Research Article

Harnessing Workforce Diversity for Enhanced Employee Performance: Strategic Insights for Capacity Building

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ABSTRACT

Diversity, a consequence of evolution and globalization, has prompted businesses to reevaluate their organizational structures. This shift has created opportunities for management to harness the valuable perspectives and ideas of diverse employees, which serve as catalysts for success in the intricate and ever-changing business environment. Consequently, the primary objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between employees' perceptions of diversity practices within the organization and their influence on employee productivity, engagement, and performance. Furthermore, the study seeks to explore effective strategies for managing workforce diversity. The majority of respondents belong to the age group of 41 years and above, are female, and are Tagalog employees. Respondents unanimously acknowledged that various diversity practices have a positive impact on employee productivity and overall organizational performance. However, significant organizational challenges such as resistance to change, communication barriers, and resource constraints hinder the successful implementation of diversity programs and, consequently, employee performance. However, there was no significant variation in the influence of diversity practices on employee productivity and overall performance across demographic groupings, such as age, gender, and ethnicity. The most effective diversity integration strategies employed within the organization involved regular diversity training programs and the involvement of all employees in diversity initiatives. Furthermore, integrating diversity into employee performance leads to heightened employee satisfaction and a sense of belonging. Employees become more proactive in their roles when they feel included and valued within the organizational culture, resulting in elevated employee engagement levels in organizations that actively support and promote diversity and inclusion. Furthermore, the integration of diversity in employee engagement leads to diverse perspectives that contribute to improved decision-making and enhanced work outputs. The measurement and

evaluation framework developed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for Diversity Management has been adapted to assess the impact of diversity initiatives on employee performance. The three-module training program was designed to help small businesses develop inclusive cultures and enabling work environments as well as strategies for bringing in, managing, and retaining a diverse workforce.

Introduction
Background of the Study

Amidst the ongoing pandemic, employees have come to recognize the paramount importance of their job responsibilities and the organizations they serve. Consequently, it has become imperative for organizations to demonstrate unwavering dedication in fostering diverse and inclusive work environments for their staff. Workplace diversity entails assembling a team that encompasses a diverse range of genders, races, nationalities, abilities, and sexual orientations. Equity entails ensuring that every employee has equitable access to resources, opportunities, and fair compensation. In inclusive work environments, every employee feels valued, engaged, and supported, thereby fostering the development of trust, motivation, and enhanced job satisfaction ("Why are diversity and inclusion critical in the workplace?," 2022).

As companies have grown more inclusive and global, the idea of workforce diversity has evolved beyond race and gender to a multi-dimensional facet that encompasses a range of characteristics, including age, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities and disabilities, and cultural background. In addition to differences in gender, culture, race, and social and psychological traits, people also differ in their viewpoints and preconceptions. The existence of chronic societal discrimination on these grounds indicates the presence of heterogeneity in the workplace. In the contemporary context, all organizations must hire a diverse staff nonetheless, managing such a workforce presents significant managerial challenges (Saxena, 2014).

Workplace diversity refers to the variety of differences between people in an organization. That sounds simple, but diversity encompasses race, gender, ethnic group, age, personality, cognitive style, tenure, organizational function, education, background, and more (Patrick & Kumar, 2012). The changing workforce demographics and increasing globalization are driving organizations to rethink their business strategies and embrace diversity for competitive advantage (McCuiston et al., 2004). In the modern organization, an institution with diverse employees will have many possibilities and challenges, but problems may arise if they are not effectively implemented and managed, disorganizing its culture and reputation (Okundia, 2021).

It is simple to overlook the significance of workforce diversity since in an organization it prioritizes operations and productivity, hiring personnel that meets these two requirements is sufficient. However, diversity is more than just that. Its intangible worth can only be appreciated by combining a range of unique perspectives, characters, and life experiences that come from different backgrounds. Research keeps coming back to show how beneficial diversity is to any team. It is a significant driver of innovation and is increasingly crucial for establishing competitive advantage in companies. Initiatives promoting diversity and inclusion are becoming a common feature of growth strategies for many American businesses. However, Asian businesses still need to catch up, though. It's interesting to observe how many global corporations have robust diversity initiatives in place throughout the world, but little of them are currently being done in Asia. This is surprising given the cultural and economic diversity of the Asia-Pacific area (Eswaran, 2024).

In today's globalized society, diversity is essential as it promotes education and empathy among people. Every individual's distinct characteristics and life experiences help in cultivating a society that is more imaginative and original. Diversity fosters empathy, social unity, and a fair and inclusive setting, guaranteeing equal opportunities for everyone. Just as people have different passions, pastimes, and skills, they also originate from a range of backgrounds, cultures, and life journeys. Accepting diversity enables us to value and gain knowledge from these differences, fostering a culture of acceptance and inclusiveness. Treating everyone with kindness and respect, regardless of their looks or background, helps create a more peaceful and harmonious world. Diversity and inclusion offer many advantages, especially in the professional setting. Empowering diversity fosters a culture that appreciates and utilizes the varied viewpoints and backgrounds of its workers, resulting in increased productivity and creativity (Ricee, 2023).

In the Philippines, the country is described as a very diverse nation. There are numerous ethnic groups and more than a hundred dialects in this country. Not only that but the culture's rich history and archipelagic nature also contribute to its diversity. Therefore, despite its apparent lack of diversity, the Philippine office scene is quite diverse (Cabrera, 2022). Sprout Solutions, a cloud-based HR platform, advises employers to address diversity and inclusion issues in the workplace to successfully retain talent. Organizations in the Philippines continue to struggle with developing and putting into practice successful diversity and inclusion policies, despite the growing recognition of these concepts (Talavera, 2023).

Review of Related Literature

In today's dynamic and interconnected business environment, organizations can tap into a variety of unique talents and perspectives that contribute to increased productivity and long-term success by fostering an inclusive culture and embracing diversity.
1. Diversity's Impact on Productivity, Employee Satisfaction, and Performance

The relationship between diversity and labor productivity is intricate and multifaceted. A diverse workforce possesses the potential to enhance creativity, innovation, and decision-making capabilities, leading to increased productivity. Conversely, diversity can also introduce challenges in management, communication, and conflict resolution, potentially impacting productivity.

As per a survey conducted in 2014, a diverse workforce can lead to improved decision-making capabilities. The study revealed that diverse groups outperformed homogeneous groups in their ability to solve problems. When varied groups approach problems from multiple perspectives, they demonstrate enhanced comprehension of complex issues and the generation of innovative solutions.

A diverse workforce leads to superior decision-making. A diverse team is more inclined to consider a broader spectrum of perspectives and concepts when reaching conclusions. This enhanced inclusivity enables the team to identify potential risks and opportunities that might have been overlooked in a more homogeneous group, ultimately resulting in improved decision-making.

Furthermore, diversity fosters increased job satisfaction and staff engagement. Employees are more motivated and committed to their work when they feel valued and included within the workplace. Employees who perceive appreciation and a sense of belonging in a diverse environment tend to experience higher job satisfaction (Ojo, 2023).

Cultural diversity in the workplace has both advantages and disadvantages for employee satisfaction. It can improve creativity, innovation, and learning opportunities, which is a positive outcome. It fosters the growth of effective communication and teamwork abilities and introduces a wider variety of skills and talents to the company. These elements play a role in creating a feeling of fulfillment and job satisfaction for workers. Similarly, one must also take into account potential adverse outcomes. Differences in language, communication styles, and cultural norms can lead to communication barriers, conflicts, and tensions. Some employees may feel excluded and marginalized due to not being included and not feeling like they belong.

Resistance and prejudices can impede the embrace of diversity, resulting in reduced job contentment for some people. In order to fully utilize the advantages of cultural diversity and reduce any negative effects, companies must actively encourage inclusivity, adopt inclusive policies and practices, and offer cultural competence training. By promoting a work environment that is inclusive and supportive, companies can take advantage of the benefits of diversity and work to overcome challenges, leading to increased employee satisfaction and overall success for the organization (Pan & Sen, 2024).

2. Challenges in Implementing Diversity Strategies

2.1. Resistance to Change

Organizational adaptation to change is crucial for survival in today's dynamic business environment (Chirimbu, 2011). However, employee resistance to change remains a significant challenge, necessitating practical steps to motivate staff (Kharianti & Aslami, 2022). The rate of failure of organizational change turns out to be up to 70% (Balogun & Hailey, 2004).

2.2. Communication Barriers

Communication barriers pose significant challenges for implementing diversity strategies in organizations. These barriers can hinder strategic implementation and impede the propagation of ideas within an organization (Pereira et al., 2019). By addressing communication barriers and implementing effective diversity management strategies, organizations can promote integration and equality in the workplace, ultimately benefiting from a diverse workforce (Sadri & Tran, 2002; Madera, 2011).

2.3. Lack of Resources

As more and more organizations implement diversity initiatives, personnel, and human resource managers play increasingly significant roles. Limited resources hinder the execution of crucial processes like diversity audits, essential for identifying organizational problems (Mathews, 1998) and the absence of a theoretically grounded framework for understanding diversity strategies further complicates implementation efforts (Ortlieb & Sieben, 2013).

3. Social Identity Theory

One widely recognized framework for comprehending the dynamics of social groupings and intergroup relations is Social Identity Theory (SIT). SIT offers valuable insights into how individuals perceive themselves and others within the context of social identities. It is grounded in cognitive psychology and social categorization processes. Understanding the fundamental principles of SIT can significantly enhance your comprehension of workplace dynamics and political dynamics, as individuals navigate intricate organizational structures.

According to Social Identity Theory (SIT), individuals (sometimes unconsciously) categorize themselves and others into social groups based on shared characteristics such as gender, race, nationality, or affiliation with a specific organization. These group memberships facilitate the development of social identities by influencing individuals' attitudes, behaviors, and self-perception. SIT encompasses fundamental concepts including social categorization, social identification, social comparison, in-group bias, and intergroup conduct (Ramadas, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

Henri Tajfel and John Turner proposed social identity theory in the 1970s, which holds that membership in social groups contributes to a portion of an individual's self-concept. The theory attempts to explain the cognitive processes and social conditions that underpin intergroup behaviors, particularly those associated with prejudice, bias, and discrimination (McLeod, 2023).

