



CHALLENGES OF MANAGING WORKPLACE DIVERSITY IN METRO MANILA'S TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the challenges of workplace diversity in the tourism and hospitality industry in Metro Manila, framed within Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Using a quantitative research design, data were collected from 396 valid respondents via face-to-face surveys and online Google Forms from December 2023 to February 2024. Various statistical analyses were employed, including Frequency, Percentage, Weighted Mean, and Pearson Correlation Coefficient. Findings revealed that most respondents were under 30 years old, female, single, college graduates, and identified as Catholic. The majority had less than three years of industry experience, worked primarily in the accommodation sector, and earned a monthly salary below ₱20,000 (≈ US\$324). Respondents' perceptions of workplace diversity challenges were assessed across two key dimensions. Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues received the highest mean score of 4.10, while difficulties in voicing ideas, facing prejudice, and cultural stereotyping scored slightly lower at 3.95. Both dimensions were categorized as "Very Challenging," indicating significant perceived barriers within the industry. The null hypothesis was partially rejected, as significant relationships were found between perceptions of diversity challenges and variables such as age, educational attainment, years of service, employment sector, and monthly salary. These findings highlight the complex nature of diversity issues in Metro Manila's tourism and hospitality sector, emphasizing the need for targeted strategies to address employee dissimilarity and discrimination.

Keywords: *Workplace discrimination; Intercultural communication; Employee voice; Cultural prejudice and stereotyping*

INTRODUCTION

Sigroha and Gaurav (2020), citing Ashton (2010), classify diversity into two dimensions: primary characteristics (age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and skin color) and secondary characteristics (religion, education, income, personality, etc.). While primary traits are visible and shape initial workplace dynamics, secondary traits often emerge through deeper interactions.

In today's globalized environment, diversity is especially crucial in tourism and hospitality, industries that rely heavily on interpersonal interactions and a culturally varied workforce (Manoharan et al., 2024). A diverse workplace offers several benefits, including enhanced decision-making, increased creativity, higher productivity, and improved employee engagement (Indeed Employer Content Team, 2025; Tenney, 2025). It also strengthens a company's ability to serve a broad customer base (Haddon, 2025).

However, effectively managing diversity presents challenges. Employee dissimilarity can lead to discrimination and bias, particularly around race, gender, and ethnicity (Zhou et al., 2022). Intercultural communication gaps may cause misunderstandings, suppress innovation, and reduce team collaboration (Estillore et al., 2022). In the hospitality sector, personality and cultural clashes often lead to interpersonal conflicts, undermining team efficiency (FasterCapital, 2025).

This study aimed to explore these challenges within tourism and hospitality by examining the perspectives of HR managers and employees. The goal is to identify practical strategies for leveraging diversity's benefits while minimizing its drawbacks through inclusive leadership and cultural sensitivity training.

Research Questions

This study examined the implications of the challenges associated with workplace diversity in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Specifically, this study answered the following problems:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of Age, Sex, Civil status, Highest educational attainment, Years of service in the company, Religion, Employment sector, and Salary bracket?
2. What are the challenges of having a diverse workplace in the tourism and hospitality industry in terms of:
 - 2.1.1. Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues;
 - 2.1.2. Intercultural communication between employees and management; and
 - 2.1.3. Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping?

3. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of respondents and their perceived challenges of having a diverse workplace in the tourism and hospitality industry?

Theoretical Framework

Workplace diversity in tourism and hospitality brings both advantages and challenges, particularly around intergroup dynamics, communication, and bias. **Social Identity Theory (SIT)**, developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), provides a useful framework for understanding these dynamics. It explains how individuals define themselves through their membership in groups such as those based on ethnicity, gender, or religion, which can foster ingroup favoritism and outgroup discrimination. It emphasizes three key ideas: social categorization, or the tendency to classify people according to shared traits; social comparison, which involves evaluating one's own group against others and often results in bias; and positive distinctiveness, the drive to view one's group as superior in order to maintain self-esteem. Social Identity Theory suggests people group themselves into "in-groups" and "out-groups," potentially leading to exclusion and longer decision-making processes (Dawson et al., 2020). Poor diversity management can result in low morale, higher turnover, and negative customer experiences (Paldon et al., 2024; Gandhi, 2024).

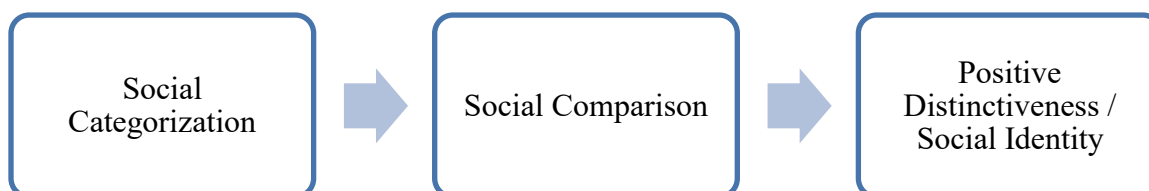


Figure 1. Illustrative Diagram of SIT Model:

In the hospitality industry, where multicultural teams and frequent guest interaction are the norm, social identity dynamics can trigger issues such as favoritism, stereotyping, and exclusion, ultimately reducing morale and service quality (Dawson et al., 2020). Hierarchical workplaces may reinforce in-group bias, limiting advancement for minority employees, while informal cultural or language-based groups can alienate others and hinder teamwork. Identity threats, where individuals feel their identity is devalued or undermined, can intensify disengagement and increase the likelihood of turnover. Social Identity Theory emphasizes that effective diversity management must go beyond representation to cultivate inclusion and psychological safety. Inclusive leadership and cultural intelligence training help reduce bias, strengthen cohesion, and address identity-based tensions, particularly when cultural norms differ from guest expectations (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). As Alaa-Eldeen et al. (2022) highlight, cultural intelligence is crucial for navigating diverse teams; and Mistry et al. (2023) show that well-managed diversity can enhance job performance and service innovation.

