



PROMOTING WORKPLACE HARMONY THROUGH DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT: STRATEGIES FROM METRO MANILA'S TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

This study examined employees' perceptions of strategies sustaining workplace harmony within culturally diverse tourism and hospitality organizations in Metro Manila. Anchored on Social Identity Theory and Social Exchange Theory, it employed a quantitative, deductive design to evaluate five organizational strategies: fostering openness and respect for differences, perceptiveness in inquiry and active listening, developing diversity management training programs, defining organizational values and policies, and adopting Employee Relationship Management (ERM) systems. Data were collected from December 2023 to February 2024 from frontline and non-executive employees across lodging, food and beverage, airlines, travel agencies, and events sectors to assess perception levels and analyze relationships with demographic profiles including age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, tenure, religion, employment sector, and salary bracket. Descriptive and inferential analyses revealed that workplace harmony strategies are broadly perceived as pervasive and institutionalized across Metro Manila enterprises. However, inferential testing showed significant variance mediated by age, employment sector, and monthly salary bracket. Mid-career respondents (aged 30–39) reported lower evaluations of organizational policies and ERM systems, highlighting a “middle-management dip” driven by administrative friction. Employment sub-sectors and income tiers also revealed disparities in adopting formal ERM systems and structured diversity training, reflecting resource capabilities. Conversely, personal identity traits such as sex, civil status, education, tenure, and religion showed no significant relationship with perceived practices, underscoring a baseline of interpersonal inclusivity. Based on these findings, a strategic action plan is proposed to bridge sub-sector resource gaps and

optimize ERM accessibility across employee levels, reinforcing diversity as a cornerstone of organizational resilience.

Keywords: *Workplace harmony, Diversity management, Hospitality industry, Metro Manila, Social Exchange Theory, Employee Relationship Management (ERM).*

INTRODUCTION

The tourism and hospitality industry in Metro Manila serves as a critical driver of economic vitality in the Philippines, characterized by high-volume service transactions, round-the-clock operations, and an inherently diverse labor force (Esguerra et al., 2022). As Metro Manila solidifies its position as a global travel and business hub, hospitality enterprises increasingly rely on multicultural operations where workforce heterogeneity is standard practice (Mistry et al., 2023). Within this service-centric ecosystem, frontline employees and back-of-house teams must collaborate seamlessly to ensure operational continuity and deliver high-quality guest experiences (Madera et al., 2023).

However, the organizational reality of managing a culturally diverse workforce is complex. In Metro Manila's hospitality sector, diversity spans a wide spectrum of socio-demographic indicators, including age cohorts, sex, civil status, educational attainment, length of service, religious affiliations, operational sectors, and salary brackets (Manoharan et al., 2021; Khassawneh & Mohammad, 2022)). While a diverse workforce introduces multi-perspectival problem solving, heightened adaptability, and rich cultural intelligence, unmanaged differences frequently trigger interpersonal friction, cognitive bias, and communication breakdowns (Gaur, 2025). In service-driven environments where inter-departmental synergy is essential, unaddressed socio-cultural tension can quickly degrade service quality, erode morale, and elevate employee turnover (Madera et al., 2023).

Sustaining workplace harmony in culturally diverse organizations requires structured human resource strategies that move beyond superficial tolerance toward genuine structural inclusion (Gupta & Jangra, 2024). Contemporary organizational management highlights five core strategies essential for maintaining relational equilibrium:

1. **Fostering Openness and Respect for Differences:** Establishing an environment where individual perspectives are valued without prejudice (Mistry et al., 2023).
2. **Perceptiveness in Inquiring and Active Listening:** Institutionalizing empathetic communication channels that mitigate misunderstandings (Esguerra et al., 2024).
3. **Developing Diversity Management Training Programs:** Equipping staff with cross-cultural competencies and conflict-resolution mechanisms (Manoharan et al., 2021).

4. **Defining Organizational Values and Policies:** Creating explicit governance frameworks that establish equity and mutual respect as core standards (Gaur, 2025).
5. **Adopting Employee Relationship Management (ERM) Systems:** Utilizing institutionalized communication platforms and support mechanisms to systematically monitor, address, and enhance worker relations (Zhang et al., 2025).

Although global literature widely affirms the positive relationship between diversity management initiatives and employee commitment, empirical research examining how non-executive and frontline hospitality employees in Metro Manila evaluate these practices remains limited (Khassawneh & Mohammad, 2022). Individual demographic attributes—such as age cohort, religious background, employment tenure, or income level—significantly alter how an employee perceives and experiences organizational diversity interventions (Jo et al., 2025; Li et al., 2025). Assessing these employee evaluations across socio-demographic profiles provides essential insights into whether institutional diversity strategies are applied consistently and effectively throughout all operational levels of the hospitality sector.

Research Questions

This study aimed to examine employees' perceptions regarding the extent of practice of strategies used to sustain workplace harmony within culturally diverse tourism and hospitality organizations in Metro Manila.

Specifically, this study answered the following sub-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 strategies do tourism and hospitality organizations employ to sustain workplace harmony in culturally diverse environments in terms of:
 - 2.1. Fostering Openness and Respect for Differences,
 - 2.2. Perceptiveness in Inquiring and Active Listening,
 - 2.3. Developing a Diversity Management Training Program,
 - 2.4. Defining Organizational Values and Policies, and
 - 2.5. Adopting Employee Relationship Management (ERM) Systems
3. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of respondents and their perceived extent of practice of various strategies to sustain a harmonious relationship despite having a culturally diverse workplace in the tourism and hospitality industry

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two foundational social psychological and management theories:

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979): Posits that individuals categorize themselves and others into "in-groups" and "out-groups" based on shared demographic or socio-cultural traits (e.g., age, religion, tenure). In a culturally diverse workplace, unmanaged in-group biases can foster fragmentation and interpersonal conflict. Effective diversity practices—such as open communication, shared values, and relationship management systems—reframe group identity toward a common organizational vision, thereby mitigating in-group bias and reinforcing workplace harmony.

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964): Asserts that human relationships are formed through subjective cost-benefit analyses and reciprocal obligations. When employees perceive that an organization actively invests in their well-being through inclusive training, active listening, and equitable policies, they reciprocate with positive attitudes, mutual respect toward co-workers, and enhanced commitment to maintaining a collaborative environment (Khassawneh & Mohammad, 2022).

