ISSN: 2704-3010 Volume VII, Issue I August 2025





MIND THE GAP: SUSTAINING A GENDER RESPONSIVE AVIATION INDUSTRY AMIDST INVISIBLE DISRUPTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The study is anchored on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 specifically goal number 5 (SDG 5) which promotes Gender Equality. SDG 5 clearly stipulates to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning. The Philippine State College of Aeronautics, a pioneer in public education in aviation is mandated to "provide" professional and advanced technical and technological instruction and training in the preparatory field of aeronautics and the liberal arts courses" as per RA 7605 (Sec2). Further, PhilSCA believes that academic institutions are catalyst of change: economically, morally, spiritually, and physically to transform and develop the entire community in which it exists. This mandate includes all man regardless of their gender. The study is also anchored on global driver of connectivity and economic growth, as the aviation industry today is not immune to the challenges brought by invisible disruptions such as pandemics, climate change, technological shifts, and systemic inequalities. These disruptions, though less visible compared to operational or infrastructural crises, have profound implications on workforce diversity, inclusivity, and resilience. This study explores strategies for sustaining a gender-responsive aviation industry that ensures equitable participation of women and other marginalized groups despite these emerging challenges. Anchored on the principles of Gender and Development (GAD), the research examines existing policies, workplace practices, and leadership

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ISSN: 2704-3010 Volume VII, Issue I August 2025



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frameworks within aviation organizations, and evaluates their capacity to withstand invisible disruptions without compromising gender equity. Through a mixed-method approach, the study gathers insights from industry stakeholders, regulatory agencies, and academic institutions to assess current gaps and opportunities. Findings underscore the need for strengthened gender mainstreaming, inclusive capacity-building programs, and adaptive governance models that integrate both equity and resilience in aviation management. Ultimately, the study argues that sustaining a gender-responsive aviation industry requires not only compliance with gender policies but also the proactive cultivation of a culture of inclusivity, innovation, inclusion and adaptability in the face of unforeseen disruptions.

Keywords: Aviation, Diversity, Inclusive, Gender Balance, Disruptions

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INTRODUCTION

The aviation industry has long been recognized as a male-dominated field, with women and gender minorities facing challenges in representation, participation, and leadership. While progress has been made in promoting inclusivity, recent years have highlighted a new dimension of challenge: invisible disruptions. These are not always sudden, tangible crises like accidents or economic recessions, but rather subtle, ongoing disruptions such as systemic gender biases, cultural barriers, unequal access to training opportunities, mental health strains, and the hidden impacts of global crises (e.g., pandemics, geopolitical tensions, or climate change). Addressing these disruptions is vital to sustaining a gender-responsive aviation industry that fosters inclusivity, resilience, and equity.

Understanding invisible disruptions in aviation requires looking into the systemic and often hidden challenges that disproportionately affect women and marginalized genders in the industry. Persistent cultural notions continue to reinforce the idea that aviation careers are primarily for men, limiting the availability of mentorship and role models for women. Workplace inequalities also remain evident, as unequal access to training, promotion, and leadership opportunities continues to hinder career advancement. Additionally, the disproportionate impact of family-care responsibilities on women further exacerbates these challenges.

Beyond workplace structures, psychosocial and mental health issues play a significant role. Stress, fatigue, and burnout are common experiences in aviation, yet these are often unacknowledged, particularly among women who balance multiple roles. Hidden disruptions also emerge during global crises. For instance, pandemic restrictions not only led to professional setbacks but also increased the burden of home responsibilities for women in aviation. Similarly, the ongoing transitions brought by climate change, automation, and artificial intelligence are creating new skill gaps. Without gender-responsive planning, women may face further exclusion from emerging opportunities in the sector.

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The need for gender-responsiveness in aviation has therefore become urgent. It ensures equitable access to training, employment, and leadership for all genders, while also strengthening the resilience of the aviation workforce by drawing on diverse perspectives. This aligns with global frameworks such as the ICAO Gender Equality Programme, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality), and the Philippine Magna Carta of Women.

