

The role of human resource management strategies in enhancing workplace diversity and inclusion of a city in the Philippines

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Abstract: Achieving workplace diversity and inclusion (D&I) is essential for fostering innovation, enhancing employee satisfaction, and driving organizational success. This study examines the effectiveness of human resource (HR) strategies in promoting D&I within organizations in Borongan City, Eastern Samar. Many organizations face challenges in implementing inclusive hiring practices, diversity training programs, and equitable workplace policies, which can hinder the development of a truly inclusive culture. Employing a descriptive research design, this study utilized surveys and interviews with HR personnel and employees across various industries to explore key HR practices—such as recruitment policies, training initiatives, leadership commitment, and organizational culture—and their impact on D&I outcomes. Data were analyzed using statistical methods to assess the relationship between HR strategies and workplace diversity outcomes. The findings reveal that organizations with well-structured diversity programs and inclusive policies report higher levels of employee engagement and satisfaction. However, challenges such as unconscious bias, resistance to change, and lack of leadership commitment were identified as significant barriers to effective implementation. Based on these results, the study recommends enhancing D&I training, fostering leadership accountability, and refining recruitment strategies to build a more inclusive workforce.

Keywords: Diversity and inclusion, HR strategies, Workplace culture, Employee Engagement, Organizational success

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INTRODUCTION

In Borongan City, businesses and organizations are pivotal in driving economic growth, fostering employment, and shaping the local workforce. As the city progresses, cultivating inclusive and equitable workplace environments becomes increasingly essential. Diversity and inclusion (D&I) have emerged as critical components of modern human resource (HR) management, ensuring that employees from all backgrounds have equal opportunities to contribute and succeed. Companies that implement robust D&I strategies often experience higher employee engagement, improved productivity, and enhanced business sustainability.

However, not all organizations in Borongan City have successfully integrated effective D&I initiatives into their HR frameworks. Some businesses grapple with outdated policies, unconscious biases, and a lack of structured diversity programs. While larger corporations may have the resources to establish comprehensive HR strategies, smaller businesses and local

enterprises often encounter challenges in adopting inclusive workplace practices. As a result, disparities in employee experiences and career advancement opportunities persist.

The COVID-19 pandemic further underscored the importance of resilient and adaptive HR strategies. Many employees faced job insecurities, shifting work environments, and increased workplace inequalities. Organizations with strong D&I programs were better equipped to support their workforce, ensuring inclusive decision-making and equitable employment practices. In Borongan City, businesses must recognize the significance of HR-driven diversity and inclusion strategies to foster long-term organizational success.

Encouragingly, local initiatives reflect a growing commitment to D&I. For instance, the Eastern Samar State University (ESSU) in Borongan City has implemented a Policy on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, aiming to create an environment that upholds the rights, dignity, and well-being of all individuals. Such efforts demonstrate the potential for institutions to lead by example in promoting inclusive practices.

On a national level, the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), in collaboration with the International Labor Organization (ILO), launched the Diversity and Inclusion Committee to promote gender equality and inclusivity in the workplace. This initiative underscores a broader movement within the Philippines to prioritize D&I in organizational settings.

Statement of the problem

This research aims to examine the role of human resource (HR) strategies in enhancing workplace diversity and inclusion (D&I) within businesses and organizations in Borongan City.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of the following: (a) Age, (b) Gender, (c) Educational Background, (d) Job Position, (e) Length of Service, (f) Type of Organization (Public/Private), (g) Industry Sector, (h) Workplace Policies on Diversity and Inclusion

2. What HR strategies are implemented by businesses in Borongan City to promote diversity and inclusion in terms of: (a) Recruitment and Hiring Practices, (b) Training and Development Programs, (c) Employee Engagement and Retention Strategies, (d) Anti-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Policies, (e) Leadership Commitment to D&I, and (f) Workplace Culture and Inclusion Initiatives.

3. Is there a significant relationship between the implemented HR strategies and successful diversity and inclusion outcomes in the workplace?

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study employs a descriptive research design to analyze the relationship between HR strategies and D&I outcomes. According to the provided document, descriptive research is appropriate for assessing current HR practices and their impact on workplace diversity. This design allows for a systematic analysis of current conditions and practices related to D&I in Borongan City. Both quantitative and qualitative methods will be utilized.

Respondents and locale of the study

The research will be conducted in Borongan City, Eastern Samar. Borongan City is selected as the locale due to its developing economic landscape and the presence of various businesses and organizations. This setting provides a relevant context for examining how HR strategies contribute to diversity and inclusion.