Conceptual Framework

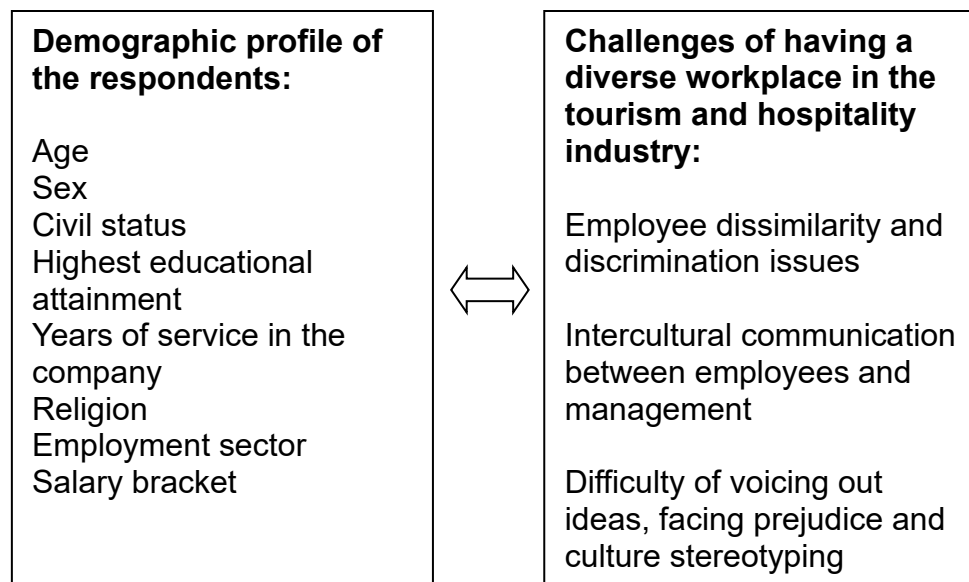


Figure 2. The Conceptual Framework of the Study

This framework examines how employee demographics shape challenges related to workplace diversity in the tourism and hospitality industry. The demographic profile—including age, gender, civil status, education level, tenure, religion, job role, and economic status—represents each employee's identity and potentially influences their perspectives on inclusion. Generational differences influence how people view diversity, while gender and civil status affect communication and work dynamics. Education and tenure shape openness to change and potential biases, and factors such as religious beliefs, job level, and economic background influence individual values and perceptions of fairness. Together, these factors highlight the key insights drawn from the demographic profile. These are some of the key insights of the demographic profile. These factors serve as independent variables that may influence three key diversity-related challenges: *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues*, where differences can lead to exclusion or unequal treatment; *Intercultural communication between employees and management*, where language and cultural clashes disrupt collaboration; and *Difficulty in voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping*, where identity-based biases may discourage employee expression. The arrow between demographic factors and diversity challenges represents a hypothesized relationship, suggesting that employee backgrounds affect how diversity is experienced. Understanding these dynamics can help organizations better manage inclusion, reduce conflict, and enhance team performance.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the profile of respondents and their perceived challenges of having a diverse workplace in the tourism and hospitality industry

Literature Review

Challenges of Workplace Diversity in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry.

Workplace diversity in tourism and hospitality offers clear benefits—enhancing service quality, innovation, and customer satisfaction—but also brings complex challenges that can hinder organizational effectiveness. This section explores key issues: *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues*, *Intercultural communication between employees and management*, and *Difficulty in voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping*.

Employee Dissimilarity and Discrimination Issues. Diverse teams in hospitality often face challenges stemming from racial, cultural, and gender differences. These differences, when unmanaged, can lead to communication breakdowns, stereotyping, and perceived inequity (Kumar, 2023). Discrimination persists across employment stages—from hiring to promotion—due to unconscious bias (McCarthy, 2024; Corporate Maldives, 2020). Women and minorities remain underrepresented in leadership, facing wage gaps and limited career advancement (Food & Hospitality Asia, 2024). These disparities reduce morale, disengage staff, and hinder the inclusion of diverse perspectives (Baker et al., 2022).

Intercultural Communication between Employees and Management. Cultural and language differences often create misunderstandings between staff and management. Without cultural awareness, these gaps can undermine collaboration and service quality (Alaa-Eldeen et al., 2022). High-context cultures (e.g., Japan, China) rely on indirect communication, while low-context cultures (e.g., U.S., Germany) prioritize directness—leading to misinterpretations (Sheposh, 2025). Effective leadership in diverse teams requires cultural competence and intercultural sensitivity to reduce conflict and improve teamwork (FasterCapital, 2025).

Difficulty in Voicing Out Ideas, Facing Prejudice and Culture Stereotyping. Employees from marginalized backgrounds often hesitate to share ideas due to fear of bias or backlash. In frontline roles, racial discrimination from customers is common, reinforced by the “customer is always right” culture (Woo & Kim, 2024). Cultural stereotypes—such as perceptions of Asian employees as less warm—further increase emotional labor demands (Lee et al., 2023). These burdens can lead to burnout and attrition. Also, stereotype threat reduces creativity and engagement, while in-group/out-group dynamics, as explained by social identity theory, can erode team cohesion (von Hippel et al., 2024). Without inclusive practices, workplace tensions may escalate in diverse teams.

To address these challenges, organizations must invest in diversity management strategies that foster inclusion, cultural competence, and open communication. Creating an environment where all voices are valued supports employee well-being, improves service, and strengthens overall performance in the global hospitality landscape.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a positivist paradigm, focusing on identifying cause-and-effect relationships and testing existing theories through systematic, quantitative observation (Maksimović & Evtimov, 2023). It assumed an objective reality measurable through controlled observation, replication, and generalization. A deductive approach was used, beginning with an established theory, formulating a problem and hypothesis, collecting and analyzing data, and determining whether to reject the null hypothesis (Streefkerk, 2023). The framework was grounded in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) to explore challenges in managing workplace diversity.

Primary data were gathered from 396 HR managers and employees in the tourism and hospitality industry from December 2023 to February 2024, offering insights into issues such as *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues*; *Intercultural communication between employees and management*; and *Difficulty in voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping*. A correlational analysis examined the relationships between respondents' demographic profiles and their perceived diversity-related challenges.

The research instrument was developed through a review of scholarly sources from Scopus, Emerald Insight, ScienceDirect, and other credible online databases. Expert validation by tourism professionals ensured content accuracy and relevance, while a pretest and Cronbach's Alpha confirmed reliability. The final instrument included 24 statements addressing workplace diversity challenges. After validation, the instrument was distributed to 396 qualified respondents—HR managers and employees regularly interacting with diverse individuals in the tourism and hospitality sector. Trained enumerators facilitated data collection across multiple establishments in 2024, overcoming difficulties in locating sufficient qualified participants.

Participant profiles were obtained using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and percentages. The means and standard deviations of each dependent variable were calculated across all variable profile levels to assess potential associations. Before conducting correlation analyses, the Shapiro-Wilk (SW) test for normality was performed. If normality was confirmed, Pearson r (for continuous variables), point-biserial coefficients (for continuous and binary variable pairs), and Beta Coefficients (for continuous variables paired with multi-level variables) were used. In cases of non-normality, Spearman rank and rank-biserial coefficients were employed. Statistical analyses were conducted using JASP v.0.18.3.0, R v.4.3.0, and RStudio v.2023.06.0, with significance tested at the 5% level.

