

The Lived Experiences of Women in Non-Traditional Occupation: A Phenomenology Analysis

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Abstract - A qualitative phenomenological study on coping mechanisms of women in non-normative occupations was conducted in the two government agencies in Pangasinan. This study explored the lived experiences of women working in non-normative occupations. The researcher's focus was to provide a deep and rich perspective on each of their unique lives with all the complexities that exist in human phenomena. There were fifteen participants in the study. All of the participants are government employees.

It was found that women in non-normative occupation in their real-life experiences faced challenges on structural issues including resources and policies, gender bias, and promotions. On the coping mechanisms of these women, two themes emerged, problem-focused coping strategies and emotion-focused strategies. The emotion-focused strategies which can be used to overcome challenges are pray and ask God's guidance, show respect to colleagues, spend time with yourself, family and friends, and accept failures as part of life. While the problem-focused strategies are to seek professional advice and balance time with family and work.

Moreover, as the participants envisioned their future self- majority of them concur that staying employed in the non-normative occupations is their life- long commitment. While other participants envisioned their future self to work overseas.

Based on the findings and conclusions unearthed from the study, the following are hereby recommended: A similar study be conducted having men in normative occupation as participants. Create mental wellness program to strengthen the passion and commitment of the women in order for them not to leave. And conduct seminars and training to strengthen the capacities of women to combat gender bias for the gender equality.

Keywords: Coping Mechanisms, Non-normative, Gender equality, Occupation

INTRODUCTION

A brief historical overview of this study indicates women were first introduced to nontraditional occupations during the World Wars I and II when the United States government needed women to work with in the relatively high-paying blue-collar jobs usually held by men. When the wars ended and men returned to their homes, government support was withdrawn and women were left without options to remain in these nontraditional occupations and they returned to their traditionally employment or full-time homemaking.

Historically, in the 1970s married women began entering the labor force in great numbers and the segregation of women into certain occupations began to lessen somewhat as new opportunities arose.

At present women in the labor force are increasingly becoming popular and amazing both worldwide and across disciplines. This usually continues to mark rise in women's involvement in labor markets all over the country, and the government's continuous desire to maximize participation to utilize their talents and skills to the fullest. Thereby, as women make way into non-normative or male-dominated occupations, this now becomes a remarkable topic. While women today can aspire to likely any profession,

this was not always the case. In the early 1900's, women were only to select.

To further discuss some issues, it is first necessary to provide brief, but concise definitions of non-normative or nontraditional occupation, the WANTO Act (United States Congress, 1992), role model, mentor and longevity: Nontraditional occupation means jobs in which women make up 25% of less of the total number of workers in the occupation (United States Congress, 1992, Sec 2508). The WANTO Act (United States Congress, 1992) is the abbreviated term for Congressional Act 29 USC Chapter 27, Secs 2501-2509, Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO). The purpose of this chapter is to provide technical assistance to employers and labor unions to encourage employment of women in apprenticeable occupations and nontraditional occupations. Such assistance is provided to enable businesses to meet the challenges of Workforce 2000 by preparing employers to successfully recruit, train, and retain women in apprenticeable and nontraditional occupations (United States Congress, 1992).

Nontraditional occupations fall into categories such as engineering, science, technology, trades, construction, university academic levels, entrepreneurship, logistics and aviation.

The situation in many of these sectors is changing, however, Statistics Canada reports that in the construction industry, for example, the number of Alberta women employed full-time and part-time rose to 29% and 21% respectively between 2001 and 2011 which still leaves a significant room for further growth. According to Statistics' Canada, less than 15% of the province's construction workforce is female. Women have also made significant employment gains in the professional, scientific, and technical services industry over the last decade.

Meanwhile, more women have been gaining the qualification to embark on career dominated by men and more women have been stepping into the lower range of such careers. Generally, having physical labor was not confined to men; traditionally, women as homemakers performed physically demanding chores such as grinding rice/corn grains, carrying pail of water, gathering firewood and churning milk to make butter to feed the family.

However, it is important to note that the entrance of women into the labor workforce particularly into non-normative occupations did not happen overnight.

with women taking over most household and domestic tasks such as childcare while the men went out to work. This transition that may have stemmed from social and economic developments were the critical agents that changed the nature of women's work.

Historically, in the 1970s married women began entering the labor force in great numbers and the segregation of women into certain occupations began to lessen somewhat as new opportunities arose for female workers in traditionally male occupations.

As time shifted and new fast technological progress had meant that many tasks that once required heavy physical exertion were solely for men, but now can be performed easily and simply by pushing button, operating a heavy equipment machine, for instance does not require so much power such as alertness, judgment, and coordination-qualities which women possess than in men. Many non-normative occupations especially those technical ones, have the advantage of short training.

On the other hand, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), cognizance of the importance of women has always been upholding the rights of women in enforcement activities. As a matter of fact, it continues to strengthen the implementation of labor standards that affords full protection for the country's women workers.

Consequently, Republic Act (RA 6949) s. 1990 has set March 8 of every year as *National Women's Day*. More so, in 2017 the Philippine

Commission on Women (PCW) Board Members and Inter-Agency Technical Working Group identified the NWMC theme," *We Make Change Work for Women*, " which shall be used from the year 2017-2022, which basically, resonates the call for gender-balance in leadership and decision- making inclusion of women's concerns in platforms and the government's development agenda; capacitating and preparing women to reach their rights in the field of work.