To sustain gender-responsiveness amidst invisible disruptions, several strategies can be employed. Policy and institutional support is critical, including the enforcement of gender-sensitive policies that address discrimination, harassment, and unconscious bias, as well as the integration of gender analysis in aviation planning, budgeting, and training programs. Capacity-building efforts must provide equal access to technical, managerial, and leadership training while adopting flexible modalities to accommodate diverse life situations. Mentorship and networking initiatives are also essential, such as establishing women-in-aviation mentorship systems, building cross-gender networks, and supporting the visibility of successful female leaders in the industry.

Furthermore, health, safety, and well-being measures must address psychosocial risks by acknowledging stress and fatigue and ensuring accessible mental health support tailored to gender-responsive needs. Technological and organizational adaptation is also necessary, particularly through the use of digital tools to democratize access to training and professional development, as well as inclusive upskilling programs to address disruptions brought by automation and AI. Monitoring and accountability mechanisms, such as gender audits and linking gender equity progress to organizational performance metrics, will further ensure meaningful progress.

Case insights highlight both local and international best practices. In the Philippines, Gender and Development (GAD) initiatives in aviation education have begun integrating gender perspectives into curriculum and training. On a global scale, the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) initiative

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serves as a model for promoting equal access to aviation careers. Together, these insights underscore the importance of building a gender-responsive aviation industry that can withstand invisible disruptions while ensuring inclusivity, resilience, and sustainability.

According to Arpad Szakal (2020), gender diversity continues to be a hot topic in the aviation industry. Aviation is working to achieve gender balance across the sector. However, the industry is aware that work is still needed to encourage balance in technical areas such as engineering and flight crew.

In a report by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) which represents 290 airlines, the proportion of women holding C-level roles in the industry is just three percent. For some businesses it's a matter of regulatory compliance or corporate social responsibility; others regard it as a key source of competitive advantage. The aviation sector, however, continues to have one of the poorest gender balances. The lack of females is particularly apparent at leadership level.

For Carol Anderson (2020), some of the main obstacles aspiring female leaders face include bias as well as assumptions about women's interests and capabilities. Gender stereotypes also have a major impact on women's career progression. As an example, care and empathy are typically described as feminine traits, while competition, confidence, and assertiveness are often viewed as masculine traits. When female leaders exhibit some of the latter, they are often criticized or viewed unfavorably. This can make it challenging for women to fit into the exact parameters expected of them without being seen as overly aggressive.

Prioritizing women and girls will fundamentally drive better and more sustainable development outcomes for all, support a more rapid recovery, and place the world back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

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Research Background

From the lens of gender and development, the Philippine State College of Aeronautics (PhilSCA), the only state funded aeronautical school in the country and was created by virtue of RA 7605 on June 3, 1992, on its end, spearheaded the campaign about gender balance and inclusivity. The College's vision and mission statement directs the management and administration towards achieving excellence in the aviation field.

Captured in its vision statement: PhilSCA is a leading higher education institution in aviation sciences with a balanced liberal arts and technology

It's mission statement provides: PhilSCA continues to produce world class professionals in the aviation industry to quality, instruction, research, extension, research management and industry partnership.

In 2009, Republic Act 9710 otherwise known as the Magna Carta of Women was passed. This is a local translation of the CEDAW particularly in defining gender discrimination, state obligations, substantive equality, and temporary special measures. It recognizes human rights guaranteed by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

From these contexts, the proponents of this study crafted four questions to clarify the crucial role of education in promoting and sustaining gender balance in the aviation industry:

Research Questions

- 1. What institutional policies, plans, and action programs are directed to the promotion of gender balance in aviation education?
- 2. How is SDG 5 being utilized as a gauge to promote gender equality, quality education and lifelong learning?

