



## WORKPLACE DIVERSITY MODEL IN PRIVATE TERTIARY HOSPITALS IN GENERAL SANTOS CITY, PHILIPPINES

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### **Abstract:**

This quantitative research study was conducted to determine the extent of workplace diversity implementation in private tertiary hospitals in General Santos City for the calendar year 2022- 2023. The respondents of this study were the randomly selected 300 regular employees from the total population of 1,205 employees. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was utilized in this study to identify the moderator and determine the workplace diversity implementation model. Based on the findings of the study, the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the extent of the implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of the employees in the implementation of workplace diversity is rejected because of the p-values <0.05. The hypothesis that the profile of the respondents does not moderate the relationship between the extent of implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of employees in the implementation of workplace diversity is also rejected because of the p-value of < .001. Further, the findings were enriched with qualitative data that surfaced three major themes from the focus group discussion: (1) Fairness and Equity in Compensation and Benefits, (2) Management Imposed Time, and (3) Limited Training for Non-Medical Personnel. Hence, Workplace Diversity Model is recommended to take effect in the private tertiary hospitals in General Santos City to strengthen the implementation of workplace diversity in the functional areas of human resource management.

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## 1. Introduction

Human capital is pivotal to organizational effectiveness and the most valuable asset available to an organization is its people. In an organization, employees are the key resources through which all the other objectives are achieved (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2017). The 21st-century business environment, according to Udin, Suharnomo, Yuniawan, and Wahyudi (2017), is highly characterized as dynamic and ever-changing. These changes are largely due to globalization and liberalization of trade and business, which has altered the face of business, including the diverse employees in the workplace. Workplace diversity includes differences and similarities existing among employees in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, and nationalities (Tamunomiebi & John-Eke, 2020).

In the United States, industries and organizations invest more in groups of diverse workforces to ensure the success of business plans. Groups with the same personality and characteristics have increased team learning, psychological safety, job satisfaction, and expected performance. More so, teams with high diversity but with improper training and orientation in the same unit have experienced task and relationship conflicts, low group learning, and less mental safety and work performance (Lau & Murnighan, 1998). Furthermore, the International Labour Organization (2018) found in one of their surveys that half of the respondents said that diversity and inclusion were sufficiently identified and resourced in their workplaces' culture and strategy. Only a third of enterprises currently measure inclusion, although doing so is essential for progress. In addition, the United States Labor Force Population estimates an increase of other nationality workers from 25% by the year 2050, which may lead to changes and other shifts in industrial settings. Employers, managers, and employees in organizations are progressively required not only to be sensitive to group differences but also to adopt policies and practices that are effective in coping (Jackson, 2018).

The workplace is becoming more and more diverse than ever (Inegbedion, Sunday, Asaleye, Lawal, & Adebajji, 2020). These dynamics have consequently changed the compositions of many societies and influenced the way human beings interact, work or cohabit with one another. As a result, many organizations are exploring strategies to positively exploit the growing diversity to remain and or gain a competitive advantage (Cletus, Mahmood, Umar, & Ibrahim, 2018).

In adopting workplace diversity, some areas of human resources have to deal with concerns as sometimes there is unfair compensation to the employee because of the bias of the manager. The allowances are not provided on fair criteria (Feraro-Banta & Shaikh, 2017). Moreover, researchers stated that employees do not understand compensation and benefits. Most of the employees thought that the compensation and benefits were only viewed as cash. Compensation and benefits are usually narrowed to cash and as a result, employers only have a tunneled vision when it comes to the issues of compensation for

their employees (Kadir, AlHosani, Ismail, & Sehan, 2019). Another area is employee job satisfaction, which has remained a remarkable area in the field of human resources management. Employees who are always experiencing stress and dissatisfaction with their work will experience a decrease in their performance and quality of work. Factors such as working conditions, below-competitive salaries, lack of promotional opportunities, and lack of recognition are some of the contributing factors to employee dissatisfaction (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2017). In relation to job satisfaction is employee engagement, which, according to Osborne and Hammoud (2017), is critical to any organization. Organizations in the 21st century are facing a difficult situation. In spite of providing good pay packets and benefits, many organizations lose top performers to competitors for no apparent reason (Singh, 2016).

In the Philippines, like in any other country, high levels of diversity and inclusion in the workplace are associated with greater productivity, innovation and workforce well-being, yet too little is being done to promote them, particularly among minority groups, meaning that enterprises, workers and societies are missing out on considerable potential benefits (ILO, 2022). In the healthcare industry, according to the Department of Health (2018), augmenting human resource complement is among the organizational changes that need to be strengthened and rationalized. Furthermore, to improve the delivery of care in the Philippines and health sector governance, health human resource stock inventory is among the various systems that have been made operational (DOH, 2018).

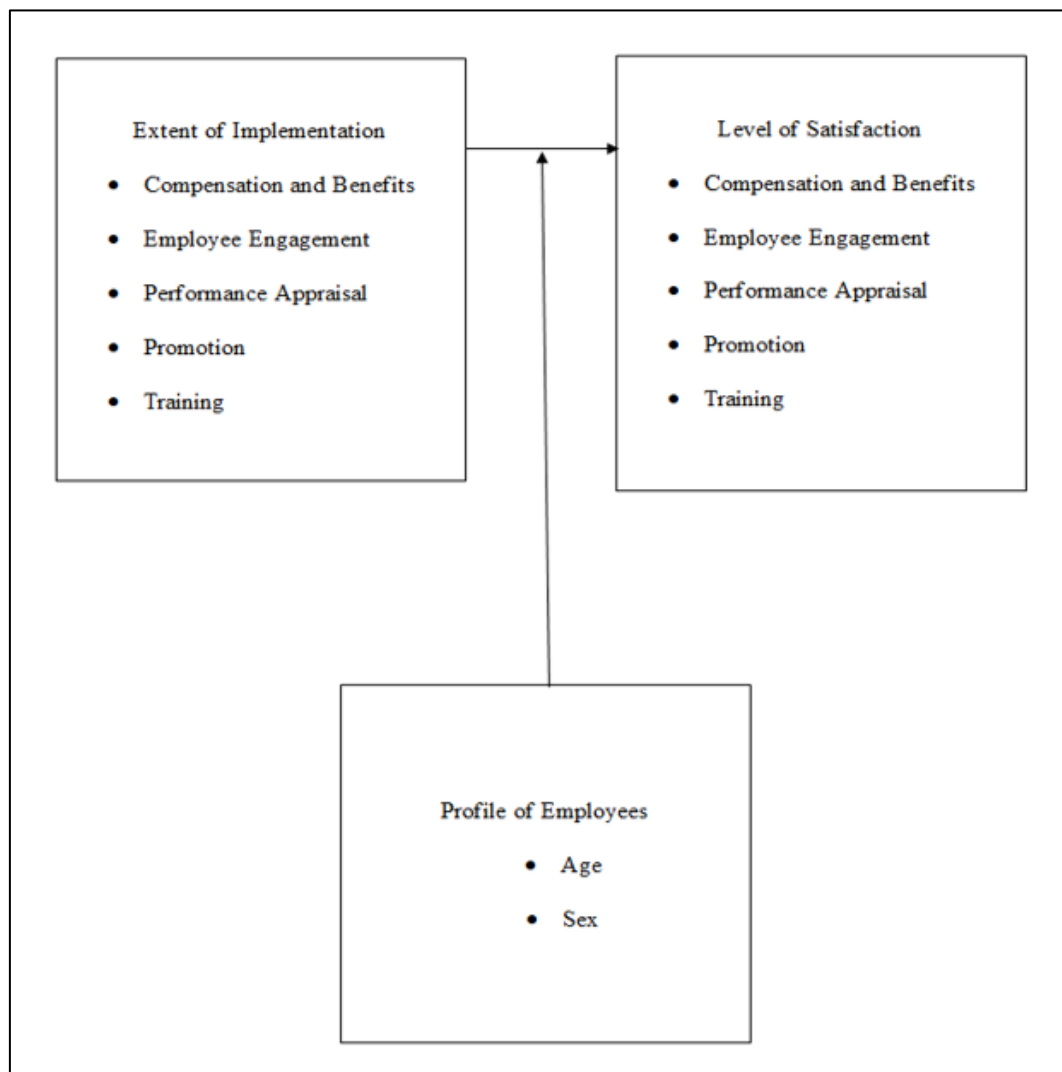
In General Santos City, the application of workplace diversity is gradually taking in place in most hospitals, clinics, and any healthcare facility. In one of the tertiary hospitals in the city, initiation of a diverse workforce implies scrutinizing the application of ethics, values, and moral orientation, as well as generation considerations and attainment in education. According to one of the Chief Nurses of the hospitals in the city, this is the reality that hospitals should start realizing and take action as soon as possible. According to the employee interviewed, understanding a co-worker includes tolerating their personality and behavior, and some beliefs and norms may not complement others. Nevertheless, workplace diversity intensified the improvement in the delivery of care from the traditional modality of care (DOH, 2016).

Integration of workplace diversity in different work environments like hospitals enables improvement in the quality of care, satisfaction in the job, and creativity in the workplace, and provides impact on the reputation of hospitals and loyalty of clientele if properly and keenly implemented in the organization. It is undeniable that a diverse and inclusive workforce can lead to an increase in innovation, unique opinions, and approaches to problem-solving.

It is in this context that the researcher is motivated to conduct this study to determine the extent of workplace diversity implementation. The findings of this study serve as a basis for designing a model for workplace diversity implementation in private tertiary hospitals.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

In this study, the researcher identified five (5) indicators of workplace diversity that are part of the functional areas of human resources: compensation and benefits, employee engagement, performance appraisal, promotion, and training. These indicators were used to assess and gain insights into the extent of diversity in the workplace, the satisfaction of employees involved in the phenomenon, and their experiences of workplace diversity.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework

The researcher assessed the profile of employees, specifically the demographic profile, as this can be a factor and an indicator of the implementation of workplace diversity. The employees' experiences, including relationships, communication, actions, and behaviour of every individual they meet and work with within the organization, were looked at in this study. The challenges experienced by the respondents were also explored and gathered through a focus group discussion. Themes were drawn from the

statements of respondents and core ideas were identified to support the themes. These data were used to enrich the discussion of the findings of the quantitative data.

The results of the study were used as a basis for a model where diversity can be embedded in the programs of functional areas of human resource management, employee satisfaction, and experiences in consideration of their demographic profile. With the model drawn from the findings of this study, the researchers expect to bring increased productivity of employees, improved work performance, better job satisfaction and relationship with each other, and strengthen the commitment of employees not just in their respective duties and responsibilities but to the organization as a whole.

### **3. Related Literature**

The review of literature related to workplace diversity discusses the evolution and adaptation of diversity in an organization. It further broadened my knowledge of integrating diversity in human resource practices and helped me to better understand and handle a diverse workplace.

