results reveal that police recruits at the Police Training Center–Cordillera Administrative Region view gender sensitivity as an important aspect of their training and professional development, considering it central to ethical policing, leadership, self-awareness, conflict prevention, and community relations. Most indicators were rated as highly important, indicating that recruits do not see gender awareness as optional but as a core element of their professional

identity and organizational integrity. However, some variation was observed, particularly in perceptions of its impact on teamwork and its equivalence to traditional competencies like physical and legal training, suggesting that certain institutional norms and traditional views still shape attitudes.

Perceived Gender Sensitivity of the Training Center's Policies and Environment

The findings reveal that police recruits perceive the training center's policies and institutional environment on gender sensitivity as moderate, reflecting both strengths and gaps in implementation. While the center is seen as promoting a gender-sensitive learning environment and responding seriously to complaints, other aspects such as integrating gender issues into lectures, modeling gender-sensitive behavior, ensuring safety for female and LGBTQIA+ trainees, and enforcing zero tolerance for harassment were viewed less positively. This uneven profile suggests that although formal commitments and structures for gender sensitivity exist, their practical application in daily interactions, instruction, and institutional culture remains limited. From the perspective of institutional theory, this indicates a gap between policy and practice, where compliance with external mandates is evident but full integration into organizational routines, leadership behavior, and lived experiences has yet to be achieved.

Effectiveness of Gender Sensitivity Training in PTC CAR

The findings reveal that police recruits at the Police Training Center–Cordillera Administrative Region perceived the gender sensitivity training as moderately effective, with strengths in enhancing their knowledge of gender issues, laws, and appropriate behaviors, but with notable weaknesses in fostering self-awareness, confidence, personal growth, and perceived professional relevance. While the training succeeded in transmitting rules and concepts aligned with institutional expectations, it fell short of promoting deeper reflection, emotional engagement, and integration of gender sensitivity into policing roles. This suggests that the program largely achieved compliance-based learning but did not fully advance toward normative and cultural internalization, highlighting the need for more interactive, reflective, and practice-oriented approaches to ensure lasting impact on recruits' professional identity and commitment to gender equity.

Factors Influencing the Gender Sensitivity And Equality Awareness Of Police Recruits in PTC CAR

The study highlights that the design and delivery of gender sensitivity training at PTC CAR play a critical role in shaping recruits' understanding and application of gender-related principles. While recruits gained basic knowledge about gender laws and avoiding offensive behavior, many found the training ineffective in fostering personal reflection, communication confidence, and practical relevance to policing duties. The reliance on lectures, slide presentations, and printed modules positioned recruits as passive learners, resulting in training that was more informational than transformational. Without interactive or experiential methods—such as role-playing, discussions, or scenario-based exercises—recruits perceived the sessions as formalities rather than meaningful learning opportunities. This aligns with existing research that shows learners in hierarchical institutions like police academies often disengage when they are not given the chance to actively reflect and connect lessons to real-world contexts.

From an institutional perspective, the findings suggest that PTC CAR's approach reflects ritualistic compliance, where gender training is implemented to satisfy formal requirements but lacks the depth needed for cultural and professional internalization. Without bridging the gap between theory and operational realities, recruits struggle to see the relevance of gender sensitivity to law enforcement work, leading to superficial adherence rather than genuine practice. Institutional theory emphasizes that true transformation requires not only rules and policies (regulative) but

also shared norms and values (normative and cultural-cognitive). Recruits' accounts confirm that more engaging and reflective methods—such as role-playing and honest conversations—can foster lasting change by encouraging emotional engagement and identity reconstruction. For PTC CAR, redesigning training into interactive, contextualized, and participatory formats is essential to move beyond compliance and instill gender sensitivity as a professional ethic. The gender sensitivity and equality awareness of police recruits at PTC CAR are shaped less by classroom instruction and more by the institutional culture and behaviors modeled by leadership. While gender modules are formally taught, recruits observe contradictions between lessons and the conduct of trainers, some of whom make sexist remarks or dismiss concerns, creating normative misalignment that weakens institutional credibility. Institutional theory highlights that leadership behavior carries symbolic weight in hierarchical organizations like police academies, meaning that silence, indifference, or inconsistency can reduce gender sensitivity to mere performative compliance. Conversely, leaders who actively model inclusivity, address bias, and reinforce equity norms contribute to embedding gender sensitivity as an ethical commitment rather than a procedural formality. Without visible and consistent leadership modeling, however, recruits are pressured to conform to prevailing masculine norms, leaving gender initiatives vulnerable to cultural resistance and preventing their meaningful institutionalization.