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- 3. What are the innovative and transformative practices towards achieving gender responsive aviation industry amidst the invisible disruptions at PhilSCA?
- 4. How can governance be enhanced for better implementation of SDG 5 at PhilSCA?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researchers examined the relevance of the focus of this study through:

Documentary Analysis. Document analysis is a form of qualitative research that uses a systematic procedure to analyze documentary evidence and answer specific research questions. A survey of the documented achievements and accomplishments of the GAD initiatives of the Philippine State College of Aeronautics (PhilSCA)

Ethnographic Research is a qualitative research method rooted in anthropology that involves the in-depth study of people and cultures in their natural settings. It seeks to understand social practices, interactions, and meanings from the perspective of the participants. Researchers immerse themselves in the daily lives of individuals or communities, often using participant observation, interviews, and field notes to collect data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019).

This approach emphasizes a holistic view, capturing not just behaviors but also the cultural norms, values, and contexts that shape them (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ethnography is particularly valuable when exploring complex social phenomena, allowing researchers to generate rich, detailed descriptions and interpretations of human experiences.

Case Study is a qualitative research approach that involves the in-depth exploration of a bounded system (such as an individual, group, organization, or event) within its real-life context. It aims to provide a detailed and holistic understanding of complex issues through multiple sources of evidence such as interviews, observations, documents, and artifacts (Yin, 2018).

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Unlike broad surveys, case studies focus on depth rather than breadth, allowing researchers to analyze processes, relationships, and outcomes in detail (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This method is widely used in education, social sciences, business, and health research where real-world application and contextual analysis are essential.

Theoretical Framework

The paper is grounded on UN Sustainable Goal number 5 (SDG5) Gender Equality which hopes to achieve gender equality and empowerment among all women and girls by 2030.

As specified in the framework, SDG 5: Gender Equality targets:

- End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.
- Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.
- Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

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- Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as
 access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial
 services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.
- Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.
- Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

The study likewise took inspiration from the legal frameworks of Gender and Development:

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA)
- Magna Carta of Women (MCW) RA 9710
- Commission on Higher Education Circular Memorandum Order (CHED CMO) No. 01,
 Series 2015

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the international human rights treaty that focuses specifically on equality between women and men in all areas of life.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) is a landmark document for advancing the rights of women and gender equality worldwide

RA 9710 known as Magna Carta of Women (MCW), a local translation of the provisions of the CEDAW, particularly in defining gender discrimination, state obligations, substantive equality, and temporary special measures.

Commission on Higher Education Circular Memorandum Order No. 01, Series 2015, Establishing the Policies and Guidelines on Gender and Development in the Commission of Higher Education and Higher Educational Institutions.

Gender and Development Accord of Philippine Aviation Industry On 24th October 2012, as its commitment on the foregoing international treaties and pursuant to its mandates under

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the Magna Carta of Women, the Philippine State College of Aeronautics (PhilSCA) has spearheaded a call for Partnership among Government Agencies in the Aviation Industry in full and effective coordination with the Philippine Commission on Women and convened the 1st Gender and Development Summit in the Aviation Industry held at the PhilSCA Conference Room on October 24, 2012 and for the next four (4) succeeding years.

AGENCY PARTNERS of the GAD Accord include: Philippine State College of Aeronautics, Philippine Air Force, Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines, Civil Aeronautics Board, Manila International Airport Authority, Mactan Cebu International Airport Authority, Clark International Airport Corporation, and Office for Transportation Security.

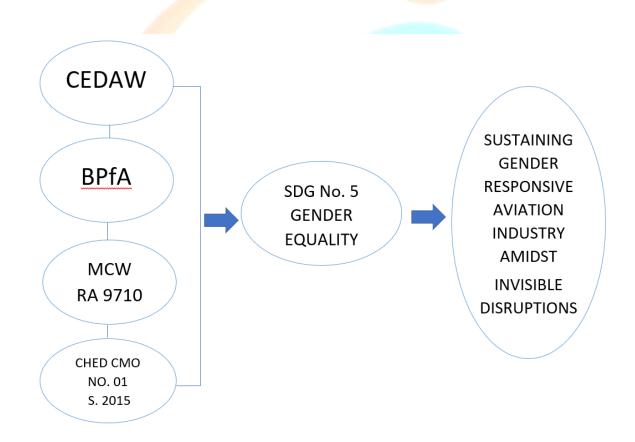


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

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Including the Gender and Development Accord of Philippine Aviation Industry of 2012, the study coined its Conceptual Framework based on the international and domestic legal foundations of GAD. The PhilSCA implementation puts premium on the localization and mainstreaming of Gender and Equality as spelled out in SDG 5 along with its targets in the medium to long term strategic directions. Given these premises PhilSCA, as an academic institution of higher learning and a [pioneer] public aviation school, hopes to continue as a strong player in Sustaining a Gender Responsive Aviation Industry Amidst Invisible Disruptions.