RESULTS

1. Socio-economic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the respondents' demographic profile, including age group, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, years of service, religion, employment sector, and salary bracket. The majority of respondents are below 30 years old (58.33%), female (52.02%), single (67.42%), college graduates (70.96%), and Catholic (76.77%). Most have been with their current company for less than three years (63.02%). In terms of employment sector, a large proportion work in accommodation (35.10%), food and beverage (21.46%), and travel agency (17.93%) establishments. Regarding income, many earn below ₱20,000 ($\approx$ US\$324) (46.59%) or between ₱20,000 and ₱29,999 ($\approx$ US\$324–US\$486) (24.62%), while about one-third chose not to disclose their salary.

Table 1. Summary of the socio-economic profiles of the respondents

Profile	Variables	Frequency (n=396)	Percentage
Age Group	Below 30	231	58.33
	30-39	94	23.74
	40-49	51	12.88
	50 and up	20	5.05
Sex	Female	206	52.02
	Male	190	47.98
Civil Status	Single	267	67.42
	Non-single	129	32.58
Highest Educational Attainment	HS graduate	73	18.43
	College level	19	4.80
	College graduate	281	70.96
	Post-graduate	23	5.81
Years of Service in the Company	Less than 3	242	63.02
	3 to 6	73	19.01
	7 to 10	35	9.11
	11 and up	34	8.85
Religion	Catholic	304	76.77
	Non-Catholic	92	23.23
Employment Sector	Accommodation	139	35.10
	Food and Beverage	85	21.46
	Travel Agency	71	17.93
	Leisure and Entertainment	49	12.37
	DOT and Other Agencies	49	12.37
	Human Resource	3	0.76
Salary bracket	Less than 20000	123	31.06
	20000 to 29999	65	16.41
	30000 to 39999	28	7.07
	40000 to 49999	11	2.78

50000 or greater	37	9.34
Prefer not to answer	132	33.33

2. Challenges of Having a Diverse Workplace in Metro Manila's Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Table 2 shows the overall weighted mean summary of the respondents perceived extent of challenges of having a diverse workplace in the tourism and hospitality industry. It is apparent that *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues* showed the highest overall weighted mean score of 4.10, followed by *Intercultural communication between employees and management* at 3.98, while *Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping* showed the lowest overall weighted mean score of 3.76. All these three Overall Weighted Mean scores and the Grand Mean of 3.95 are interpreted as "Very Challenging".

Table 2. Weighted mean summary of workplace diversity challenges in Metro Manila's tourism and hospitality industry

Challenges of a Diverse Workplace	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
2.1. Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues		
Bullying and harassment of employees result in a negative image of the workplace	4.36	Extremely Challenging
Discrimination issues affect the mental health of the employee that results to depression and anxiety	4.25	Extremely Challenging
Work motivation and teamwork of employees can be affected because of discrimination issues and different cultures.	4.18	Very Challenging
Employee dissimilarity can reduce job satisfaction and task performance.	4.09	Very Challenging
Differences between social interest creates conflict between employees	4.01	Very Challenging
Different work discrimination in the workplace leads to conflict that are mostly experienced by the employees such as:	3.72	Very Challenging
Being dismissed or having shifts cut down	3.92	Very Challenging
Denial of training opportunities, transfers and promotions	3.88	Very Challenging
Not being paid the same as someone doing the same job with the same experience and qualifications	3.70	Very Challenging
Exclusion or isolation by co-workers	3.64	Very Challenging
Being given impossible tasks	3.62	Very Challenging

Being subjected to taunts or abuse that references the protected attribute	3.54	Very Challenging
Overall Weighted Mean on Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues	4.10	Very Challenging
2.2. Intercultural communication between employees and management		
Undetailed tasks are misinterpreted due to different cultural differences.	4.06	Very Challenging
New employees mostly feel culture shock to the diversity in the workplace.	4.05	Very Challenging
Miscommunications are due to assumptions of people to understand the fundamentals of the way they interact based on their cultural differences.	4.02	Very Challenging
Employees cultural emotions can affect their performance in the workplace and results to resistance to change.	3.96	Very Challenging
Professional etiquette in emails, calls, and meetings varies across cultures.	3.95	Very Challenging
Experienced employees often resist change to maintain familiar routines.	3.86	Very Challenging
Overall Weighted Mean on Intercultural communication between employees and management	3.98	Very Challenging
2.3. Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping		
Failing to appreciate the need for employees' voices may lead to misconception and negative feelings of cultural bias.	4.29	Extremely Challenging
Employees facing frequent comments and feedback on cultural differences may lose motivation and interest in their job performance.	4.03	Very Challenging
Witnessing unfair treatment, employees may stay silent and avoid speaking up.	3.93	Very Challenging
Indigenous employees are often unheard compared to mainstream staff.	3.50	Very Challenging
Women face limited promotion opportunities due to caregiving roles.	3.41	Very Challenging
Transgender employees may face discrimination that impacts their performance.	3.41	Very Challenging
Overall Weighted Mean on Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping	3.76	Very Challenging

**Grand Mean on the Challenges of having a
diverse workplace in the tourism and
hospitality industry**

3.95

**Very
Challenging**

Weighted Mean Range and Extent of Challenge Verbal Interpretation: 1.00 - 1.80 Never a Challenge; 1.81 - 2.60 Slightly a Challenge; 2.61 - 3.40 Moderately Challenging; 3.41 - 4.20 Very Challenging; 4.21 - 5.00 Extremely Challenging

3. Challenges of Diverse Workplace Relative to Respondents' Socio-Economic Profile in Metro Manila's Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Table 3 summarizes respondents' perceptions of workplace diversity challenges in the tourism and hospitality industry, categorized by socio-economic profile. Across **age**, **gender**, **marital status**, and **religion**, participants consistently rated key issues—*Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues*, *Intercultural communication between employees and management*, and *Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping*—as “Very Challenging.” By **educational attainment**, most respondents shared this view; however, those with **college-level education** rated *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues* as “Moderately Challenging,” while those with **postgraduate degrees** viewed *Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping* as “Extremely Challenging.” Regarding tenure, employees with **seven or more years of service** rated *Intercultural communication between employees and management* and *Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping* as “Extremely Challenging,” compared to shorter-tenured employees who found them “Very Challenging.” By **employment sector**, those in **Leisure and Entertainment** and **Human Resources** considered these *three challenges* “Extremely Challenging,” while respondents from other sectors generally rated them “Very Challenging.” Finally, employees **earning ₱40,000 and above (≈ US\$648+)** viewed *Intercultural communication between employees and management* and *Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping* as “Extremely Challenging,” whereas those earning less rated them “Very Challenging.”