At the Police Training Center–Cordillera Administrative Region (PTC CAR), gender sensitivity is formally introduced through lectures, but the lack of visible and accessible materials—such as posters, manuals, and policy reminders—limits its integration into the daily learning environment. While the institution is rated highly for promoting a gender-sensitive culture, the absence of consistent visual and informational cues weakens recruits' awareness, understanding, and internalization of gender equity values. Institutional theory emphasizes that visible symbols and repeated exposure are crucial for embedding equity into organizational culture; thus, without sustained reminders and accessible resources, gender sensitivity risks being perceived as a one-time topic rather than a lived institutional priority.

This study highlights a critical gap between gender sensitivity training and its relevance to practical policing duties. While recruits gained cognitive knowledge of gender laws and behaviors, they struggled to see its application in real scenarios such as crime scene response, interviewing victims, or handling cases involving vulnerable groups. Narratives revealed frustration over the lack of case-based, scenario-driven instruction, reducing training to abstract or tokenistic compliance. Institutional theory explains this as "decoupling," where formal policies exist but are not integrated into practice. Without contextualization, gender sensitivity risks being sidelined, undermining both officer preparedness and public trust. To be effective, training must embed gender as a core policing competency through applied modules, simulations, and reflective learning that connect directly to field realities.

At the Police Training Center–Cordillera Administrative Region (PTC CAR), the effectiveness of gender sensitivity training is heavily shaped by the competence and commitment of trainers, who serve as key institutional actors. Findings show that many recruits perceive trainers as lacking credibility, with some merely reading slides, avoiding sensitive issues, or showing discomfort, which undermines the legitimacy of gender sensitivity and reduces it to compliance rather than transformation. Conversely, trainers who demonstrate personal conviction, share real experiences, and foster open dialogue act as "norm entrepreneurs," inspiring recruits to internalize equity values. Without deliberate efforts to build trainer capacity and advocacy, gender sensitivity initiatives risk being hollowed out by passive compliance, making trainer development central to meaningful institutional reform.

At PTC CAR, peer and batch dynamics strongly shape how recruits engage with gender sensitivity training,

often amplifying or undermining formal instruction. While some recruits reported ridicule, jokes, and silence that discouraged genuine engagement, others described supportive peers who reinforced gender-sensitive behavior and deepened understanding. Consistent with institutional theory, these peer norms act as powerful cultural mechanisms that can either hinder or promote the internalization of equity values. Thus, fostering peer leadership, small-group dialogue, and community-based reinforcement is crucial for transforming informal batch culture into a driver of sustainable gender-sensitive policing.

Prior exposure to gender education, advocacy, or related social issues significantly shapes how police recruits at PTC CAR receive and internalize gender sensitivity training. Recruits with prior experiences—through courses, volunteer work, or advocacy—tend to view the training as meaningful and relevant, while those without such background often struggle, resist, or misinterpret its purpose. These disparities highlight the role of institutional logics, where individuals filter new norms through pre-existing beliefs and socializations. Importantly, recruits with prior exposure can act as informal peer facilitators, helping to diffuse equity values within their batch. Thus, baseline assessments and differentiated learning strategies are essential to ensure inclusive and effective gender sensitivity training, turning prior exposure into an institutional asset for reform.

Police recruits' perception of PTC CAR's institutional commitment to gender equity strongly shapes how they internalize gender sensitivity. When recruits see inconsistencies—such as posters promoting equality but little action on discriminatory behavior—they interpret reforms as symbolic rather than genuine. This undermines the credibility of gender initiatives and discourages recruits from taking them seriously, reinforcing the gap between institutional rhetoric and lived practice. Institutional theory explains this as a problem of normative legitimacy, where stated values fail to align with observable actions

Sociocultural beliefs and regional norms also influence recruits' responses to gender training. Many enter with values shaped by traditional, patriarchal, or religious community practices, which may conflict with gender equality principles. This creates tension between ingrained cultural scripts and the egalitarian frameworks promoted in training. However, local traditions that emphasize female leadership, community solidarity, or collective decision-making can also serve as bridges for aligning gender equity with regional identity. Approaching training with cultural sensitivity can transform these influences from barriers into enablers of reform.

Finally, the lack of opportunities for reflection, dialogue, and practical application limits the effectiveness of gender training at PTC CAR. Many recruits described the sessions as passive lectures rather than interactive engagements, leaving them unprepared to apply gender sensitivity in real-world policing. Without safe spaces to ask questions, role-play scenarios, or critically reflect, gender sensitivity remains abstract and external. To address this, the training center must integrate experiential and dialogic methods that allow recruits to actively practice and internalize gender equity as a professional and ethical value.