As a matter of fact, DOLE has inspected 57,661 establishments last 2019 and results show that nine out of every ten establishments nationwide comply with provision of maternity leave (99.31%), solo parent leave (99.28%), Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) leave; (99.34%), special leave for Lactation Break (96.18) and Anti -Sexual Harassment Law (93.02%)

Apparently, women are now well-entrenched in the workforce including those women with children. However, recent statistics presents that women continue to be underrepresented at the top of their work organization (Elacqua, et.al., 2009) as well as in nontraditional occupations.

Launching on the given data, women are consistently underrepresented in engineering and other related fields. In Israel, for instance, where 28% of senior academic staff are women, they remain marginalized in engineering (14%), physical sciences (11%), mathematics (52%) and paramedical occupations (63%).

Furthermore, in developed countries like Japan and Republic of Korea, women represent just 5% and 10% engineers, while in Europe and North America, the number of female graduates in engineering, physics, mathematics and computer science is generally low. Women make up just 19% of engineers in Canada, Germany and USA.

However, in some developing countries, there is a sizeable proportion of women engineers. At least three out of ten engineers are women, for instance in Costa Rica, Vietnam and the United Arab Emirates (31%), Algeria (32%), Mozambique (34%), Tunisia (41%), and Brunei (42%). (UNESCO Science Report towards 2030)

On the other hand, women in law enforcement positions could be considered a large social change. Historically, century ago, there were few jobs open to women in law enforcement. A small number of women worked as correctional officers and their assignments were usually limited to peripheral tasks. (Wikipedia)

Although opportunities few women in policing have expanded over time, their overall numbers remain relatively low. Nationwide, about a third of all police personnel were women

in 2017-2018, but barriers remain to states achieving their goals of reaching 50-50 gender parity on police forces. Women are vastly underrepresented in senior roles, as well.

On the contrary, in the study of Carrington and Troske's (1998) findings revealed that in the 4,000 manufacturing establishments, women blue-collar workers tended to be concentrated within industries that paid less than those where men were found.

Examples of the blue-collar occupations where women were heavily represented were largely comprised of piecework wherein women were paid according to how quickly and accurately work. This style of remuneration had added considerable stress and pressure upon women employed in this type of industry. (Mulcahy & Faulkner, 2017)

Despite women wide range of experiences on these two non-normative occupations, specifically on engineering and policing, some scholars research on their careers have focused on problems they have faced considerable acceptance in a historically male dominated or masculine field.

Like in many organizations, women in nonnormative occupations are going through rapid change and they are expected to be more knowledgeable, to be capable of a wider range of skills and keep abreast of new developments in their profession as major changes in wider community.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to explore the lived experiences and coping mechanism of women working in non-normative occupations from their recruitment period to the performance of their respective functions.

It also looked into the challenges faced by women and identified coping strategies that enable them to continue working in a male-dominated workplace.

From the merits of the prospective findings, the researcher have used the result to make recommendations for improvement and to establish best practices in recruitment and retention of women in non-normative occupations.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to Foss and Waters (2007), "the research question is the most important part of the dissertation and takes the most effort and care to develop."

This study probed the coping mechanisms of women in the non-normative occupations. The study, specifically sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the challenges that women in non-normative occupations encountered in male-dominated profession?
2. What are the coping mechanisms used by these women to address these challenges?
3. How do they envision themselves in the non-normative occupation?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was qualitatively focused to allow for exploration, discovery and understanding of the participants' experiences in a holistic and meaningful way. A qualitative study requires "theoretical sensitivity", which means one must possess the instinct to be sensitive and aware while ascribing meaning to data. It also requires the capacity and understanding to separate meaningful from inconsequential data as the theory is being developed (Strauss & Corbin, 2019)

The present study lends itself to qualitative analysis of the experiences of woman-police officers and woman-engineers in an open-ended way and to developing theoretical explanations based on these understandings and meaningful interpretations.

On the other hand, interpretations in qualitative research are referred to as meaningful when we immediately understand what is said (make sense of) or are "already with" the participant. (Dreyfus, 2015))

The Triangulation method was employed in this study, using semi-structured interview, field notes and audio recording so that delivered questions to key participants/informants and observations, concentrating on the experiences of the women-police officers and women-engineers were prudently apprehend. Common themes were also established in this study.

Sources of Data

In this study, the researcher set aside any personal biases in order to capture and describe the essence of each participants' lived experiences. In-depth interviews were conducted by phone and other online platforms such as E-mail and Facebook Messenger, using semi-structured open-ended questions.

Research Setting

The government agencies chosen as the research site were the Lingayen Municipal Police Station (LMPS) and the 1st District Office of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Alaminos City, all of which are situated in the Province of Pangasinan. These two government agencies, DPWH and LMPS are deemed to be the ideal sites for this research because these women are working in these two non-normative occupations, i.e. engineering and

policing which are considered male-dominated profession. (Veldman, 2017) Another reason of the researcher in choosing this research setting is the fact that she is from the same place and find it more accessible and as well as engaging to her in the conduct of interview and collection of data.

There is no exact number of participants as this was dependent on the data saturation that was generated from the interview.