Allport (1954) proposed the intergroup contact hypothesis, which states that beneficial impacts of intergroup contact occur when four critical criteria are met: equal status, intergroup collaboration, common aims, and backing from social and institutional authorities. According to Allport, the contact situation must incorporate these elements to some extent (Everett, 2013).
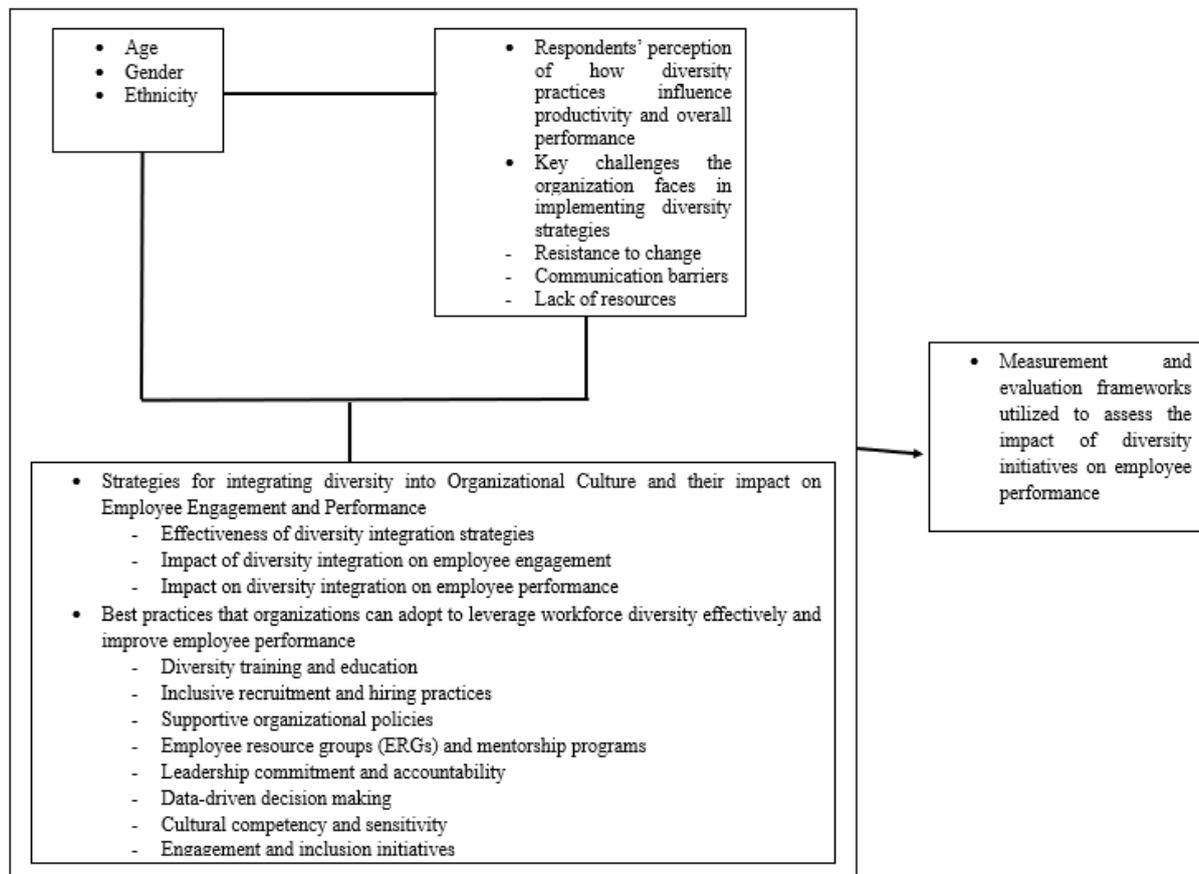
Conceptual Framework

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

Statement of the Problem
General Problem

The purpose of the study is to determine how to effectively leverage workforce diversity to improve employee performance and identify the best practices for developing the strategic capacity necessary to achieve these outcomes.

Specific Problems

1. What is the respondents' demographic profile regarding age, sex, and ethnicity?
2. What is the impact of various diversity practices on employee productivity and overall performance within organizations?
3. To what extent do respondents think that significant organizational problems such as resistance to change, communication barriers, and a lack of resources have a detrimental impact on the successful implementation of diversity programs and employee performance?
4. Is there a significant variation in the influence of diversity practices on employee productivity and overall performance across demographic groupings, such as age, gender, and ethnicity?
5. What strategies are most effective for integrating diversity into organizational culture, and what are the impacts of this integration on employee engagement and performance?
6. What best practices can organizations adopt to build strategic capacity that leverages workforce diversity to improve employee performance?
7. What measurement and evaluation frameworks are utilized to assess the impact of diversity initiatives on employee performance?

Null Hypothesis

1. There is no significant variation in the influence of diversity practices on employee productivity and overall performance across demographic groupings, such as age, gender, and ethnicity.

Significance of the Study

The findings will support institutions' adoption of various workforce diversity management measures as a crucial means of improving employee performance. Furthermore, the findings will support department heads and workers in evaluating the importance of workforce diversity and its effects on employee and organizational performance. Top management can create strategic insights for the capacity building of employees. Therefore, when individuals in the organization can appreciate and comprehend one another's differences and benefit from one another's experiences, perspectives, and awareness, diversity will lead to collaborative performance.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study only focused on determining how to effectively leverage workforce diversity to improve employee performance and identify the best practices for developing the strategic capacity necessary to achieve these outcomes. The respondents of the study were employees from the Local Government Unit of Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro. The data gathering was available online using survey questionnaires through Google Forms, considering the work schedule of each employee. Only 112 employees from different departments willingly answered the survey questionnaires.

Definition of Terms

Workforce diversity. Workforce diversity refers to the composition of work units based on cultural or demographic characteristics that are salient in group relationships (DiTomaso et al., 2007).

Capacity building. Capacity building is the investment in human capital to ensure community or organizational development and sustainability (Cunningham, 2020).

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). An employee resource group are voluntary, employee-led group aimed to foster a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with the organizations they serve. This is an employee-led group within an organization that fosters inclusivity and builds community through the sharing of common lived experiences, demographic similarities, and/or like-views ("What is an employee resource group (ERG) and why would I join?" 2022).

CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a correlational research design combined with a descriptive method to investigate the relationship between workforce diversity and employee performance. A correlational design is appropriate when investigating the associations between two or more variables within a single group (Devi et al., 2023). This approach facilitates the exploration of relationships in practical settings, enhancing the generalizability of the findings to real-world scenarios. Descriptive methods were employed to characterize and summarize the collected data, offering a comprehensive account of the respondents' demographic characteristics and their perceptions regarding diversity practices and employee performance.

The rationale for employing this design stems from its capacity to discern whether diversity strategies contribute to enhanced employee performance and identify specific challenges that impede the effective integration of diversity within organizations. By correlating diversity initiatives with employee engagement and performance, the study aims to provide actionable insights into how organizations can leverage diversity for capacity building.

Population and Sampling

The study's target population encompassed all employees of the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Mansalay, including both regular employees and contract-of-service staff. The total number of employees was N=150 individuals, representing a diverse range of genders, ages, and ethnic backgrounds. . Purposive sampling techniques were employed to identify respondents who were most likely to provide valuable

insights pertinent to the study's objectives. A total of 112 employees voluntarily participated by completing the survey questionnaire. This sample size was deemed sufficient to yield meaningful results while accounting for the constraints of time and resources.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents were employees of various departments within the Local Government Unit of Mansalay. Both regular employees and contract-of-service staff were included to capture a comprehensive range of experiences and perspectives on workplace diversity. The inclusion criteria stipulated that respondents had a minimum of six months of tenure within the organization to ensure familiarity with the workplace culture and diversity initiatives. The demographics of the respondents (age, gender, and ethnicity) were analyzed to discern any notable variations in perceptions of diversity practices and their impact on employee performance across distinct demographic groups.

Research Instrument

Data was gathered using a self-constructed questionnaire tailored to capture the necessary information related to workforce diversity and its impact on employee performance. The questionnaire included multiple sections: (1) demographic data (age, gender, ethnicity), (2) respondents' perception of diversity practices, (3) challenges in implementing diversity strategies such as resistance to change, communication barriers, and lack of resources, and (4) strategies and best practices for diversity integration and their effect on employee performance and engagement.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, it was subjected to expert review by a panel of professors, who provided feedback and recommendations. These were incorporated into the final version of the survey. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the respondents' agreement with various statements, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Validity and Reliability

Before administering the survey instrument, the Cronbach alpha (CA) coefficient was applied to work out the internal consistency and reliability of the measuring instrument. If the Cronbach's alpha value is more than 0.9, the reliability level is at an excellent level which was observed in Table 1 (Mohd, et al., 2018).

Table 1. Scale Reliability

S.#	Category	Number of items	CA Value
1	Respondents' perceptions of how diversity practices influence productivity and overall organizational performance.	10	0.965
2	Key challenges the organization faces in implementing diversity strategies, in terms of resistance to change and how these challenges affect employee performance.	15	0.977
3	Effectivity of diversity integration strategies.	10	0.943
4	Impact of diversity integration on employee engagement.	10	0.957
5	Impact of diversity integration on employee performance.	10	0.965

Ethical Considerations

This research adhered to all ethical standards in research, ensuring the protection of participants' rights and confidentiality throughout the process. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the Human Resource Management Office of the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Mansalay. Informed consent was also obtained from all respondents, who were provided with a detailed explanation of the study's objectives, scope, and voluntary nature. They were assured that their responses would remain confidential and would solely be utilized for academic purposes.