Table 3. Weighted mean summary of the challenges in Metro Manila's diverse tourism and hospitality workplace by respondents' socio-economic profile

Challenges	Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Extent of the Challenge
Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues	<u>Age Group</u>			
	Below 30	3.94	0.796	Very challenging
	30-39	3.80	0.839	Very challenging
	40-49	4.03	0.726	Very challenging
	50 & up	4.27	0.737	Very challenging
Intercultural communication between employees and management	Below 30	4.00	0.895	Very challenging
	30-39	3.87	0.906	Very challenging
	40-49	4.02	0.814	Very challenging
	50 & up	4.18	0.629	Very challenging
Difficulty of voicing out	Below 30	3.70	0.893	Very challenging
	30-39	3.83	0.819	Very challenging

ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping	40-49 50 & up	3.90 3.93	0.873 0.812	Very challenging Very challenging
Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues	<u>Sex</u> Male Female	3.99 3.88	0.792 0.803	Very challenging Very challenging
Intercultural communication between employees and management	Male Female	4.00 3.96	0.869 0.885	Very challenging Very challenging
Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping	Male Female	3.82 3.71	0.824 0.910	Very challenging Very challenging
Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues	<u>Civil Status</u> Non-Single Single	4.01 3.90	0.771 0.811	Very challenging Very challenging
Intercultural communication between employees and management	Non-Single Single	3.98 3.99	0.802 0.912	Very challenging Very challenging
Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping	Non-Single Single	3.87 3.72	0.821 0.891	Very challenging Very challenging
<u>Highest Educational Attainment</u>				
Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues	HS graduate College level College graduate Post-graduate	3.89 3.53 3.94 4.31	0.726 0.698 0.827 0.579	Very challenging Very challenging Very challenging Extremely challenging
Intercultural communication between employees and management	HS graduate College level College graduate Post-graduate	3.97 3.90 3.99 4.06	0.920 0.655 0.891 0.739	Very challenging Very challenging Very challenging Very challenging

Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping	HS graduate	3.63	0.843	Very challenging
	College level	3.38	0.854	Moderately challenging
	College graduate	3.81	0.873	Very challenging
	Post-graduate	3.97	0.849	Very challenging
<u>Length of Service</u>				
Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues	Less than 3	3.78	0.795	Very challenging
	3 to 6	4.16	0.701	Very challenging
	7 to 10	4.28	0.722	Extremely challenging
	11 & up	4.14	0.869	Very challenging
Intercultural communication between employees and management	Less than 3	3.85	0.912	Very challenging
	3 to 6	4.16	0.769	Very challenging
	7 to 10	4.32	0.730	Extremely challenging
	11 & up	4.23	0.729	Extremely challenging
Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping	Less than 3	3.59	0.883	Very challenging
	3 to 6	3.94	0.799	Very challenging
	7 to 10	4.16	0.825	Very challenging
	11 & up	4.14	0.715	Very challenging
<u>Religion</u>				
Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues	Non-Catholic	3.81	0.830	Very challenging
	Catholic	3.97	0.787	Very challenging
Intercultural communication between employees and management	Non-Catholic	3.86	0.885	Very challenging
	Catholic	4.02	0.871	Very challenging
Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping	Non-Catholic	3.74	0.843	Very challenging
	Catholic	3.77	0.880	Very challenging
<u>Employment sector</u>				
Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues	Accommodation	3.95	0.704	Very challenging
	Travel Agency	3.76	0.850	Very challenging
	Food & Beverage	3.89	0.788	Very challenging
	Human Resource	4.44	0.413	Extremely challenging

Intercultural communication between employees and management	Leisure & Entertainment	4.43	0.796	Extremely challenging
	DOT & Other Agencies	3.69	0.820	Very challenging
	Accommodation	3.84	0.894	Very challenging
	Travel Agency	4.03	0.845	Very challenging
	Food & Beverage	3.91	0.984	Very challenging
	Human Resource	4.56	0.510	Extremely challenging
	Leisure & Entertainment	4.36	0.671	Extremely challenging
	DOT & Other Agencies	4.04	0.769	Very challenging
	Accommodation	3.78	0.754	Very challenging
	Travel Agency	3.69	1.001	Very challenging
Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping	Food & Beverage	3.66	0.888	Very challenging
	Human Resource	4.19	0.613	Very challenging
	Leisure & Entertainment	4.33	0.628	Extremely challenging
	DOT & Other Agencies	3.44	0.942	Very challenging
	<u>Monthly Salary</u>			
	Less than 20000	3.83	0.775	Very challenging
Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues	20000 to 29999	3.96	0.757	Very challenging
	30000 to 39999	4.05	0.859	Very challenging
	40000 to 49999	4.29	0.711	Extremely challenging
	50000 or greater	4.36	0.668	Extremely challenging
	Less than 20000	3.99	0.849	Very challenging
Intercultural communication between employees and management	20000 to 29999	4.01	0.809	Very challenging
	30000 to 39999	4.05	0.712	Very challenging
	40000 to 49999	4.24	0.523	Extremely challenging
	50000 or greater	4.31	0.680	Extremely challenging
	Less than 20000	3.49	0.896	Very challenging
Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping	20000 to 29999	3.85	0.796	Very challenging
	30000 to 39999	4.14	0.690	Very challenging
	40000 to 49999	4.20	0.561	Very challenging
	50000 or greater	4.16	0.649	Very challenging

Weighted Mean Range and Extent of Challenge Verbal Interpretation: 1.00 - 1.80 Never a Challenge; 1.81 - 2.60 Slightly a Challenge; 2.61 - 3.40 Moderately Challenging; 3.41 - 4.20 Very Challenging; 4.21 - 5.00 Extremely Challenging

4. Relationships Between Respondents' Profile and Perceived Workplace Diversity Challenges in Metro Manila's Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Table 4 shows significant correlations between employees' perceptions of workplace diversity challenges—specifically *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues*, *Intercultural communication between employees and management*, and *Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping*—and the variables of **age**, **education**, **years of service**, **employment sector**, and **monthly salary**. Thus, the null hypothesis is **rejected** for these demographic factors. Conversely, no significant correlations were found for **sex**, **civil status**, and **religion**, indicating that the null hypothesis is **accepted** for these profiles.