Data saturation refers to the point the research process when no new information is discovered in data analysis, and this redundancy signals that the data collection may cease. Also called the “informational redundancy”, it provides a similar description of data saturation as the point at which new data tend to be redundant of data already collected.

In interviews, when the researcher started to hear the same comments from the participants again and again, data saturation is being reached. It is then time to stop collecting information and to start analyzing what has been collected (Francis, et al, 2010).

Launching on this point, the researcher reasonably assured that further data collection would yield similar results and serve to conform emerging themes and conclusions. The researcher accepted the diversity and richness of experiences brought in by the participants. It was vital to note that the analysis should do justice to each of the participants, with their stories treated with utmost respect. The focus of the researcher was to provide a profound and copious perspective on each of their unique lives with all the complexities that exist in human phenomena.

The women who were interviewed represent a “perspective” that is unique, rather than a population (Smith, et al, 2009).

Sampling

The researcher used purposive sampling in the study. It is a non-probability method that selects samples based on the characteristics of a population (inclusion criteria), (Paler, 2016). Purposive sampling is also known as judgmental, selective, subjective sampling (De Guzman, 2019). This type of sampling as mentioned by Crossman (2017) can be very useful in situations to reach a targeted sample quickly and where the sampling for probability is not the main concern.

Women are discouraged or excluded to participate from the male-dominated profession because of their experiences which are diverse and complex; a strong deterrent is the underlying feeling that “it’s still a man’s world.”

This tends to explore and study on the understanding of the challenges of non-normative occupations for women as it focuses to answer the process question.

The Table 1 A represents the responses of the participants with their In Vivo Code for specific question number.

1. *What are the challenges that women in non-normative occupations experienced in male-dominated profession?*

The In Vivo codes were color-coded based on the similarities of responses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1A: In Vivo Codes on the Challenges Experienced by Women in Non-Normative Occupations.

CODED DATA FROM INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT	IN VIVO CODE
<p><i>Me: What Challenges did you experience in the performance of your respective functions and as a result of working in a male-dominated profession?</i></p> <p><i>(Tellus)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Physically, you have to be strong especially during trainings. You have to be independent, thinking that you can do whatever will be assigned to you and always bear in mind that you have to be in service to people. One thing more, is that you have to be alert at all times especially during disaster. And learn to work with your team.</i> <p><i>(Vesta)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Some challenges I have experienced are the familiarization of the office works because I stayed long in mobile force battalion wherein I don't hold any key position, peer pressure, expectations of your superiors and the demands of the community as well.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Physically, you have to be strong especially during trainings</i>

(Ceres)

- I find it hard to respond to people who needed my help because I feel anxious but I
- believe that if other people can, I know that I can and should too.

(Venus)

- Some of the challenges would be... my family is deprived of time I spend with them, another would be the impression of our male colleagues, on how they see as women-police officers who are vulnerable especially during combat situation. So to overcome these, I joined PNP Scout Training. This is a training perceived to be for men only, but I proved them wrong.

(Juno)

- Working in a male-dominated work environment, I have learned to perform well without focusing on the gender but rather focusing on the capabilities I have and how well I deliver what is expected of me.

(Diana)

- Some of the challenges I had experienced was during operations like I have to deal with intoxicated suspects or those under drug influence and help my comrades to arrest them.

(Minerva)

- I have a hard time to interact
- with different behaviors of co-personnel in the office, and to have different bosses with different temperaments. But I
- have learned that as long as you get along with others, there will be no problem.
- None as of this time, as long as you know how to get along with everyone

(Aphrodite)

- Not that much because we are assigned more of office work rather than field work

(Athena)

- It is hard to beat the stereotyping until this day. From my past experience as a project engineer, my foreman sometimes does not take my command I opt him to do. When I arrived at the project site, based on my experience, the workers would stop working or slow down their work to just look at me. A distraction to them for a small amount of time. What I did to my foreman was I began befriending him. I realized that I must earn that respect as an engineer to him since he is more experienced than me at the site. As for the workers, I will just overlook if it is their breaktime.

(Artemis)

- Challenges? Ano ba? Hmmm one of the challenges in working in a male dominated profession is some of my workmates tend to say some sexist jokes though they are not directed towards me, of course it still instills the stereotype that women are somewhat below men. Also, my senior engineers tend to not include me in site inspections or similar activities that involves going outside the office, which I think is brought by me being a female and I guess, we're not supposed to go outside and get sweaty/tired. It's better for us to be in the office. To overcome this, I think that someone should choose their battles, sometimes you have to stand up and sometimes you have to accept it especially if you're still not in the position of power to make changes in the office.

2.Familiarization of the office works

3.I find it hard to respond to people who needed my help because I feel anxious

4.family is deprived of time I spend with them

5.impression of our male colleagues

6.to deal with intoxicated suspects or those under drug influence and help my comrades to arrest them.

7.I have a hard time to interact with different behaviors of co-personnel in the office, and to have different bosses with different temperaments.

8.Stereotyping

(Hestia)

- There are challenges like how you work with your male workmates, deal with construction workers if your on project site, but so far I could say that I did not experience that much maybe because most of work are in the office and I get to accomplish reports and just meet deadlines.

(Gaia)

- Some of the challenges I had experienced were staying late at night, when we have to do overtime because we have to check the details of our projects and when we have to travel to visit and inspect projects.
But you see, we were made to be prepared and ready to this kind of challenges so we learn to be flexible at work.