Participants were given the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any

adverse consequences. The researchers ensured that there was no coercion or undue influence on the participants to complete the survey. No incentives were provided for participation, and the data was securely stored to prevent unauthorized access.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering process commenced after obtaining ethical clearance from both the institution and the LGU of Mansalay. The researchers developed a questionnaire, which was first validated by academic experts. Once approval was granted, the survey was distributed using Google Forms to ensure wide accessibility and convenience, given the participants' varying work schedules. The online survey remained open for two weeks, after which the responses were tabulated.

The researchers also gathered secondary data from journals, online publications, government reports, and academic articles to supplement the findings. These materials were used to cross-reference and provide additional context to the study's conclusions.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The following statistical tools were employed to analyze the data:

1. Frequency and Percentage: These were used to summarize the respondents' demographic characteristics and perceptions of diversity practices.
2. Mean and Standard Deviation: Descriptive statistics were used to measure the central tendencies of respondents'

perceptions and the dispersion of their responses.
3. Kruskal-Wallis Test: Since the data did not meet the assumptions of normality, the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was applied to compare the impact of diversity practices across different demographic groups such as gender, age, and ethnicity. The test helped identify any significant variations in perceptions and outcomes related to diversity practices.

This statistical treatment provided the basis for the study's conclusions on how diversity affects employee performance and what strategies could be implemented for better capacity building in organizations.

CHAPTER 3 RESULTS

Demographics

Table 2 portrays that the majority (n=29, 26%) pertains to the age group of 41 years and above, followed by 26 (23%) from the age group of 26-30 years, 24 (21%) from the age group of 36-40 years, 19 (17%) from the age group of 31-35 years, and 14 (13%) from age group 25 and below. Moreover, out of 112 respondents, 65 (58%) were female, whereas 47 (42%) male employees participated in the study. Similarly, Table 2 showed that out of 112 employees, 72 (64%) were Tagalog, 27 respondents were Mangyan (24%), and 13 (12%) respondents belonged to Bisaya ethnicity.

Table 2. Demographic profile of the respondents.

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
25 and below	14	13
26-30	26	23
31-35	19	17
36-40	24	21
41 and above	29	26
Total	**112**	**100**
Gender		
Male	47	42
Female	65	58
Total	**112**	**100**

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Ethnicity		
Bisaya	13	12
Mangyan	27	24
Tagalog	72	64
Total	**112**	**100**

Source: Survey data, 2024

Table 3 shows the impact of various diversity practices on employee productivity and overall performance within organizations based on the respondents of the study.

Table 3. Respondents' perceptions of how diversity practices influence productivity and overall organizational performance.

No.	Statements	WM	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1	Diversity practices in my organization have improved employee collaboration.	4.10	0.79	Agree
2	The inclusion of diverse perspectives has led to better decision-making in the workplace.	4.23	0.79	Strongly Agree
3	Workforce diversity has a positive impact on overall employee productivity.	4.13	0.80	Agree
4	Diverse teams in my organization are more innovative in solving complex problems.	4.14	0.80	Agree
5	Employees from diverse backgrounds contribute to the achievement of organizational goals.	4.21	0.78	Strongly Agree
6	Diversity initiatives have resulted in higher performance levels across different departments.	4.11	0.79	Agree
7	Diversity practices in my organization encourage employees to take on new responsibilities.	4.08	0.81	Agree
8	The presence of a diverse workforce has enhanced customer satisfaction and service delivery.	4.12	0.85	Agree
9	Employees are more engaged and motivated due to the organization's diversity initiatives.	4.15	0.77	Agree
10	Diversity programs have reduced conflicts and improved workplace harmony.	4.05	0.81	Agree
	Average Weighted Mean	**4.13**		**Agree**

Source: Survey data, 2024
Legend: 4.21-5.00 (Strongly Agree), 3.41-4.20 (Agree), 2.61-3.40 (Neutral), 1.81-2.60 (Disagree), 1.00-1.80 (Strongly Disagree)

Mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze statements of the questionnaire. The data show that most of the respondents agree with the statements in relation to the perceptions of how diversity practices influence productivity and overall organizational performance. The respondents agreed that the diversity practices had helped in collaboration between employees in their institution and accepted that better decision-making was employed due to the inclusion of diverse perspectives. Workforce diversity has also a positive impact on the overall employee productivity of the members of an institution and solving complex problems by diverse teams was recognized. Promoting diversity and inclusivity is critical to having a flourishing workplace. Organizations that embrace diversity in all its manifestations can have access to a diverse

range of viewpoints, ideas, and skills. This promotes invention, creativity, and teamwork (Grossmann, 2024). Diverse backgrounds of employees create a contribution to the achievement of organizational goals as perceived by the study and initiatives in diversity have resulted in higher performance levels across different departments. Having a varied team provides for a variety of experiences and backgrounds, as well as a broader set of ideas. Every individual has a unique perspective that broadens the scope of what an institution may accomplish. When making decisions, each person can contribute diverse perspectives, ideas, and opinions, all of which combine to provide a more educated and considered outcome (Obaidy, 2022). Diversity practices in my organization encourage employees to take on new responsibilities and the presence of a diverse workforce has enhanced satisfaction and customer delivery. The respondents feel more engaged and motivated because of the organization's diversity and the diversity programs leading to fewer conflicts and improved workplace harmony. Employees with diverse ethnic backgrounds bring unique talents and abilities to the table. Thus, workplace diversity provides a platform for open communication, stronger teamwork, and better decision-making, all of which contribute to increased productivity (Sharma, 2023).

Table 4 shows key challenges the organization faces in implementing diversity strategies, in terms of resistance to change, communication barriers, and lack of resources, and how these challenges affect employee performance.

Table 4. Key challenges the organization faces in implementing diversity strategies, in terms of resistance to change, communication barriers, and lack of resources, and how these challenges affect employee performance.

No.	Statements	WM	SD	Verbal Interpretation
	Resistance to Change			
1	Resistance to change among employees has created barriers to implementing diversity strategies effectively.	4.07	0.77	Agree
2	Employees are hesitant to adopt new diversity policies, which affects overall performance.	3.88	0.86	Agree
3	Resistance to organizational changes related to diversity leads to lower team productivity.	3.82	0.84	Agree
4	The reluctance to embrace diversity-related changes has negatively impacted the engagement of diverse teams.	3.89	0.83	Agree
5	Employee resistance to diversity initiatives reduces their willingness to collaborate with diverse colleagues.	3.92	0.78	Agree
	Average Weighted Mean	**3.92**		**Agree**
	Communication Barriers			
1	Communication gaps between diverse teams negatively impact collaboration and productivity.	3.90	0.82	Agree
2	Misunderstandings due to cultural differences create challenges in implementing diversity strategies.	3.85	0.93	Agree
3	Lack of effective communication between management and employees regarding diversity goals hinders performance.	4.04	0.86	Agree
4	Poor communication between diverse groups leads to conflicts that lower team performance.	4.06	0.86	Agree
5	Language barriers between employees of different backgrounds affect the success of diversity initiatives.	3.76	1	Agree
	Average Weighted Mean	**3.92**		**Agree**

No.	Statements	WM	SD	Verbal Interpretation
	Lack of Resources			
1	The lack of budget allocated to diversity initiatives limits their effectiveness in improving employee performance.	4.04	0.81	Agree
2	Inadequate training on diversity and inclusion hampers the successful implementation of diversity strategies.	4.02	0.87	Agree
3	Insufficient leadership support and resources negatively impact the performance of diverse teams.	4.06	0.82	Agree
4	A lack of structured programs to promote diversity results in reduced employee engagement and productivity.	3.96	0.83	Agree
5	The absence of a clear framework for diversity implementation leads to poor employee performance outcomes.	4.02	0.81	Agree
	Average Weighted Mean	**4.02**		**Agree**

Source: Survey data, 2024
Legend: 4.21-5.00 (Strongly Agree), 3.41-4.20 (Agree), 2.61-3.40 (Neutral), 1.81-2.60 (Disagree), 1.00-1.80 (Strongly Disagree)

Table 4 illustrates that most respondents agree that resistance to change creates barriers (4.07) and negatively impacts engagement within diverse teams (3.89). It also highlights that hesitation to adopt inclusive policies affects overall performance (3.88) and reduces willingness to collaborate with colleagues from diverse backgrounds (3.92). Furthermore, respondents concur that resistance to organizational changes leads to decreased team productivity (3.82). Organizational dynamics and individual psychology are two dynamic sources of resistance to change. Change is feared by humans because it creates uncertainty about the future and employees may view change as a danger to their security when they are unsure of how a change will affect their working life or overall well-being (Norman 2024). The main source of employee resistance to change is a lack of understanding of the goal and rationale for the change. This results from the organization's inability to clearly explain the employee's involvement in the success of the transition as well as the specifics and business justifications for the change. When workers are unable to respond with, "What's in it for me?" resistance arises (Creasey, 2022).

In conjunction, a significant proportion (3.92) of respondents affirm that communication gaps and misunderstandings among employees and management from varied backgrounds adversely affect collaboration, productivity, and overall performance. The implementation of diversity strategies in organizations faces communication challenges that require targeted approaches. Witherspoon and Wohlert (1996) emphasize the importance of strategic language and actions in fostering organizational change for diversity. Sadri and Tran (2002) propose improving supervisor-subordinate communication through personal growth management and mentoring to promote workplace integration and equality.

Furthermore, a significant majority of respondents concur that the lack of resources including funding (4.04), educational resources (4.02), leadership support (4.06), structured programs (3.96), and a clear framework for diversity implementation (4.02)—significantly constrains the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at enhancing employee performance and impedes the successful execution of diversity-related programs within the organization. Resource scarcity is a significant barrier to institutional change (Aby & Benson, 2021). The performance of an organization's personnel has a major impact on its success. For goals to be exceeded and the organization to prosper, managers or department heads must take the required actions to support employee performance (McFee, 2023). A major cause of underrepresentation is the inability of leaders to

assume accountability for creating a climate in which meritocracy flourishes. Oftentimes, executives will speak about diversity initiatives but not put them into practice in a way that advances equity for all employees in their company (Clarke, 2023). All employees are guaranteed equitable treatment and equal opportunities for professional development and success when policies are designed with diversity and inclusivity in mind. Policies about employee development initiatives, hiring procedures, and promotion procedures may fall under this category. Organizations can provide an equitable work environment for all employees by eliminating prejudice and discrimination from these procedures (Grossmann, 2024). According to a study by Axelsson in 2022, an organization lacking a clear structure for organizing its diversity, equity, and inclusion practices should correlate different practices. More so, the idea of how to measure the outcomes must be implemented to organize, plan, and represent shared understandings of employees and adopt diversity, equity, and inclusion practices.