#### **3.1 Workplace Diversity**

Workplace diversity is the term used for the workplace composed of employees with varying characteristics, such as different sex, gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (Cox & Blake, 2011). There are many different types of workplace diversity. In the beginning, the term diversity was used primarily to address racial and ethnic diversity. However, in recent years, the term workplace diversity has been expanded to encompass many different characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical abilities and disabilities, religion, political beliefs, education, socioeconomic background, geographical orientation, language, culture, and military service (Gilbert & Ivancevich, 2009). Furthermore, Cletus, Mahmood, Umar, and Ibrahim (2018) described workplace diversity as complex physical, sociological, or psychological attributes such as gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs that define an individual or group. It transcends the recruitment, representation, or preferential treatment of people within an organization. Furthermore, the study postulated that the complexity of workplace diversity has become one of the most challenging issues currently of critical importance in business and organizational management.

According to Lee (2019), diversity in the workplace refers to an organization that intentionally employs a workforce comprised of individuals of varying gender, religion, race, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, education, and other attributes. In order to explain the term diversity, it is important to understand that diversity directly affects the workplace – and with increasing significance. The term diversity includes an understanding and acceptance of the fact that people have individual characteristics which make them unique from each other, particularly when comparing individuals in a group. These characteristics may include race, ethnicity, gender, religion, political

ideologies, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities or socioeconomic status. These characteristics also may include life experiences and cognitive approaches toward problem-solving (Natter, 2019).

Diversity in the workplace is all about creating an inclusive environment, accepting every individual's differences, enabling all employees to achieve their full potential, and, as a result, allowing your business to reach its fullest potential (Ong, 2018). According to the Journal of Applied Behavioral Science (2017), workplace diversity is defined as managing diversity in the workplace by negotiating interaction across culturally diverse groups and contriving to get along in an environment characterized by cultural diversity.

In an article by the Philippine Journal of Nursing (2018), workplace diversity means respecting and valuing the skills and differences that each staff member brings into the workspace. A diverse workplace is an inclusive environment that provides equal rights and opportunities for all workers, regardless of gender, color, age, ethnicity, physical ability, sexual orientation, or religious beliefs. More so, in Australia, it is a law for workplaces to provide equal opportunity to their employees, as well as to create a workplace free from discrimination and harassment. Employers are responsible for putting measures into place to overcome employment disadvantages and discrimination in the workplace. This includes valuing workplace diversity and ensuring that a workplace is free from racial and sexual harassment, discrimination, and bullying (Australian Journal of Nursing Care, 2020).

Workforce diversity means similarities and differences among employees in terms of age, cultural background, physical abilities and disabilities, race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. Employing a diversified workforce is a necessity for every organization but managing such a diversified workforce is also a big challenge for management (Saxena, 2020). A Boston Consulting Group study found that companies with more diverse management teams have 19% higher revenues due to innovation. This finding is significant for tech companies, start-ups, and industries where innovation is the key to growth. It shows that diversity is not just a metric to be strived for; it is actually an integral part of a successful revenue-generating business (Eswaran, 2019).

### **3.3 Diversity and History**

The business case for diversity stems from the progression of the models of diversity within the workplace since the 1960s. The original model for diversity was situated around affirmative action drawing strength from the law and a need to comply with equal opportunity employment objectives implemented in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Harvey, 2012). Equal employment opportunity was centered around the idea that any individual academically or physically qualified for a specific job could strive for and possibly succeed at obtaining the said job without being discriminated against based on identity. This compliance-based model gave rise to the idea that tokenism was the reason an individual was hired into a company when they differed from the dominant group.

Dissatisfaction from minority groups eventually altered and/or raised the desire to achieve perfect employment opportunities in every job (Milles & Dye, 2008).

According to Natter (2019), before looking at business as it is currently practiced globally, look back in time. In an attempt to rid workplaces of unfair, unequal treatment of individuals – specifically, those who are members of minority ethnic groups – which had historically been discriminated against. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy signed an Executive Order, which then became known as "Affirmative Action". Affirmative Action states that U.S. government employers could not discriminate against employees or job applicants on the basis of race, creed, color, or national origin. In later years, similar laws expanded the idea to include sex (gender), physical disabilities, and veterans. These laws are mandated only for federal agencies, contractors, and subcontractors – who must take affirmative action or steps to not only make sure that they are not discriminating against individuals – but also that they are actively seeking to hire those who have been discriminated against historically or who are a member of a minority group.

Although many find these legislative actions positive, others feel that they created reverse discrimination. However, because the emphasis for job opportunities was on those who were a member of a minority group – and instead of creating a level playing field, it was then felt that the laws had put some at a disadvantage for job opportunities since the emphasis was on hiring minority individuals. However, others believed that this early diversity law provided talented individuals with opportunities to which they might not have had previous access (Marlene, 2006).

### **3.4 Workplace Diversity and Human Resource Practices**

Natter (2019) postulated that the backlash concerning affirmative action is an issue when it comes to workplace diversity in the larger business world. Companies are currently adapting their policies and strategies to appeal to future talent effectively. As a result, workplace diversity continues to gain prominence among companies that continuously seek global expansion and maximization of profits amidst growing competition for scarce talent, resources and market share. Analysts opine that, in the coming years, companies and organizations will need to devise effective strategies and increase investments in diversity programs to remain globally competitive (Cletus, Mahmood, Umar, & Ibrahim, 2018). Some people are concerned that when management is focused on creating a culturally – or otherwise diverse organization – then it is possible that the quality of qualified and talented personnel will suffer. They believe that the focus may be on hiring a candidate that fits into a category, which then adds to the company's appearance of diversity, even though those individuals may not be the most qualified candidates for a specific position (Natter, 2019).

In the Journal of Evolution of Diversity (2016), the first modern equal employment legislation was introduced in Congress in 1943. In 1948, President Truman signed Executive Order 9981 to desegregate the armed services, which some scholars cite as the first diversity initiative in the workplace. Executive Order 9981 required equality of treatment and opportunity in the armed services. However, it did not expressly forbid

segregation. As a result of this order, by 1953, 95% of African American Army soldiers were serving in integrated units.

In the 1960s, social and political changes resulted in the passage of civil rights legislation that prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, and, later on, age. For example, the legislative history of Title VII reflected a concern that a particular racial or ethnic composition of employees in the workforce should not be mandated. People who opposed Title VII feared that the Act could be interpreted to require employers with a racially imbalanced workforce to grant preferential treatment to racial minorities (Goldman, 2010).

In the face of globalization, organizations are concerned with how to design and implement performance appraisal to fit the global as well as the local context. Employee performance appraisal is a subject of great interest in any organization. In the study conducted by Ahmad and Bujang (2013), the main issue in the practice of performance appraisal activity is the fairness of the evaluation decision. Also, one of the factors that contribute to employee dissatisfaction is that raters are not knowledgeable and do not have the required skills. Moreover, there is an issue of subjectivity in the performance evaluation in the public and private sectors. Technically, in one of the results of the study, the authors cited that the quota system practised in certain organizations also creates dissatisfaction among employees. Only a small portion of the employees will get salary increments either vertically or diagonally. The study also concluded that appraisal decisions nowadays are confronted with plenty of criticism and comments from employees and their unions. There are several issues being put forward, such as the raters' ability, the accuracy of the system, fairness, discrimination, quota system, and other aspects. In the Philippines, there is a continuing lack of a well-crafted and functional performance measurement system, the proliferation of performance indicators, and a lack of awareness of indicators (Berman, 2011). Moreover, the need for the Performance Evaluation System (PES) was pronounced in a similar law, stating that, —there shall be an established PES in every department or agency of the national and local government, including state universities and colleges and government-owned and controlled corporations. (Rule IX Section 1, Omnibus Rules Implementing Book V of Executive Order No. 292).

The development of human capital through training and development is one of the most important means for an organization to gain a competitive advantage. According to Boadu (2014), some organizations express dissatisfaction with their productivity after subjecting their employees to rigorous training and development programs. Sometimes, employees feel that training does not provide them with sufficient skills or knowledge. And, therefore, I was of the view that improper training can result in conflicts between employees and their organizations. This could negatively impact the organization's performance and effectiveness. In the Philippines, a study conducted by Baylon and Santos (2011) suggests that it is critical for employees to be well-educated and trained, able to follow orders, manage risks, solve problems, and be psychologically and



emotionally happy to ensure safe, secure, clean and efficient operations for the safety of life.

### **3.5 Workplace Diversity and Employee Engagement**

Another functional area that needs to be considered in the implementation of workplace diversity is employee engagement. According to AbuKhalifeh and Som (2012), employee engagement becomes an important issue as employee turnover rises due to the demand and shortage of skilful employees. Employees who are engaged are more likely to stay with their current organization and stay committed to their organization (Bakker, Tims, & Derks, 2012). Apparently, employees who are not engaged will affect hotel performance through higher absenteeism, higher turnover, lower productivity, and recruitment and training costs. With the current worldwide falling economics, management is zooming into organizational efficiency and diminishing the operating cost in order to be sustainable in the marketplace. On the other hand, a high level of employee engagement helps hotels focus on attracting new talent in the labour market (Sun & Bunchapattanasakd, 2019; White, Alcock, Wheeler, & Depledge, 2013).

In the Philippines, according to Montalbo and Agong (2016), stress, burnout, high attrition rate, mismatches in school curricula, and industry demand are a regular focus of research because of their effect on employee performance and satisfaction. Due to these issues, businesses and HR practitioners are finding ways to reverse or promote a healthy lifestyle and retain employees. Engagement and turnover are forecasted to be important metrics for every industry.

## **4. Research Questions**

The study aims to determine the extent of implementation of workplace diversity in tertiary private hospitals in General Santos City. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of employees in terms of:
  - 1.1 Age; and
  - 1.2 Sex?
2. What is the extent of implementation of workplace diversity in the functional areas of human resources such as:
  - 2.1 Compensation and Benefits;
  - 2.2 Employee Engagement;
  - 2.3 Performance Appraisal;
  - 2.4 Promotion; and
  - 2.5 Training?
3. What is the level of satisfaction of employees in the implementation of workplace diversity in the functional areas of human resources such as:
  - 3.1 Compensation and Benefits;
  - 3.2 Employee Engagement;

3.3 Performance Appraisal;

3.4 Promotion; and

3.5 Training?

4. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of the implementation of workplace diversity in the functional areas of human resources and the level of satisfaction of the employees in the implementation of workplace diversity?
5. Does the profile of the respondents moderate the relationship between the extent of implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of employees in the implementation of workplace diversity?
6. What are the challenges of employees in the implementation of workplace diversity?
7. Based on the findings of the study, what workplace diversity model can be developed?