(Salacia)

- Challenges would include the continuous process of proving yourself, because as a woman, they have this thinking that your restricted or limited in doing a man's job

(Demeter)

- It was hard at first because being a woman-engineer would require you to deal with male colleagues, I could say that more than half of the population in our workplace are males, but the good thing working in a male dominated work environment is you have the chance to do the same things they are doing.

(Rhea)

- Learning new things and working on my own. I do not want to show that I am weak to my male colleagues.

Me: Have you experienced bias, discrimination, and negative attitudes from your male colleagues? Describe your experience?

(Tellus)

9. sexist jokes

10. you work with your male workmates, deal with construction workers if your on project site

11. experienced were staying late at night,

- So far, I did not experience any of these. My male counterparts or colleagues are all supportive and they treat us with respect.

(Vesta)

- I had experience it many times. Recently, there was a Barangay Councilor securing a Travel Authority pass, but he did not meet the requirements and I am trying to explain in very positive approach on what are the requirements and what to do, but unfortunately instead of listening he raised his voice insisting what he want

(Ceres)

- I didn't experience any forms pf discriminations because we respect each other and I consider as one of my family

(Juno)

- In my eleven years of profession, so far I did not experience of any of these because I have made my self clear to that I was there for work

(Diana)

- Not yet, because I do my job well and try to focus my attention to work
What are your observations of lateral promotions in your organizations?

- All are given equal opportunities as long as you are qualified.

(Minerva)

- I had experience this when I am with people who think that they are the best above all.

12. continuous process of proving yourself,

13. deal with male colleagues

14. Learning new things and working on my own

15. I did not experience any of these

(Aphrodite)

- I did not experience bias and discrimination, or even negative attitudes, in our workplace because of different personality and work attitudes sometimes we argue and have clashing ideas but this is done professionally for the improvement of our work

(Athena)

- Yes I did experience, especially when I am on site, I have to deal with foremen and construction workers and all of them are all males. They belittle me since I am a fresh graduate. Well, I do not mind them. I still ask them politely. Like the saying goes, what comes around, goes around.

(Artemis)

- Yes, but sad to say not from male colleagues, but mostly from older women in the office. They mostly point out my weight and that I don't wear make up. They do not like the idea of me joining my male colleagues to drink, you know after work we get time to bond also.

(Hestia)

- There are various negative attitudes and behaviors I had encountered. When some things did not satisfy them or when I gather recognition, my workmates, especially my female workmates, had quite negative attitudes.

(Gaia)

- I can not really determine if I did experience maybe because, in everything I do always see to it that I do professionally and that I do not make things that would hurt or disrespect, my seniors and male colleagues,

(Leto)

-yes, I did a few times, but I think regardless of who are your co-workers or what is your work environment, we encounter such difficulties, but ours might be different because as you have said, we are working on a male dominated environment. Siguro, may bias pero in a good way, kc most of the time do not want to give us difficult or hard work, pero they treat us naman equally and with respect.

(Demeter)

- Yes I did, I felt that I was underestimated especially when I was still newly hired, especially if you go out for field work and you get to be with construction workers, they find it unusual to deal with woman-engineers.

(Salacia)

- Yes, negative attitudes and behaviors from colleagues. Biased boss, I have to deal with their attitudes. They do not want to lend a helping hand especially to us women.

Me: What are your observations of lateral promotions in your organizations?

(Tellus)

- To be promoted we have to follow certain qualifications, like you have to in service for three years, in my case I have to wait because I am still in my second year of employment.

(Vesta)

- I think lateral promotions in our organization should have a rank of at least Police Staff Sergeant (PSSG) or Police Officer III, meet the general qualifications on the Written Competitive Examination (WCE) and must have pass the two physical fitness test. The lateral promotion tends to establish a system that strictly observes the rule of merit and select the most qualified by the principle of equality.

16.I had experience it many times

17.I didn't experience any forms pf discriminations

18.far I did not experience of any of these because I have made my self clear to that I was there for work

19.Not yet

20.I had experience this when I am with people who think that they are the best above all.

21.I did not experience bias and discrimination, or even negative attitudes

22. Yes I did experience

23. Yes, but sad to say not from male colleagues, but mostly from older women in the office. They mostly point out my weight and that I don't wear make up.

24. There are various negative attitudes and behaviors I had encountered.

25. I cannot really determine

26.yes, I did a few times,

27.yes, I did a few times



(Ceres)

- I believe that to be promoted you have to *meet the qualifications* and be patient and work hard

(Venus)

- The competition is tight, but you see you have to *meet the qualifications* and be patient and more hardwork

(Juno)

- Very competitive

(Diana)

- All are given equal opportunities as long as you are *qualified*

(Minerva)

- We are all given equal chances to get promoted as long as you are *qualified*

Have you encountered problems working in a male-dominated

(Aphrodite)

- Employees get promoted based on merits and *competence* of the qualified applicants regardless of gender

(Athena)

- Working in a politically inclined department I must say *connections do good. The more connections, the higher promotions...* (laughing while saying) joke, but you see this is the real scenario

(Artemis)

- It seems like *connections and good rapport with the higher ups comes first. Accomplishments come second...* some officemates also make up stories that taints the credibility of others that they somewhat jeopardized their promotion.