Analysis

Based on the recent airline business survey, the table provides:

Table 1. 2023 – 2025 data by industry journal survey, Airline Business

Indic <mark>ator</mark>	Recent Data	Remarks
Women in Pilot roles (U.S.,	10.8% of all licensed pilots	A modest increase of 7%
FAA)	are women (91,694 women	from the previous data in
	out of 848,770) as of	the U.S. pilots being
	December 31, 2024	women.
Women as Airline Pilots in	5.5% of airline transport	This is more a senior
U.S.	rated pilots are women	category, and the gap is still
		larger
UK Women Pilots	6.5% of UK Pilots are	Still well below parity;
	women	earlier reports had similar
		low single-digit percentages.
Number of female airline	There were 28 female	Earlier data provides only
CEOs globally	airline chief executives as	3%. So, there is some
	per IATA (2022). Also,	progress.
	signatories to IATA's	
	"25by2025" initiative	
	showed the proportion	
	nearing 9% for airline CEOs	
	being women	

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Women in senior leadership	28% of senior leadership	Improving from 24% in
roles (airlines)	roles held by women among	2021. Still not parity.
	IATA signatory airlines in	
	2022.	
Women in technical roles	Women hold only 20% of	Technical jobs include roles
	technical roles according to	like maintenance,
	IATA's 2022 report	engineering, etc., where
		representation remains
		much lower.
Gender pay gap in UK	EasyJet UK Ltd: Women	Trend though: big gaps
airlines (2024-2025)	earn £0.76 for every £1 that	especially in airlines with
	men earn (median hourly	many male pilots.
	pay) \rightarrow a 24% pay gap.	
		Some of your earlier figures
	Ryanair Ltd: Women earn	(e.g. "72% lower")
.000	£0.42 for every £1 men earn	
ART OF	(median hourly pay) \rightarrow 58%	
	gap.	
	British Airways PLC: Women	
	£0.73 for every £1 (median	
	hourly pay) → 27% gap	
Licenses issued to women in	UK Civil Aviation Authority	So while progress is
the UK	(CAA) reports a 26%	happening, women still
	increase in the number of	remain a small minority
	pilot licenses issued to	among licensed pilots.
	women over 2019-2023. 6%	
	of total pilot-licenses are	
	held by women.	

The matric presentation below provides for the current situation of women in the aviation industry. It can be gleaned that the global average for women pilots remains below 10%, often around 5-7% for commercial and airline-transport pilots. Leadership (CEO, senior management) is improving slowly, but female CEOs are still a small number relative to the total number of airlines worldwide. Pay gap data continues to show large disparities, especially

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in airline companies with high proportions of male pilots and high seniority roles occupied predominantly by men. Lastly, Technical roles (engineering, maintenance, technicians) remain some of the most under-represented for women. Even as employee numbers rise generally, technical role percentages lag.

 Institutional Policies, Plans, and Action Programs Directed to the Promotion of Gender Balance in Aviation Education

Promoting gender balance in aviation education requires strong institutional frameworks that align with both national gender mandates and international commitments. At the policy level, institutions are guided by the Philippine Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710), which mandates gender mainstreaming in all sectors, including education and training. Within aviation schools and higher education institutions, this translates into the establishment of Gender and Development (GAD) Focal Point Systems, which oversee the integration of gender perspectives in curriculum design, budgeting, and institutional planning. Policies also include the enforcement of anti-discrimination and anti-harassment measures that ensure safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environments for both male and female students.