## **5. Methodology**

### **5.1 Respondents of the Study**

The respondents of the study are regular employees of each participating organization. The respondents were identified using the probability sampling technique. The probability sampling technique is used to ensure that all subjects in the target population have an equal chance of being selected for the sample (Elfil & Negida, 2017). Specifically, this study employed stratified random sampling. Applying this sampling technique, the researcher divided the whole population into homogeneous strata or subgroups according to a demographic factor (e.g. gender, age, religion, socioeconomic level, education, or diagnosis, etc.). Then, the researcher selected and drew a random sample from the different strata (Elfil & Negida, 2017). Regular employees from all departments in the organization were given a chance to be selected and become respondents to this study.

The researcher determined the sample size for this study using the Taro Yamane. Together with the statistical tool in determining the sample size is the inclusion criteria, which included regular staff who shall be with the institution for at least (2) years. The survey questionnaire was administered to three hundred (300) respondents. The focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted with 5 respondents from each institution, a total of fifteen (15) respondents for the FGD.

### **5.2 Research Instrument**

The researcher utilized a survey questionnaire and interview guide that gathered information and description of workplace diversity in the 3 hospitals. The survey questionnaire and the interview guide underwent validation by experts. After validation, the tool underwent reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's alpha (Appendix B) was used to measure and ensure the internal reliability or consistency of the set of items in the developed survey questionnaire (Taber, 2018).

The survey questionnaire aimed to determine the extent of implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of employees in the functional areas of human resources. The first part is a researcher-made tool presented in a 5-point Likert Scale that determined the extent of implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of employees.

For the interpretation of gathered data, the 5-point Likert scale will be used:

**Box 2:** Likert Scale for Extent of Implementation of Workplace Diversity

Likert Scale				
5 Very High in Extent	4 High in Extent	3 Moderate in Extent	2 Low on Extent	1 Very Low in Extent

**Box 3:** Likert Scale for Level of Satisfaction of Employees

Likert Scale				
5 Highly Satisfied	4 Satisfied	3 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	1 Highly Dissatisfied

The second part is the 5-item open-ended questionnaire designed to gather the experiences and challenges of employees experiencing diversity in the private hospitals in General Santos City.

### 5.3 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher obtained the approval of the Administrators/Chief Executive Officer/President of the participating private hospitals. Attached to the request letter are the sample tool, respondent consent, problem statement, and ethical considerations.

The survey questionnaire was distributed to the respondents through the Human Resources Department. The HRD was given 100 copies of the tool and facilitated the distribution to the different departments in the hospitals and its collection.

The focus group discussion was conducted face-to-face in one of the conference rooms of the hospitals. It participated by 2 unit heads and 3 staff coming from different departments. The interview was audio recorded using a cellular phone. The recordings were transcribed and deleted immediately.

After the data were gathered, the data were subjected to statistical analysis and thematic analysis. The researcher submitted the data to a statistician to get the results of the study. Based on the results of both the quantitative and qualitative data, a workplace diversity model was developed.

### 5.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

This study gathered quantitative and qualitative data. The data collected were tabulated, summarized, analyzed, and interpreted. The statistical tools used in the study are listed

below. In the analysis of respondents' profile distribution, frequency count, mean, and percentage distribution were utilized.

The extent of implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of employees in the functional areas of human resources were examined and analyzed with standard deviation and weighted mean.

In determining the significant relationship between the extent of implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of employees, the researcher used the Pearson-R Correlation. This tool measured the strength and direction of the relationship (Cramer, 1998) between the extent of implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of employees.

The study also utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to determine the workplace diversity model. SEM identified the profile of the respondents to moderate the relationship (Fan, Chen, Shirkey, 2016) between the extent of implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of employees in the implementation of workplace diversity.

The following scoring guide was used to evaluate the extent of implementation of workplace diversity in the private tertiary hospitals in General Santos City.

**Box 4:** Scoring Guide for the Extent of Workplace Diversity Implementation

Range	Interpretation	Description
4.50 - 5.00	Very High in Extent	81- 100% implementation of workplace diversity
3.50 - 4.49	High in Extent	61-80% implementation of workplace diversity
2.50 - 3.49	Moderate in Extent	41-60% implementation of workplace diversity
1.50 - 2.49	Low in Extent	21-40% implementation of workplace diversity
Below 1.49	Very Low in Extent	0-20% implementation of workplace diversity.

**Box 5:** Scoring Guide for the Level of Satisfaction of Employees

Range	Interpretation	Description
4.50 - 5.00	Highly Satisfied	The level of satisfaction is rated at 51-100%
3.50 - 4.49	Satisfied	The level of satisfaction is rated at 1-50%
2.50 - 3.49	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	The employee cannot decide on the given provision.
1.50 - 2.49	Dissatisfied	The level of dissatisfaction is rated at 1-50%
Below 1.49	Highly Dissatisfied	The level of dissatisfaction is rated at 51-100%

## 5.5 Ethical Considerations

The data privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of the respondents' data were ensured and assured to protect their privacy in the conduct of this study.

Consent to conduct the study was obtained first from the hospital administrators. After the approval, the consent forms and the questionnaire were given to the department heads for instruction and distribution. Together with the questionnaires are the consent forms for the participants. The consent forms were signed before the study was conducted. The consent forms contain moral obligations of gathering, protecting, and using personally identifiable information. The respondents' consent forms were retrieved free from coercion and financial-related remuneration. Records of gathered data were

shredded for printed documents and were broken for data saved in computer software devices.

In selecting respondents, voluntariness is a primary consideration. Respondents were consulted first regarding their availability and willingness to answer the survey tool and participate in the focus group discussion, which is conducted virtually. The respondents' resources for both the survey questionnaire and FGD were considered in order to gather data effectively and efficiently. Resources such as the internet connection, equipment, and environment were looked into before the study.

All data gathered for this study were treated with the utmost confidentiality. The identification of respondents is of prime consideration. The names of the hospitals were not reflected in any parts of this manuscript. A code for the respondents was indicated in the survey tool to keep the respondents' identities. The questionnaire and the results of the survey were shredded after tallying and consolidation. The FGD recordings taken from the face-to-face interview were deleted after the recording was transcribed. The recordings were not published nor distributed to any person.

## 5.6 Scope and Delimitation

This study focused on determining the extent of workplace diversity implementation. The findings of this study serve as a basis for designing a model for workplace diversity implementation in private tertiary hospitals. It presented only information based on the data gathered from the respondents through an answered survey questionnaire and from the FGD.

## 6. Results

This chapter presents the results of the data and information gathered during the conduct of the study.

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, 300 respondents, 169 of them are between 20- 25 years old with a percentage of 56.33%, next 21.67% of the respondents are 26- 30 years old, and then 14.67% of the respondents are 31- 35 years composed of 44 and 31- 35 years old compose of 13 with the percentage of 31- 35 years old.

**Table 1:** Demographic Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Age

Age	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
20 - 25 years old	169	56.33%
26 - 30 years old	65	21.67%
31 - 35 years old	44	14.67%
36 - 40 years old	13	4.33%
41 - 45 years old	9	3.00%
46 - 50 years old	-	0.00%
51 - 55 years old	-	0.00%
56 - 60 years old	-	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Table 2 shows the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of gender. Males gathered the highest of 69.33%, which is 208 out of 300. The remaining 30.67% represents the females, comprising 92 respondents. The majority of the respondents are male.

**Table 2:** Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Sex

Sex	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Female	92	30.67%
Male	208	69.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Table 3 presents the extent of the implementation of workplace diversity in terms of compensation and benefits. The indicator provides long-term disability assurance and garnered the highest weighted mean of 4.51, which is interpreted as very high in extent. Second to highest, offers opportunities for promotions, bonuses, and pay raises, with the mean of 4.39 interpreted as very high in extent. The indicators provide short-term disability assurance, with a mean of 4.27, and acknowledge the employees' credentials and consider them in the salary package, with a mean of 4.24, were interpreted as very high in extent. The indicator provides a satisfying number of vacation leaves, and the sick and personal days obtained the lowest mean of 4.13, which is interpreted as high in extent.

The extent of implementation of workplace diversity in terms of compensation and benefits gained an overall mean of 4.31 is interpreted as highly extensive, and an SD of 0.261.

**Table 3:** Extent of Implementation of Workplace  
Diversity in Terms of Compensation and Benefits

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Provides short-term disability assurance	4.27	0.603	VHE
Provides long-term disability assurance	4.51	0.558	VHE
Offers opportunities for promotions, bonuses and pay raise	4.39	0.546	VHE
Provides a satisfying number of vacation leave, sick and personal day	4.13	0.576	HE
Acknowledges the employees' credentials and considers them in the salary package	4.24	0.671	VHE
<b>Total mean</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>0.261</b>	<b>VHE</b>

**Legend:** VHE - Very High in Extent; HE - High in Extent; ME - Moderate in Extent; LE - Low in Extent; VLE - Very Low in Extent.

Table 4 presents the extent of the implementation of workplace diversity in terms of employee engagement. The indicator provides opportunities for employees to do what is best every day and gathered the highest weighted mean of 4.42, which is interpreted as very high in extent. The indicators make employees feel that his/ her job is important, with a mean of 4.30, give recognition for the good performance of employees for the last seven days, with a mean of 4.29, and provide feedback for employees to know their

progress in the last six months, with the mean of 4.26, and considers the opinions and major concerns of the employees, with the mean of 4.24, were interpreted as very high in extent.

**Table 4:** Extent of Implementation of Workplace Diversity in Terms of Employee Engagement

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Provides opportunities for employees to do what is best every day	4.42	0.620	VHE
Considers the opinions and major concerns of the employees	4.24	0.696	VHE
It makes employees feel that his/ her job is important	4.30	0.705	VHE
Gives recognition for good performance of employees for the last seven days	4.29	0.634	VHE
Provides feedback for employees to know their progress in the last six months	4.26	0.631	VHE
<b>Total mean</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>0.307</b>	<b>VHE</b>

**Legend:** VHE - Very High in Extent; HE - High in Extent; ME - Moderate in Extent; LE - Low in Extent; VLE - Very Low in Extent.

The extent of implementation of workplace diversity in terms of employee engagement gathered an overall mean of 4.30, which is interpreted as very high in extent and with an SD of 0.307.

Table 5 presents the extent of the implementation of workplace diversity in terms of performance appraisal. The indicator performance appraisal system of the organization is clear and purposeful, garnering the highest weighted mean of 4.34, which is interpreted as very high in extent. The indicators identify performance problems to improve employee productivity and motivation and involve an appraiser highly capable of rating the performance of the rate, with a mean of 4.33, uses a set of performance goals for every employee for each rating period, with the mean of 4.29, and is based on a set of standards for the job of employees, with the mean of 4.28, were interpreted as very high in extent.

