

For Lady Boarders Only? Exploring Gender Dynamics in Higher Education Student Accommodations

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ABSTRACT

Gender inclusivity in student accommodations is paramount for fostering equitable living conditions. This study explores the gender dynamics among the higher education student accommodation providers in a municipality of Davao del Norte, Philippines, highlighting the reasons behind these preferences and their impact on gender equality. Through a descriptive analysis, the research identifies three primary gender preferences: accommodations for girls only, gender binary exclusive, and open to all. Key influencing factors include personal views, adherence to guidelines, and gender-biased perceptions. The findings underscore significant gender biases that contribute to inequality in housing, particularly affecting LGBTQIA+ students. This research emphasizes the need for more inclusive policies and practices to create supportive environments for all students, thereby promoting gender sensitivity and reducing discrimination. The study aligns with Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 10, aiming to end discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for all, regardless of gender identity or expression.

RESUMO

A inclusão de gênero nas acomodações estudantis é fundamental para promover condições de moradia equitativas. Este estudo explora as dinâmicas de gênero entre os provedores de alojamento para estudantes do ensino superior em um município de Davao del Norte, nas Filipinas, destacando as razões por trás dessas preferências e seu impacto na igualdade de gênero. Por meio de uma análise descritiva, a pesquisa identifica três preferências principais de gênero: acomodações exclusivas para mulheres, exclusivas com base no binarismo de gênero e abertas a todos. Os principais fatores de influência incluem opiniões pessoais, adesão a diretrizes e percepções enviesadas em relação ao gênero. Os resultados evidenciam vieses de gênero significativos que contribuem para a desigualdade na habitação, afetando particularmente estudantes LGBTQIA+. A pesquisa ressalta a necessidade de políticas e práticas mais inclusivas para criar ambientes acolhedores para todos os estudantes, promovendo assim a sensibilidade em relação ao gênero e reduzindo a discriminação. O estudo alinha-se aos Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável 5 e 10, visando acabar com a discriminação e garantir oportunidades iguais para todos, independentemente da identidade ou expressão de gênero.

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Introduction

Gender inclusivity on accommodations is not new in today's global trends. There have been a lot of initiatives taken and gender and development studies are now into the stream of knowledge and innovation to promote it of which lot of studies on gender preferences which relate to accommodation in general have been conducted as gender-inclusive housing allows individuals to live together regardless of biological sex and to provide a supportive environment where all residents can feel safe in their housing assignments with respect to their gender identity and gender expression - creating a more inclusive campus climate and community (University of Miami, 2023).

Gender inclusivity is a term which denoted that all have opportunities and services are open to all people regardless of status, identity, and preference (Smith & Bamberger, 2021). Integrating and promoting gender-inclusivity not just on the community itself but also on the policies implemented so with the accommodations being offered within the community will be an avenue for the society to gear up towards gender sensitivity and awareness since it mitigate possible discrimination, harassment, inadequate accommodation, or stereotyping which can lead to increased stress and mental health issues among various gender preferences especially transgender and gender non-conforming individuals (Grant et al., 2018). Gender-inclusive accommodation is paramount in ensuring that individuals of all genders have equal access to safe and comfortable living spaces. It upholds the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination, which are fundamental human rights (United Nations, 1948).

In emphasizing gender-inclusivity, different concepts and foundations can be attributed. The social role theory which posits that gender biases arise from the social roles and expectations associated with being male or female or other gender can be utilized. It further explains how biases are formed based on how society creates labels based on gender (Eagly & Steffen, 1986). The concept of stereotype content may become an anchor as this model speaks of how gender biases are shaped by perceptions of competence and warmth and how these affect the perceptions of individuals towards gender itself (Fiske, 2002).

This can be gleaned through the concept of confirmation bias and social cognitive theory of prejudice. The confirmation bias speaks of how a particular notion contributes to biases related to race, gender, and other social categories regardless if the notion is about gender or not (Eberhardt et al., 2004) while the theory of prejudice highlights how cognitive processes contribute to the formation and maintenance of gender biases and how these later formulate perceptions that affect decision making and judgments of individuals (Fiske & Neuberg, 1999).