Conceptual Framework

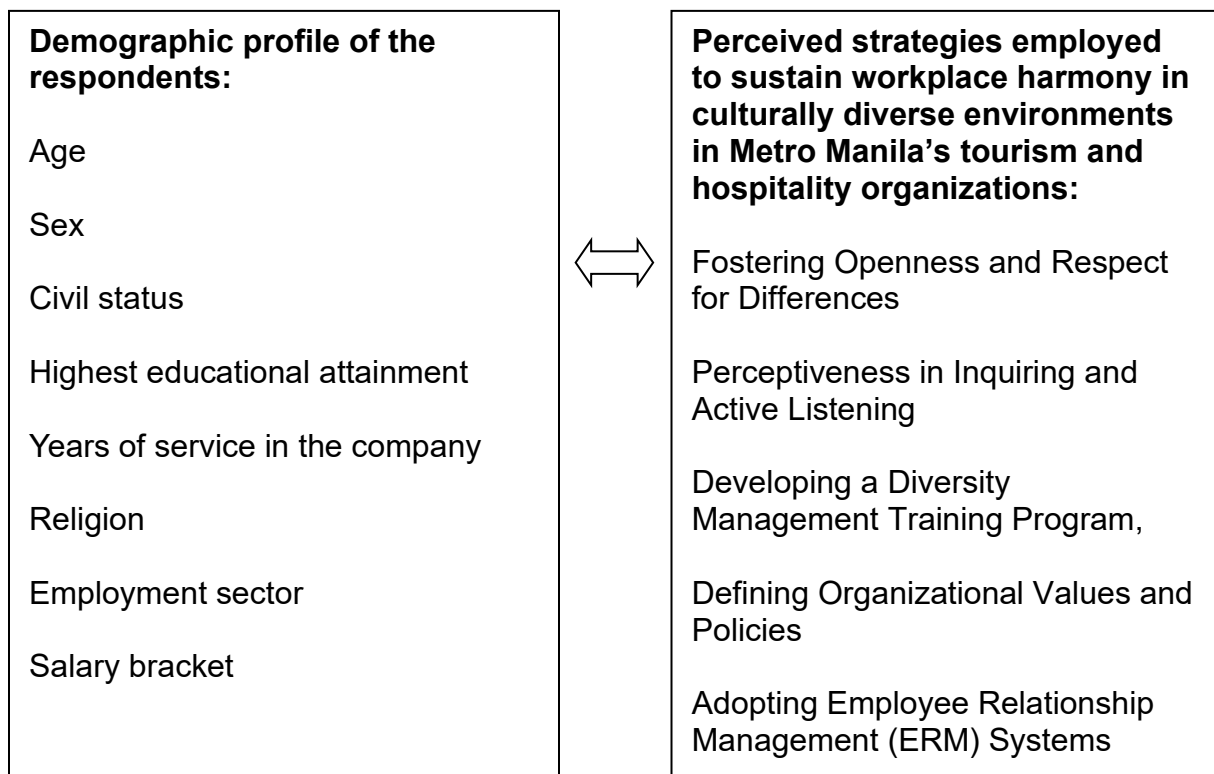


Figure 1. The Conceptual Paradigm of the Study

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between the respondents' demographic profiles and their perceptions of the strategies used to sustain workplace harmony in Metro Manila's tourism and hospitality sector.

Independent Variables (Demographic Profile): This block contains the socio-demographic background of the respondents, including Age, Sex, Civil Status, Highest Educational Attainment, Years of Service, Religion, Employment Sector, and Salary Bracket. These individual characteristics serve as the baseline factors that shape an employee's lived experiences, background assumptions, and workplace expectations.

Dependent Variables (Perceived Strategies to Sustaining Harmony): This block encompasses the five core organizational strategies evaluated by the respondents: Fostering Openness and Respect for Differences, Perceptiveness in Inquiring and Active Listening, Developing a Diversity Management Training Program, Defining Organizational Values and Policies, and Adopting Employee Relationship Management (ERM) Systems. These represent the institutional practices implemented to maintain a cohesive environment.

The Relationship / Interconnection: The framework posits that an employee's demographic profile (IV) directly influences how they perceive and evaluate the extent of practice of these workplace harmony strategies (DV). By examining this interaction, the framework determines whether specific demographic groups experience, value, or evaluate diversity practices differently within culturally diverse hospitality settings.

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the profile of respondents and their perceived extent of practice of various strategies to sustain a harmonious relationship despite having a culturally diverse workplace in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Literature Review

Workforce Diversity Dynamics in Hospitality and Tourism

Workforce diversity in modern hospitality functions as both an operational asset and a complex managerial challenge. Research by Manoharan et al. (2021) demonstrates that while diversity fosters innovation and enhances service adaptability, it also introduces intergroup anxieties if left unmanaged. In hotel and restaurant operations, daily interactions occur under high-stress conditions where rapid communication is paramount. Mistry et al. (2023) observe that without targeted diversity practices, socio-cultural distinctions can manifest as workplace silos, informal sub-cultures, and reduced team cohesion. In Asian hospitality contexts, where relational harmony (*pakikisama* in the Philippine cultural paradigm) plays a significant role in organizational life, maintaining interpersonal equilibrium is vital to avoiding workplace friction (Khassawneh & Mohammad, 2022).

Institutional Strategies for Sustaining Workplace Harmony

To harmonize diverse teams, modern hospitality organizations implement targeted human resource practices:

Fostering Openness and Active Communication: Open communication channels and perceptive listening mitigate implicit bias. When managers and peers demonstrate perceptiveness during interpersonal exchanges, psychological safety increases, allowing employees to express operational concerns without fear of marginalization (Esguerra et al., 2024). Cultivating psychological safety through active listening and non-judgmental inquiry minimizes socio-cultural friction (Hoteliga, 2021).

Diversity Management Training: Structured training interventions equip workers with cognitive and behavioral tools needed to navigate cultural differences. Madera et al. (2023) emphasize that continuous diversity training directly correlates with improved employee engagement and decreased perceived discrimination. Formal programs equip employees with cross-cultural competence, conflict-resolution tools, and empathy, transforming demographic differences into collaborative assets (Manoharan et al., 2021).

Organizational Values and ERM Systems: Organizational policies serve as the formal foundation for acceptable workplace behavior (Gaur, 2025). Clear corporate policies and digital Employee Relationship Management (ERM) platforms provide equitable structural support, ensuring fair grievance handling, transparent feedback, and aligned organizational conduct (Madera et al., 2023; Khassawneh & Mohammad, 2022). Implementing Employee Relationship Management (ERM) systems creates transparent, accessible avenues for grievance handling, performance recognition, and two-way feedback, reinforcing equity across all staff tiers (Zhang et al., 2025).