(Hestia)

- For a young government employee like me, I know that I have so much to learn, but eventually I have to start working hard so I may get promoted someday, but all I can say that promotion here is done fairly and squarely.

(Gaia)

- I believe job promotion here is based on *meritorious achievements*.

28. Yes, negative attitudes and behaviors from colleagues. Biased boss, I have to deal with their attitudes

29. qualifications

30. Qualifications

31. meet the qualifications

32. meet the qualifications



<p>(Salacia) - We are promoted based on merits and competence naman, so regardless of the sexual orientation, everything is fair and square.</p> <p>(Demeter) - I think it is similar process with the recruitment. You get to submit documents, undergo interview and everything is based on job performance.</p> <p>(Rhea) - Promotion is still based on merits.</p>	<p>33. Very competitive</p> <p>34. All are given equal opportunities as long as you are qualified</p> <p>35. Qualified</p> <p>36. merits and competence</p> <p>37. connections do good. The more connections, the higher connections, the higher promotions.</p> <p>38. It seems like connections and good rapport with the higher ups comes first</p> <p>39. done fairly and squarely.</p> <p>40. meritorious achievements.</p> <p>41. on merits and competence</p> <p>42. on merits</p>
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Table 1B: Challenges Experienced by Women in Non-normative Occupations.

CODE	CATEGORY	THEMES/CONCEPTS
	STRUCTURAL ISSUES INCLUDING RESOURCES AND POLICIES	CHALLENGES
familiarization of the office works		
Yes, negative attitudes and behaviors from colleagues. Biased boss, I have to deal with their attitudes.	PERCEPTION OF – AND ACTUAL – GENDER-SPECIFIC BIAS	
Yes, I did, I felt that I was underestimated especially when I was still newly hired, especially if you go out for field work and you get to be with construction workers, they find it unusual to deal with women-engineers.		
I had experience this when I am with people who think that they are the best above all.		
Yes, but sad to say not from male colleagues, but mostly from older women in the office. They mostly point out my weight and that I don't wear makeup.	PROMOTIONS	
Sexist jokes		
Stereotyping		
impression of our male colleagues		
connections do good. The more connections, the higher connections, the higher promotions.	PROMOTIONS	
It seems like connections and good rapport with the higher ups comes first		

Table 1B presents the three categories that emerged from the different challenges experienced by women in non-normative occupations. These were structural issues on resources and policies, perceptions on actual gender-specific bias and promotions. Most of the participants experienced issues on gender-bias.

Gender- bias is the tendency to prefer gender over another. It is a form of unconscious bias, or implicit bias, which occurs when one individual unconsciously attributes certain attitudes and stereotypes to another person or group of people. (Reiners, 2019)

*“...Yes, negative attitudes and behaviors from colleagues. biased boss, I have to deal with their attitudes....”
(Salacia)*

This corroborated with the study of Lekchiri, et al., (2019) that women in the selected institutions reflect their perceptions of their manager’s ineffective behaviors towards them and the impact of these behaviors. This supports Crowder and Schnerre (2019) claimed that gender- behavioral practices which includes abusive behaviors, unfair treatment, bias and lack of recognition decreased productivity, depression, anxiety and low self-esteem.

“...Yes, I did. I felt that I was underestimated especially when I was still newly hired, especially if you go out for field work and you get to be with construction workers, they find it unusual to deal with woman-engineer.” (Demeter)

To support the same lines, the study done by Begeny (2020) stated that evidence of gender bias under these conditions would reveal several unique insights. First, it would show that establishing a strong representation of women does not equate to resolving issues of gender inequality in a profession. This would seem particularly important to consider, given that concerted efforts are underway in the number of fields to increase women’s representation. Second, quite critically, it would demonstrate that believing gender equality

has been achieved within one’s own field may be a key risk factor for expressing gender bias—a risk factor that can be easily measured and can be readily acknowledged and discussed with those who hold such a belief. Therein, as a practical implication, such insights could aid in the development of targeted bias interventions designed to maximize effectiveness among those who are most likely to demonstrate gender bias.

*“It is hard to beat the stereotyping until this day. From my past experience, as a project engineer, my foreman sometimes does not take my command I opt him to do.”
(Athena)*

This could be explained that unfair workplace gender bias toward women is a problem as old as society itself. Women tries to build and achieve successful professional career, but have had to deal with lower wages, less potential for promotion, and the unfair perception that they are less competent than their male co-workers. (Anderer, 2020)

Moreso, in the findings of Bagilhole (2020), in her study, that women remained underrepresented in engineering and technology. This may be supported by exploring the career decision of women who chose to study engineering and technology. It was found that women still struggled on the issues of gendered stereotyping about women’s suitability for masculine work.

Meanwhile, Athena, one of the participants jokingly answered that in promotion or professional growth and advancement, connection with the higher ups/higher authorities somehow helped them to be promoted.

“...connections do good. The more connections, the higher connections, the higher promotions.”

The study of Becker (2018) examines the extent of gender differences in the incidence of and returns to promotions Further analysis indicates, however, that women are held to higher promotion standards than men and therefore receive fewer promotions than men with equal measured abilities. However, there were some participants who believed that promotion in their agencies is still based on merits and qualifications regardless of your gender orientation.