Table 4. Significant relationships between respondents' profile and perceived challenges of a diverse workplace in the tourism and hospitality industry

Profile Variables	Challenges of Having a Culturally Diverse Workplace in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry	Correlation coefficient	p-value	Interpretation
Age	Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues	0.04	0.3816	Not significant
	Intercultural communication between employees and management	-0.02	0.6824	Not significant
	Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping	0.11	0.0351	Significant
Sex	Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues	-0.07	0.1922	Not significant
	Intercultural communication between employees and management	-0.02	0.6468	Not significant
	Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping	-0.05	0.2841	Not significant
Civil Status	Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues	-0.07	0.1935	Not significant
	Intercultural communication between employees and management	0.03	0.4973	Not significant
	Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping	-0.08	0.1217	Not significant
Education	Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues	0.12	0.0145	Significant

	Intercultural communication between employees and management	0.02	0.7593	Not significant
	Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping	0.12	0.0151	Significant
No. of Years of Service	Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues	0.20	< 0.001	Significant
	Intercultural communication between employees and management	0.13	0.0110	Significant
	Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping	0.22	< 0.001	Significant
Religion	Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues	0.08	0.1006	Not significant
	Intercultural communication between employees and management	0.08	0.0986	Not significant
	Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping	0.02	0.7140	Not significant
Employment Sector	Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues	0.05	0.3498	Not significant
	Intercultural communication between employees and management	0.14	0.0045	Significant
	Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping	0.02	0.6641	Not significant
Monthly Salary	Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues	0.17	0.0055	Significant
	Intercultural communication between employees and management	0.06	0.2968	Not significant
	Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping	0.28	< 0.001	Significant

DISCUSSION

1. Socio-economic Profile of the Respondents

Overall, the respondents can be characterized as a predominantly young, slightly female-majority, single, college-educated workforce with relatively short organizational

tenure, predominantly Catholic religious affiliation, and substantial representation from accommodation, food and beverage, and travel agency establishments. The profile is broadly compatible with the characteristics of tourism-related employment, which provides significant employment opportunities for young people and women and encompasses labor-intensive service industries (El Achkar, 2023).

These demographic characteristics are important to the subsequent analysis because they establish the social and organizational context in which employees encounter workplace diversity, discrimination, intercultural communication, employee voice, prejudice, and cultural stereotyping. In particular, the high proportion of young employees and those with less than three years of service suggests the importance of organizational mechanisms that encourage participation and enable employees to communicate concerns safely. Contemporary research indicates that effective diversity communication and management can support organizational identification and employee voice, while employees who experience a sense of “otherness” may evaluate organizational diversity practices less positively (Kusku et al., 2022; Men et al., 2024).

Thus, the demographic profile does not merely describe who participated in the study; it provides a basis for understanding the workplace context within which perceptions of diversity and discrimination are formed. The findings further suggest that organizations in tourism-related sectors may benefit from inclusive human resource practices, intercultural communication training, transparent communication channels, and mechanisms that encourage employees, particularly newer employees, to express ideas and concerns without fear of negative consequences.

2. Challenges of Workplace Diversity in Metro Manila's Tourism and Hospitality Industry

The findings in Table 2 reveal that challenges related to *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues* are perceived as highly significant in the tourism and hospitality industry. Specifically, two of the six probing statements were rated ‘Extremely Challenging’, while the remaining four were considered ‘Very Challenging’. The statement **“Bullying and harassment of employees result in a negative image of the workplace”** obtained the highest weighted mean (4.36), indicating that workplace mistreatment is viewed as a critical threat to organizational reputation. Similarly, **“Discrimination issues affect the mental health of the employee that results to depression and anxiety”** received a weighted mean of 4.25, underscoring the severe psychological consequences of discriminatory practices. These results suggest that workplace diversity, while essential, can generate tensions that negatively impact employee wellbeing and organizational image if not properly managed. Recent studies confirm that bullying and discrimination in tourism and hospitality settings undermine inclusivity, increase turnover, and contribute to mental health challenges among employees (Chatterjee, 2025).

Likewise, all six probing statements concerning *Intercultural communication between employees and management* were perceived as ‘Very Challenging’. The highest

weighted means were recorded for ***“Undetailed tasks are misinterpreted by employees due to different cultural understandings”*** (4.06) and ***“New employees mostly feel culture shock to the diversity in the workplace”*** (4.05). These findings highlight how unclear communication and cultural differences can hinder task execution and adjustment among diverse staff. Conversely, the lowest weighted mean (3.86) was observed for ***“Mostly seasoned employees resist changes because they prefer their usual environment”***, suggesting that while resistance to change exists, it is less critical compared to miscommunication and culture shock. Overall, the data emphasizes that effective intercultural communication is essential in tourism and hospitality workplaces to reduce misunderstandings, ease newcomer adaptation, and foster inclusivity. Recent studies confirm that communication barriers and cultural adjustment challenges significantly affect employee performance, satisfaction, and retention in diverse service industries (Alshaabani et al., 2022).

Moreover, one of the six probing statements under *Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice, and culture stereotyping* was rated as ‘Extremely Challenging’, while the remaining five were considered ‘Very Challenging’. The highest weighted mean was recorded for ***“Failing to appreciate the need for employees’ voices may lead to misconception and negative feelings of cultural bias”*** (4.29), followed by ***“Employees facing frequent comments and feedback on cultural differences may lose motivation and interest in their job performance”*** (4.03). These findings highlight that lack of voice and persistent cultural stereotyping are perceived as critical barriers to employee engagement and performance. Conversely, the lowest weighted mean (3.41) was observed for ***“Transgender and transsexual employees are discriminated by other employees that may affect their work performance”***, suggesting that while discrimination against gender-diverse employees is acknowledged, it is perceived as less pressing compared to broader communication and stereotyping issues. Overall, the data emphasize that fostering inclusive communication and reducing prejudice are essential for sustaining motivation and equity in diverse workplaces. Recent studies confirm that silencing employee voices and cultural stereotyping undermine psychological safety, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment in hospitality and service industries (Chen & Wu, 2021).

3. Challenges of Workplace Diversity in Metro Manila’s Tourism and Hospitality Industry Based on the Respondents’ Socio-economic Profile

Table 3 highlights respondents’ perceptions of workplace diversity challenges in the tourism and hospitality industry across socio-economic profiles. Findings show that, regardless of **age, sex, civil status, or religion**, three areas were consistently rated as ‘Very Challenging’: (1) *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues*, (2) *Intercultural communication between employees and management*, and (3) *Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping*.

This consistency across demographic groups suggests that diversity-related challenges are systemic rather than isolated to specific subgroups. The results imply that organizations must adopt comprehensive diversity management strategies to address

discrimination, improve intercultural communication, and create psychologically safe spaces for employee voice. Recent studies confirm that workplace diversity challenges in hospitality are pervasive, influencing employee wellbeing, organizational commitment, and service quality across demographic categories (Alshaabani et al., 2022; Chen & Wu, 2021).