Demographic Correlates and Perception Variance

Employee evaluations of organizational practices are rarely uniform; they are mediated by personal demographic characteristics. Research on organizational justice indicates that variables such as tenure, educational attainment, religious background, and income bracket influence how employees interpret fairness, leadership support, and policy execution (Jo et al., 2025). For instance, junior or lower-salaried staff may evaluate ERM accessibility differently than senior staff, while workers with diverse religious or generational backgrounds may prioritize specific accommodations in organizational policies (Li et al., 2025). Identifying whether significant relationships exist between these profile variables and perceived practice extents is therefore critical for designing nuanced, targeted human resource strategies.

METHODOLOGY

This study follows a quantitative, objective research approach. It operates on the principle that workplace dynamics can be observed, measured, and analyzed without researcher bias (Ali, 2024). A deductive structure was used, starting with theoretical concepts from **Social Identity Theory** (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and **Social Exchange Theory** (Blau, 1964), which were then tested through data collection and statistical analysis (Maksimović & Evtimov, 2023). A quantitative method was chosen to collect objective data, test hypotheses, and evaluate how employees perceive organizational practices in diverse workplaces (Abdullah et al., 2023).

Data collection utilized a structured, 36-item survey instrument synthesized from established peer-reviewed literature across major academic databases, including Scopus, Emerald Insight, and ScienceDirect. The content validity of the instrument was critically evaluated and refined by a panel of subject-matter experts from academia and industry. Prior to full-scale deployment, pilot testing confirmed high internal consistency across all evaluated perceived strategies employed to sustain workplace harmony in culturally diverse environments in Metro Manila's tourism and hospitality organizations, yielding robust Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

The finalized instrument was administered from December 2023 to February 2024 to $N = 396$ respondents, comprising human resource practitioners and operational personnel across Metro Manila's tourism and hospitality landscape. To secure proportional representation across diverse industry segments—specifically Hotels, Airlines, Travel Agencies, Food and Beverage enterprises, Cruise Lines, MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions), and public tourism agencies—a stratified sampling technique was executed. Field enumeration was carried out on-site by trained data collectors to optimize response completeness and data integrity.

Quantitative analysis was executed using JASP (v.0.18.3.0), R (v.4.3.0), and RStudio (v.2023.06.0), applying a threshold of $\alpha = 0.05$ for statistical significance.

1. **Descriptive Analysis:** Frequencies (f) and percentages (%) were computed to profile the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample, while sample means ($\bar{X}$) and standard deviations (SD) were derived to evaluate perceived diversity practices.
2. **Normality Testing:** Data distribution characteristics were evaluated using the Shapiro–Wilk test to determine appropriate parametric or non-parametric analytical routes.
3. **Inferential Analysis:**
 - For variables meeting normality assumptions, relationship testing utilized Pearson product-moment correlation (r), point-biserial correlation (r_{pb}), and standard beta coefficients (β).
 - For non-normally distributed data, non-parametric equivalents were applied, specifically Spearman's rank correlation (ρ) and rank-biserial correlation coefficients (r_{rb}).

RESULTS

1. Socio-economic Profile of the Respondents

The socio-demographic and workplace attributes of the survey participants ($N = 396$) across Metro Manila's tourism and hospitality enterprise network are detailed in Table 1.

A substantial majority of the sample consists of early-career personnel under the age of 30 (58.33%), with women representing a slight majority (52.02%) and single individuals accounting for more than two-thirds of the cohort (67.42%). Educationally, the workforce displays a high rate of academic attainment, with 70.96% holding a baccalaureate degree. Regarding religious affiliation, Roman Catholicism constitutes the dominant belief system, reported by 76.77% of participants. Occupational data reveal that nearly two-thirds of respondents (63.02%) possess fewer than three years of tenure within their respective organizations. Industry distribution is primarily concentrated within three key sectors: Accommodation Services (Hotels & Resorts): 35.10%; Food and Beverage Operations: 21.46%, and Travel Agencies and Tour Operations: 17.93%. Financially, close to half of the respondents (46.59%) report a monthly income below PHP 20,000 or US\$324, while roughly one in four 24.62% earns within the PHP 20,000–29,999 (US\$324–US\$486) salary tier.

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

Socio-demographic 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. Employee Perceptions of Diversity Strategies and Workplace Harmony in Metro Manila's Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Table 2 details the evaluation of organizational strategies deployed to maintain interpersonal equilibrium within culturally diverse tourism and hospitality enterprises across Metro Manila. Overall, the composite evaluation yielded a **Grand Mean** of **4.45** (SD 0.42), corresponding to an operational interpretation of **Always**. This high composite rating demonstrates that employees perceive harmony-sustaining strategies as consistently practiced and deeply embedded across regional hospitality operations.

An examination of specific strategy dimensions reveals a narrow mean distribution (ranging from 4.41 to 4.46), indicating high consistency in implementation across all five areas. **Adopting ERM Systems** ($\bar{X} = 4.46$): Emerged as the highest-rated dimension. This indicates that structured platforms for communication, conflict resolution, and feedback provide the strongest structural foundation for employee relationship management. **Fostering Openness and Respect for Differences** ($\bar{X} = 4.45$): Reflects a strong organizational culture that values background diversity, reducing interpersonal friction in high-touch team settings. **Defining Organizational Values and Policies** ($\bar{X} = 4.44$): Demonstrates that explicit code-of-conduct guidelines and equitable HR policies effectively anchor institutional expectations. **Developing a Diversity Management Training Program** ($\bar{X} = 4.42$): Confirms that formal training initiatives successfully equip personnel with cross-cultural skills. **Perceptiveness in Inquiring and Active Listening** ($\bar{X} = 4.41$): While scoring the lowest among the five dimensions, its high overall mean confirms that empathetic communication and mutual inquiry remain routinely practiced across operational teams.