Table 5 reveals that respondents agree with the integration of diversity strategies into the organizational culture of the institution with an average weighted mean of 4.18.

Table 5. Effectivity of diversity integration strategies.

No.	Statements	WM	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1	Implementing regular diversity training programs enhances employees' understanding and acceptance of diversity.	4.17	0.75	Agree
2	Establishing diversity and inclusion committees helps in effectively integrating diversity into organizational culture.	4.14	0.79	Agree
3	Creating mentorship programs for underrepresented groups supports their integration and development within the organization.	4.16	0.72	Agree
4	Developing clear diversity policies and goals leads to better implementation and monitoring of diversity initiatives.	4.20	0.71	Agree
5	Providing resources and support for diversity initiatives improves their effectiveness in the workplace.	4.17	0.76	Agree
6	Encouraging employee resource groups (ERGs) fosters a more inclusive environment and supports diversity integration.	4.18	0.67	Agree
7	Celebrating cultural events and observances helps in creating a more inclusive organizational culture.	4.19	0.73	Agree
8	Regularly assessing and updating diversity strategies ensures they remain relevant and effective.	4.18	0.67	Agree
9	Promoting diversity in leadership positions positively influences organizational culture and integration efforts.	4.16	0.69	Agree
10	Involving all levels of employees in diversity initiatives enhances the overall impact and effectiveness of these strategies.	4.29	0.69	Strongly Agree
	Average Weighted Mean	**4.18**		**Agree**

 Source: Survey data, 2024
Legend: 4.21-5.00 (Strongly Agree), 3.41-4.20 (Agree), 2.61-3.40 (Neutral), 1.81-2.60 (Disagree), 1.00-1.80 (Strongly Disagree)

The respondents agree (4.17) that implementing regular diversity training programs enhances employees' understanding and acceptance of diversity. To foster a positive work environment, a diversity training program seeks to increase participants' awareness of various forms of diversity, foster an appreciation for the differences among coworkers, and impart knowledge and techniques to improve employees' interpersonal and communication skills across diversity (Plaza et al., 2021). Additionally, with a weighted mean of 4.14, the study agrees that establishment of diversity and inclusion committees helps in effectively integrating diversity into their organizational culture. This was supported by Williams and Rowe in 2021 that committees on diversity and inclusion must be intentionally formed to offer a platform for the creation and execution of programs designed to enhance the experiences of marginalized populations. The study showed that the respondents agree (4.16) that creating mentorship programs for underrepresented groups supports their integration and development within the organization. According to the study by Beasley in 2017, mentoring can help employees advance through the ranks at all levels and earlier research suggests that mentoring programs help women and people of color advance into management roles. In terms of developing clear diversity policies and goals, they agreed (4.20) that this will lead to better implementation and monitoring of diversity initiatives. Binujacob in 2023 stated that having well-defined policies that support inclusion, diversity, and equity benefits an organization's reputation internally as well as externally and can assist in gaining the trust of your staff by your managers and HR staff. More so, respondents agree (4.17) that providing resources and support for diversity initiatives improves their effectiveness in the workplace and encouraging employee resource groups (ERGs) fosters a more inclusive environment and supports diversity integration (4.18). The creation of successful and diverse workplaces is largely dependent on employee resource groups. These are staff-led organizations that highlight marginalized communities. These organizations promote inclusivity and aid in professional development (Heath, 2024). Moreover, celebrating cultural events and observances helps in creating a more inclusive organizational culture (4.19). Organizing events that celebrate cultural diversity is like unlatching a vibrant mosaic of hues, forms, and textures. It has many advantages, including promoting diversity, giving people a feeling of community, and providing chances for cross-cultural learning ("Celebrating cultural diversity through organizational events," 2024). Regularly assessing and updating diversity strategies ensures they remain relevant and effective. By emphasizing diversity, more voices are heard at the table. This is enhanced by a culture that supports individuals in using their voices truthfully and in feeling psychologically secure enough to contribute their entire range of ideas. On the other hand, respondents said that promoting diversity in leadership positions positively influences organizational culture and integration efforts with a weighted mean of 4.16. Encouraging diversity is a significant task hampered by prejudices, sensitivities, and a generalized fear of change. To accomplish diversity goals and enhance inclusion, an organization must be guided by strong leadership through opposition and obstacles (Feyes, 2018). Lastly, with a weighted mean of 4.29, respondents decided that involving all levels of employees in diversity initiatives enhances the overall impact and effectiveness of these strategies. Being receptive to feedback and criticism can assist leaders in becoming more inclusive. To convince reluctant team members that your policies are in everyone's best interests, be open to having discussions with them (Binujacob, 2023).

Table 6 shows the impact of diversity integration on employee engagement. The study revealed that with a weighted mean 4.15, respondents agree that the diversity integration has an impact on the employee engagement of the respondents.

Table 6. Impact of diversity integration on employee engagement.

No.	Statements	WM	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1	Employees feel more engaged when they perceive that the organization is committed to diversity and inclusion.	4.09	0.79	Agree
2	Integration of diversity practices leads to increased employee satisfaction and a sense of belonging.	4.13	0.80	Agree
3	A diverse and inclusive work environment enhances employees' motivation and enthusiasm for their work.	4.16	0.79	Agree
4	Opportunities for career development and advancement are perceived as more equitable in a diverse organization.	4.08	0.72	Agree
5	Employees are more likely to stay with the organization if they feel their diversity is valued and respected.	4.15	0.71	Agree
6	Regular feedback mechanisms on diversity initiatives contribute to higher levels of employee engagement.	4.09	0.74	Agree
7	The presence of diverse role models and leaders positively affects employee engagement.	4.13	0.74	Agree
8	Employees are more proactive in their roles when they feel included and valued in the organizational culture.	4.24	0.77	Strongly Agree
9	Diversity integration strategies lead to improved communication and collaboration among employees.	4.19	0.77	Agree
10	Employee engagement levels are higher in organizations that actively support and promote diversity and inclusion.	4.23	0.72	Strongly Agree
	Average Weighted Mean	**4.15**		**Agree**

 Source: Survey data, 2024
Legend: 4.21-5.00 (Strongly Agree), 3.41-4.20 (Agree), 2.61-3.40 (Neutral), 1.81-2.60 (Disagree), 1.00-1.80 (Strongly Disagree)

Employees feel more engaged when they perceive that the organization is committed to diversity (4.09) and inclusion and believe that a diverse and inclusive work environment significantly enhances employee motivation and enthusiasm (4.13). A diverse and inclusive work environment enhances employees' motivation and enthusiasm for their work (4.16) and agrees that opportunities for career development and advancement are viewed as more equitable in a diverse organization (4.08). More so, respondents believe that employees are more inclined to stay with an organization that values and respects their diversity (4.15). Most of the respondents agree with both the statement "Integration of diversity practices leads to increased employee satisfaction and a sense of belonging", and "Regular feedback mechanisms on diversity initiatives contribute to higher levels of employee engagement" with a weighted mean of 4.15 and 4.09 respectively. Most of the respondents (4.13) believed that

the presence of diverse role models and leaders positively affects employee engagement and that diversity integration strategies lead to improved communication and collaboration among employees (4.24). Lastly, respondents agree that employees are more proactive in their roles when they feel included and valued in the organizational culture (4.19). Furthermore, employee engagement levels are higher in organizations that actively support and promote diversity and inclusion (4.23).

A study by Goswami and Goswami in 2018, states that there is a strong correlation between employee engagement and workplace inclusion. According to the empirical model, management should recognize the value of workplace inclusion in fostering employee engagement, as highly engaged workers will undoubtedly contribute to an organization's success in both financial and non-financial domains. More so, according to Anchu and Thampi in 2022, findings show that increasing

employee engagement through workforce inclusion requires diversity. The findings show that intellectual, social, and affective engagement are positively and significantly correlated with workplace diversity. Additionally, a substantial portion of the relationship between workplace diversity and employee engagement is mediated by workforce inclusion. Therefore, incorporating inclusive practices into an organization that values diversity can result in improved employee engagement. Additionally, the case of the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, showed that management of diversity has a major positive impact on job satisfaction, organizational trust, and employee engagement that association is genuinely and significantly mediated by insecurity (Alshaabani et al., 2022).

Table 7 shows the impact of diversity integration on employee performance. The study revealed that with a weighted mean 4.19, respondents agree that the diversity integration has an impact on the employee performance of the respondents.

Table 7. Impact of diversity integration on employee performance.