Institutional plans and programs are often aligned with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Orders on Gender Mainstreaming, which encourage schools to integrate gender sensitivity in curricula, faculty training, and student development. Aviation schools, such as PhilSCA, may incorporate gender-responsive planning into their Strategic Development Plans, embedding gender analysis into academic offerings, research priorities, and extension services. This includes promoting women's participation in non-traditional fields such as aircraft maintenance, avionics, and aeronautical engineering.

Specific action programs that support gender balance include:

• Curriculum Integration. Embedding gender and development concepts in aviationrelated courses to raise awareness about inclusivity and equality.

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- Scholarship and Training Opportunities. Providing equal access to financial support, technical training, and leadership programs that encourage more women to pursue aviation careers.
- Capacity-Building Workshops. Organizing gender sensitivity training for faculty, staff, and students to eliminate stereotypes and unconscious bias in the classroom and workplace.
- Mentorship and Role-Model Programs. Establishing networks that connect female students with successful women in aviation, thereby increasing visibility and inspiration.
- Health and Well-being Services. Providing psychosocial support, mental health programs, and safe spaces that respond to the needs of women and marginalized genders.
- Monitoring and Accountability Mechanisms. Conducting gender audits, collecting sexdisaggregated data, and linking gender equity performance with institutional outcomes.

Internationally, institutional actions are informed by frameworks such as the ICAO Gender Equality Programme and the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) Initiative, which emphasize equal access to aviation careers worldwide. By harmonizing local policies with these global standards, aviation institutions ensure that gender balance is not just a compliance measure but a transformative strategy that enhances diversity, innovation, and resilience in the aviation sector.

Some institutional policies, plans and action programs instituted by PhilSCA during times of surprises:

a. The strict implementation of the approved annually its GAD Plan and Budget by PCW in consultation with other GAD experts

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- b. Plans and programs stipulated in the GAD Plan and Budget were followed as scheduled, such as:
- i. Gender Sensitivity Trainings for Faculty and staff, other employees directly involved in the administration of the College
- ii. Annual Gender Orientation in a General Assembly via zoom or other means of disseminating the current laws like the Safe Spaces Act of 2009 and the Anti-sexual harassment Law or RA 7877 intended for all the enrolled students in every school year. This is a welcome approach appreciated by the parents and guardians of the students for them to be guided and become aware of their human rights as students.
- c. Institutionalization of the proper use of comfort rooms is considered important having students with differing sexual orientation or gender identity.
- d. Any act/s in violation of the said laws are dealt with severely with punishments like suspension and/or expulsion for students and dismissal and/or subjected to the filing of civil case as appropriate. If found guilty by the Committee of Decorum and Investigation created by the College, said punishments are imposed. For third party service providers of the Institution, reprimand, to severe reprimand and termination of the contract and will be permanently banned.
- e. During this pandemic when students are on modular learning and online engagements with their instructors, violations of sexual harassment, discrimination of sexual orientation and the like are somehow prevented or there are no recorded/reported incidence. If ever such cases still manifest, the College is bound to fulfill and implement the strictest punishment ever the law can give.
- SDG 5 Achieving Gender Equality is considered as the most important goal mandated by UN as it crosses in all the other SDGs to achieve. It is utilized in crafting policies, guidelines and regulations that involves the academe, students, and employees. Whenever any activity, project, and/or program that the College is to conduct, gender perspective is mainstreamed

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during the planning and budgeting, monitoring during its execution and critiquing in the post activity reporting. The College believes that achieving SDG 5 in its institution will create harmony, respect, and promotion of dignity of all thereby achieving quality education. And since its inception with strict implementation and monitoring, students and faculty and staff/employees are effectively gaining the knowledge required for an aeronautical institution that is abiding by the achievement of the SDG. In long term learning, Gender and Development has become a way of life by all and that will be carried on thru generations.

2. SDG 5 is Being Utilized as a Gauge to Promote Gender Equality, Quality Education, and Lifelong Learning

Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), which focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, serves as a critical gauge in promoting equity across education and professional development sectors, including aviation education and training. As a benchmark, SDG 5 is not only concerned with eliminating discrimination and violence but also with ensuring that women and men have equal opportunities to access resources, education, and leadership positions.