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO THE STUDY: GENDER STEREOTYPING

“I don’t think of myself as a “woman”. I think of myself as a person.” – Jennifer Clack

I have seen women moving up and through organizations, inhabiting leadership positions and securing appropriate recognition for their work leads us to believe that gender needs to be looked at and cannot be totally irrelevant. Gender may not be the most important thing about a person or something they see as having influenced their own career trajectory. But it does not necessarily follow that gender is therefore irrelevant, or that does not in some way affect how our colleagues or society view women as a person.

Figure 4 was a word cloud formed on question number one regarding the challenges experienced by women in non-normative occupations. It can be gleaned that the word “work experience” was highlighted emphasizing that women experienced challenges in their work. Intrinsically speaking, it could be challenges from their male colleagues, specifically on attitudes and behavior, merits, and promotion. Though, it cannot be denied that some participants chose these male-dominated professions because they found it challenging and a high-paying job.

Figure 4 Challenges Experienced by Women in Non-Normative Occupations (NVivo 12 Plus)



Coping Mechanisms of Women on these Challenges

Supported by decades of research, coping has been recognized as a tool that enables individuals to deal with challenges and problems in their environment (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2014)

Table 2A is the transcript coded with In Vivo regarding specific question number.

2. *What are the coping mechanisms used by these women to address these challenges?*

Table 2A In Vivo Codes on the Coping Mechanisms of Women

CODED DATA FROM INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT	IN VIVO CODE
Me: What are your coping mechanism/strategies to address these challenges?	
(Tellus) - I always make sure that I have these values in me, perseverance, courage, determination and loving and always seek guidance from God	values always seek guidance from God
(Vesta) - Know your rights when it comes to managing your mental health at work and family. When my mind and my work are being organized, I just make sure to set aside what I am doing for a few minutes and begin to relax by listening to worship songs , it really works for me	listening to worship songs
(Ceres) - I try to stay strong, do my work with pride, dignity and integrity and always pray to God	
(Venus) - When I experienced a lot of stress from work. I give myself - time to relax and leave my work and spend time with my family, then don't forget to pray and ask for God's guidance	values
(Juno) - I always find to relax and spend quality time with my family and friends to balance my work and personal life .	pray and ask for God's guidance
(Diana) - Always think positive, love your work, separate work from your personal life and pray	

(Minerva)	- I think of my family and they are the reason why I work so hard and always keep the faith	balance my work and personal life
(Aphrodite)	- To be successful, we tend to fail and learn from those and become part of our learning journey. I spend time with myself by pampering and I pray to God for strength and wisdom	separate work from your personal life and pray family
(Athena)	- Just smile, greet them and treat them fairly then respect	
(Artemis)	- First, is you have to prepare yourself mentally to face a challenge. One thing that is always forgotten is mental wellness of a person. Its not always when you are not ready. So, its good to take good breaks to make sure you're well prepared to face the challenge eventually. It's also good to ask help from your friends and family. One thing that helped me to cope with challenges is to seek professional advice to cope with emotions in facing challenges	spend time with myself and I pray to God for strength and wisdom respect
(Hestia)	- I deal with professionally and accommodating and of course with all due respect	respect
(Gaia)	- It is just a matter of balancing our time with our family and work	balancing our time with our family and work
(Aphrodite)	- In my everyday journey at work, I accept success and failures as part of life and don't forget to pray.	don't forget to pray
(Demeter)	- Just treat them with respect and they will give it back to you regardless of your sexual orientation.	respect
(Salacia)	- I treat them fairly and with respect, I tolerate these bad work behaviors and negative work attitudes.	respect

Table 2B shows the tabular representations of the codes of the participants on the themes on women's coping mechanisms on the challenges.

Table 2B Themes on Women's Coping Mechanism on the Challenges

Code	Category	Themes/Concepts
always seek guidance from God.	Emotion-focused coping strategies	COPING MECHANISMS
listening worship songs		
pray and ask for God's guidance		
pray		
spend time with myself		
don't forget to pray		
I accept success and failures as part of life		
respect	Problem-focused coping strategies	
seek professional advice		
balancing our time with our family and work		

Table 2B shed light into the two coping strategies of women on the challenges. The emotion-focused strategies stemmed out from the different challenges the participants had experienced. People do not grow when things are easy, but they do grow when they face challenges. The quotes that encapsulate women coping mechanisms and continued growth in the male-dominated profession.

“First is you have to prepare yourself mentally to face a challenge. One thing that is always forgotten is mental wellness of a person. It’s not always ok to face a challenge especially when you are not ready. So, it’s good to take good breaks to make sure you’re well prepared to face the challenge eventually. It’s also good to ask help from your friends and family. One thing that helped me to cope with challenges is to seek professional advice with a psychologist she helped me to cope with emotions that come with facing challenges.” – (Artemes)

“To be successful, we tend to fail and learn from those and become part of our learning journey, I spend time with myself, by pampering and I pray to God for strength and wisdom.”- (Aphrodite)

This resonates with the study of Morganson (2018), she found that coping strategies are effective for girls and women in STEM curricula by understanding the barriers that women in STEM curricula face and the coping strategies were known to be effective in STEM environments.

Coping is a transportable skill that can continue to assist women in overcoming challenges as they move forward in their careers. The construct of coping has appeared in the higher education, and workplace counselling and is regarded as useful way to overcome challenges and mitigate stress at various stages in one’s career path.