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The respondents will include HR managers, Business owners, Employees from selected organizations in Borongan City

These participants are chosen based on their involvement in HR processes and/or experience with D&I initiatives. A diverse representation across various industries within Borongan City will be targeted.

Research instrument

Two primary instruments were used to collect data for this study: a survey questionnaire and an interview guide. The survey questionnaire is designed to gather quantitative data on human resource (HR) strategies and diversity and inclusion (D&I) outcomes. It will include Likert-scale questions (e.g., 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) to measure participants' perceptions and attitudes toward various D&I-related practices. The survey will be organized into several sections to assess different HR strategies, including recruitment and hiring practices, training and development programs, employee engagement and retention strategies, anti-discrimination and equal opportunity policies, leadership commitment to D&I, and workplace culture and inclusion initiatives.

In addition to the survey, a semi-structured interview guide will be used to collect qualitative data. These interviews aim to explore the challenges, best practices, and in-depth insights related to D&I efforts within organizations. The interview questions will be open-ended to encourage detailed and thoughtful responses from participants, allowing for a deeper understanding of the context and experiences that shape D&I practices in the workplace.

Data analyses procedure

Data will be analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research findings. For the quantitative analysis, descriptive statistics will be employed to summarize the data, including measures such as mean, standard deviation, and frequencies. To determine the relationship between HR strategies and D&I outcomes, the Pearson correlation coefficient will be used. In this analysis, r represents the correlation coefficient, x denotes the scores for HR strategies, and y represents the scores for D&I outcomes.

For the qualitative analysis, thematic analysis will be applied to examine the interview transcripts. This method involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within the data. Codes will be developed based on the research questions and key themes identified in the literature review, allowing for a structured interpretation of participants' responses and deeper insights into the challenges and best practices related to diversity and inclusion initiatives.

DISCUSSIONS

The demographic analysis reveals a balanced representation across various factors, indicating a diverse workforce within the surveyed organizations. The implementation of HR strategies varies, with some fully adopted and others partially or not implemented. Notably, strategies like unconscious bias training and leadership commitment are more prevalent, aligning with findings that such initiatives enhance employee engagement and retention.

The correlation analysis suggests a positive relationship between HR strategies and diversity and inclusion outcomes. For instance, unconscious bias training shows a strong correlation with employee satisfaction, supporting the notion that diversity training workshops are crucial for employee awareness and understanding.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study concludes that organizations in Borongan City exhibit a diverse workforce, highlighting the importance of implementing tailored human resource (HR) strategies to address the varied needs of employees. While many organizations have taken steps to promote diversity and inclusion (D&I), the extent of implementation varies significantly. In particular, more comprehensive approaches—such as conducting policy audits and adopting inclusive language policies—are less commonly practiced.

Despite this variation, the study found that the effective implementation of certain HR strategies, such as unconscious bias training and the establishment of employee resource groups (ERGs), has a notably positive impact on D&I outcomes. These strategies contribute to a more inclusive workplace environment, which in turn enhances employee satisfaction and retention. Overall, the findings underscore the critical role of well-executed HR practices in fostering a more equitable and supportive organizational culture.

To further enhance diversity and inclusion (D&I) in the workplace, several recommendations are proposed. First, organizations should focus on comprehensive policy development by creating and regularly auditing D&I policies to ensure their effectiveness and relevance to the evolving needs of the workforce. Second, there is a need to implement ongoing training programs that address unconscious bias, cultural competency, and inclusive practices, which are essential for fostering an inclusive organizational culture.

Third, organizations are encouraged to support the formation and active participation in employee resource groups (ERGs), which can serve as valuable support networks for underrepresented groups and promote a sense of belonging. Fourth, leadership involvement is crucial; organizational leaders should actively participate in D&I initiatives, demonstrating their commitment through engagement in training and public endorsements of inclusive practices.

Promoting an inclusive workplace culture is essential. This can be achieved by organizing cultural events and adopting inclusive language policies that celebrate diversity and create a welcoming environment for all employees. Finally, organizations should conduct regular assessments of their D&I initiatives and seek employee feedback to identify areas for improvement and track progress over time. These recommendations aim to build a more inclusive, equitable, and supportive work environment.

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The role of human resource management strategies in enhancing workplace diversity and inclusion of a city in the Philippines

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