In the context of promoting gender equality, SDG 5 is used as a measure to assess whether institutions provide equal access to training, employment, and advancement opportunities regardless of gender. This involves evaluating policies, practices, and systems that support women's participation in traditionally male-dominated fields, such as aviation, and ensuring that workplace cultures are free from bias, harassment, and systemic barriers.

Regarding quality education, SDG 5 is closely aligned with SDG 4 (Quality Education), as it emphasizes inclusive and equitable access to learning opportunities. By applying SDG 5 as a gauge, institutions can monitor how effectively they are integrating gender-sensitive pedagogy, ensuring equal representation in STEM-related programs, and providing curricula that address gender issues and inclusivity. It also measures the extent to which both men and women benefit from scholarships, training programs, and educational resources that lead to professional growth.

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Finally, in terms of lifelong learning, SDG 5 provides a framework for evaluating whether education and training systems are flexible, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of learners. This includes creating pathways for women who may have been excluded due to caregiving responsibilities, financial barriers, or systemic bias. Lifelong learning under SDG 5 emphasizes the importance of continuous capacity-building, digital literacy, and leadership training that empower women to adapt to evolving industries, such as aviation, where technological transitions and global disruptions demand continuous upskilling.

By using SDG 5 as a gauge, institutions and policymakers can systematically track progress, identify gaps, and implement gender-responsive strategies that ensure education and career development remain equitable, inclusive, and sustainable across all stages of learning and professional life.

3. Innovative and Transformative Practices Towards Achieving a Gender-Responsive Aviation Industry Amidst Invisible Disruptions at PhilSCA

At the Philippine State College of Aeronautics (PhilSCA), achieving a gender-responsive aviation industry amidst invisible disruptions requires both innovative and transformative practices that address systemic inequalities while strengthening institutional resilience. One transformative practice is the integration of Gender and Development (GAD) perspectives in aviation education and training. By embedding gender-sensitive modules in the curriculum, PhilSCA equips future aviation professionals with an awareness of inclusivity, equity, and gender-sensitive leadership, aligning with national frameworks such as the Magna Carta of Women and international standards like the ICAO Gender Equality Programme.

Another innovative practice is the establishment of flexible and inclusive training systems. In response to disruptions such as pandemics, technological transitions, and psychosocial challenges, PhilSCA can adopt blended learning modalities, digital platforms, and remote training opportunities that accommodate diverse life situations, particularly for women and marginalized groups who face multiple roles and responsibilities.

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PhilSCA may also strengthen mentorship and networking initiatives, providing structured women-in-aviation mentorship systems, peer support groups, and cross-gender collaborations. These initiatives not only build confidence but also increase the visibility of female role models in aviation, addressing the persistent lack of representation in leadership and technical fields.

In terms of health and well-being, gender-responsive support services—such as mental health programs, stress management workshops, and safe spaces—can mitigate the hidden impacts of fatigue, burnout, and psychosocial pressures, which disproportionately affect women. Coupled with institutional policies that address unconscious bias, harassment, and discrimination, these measures foster an inclusive and supportive learning and working environment.

Aside from the implementation of the existing laws, PhilSCA shall endeavor in the conduct of gender sensitivity trainings and seminars even pandemic thru the use of social media instruments engaging the audience mainly thru the internet. Though the issue of connectivity persists in educational institutions like PhilSCA, there is a lot of measures to tinker in addressing that problem.

On March 2020, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte declared a state of public health emergency when the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the 2019 Coronavirus Disease a global health crisis, the National Capitol Region was placed under the General Quarantine as the country faced the challenges brought about by the COVID 19 pandemic. Classes were suspended in all levels and work slowed down while all were advised to stay at home that resulted to a standstill of the economy. Millions of Filipinos lost their jobs as small enterprises shutdown and big companies resorted to cost-cutting. All sectors were affected to include the aviation industry.

The Commission on Higher education issued CHED Memorandum Order No. 04, Series 2020 the "Guidelines on the Implementation of Flexible Learning" that was deemed

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appropriate given the COVID 19 pandemic situation to keep the students, faculty members and the administrative personnel safe.