Table 1
Level of Awareness on Gender Sensitivity in terms of Awareness and Knowledge

Indicator	Mean	DE
1. I can explain the concept of gender and how it differs from biological sex.	4.46	HA
2. I am aware of what gender sensitivity means in the context of law enforcement	3.24	SA
3. I understand the difference between gender equality and gender equity.	4.68	HA

4. I can identify examples of gender-based discrimination in the workplace.	3.62	A
5. I am familiar with the roles and responsibilities of men and women in traditional and evolving contexts.	3.74	A
6. I can identify gender stereotypes in media and popular culture.	3.36	SA
7. I understand the importance of recognizing diverse gender identities.	4.32	HA
8. I know the impact of gender inequality on community safety and development.	3.85	A
9. I am aware of how gender issues affect policing and community engagement.	4.73	HA
10. I can name key terms related to gender advocacy (e.g., SOGIE, patriarchy, gender bias)..	3.86	A
Level of Awareness and Knowledge	3.99	A

Table 2
Level of Awareness on Gender Sensitivity in terms of Attitudes and Beliefs

Indicator	Mean	DE
1. I believe men and women are equally capable of performing police duties.	4.41	HA
2. I believe addressing gender issues should be a priority in law enforcement training.	4.43	HA
3. I am comfortable working under female leadership.	3.56	A
4. I think gender sensitivity improves public trust in the police.	4.44	HA
5. I respect people of different gender identities and sexual orientations.	3.31	A
6. I believe gender roles should not limit professional opportunities.	3.70	A
7. I support gender-inclusive language in training and communication.	3.88	A
8. I consider gender-based jokes or comments as inappropriate in professional settings.	3.80	A
9. I believe gender sensitivity makes me a more effective public servant.	3.58	A
10. I challenge my own biases and assumptions about gender.	3.45	A
Awareness of on Gender Sensitivity in terms of Attitudes and Beliefs	3.86	A

Table 3
Level of Awareness on Gender Sensitivity in terms of Policy and Legal Frameworks

Indicator	Mean	DE
1. I am aware of the Philippine laws on gender-based violence (e.g., RA 9262, RA 11313).	3.54	A
2. I am familiar with the PNP guidelines on gender and development (GAD).	3.88	A
3. I have received orientation on gender-related laws during my training.	4.11	A
4. I know the internal grievance mechanisms for gender-related complaints.	3.46	A
5. I can identify legal protections for LGBTQIA+ individuals in the Philippines.	4.72	HA
6. I understand the implications of non-compliance with gender-sensitive laws.	3.92	A

7. I am aware of national plans or policies related to gender equality (e.g., Magna Carta of Women).	3.37	SA
8. I believe the Training Center complies with gender sensitivity policies..	3.86	A
9. I can apply gender-related policies in hypothetical policing scenarios.	4.00	A
10. I have access to materials and resources on gender laws.	3.96	A
Overall Mean	3.88	A

Table 4
Level of Awareness on Gender Sensitivity in terms of Communication

Indicator	Mean	DE
1. I use gender-sensitive language in professional communication.	4.40	HA
2. I avoid sexist jokes or remarks in conversation.	4.41	HA
3. I treat people with respect regardless of their gender.	4.22	HA
4. I am careful not to interrupt or speak over women in group discussions.	4.37	HA
5. I actively listen to diverse viewpoints, including those related to gender.	4.18	A
6. 6. I am confident in discussing gender issues in group or public settings.	4.33	HA
7. I encourage respectful behavior among peers regarding gender topics.	4.27	HA
8. I know how to respond appropriately when I witness gender-insensitive behavior.	4.59	HA
9. I consider how gender may affect communication styles.	4.69	HA
10. I avoid using language that reinforces gender stereotypes.	4.16	A
Overall Mean	4.36	HA

Table 5
Level of Awareness on Gender Sensitivity in terms of Communication

Indicator	Mean	DE
1. Training opportunities are equally available to male and female recruits.	3.44	A
2. Leadership roles are fairly offered regardless of gender.	4.46	HA
3. All trainees are encouraged to speak up and participate, regardless of gender.	4.46	HA
4. Physical standards in training are fairly adjusted to reflect gender equity.	4.09	A
5. Male and female trainees have equal chances to be recognized for achievements.	1.97	U
6. I believe LGBTQIA+ trainees are treated fairly.	4.37	HA
7. Mentoring and coaching are accessible to all genders.	4.48	HA
8. Facilities (e.g., bathrooms, dorms) are respectful of gender needs.	4.16	A
9. Recruits of all genders feel safe in the training environment.	4.69	HA
10. Female officers are visible in leadership and instructional roles.	4.26	HA
Awareness on Gender Sensitivity in Terms of Access and Opportunities.	4.04	A