No.	Statements	WM	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1	Employees perform better when they work in an environment that values and supports diversity.	4.22	0.69	Strongly Agree
2	The integration of diversity initiatives leads to higher levels of creativity and innovation in the workplace.	4.20	0.72	Agree
3	Diverse teams are more effective at problem-solving and achieving organizational goals.	4.17	0.75	Agree
4	Performance metrics improve when employees feel their contributions are equally valued in a diverse setting.	4.18	0.71	Agree
5	Clear diversity goals and strategies contribute to enhanced overall performance and productivity.	4.17	0.68	Agree
6	Diverse perspectives contribute to better decision-making and higher quality work outputs.	4.25	0.70	Strongly Agree
7	Employees show increased performance levels when they feel respected and included in a diverse environment.	4.21	0.74	Strongly Agree
8	Regular assessment and reinforcement of diversity practices lead to sustained improvements in performance.	4.19	0.72	Agree
9	Training and development programs focused on diversity contribute to better employee performance outcomes.	4.17	0.77	Agree
10	Effective diversity integration positively impacts individual and team performance across various departments.	4.19	0.75	Agree
	Average Weighted Mean	**4.19**		**Agree**

Source: Survey data, 2024
Legend: 4.21-5.00 (Strongly Agree), 3.41-4.20 (Agree), 2.61-3.40 (Neutral), 1.81-2.60 (Disagree), 1.00-1.80 (Strongly Disagree)

The findings show that the respondents strongly agree (4.22) that they perform better when they work in an environment that values and supports diversity. Regular assessment and reinforcement of diversity practices lead to sustained improvements in performance (4.20) and effective diversity integration positively impacts individual and team performance across various departments (4.17) have high weighted means, indicating that respondents believe that employee performance was affected by the integration of diversity integration. Respondents also confirmed performance metrics improve when employees feel their contributions are equally valued in a diverse setting and when the training and

development programs are focused on diversity (4.18) together with clear diversity goals and strategies that contribute to enhanced overall performance and productivity (4.17). On the other hand, it is strongly believed (4.25) that having a diverse perspective contributes to better decision-making and higher quality of work outputs in an institution and employees show increased performance levels when they feel respected and included in a diverse environment (4.21). In terms of regular assessment and reinforcement of diversity practices with a weighted mean of 4.19, this leads to sustained improvements in performance. Moreover, with a weighted mean of 4.17 and 4.19 respectively, it is also agreed that training and development programs focused on diversity contribute to better employee performance outcomes and effective diversity integration positively impacts individual and team performance across various departments.

In the study conducted by the Dinasti International Journal of Digital Business Management, it was concluded that initiatives about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) have a substantial improvement in employee performance. Diversity improves an organization's creativity and invention, while inclusion and equity boost staff morale and dedication (Mulyani et al., 2024). According to the Organization and Human Capital Development analysis, workforce diversity also seems to have an effect on employee performance at the Toyota of Bowie, United States of America. The relationship between workforce diversity and employee performance was found to be influenced and explained by several variables, including employee satisfaction, efficiency, and diversity in age and gender (Oshin et al., 2023). Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that employee performance is positively and significantly impacted by age, educational background, religious background, work experience, and attitude diversity in the Sri Lankan garment industry (Jayawardana & Priyashantha, 2019).

Diversity Training and Education

Diversity Training and Education
112 responses

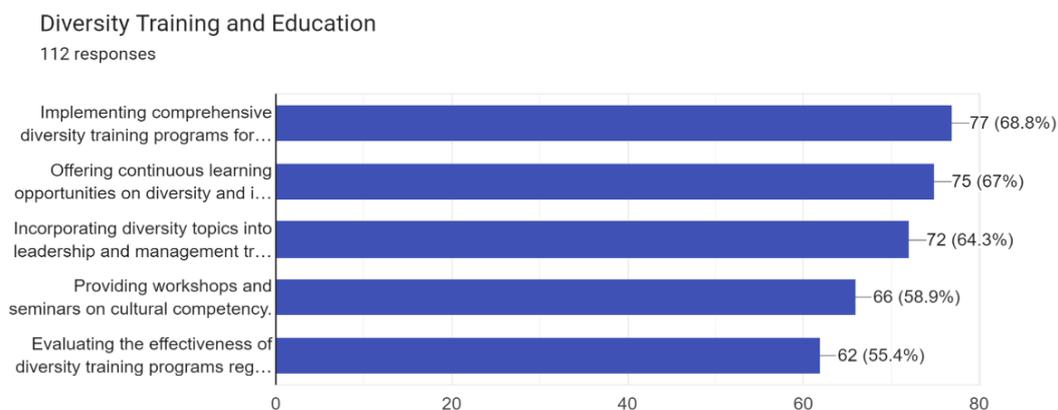|	
Implementing comprehensive diversity training programs for…	77 (68.8%)
Offering continuous learning opportunities on diversity and i…	75 (67%)
Incorporating diversity topics into leadership and management tr…	72 (64.3%)
Providing workshops and seminars on cultural competency.	66 (58.9%)
Evaluating the effectiveness of diversity training programs reg…	62 (55.4%)

Figure 2. Best practices in terms of diversity training and education.

According to 69% of respondents (77 out of 112), implementing thorough training programs for all employees is the best practice for diversity education and training. Providing opportunities for ongoing education on diversity and inclusion comes in second at 67%. While offering workshops and seminars on cultural competency received 59% of the vote, incorporating diversity topics into management and leadership training received 64%. The lowest ranking, at 55%, was evaluating the efficacy of diversity training programs.

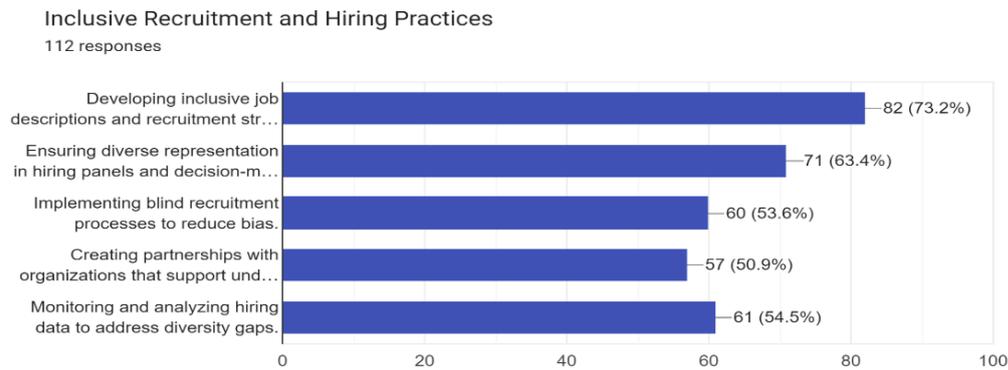## Inclusive recruitment and hiring practices

Inclusive Recruitment and Hiring Practices
112 responses

Developing inclusive job descriptions and recruitment str…	82 (73.2%)
Ensuring diverse representation in hiring panels and decision-m…	71 (63.4%)
Implementing blind recruitment processes to reduce bias.	60 (53.6%)
Creating partnerships with organizations that support und…	57 (50.9%)
Monitoring and analyzing hiring data to address diversity gaps.	61 (54.5%)

Figure 3. Best practices in terms of inclusive recruitment and hiring practices.

In the area of Inclusive Recruitment and Hiring Practices, developing inclusive job descriptions and recruitment strategies emerged as the top practice, receiving approval from 73% of respondents (82 out of 112). Ensuring diverse representation in hiring panels and decision-making teams garnered 63% (71 out of 112), while monitoring and analyzing hiring data to address diversity gaps and implementing blind recruitment processes to reduce bias followed closely at 54% (61 out of 112). The least favored practice was creating partnerships with organizations that support underrepresented groups, which received support from 51% of respondents (57 out of 112).
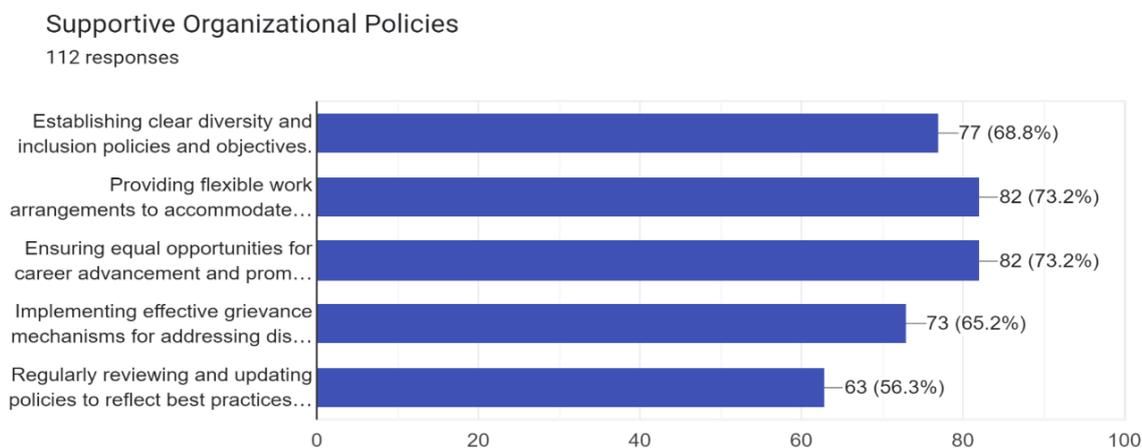
Supportive organizational policies

Supportive Organizational Policies
112 responses

Establishing clear diversity and inclusion policies and objectives.	77 (68.8%)
Providing flexible work arrangements to accommodate…	82 (73.2%)
Ensuring equal opportunities for career advancement and prom…	82 (73.2%)
Implementing effective grievance mechanisms for addressing dis…	73 (65.2%)
Regularly reviewing and updating policies to reflect best practices…	63 (56.3%)

Figure 4. Best practices in terms of supportive organizational policies.

Providing flexible work arrangements to accommodate diverse needs and ensuring equal opportunities for career advancement and promotions tied for the top practice in Supportive Organizational Policies, with 73% of respondents (82 out of 112) selecting this option. This was closely followed by establishing clear diversity and inclusion policies and objectives at 69% (77 out of 112) and implementing effective grievance mechanisms to address discrimination and harassment at 65% (73 out of 112). Lastly, regularly reviewing and updating policies to reflect best practices in diversity received support from 56% (63 out of 112) of respondents.

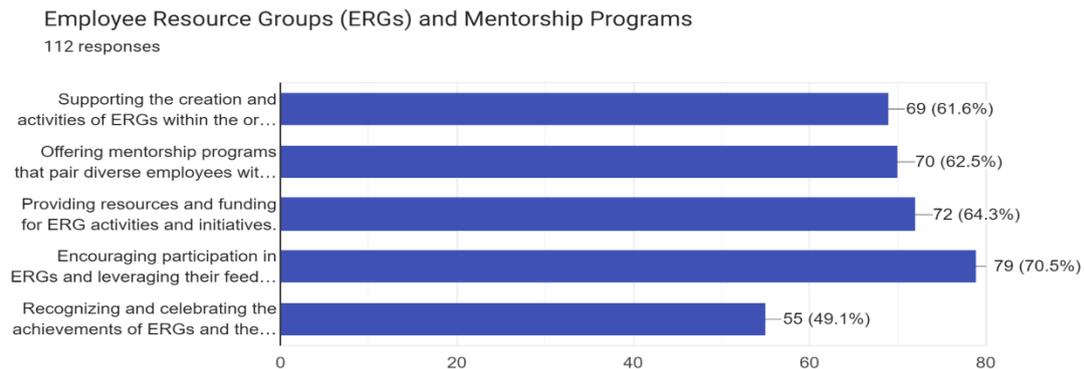## Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and Mentorship Programs

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and Mentorship Programs
112 responses

Figure 5. Best practices in terms of employee resource groups (ERGs) and mentorship programs.