**Table 5:** Extent of Implementation of Workplace Diversity in Terms of Performance Appraisal

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Is clear and purposeful	4.34	0.672	VHE
Is based on a set of standards for the job of employees	4.28	0.670	VHE
Identifies performance problems to improve employee productivity and motivation	4.33	0.505	VHE
Uses a set of performance goals for every employee for each rating period	4.29	0.582	VHE
Involves an appraiser highly capable of rate the performance of the rate	4.33	0.666	VHE
<b>Total mean</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>0.231</b>	<b>VHE</b>

**Legend:** VHE - Very High in Extent; HE - High in Extent; ME - Moderate in Extent; LE - Low in Extent; VLE - Very Low in Extent.

The extent of implementation of workplace diversity in terms of performance appraisal attained an overall mean of 4.31, which is interpreted as very high in extent and with an SD of 0.231.

Table 6 presents the extent of the implementation of workplace diversity in terms of promotion. The indicator uses a process for career advancement/promotion transparent to all employees attained the highest weighted mean of 4.37 interpreted as very high in extent. The indicators acknowledge employee's achievement and use such for promotion, with a mean of 4.30, provides for transparent communication for everyone regarding pay, promotions and opportunities, with a mean of 4.29, and indicator supports career growth of employees, with a mean of 4.23, were interpreted as very high in extent. The indicator provides equitable opportunities to advance their career garnered the lowest mean of 4.20 interpreted as high in extent. The extent of implementation of workplace diversity in terms of promotion earned an overall mean of 4.28 is interpreted as highly extensive and with an SD of 0.314.

**Table 6:** Extent of Implementation of Workplace Diversity in Terms of Promotion

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Uses a process for career advancement/promotion transparent to all employees	4.37	0.727	VHE
Provides equitable opportunities to advance their career	4.20	0.634	HE
Supports career growth of employees	4.23	0.691	VHE
Acknowledges employee's achievements and use such for promotion	4.30	0.661	VHE
Provides for transparent communication for everyone regarding pay, promotions and opportunities	4.29	0.650	VHE
<b>Total mean</b>	<b>4.28</b>	<b>0.314</b>	<b>VHE</b>

**Legend:** VHE - Very High in Extent; HE - High in Extent; ME - Moderate in Extent; LE - Low in Extent; VLE - Very Low in Extent.

Table 7 presents the extent of the implementation of workplace diversity in terms of training. The indicators that offer equal opportunities for career growth attained the highest weighted mean of 4.39, which is interpreted as very high in extent. The indicators offer continuing education programs and training opportunities, with a mean of 4.34, has a career progression system that offers equitable opportunities for career growth among all employees, with a mean of 4.32, provides training based on a comprehensive needs analysis, with the mean of 4.26, and employs a learning management system to keep employees updated and assessed with their conceptual needs with the mean of 4.21, were interpreted as very high in extent. The extent of implementation of workplace diversity in terms of training garnered an overall mean of 4.31, which is interpreted as very high in extent and with an SD of 0.280.



**Table 7: Extent of Implementation of Workplace Diversity in Terms of Training**

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Has a career progression system that offers equitable opportunities for career growth among all employees	4.32	0.496	VHE
Offers equal opportunities for career growth	4.39	0.632	VHE
Offers continuing education programs and training opportunities	4.34	0.672	VHE
Provides training based from a comprehensive needs analysis	4.26	0.703	VHE
Employs a learning management system to keep employees updated and assessed with their conceptual needs	4.21	0.512	VHE
<b>Total mean</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>0.280</b>	<b>VHE</b>

**Legend:** VHE - Very High in Extent; HE - High in Extent; ME - Moderate in Extent; LE - Low in Extent; VLE - Very Low in Extent.

Table 8 presents the level of satisfaction of employees in terms of compensation and benefits. The indicator salary package earned the highest weighted mean of 4.45, interpreted as highly satisfied. The indicators number of vacation leave, sick and personal days, with a mean of 4.36; long-term disability assurance, with a mean of 4.32. And opportunities for promotions, bonuses and pay raises, with a mean of 4.31, were interpreted as highly satisfied. The indicator short-term disability assurance attained the lowest mean of 4.09, which was interpreted as satisfied. The level of satisfaction of employees in terms of compensation and benefits obtained an overall mean of 4.29, interpreted as highly satisfied and with an SD of 0.275.

**Table 8: Level of Satisfaction of Employees in Terms of Compensation and Benefits**

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Short term disability assurance	4.09	0.548	S
Long term disability assurance	4.32	0.682	HS
Opportunities for promotions, bonuses and pay raise	4.24	0.619	HS
Number of vacation leave, sick and personal day	4.36	0.620	HS
Salary package	4.45	0.675	HS
<b>Total mean</b>	<b>4.29</b>	<b>0.275</b>	<b>HS</b>

**Legend:** VS - Highly Satisfied; S - Satisfied; NSD - Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied; D - Dissatisfied; VD - Highly Dissatisfied

Table 9 presents the level of satisfaction of employees in terms of employee engagement. The indicator feedback given to employees on the importance of their role/job gathered the highest weighted mean of 4.36, interpreted as highly satisfied. The indicators of feedback for employees about their progress, with a mean of 4.27, and attention given to opinions and major concerns of the employees, with a mean of 4.26, were interpreted as highly satisfied. The indicators of opportunities for employees to maximize their engagement, with a mean of 4.19, and recognition for the good performance of employees, with a mean of 4.18, were interpreted as satisfied. The level of satisfaction of

employees in terms of employee engagement attained an overall mean of 4.25, which is interpreted as highly satisfied and an SD of 0.276.

**Table 9:** Level of Satisfaction of Employees in Terms of Employee Engagement

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Opportunities for employees to maximize their engagement	4.19	0.620	S
Attention is given to the opinions and major concerns of the employees	4.26	0.631	HS
Feedback is given to employees on the importance of their role/job	4.36	0.621	HS
Recognition for the good performance of employees	4.18	0.557	S
Feedback for employees about their progress	4.27	0.668	HS
<b>Total mean</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>0.276</b>	<b>HS</b>

**Legend:** VS - Highly Satisfied; S - Satisfied; NSD - Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied; D - Dissatisfied; VD - Highly Dissatisfied

Table 10 presents the level of satisfaction of employees in terms of performance appraisal. The indicator clear and purposeful performance appraisal system obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.50, which is interpreted as highly satisfied. The indicators provision for a qualified and capable appraiser, with a mean of 4.40, set of standards used for the appraisal system, with a mean of 4.29. Performance goals for every employee, with a mean of 4.28, and feedback for the performance problems of employees, with the lowest mean of 4.23, were interpreted as highly satisfied.

**Table 10:** Level of Satisfaction of Employees in Terms of Performance Appraisal

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Clear and purposeful performance appraisal system	4.50	0.570	HS
Set of standards used for the appraisal system	4.29	0.659	HS
Feedback for the performance problems of employees	4.23	0.626	HS
Performance goal for every employee	4.28	0.551	HS
Provision for a qualified and capable appraiser	4.40	0.511	HS
<b>Total mean</b>	<b>4.34</b>	<b>0.253</b>	<b>HS</b>

**Legend:** VS - Highly Satisfied; S - Satisfied; NSD - Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied; D - Dissatisfied; VD - Highly Dissatisfied

The level of satisfaction of employees in terms of performance appraisal garnered an overall mean of 4.34 is interpreted as highly satisfied, and an SD of 0.253.

Table 11 presents the level of satisfaction of employees in terms of promotion. The indicator provision for support on career growth of employees attained the highest weighted mean of 4.39, interpreted as highly satisfied. The indicators transparency of communications related pay, promotions, and opportunities, with a mean of 4.34, opportunities to advance the career of employees, with a mean of 4.29, acknowledgement to employee's achievement, with a mean of 4.27, and process for career advancement/promotion with the lowest mean of 4.23, were interpreted as highly satisfied. The level of satisfaction of employees in terms of promotion earned an overall mean of 4.30 is interpreted as highly satisfied, and an SD of 0.285.

**Table 11: Level of Satisfaction of Employees in Terms of Promotion**

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Process for career advancement/promotion	4.21	0.634	HS
Opportunities to advance the career of employees	4.29	0.650	HS
Provision for support on career growth of employees	4.39	0.632	HS
Acknowledgement given to employee's achievement	4.27	0.726	HS
Transparency of communications-related pay, promotions and opportunities	4.34	0.475	HS
<b>Total mean</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>0.285</b>	<b>HS</b>

**Legend:** VS – Highly Satisfied; S– Satisfied; NSD – Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied; D– Dissatisfied; VD– Highly Dissatisfied

Table 12 presents the level of satisfaction of employees in terms of training. The indicator career progression system offering equitable opportunities garnered the highest weighted mean of 4.39, interpreted as highly satisfied. The indicators of training opportunities for career growth and learning management system that keeps employees updated, with a mean of 4.27 interpreted, continuing professional education programs, with a mean of 4.25, and training based on the needs of employees with a mean of 4.23, were interpreted as highly satisfied.

**Table 12: Level of Satisfaction of Employees in Terms of Training**

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Career progression system offering equitable opportunities	4.39	0.546	HS
Training opportunities for career growth	4.27	0.586	HS
Continuing professional education programs	4.25	0.573	HS
Trainings based on the needs of employees	4.24	0.558	HS
Learning management system that keeps employees updated	4.27	0.696	HS
<b>Total mean</b>	<b>4.28</b>	<b>0.276</b>	<b>HS</b>

**Legend:** VS - Highly Satisfied; S - Satisfied; NSD - Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied; D - Dissatisfied; VD - Highly Dissatisfied

Table 13 shows a significant relationship between the extent of the implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of the employees. Evidently, p-values at <0.05 represent the significant relationship between the variables. Similarly, the extent of the implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of the employees show a statistically significant moderately high correlation at both 0.05 and 0.01 significance levels, as marked in an r-value of 0.585 with a p-value of less than 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the extent of the implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of the employees is rejected.