Despite the various initiatives taken to address gender inequalities, there was still a need to conduct gender-inclusive researches since this advocacy has find difficulty in the acceptance of the society. Highlighted on the symbolic interactionism perspective of Mead

(1934) that society tends to attribute and label individuals based on how they interact with others and there are meanings attached to events and social interactions even before the interaction takes place. This was affirmed by the concept of gender-inclusivity among accommodations which has been pushed as gender bias on hospitality and accommodation making the level of gender inequality higher (Adebayo, 2015).

To highlight, one of the related research projects being conducted was in Tanzania where the inadequacy of accommodation for female students made them feel vulnerable to health and social problems (Mtani & Nuhu, 2019). Another was the experiences of male students in Toronto where off-campus housing discriminates renters based on gender which only worsens the situation for young students looking for a home (Lewicki, 2014) and that of how gender inequalities in university-provided student accommodation in Iran had been highlighted as it affects the living conditions of the disadvantaged social group and the role of housing for social exclusion (Mohseni & Hoseini, 2021).

This research will give insights and inputs with regards to the focus of the study and this will fill in the gap of literatures particularly on the aspect that there is no other study being conducted same as to focus of this research as well as it aimed to fill in the methodological gap by utilizing different research methods filling in the knowledge gap as it come up with findings and results. Also, it directs towards two of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) – SDG 5 (Gender Equality) which aims to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) which is the goal to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status and ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard respectively (United Nations Development Programme, 2023).

Thus, the objective of this study was to answer the following: (i) What is the status of student accommodations? (ii) What are the gender preferences of the student accommodation owners/lessors in accepting renters? And (iii) What are the reasons influencing their gender preferences in accepting renters?

Related Literatures

Different articles and readings are provided in this section to give details and elaboration on the key concepts on this study.

Many initiatives and programs are being implemented since before to establish and inform the general public about gender awareness and sensitivity and to educate everyone about the concept of gender equality; however, some are still unaware of these concepts and unintentionally, creating different ideologies towards gender and sex such that economists, decision-makers, and the general public are paying more and more attention to the enduring

gender disparities that still exist in both the developed and developing worlds (Amirkhanyan et al., 2021).

It is demonstrated by the theoretical idea of power play that there are unequal power dynamics between men and women. Men can now take advantage of women because of the male-centric socio-cultural norms and practices that have given them privilege and power. This devalues women, and the power struggle contributes to the creation and maintenance of inequality (Dahal, et al., 2022).

Even the mobilization of people across the globe has affected the roles that are labelled with gender identity and orientation. A transitory shift in gender roles and increased women's autonomy have resulted from men leaving the country in greater numbers in search of employment. Previous studies have shown that the migration of male spouses has given women resistance to the power dynamics; however, it has also restricted their mobility by making them share decision-making responsibilities within household structures, subjected them to ongoing social scrutiny regarding the money they receive from remittances, and drawn attention to their lives (Hendrickson, 2019; Hendrickson, 2018).

There have been interventions being made and initiated to promote gender equality, reduce violence against women, and increase awareness of sex trafficking among others. There has been the existence of Forum Theatre interventions (Dahal et al., 2021; Dahal et al., 2019). A great deal of research has gone into studying gender equality, including its causes, effects on women and society, and the best course of action in terms of laws and policies to promote women's equality (Belingheri, 2021).

The issues of developing settings, communities, and institutions that support students' growth had gained prominence as worries about the mental health and wellness of students grow. Since it is typical for students to retreat both mentally and physically from their accommodations if they do not make friends there, pastoral professionals and even those who manage the accommodations have a crucial role to play. Their roles in the preference of students to choose has something to do with the value of the human aspect in housing for it is critical to create environments that foster a sense of acceptance, belongingness, and community regardless of race, backgrounds or gender preferences (Worsley et al., 2021).

