



## Gender equality and workplace diversity in a school division office

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### Abstract

Gender equality promotes equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all genders. Nowadays, organizations are adopting a globally competitive environment with programs that promote diversity, inclusion, and non-discrimination policies. This study aimed to determine the extent of the practice of gender equality and workplace diversity in a School Division Office. The respondents were 110 non-teaching employees who completed a research questionnaire. This study utilized a descriptive comparative-correlational research design. The results indicated a high extent of practice for gender equality and an even higher extent for workplace diversity. Additionally, the results revealed a significant relationship between gender equality and workplace diversity. Therefore, employees demonstrate a commitment to practicing gender equality within their diverse workplace, fostering a multicultural setting.

**Keywords:** Gender equality; workplace diversity; multicultural



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## 1. Introduction

Gender equality encompasses equal educational opportunities, paid employment, and decision-making power for both men and women (David, Albert, & Vizmanos, 2018; Potrafke & Ursprung, 2012). Banham & Ahern (2016) emphasized the importance of gender equality for economic and social development. Various aspects of gender equality contribute to practices that encourage the free expression of ideas, opinions, and beliefs while discouraging discrimination (Secreto, 2013; Suripeddi & Consortium, 2018).

Workplace diversity refers to the differences among individuals working within an organization, such as gender, race/ethnicity, age, tenure, education, and functional background (Cletus et al., 2018; Patrick & Kumar, 2012; Guillaume et al., 2017). In the context of globalization and workforce demographics, organizations need to prioritize diversity initiatives (Yadav & Lenka, 2020; Mathez-Stiefel et al., 2016). Workplace diversity encompasses factors like wages, benefits, pay fairness, diversity training programs, evaluation, and promotion, as well as addressing multiple forms of discrimination.

Studies by Mazibuko & Govender (2017), and Verniers & Vala (2018) highlight the importance of fostering a globally competitive environment within every dimension of the workplace. This includes promoting diversity, inclusion, unconscious bias awareness, organizational values, and non-discrimination policies. Gender bias can lead to biased decision-making, which can have negative implications for both gender equality and organizations (Chang & Milkman, 2020).

In the Philippines, workplace diversity contributes to a positive organizational culture and enhances the lens of equality (Llantos, 2021; Hechanova & Caringal-Go, 2018). Additionally, Kasan et al. (2016) and McCann & Kohntopp (2017) argue that while discrimination exists in the Philippines, an effective gender equality policy can address and prevent future incidents of discrimination within organizations. Another study suggests that the affective labor of individuals from diverse genders can enhance productivity, alleviate workplace tensions, and boost employee morale (David, 2015).

This study underscores the significance of understanding the practice of gender equality and workplace diversity and its impact on organizations. Promoting gender equality fosters positive workplace diversity, contributing to employee productivity and efficiency. Conducting this study is essential to recommend appropriate training programs and activities that further strengthen the practice of gender equality and workplace diversity, ultimately leading to organizational success.

In this study, we aimed to determine the extent of the practice of gender equality and workplace diversity in a Schools Division Office, considering collective data and groupings based on sex, age, and years of service. Additionally, we explored the relationship between the extent of the practice of gender equality and workplace diversity.

## 2. Method

This study employed a descriptive-comparative correlational research design. The sample size of one hundred ten (110) employees was determined using Cochran's formula, and they completed the adopted-modified questionnaire.

Fifteen experts validated the research instrument, and the computed content validity index was 0.812, as calculated using the Content Validity Ratio by Lawshe, thus establishing the questionnaire's validity. Additionally, the research instrument underwent a pre-test with thirty non-actual respondents, resulting in a computed reliability index of 0.80 using Cronbach's alpha, demonstrating the questionnaire's reliability.

Prior to distributing the survey questionnaires, the researchers obtained permission from the head of the School Division Office. All collected information was treated with the utmost confidentiality and kept confidential. The research data were coded, classified, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used for descriptive questions, while inferential questions were addressed using t-tests and Pearson product-moment correlation.

## 3. Empirical Result

The study revealed that the employees in a School Division Office, regardless of their sex, age, and years in service, greatly practice gender equality and workplace diversity.

### Gender Equality

According to Table 1, employees, as a whole, exhibit a high extent of practice regarding gender equality, with a mean score of 3.20. Recognizing and addressing the issue of gender equality is essential for improving performance (Sheppard, 2016) and avoiding negative impacts on overall organizational productivity (Patrick & Kumar, 2012; Reio & Ghosh, 2009).

The results indicate that males have a higher mean score than females, with scores of 3.25 and 3.17, respectively. This suggests that males are more inclined to practice gender equality than females. Towns and Good's (2015) study supports this finding, showing that males exhibit a higher level of engagement in gender equality practices. In fact, male employees tend to adapt more quickly to the workplace environment and readily accept changes brought about by new leadership and policies (Sun, 2018; Rao & Bagali, 2014).

Furthermore, older employees have a higher mean score than younger employees, with scores of 3.24 and 3.18, respectively. Both age groups display a similar extent of practice and are receptive to further improvements in gender equality practices in the workplace. However, studies by Plickert & Sterling (2017), and Osman et al. (2016) indicate that older employees tend to be more adaptable due to their longer exposure to the workplace environment.