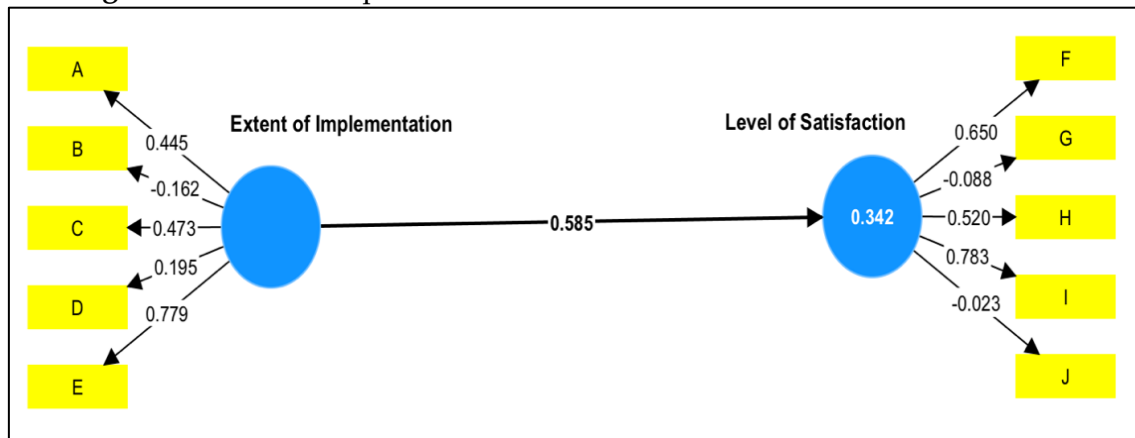
The level of satisfaction of employees in terms of training attained an overall mean of 4.28 is interpreted as highly satisfied, and an SD of 0.276.

**Table 13:** Correlation between the Extent of the Implementation of Workplace Diversity and the Level of Satisfaction of the Employees

Variables	Pearson r	Degree of Freedom	t-Stat	P-value
Extent of Implementation Level of Satisfaction	0.585	298	28.61	.0000

**Note:**  $r=0.585$  is moderately high correlation and  $p<.001$  is highly significant.

**Figure 3:** Structural Equation Model of the Correlation between the Variables



**Table 14:** Moderating Effect of Age

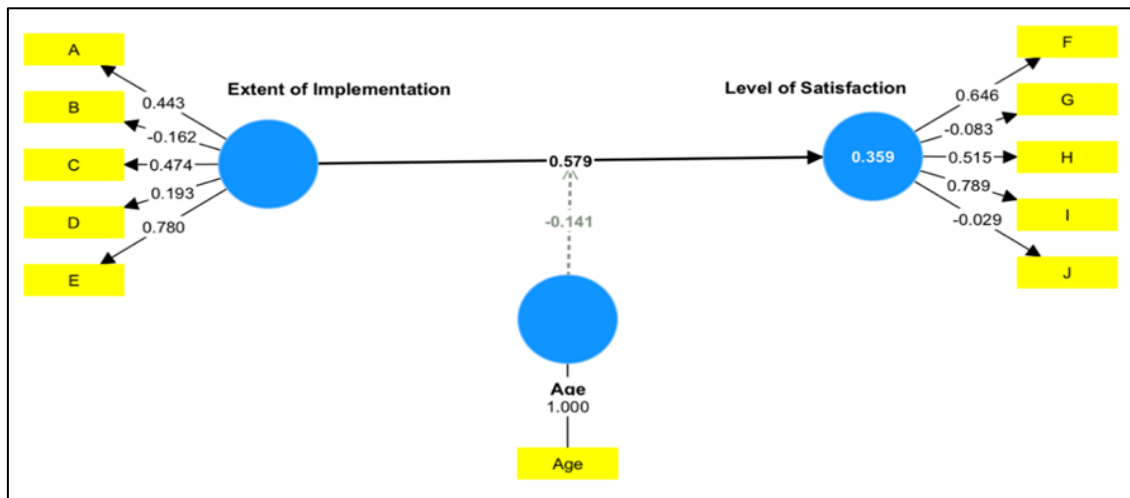
Variables	Moderating Effect	Adjusted R	P-value
Age x Extent of Implementation → Level of Satisfaction (Model 1)	-0.141	0.579	.0000
Age x Level of Satisfaction → Extent of Implementation (Model 2)	-0.105	0.575	.0000

**Note:** Age is the moderating variable, and the correlation between the main variables has been narrowed down.

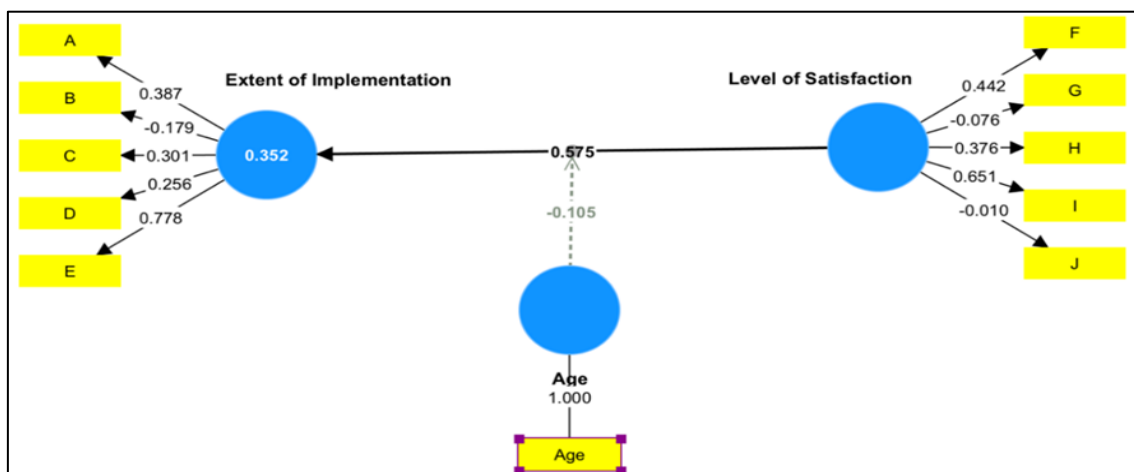
Table 14 shows the moderating effect of the profile of respondents in terms of age and the relationship between the extent of the implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of the employees. The p-values at  $<0.05$  represent the significant relationship between the variables at 0.05 and even at 0.01 level of significance. This implies age can moderate workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction with the moderating effect of -0.141 (Age x Extent of Implementation → Level of Satisfaction). Also, (Age x Level of Satisfaction → Extent of Implementation), with the moderating effect of -0.105, age is the moderating variable, and the correlation between the main variables has been narrowed down.

On the other hand, in model 1, the adjusted R is 0.579 and in model 2, the adjusted R is 0.575. The direct effect of the profile in terms of age and the relationship between the extent of the implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction was significant,  $p < .001$ . The hypothesis is rejected; that implies the profile of the respondents in terms of age does moderate the relationship between the extent of implementation of

workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of employees in the implementation of workplace diversity.



**Figure 4:** Age x Extent of Implementation → Level of Satisfaction



**Figure 5:** Age x Level of Satisfaction → Extent of Implementation

**Table 15:** Moderating Effect of Sex

Variables	Moderating Effect	Adjusted R	P-value
Sex x Extent of Implementation → Level of Satisfaction (Model 1)	-1.47	0.107	.141
Sex x Level of Satisfaction → Extent of Implementation (Model 2)	-1.65	0.117	.099

**Note:** Sex is the moderating variable and has narrowed very low correlation between the main variables.

Table 15 shows the moderating effect of sex between the extent of the implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of the employees with the p-values at  $>0.05$ . This value represents no significant relationship between the variables. It implies that sex cannot moderate workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of employees with a moderating effect of -1.47 (Sex x Extent of Implementation → Level of Satisfaction).

Also (Sex x Level of Satisfaction → Extent of Implementation) with the moderating effect of -1.65, sex does not moderate the variables and has narrowed into a very low correlation between the main variables.

On other hand, model 1, with an adjusted R is .107, and model 2, with an adjusted R is .117 is not significant. Therefore, sex has no direct effect on the relationship between the extent of the implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction. This data rejects the hypothesis that the profile of the respondents in terms of sex does not moderate the relationship between the extent of implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of employees.

**Table 16: Challenges of Employees in the Implementation of Workplace Diversity**

Themes	Core Ideas
Fairness and Equity in Compensation and Benefits	Generic Performance Appraisal Tool Competency-based Compensation Pay
Management Imposed Time	Compliance with Policy Scheduled Employee Activity Participation
Limited Training for Non-Medical Personnel	Medical Professionals Receiving Priority Training Employee Motivation

Table 16 was intended to answer the sixth problem. It presents the challenges of employees experiencing workplace diversity in private tertiary hospitals in General Santos City. The respondents of the study had shared challenges in experiencing diversity in their workplaces. Based on the focus group discussion conducted, analysis of the findings gave rise to the themes shown above.

## 6. Discussion

This chapter provides the justification and implications of the findings derived by the researcher. This study aims to determine the extent of implementation of workplace diversity in tertiary private hospitals in General Santos City. The researcher incorporated the qualitative research design to enrich the data gathered from the quantitative findings.

Based on the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, 300 respondents, 169 of them are between 20- 25 years old, with a percentage of 56.33%. According to Rasca (2017), the 21<sup>st</sup> human resource demographics have changed. More millennials will work together with workers from Generation X who will retire much later. Apart from millennials in the workplace, part of Generation Z is already working, some are currently entering the workforce and others are still in formation (Marquez, Bermudez-Gonzalez, Sanchez-Teba, & Nuñez-Rydman, 2021).

Participant 005 supported this legislation by saying, “...*tanang man ginadawat..*” (Everyone is accepted.) [Transcription A, line 36] Participant 007 also added “*Whatever race/ gender we have, hindi namin ramdam na we are disregarded, deprived or humiliated.*”(Whatever race/ gender we have, we do not feel disregarded, deprived or humiliated.)

In terms of sex, males earned the highest mean of 69.33%, which is 208 out of 300. In a study conducted by Pew Research Center in 2018, the number of females in the labor force has leveled off. In 2017, 57% of working-age females (ages 16 and older) were either employed or looking for work. Although females in number in the workplace is decreasing, females have made gains in educational attainment, which has contributed to their progress in the workforce at large. Their achievements made them lag in top leadership positions in business and government (Geiger & Parker, 2018). Moreover, Johansen and Zhu (2017) added that female managers place a higher priority on diversity than their male counterparts in nonprofit and private organizations compared with managers in public organizations. This research provides systematic evidence of sector differences in the patterns of managerial priorities regarding diversity.

In the Philippines, in support of diversity, lawmakers have long passed a bill that seeks to recognize the fundamental right of every person to be free from any form of discrimination regardless of sex, age, class, status, ethnicity, color, disability, religious and political beliefs, and sexual orientation or gender identity. This bill, the Anti-Discrimination Bill or the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) Equality Bill seeks to protect individuals and communities that experience human rights violations based on their SOGIE (Rugay, 2022).