By **educational attainment** results show that *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues* were rated 'Very Challenging' across **all groups**, except **postgraduates**, who perceived them as 'Extremely Challenging'. *Intercultural communication between employees and management* was consistently rated 'Very Challenging' across **all education levels**, underscoring its universal impact. For *Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping*, **college undergraduates** viewed this as 'Moderately Challenging', whereas **high school graduates**, **college graduates**, and **postgraduates** rated it 'Very Challenging'. These findings suggest that higher educational attainment may heighten sensitivity to discrimination, while less experienced groups (e.g., **undergraduates**) may underrecognize the severity of prejudice and stereotyping. Overall, the data highlights the need for inclusive communication strategies and diversity training tailored to varying educational backgrounds. Recent studies confirm that perceptions of workplace diversity challenges differ by education level, with higher-educated employees more attuned to subtle forms of discrimination and communication barriers (Alshaabani et al., 2022; Chen & Wu, 2021).

By **length of service** results show that *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues* were rated 'Very Challenging' across **all tenure groups**, except employees with **7–10 years** of service, who perceived them as 'Extremely Challenging'. *Intercultural communication between employees and management* was considered 'Very Challenging' by those with **less than six years** of service, but 'Extremely Challenging' among **longer-tenured employees**, reflecting heightened sensitivity to communication barriers over time. Meanwhile, *Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping* remained consistently 'Very Challenging' across **all groups**. The findings suggest that mid-tenure employees are particularly attuned to fairness violations, consistent with Tenure Diversity and Equity Theories (Salinas & Love, 2024). Less-experienced staff struggle with limited exposure to diverse communication norms (Abensur, 2024), while long-tenured employees face challenges rooted in ingrained habits and elevated expectations (Renn et al., 2023). Importantly, these difficulties appear to stem from structural organizational issues rather than individual shortcomings (Mistry et al., 2023). This underscores the need for systemic diversity management strategies that address communication, fairness, and inclusion across all tenure levels.

By **employment sector** employees from **Accommodation, Travel Agencies, Food & Beverage, and DOT & Other Agencies** consistently rated (1) *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues*, (2) *Intercultural communication between employees and management*, and (3) *Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping* as 'Very Challenging'. In contrast, respondents from **Human Resources and Leisure & Entertainment** sectors rated these challenges as 'Extremely Challenging'. This pattern suggests that HR and leisure-related roles, which are more

directly engaged in people management and customer interaction, experience heightened sensitivity to diversity-related issues. Their elevated ratings may reflect greater exposure to workplace conflicts, cultural stereotyping, and employee voice concerns. Meanwhile, operational sectors such as accommodation and food service perceive these challenges as significant but less severe, possibly due to structured task routines that reduce direct confrontation with diversity issues. Overall, the findings highlight the need for sector-specific diversity management strategies, particularly in HR and leisure industries where interpersonal dynamics are most pronounced. Recent studies confirm that diversity challenges are more acute in people-centered roles, where communication, inclusion, and equity directly affect employee wellbeing and organizational performance (Alshaabani et al., 2022; Mistry et al., 2023).

By **monthly salary** employees earning **below ₱40,000** ($\approx$ US\$677) rated *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues* and *Intercultural communication between employees and management* as 'Very Challenging'. In contrast, those earning **₱40,000–₱49,999** ($\approx$ US\$677–US\$845) and **₱50,000 or more** ($\approx$ US\$845+) perceived these challenges as 'Extremely Challenging'. This pattern suggests that higher-income employees may be more sensitive to diversity-related issues, possibly due to greater involvement in managerial roles, decision-making, or direct responsibility for organizational culture. Their heightened ratings reflect stronger expectations for fairness, inclusion, and effective communication. Meanwhile, lower-income employees acknowledge these challenges but may perceive them as less severe, likely due to limited authority or reduced exposure to organizational-level diversity conflicts. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of tailoring diversity management strategies to different salary groups, ensuring that both frontline and managerial employees feel supported in addressing discrimination and communication barriers. Recent studies confirm that perceptions of workplace diversity vary by socio-economic status, with higher earners often more attuned to equity and inclusion concerns in hospitality and service industries (Mistry, et al., 2023; Alshaabani et al., 2022).

Overall, results show consistent recognition of diversity challenges across demographics, with intensity influenced by education, tenure, sector, and salary. These findings highlight systemic inequities and the need for inclusive communication, fair treatment, and effective diversity management in the tourism and hospitality industry.

4. Relationships Between Respondents' Profile and Perceived Workplace Diversity Challenges in Metro Manila's Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Findings show a significant link between respondents' **age** and their perception of *Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping* they experienced at work. Older employees perceive these challenges more strongly, suggesting that age may heighten sensitivity to exclusion or bias due to accumulated experiences or generational norms. In contrast, **age** is not significantly related to perceptions of challenges in *Intercultural communication between employees and management* and *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues*, indicating that these issues are systemic rather than age specific. Supporting studies show similar patterns: Coulon et al.

(2024) found that older workers often feel excluded or undervalued, while Shubat (2025) noted that generational stereotypes hinder collaboration and self-expression. Unite News (2024) further reports that older professionals, particularly women, feel less heard in decision-making, reinforcing that age amplifies perceived prejudice and communication barriers.

Sex, civil status, and religion show no significant correlation with respondents' perceptions of *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues*, *Intercultural communication between employees and management*, and *Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping* in their workplace. This suggests that such challenges are systemic, experienced similarly across demographic groups, and rooted in organizational culture rather than personal identity. Supporting studies affirm this pattern: Manaig et al. (2023) found no significant impact of religion, sex, or civil status on workplace perceptions; emphasized that systemic practices outweigh individual demographics; and Ocampo (2011) noted that subtle discrimination is often organizational, not identity based.

Educational attainment is significantly associated with respondents' perceptions of *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues* and the *Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping*. The positive correlation suggests that individuals with higher education levels perceive these challenges more acutely, reflecting heightened awareness of systemic inequities, stronger expectations for inclusivity, and greater sensitivity to subtle bias. In contrast, **educational attainment** shows no significant relationship with perceptions of *Intercultural communication between employees and management*, indicating that such challenges are universal and structural. Consistent with these findings, Aguilar et al. (2022) and Respicio & Co. (2025) observed that higher-educated employees are more attuned to workplace inequities, while intercultural communication barriers arise primarily from organizational culture and leadership practices.

Length of service shows a significant correlation with respondents' perceptions of *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues*, *Intercultural communication between employees and management*, and *Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping* in their workplace. **Longer-tenured employees** perceive these challenges as more pronounced, suggesting that extended exposure deepens awareness of systemic issues through accumulated experiences and evolving expectations. They may also feel more invested in organizational fairness, making unresolved diversity issues more salient. Farnsworth et al. (2019) note that long-serving employees often face complex interpersonal dynamics and become more aware of discrimination and communication gaps. Similarly, Sharma (2023) and Buckley and Bachman (2017) found that prolonged exposure heightens sensitivity to exclusion and bias, emphasizing the persistence of diversity and communication challenges over time.