Regarding length of service, long-term employees exhibit a higher mean score of 3.36 compared to those with shorter years of service, who have a mean score of 3.19. This suggests that employees with longer tenures are more open to gender equality in

the workplace. Individuals who have worked for an extended period are more likely to embrace gender equality practices compared to those with shorter work experience (Berde & Rigó, 2020; Suleiman, 2013).

When analyzing the results based on sex, age, and years of service, the findings indicate that the extent of practice regarding gender equality does not significantly differ, with p-values of 0.249>0.05, 0.370>0.05, and 0.528>0.05, respectively. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted for all these variables, suggesting that employees' perception and practice of gender equality remain consistent regardless of sex, age, or years of service.

**Table 1. Statistical Result**

Variable(s)	Gender Equality			Workplace Diversity		
	Mean	SD	<i>t-test</i> ( <i>p-value</i> )	Mean	SD	<i>t-test</i> ( <i>p-value</i> )
<b>Sex</b>						
Male (n=44)	3.25**	0.360	0.249	3.23*	0.455	0.593
Female (n=66)	3.17*	0.375		3.27**	0.038	
<b>Age</b>						
Younger (n=66)	3.18*	0.436	0.370	3.22*	0.040	0.212
Older (n=44)	3.24*	0.436		3.32**	0.021	
<b>Length of Service</b>						
Shorter (n=93)	3.19*	0.477	0.528	3.27**	0.431	0.476
Longer (n=17)	3.36**	0.438		3.32**	0.450	
<b>Taken Collectively</b> (n=110)	3.20*	0.371		3.26**	0.400	
Pearson product-moment correlation ( <i>p-value</i> )					0.000	

Notes: \*, \*\* consecutively verbal interpretation of mean are Great Extent and Very Great Extent.

Both males and females have the same perception and practice toward gender equality in the workplace (Sharma & Jaiswal, 2018; Mathez-Stiefel et al., 2016). Both younger and older groups have the same perception and practice toward gender equality, though slight differences in their mean scores are considered insignificant (Graham, 2017). Meanwhile, Parcheta et al. (2013) said that respondents with shorter and longer years in service have the same perception and practice of gender equality. Several years in the organization do not guarantee to have different views and opinions on a particular topic (Wu & Cheng, 2016; Patrick & Kumar, 2012).

### Workplace Diversity

When taken as a whole, employees show a very great extent of the practice in workplace diversity with a mean score of 3.26. Meanwhile, females have a higher mean score of 3.27 than males, with a mean score of 3.23 (see Table 1). This implies that females are more open to workplace diversity than males and prefer working with people from diverse backgrounds. The female employees are more flexible in making adjustments to blend in with a diverse workplace (Rao & Bagali, 2014; Wu & Cheng, 2016).

Results also showed that older employees have a higher mean score of 3.32 than younger employees with a mean score of 3.22. This suggests that older employees are more mature to accept the workplace changes and work with individuals from diverse backgrounds. More senior employees prefer the security of tenure, while younger employees seek greener pasture (Foma, 2014; Kumar & Velmurugan, 2020; Lee, Yang, & Li, 2017).

Moreover, results showed that employees with longer years in service have a higher mean score of 3.32 than employees with shorter years in service with a mean score of 3.27. This implies that employees with long years in service are more open to workplace diversity. The results affirmed the study of Dike (2013) that says employees with longer years in the service have a very great extent in practicing workplace diversity. Furthermore, Prakash et al. (2019) argued that shorter years in service have a lower extent of practice because they are still internalizing working in a diverse environment.

When grouped according to sex, age, and years in service, the results showed that the extent of practice on workplace diversity does not differ significantly with a P-value of  $0.593 > 0.05$ , P-value of  $0.212 > 0.05$ , P-value of  $0.476 > 0.05$ , respectively, thus, the hypothesis was accepted for all these variables. Therefore, the employees' perception and practice of workplace diversity regardless of sex, age, and years in service are the same.

The findings are similar to Rao & Bagali's (2014) study, wherein male and female groups do not differ significantly. Both sexes have the same perception of workplace diversity and can adapt to an environment with people with different attributes and characteristics. Dike (2013), Saxena (2014), and Gupta (2016) articulated that there was no significant difference in the perception of workplace diversity among younger and older employees. On the contrary, Foma (2014) and Plickert & Sterling (2017) argued a significant difference in the employees' perception of workplace diversity between employees with shorter years in service and employees with longer years in service.

#### **Relationship between Gender Equality and Workplace Diversity**

Using Pearson product-moment correlation as seen in Table 1, the study showed a significant relationship between gender equality and workplace diversity with a P-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Thus, the hypothesis was rejected. This implies that the increase in the extent of the practice of gender equality would also increase the employees' perception of workplace diversity. The study revealed that organization needs to create awareness of gender equality principles and workplace diversity.

The studies of Ahmad (2020) also showed a positive correlation between gender equality and workplace diversity, affirming the result of the study. When respondents have a positive impression of gender equality, they also have a positive perception of workplace diversity and vice versa (Netzer, 2016).

#### **4. Conclusions**

This study concludes that employees of the School Division Office exhibited a strong commitment to practicing gender equality and workplace diversity. The results

indicate that employees demonstrated flexibility and adaptability in response to societal changes, particularly within the workplace. It is evident that employees embraced diversity and were willing to work in a diverse environment, disregarding factors such as sex, age, and years in service. Furthermore, they actively advocated for equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all individuals within the organization.

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**Authors' Contributions:** All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study

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