Based on the result of the extent of implementation of workplace diversity in terms of compensation and benefits, the organization provides long-term disability assurance garnered the highest weighted mean of 4.51 interpreted as 81- 100% implementation of workplace diversity. Employee benefits are a powerful tool and a great opportunity to lure, raise and keep employees (Stalmasekova, Genzorová, & Čorejová, 2017). Employees in the hospital got to enjoy pay and benefits as experienced by one of the participants who said: Participant 008 *“Actually, the company is giving equal bonuses and merits to all staff members.”*

Another functional area of human resources that needs to be considered in the implementation of workplace diversity is employee engagement. In this study, the indicator, provides opportunities for employees to do what is best every day and earned the highest weighted mean of 4.42, interpreted as 81- 100% implementation of workplace diversity. According to AbuKhalifeh and Som (2012), employee engagement becomes an important issue as employee turnover rises due to the demand and shortage of skillful employees. Organizations nowadays have provided employees with more opportunities to participate in their task-related decisions and to give suggestions, recommendations, or ideas for productive organizational change (Barry & Wilkinson, 2016). As experienced by the participants, they are given opportunities where they can participate in activities by saying:

Participant 007 said: *“Ang hospital po mismo ang nag aarrange ng mga activities.”* (The hospital arranges activities) In the area of performance appraisal, the extent of implementation of workplace diversity with the indicator that it is clear and purposeful, obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.34 interpreted as 81- 100% implementation of workplace diversity. According to Dijk (2015), an effective performance appraisal would

be one that achieves its purpose, is perceived as reliable, accurate, and free of political interest and allows the rate to participate in the process. One of the respondents shared that they have a performance appraisal just recently conducted.

Participant 015 said: *"Naa mi performance appraisal. Bago lng gani nahuman."* (We have a performance appraisal. We just recently finished conducting one.) The extent of implementation of workplace diversity in terms of promotion, the indicator, uses a process for career advancement/promotion transparent to all employees, gained the highest weighted mean of 4.37, interpreted as 81 - 100% implementation of workplace diversity. A workplace with transparent communication is more collaborative and trustworthy. Transparent communication allows employees to be more innovative, encourages others to communicate openly, and increases sharing of ideas (Hutchison, 2020). Hospitals nowadays are becoming transparent to their employee as experienced by respondents.

Participant 006 supported this idea and said: *"Transparency is very evident in our institution sir."* In the extent of implementation of workplace diversity in terms of training, the indicator offers equal opportunities for career growth attained a highest weighted mean of 4.39 interpreted as 81- 100% implementation of workplace diversity. Employee training is a significant factor in attaining the vision, mission, goals and objectives of any organization. Training is an essential element to increasing competence, and productivity of employees, developing knowledge and skills of employees as per the requirements of the job and eliminating performance problems (Surbhi, 2018). Participants were sent to training and other hospital activities that are essential and relevant to the delivery of their services.

Participant 013 shared that: *"Yes, the institution gives or provides seminars and training that could enhance and improve my knowledge."* [Transcription C, line 63]. It was also supported by Participant 007 who said: *"Ang hospital po mismo ang nag aarrange ng mga activities, training and seminars namin."* (The hospital arranges activities, trainings and seminars)

Diversity in the workplace is all about creating an inclusive environment, accepting every individual's differences, enabling all employees to achieve their full potential, and as a result, allowing businesses to reach their fullest potential (Ong, 2018).

On the result of the level of satisfaction of employees in terms of compensation and benefits, the salary package obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.45, interpreted as always represents a good feeling with the statement (81-100% of the time). Having financial incentives, pay and benefits aligned with company strategy, the organization can inspire its management and human resources to deliver superior results (Groysberg, Abbott, Marino, & Aksoy, 2021).

Satisfied with the employer Participant 013 said: *"Naay benefits included on the contract of my employment, somehow I am satisfied."* (There are benefits included in the contract, somehow, I am satisfied.)

The level of satisfaction of employees in terms of employee engagement with indicator, feedback given to employees on the importance of his role/job garnered the



highest weighted mean of 4.36, interpreted as always representing a good feeling with the statement (81-100% of the time). Timely feedback by managers and leaders was essential to institutions to build trust and to maintain staff engagement over time (Frampton, Fox, & Hollowood, 2017). As shared by participants they feel belongingness in the hospital they are in.

Participant 013 said: *"...I believe I am valued..."* [Transcription C, line 33]. It was supported by Participant 014 by saying: *"Wala man award pero the responses na gina hatag sa akong sa mga upod ko and even from my superiors, feeling nko I am valued na."* (No award yet the responses given to me by my colleagues and even my superiors, I feel being valued.) [Transcription C, line 34-35]. Participant 006 also shared the same idea and said: *"Our supervisors and top managers are very motivating. Narerecognize nila lahat."* (Our supervisor and top managers were very motivating. They recognized everyone.)

The level of satisfaction of employees in terms of performance appraisal, a clear and purposeful performance appraisal system obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.50, interpreted as always representing a good feeling with the statement (81-100% of the time). Participants shared on the basis of their performance appraisal. Clearly defining the purposes and processes of performance appraisal used by organizations will help the employee with their work performance and will give a venue for feedback (Dijk, 2015).

Participant 006 said: *"Performance are assessed based on the task I have accomplished, feedback from patients, the attitude/ behavior."* [Transcription B, line 60-61]. It was supported by Participant 008 who said: *"Sa amin sa Nursing Service, naka pattern po kami sa standards of Nursing Profession based in our Institutional Protocol."* (For us in the Nursing Service, we Aligned it to the standards of Nursing profession in our institutional protocol.)

The level of satisfaction of employees in terms of promotion, with indicator provision for support on career growth of employees, earned the highest weighted mean of 4.39, interpreted as always represents a good feeling with the statement (81-100% of the time). Participants got to enjoy their pay as shared by one of them. In order to increase productivity, responsiveness, quality, and recognition service, hospitals must ensure that worker satisfaction levels are high. Organizations must seek to examine the degree of worker motivation and satisfaction (Ali & Anwar, 2021).

Participant 008 said: *"Actually, the company is giving equal bonuses and merits to all staff members."*

The level of satisfaction of employees in terms of training, with indicator career progression system offering equitable opportunities garnered the highest weighted mean of 4.39, interpreted as always representing a good feeling with the statement (81-100% of the time). Employees interviewed as participants participate in knowledge-enriching activities, as shared by one of them.

Participant 013 supported this idea and said: *"Yes, the institution gives or provides seminars and training."*

If employees receive the right training, performance increases as skills improve, thanks to training and development programs, and employee satisfaction is also high. By

raising awareness of the advantages of training and development among employees and managers, the gap between the knowledge and skills currently possessed by employees and those needed to function successfully and efficiently should be closed. (Khan, Abbasi, Waseem, Ayaz, & Ijaz, 2016) Participants have shared:

Participant 009 said: “...*kailangan may seminars and additional training that we need in our field of profession.*” (Needs seminar and additional training that we need in our field of profession.)

Such an individual lifestyle is fundamentally based on happiness in whatever one performs at work. The same is true for nurses whose job satisfaction has a beneficial impact on patient safety, productive work behavior, quality care and attention, turnover, dedication to their jobs, and professional engagement. Nursing, like any other career, entails risks, particularly in facilities that provide healthcare where nurses frequently come into contact with patients who are exposed to pathogens, poisonous, risky, and harmful chemicals, solutions, and medications (Akinwale & George, 2020).

The relationship between the extent of the implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of the employees with p-values at  $<0.05$  represents a significant relationship. As per Olowookere, Abdulraheem, and Abu (2021), workforce diversity finds significance in the contemporary work environment in the face of expanding workforce migration, and women’s participation, among other drivers. Contemporary organizations are, therefore, rarely socially homogeneous and workers from numerous social backgrounds essentially need to interface to accomplish the objective.

In this study, age has a moderating effect on the extent of the implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of the employees, with p-values at  $<0.05$  representing that there is a significant relationship. Age in the workplace can cause lower work performance due to employees’ compatibility issues (Case, Hussain, Marshall, Summerskill, & Gyi, 2015). Several studies consider age as a source of diverse processes and its effects on the organization’s performance (Kunze, Boehm, & Bruch 2013), and employees of various ages act differently in a workplace (Bashir, 2021). But when age-diverse teams are managed well, members can develop an organization with an array of skills, knowledge, and networks with one another (Gerhardt, Nachemson-Ekwall, & Fogel, 2022).

On the other hand, the moderating effect of sex between the extent of the implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of the employees with the p-values at  $>0.05$ . This value represents no significant relationship between the variables. The employees, regardless of gender, color, ethnicity, or other personal traits, feel valued, respected, and supported in the workplace, which is the goal of workplace diversity implementation. As a result, rather than taking into account the employee’s sex, the level of satisfaction with workplace diversity implementation should be focused on their experiences with the implementation itself.

Additionally, workplace diversity and inclusion have demonstrated that it helps all workers, regardless of sex, by fostering a healthy work environment, boosting morale,

fostering creativity and innovation, and improving organizational performance. Consequently, regardless of the respondents' gender, the degree of workplace diversity implementation ought to have a favourable association with employee satisfaction.

According to Westover and Peterson (2019), there is no difference in job satisfaction between men and women, particularly for specific job variables. Apart from job satisfaction, work relation factors such as job well-being (how a person feels while working) have been observed with no gender difference. But for both male and female employees, job well-being decreases with age. Similarly, according to Baslevant and Kirmanoglu (2014), there is no gender difference when it comes to the preferred number of work hours.

In the previous chapter, the challenges of employees experiencing diversity have been presented. Three major themes with sub-themes have arisen from the focus group discussion conducted, namely:

- A. Fairness and Equity in Compensation and Benefits,
- B. Management Imposed Time, and
- C. Limited Training for Non-Medical Personnel.

#### **A. A Fairness and Equity in Compensation and Benefits**

In a study conducted by Estrella (2022), in the hospitals of Metro Manila, Metro Davao and Metro Cebu, a competitive compensation and benefits scheme remained a significant challenge in the healthcare industry. Moreover, the study revealed, that compensation and benefits are major drivers for labor migration among healthcare providers.

Participant 013 said: *"... in terms of compensation for my job position, somehow dili ko satisfied, especially if I try to compare my compensation with others..."* (..in terms of compensation for my job position, somehow I am not satisfied, especially if I try to compare with others.)

One aspect considered in the pay system is performance appraisal. Performance appraisal is the mediator between what the employee wants to be done and motivating them to do it. This extends up to tying performance to compensation making the appraisal much more powerful (Gesmen & Wiseman, 2011). The private tertiary hospitals in General Santos City have performance appraisals to check the productivity of staff. However, the tool does not measure exactly the work performed by the staff since the tool is general or the same across all job titles.

Participant 0013 said: *"Yes, but sometimes I could say na very generic ang performance appraisal."* (Yes, but sometimes I could say the performance appraisal (tool) is generic.) [Transcription C, line 42]. It was supported by Participant 011 and said: *"...gigamit sa akona na tool pareho pud sa ibang department."* (...the tool used for me is the same as other departments.)