Table 2. Weighted Mean Summary of Employees' Perceptions on Workplace Harmony Strategies in Culturally Diverse Tourism and Hospitality Organizations in Metro Manila

Strategies Used to Sustain Work Harmony	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
2.1. Fostering Openness and Respect for Differences		
More face-to-face meetings with workers in different departments and positions that shows their bosses and	4.47	Always

other administrators are confident, accessible, and eager to address problems in the workplace.		
Ensuring that every employee knows when to share thoughts, how to improve and how to contribute ideas to help them achieve their objectives	4.47	Always
Employees must accept and respect co-workers' differences in terms of age, sexual orientation, social status, ethnicity, personality, and religion.	4.47	Always
Company must actively look for ways to help the employees to accomplish a goal despite of cultural differences.	4.46	Always
Staff should be able to readily access mission statement, strategic goals, training manuals, and operating manuals.	4.46	Always
Being flexible creates an environment where employees can look at work-life balance which is mutually beneficial.	4.46	Always
Management must create an attitude of openness that employees' ideas and comments are encouraged to be expressed.	4.44	Always
Ensuring that employees have all the information necessary to complete tasks and set specific guidelines to access information to other companies	4.41	Always
Posting daily emails, frequent conferences and memos or newsletters regarding specific initiatives and updates on key developments that demonstrate senior staff dedication to enhancing communication.	4.40	Always
Overall Weighted Mean on Fostering Openness and Respect for Differences	4.45	Always
2.2. Perceptiveness in Inquiring and Active Listening		
Give full attention to what other people are saying by taking time to understand about what he/she is stating.	4.51	Always
Companies should practice social perceptiveness to easily adapt changes in workplace	4.46	Always
Employers and employees must listen and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences by anyone.	4.46	Always
Employees should be able to give out information and ideas regardless of cultural differences.	4.45	Always
Employees should understand co-workers' differences in order to have diversity and positive attitude in the workplace	4.45	Always
Direct act of listening should be taught to employees to enrich workplace relationships	4.45	Always
Overall Weighted Mean on Perceptiveness in Inquiring and Active Listening	4.41	Always
2.3. Developing a Diversity Management Training Program		
The company should conduct a thorough self-assessment to have an effective training development	4.44	Always
Diversity management concepts should be integrated into other corporate training programs	4.43	Always

Employees and managers at all levels should attend an educational class, addressing the significance of the company's diversity and its contribution to business strategy	4.42	Always
Awareness and emphasis on diversity must form part of the culture of the organization to provide successful training	4.42	Always
Training initiatives on diversity and inclusion should reach all workers and tackle a variety of problems, including implicit bias, micro aggressions, and intercultural communications	4.40	Always
Companies should decrease the cultural distance among employees to diminish the difficulty of working together.	4.38	Always
Overall Weighted Mean on Developing a Diversity Management Training Program	4.42	Always
2.4. Defining Organizational Values and Policies		
Setting organizational values for better diversity in workplace such as:	4.56	Always
a. Strengthening the employment value proposition	4.49	Always
b. Strengthen the work policies and "fill the gaps" in the silent policies	4.47	Always
c. Reduce risk of inappropriate behavior	4.46	Always
d. improve the organizations' ethical character as expressed in its operations and culture	4.44	Always
Implementation of uniformity in terms of employee rights and responsibilities to maintain harmony within the workplace	4.47	Always
Guidelines should have consequences for workers who violate the company policies	4.46	Always
Meeting legal requirements as a primary goal when developing a policy including safety of the employees	4.44	Always
Understanding how the company plans to continue to strengthen its society, efficiency, and employee experience	4.43	Always
Working with senior leaders to refine and finalize values and develop a plan for implementation.	4.40	Always
Conducting thoughtful discussion about the organization's deeply held beliefs	4.40	Always
Developing a list of values statements based on the highly rated beliefs and behaviors	4.38	Always
Overall Weighted Mean on Defining Organizational Values and Policies	4.44	Always
2.5. Adopting Employee Relationship Management (ERM) System		
Maintaining a continuous interaction with the employees by keeping them updated about company's policies, procedures, and decisions	4.54	Always
The company should encourage employees to share their ideas and input that may enhances an employee's determination to further excel in attaining a company's set goals and objectives	4.49	Always
Rewarding and appreciating employees for a well-done job or for achieving/over-meeting their targets	4.48	Always

Implement an improved communication channels that may lead to conflict reduction, reduced staff turnover rates, and absenteeism levels	4.46	Always
Policies, goals, and objectives of a company should be clearly articulated and informed with all employees	4.44	Always
Implement programs that build a good rapport and encourage health and wellness of the employee	4.43	Always
Assigning employees greater responsibilities or indulging them in training programme to make the employees job interesting	4.38	Always
Overall Weighted Mean on Adopting Employee Relationship Management (ERM) Systems	4.46	Always
Grand Mean on the Perceived Extent of Practice of Strategies Used to Sustain Workplace Harmony within Culturally Diverse Tourism and Hospitality Organizations in Metro Manila	4.45	Always

Weighted Mean Range and Extent of Challenge Verbal Interpretation: 1.00 - 1.80 Very Low; 1.81 - 2.60 Low; 2.61 - 3.40 Moderate; 3.41 - 4.20 High; 4.21 - 5.00 Very High

3. Employee Perceptions of Diversity Strategies and Workplace Harmony in Metro Manila's Tourism and Hospitality Industry Across Socio-economic Profile

Table 3 evaluates whether employees' perceptions of the five harmony-sustaining strategies vary when disaggregated by socio-demographic profile (Age, Sex, Civil Status, Highest Educational Attainment, Years of Service, Religion, Employment Sector, and Salary Bracket). Descriptive analysis reveals that across **all** demographic categories and across **all** five strategy dimensions, respondents consistently rated the extent of organizational practice as **Always**, with sub-group means remaining within the 4.21–5.00 numerical interval.