Respondents' perceptions of *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues* and *Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping* in their workplace, are not significantly related to **employment sector**, indicating that these challenges are

systemic and experienced similarly across industries. However, *Intercultural communication between employees and management* shows a significant correlation with sector, suggesting that industry context influences communication dynamics. Employees in **Human Resources** and **Leisure & Entertainment** report greater challenges, likely due to high interpersonal demands and diverse team structures. Haerewa (2023) notes that sectors requiring frequent cross-cultural interaction face heightened risks of miscommunication, recommending sector-specific training. Similarly, Farnsworth et al. (2019) and Sharma (2023) emphasize that while discrimination and stereotyping are universal, intercultural communication barriers vary by industry and demand tailored diversity management strategies.

Monthly salary shows a significant association with respondents' perceptions of *Employee dissimilarity and discrimination issues* and the *Difficulty of voicing out ideas, facing prejudice and culture stereotyping* in their workplace. **Higher-paid employees** perceive these challenges as more pronounced, possibly due to greater expectations for fairness and inclusion, increased awareness of organizational dynamics, and stronger personal investment in workplace culture. However, salary is not significantly related to perceptions of *Intercultural communication between employees and management*, indicating that this issue is universally experienced across income levels. Compoort (2023) emphasizes that equitable compensation underpins effective DEI initiatives and that perceived pay inequity heightens sensitivity to exclusion. Similarly, Sharma (2023) and Usanmaz (2024) note that senior or higher-paid employees may be more aware of subtle workplace inequities, reinforcing the link between salary and perceptions of discrimination and bias.

Conclusions

The study concludes that workplace diversity challenges are highly significant in the tourism and hospitality industry, particularly in relation to employee dissimilarity and discrimination, intercultural communication between employees and management, and difficulty in voicing ideas amid prejudice and cultural stereotyping. The consistently high ratings across the three dimensions demonstrate that diversity-related concerns are not isolated workplace experiences but are perceived as important organizational challenges. Among the specific concerns, bullying and harassment were perceived as the most critical issue under employee dissimilarity and discrimination, while the effects of discrimination on employees' mental health were also strongly recognized. These findings indicate that workplace mistreatment can have consequences extending beyond interpersonal conflict to employee well-being and organizational reputation.

The study further concludes that intercultural communication represents a substantial challenge in tourism and hospitality workplaces. Misinterpretation of insufficiently detailed tasks due to differences in cultural understanding and culture shock among newly hired employees were among the most highly rated concerns. These findings suggest that diversity in the workplace requires more than simply bringing employees from different backgrounds together; organizations must establish communication practices that accommodate cultural differences and ensure that

instructions, expectations, and feedback are clearly understood. The findings also indicate that difficulty in voicing ideas, prejudice, and cultural stereotyping constitute important barriers to an inclusive work environment. In particular, the perceived consequences of failing to recognize employee voices and the negative feelings associated with cultural bias demonstrate the importance of creating an environment where employees feel heard, respected, and psychologically safe.

The demographic analysis further indicates that perceptions of workplace diversity challenges are generally consistent across age, sex, civil status, and religion, supporting the view that these concerns are largely organizational and systemic rather than limited to a particular demographic group. Nevertheless, significant relationships were identified for selected demographic characteristics. Age was significantly associated with difficulty in voicing ideas, prejudice, and cultural stereotyping, with older employees reporting stronger perceptions of these challenges. Educational attainment was significantly associated with employee dissimilarity and discrimination and with difficulty in voicing ideas, prejudice, and stereotyping, while length of service was significantly associated with all three dimensions. Employment sector was significantly related only to intercultural communication, whereas monthly salary was significantly associated with employee dissimilarity and discrimination and with difficulty in voicing ideas, prejudice, and stereotyping. These results indicate that although diversity challenges are broadly shared, employees' experiences and perceptions may vary according to their organizational exposure, educational background, tenure, work context, and socioeconomic position.

Overall, the study concludes that effective diversity management should be treated as an organizational responsibility rather than as an issue affecting only particular groups of employees. The findings underscore the need for tourism and hospitality organizations to strengthen anti-discrimination mechanisms, improve intercultural communication, encourage employee voice, and actively address prejudice, stereotyping, bullying, and harassment. A workplace that values diversity should not only recognize differences among employees but should also ensure equitable treatment, respectful communication, meaningful participation, and protection from discriminatory behavior.

Recommendations

Tourism and hospitality organizations should establish and consistently enforce comprehensive anti-discrimination, anti-bullying, and anti-harassment policies. These policies should clearly define unacceptable behaviors, establish confidential reporting procedures, identify appropriate disciplinary measures, and ensure that complaints are investigated promptly and fairly. Management should also communicate these policies regularly rather than limiting them to employee orientation. Given that bullying and harassment received the highest rating among the identified challenges, organizations should prioritize preventive measures, early intervention, and mechanisms that protect employees from retaliation when reporting inappropriate behavior.

Organizations should also strengthen intercultural communication practices through regular diversity and cultural-awareness training. Such programs

should focus on practical workplace situations, including giving clear instructions, resolving misunderstandings, providing culturally sensitive feedback, managing culturally diverse teams, and helping newly hired employees adjust to workplace norms. Supervisors and managers should be trained to communicate expectations explicitly and confirm employees' understanding, particularly when tasks involve multiple cultural or linguistic backgrounds. Since intercultural communication challenges were evident across demographic groups, these interventions should be implemented organization-wide rather than targeted only at particular demographic categories.

To address difficulties in voicing ideas and concerns, management should establish accessible and psychologically safe employee voice mechanisms. Organizations may provide anonymous feedback systems, regular employee consultations, suggestion channels, team discussions, employee engagement surveys, and structured supervisor–employee meetings. Managers should demonstrate that employee feedback is valued by acknowledging concerns and communicating what actions have been taken in response. Employees should not have to risk negative treatment, exclusion, or career disadvantages simply because they express a concern or propose an alternative idea.

Particular attention should also be given to new employees and longer-tenured employees, as the findings indicate that length of service is significantly related to perceptions of all three diversity challenges. New employees may benefit from structured onboarding and intercultural orientation programs, while longer-tenured employees may benefit from continuous diversity training and opportunities to participate in organizational improvement initiatives. Likewise, organizations should consider the differences identified across educational and salary groups when designing training and communication strategies. However, such differences should be used to guide support rather than to stereotype employees based on their educational or socioeconomic status.