“Just treat them with respect and they will give it back to you regardless of your sexual orientation-(Demeter)

“I treat them fairly and with respect. I tolerate these

bad work behaviors.” – (Salacia)

Men and women cope in different ways generally, men tend to cope either by attempting to change the stressor (i.e problem-focused coping) or by ignoring the stressor (Helgeson, 2016). In contrast, women engage in social support coping by looking to others for emotional support as a way of dealing with challenges. This tendency is consistent with cultural typologies of women as a communal and relationship- oriented (Fletcher, 2018)

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO THE STUDY: MENTAL WELLNESS

I completely agree with Artemes in her statement on mental wellness, and seeking professional advice in dealing on emotions and facing challenges. Her seriousness on the matter exuded from the expression coming from her eyes and face.

Research (Abraham and Hanson, 2016) has also shown that coping strategies used by men found to be problem-focused is a form which is more important in predicting occupational satisfaction. While women, made the use of emotion-focused coping (e.g turning to religion and turning to family and friends)

Overall, research support the proposition that different coping mechanisms are more or less effective depending on the person using them. (Feldman, 2018).

Figure 5 emphasized the word “always pray” which is the ultimate coping mechanism of these women.

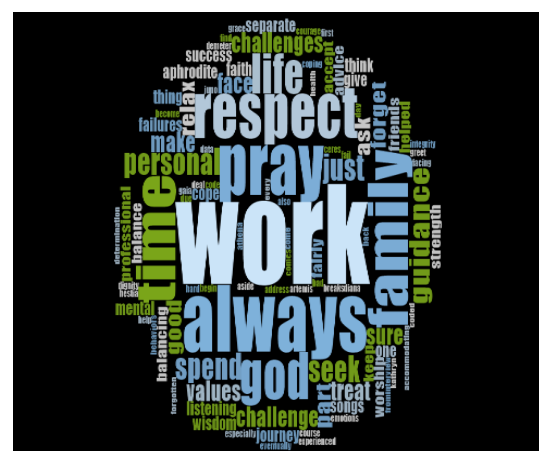


Figure 5 Women’s Coping Mechanism on the Challenges Envisioning Thyself

Career choice is significantly influenced by tradition and the way we have been socialized; therefore, women are often unaware of the variety or alternatives that are available to them. As I am presently employed in a normative occupation like teaching and a female-dominated profession; I am curious to know how does these women overcome challenges or barriers they have experienced and still want to see themselves working in a male-dominated profession.

Table 3A is the tabular representation of the participant's responses on how they envisioned themselves in the world of male-dominated profession. The color coding corresponds to the similar responses of the participants, it answers specifically, question number 3. *How do they envision themselves in the non-normative occupation?*

Table 3A In Vivo Codes on Envisioning Thyself

CODED DATA FROM INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT	IN VIVO CODE
<p>Me: What are your future plans? (Tellus) - Well, I have a very simple plan and that is to become a good police officer and be the best wife to my husband and the best mother to my children</p> <p>(Vesta) - I am very open to whatever opportunities that future may hold especially within this organization. I think the best way of planning the future is to - make the most of the present. So now, I am working with dignity, pride and acquiring the knowledge to be more qualified in the next rank while waiting for the turn of our batch in promotion.</p> <p>(Ceres) - To be a successful person even more and provide more assistance to the people who are in need and help to have a peaceful community</p> <p>(Venus) - Excel more in the profession and never stop learning.</p> <p>(Juno) - To achieve all my dreams and be a better version of myself</p> <p>(Diana) - Be better then retire and leave the organization with high morals and integrity</p> <p>(Minerva) - That I can take my schooling for next year so that I can join in the next promotion</p> <p>(Aphrodite) - In the government agency, you have to acquire new knowledge by attending seminars to get a higher post in the future</p> <p>(Athena) - I would like to work overseas, I see better opportunities there. I want to explore because I am still young.</p> <p>(Artemis) - I am planning to take my masters next year at Dela Salle University or University of the Philippines majoring in Structural/Geotechnical Engineering. Hopefully in between my work, I could really find time to pursue this.</p> <p>(Hestia) - At the moment I am enjoying my work here in DPWH and I will be working hard to excel and give my best performance, if there will be opportunities abroad, then why not.</p> <p>(Gaia) - To become the best engineer and be promoted of course.</p> <p>Marissa (Aphrodite) - Of course, to be in a higher post</p>	<p>become a good police officer</p> <p>be the best wife to my husband and the best mother to my children</p> <p>to be more qualified in the next rank while waiting for the turn of our batch in promotion.</p> <p>To be a successful person even more provide more assistance to the people who are in need help to have a peaceful community</p> <p>Excel more in the profession and never stop learning.</p> <p>achieve all my dreams better version of myself</p> <p>be better retire and leave the organization with high morals and integrity</p> <p>can join in the next promotion</p> <p>higher post in the future</p> <p>I would like to work overseas</p> <p>I am planning to take my masters</p>

<p>(Demeter) - I want to work abroad because I know that I can earn much higher than what I am earning here. Practical lang talaga ako. Para sa family you know</p> <p>(Salacia) - I am looking forward to be promoted, so I think if given the opportunity I will further my studies my taking my masteral degree</p>	<p>to excel and give my best performance there will be opportunities abroad</p> <p>To become the best be promoted</p> <p>to be in a higher post</p> <p>I want to work abroad</p> <p>I am looking forward to be promoted further my studies my taking my masteral degree</p>
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Table 3B on the next page presents the tabular representation on the themes on how women envisioned themselves.