Table 3. Weighted Mean Summary of Employees' Perceptions on Workplace Harmony Strategies in Culturally Diverse Tourism and Hospitality Organizations in Metro Manila by Socio-Economic Profile

Strategies	Profile Categories	Mean	Std. Deviation	Extent of practice
Foster an attitude of openness and respects differences in organization	Age			
	Below 30	4.48	0.518	Always
	30-39	4.36	0.559	Always
	40-49	4.38	0.455	Always
	50 & up	4.62	0.358	Always
Perceptiveness in asking and listening	Below 30	4.50	0.659	Always
	30-39	4.37	0.540	Always
	40-49	4.38	0.523	Always
	50 & up	4.53	0.371	Always

Developing a diversity management training program	Below 30	4.46	0.545	Always
	30-39	4.30	0.588	Always
	40-49	4.41	0.547	Always
	50 & up	4.40	0.491	Always
Defining organizational values and policies	Below 30	4.48	0.509	Always
	30-39	4.34	0.553	Always
	40-49	4.44	0.461	Always
	50 & up	4.40	0.396	Always
Adopt employee relationship management system	Below 30	4.49	0.559	Always
	30-39	4.34	0.675	Always
	40-49	4.50	1.226	Always
	50 & up	4.59	0.436	Always
Foster an attitude of openness and respects differences in organization	<u>Gender</u>			
	Male	4.47	0.489	Always
	Female	4.43	0.541	Always
Perceptiveness in asking and listening	Male	4.43	0.526	Always
	Female	4.47	0.672	Always
Developing a diversity management training program	Male	4.41	0.531	Always
	Female	4.41	0.577	Always
Defining organizational values and policies	Male	4.43	0.495	Always
	Female	4.45	0.526	Always
Adopt employee relationship management system	Male	4.41	0.595	Always
	Female	4.51	0.789	Always
Foster an attitude of openness and respects differences in organization	<u>Civil Status</u>			
	Non-Single	4.42	0.476	Always
	Single	4.46	0.535	Always
Perceptiveness in asking and listening	Non-Single	4.42	0.494	Always
	Single	4.47	0.652	Always
Developing a diversity management training program	Non-Single	4.37	0.543	Always
	Single	4.44	0.560	Always
Defining organizational values and policies	Non-Single	4.41	0.463	Always
	Single	4.45	0.532	Always
Adopt employee relationship management system	Non-Single	4.48	0.880	Always
	Single	4.45	0.601	Always
	<u>Highest Educational Attainment</u>			
Foster an attitude of openness and respects differences in organization	HS graduate	4.52	0.528	Always
	College level	4.23	0.729	Always
	College graduate	4.44	0.495	Always
	Post-graduate	4.53	0.507	Always

Perceptiveness in asking and listening	HS graduate	4.45	0.593	Always
	College level	4.38	0.716	Always
	College graduate	4.46	0.613	Always
	Post-graduate	4.45	0.481	Always
Developing a diversity management training program	HS graduate	4.46	0.564	Always
	College level	4.25	0.612	Always
	College graduate	4.42	0.548	Always
	Post-graduate	4.39	0.574	Always
Defining organizational values and policies	HS graduate	4.50	0.541	Always
	College level	4.43	0.610	Always
	College graduate	4.42	0.494	Always
	Post-graduate	4.43	0.546	Always
Adopt employee relationship management system	HS graduate	4.50	1.178	Always
	College level	4.44	0.636	Always
	College graduate	4.45	0.535	Always
	Post-graduate	4.45	0.573	Always
<u>Length of service</u>				
Foster an attitude of openness and respects differences in organization	Less than 3	4.39	0.562	Always
	3 to 6	4.58	0.394	Always
	7 to 10	4.49	0.485	Always
	11 & up	4.54	0.418	Always
Perceptiveness in asking and listening	Less than 3	4.43	0.682	Always
	3 to 6	4.54	0.441	Always
	7 to 10	4.49	0.443	Always
	11 & up	4.50	0.513	Always
Developing a diversity management training program	Less than 3	4.40	0.570	Always
	3 to 6	4.53	0.506	Always
	7 to 10	4.37	0.595	Always
	11 & up	4.39	0.496	Always
Defining organizational values and policies	Less than 3	4.40	0.543	Always
	3 to 6	4.55	0.435	Always
	7 to 10	4.49	0.529	Always
	11 & up	4.46	0.376	Always
Adopt employee relationship management system	Less than 3	4.44	0.585	Always
	3 to 6	4.53	1.078	Always
	7 to 10	4.44	0.521	Always
	11 & up	4.51	0.533	Always
<u>Religion</u>				
Foster an attitude of openness and respects differences in organization	Non-Catholic	4.45	0.510	Always
	Catholic	4.45	0.520	Always
Perceptiveness in asking and listening	Non-Catholic	4.46	0.521	Always
	Catholic	4.45	0.629	Always
Developing a diversity management training program	Non-Catholic	4.40	0.506	Always
	Catholic	4.42	0.570	Always

Defining organizational values and policies	Non-Catholic	4.46	0.482	Always
	Catholic	4.43	0.520	Always
Adopt employee relationship management system	Non-Catholic	4.47	0.562	Always
	Catholic	4.45	0.741	Always
<u>Employment sector</u>				
Foster an attitude of openness and respects differences in organization	Accommodation	4.37	0.533	Always
	Travel Agency	4.45	0.491	Always
	Food & Beverage	4.54	0.497	Always
	Human Resource	4.63	0.548	Always
	Leisure & Entertainment	4.49	0.612	Always
	DOT & Other Agencies	4.46	0.414	Always
Perceptiveness in asking and listening	Accommodation	4.35	0.551	Always
	Travel Agency	4.51	0.861	Always
	Food & Beverage	4.58	0.476	Always
	Human Resource	4.67	0.577	Always
	Leisure & Entertainment	4.47	0.557	Always
	DOT & Other Agencies	4.42	0.523	Always
Developing a diversity management training program	Accommodation	4.28	0.586	Always
	Travel Agency	4.44	0.548	Always
	Food & Beverage	4.57	0.493	Always
	Human Resource	4.67	0.577	Always
	Leisure & Entertainment	4.49	0.569	Always
	DOT & Other Agencies	4.39	0.498	Always
Defining organizational values and policies	Accommodation	4.34	0.542	Always
	Travel Agency	4.41	0.475	Always
	Food & Beverage	4.62	0.434	Always
	Human Resource	4.67	0.577	Always
	Leisure & Entertainment	4.45	0.598	Always
	DOT & Other Agencies	4.42	0.428	Always
Adopt employee relationship management system	Accommodation	4.32	0.620	Always
	Travel Agency	4.44	0.583	Always
	Food & Beverage	4.62	0.438	Always
	Human Resource	4.57	0.514	Always
	Leisure & Entertainment	4.38	0.596	Always
	DOT & Other Agencies	4.65	1.269	Always