It cannot be denied that starting university requires young people to adjust to new social and environmental contexts; thus, biases towards them - whether based on age, gender, or economic status – could indirectly affect their perceptions towards the society and others (Richardson, 2012). Moving from home into student housing, however, comes with a number of difficulties, including handling household responsibilities and demands, living with strangers, and fostering independence (Student Minds, 2014). It has been suggested that the shift from one place, like home, to another, like a university, occurs in a space between, and it is typical for mental health issues to surface as students adjust to their new surroundings (Palmer et al., 2009).

Based on a report of Unite Students, in the concept of choosing and staying on a particular accommodation where they can stay away from home, living with other people they like is more essential to 88% of young people in the UK who plan to move away from their parental home than the specifics of their accommodation (Unite Students, 2017). Many young people will no longer rely primarily on their family and high school classmates for support, which presents a special chance to build new relationships which also means that the ways they are being treated within the accommodations affect the way they deal with things or the way they accept the society (Oswald et al, 2003).

Methods

This study was descriptive research as it aimed to explore on the gender preferences of student accommodation owners/managers in a municipality and identify reasons that influence for having gender preferences among accommodations. Descriptive research is a research methodology that aims to provide a detailed understanding and straightforward descriptions of experiences and perceptions of a specific phenomenon or topic (Sandelowski, 2010). It is particularly valuable when researchers seek to explore and describe a phenomenon in depth, focusing on the rich, contextually grounded, and nuanced aspects of that phenomenon; thus, making this design a fit for the purpose of the study.

A descriptive design may be deemed most appropriate as it recognizes the subjective nature of the problem, the different experiences participants have and will present the findings in a way that directly reflects or closely resembles to the answers needed by the research itself (Bradshaw et al., 2017).

This research involved the utilization of secondary data as well as the participation of 10 landowners/lessors which were identified through purposive sampling. Creswell and Creswell (2018) where they highlighted that an estimate between 10 and 50 participants for researches is sufficient for data saturation. The research participants were selected purposely based on the following pre-inclusion criteria: landowners/lessors of registered student accommodations (for higher education students only) located within the focused locality, landowners/lessors of different gender preferences (male, female, or LGBTQIA+), accommodation owned/leased is operational since 2019 - present, and accommodations which do accept college students, employees, and/or other individuals as renters.

Upon the conduct of the study, secondary data were utilized to address the questions of this study. Interviews to ten accommodation owners were done to explore their gender preferences as well as their reasons for having such.

Results and Discussion

The following are the results gathered in order to address the research questions for this study.

Status of Higher Education Students Accommodations

As shown in Figure 1, there are 69 registered student accommodations in the municipality. Out of the 69 student accommodations, 65 are boarding houses and four are apartments respectively. Further, 38 (55%) of them are owned/managed by females while the remaining 31 (45%) are managed by males (based on the registration data from the municipality's Business Permits & Licensing Section).

Figure 1.
Student Accommodations (Registered)

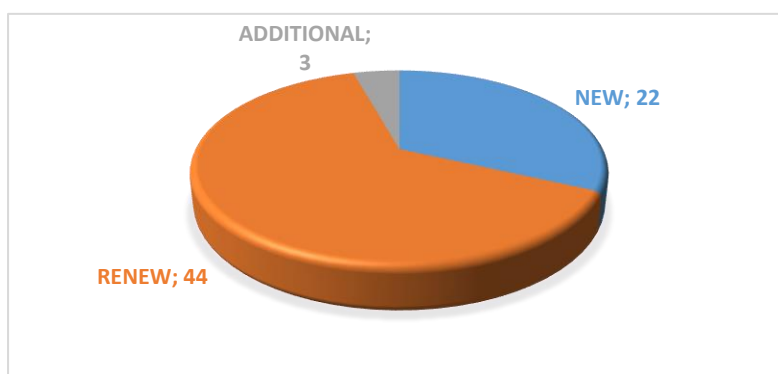


Table 1 shows the distance of the student accommodations from the heart of the municipality where the local college is located, most number of student accommodations are located 0.22 kilometers away from the school and only two are nearest to the local college. To specify, the 69 accommodations are located among various puroks in the población barangay– Purok 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 12 respectively (see Table 1 below for details).