The implementation of flexible learning and adopting to the new normal pose a big challenge to students both male and female alike given the economic conditions, geographical location and access to connectivity. The same challenges for faculty members.

As an intervention, massive capacity building was initiated for both faculty members and students. Faculty members on permanent status were provided with the laptop as allowed by existing COA rules and regulations while others are struggling to include the students of providing for themselves the gadgets needed to cope up with technology.

As a result, there was a decline in enrolment during the 1st semester of AY 2020-2021. Alarmed by this, the academic community was instructed to provide hard copies of modules to students who have no access to connectivity or not capable of providing themselves the gadgets only to encourage them to continue their education making sure that no one is left behind and providing equal access to education thereby achieving gender equality and empowerment of women. Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.

Lastly, PhilSCA can embrace technological and organizational innovations by using digital tools to democratize access to professional development and by implementing inclusive upskilling programs in areas like automation, artificial intelligence, and green aviation. Monitoring and accountability mechanisms, such as gender audits and performance-based gender equity reporting, will ensure that these practices are sustained and measurable.

Through these transformative and innovative practices, PhilSCA is positioned to champion a gender-responsive aviation industry that not only withstands invisible disruptions but also advances equity, inclusivity, and resilience in line with global and national development goals.

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Case Study: Asst. Prof. Charmagne A. Ilaban

Asst. Ilaban served as a Gender and Development (GAD) Facilitator, as the GAD staff during the implementation of GAD at the University of Northern Philippines from 2006 to 2010. In 2011, I guided and assisted the Philippine State College of Aeronautics (PhilSCA) in establishing the PhilSCA GAD Centre, where I have since continued my advocacy as a dedicated GAD champion. One of my significant contributions was helping establish the PhilSCA GAD Centre, inaugurated by then-CHED Chairperson Dr. Patricia B. Licuanan.

Under this initiative, we, together with the PhilSCA GAD advocates implemented a wide range of activities such as capacity-building programs for employees and students, community outreach projects, and nationwide facilitation and resource engagements across State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). These efforts led to PhilSCA GAD being recognized as a GAD Model among 114 SUCs. Moreover, PhilSCA played an instrumental role in the formulation of CHED Memorandum Order No. 01, series of 2015, which institutionalized the integration of GAD in higher education institutions.

As the PhilSCA GAD Centre expanded its operations, a core group was formed and trained extensively in GAD facilitation, including Gender Sensitivity Training and sessions highlighting RA 7877 (Anti-Sexual Harassment Act) and the Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) law, conducted across campuses and local government units. These achievements were made possible with the strong support of the College President, alongside the Administration and Finance sectors.

In 2013, I assisted in facilitating the implementation of RA 7877's healing process in collaboration with Kaunlaran Foundation, Inc. and Ateneo de Davao University, PCW and CHED. PhilSCA also became a pioneering institution in the establishment of the Philippine Association of Gender and Development Advocates, Inc. (2012), in partnership with the Technological University of the Philippines, the Civil Service Commission, the Philippine Commission on Women, and CHED, engaging SUCs and private higher education institutions as partners. PhilSCA GAD Centre also staged the first and second Aviation Summit with CAAP and different airline industries.

PhilSCA likewise spearheaded the First GAD Higher Education Summit in 2012, held at the University of the Philippines Diliman in partnership with the UP Center for Women's Studies, Miriam College, and CHED. In 2013, PhilSCA GAD extended assistance to the survivors and victims of Typhoon Yolanda, where PhilSCA GAD Centre was designated as the headquarter with the partner supporting organizations and private companies, as well as, government agencies. Hence, demonstrating the institution's responsiveness beyond the academic setting.

Looking ahead, we envision the continuity of PhilSCA's GAD programs not merely as compliance with policies, but as a sustained commitment to advancing gender equality and development within and beyond the institution.