	<i>Monthly salary</i>			
Foster an attitude of openness and respects differences in organization	Less than 20000	4.49	0.517	Always
	20000 to 29999	4.34	0.533	Always
	30000 to 39999	4.40	0.506	Always
	40000 to 49999	4.58	0.348	Always
	50000 or greater	4.53	0.469	Always
Perceptiveness in asking and listening	Less than 20000	4.49	0.536	Always
	20000 to 29999	4.48	0.904	Always
	30000 to 39999	4.40	0.542	Always
	40000 to 49999	4.51	0.369	Always
	50000 or greater	4.46	0.491	Always
Developing a diversity management training program	Less than 20000	4.45	0.539	Always
	20000 to 29999	4.37	0.608	Always
	30000 to 39999	4.42	0.497	Always
	40000 to 49999	4.33	0.488	Always
	50000 or greater	4.41	0.570	Always
Defining organizational values and policies	Less than 20000	4.49	0.500	Always
	20000 to 29999	4.37	0.588	Always
	30000 to 39999	4.45	0.453	Always
	40000 to 49999	4.43	0.329	Always
	50000 or greater	4.44	0.467	Always
Adopt employee relationship management system	Less than 20000	4.61	0.876	Always
	20000 to 29999	4.35	0.694	Always
	30000 to 39999	4.32	0.509	Always
	40000 to 49999	4.48	0.321	Always
	50000 or greater	4.49	0.482	Always

Weighted Mean Range and Extent of Challenge Verbal Interpretation: 1.00 - 1.80 Never; 1.81 - 2.60 Rarely; 2.61 - 3.40 Sometimes; 3.41 - 4.20 Often; 4.21 - 5.00 always

4. Relationship between the Employees' Socio-economic Profile and Their Perceptions of Diversity Strategies and Workplace Harmony in Metro Manila Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Table 4 details the correlation analysis conducted to test the relationship between the respondents' demographic profiles and their perceived extent of practice of diversity strategies used to sustain workplace harmony.

Significant Relationships (H_0 Rejected): Statistical analysis reveals significant correlations between respondents' **Age**, **Employment Sector**, and **Monthly Salary Bracket** and their perceptions of four specific harmony-sustaining strategies: *Perceptiveness in Inquiring and Active Listening*, *Developing a Diversity Management Training Program*, *Defining Organizational Values and Policies*, and *Adopting Employee Relationship Management (ERM) Systems*. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0) is **rejected** for Age, Employment Sector, and Monthly Salary Bracket across these strategic dimensions.

Non-Significant Relationships (H_0 Accepted): Conversely, no statistically significant correlations were observed when evaluations were cross-tabulated against **Sex, Civil Status, Highest Educational Attainment, Length of Service, and Religion**. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is **accepted** for these demographic profiles, indicating that these specific background traits do not significantly alter how employees evaluate workplace harmony strategies.

Table 4. Relationship Between Socio-Economic Profile and Perceived Practice of Workplace Harmony Strategies in Culturally Diverse Tourism and Hospitality Organizations in Metro Manila

Profile variables	Strategies	Correlation coefficient	p-value	Interpretation
Age	Foster an attitude of openness and respects differences in organization	-0.09	0.0777	Not significant
	Perceptiveness in asking and listening	-0.08	0.0949	Not significant
	Developing a diversity management training program	-0.08	0.1356	Not significant
	Defining organizational values and policies	-0.10	0.0466	Significant
	Adopt employee relationship management system	-0.12	0.0161	Significant
Sex	Foster an attitude of openness and respects differences in organization	-0.02	0.6841	Not significant
	Perceptiveness in asking and listening	0.03	0.5755	Not significant
	Developing a diversity management training program	0.02	0.7150	Not significant
	Defining organizational values and policies	0.03	0.5804	Not significant
	Adopt employee relationship management system	0.07	0.1619	Not significant
Civil Status	Foster an attitude of openness and respects differences in organization	0.07	0.1458	Not significant
	Perceptiveness in asking and listening	0.06	0.2387	Not significant
	Developing a diversity management training program	0.07	0.1395	Not significant
	Defining organizational values and policies	0.08	0.1299	Not significant
	Adopt employee relationship management system	0.03	0.5679	Not significant

Education	Foster an attitude of openness and respects differences in organization	-0.03	0.5223	Not significant
	Perceptiveness in asking and listening	-0.03	0.5261	Not significant
	Developing a diversity management training program	-0.02	0.6251	Not significant
	Defining organizational values and policies	-0.08	0.1270	Not significant
	Adopt employee relationship management system	-0.03	0.5151	Not significant
Length of service	Foster an attitude of openness and respects differences in organization	0.00	0.9980	Not significant
	Perceptiveness in asking and listening	0.00	0.9758	Not significant
	Developing a diversity management training program	-0.06	0.2298	Not significant
	Defining organizational values and policies	-0.03	0.5128	Not significant
	Adopt employee relationship management system	-0.08	0.1222	Not significant
Religion	Foster an attitude of openness and respects differences in organization	0.00	0.9483	Not significant
	Perceptiveness in asking and listening	-0.02	0.7294	Not significant
	Developing a diversity management training program	0.03	0.5715	Not significant
	Defining organizational values and policies	-0.02	0.7475	Not significant
	Adopt employee relationship management system	-0.04	0.4844	Not significant
Employment sector	Foster an attitude of openness and respects differences in organization	0.10	0.0525	Not significant
	Perceptiveness in asking and listening	0.10	0.0427	Significant
	Developing a diversity management training program	0.13	0.0099	Significant
	Defining organizational values and policies	0.11	0.0302	Significant
	Adopt employee relationship management system	0.14	0.0068	Significant
Monthly salary	Foster an attitude of openness and respects differences in organization	-0.09	0.1453	Not significant

Perceptiveness in asking and listening	-0.10	0.0996	Not significant
Developing a diversity management training program	-0.09	0.1295	Not significant
Defining organizational values and policies	-0.12	0.0525	Not significant
Adopt employee relationship management system	-0.14	0.0273	Significant

DISCUSSION

1. Socio-economic Profile of the Respondents

The demographic structure highlights a workforce heavily driven by a young, single labor pool engaged primarily in entry-level, customer-facing operational capacities. The high concentration of college-educated staff reflects the sector's stringent skill requirements for service delivery and client management. Conversely, the intersection of limited tenure (≤ 3 years) and modest compensation brackets ($\leq$ PHP 20,000 or US\$324) underscores systemic retention challenges and elevated labor mobility across regional hospitality businesses.