Table 1.
Distance (km) of Student Accommodations from the Local College

Location	No. of Student Accommodations	Distance (km)
Purok 1	3	0.6
Purok 2	2	0.099
Purok 4	5	0.16
Purok 5	11	0.28
Purok 6	16	0.22
Purok 7	7	0.8
Purok 8	7	1.6
Purok 9	11	1.5
Purok 10	6	0.2
Purok 12	1	2.4

Gender Preferences in the Student Accommodation Owners/Lessors in Accepting Renters

Shown in Table 2 are the gender preferences of the student owners/lessors in accepting renters. These were girls only, exclusive for gender binary, and open to all.

Table 2.
Gender Preferences in Accepting Renters

Emerging Theme	Core Ideas
Girls only	• Choosing girls only to minimize considerations. • Having to deal with females is easier. • Opting for females as decided. • Having lots of female acquaintances.
Exclusive for gender binary	• Having both male/female prospects. • Catering men/women as needed. • Not picking out neither of the two as long as they pay.
Open to all	• Being open for everyone since rooms are divided. • Considering every individual regardless of gender. • Having to consider the openness of the society.

Based on the results presented, the biases among genders cannot be denied which supports the prevalence of gender biases on hospitality and accommodation leading to gender inequality (Adebayo, 2015). The preference of choosing a particular gender in housing or accommodations is a manifestation of inequality. This gender inequalities in student accommodations affects the living conditions of the disadvantaged social group and the role of housing for social exclusion (Mohseni & Hoseini, 2021). The exclusion of third sex or those from LGBTQIA+ on the preferences created a problem to those who belong on this gender which had been experience long before since student accommodation that is traditionally gender specific causes problem for the transgender students that are put in dorms with the colleagues of the gender they do not identify themselves with (Krum et al., 2013).

Nonetheless, the preference of being open to all is a step towards gender inclusivity for accommodations since this would encourage the acceptance and understanding of the community towards individual differences. Having such option is equally important to ensure that the trans and non-binary students living in student accommodations are supported since they experience high rates of harassment, discrimination and violence (Stone-Sewalish, 2024).

Factors Influencing Gender Preferences in Accepting Renters

Table 3 presents the reasons that influence the student accommodation owners/managers to establish gender-related policy on their accommodations. The reasons

derived were viewed on personal grounds, establishing limitations, adherence to the guidelines, and gender-biased perceptions.

Table 3.
Factors Influencing Gender Preferences in Accepting Renters

Emerging Theme	Core Ideas
Viewed on personal grounds	• Avoiding the youth to temptations or vices. • Taking oneself as parents/guardians, not lessors only. • Looking forward for the success of the renter's endeavor.
Establishing limitations	• Seeing the need to establish order and restrictions. • Giving designated room/area for different genders to limit disturbances. • Limiting visitors' presence and stay to safeguard renters. • Implementing curfew and random monitoring to renters.
Adherence to the guidelines	• Following the set guidelines of the LGU. • Adhering to the rules as mandated. • Operating based on the provisions and laws enacted.
Gender-biased perceptions	• Having the assumptions that some males are stubborn. • Being not too much tolerance with noise caused by hanging out or visiting friends of male renters. • Considering that females are more into aesthetics. • Creating unity amid diversity in a place just like home.

The results depict that student accommodation owners tend to limit or establish policy on their housing since there are various perspectives -personal or not- to consider. To mention, one of the reasons was because it was viewed on personal grounds such the owners tend to avoid the renters from vices or bad influences or they have cared for them as their own. Thus, it is true that gender roles that are performed on an unconscious level are important to consider. Roles are formed throughout society, such as how a particular person should behave and learn according to their gender (Burgess, 2024). Further, the existence of student accommodations has been labelled as on-campus and off-campus live-in or 'trial marriages' or the arrangements require that the male student pay for the female's fees and tuition or vice versa (Yakaboski & Birnbaum, 2013).