Regarding Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and Mentorship Programs, encouraging participation in ERGs and utilizing their feedback for organizational improvements was recognized as the best practice, with 71% of respondents (79 out of 112) supporting this approach. Providing resources and funding for ERG activities ranked second, favored by 64% (72 out of 112). Close behind, offering mentorship programs that connect diverse employees with senior leaders received 63% support (70 out of 112). Supporting the creation and activities of ERGs within the organization followed at 62% (69 out of 112). Finally, recognizing and celebrating the achievements and contributions of ERGs was the least favored practice, with 49% support (55 out of 112).

Leadership Commitment and Accountability

Leadership Commitment and Accountability
112 responses
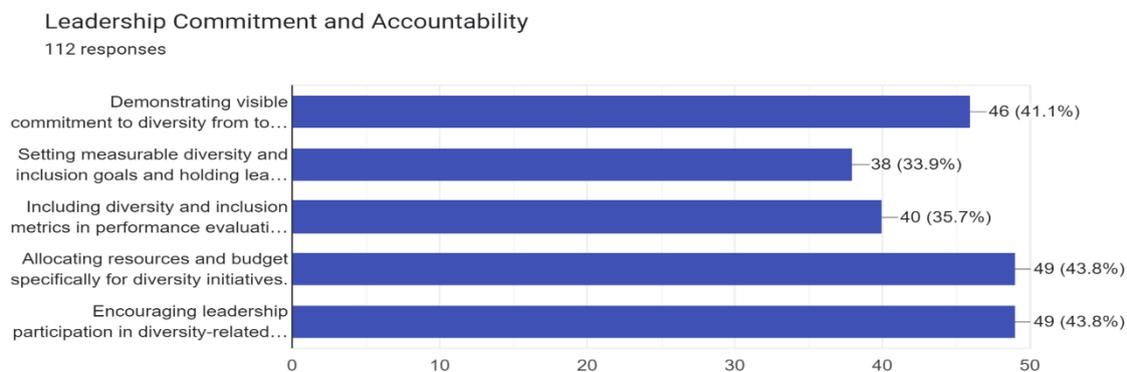
Figure 6. Best practices in terms of leadership commitment and accountability.

In the realm of Leadership Commitment and Accountability, allocating resources and budget specifically for diversity initiatives, as well as encouraging leadership participation in diversity-related events and discussions, emerged as the top practices, each receiving support from 44% of respondents (49 out of 112). This was followed by demonstrating visible commitment to diversity from top leadership, which garnered 41% support (46 out of 112). Including diversity and inclusion metrics in performance evaluations for leaders received 36% approval (40 out of 112), while setting measurable diversity and inclusion goals and holding leaders accountable ranked lowest, with 34% support (38 out of 112).
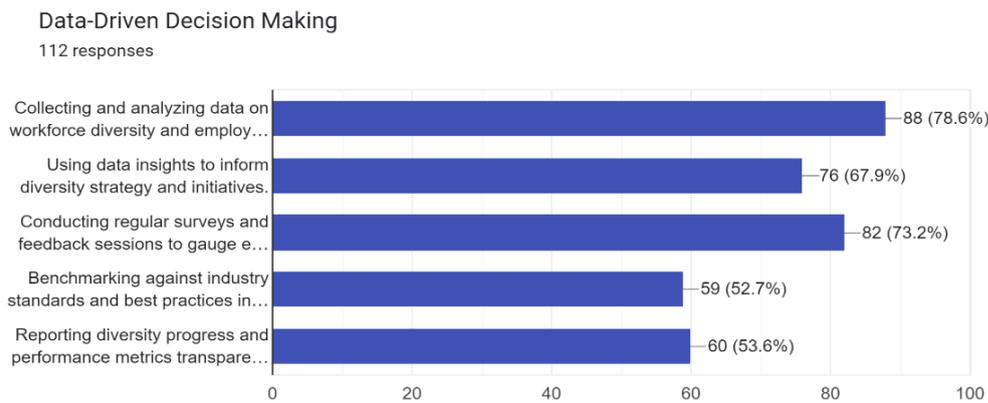
Data-Driven Decision Making

Figure 7. Best practices in terms of data-driven decision making.

Collecting and analyzing data on workforce diversity and employee performance was identified as the best practice for Data-driven Decision Making, receiving support from 79% of respondents (88 out of 112). This was followed by conducting regular surveys and feedback sessions to gauge employee perceptions of diversity efforts, which garnered 73% support (82 out of 112). Using data insights to inform diversity strategies and initiatives received 68% approval (76 out of 112), while reporting diversity progress and performance metrics transparently to stakeholders garnered 54% support (60 out of 112). Finally, benchmarking against industry standards and best practices in diversity ranked as the least preferred practice, with 53% support (59 out of 112).
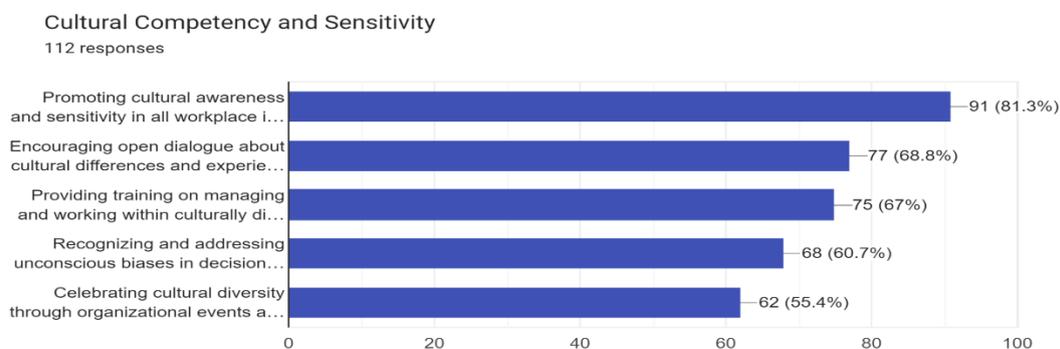
Cultural Competency and Sensitivity

Figure 8. Best practices in terms of cultural competency and sensitivity.

With Cultural Competency and Sensitivity in consideration, promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity in all workplace interactions was hailed as the best practice, receiving support from 81% of respondents (91 out of 112). Encouraging open dialogue about cultural differences and experiences ranked second, with 69% approval (77 out of 112). Providing training on managing and working within culturally diverse teams placed third, garnering 67% support (75 out of 112). Recognizing and addressing unconscious biases in decision-making followed in fourth place, with 61% support (68 out of 112). Finally, the least favored practice was celebrating cultural diversity through organizational events and communications, which received support from 55% of respondents (62 out of 112).
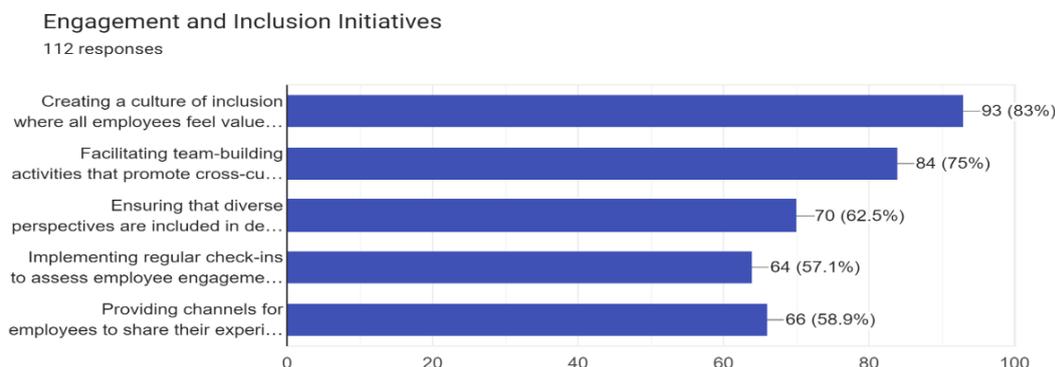
Engagement and Inclusion Initiatives

Figure 9. Best practices in terms of engagement and inclusion initiatives.

In the area of Engagement and Inclusion Initiatives, creating a culture of inclusion where all employees feel valued and respected was recognized as the top practice, receiving approval from 83% of respondents (93 out of 112). This was followed by facilitating team-building activities that promote cross-cultural understanding, which garnered support from 75% of respondents (84 out of 112). Ensuring diverse perspectives are included in decision-making processes received 63% approval (70 out of 112), while providing channels for employees to share their experiences and suggestions related to diversity was supported by 59% (66 out of 112). Lastly, the least favored practice was implementing regular check-ins to assess employee engagement and satisfaction, with 57% support (64 out of 112).

Table 8. Kruskal-Wallis Test

Grouping Variable	Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistic	Degrees of Freedom (df)	p-value	Effect Size (ε^2)	Interpretation
Age	1.980	4	0.739	0.018	*No Significant Difference*
Sex	0.241	1	0.624	0.002	*No Significant Difference*
Ethnicity	2.090	2	0.351	0.019	*No Significant Difference*

Kruskal-Wallis Test on Age Groups

The p-value (0.739) is much greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in respondents' perceptions of the influence of diversity practices on employee productivity and overall performance across different age groups. This suggests that age does not significantly affect how respondents perceive the influence of diversity practices.