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To enhance governance for the effective implementation of SDG 5 at PhilSCA, as an institution of higher learning, should strengthen and institutionalize its Gender and Development (GAD) programs by providing adequate resources, authority, and training for personnel. Policies on gender equality should be regularly updated, aligned with national and international standards, and implemented through transparent and participatory processes. Decision-making should be guided by sex-disaggregated data to identify gaps and monitor progress, while accountability mechanisms ensure responsible leadership. Additionally, gender mainstreaming across curricula, research, community programs, and administrative practices, complemented by partnerships with relevant agencies and organizations, will foster a culture of inclusivity, equity, and sustainable gender-sensitive governance within the organization and across campuses.

Conclusion

Advancing the status of women to achieve gender equality and empowerment of men and women, requires sterling dedication and unselfish commitment of every man and woman of the institution. Likewise, the agenda needs strong partnership that creates synergy between and among the government agencies as well as the private organizations in the aviation industry is the basic foundation of attaining a harmonious relationship leaving no one behind. Utilization of the gender mainstreaming evaluation framework as a gender analysis tool which assesses the gender mainstreaming efforts of the institution to objectively achieve gender equality is indeed very instrumental.

A gender-responsive aviation industry is not just a matter of equity—it is a matter of resilience, sustainability, and innovation. By recognizing invisible disruptions and embedding gender-responsive strategies at every level of the industry, aviation can ensure that progress toward inclusivity is not derailed by unseen challenges. Sustaining this approach requires a collective commitment from governments, institutions, and stakeholders to create a more equitable sky for all.

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The pursuit of a gender-responsive aviation industry, particularly within educational institutions such as the Philippine State College of Aeronautics (PhilSCA), is both a necessity and an opportunity in addressing invisible disruptions. Systemic challenges—such as persistent stereotypes, unequal access to opportunities, psychosocial burdens, and the hidden impacts of global crises—highlight the importance of policies, programs, and practices that promote inclusivity and equity. Institutional commitments through Gender and Development (GAD) frameworks, aligned with national mandates and international standards like SDG 5 and ICAO's Gender Equality Programme, provide a strong foundation for fostering gender balance in aviation education.

Innovative and transformative practices, such as integrating gender perspectives in curricula, adopting flexible and inclusive training systems, strengthening mentorship and role-model networks, and addressing mental health and well-being, are critical in sustaining resilience amidst technological and socio-economic disruptions. Moreover, continuous monitoring, gender audits, and accountability mechanisms ensure that progress is measurable and impactful.

Ultimately, promoting gender equality in aviation education is not simply about compliance with legal frameworks but about building a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready aviation workforce. By leveraging diversity, supporting lifelong learning, and ensuring equal participation, institutions like PhilSCA can prepare the next generation of aviation professionals to thrive in an evolving global landscape while contributing to a more equitable and sustainable industry.

Finally, even the nation is going through global surprises and pressures, our gender and development programs will not be held back as it is in these trying times that the need to preserve equality and equity is increasing and upholding the promotion of human dignity for all must always prevail to sustain a gender responsive aviation industry amidst invisible disruptions.

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Recommendation

From the foregoing discussions, achieving a gender-responsive aviation industry requires a holistic approach that addresses invisible disruptions such as systemic bias, unequal opportunities, psychosocial challenges, and the impacts of global crises, through the following actions are recommended:

- Revisit institutional policies, strategic plans, and action programs anchored on Gender and Development (GAD) frameworks, aviation education can foster inclusivity, equity, and resilience.
- Integrating gender perspectives in curricula, providing equal access to training and leadership opportunities, strengthening mentorship, and supporting mental health and well-being, institutions like PhilSCA contribute to building a diverse and future-ready workforce.
- Continuous effort to achieve a fully gender responsive instruction, research, extension and production.
- Strengthening PhilSCA GAD Commitment by setting up an inclusive and a long-term Gender and Development Agenda
- Strengthening and expanding the partnership with other government agencies in the aviation industry and private organizations specifically both local and international airlines.
- Annual assessment using gender analysis tools for effective monitoring and evaluation to ensure institutionalization of GAD efforts and sustainability.
- Guided by SDG 5 and aligned with international initiatives such as ICAO's Gender Equality Programme, promoting gender balance is not only a matter of compliance but a transformative pathway toward a sustainable, innovative, and equitable aviation sector.

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