Moreover, tertiary hospitals in General Santos City have difficulty in giving details of their compensation and benefits structure even to their own employees. In the study of Kadir, AlHosani, Ismail, and Sehan (2019), some industries have unfair compensation to the employee, the allowances are not provided on fair criteria, and many employees

do not understand the compensation and benefits. As shared by respondents, they do not know the composition of their compensation and pay structure or system.

Participant 003 supported the idea and said: "*Ambot kung naa ba. ...naa koy training pero wala man adjustment sa pay.*" (I do not know if there is...I have training yet no adjustment in my pay.) [Transcription A, line 160]. Participant 013 added: "*Dili pa man gud kaayo klaro..*" (It is not clear yet...) [Transcription C, line 70]

## **B. Management Imposed Time**

Industries are dependent on maximizing profits while recognizing and adjusting to the fact that what may work today may not necessarily work in the future (Kortmann, Gelhard, Zimmermann, & Piller, 2014). Researchers suggested that in order to make and maintain companies' profitability, leaders of companies must ensure engage employees with the company. However, leaders struggle to adapt their organization in response to changes and balance between employee relations, adopting innovation, and maximizing short-term profits (Hill & Birkinshaw, 2012). In order to ensure the participation of employees in hospital activities, management styles include arranging the schedules of employees.

Participant 013 said: "*...the institution gives or provides seminars and training...*" [Transcription C, line 63]. It was supported by Participant 007 and said: "*...hospital po mismo ang nag aarrange ng mga activities, training and seminars namin.*" (The hospital arranges our activities, training, and seminars.)

Lowe (2012) proposed that employee engagement is a byproduct of leadership. Ensuring work engagement and empowerment is a significant factor in employee involvement (Nicholas & Erakovich, 2013). In the discussion, respondents mentioned that their activities, training, and seminars are part of their institutional policy and compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. These actions are being facilitated by the unit head or their leaders.

Participant 008 said: "*Part din po kasi ng audit naming.*" (Part of our audit.) [Transcription B, line 100]. It was supported by Participant 009, and said: "*Sa audit kailangan may seminars and additional training...*" (In our audit, there is a need for the seminar and additional training...) [Transcription B, line 102]. Furthermore, Participant 004 added: "*for licensing... Mga required ni DOH.*" (For licensing... Required by the DOH.)

## **C. Limited Training for Non-Medical Personnel**

According to Hutchison (2020), training is a factor that is related to the overall workplace environment and employees' job satisfaction. Moreover, effective training will yield higher job satisfaction, productivity, improved work quality, increased motivation, commitment, higher morale and teamwork. However, in tertiary private hospitals in General Santos City, training is mostly given to medical personnel.

Participant 005 supported the idea and said: "*...selected lang.*" (... selected only.) [Transcription A, line 135]. Participant 001 also experienced the same and said: "*Wala pa man koy naadtuan na training...ah, naa diay pero dugay na kaau. Tinuig na.*" (I haven't

attended training... ah, there is but it was long time ago... Years ago.) [Transcription A, line 141]. Moreover, Participant 002 said: "... *sa laundry wala man na sila ginapa training.*" (...those in the Laundry they are not sent to training.)

## **7. Workplace Diversity Model in Private Tertiary Hospitals in General Santos City**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Workplace Diversity is a phenomenon private tertiary hospitals are experiencing today. A phenomenon that primarily involves human resources in an organization, the interactions, and the relationships that take place within the environment. Human resource manager with the support of organization management has a bigger role in this diversity. Their role will shape and direct the flow of the organization with the diverse employees they have. The functional areas of human resources: Compensation and Benefits, Employee Engagement, Performance Appraisal, Promotion, and Training, will serve as the foundation to protect and serve the interest of human resources and in achieving organizational goals and objectives.

### **7.2 Rationale**

The implementation of workplace diversity has been challenging. Human resource managers have kept strategizing and creating programs to empower, engage and increase the productivity of employees in their organization but have little understanding of the growing diversity. In handling workplace diversity, human resource managers and management must understand the different factors that consist of diversity and consider the ever-changing dynamics that surround every employee and the landscape of employment. Among the factors to be considered is the age of employees. Age has been noted to moderate the extent of implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of employees. This means that strategies to be designed in the functional areas of human resources must be aligned with the age of employees. For instance, younger employees are adept at using technology as a means of communication, HR managers must use this opportunity to hasten information dissemination in the organization. This model of workplace diversity is the main essence of empowering and engaging employees while achieving organizational goals. This model was designed after an in-depth analysis of the responses gathered with the survey questionnaire and was enriched by the experiences of respondents through a focus group discussion. Moreover, this model of workplace diversity is evolving as it is dependent on the variables not limited to the aforementioned in this study.

### **7.3 Goals and Objectives**

This study aims to develop a model of Workplace Diversity that would guide human resource managers and management in understanding the dynamics of employment, employees, and workplace environment. Along with understanding this condition in the workplace is also to strengthen functional areas in human resources that created themes

with core ideas which were drawn from the focus group discussion: Fairness and Equity in Compensation and Benefits with core ideas of Generic Performance Appraisal Tool, Competency-based Compensation Pay; Management Imposed Time with core ideas Compliance with Policy and Scheduled Employee Activity Participation; Limited Training for Non – Medical Personnel with core ideas Medical Professionals receiving priority training and employee motivation.

The workplace diversity model gives insight into the factors that need to be enhanced in the functional areas of human resources. As discussed in the recommendation of this study, organizations should value diversity specifically in engaging employees to increase their satisfaction, and consideration of diversity in the formulation of policies and procedures as this affects human resources and effective communication across the organization.

#### **7.4 Approaches and Guiding Principles**

The theories that serve as the guiding principles and at the same time support of this study include: Cognitive Diversity Hypothesis, Social Cognitive Theory, and Similar Attraction Theory.

##### **a. Cognitive Diversity Hypothesis**

This theory proposed that the differences of employees from cultural backgrounds can bring or result in creative and innovative problem-solving strategies (Miller, Burke & Glick, 1998). This study supports the idea that when employees of different backgrounds in life, experiences, skills, and knowledge levels will create a better-performing team. Furthermore, the openness and willingness to accept and adopt the uniqueness of every individual in the organization will increase team cohesion and dynamics.

##### **b. Social Cognitive Theory**

The emphasis of this theory is the social influence and its effect on external and internal social reinforcement. SCT considers the unique way every individual in acquiring and maintaining behavior. It also considers the social environment in which they perform the behavior. The theory accounts for the person's past experiences, which will determine the behavioral action. Furthermore, these past experiences influence reinforcements, expectations, and expectancies, which shape whether a person will engage in a specific behavior and the reasons why a person engages in that behavior (LaMorte, 2016). This model of the study supports the theory where employees are surrounded by different factors such as the policies and procedures, their colleagues, and the experiences they get to encounter every day, even in their communication with different people will shape them into better individuals. This theory, together with the Workplace Diversity model, believes that when employees operate in their environment, they monitor and regulate their actions. These behaviors if combined with other employees will lead to a more aware, reflective, and adaptive team where everyone is sensitive to others.

### **c. Similarity Attraction Theory**

This theory according to Berscheid and Walster (1969) and Byrne (1971), suggests that people, in general, are most attached to others who share similar attributes. They share similar important characteristics and are more likely to be attracted to each other. Contrary to the two theories mentioned above, this theory focuses on the individual aspect of an employee. This may not contribute to teamwork and increase cohesions among members but this has to be understood when handling a group of people in an organization. The diversity of workers may lead to differences in attitude, behavior and beliefs, some may identify themselves as belonging to those they share the same traits. In understanding workplace diversity, this model supports this theory as employees will associate themselves with others as this may provide corroboration that an employee is not alone.

## **8. Methods**

The implementation of workplace diversity may vary according to the service desired, the goals, and the objectives of the organization. The interplay of the top management and human resource manager is very vital to use diversity to propel or hasten the achievement of the goals and objectives of the organization. Human resource managers continuously strategize and innovate actions in the functional areas of human resources while considering the gains or profits of the organization. In the implementation of programs for each functional area of human resources, the human resource manager will ensure the assistance and facilitation of the top management in the organization as they are at the side of every employee under their unit.

### **8.1 Strategies**

The proposed Workplace Diversity Model aims to improve the implementation of programs in the functional areas of human resources.

#### **a. Management Support**

The role of top management in the landscape of employment today is critical to the achievement of the plans of the human resources department. Their support entails funding the programs identified for each functional area of human resources. In one of the discussions in this study, employees feel motivated when they are being acknowledged by their management. This acknowledgment may be in the form reward or simply being checked by their management through their head, which has a big impact, especially in the area of employee engagement.

#### **b. Technical Support**

The advent of technologies will help in the delivery of programs in the human resource department. The use of software, programs, and equipment in the human resource department will hasten the implementation of activities.

For instance, communication can be enhanced with the use of technology. In increasing engagement, employees must be informed or aware of the programs, policies, and updates within the organization in a timely manner.

### **c. Age Inclusive Human Resource Management Practices**

In this study, age has been identified to moderate the relationship between the extent of implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of employees. The human resource manager, through functional areas of human resources, will be able to strategize human resource practices that capitalize on age to support the ongoing diversity in the workplace. In the area of compensation and benefits, age-specific appraisal and compensation practices are recommended. Employees who stay longer in their organization are mostly parents and are providing for the needs of their families. On the other hand, younger employees desire experiences and career development. With this, the organization can expect retention of older employees.