Table 6
Level of Awareness on Gender Sensitivity along Selected Dimensions

Area of Observation	Mean	DE
1. In Terms of Awareness and Knowledge	3.99	A

2. In Terms of Attitudes and Beliefs	3.86	A
3. In Terms of Policy and Legal Frameworks	3.88	A
4. In Terms of Communication	4.36	HA
5. In Terms of Access and Opportunities	4.04	A
Overall awareness level	4.03	A

Table 7
Extent of Importance of Gender Sensitivity in Training and Professional Development

Indicator	Mean	DE
1. Gender sensitivity is essential for ethical policing.	4.46	HI
2. Training in gender awareness should be mandatory for all recruits.	4.36	HI
3. Gender-sensitive practices contribute to better community relations.	4.21	HI
4. I believe gender awareness enhances my leadership potential.	4.41	HI
5. Learning about gender sensitivity improves my self-awareness.	4.43	HI
6. Gender-sensitive training prepares me to deal with real-world cases more effectively.	4.52	HI
7. Respect for gender diversity improves teamwork and cohesion.	2.88	SI
8. I think gender sensitivity is critical for career advancement.	4.23	HI
9. Understanding gender dynamics helps prevent workplace conflicts.	4.60	HI
10. Gender awareness is as important as physical and legal training in police work.	3.97	I
Importance of Gender Sensitivity in Training and Professional Development	4.21	I

Table 8
Perceived Gender Sensitivity of Training Center's Policies and Environment

Indicator	Mean	DE
1. The training center promotes a gender-sensitive learning environment.	4.92	VH
2. Gender issues are addressed in lectures and training sessions.	1.93	L
3. Trainers model gender-sensitive behavior.	2.36	L
4. The institution responds seriously to gender-based complaints.	4.50	VH
5. Gender-sensitive materials and visual aids are present in the center.	2.98	H
6. Facilities are inclusive and respectful of gender-specific needs.	3.72	H
7. Female and LGBTQIA+ trainees feel safe and supported.	2.03	L
8. There is zero tolerance for gender-based harassment or bullying.	1.82	L
9. Assignments and tasks are given regardless of gender.	2.53	L
10. Gender-sensitivity principles are embedded in the training center's core values.	2.56	L

Table 9
Perceived Effectiveness of Gender Sensitivity Training

Indicator	Mean	DE
1. The training improved my understanding of gender-related issues.	4.83	HE
2. I became more conscious of my gender biases after the training.	2.17	NE

3. I now avoid behaviors that may be offensive or insensitive.	4.64	HE
4. The training changed how I treat people of different genders.	4.16	E
5. I gained practical tools to apply gender sensitivity in the field.	4.43	HE
6. I now have a better understanding of gender laws and policies.	4.64	HE
7. The training encouraged me to advocate for gender equality.	3.89	E
8. I feel more confident discussing gender-related topics.	1.77	VI
9. I believe the training was relevant to my future policing role.	1.24	VI
10. The gender sensitivity training helped me grow as a professional and individual.	1.35	VI
Overall Mean	3.31	SE

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that police recruits at PTC-CAR possess a strong foundational and cognitive understanding of gender sensitivity, particularly in areas of communication and basic legal terminology. The high levels of awareness regarding inclusive language and the theoretical distinctions between sex and gender suggest that institutional mandates have successfully integrated gender-sensitive concepts into the recruits' vocabulary. However, this awareness remains largely theoretical; while recruits can identify legal frameworks like those protecting LGBTQIA+ individuals, they struggle to internalize these values as personal beliefs or apply them to practical, real-world policing scenarios. This disparity indicates that current training effectively achieves "ritualistic compliance"—meeting the formal requirements of the curriculum—without yet fostering a deep-seated professional ethic.

Furthermore, the research identifies a significant "decoupling" between official institutional policy and the lived experience within the training environment. While the center is perceived as a safe space that takes formal complaints seriously, there are visible gaps in the daily modeling of gender-sensitive behavior by trainers and leadership. The persistence of sexist remarks, the lack of visible gender-responsive materials, and the perceived inequality in recognition for achievements among male and female trainees undermine the legitimacy of gender mainstreaming efforts. These inconsistencies suggest that the traditional masculine norms of police culture continue to exert a powerful influence, often overshadowing formal classroom instruction and preventing the full institutionalization of equity values.

To achieve sustainable gender-responsive policing, PTC-CAR must transition from passive, lecture-based instruction to interactive, experiential, and culturally grounded training methods. The study highlights that the effectiveness of gender education is heavily influenced by trainer credibility, peer dynamics, and the inclusion of scenario-based learning that connects gender sensitivity to core police functions. Moving forward, institutional reform should focus on bridging the gap between theory and practice by embedding gender equity into leadership modeling and daily organizational routines. By addressing these internal inconsistencies and focusing on the normative internalization of values, the institution can better prepare recruits to serve diverse communities with the inclusivity and human rights standards required of modern law enforcement.

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