Establishing limitations being one of the considerations of the owners because accommodations are considered as the second home of the students where safety and security are things to ponder with. Imposing rules to follow will aid in creating a safety environment so with having manpower to manage the accommodation and even checking the floor or other-related facilities (Stone-Sewalish, 2024). Another was how the owners adhere to the laws and policy in establishing accommodations. This adherence is a step towards establishing a safe and unbiased environment for everyone. Adherence and enforcement of rules and regulations are parts of the students' expectations towards housing or any accommodations so with other

services such as fire protection, electricity supply and safety, cleaning services, and others (Oke et al., 2017).

Gender-biased perceptions was found to be present, too. These perceptions are not new since with regards to housing decisions and preferences towards certain types of accommodation, the level of importance varied between different genders because women valued aesthetics factor more than men (Opoku & Abdul-Muhmin, 2010). As the generation becomes more diverse regarding the ethnicity and the religion among others, this further explains how people hear about gender and racial equality drive their sense of justice and belongingness along with other biases that comes to it (Cho et al., 2018; Hope, 2017).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the gathered data, there have been 69 student accommodations. Also, these accommodations are owned/managed by individuals regardless of gender and some of the accommodations have gender preferences in accepting renters which could have been affected by various reasons ranging from personal grounds to societal biases or stereotyping.

Out of these 69 accommodations, 65 are boarding houses and four are apartment type. With regards to their distance from the local college, only two are nearest to the college having 0.099km away, five for 0.16km, six for 0.2km, 16 for 0.22km, 11 for 0.28km away, three for 0.6km, seven for 0.8km, 11 for 1.5km, seven for 1.6km, and only one for 2.4km.

The preferences of the accommodation were girls only, exclusive for gender binary, and open to all. The reasons behind having gender-related policy on the accommodations were viewed on personal grounds, establishing limitations, adherence to the guidelines, and gender-biased perceptions.

The results showed coherence on the concept of the social role theory which highlighted the gender biases arise from the social roles and expectations associated with gender as the emerging themes depict the labels attributed to genders such as men are hard-headed and women are associated with cleanliness and neatness. The ideas related to stereotype content model were parallel with the results of the study since the responses presented how the concept of warmth and competence was associated to the feeling of admiration, envy, pity and contempt towards gender or individual identity.

Study revealed connection to both - the confirmation bias and social cognitive theory of prejudice. Different notions in relation to how society labels or perceives gender differences were gathered such as how stubbornness was attributed to men and aesthetics to women so with how personal viewpoints affected the decision-making of the managers/owners to establish limitations and to adhere to guidelines on their respective

This study paved way to possible changes within the locality as it provides inputs that could become bases for policy recommendations or infrastructures development and/or

renovations that could further support diversity as well as promote economic gains by addressing wider target market.

This study provides knowledge that is worth to be shared by others through publication or conference participation to strengthen the awareness of the society with regards to the biases among genders and to help in the elimination of such. The results may be presented to the local government units to establish partnership or linkages; thus, leading to the emergence of the extension activities such but not limited to policy briefs, information dissemination, education campaigns about gender and development to be conducted in the barangay level or units within the society.

This study presented information that could be used as framework for future infrastructure development plans of the local government like consideration for renovation of facilities or investment on creating more buildings because by doing so, this will attract more investors and renters bringing up more income and revenue within the municipality.

This study focused on the gender preferences of student accommodations; thus, it did not generalize all of the accommodations. This further focused on accommodations found in the heart of a municipality in Davao del Norte and not all of the municipalities in the mentioned province. As to the number of participants, this study interviewed 10 student accommodation owners only.

Artificial intelligence use declaration: Generative artificial intelligence tools were used solely for linguistic editing, reference standardization, and improvement of textual clarity. The tools were not employed to generate ideas, hypotheses, interpretations, analyses, results, or scientific conclusions. The authors confirm that the manuscript contains no fabricated, manipulated, or fully AI-generated content, and that all information has been manually verified. The authors assume full ethical and scientific responsibility for the final content.

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