These empirical trends strongly mirror broader Philippine labor force statistics. Industry benchmarks from the Department of Tourism (2024) confirm that regional tourism employment remains anchored in lodging and food service operations, drawing heavily from young, university-trained demographics. Similarly, Philippine Statistics Authority (2024) data indicate that tourism labor remains service-centric and operational, while reports by Statista (2025) reaffirm the marked representation of women and younger cohorts in entry-level, lower-compensated roles—reinforcing ongoing industry debates surrounding wage equity and retention stability in Metro Manila.

2. Employee Perceptions of Diversity Strategies and Workplace Harmony in Metro Manila's Tourism and Hospitality Industry

The uniform practice of these five strategies aligns directly with **Social Exchange Theory** (Blau, 1964). When employees perceive that their organization systematically invests in supportive infrastructure—such as functional ERM systems and explicit inclusive policies—they reciprocate with higher organizational commitment and cooperative workplace behavior.

Furthermore, these findings align with **Social Identity Theory** (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Active listening, formal diversity training, and open cultural environments actively reframe potential "in-group vs. out-group" divides into a unified organizational identity.

These empirical results mirror broader industry literature. Madera et al. (2023) and Manoharan et al. (2021) observe that hospitality enterprises prioritizing structured

diversity governance achieve greater workplace cohesion and lower interpersonal conflict. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2025) highlight that institutionalizing digital and operational ERM channels significantly enhances trust and relationship stability in multi-cultural service environments. Within the Philippine hospitality context, these practices reinforce the traditional cultural value of relational harmony (*pakikisama*), institutionalizing informal social norms into structured HR practices (Esguerra et al., 2024).

3. Employee Perceptions of Diversity Strategies and Workplace Harmony in Metro Manila's Tourism and Hospitality Industry Across Socio-economic Profile

The absence of marked descriptive variance across demographic segments demonstrates that the implementation of diversity and workplace harmony strategies is perceived as pervasive, institutionalized, and equitable across Metro Manila's tourism and hospitality enterprise landscape. Regardless of whether employees occupy entry-level operational roles with lower compensation or hold longer tenures in senior positions, their assessment of organizational inclusivity remains uniformly high.

This demographic uniformity can be contextualized through three primary theoretical and empirical perspectives:

Institutionalization and Systemic Consistency: When diversity management is embedded into core operational standards rather than treated as an ad-hoc initiative, perception gaps between demographic tiers shrink. As Mistry et al. (2023) and Manoharan et al. (2021) note, standardized Human Resource practices—such as clear codes of conduct, equal-opportunity policies, and structured onboarding—create a baseline experience of fairness that cuts across age cohorts, educational backgrounds, and pay grades.

Social Exchange and Perceived Organizational Support: In line with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), when organizations consistently deploy active listening channels and functional Employee Relationship Management (ERM) systems, workers across all salary tiers and sectors experience strong Perceived Organizational Support (POS). Recent findings by Gupta and Jangra (2024) and Zhang et al. (2025) confirm that robust ERM platforms foster a shared perception of equity, neutralizing demographic biases that often skew how frontline versus administrative workers perceive organizational commitment.

Cultural Alignment and Shared Identity: According to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), organizational communication frameworks can reframe diverse demographic attributes into a collective "in-group" identity centered on service excellence. In the Philippine hospitality context, this structural alignment is further reinforced by the cultural paradigm of *pakikisama* (relational harmony) and *hiya* (mutual respect). As Esguerra et al. (2024) highlight, Filipino service workers naturally value relational equilibrium, leading to high shared

endorsement when organizations actively support open communication, cultural respect, and empathetic leadership (Madera et al., 2023).

While descriptive metrics ($\bar{X}$ and SD) confirm a uniform "Always" rating across all profiles, the inferential statistical testing (e.g., Pearson's r , Spearman's ρ , Point/Rank-Biserial, or ANOVA/Kruskal-Wallis tests executed in JASP/R) determines whether the subtle numerical differences between demographic groups reach statistical significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). The absence of substantial descriptive divergence suggests that institutional diversity practices are broadly accessible and experienced equitably across all worker tiers in Metro Manila.

4. Relationship between the Employees' Socio-economic Profile and Their Perceptions of Diversity Strategies and Workplace Harmony in Metro Manila Tourism and Hospitality Industry

The empirical divergence between significant and non-significant demographic variables highlights how specific socio-economic factors shape workforce perceptions within Metro Manila's hospitality sector:

Socio-Economic and Operational Mediation (Age, Sector, and Salary):

The significant influence of Age, Employment Sector, and Monthly Salary reflects the distinct operational environments and career stages across hospitality sub-sectors. In accordance with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), employees in differing income tiers or specialized sectors (e.g., five-star hotels vs. food and beverage outlets) experience different levels of structural resource allocation, performance expectations, and administrative support. Younger or entry-level employees earning lower monthly salaries may rely more heavily on formal ERM systems and explicit organizational policies for protection and guidance, whereas higher-salaried or older staff may prioritize active listening and managerial perceptiveness (Jo et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2025). Furthermore, operational variations across sub-sectors (such as airlines versus travel agencies) naturally shape how training programs and core values are operationalized on the ground (Manoharan et al., 2021).

Pervasiveness of Inclusivity Across Personal Identity Traits: The non-significant findings for Sex, Civil Status, Educational Attainment, Length of Service, and Religion indicate that institutional practices are implemented with broad equity across personal identity markers. Anchored in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), when an organization establishes clear policies and shared cultural values, personal demographic divisions (e.g., gender or religious affiliation) cease to be primary drivers of perception variance. Standardized diversity initiatives effectively unify diverse employee groups under a shared organizational identity, ensuring that frontline personnel evaluate workplace respect and communication

channels consistently regardless of personal background (Mistry et al., 2023; Madera et al., 2023).

The inferential analysis reveals nuanced relationships between the demographic profiles of the respondents and their perceived extent of practice across the five harmony-sustaining strategies.

The Mediating Role of Age. Analysis indicates that the respondent's **Age** is not significantly correlated with their perception of three strategies: *Fostering Openness and Respect for Differences*, *Perceptiveness in Inquiring and Active Listening*, and *Developing a Diversity Management Training Program*. Regardless of their generational cohort, respondents consistently evaluated these practices as "Always" utilized. This suggests that basic interpersonal respect, communication, and formal training are implemented equitably across all age groups within the hospitality environment.