Table 3B Themes on Envisioning Thyself

CODE	CATEGORY	THEMES/CONCEPTS
to be more qualified in the next rank while waiting for the turn of our batch in promotion.	Stay Employed	CAREER ADVANCEMENT
can join in the next promotion		
higher post in the future		
I am looking forward to be promoted		
		FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS FULFILLMENT
be the best wife to my husband and the best mother to my children		
provide more assistance to the people who are in need		FULFILLMENT OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
help to have a peaceful community		
retire and leave the organization with high morals and integrity	BETTER VERSION OF ONESELF	
better version of myself		
Excel more in the profession and never stop learning.	WEALTH AND MONEY SATISFACTION	
to excel and give my best performance		
To become the best		
there will be opportunities abroad	Work overseas	
I want to work abroad		
I would like to work overseas		

This reflects the future self of these women. Looking into their possible selves is congruent to the Theory of Possible-Selves. The Theory of Possible selves is used to explore individual's self-concept at various life juncture situations. Women in non-normative occupations faced different challenges or barriers. Thus, the Theory of Possible-Selves can provide understanding of their identity in the present and in the future. (Hamman, et al, 2010)

"I am very open to whatever opportunities that future may hold especially within this organization. I think the best way of planning the future is to make the most of the present So now, I am working with dignity, pride and acquiring the knowledge to be more qualified in the next rank while waiting for the turn of our batch in promotion."- Vesta

Although work on identity tends to focus on past and present dimensions of identity, the importance of future dimension in the construction of self has been growing. (Wilke & Losh, 2018)

"I am planning to take my masters next year at Dela Salle University or University of the Philippines majoring in Structural/Geotechnical Engineering. Hopefully in between my work, I could really find time to pursue this."- Artemis

This echoes the study conducted by Lee and Oyserman on the concept of possible selves on choice, persistence and achievement that imagining what is possible for one's future can increase optimism, but articulating a possible self is not enough to produce sustained effort and behavior change, and for that to happen, possible selves need to be linked with specific strategies like studying in the post graduate studies to earn your masteral degree for promotion.

"I want to work abroad because I know that I can earn much higher than what I am earning here. Practical lang talaga ako.

*"Para sa family you know"
- Demeter*

Most of the participants envisioned themselves to be promoted in a higher position They have found fulfillment and joy that they could not see themselves shifting to another career. They have given their full commitment and dedication to their chosen career. While other participants dreamed of working overseas due for "greener pasture" and for them to fulfill their family obligations.

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO THE STUDY: BEST POSSIBLE SELF

"To become the better version of myself." as answered by Juno brought me back to my first year in my teaching career. The perseverance and determination to achieve hopes, dreams and aspirations that I have to do better in my chosen career because as I go along, I could already feel the fear of being left behind by my new and young colleagues.

This could be further explicate in the study conducted by Shepard and Queresette (2008) , it was found that, first, hopes and fears that an individual holds for the future become the standards by which that individual gauges current behaviors or information. Secondly, possible selves can act as motivators b y providing the energy to persevere in attempts to attain goals and to avoid fears.

Figure 6 shows the commitment of these women to their work. As it explicitly states whether they will stay in their work or leave their work for better opportunities abroad. Despite the fact that they have these experiences, they still want to further their studies and professionally advance themselves through trainings and schooling to become a better version of themselves and eventually, perform their respective work efficiently and with excellence.

While Figure 7 is the conceptual map of these women where they experience challenges such as structural issues including resources and policies, perception and actual gender specific bias, workplace culture and promotions and come out with two coping strategies: one, is the emotion-focused and second is the problem focused, which they used to face these challenges. The real-life experiences of these women serve as their motivation to keep the inertia in motion. This embodies the lived experiences of these women, a phenomenological nod on their experiences,



Figure 6 Envisioning Thyself
(NVivo Plus 12)

Table 4
Concise Perspective of Key Themes and Findings of the Study

WOMEN IN NON-NORMATIVE OCCUPATIONS		
CHALLENGES	COPING MECHANISMS	ENVISIONED SELF
✦ Structural Issues including Resources and Policies	✦ Problem-Focused	✦ Career Advancement
✦ Perception on Gender Specific Issues	✦ Emotion-Focused	✦ Family and Relationships Fulfilment
✦ Workplace Culture		✦ Fulfilment of Social Responsibility
✦ Promotions		✦ Better Version of Oneself
		✦ Wealth and Money Satisfaction

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Women in non-normative occupations or working in a traditionally male-dominated profession such as engineering and policing face a difficult hurdle. If they succeed, their co-workers, both male and female may unfairly see them unsociably and difficult to work with. To face these challenges, women have coping strategies, enough for them to have reason to keep on going.

Life may take us to different career paths women can and should make their voices be heard and upend the gender imbalances that exist across numerous professions.

Based on the findings and conclusions unearthed from this study, the following are the recommendations:

1. A similar study be conducted having men in normative occupation as participants.
2. Create a mental and emotional program to strengthen the passion and commitment of the women in order for them not to leave.
3. Conduct seminars and training to strengthen the capacities of women to combat gender bias for the gender equality.

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