The small effect size (ε^2 = 0.018) reinforces this conclusion, showing that age accounts for only a very small portion of the variance in perceptions. Therefore, the differences in the perception of diversity practices based on age are minimal and likely due to random variation rather than a meaningful effect.

Kruskal-Wallis Test on Gender

The p-value (0.624) is also greater than 0.05, meaning there is no significant difference in the perception of diversity practices between males and females. This indicates that gender does not play a significant role in how diversity practices are perceived in relation to employee productivity and performance.

The extremely small effect size (ε^2 = 0.002) suggests that gender has almost no effect on the variation in perceptions. This could imply that respondents, regardless of their gender, generally perceive the impact of diversity practices on productivity and performance similarly.

Kruskal-Wallis Test on Ethnicity

The p-value (0.351) is also greater than 0.05, showing no statistically significant difference in perceptions across different ethnic groups. This suggests that ethnicity does not significantly influence how respondents view the impact of diversity practices on productivity and performance.

The small effect size ($\varepsilon^2 = 0.019$) indicates that ethnic background has a very minimal effect on the variation in responses, meaning that perceptions of the influence of diversity practices are quite consistent across different ethnic groups.

Measurement and Evaluation Frameworks

A diversity and inclusion strategy plan is shown in Table 9, which was modified from the Workplace Diversity Management manual published by the US Agency for International Development. The three-module training program was designed to help small businesses develop inclusive cultures and enabling work environments as well as strategies for bringing in, managing, and retaining a diverse workforce.

Table 9. Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan Template

Focus Area	What are the strategic priorities that you are going to pursue?
Goal	What do you want to achieve in regard to this focus area in the next 3 to 5 years? Long-Term.
Objective	What targets must you meet to ensure that the long-term goal is achieved? Short-Term.
Strategy	What specific actions will you implement to achieve goals and objectives?
Activities	What specific activities, services, or products will you develop or employ to implement strategies?
Indicators	How will you measure progress toward achieving goals and objectives? What data sources will you use?

CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSIONS

Summary of Findings

At its core, office culture should be characterized by diverse workplace teams. Greater diversity leads to better equity and inclusion. Diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace contribute to a more inviting and open workplace environment. Workplace diversity fosters a collaborative environment while also broadening a company's perspectives. A varied workforce contributes new ideas and viewpoints to the existing office culture.

The study was conducted at the Local Government Unit of Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro, specifically employees of the LGU. The research study was permitted by the Human Resource Management Office and was conducted through an online survey (Google Forms) of 112 employees.

Most of the respondents (n=29, 26%) belong to the age group of 41 years and above, domination of female employee respondents (n=65, 58%), and Tagalogs (n=72, 64%). On the other hand, respondents' perceptions showed a positive response on how diversity practices influence productivity and overall organizational performance. Diversity practices have a positive influence on the productivity of the employees and therefore the overall organizational performance of the institution.

More so, there are key challenges that an organization faces in implementing diversity, and these challenges affect the employees' performance in the institution. Resisting changes about diversity showed that employees' performance was negatively affected. Additionally, communication barriers in an organization leads to poor performance of employees due to conflicts of interest that hinders their collaboration in the institution. Also, in the case of resources provided by the institution to the employees, poor or lack of budget, training, leadership, programs, and framework can lead to poor performance as well. The lack of

resources in the organization hinders the overall performance of the employees.

Regular diversity training programs, diversity and inclusion committees, mentorship programs, diversity policies, and goals, provision of resources and support, encouragement for employee resource groups (ERGs), cultural events and observances, assessment and update of diversity strategies, promotion of diversity in leadership, and all levels of employees in diversity initiatives were the diversity integration strategies practiced in the organization. In terms of diversity integration strategies, almost all the respondents agreed that diversity integration strategies mentioned create a positive effect on the overall progress of an organization.

Committing to diversity and inclusion, integration of diversity practices, diverse and inclusive work environment, opportunities for career development and advancement, value, and respect for diversity, regular feedback mechanisms, presence of diverse role models and leaders, feeling of inclusion and value, improved communication and collaboration, active support and promotion of diversity and inclusion affect the employee engagement in the organization. In the study conducted, respondents believe that these practices of diversity integration create a positive impact on the employee engagement of the organization.

Valuing and supporting diversity, integrating diversity initiatives, presence of diverse teams, employees' contributions are equally valued, clear diversity goals and strategies, diverse perspectives, respect and include employee in the organization, regular assessment and reinforcement of diversity practices, training and development programs, and effective diversity integration affect the employee performance of the organization in different aspects. The performance of the employees in the organization was greatly affected by the diversity integration specifically in terms of creativity, innovation, problem-solving, decision-making, and work outputs.

There were best practices observed in the organization that can adopt to leverage workforce diversity effectively and improve employee performance in the organization, and these were: 1) implementing comprehensive diversity training programs for all employees, 2) developing inclusive job descriptions and recruitment strategies, 3) providing flexible work arrangements to accommodate diverse needs and ensuring equal opportunities for career advancement and promotions, 4) encouraging participation in ERGs and leveraging their feedback for organizational improvements, 5) allocating resources and budget specifically for diversity initiatives and encouraging leadership participation in diversity-related events and discussions, 6) collecting and analyzing data on workforce diversity and employee performance, 7) promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity in all workplace interactions, and 8) creating a culture of inclusion where all employees feel valued and respected.

There was no statistically significant difference in respondents' perceptions of the influence of diversity practices on employee productivity and overall performance across different age groups with a p-value of 0.739 which was much greater than 0.05. This suggests that age does not significantly affect how respondents perceive the influence of diversity practices.

Additionally, the p-value of 0.624 was also greater than 0.05, meaning that there was no significant difference in the perception of diversity practices between males and females indicating that gender does not play a significant role in how diversity practices are perceived in relation to employee productivity and performance.

Lastly, there was no statistically significant difference in perceptions across different ethnic groups with a p-value (0.351) and was also greater than 0.05. This suggests that ethnicity does not significantly influence how respondents view the impact of diversity practices on productivity and performance.

The measurement and evaluation framework developed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for Diversity Management has been adapted to assess the impact of diversity initiatives on employee performance.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 41 years and above. Furthermore, female employees dominated the sector and had Tagalog as the main ethnicity.
2. Respondents agreed that various diversity practices has a positive impact on employee productivity and overall performance within the organization such as on employee collaboration, decision-making, solving complex problems, contribution to the achievement of goals, collaboration on different departments, taking new responsibilities, enhanced customer satisfaction and services delivery, employees feel more engaged and motivated, and reduced in conflicts and improve workplace harmony.
3. The significant organizational problems such as resistance to change, communication barriers, and a lack of resources have a detrimental negative impact on the successful implementation of diversity programs and increase in employee performance.
4. There was no significant variation in the influence of diversity practices on employee productivity and overall performance across demographic groupings, such as age, gender, and ethnicity.
5. Implementing regular diversity training programs and involving all levels of employees in diversity initiatives were the most effective diversity integration strategies practiced in the organization. Moreover, integration of diversity on employee performance leads to increased employee satisfaction and a sense of belonging, employees are more proactive in their roles when they feel included and valued in the organizational culture, and employee engagement levels are higher in organizations that actively support and promote diversity and inclusion. Additionally, integration of diversity in employee engagement leads to diverse perspectives that contribute to better decision-making and higher work outputs.
6. The best practices can organizations adopt to build strategic capacity that leverages workforce diversity to improve employee performance were: 1) implementing comprehensive diversity training programs for all employees, 2) developing inclusive job descriptions and recruitment strategies, 3) providing flexible work arrangements to accommodate diverse needs and ensuring equal opportunities for career advancement and promotions, 4) encouraging participation in ERGs and leveraging their feedback for organizational improvements, 5) allocating resources and budget specifically for diversity initiatives and encouraging leadership participation in diversity-related events and discussions, 6) collecting and analyzing data on workforce diversity and employee performance, 7) promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity in all workplace interactions, and 8) creating a culture of inclusion where all employees feel valued and respected.
7. The measurement and evaluation framework developed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for Diversity Management has been adapted to assess the impact of diversity initiatives on employee performance.

Recommendation

The purpose of the study was to determine how to effectively leverage workforce diversity to improve employee performance and identify best practices for developing strategic capacity necessary to achieve these outcomes. Based on the results, the following recommendations were made:
1. Since most of the respondents belong to the age group of 41 years and above, female employees dominated and Tagalog, it is recommended to further increase the number of respondents and include other variables to know the workforce diversity of the study area.
2. Organizational problems such as resistance to change, communication barriers, and a lack of resources must be addressed to successfully implement diversity programs and improve employee performance.
3. Based on the study there was no significant variation in the influence of diversity practices on employee productivity and overall performance across demographic groupings, such as age, gender, and ethnicity.

Therefore, it is recommended to use other variables in the study to test the variation among others.

4. It is recommended to adopt other strategic capacities that will leverage workforce diversity in the organization to further improve the employee performance of the organization.

5. The study suggested creating and implementing a Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan which will be used for future assessment of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. A sample was presented in Appendix II.

Acknowledgement

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APPENDIX I
QUESTIONNAIRE

Harnessing Workforce Diversity for Enhanced Employee Performance: Strategic Insights for Capacity Building

Dear Sir/Madam:

   Good day! We are Ms. Katherine D. Anthony and Ms. Kathleen D. Trajico, taking up a Master in Public Administration from the World Citi Colleges taking up Research Methods in Public Administration. We would like you to be one of the respondents in our study. We assure you that all the information gathered from this questionnaire is solely for academic purposes, and collected data will be treated with confidentiality.