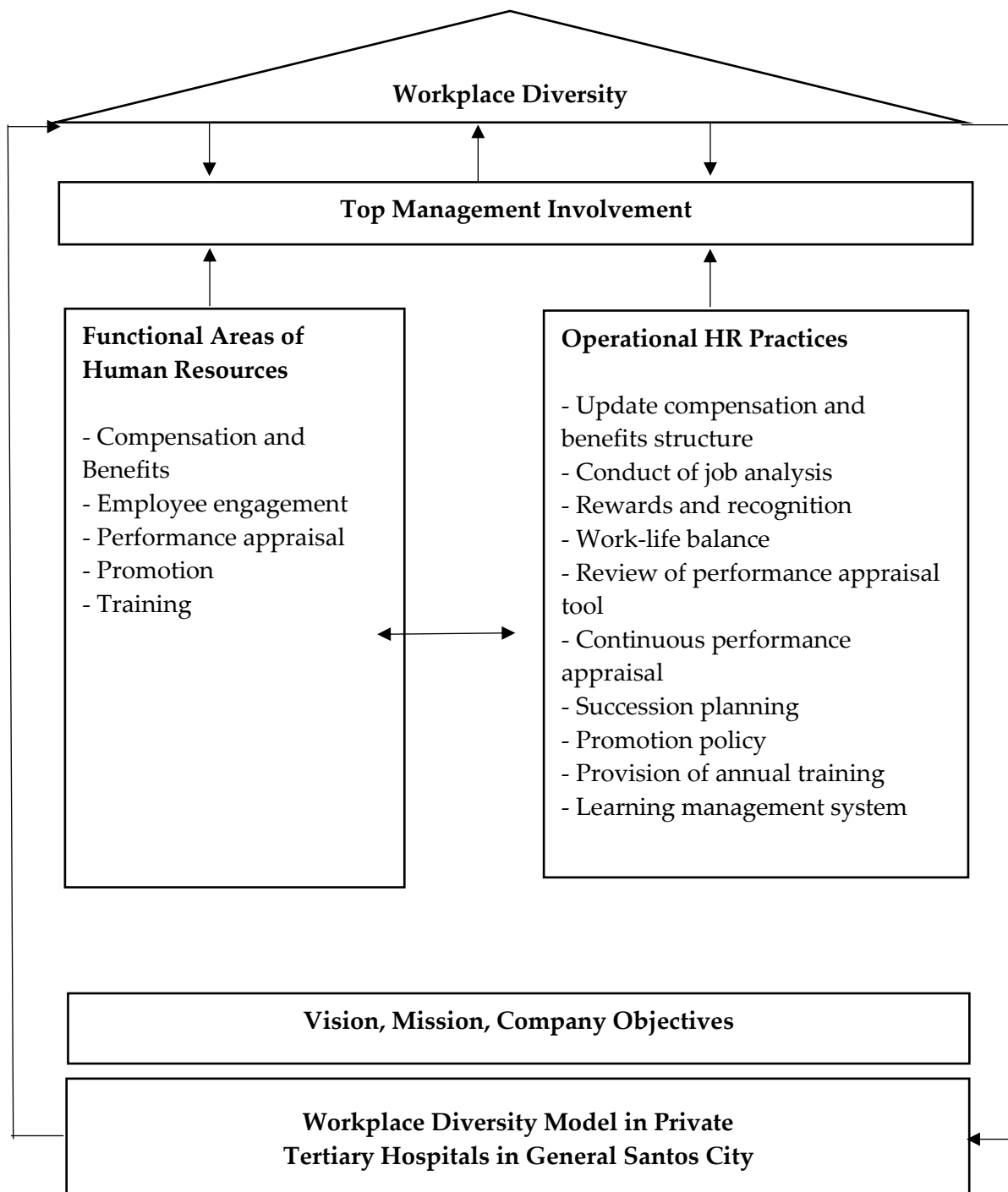
In the aspect of training and career development, a learning management system can help employees of different ages. The different methods (lecture, workshop, demonstration) of delivering knowledge and skills are effective for employees of different ages. In managing workplace diversity, training will help keep up the motivation and performance of older employees to the point that some may postpone retirement. While for younger employees, this strategy can increase their level of satisfaction.

Providing training and career development programs for different ages in the organization will also address employee engagement. Constant conduct of programs will bring a conscious effort of employees to attend and participate in activities organized by their organization.

Lastly, in terms of promotion, HR managers should implement age-neutral HRM practices. Giving equal rights to younger and older employees of the organizations in the aspect of promotion. Criteria for promotion must be clear and implemented to all regardless of age.

Taking all these strategies together is a promising tool for implementing and managing workplace diversity and addressing the satisfaction of employees.





**Figure 6:** Workplace Diversity Model in Private Tertiary Hospitals in General Santos City

Figure 6 presents the recommended Workplace Diversity Model in Private Tertiary Hospitals in General Santos City. The experiences of employees with diversity in the workplace give the idea for the development of this model. Implementing workplace diversity requires support and commitment from the top management. The support given by the management to the programs of the Human Resource Department, specifically in the functional areas of human resources, will aid in the effectiveness of

managing a diverse workforce. The functional areas of human resources and the operational HR practices should go hand-in-hand. The activities, strategies, and innovations to be applied in the HR practices should be aligned with the functional areas of HR. In the development of programs and strategies for operational HR practices and functional areas of human resources, the HR manager shall anchor both to the strategic directions, vision, mission, goals, core values, and company objectives. This will ensure alignment and achievement of the goal and objectives of the organization. Along with these factors, the characteristics, attitudes, behavior, and beliefs of employees should be considered in the planning of operational HR practices and in the functional areas of human resources.

## 9. Conclusions

The following conclusions were collected from the findings of the study:

The extent of implementation of workplace diversity in terms of compensation and benefits, performance appraisal, and training has an overall mean of 4.31, interpreted as very high in extent. The level of satisfaction in terms of compensation and benefits, performance appraisal, and training has an overall mean of 4.34, interpreted as always representing a good feeling with the statement (81-100% of the time). Providing a sizable bonus for each successful work measurement is a sign of business professionalism. A career path is something that every employee seeks wherever they work, but focusing only on bonuses and big wages does not necessarily yield the best results in terms of workplace diversity and job satisfaction. This is the primary incentive for an employee to stay with the company, as shown through career pathways that the management deems appropriate. Employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction are often primarily influenced by the corporate environment and the social dynamics at work. a system of training and rewards that is exactly calculated and planned. This study demonstrates that leadership affects workplace diversity in employee performance appraisal. The hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the Extent of the Implementation of Workplace Diversity and the Level of Satisfaction of the Employees is rejected. The respondents' age profile moderates the relationship between the extent of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of employees. Younger employees are still adjusting to the work environment, policies and procedures of the institution, and the people they work with. Older employees, on the other hand, have developed the ability to handle and lead a diverse composition of employees. The years they have stayed in their institution have provided them with varying experiences in dealing with the changes, and they have gained strategies for coping with ongoing diversity in their workplaces. The profile of respondents in terms of sex does not moderate the relationship between the extent of implementation of workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction of employees in the implementation of workplace diversity. In conclusion, because workplace diversity is meant to benefit all employees, regardless of sex, it is unlikely that the respondents' gender will act as a moderator in the relationship between the extent of workplace

diversity implementation and the level of employee satisfaction with the implementation. Workplace and job satisfaction generally have a favourable association. In other words, job satisfaction rises as diversity levels do. This finding supports the notion that diversity might cause conflict between nurses but not Performance Appraisal issues. This study does, however, also point out that as diversity rises, there is a growing correlation between it and job satisfaction.

## 10. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following are recommended:

Tertiary private hospitals should value diversity as a key contributor to employee satisfaction, especially in Employee Engagement. Organizations that are committed to diversity will also concentrate on ethnicity and the creation of a universal social awareness model. In order to increase employee satisfaction, HR managers and business administration will manage diversity factors. Policymakers and hospital management may need to engage their staff by giving them new responsibilities in order to boost productivity. It is crucial that healthcare professionals receive regular training, perhaps once a year. Working in diverse teams can help dispel stereotypes and cultural misconceptions by allowing employees to get to know and respect one another personally.

Organizations that value diversity must also make sure that they have policies and procedures in place to safeguard workers' rights and adhere to legal requirements. Consideration of how organizations' policies and procedures affect a diverse collection of employees is crucial for any organizations. To further understand how staff members feel about the diversity policy, the hospital should provide questionnaires and suggestion boxes as a means of employee input. It is important to consider all input, optimistic and negative. Hospitals must be prepared to adjust and modify any policies that staff members may perceive as impediments or unhelpful. To properly communicate business values and culture to all employees, it is also crucial to make sure that the unwritten "rules" of an organization are fully communicated to every employee.

The provision of rewards and recognition for employees to acknowledge their contributions to the institution and achievements, be they personal or professional. The following tools and/or areas can be a basis for rewards and recognition: performance appraisal, customer commendation, academic achievements, skilled acquisition, and best practices developed. Rewards and recognition are recommended to be given on a monthly, quarterly, and yearly basis, depending on the degree of contribution and/or achievement.

Crafting an annual learning and development plan to continuously develop and update the concepts and skills of employees. The COVID-19 pandemic has created a gap in the delivery of knowledge and acquisition of skills, especially for employees belonging to the medical field. Distant learning was utilized as a mode of delivering concepts but was not effective in developing or acquiring skills. The learning and development plan

will help the different departments of the institutions in delivering workshops, training, and seminars, not merely in compliance with the statutory, regulatory, and legal requirements.

Organizations must make sure they communicate with employees in an effective manner if they are to manage a diverse workplace. In order to achieve harmony within a varied workplace, policies, procedures, safety standards, and other critical information should be designed to overcome language and cultural obstacles. Workers also need to be conscious of cultural sensitivity. By making staff members more self-aware, which is essential for assisting staff members in understanding their own cultural biases and prejudices, sensitivity training can assist an organization in managing diversity in the workplace.

Management must support equal employment and career growth opportunities based on gender, ethnicity, religion, and functional inclusivity. Organizations must also see the development of an organized, diverse workforce as essential to achieving harmony within the organizations. Finally, in order to keep nurses and other healthcare workers and reduce the likelihood of turnover, hospital management must give adequate consideration to issues relating to job satisfaction, and further research must add the variable turnover rate to the organization and determine how effective the workplace diversity and the level of satisfaction.

## **10. Compliance with Ethical Standards**

The data privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of the respondents' data were ensured and assured to protect their privacy in the conduct of this study. Consent to conduct the study was obtained first from the hospital administrators. After the approval, the consent forms and the questionnaire were given to the department heads for instruction and distribution. Together with the questionnaires are the consent forms for the participants. The consent forms were signed before the study was conducted. The consent forms contain moral obligations of gathering, protecting, and using personally identifiable information. The respondents' consent forms were retrieved free from coercion and financial-related remuneration. Records of gathered data were shredded for printed documents and were broken for data saved in computer software devices.

In selecting respondents, voluntariness is a primary consideration. Respondents were consulted first regarding their availability and willingness to answer the survey tool and participate in the focus group discussion, which is conducted virtually. The respondents' resources for both the survey questionnaire and FGD were considered in order to gather data effectively and efficiently. Resources such as the internet connection, equipment, and environment were looked into before the study.

All data gathered for this study were treated with the utmost confidentiality. The identification of respondents is of prime consideration. The names of the hospitals were not reflected in any parts of this manuscript. A code for the respondents was indicated in the survey tool to keep the respondents' identities. The questionnaire and the results of

the survey were shredded after tallying and consolidation. The FGD recordings taken from the face-to-face interview were deleted after the recording was transcribed. The recordings were not published nor distributed to any person.

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### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest. The authors whose names are listed certify that they have NO affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest (such as honoraria; educational grants; membership, employment, consultancies, or other equity interest; and expert testimony or patent-licensing arrangements), or non-financial interest (such as personal or professional relationships, affiliations, knowledge or beliefs) in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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