Finally, organizations should adopt sector-sensitive diversity management strategies, particularly in Human Resources and Leisure & Entertainment, where respondents reported comparatively higher levels of challenge in several areas. HR departments should take a leadership role in monitoring diversity-related concerns, while leisure and customer-facing operations may require additional training because of the intensity of interpersonal interactions. Nevertheless, because several diversity challenges were experienced across sectors, organization-wide policies should remain the foundation of diversity management.

Implications for Practice

The findings have several important implications for tourism and hospitality managers, human resource practitioners, and organizational leaders. First, diversity management should move beyond compliance-oriented policies toward an organizational culture that actively promotes respect, inclusion, and equitable participation. The high ratings for discrimination, bullying, harassment, and cultural stereotyping indicate that simply having diverse employees does not automatically produce an inclusive workplace.

Managers must actively shape workplace norms by modeling respectful behavior, responding consistently to inappropriate conduct, and ensuring that diversity is incorporated into everyday management practices.

Second, the findings highlight the importance of communication competence among supervisors and managers. Because unclear tasks and differences in cultural understanding were among the most challenging issues, managers should avoid assuming that employees interpret instructions, feedback, or workplace expectations in the same way. Clear language, confirmation of understanding, culturally sensitive communication, and opportunities for clarification should become routine management practices. This is particularly important in tourism and hospitality, where employees frequently interact with colleagues and customers from different cultural backgrounds.

Third, organizations should institutionalize employee voice as part of human resource and management practice. Employees should have multiple opportunities to express ideas, identify workplace problems, and provide feedback without fear of retaliation. Managers should also recognize that silence does not necessarily indicate satisfaction. Employees may remain silent because they perceive that their opinions are not valued or because they fear negative consequences. Establishing confidential and non-retaliatory communication channels can therefore help organizations identify diversity-related problems before they become more serious.

Fourth, the results suggest that diversity interventions should be evidence-based and responsive to organizational context. The significant relationships involving age, educational attainment, tenure, employment sector, and salary demonstrate that employees do not necessarily perceive workplace challenges in exactly the same way. Organizations can therefore use employee surveys, exit interviews, grievance records, and engagement assessments to identify which groups or work contexts require additional support. However, these demographic differences should not be interpreted as evidence that one group is inherently more sensitive or more problematic than another. Rather, they may indicate differences in workplace exposure, expectations, experience, or organizational position.

Finally, the findings have implications for the sustainability and competitiveness of tourism and hospitality organizations. Employee well-being, effective communication, inclusion, and fair treatment can contribute to healthier workplace relationships and a more positive organizational climate. Addressing discrimination and cultural stereotyping is therefore not merely an ethical responsibility but can also support employee retention, engagement, teamwork, and service quality. Diversity management should consequently be integrated into recruitment, onboarding, training, performance management, grievance handling, leadership development, and organizational evaluation.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the study relied primarily on respondents' self-reported perceptions, which

may be influenced by personal experiences, expectations, memory, or social desirability. Respondents may have been reluctant to disclose sensitive experiences involving discrimination, bullying, harassment, prejudice, or workplace treatment. This may be particularly relevant to the salary variable, where approximately one-third of respondents did not disclose their income.

Second, the study employed a cross-sectional design, meaning that data were collected at a particular point in time. Consequently, the findings demonstrate patterns of association but cannot establish causal relationships. For example, the finding that longer-tenured employees reported greater perceptions of diversity challenges does not necessarily mean that length of service causes employees to perceive greater challenges. Other factors, such as organizational position, age, managerial responsibility, workplace experiences, or changes in organizational policies, may contribute to the observed relationship.

Third, the study's respondents were drawn from selected tourism and hospitality-related sectors, including accommodation, food and beverage, travel agencies, Human Resources, leisure and entertainment, and government or other agencies. Although this provides useful insight into the industry, the findings may not be fully generalizable to all tourism and hospitality employees, particularly those working in other geographical locations, organizational sizes, or specialized tourism subsectors. Differences in organizational culture, management practices, labor conditions, and local cultural contexts may produce different perceptions of diversity challenges.

Fourth, some categories contained different numbers of respondents, particularly across employment sector, educational attainment, tenure, and salary groups. Unequal group sizes may affect comparisons between demographic categories and should therefore be considered when interpreting the differences in weighted means. In addition, the study focused on respondents' perceptions of the identified challenges rather than directly measuring organizational outcomes such as employee turnover, absenteeism, job satisfaction, psychological well-being, or actual discriminatory incidents. The findings should therefore not be interpreted as direct evidence of the prevalence of these outcomes.

Future Research Directions

Future researchers should consider using a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews or focus-group discussions. Quantitative data can identify patterns and significant relationships, while interviews can provide deeper explanations of how employees experience discrimination, cultural stereotyping, communication barriers, and difficulties in expressing ideas. Qualitative research may also reveal forms of subtle or indirect discrimination that standardized survey items may not fully capture.

Future studies could also employ a longitudinal research design to examine how perceptions of workplace diversity challenges change over time. Such research would be

particularly valuable in examining the relationship between length of service and perceptions of discrimination, intercultural communication, and employee voice. Following employees from onboarding through different stages of employment could determine whether perceptions change as employees become more familiar with organizational practices and workplace culture.

Further research should investigate the relationship between diversity challenges and specific organizational outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, employee engagement, turnover intention, job performance, psychological well-being, and service quality. This would help determine whether perceived discrimination, poor intercultural communication, and limited employee voice are associated with measurable consequences for both employees and organizations.

Future researchers may also examine organizational factors as potential moderators or mediators. Variables such as leadership style, organizational support, psychological safety, diversity climate, human resource practices, organizational justice, and perceived supervisor support could help explain why some employees or organizations experience diversity challenges more strongly than others. In particular, psychological safety and inclusive leadership may be useful variables for explaining the relationship between workplace diversity and employees' willingness to voice ideas.

Finally, future studies should expand the geographical and organizational scope of the research by comparing different regions, tourism destinations, organizational sizes, and tourism subsectors. Comparative studies involving hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, government tourism offices, attractions, transportation services, and other tourism enterprises could determine whether the patterns identified in the present study are consistent across the broader industry. Researchers could also conduct comparative studies between public and private organizations and between local and multinational tourism enterprises to identify organizational practices that are particularly effective in promoting intercultural communication, reducing discrimination, and strengthening employee voice.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The researcher declares that ethical standards were observed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents, who were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Respondents' anonymity and confidentiality were maintained, and all data were handled in compliance with Data Privacy requirements. The well-being of the participants was safeguarded throughout the research process. The authors further declare that no conflict of interest existed in the conduct of the study. Plagiarism was strictly avoided, and the findings were interpreted objectively and without bias. The results of the study were used solely for research purposes.

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