Instructions: This survey aims to understand the impact of workforce diversity on employee performance and organizational capacity. Please answer the questions based on your own experiences and knowledge within your organization. Use the following Likert scale to rate each statement:

5	Strongly Agree
4	Agree
3	Neutral
2	Disagree
1	Strongly Disagree

Part I. Demographic Profile

Age: [   ] 25 and below
      [   ] 26-30
      [   ] 31-35
      [   ] 36-40
      [   ] 41 and above
Gender: [   ] Female   [   ] Male
Ethnicity: [   ] Bisaya   [   ] Mangyan
           [   ] Tagalog   [   ] Other _____

Part II. This section is designed to assess the respondents' perceptions of how diversity practices influence productivity and overall organizational performance. Please rate each statement using the following Likert scale:

   1 = Strongly Disagree
   2 = Disagree
   3 = Neutral
   4 = Agree
   5 = Strongly Agree

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. Diversity practices in my organization have improved employee collaboration.					
2. The inclusion of diverse perspectives has led to better decision-making in the workplace.					
3. Workforce diversity has a positive impact on overall employee productivity.					
4. Diverse teams in my organization are more innovative in solving complex problems.					
5. Employees from diverse backgrounds contribute to the achievement of organizational goals.					

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
6. Diversity initiatives have resulted in higher performance levels across different departments.					
7. Diversity practices in my organization encourage employees to take on new responsibilities.					
8. The presence of a diverse workforce has enhanced customer satisfaction and service delivery.					
9. Employees are more engaged and motivated due to the organization's diversity initiatives.					
10. Diversity programs have reduced conflicts and improved workplace harmony.					

Part III. This section focuses on the key challenges your organization faces in implementing diversity strategies, specifically in terms of resistance to change, communication barriers, and lack of resources, and how these challenges affect employee performance. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements using the scale below:

        1 = Strongly Disagree
        2 = Disagree
        3 = Neutral
        4 = Agree
        5 = Strongly Agree

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Resistance to Change					
1. Resistance to change among employees has created barriers to implementing diversity strategies effectively.					
2. Employees are hesitant to adopt new diversity policies, which affects overall performance.					
3. Resistance to organizational changes related to diversity leads to lower team productivity.					
4. The reluctance to embrace diversity-related changes has negatively impacted the engagement of diverse teams.					
5. Employee resistance to diversity initiatives reduces their willingness to collaborate with diverse colleagues.					
Communication Barriers					
1. Communication gaps between diverse teams negatively impact collaboration and productivity.					
2. Misunderstandings due to cultural differences create challenges in implementing diversity strategies.					
3. Lack of effective communication between management and employees regarding diversity goals hinders performance.					
4. Poor communication between diverse groups leads to conflicts that lower team performance.					
5. Language barriers between employees of different backgrounds affect the success of diversity initiatives.					

Lack of Resources

1. The lack of budget allocated to diversity initiatives limits their effectiveness in improving employee performance.					
2. Inadequate training on diversity and inclusion hampers the successful implementation of diversity strategies.					
3. Insufficient leadership support and resources negatively impact the performance of diverse teams.					
4. A lack of structured programs to promote diversity results in reduced employee engagement and productivity.					
5. The absence of a clear framework for diversity implementation leads to poor employee performance outcomes.					

Part IV. Strategies for Integrating Diversity into Organizational Culture and Their Impact on Employee Engagement and Performance. This section focuses on identifying effective strategies for integrating diversity into organizational culture and assessing their impacts on employee engagement and performance. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements using the scale below:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

Effectiveness of Diversity Integration Strategies

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. Implementing regular diversity training programs enhances employees' understanding and acceptance of diversity.					
2. Establishing diversity and inclusion committees helps in effectively integrating diversity into organizational culture.					
3. Creating mentorship programs for underrepresented groups supports their integration and development within the organization.					
4. Developing clear diversity policies and goals leads to better implementation and monitoring of diversity initiatives.					
5. Providing resources and support for diversity initiatives improves their effectiveness in the workplace.					
6. Encouraging employee resource groups (ERGs) fosters a more inclusive environment and supports diversity integration.					
7. Celebrating cultural events and observances helps in creating a more inclusive organizational culture.					
8. Regularly assessing and updating diversity strategies ensures they remain relevant and effective.					
9. Promoting diversity in leadership positions positively influences organizational culture and integration efforts.					
10. Involving all levels of employees in diversity initiatives enhances the overall impact and effectiveness of these strategies.					

Impact of Diversity Integration on Employee Engagement

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. Employees feel more engaged when they perceive that the organization is committed to diversity and inclusion.					
2. Integration of diversity practices leads to increased employee satisfaction and a sense of belonging.					
3. A diverse and inclusive work environment enhances employees' motivation and enthusiasm for their work.					
4. Opportunities for career development and advancement are perceived as more equitable in a diverse organization.					
5. Employees are more likely to stay with the organization if they feel their diversity is valued and respected.					
6. Regular feedback mechanisms on diversity initiatives contribute to higher levels of employee engagement.					
7. The presence of diverse role models and leaders positively affects employee engagement.					
8. Employees are more proactive in their roles when they feel included and valued in the organizational culture.					
9. Diversity integration strategies lead to improved communication and collaboration among employees.					
10. Employee engagement levels are higher in organizations that actively support and promote diversity and inclusion.					

Impact of Diversity Integration on Employee Performance

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. Employees perform better when they work in an environment that values and supports diversity.					
2. The integration of diversity initiatives leads to higher levels of creativity and innovation in the workplace.					
3. Diverse teams are more effective at problem-solving and achieving organizational goals.					
4. Performance metrics improve when employees feel their contributions are equally valued in a diverse setting.					
5. Clear diversity goals and strategies contribute to enhanced overall performance and productivity.					
6. Diverse perspectives contribute to better decision-making and higher-quality work outputs.					
7. Employees show increased performance levels when they feel respected and included in a diverse environment.					
8. Regular assessment and reinforcement of diversity practices lead to sustained improvements in performance.					
9. Training and development programs focused on diversity contribute to better employee performance outcomes.					
10. Effective diversity integration positively impacts individual and team performance across various departments.					

Part V. This section focuses on identifying best practices that organizations can adopt to leverage workforce diversity effectively and improve employee performance. Please check the relevant practices to which you agree with each statement.

1. **Diversity Training and Education**
   ☐ Implementing comprehensive diversity training programs for all employees.
   ☐ Offering continuous learning opportunities on diversity and inclusion.
   ☐ Incorporating diversity topics into leadership and management training.
   ☐ Providing workshops and seminars on cultural competency.
   ☐ Evaluating the effectiveness of diversity training programs regularly.

2. **Inclusive Recruitment and Hiring Practices**
   ☐ Developing inclusive job descriptions and recruitment strategies.
   ☐ Ensuring diverse representation in hiring panels and decision-making teams.
   ☐ Implementing blind recruitment processes to reduce bias.
   ☐ Creating partnerships with organizations that support underrepresented groups.
   ☐ Monitoring and analyzing hiring data to address diversity gaps.

3. **Supportive Organizational Policies**
   ☐ Establishing clear diversity and inclusion policies and objectives.
   ☐ Providing flexible work arrangements to accommodate diverse needs.
   ☐ Ensuring equal opportunities for career advancement and promotions.
   ☐ Implementing effective grievance mechanisms for addressing discrimination and harassment.
   ☐ Regularly reviewing and updating policies to reflect best diversity practices.

4. **Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and Mentorship Programs**
   ☐ Supporting the creation and activities of ERGs within the organization.
   ☐ Offering mentorship programs that pair diverse employees with senior leaders.
   ☐ Providing resources and funding for ERG activities and initiatives.
   ☐ Encouraging participation in ERGs and leveraging their feedback for organizational improvements.
   ☐ Recognizing and celebrating the achievements of ERGs and their contributions.

5. **Leadership Commitment and Accountability**
   ☐ Demonstrating visible commitment to diversity from top leadership.
   ☐ Setting measurable diversity and inclusion goals and holding leaders accountable.
   ☐ Including diversity and inclusion metrics in performance evaluations for leaders.
   ☐ Allocating resources and budget specifically for diversity initiatives.
   ☐ Encouraging leadership participation in diversity-related events and discussions.

6. **Data-Driven Decision Making**
   ☐ Collecting and analyzing data on workforce diversity and employee performance.
   ☐ Using data insights to inform diversity strategy and initiatives.
   ☐ Conducting regular surveys and feedback sessions to gauge employee perceptions of diversity efforts.
   ☐ Benchmarking against industry standards and best practices in diversity.
   ☐ Reporting diversity progress and performance metrics transparently to stakeholders.

7. **Cultural Competency and Sensitivity**
   ☐ Promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity in all workplace interactions.
   ☐ Encouraging open dialogue about cultural differences and experiences.
   ☐ Providing training on managing and working within culturally diverse teams.
   ☐ Recognizing and addressing unconscious biases in decision-making.
   ☐ Celebrating cultural diversity through organizational events and communications.

8. **Engagement and Inclusion Initiatives**
   ☐ Creating a culture of inclusion where all employees feel valued and respected.
   ☐ Facilitating team-building activities that promote cross-cultural understanding.
   ☐ Ensuring that diverse perspectives are included in decision-making processes.
   ☐ Implementing regular check-ins to assess employee engagement and satisfaction.
   ☐ Providing channels for employees to share their experiences and suggestions related to diversity.

Appendix II
Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan Sample

Focus Area	Internal or employee focus
Goal	Incorporate cultural diversity into the organization system and practices through promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity in all workplace interactions
Objective	Promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity in all workplace interactions
Strategy	Allocate funding for programs that promote workplace cultural diversity and establish partnerships with organizations that provide financial and educational resources to support these initiatives. The Tourism Office and the Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) should collaborate to serve as a committee responsible for organizing and facilitating events related to cultural diversity. This committee will act as the central communication channel between leadership management and ALL employees. Involve ALL employees, including individuals in leadership roles such as department heads, to participate in the cultural activities of the Local Government Unit. Take into account the experiences, feedback, and suggestions of employees that take part in the programs, seminar, and training sessions Monitor and evaluate progress regularly.
Activities	Participation of ALL employees including those who occupy leadership roles in the organization in cultural activities such as Mangyan Festival, Employee Day, etc. Conduct regular seminars/trainings to ALL employees including those who occupy leadership role in the organization regarding concepts and biases of cultural diversity
Indicators	Employee Survey results, Grievance Records, Suggestion Box, Individual Performance Commitment Review (IPCR)