However, Age demonstrated a statistically significant association with the perceived extent of practice regarding *Defining Organizational Values and Policies* and *Adopting Employee Relationship Management (ERM) Systems*. Specifically, respondents within the 30–39 age bracket consistently recorded significantly lower mean ratings for these two structural strategies compared to both their younger and older peers. This "middle-management dip" is well-documented in human resource literature. According to Jo et al. (2025), mid-career professionals—often occupying middle management or supervisory roles—experience greater friction with organizational policies and ERM systems because they are tasked with enforcing them while simultaneously managing frontline pushback, leading to a more critical evaluation of these administrative tools.

Uniformity Across Identity and Tenure Markers. The variables of **Sex, Civil Status, Highest Educational Attainment, Length of Service, and Religion** showed no significant correlation across any of the five perceived strategies. This lack of significance demonstrates that these personal and experiential markers do not skew how an employee evaluates workplace harmony initiatives. Anchored in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), this uniformity indicates that Metro Manila's hospitality enterprises have successfully cultivated an overarching organizational identity that supersedes individual demographic differences. Standardized diversity protocols ensure that whether an employee is single, married, highly tenured, or holds a specific religious affiliation, their experience of inclusivity and mutual respect remains consistently high (Mistry et al., 2023).

Sectoral Disparities in Structural Practices. The **Employment Sector** did not significantly influence perceptions of *Fostering Openness and Respect for Differences*, indicating a universal industry baseline for interpersonal respect. However, a significant correlation emerged between the Employment Sector and the remaining four strategies: *Perceptiveness in Inquiring and Active Listening*, *Developing a Diversity Management Training Program*, *Defining Organizational Values and Policies*, and *Adopting ERM Systems*.

This implies that operational context heavily dictates the execution of formal HR mechanisms. For instance, large-scale lodging enterprises (Hotels/Resorts) and Airlines typically possess the capital to invest in sophisticated digital ERM platforms and extensive compliance training. Conversely, smaller Food and Beverage operators or independent Travel Agencies may rely on informal communication structures due to leaner administrative resources. Manoharan et al. (2021) confirm that sub-sector resource disparity directly influences the sophistication and perceived presence of diversity training and technological HR systems in the hospitality industry.

Salary Influence on ERM Utilization. The **Monthly Salary** bracket was not significantly correlated with the perception of four strategies (Openness/Respect, Perceptiveness/Listening, Training Programs, and Values/Policies), indicating that financial compensation does not alter an employee's core experience of interpersonal inclusivity or organizational values.

However, a significant correlation was observed solely between Monthly Salary and the perceived practice of *Adopting Employee Relationship Management (ERM) Systems*. This suggests that access to, or reliance on, structured ERM platforms varies by income tier. Higher-salaried employees (often in administrative or executive roles) may interact with ERM systems regularly for performance metrics, approvals, and strategic communication. In contrast, lower-salaried frontline workers may underutilize digital ERM platforms, perceiving them as distant administrative tools rather than immediate support mechanisms (Gupta & Jangra, 2024; Zhang et al., 2025).

Conclusions

The empirical evidence demonstrates that Metro Manila's tourism and hospitality enterprises have successfully established a robust, institutionalized baseline for interpersonal harmony, particularly through fostering openness, mutual respect, and active listening. By effectively integrating the traditional Philippine cultural paradigm of relational harmony (*pakikisama*) with structured human resource management, these organizations maintain high overall workplace cohesion. This baseline operates equitably across personal identity markers—including sex, civil status, educational attainment, tenure, and religion—confirming that standardized diversity policies successfully reframe demographic differences into a shared organizational identity, consistent with Social Identity Theory.

However, significant perception gaps emerge across structural and administrative dimensions. The statistically lower ratings provided by mid-career employees aged 30 to 39 reveal a distinct "middle-management dip," where supervisory staff experience heightened operational friction while enforcing policies and managing frontline dynamics. Furthermore, the execution of formal diversity mechanisms remains heavily mediated by operational sector and income level. Capital-intensive sub-sectors such as lodging and airlines maintain sophisticated training and digital platforms, whereas leaner sub-sectors like travel agencies and food and beverage outlets rely on informal structures. Similarly, lower-salaried frontline workers perceive digital Employee Relationship Management

platforms as distant administrative controls rather than supportive resources, signaling a critical accessibility gap across wage brackets.

Recommendations

To address these operational and structural disparities, human resource leadership must first prioritize targeted administrative support and specialized leadership coaching for mid-career supervisory personnel. Streamlining policy enforcement workflows and providing dedicated conflict-resolution channels for mid-level managers will directly alleviate operational fatigue and bridge the administrative gap identified in the 30–39 age bracket. Additionally, enterprises must democratize Employee Relationship Management systems by re-engineering platforms to be mobile-friendly, intuitive, and directly integrated into daily frontline workflows, ensuring lower-salaried operational staff perceive these systems as accessible tools for support, feedback, and grievance resolution rather than remote corporate monitoring.

To mitigate sub-sector resource disparities, smaller hospitality enterprises—such as boutique travel agencies and independent dining establishments—should form industry consortiums or partner with the Department of Tourism to share modular, cost-effective diversity training programs. Finally, while general interpersonal openness remains strong, organizations must move beyond static onboarding modules by embedding continuous, scenario-based refresher workshops into ongoing staff development. These regular sessions should focus on addressing subtle micro-aggressions, inter-generational communication styles, and evolving workplace dynamics to maintain long-term relational equilibrium across all operational tiers.

Implications for Practice

The findings carry important implications for organizational practice. Embedding diversity management into standardized HR policies ensures equitable experiences across demographic tiers, while fostering organizational identity centered on service excellence unifies diverse employee groups. Ensuring operational equity in access to ERM systems and diversity training enhances perceptions of fairness. Moreover, leadership development in empathetic communication and active listening is critical for sustaining workplace harmony in multicultural service environments.

Limitations

Several limitations must be acknowledged. The study's geographic scope was confined to Metro Manila, limiting generalizability to other regions. Reliance on self-reported data introduces potential bias, while the cross-sectional design restricts insights into long-term trends. Additionally, unexamined variables such as organizational culture and leadership style may further influence diversity perceptions.

Future Research Directions

Future research should pursue longitudinal designs to track sustainability of diversity initiatives over time. Expanding to regional comparisons across the Philippines or Southeast Asia would provide broader contextual insights. Investigating organizational culture and leadership practices could deepen understanding of mediating factors. Linking diversity perceptions to performance outcomes such as productivity and customer satisfaction would strengthen practical relevance. Finally, adopting qualitative approaches like interviews and focus groups could capture richer narratives of employee experiences.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The researchers declare 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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