

Gender Analysis in Hospitality Industry in Mati City

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to establish a gender-sensitive workplace proportion of the hospitality industry in Mati City, Davao Oriental. Specifically, it sought to determine the main gender working in hotels, the preferred gender for hiring, and the level of gender awareness among both management and employees, it also examined the relationship between these related factors. The study utilized a complete enumeration of hotel establishments in Mati City and employed a random sampling technique to determine the sample size of hotel employees. A total of 85 employees from 11 hotels were considered, with 46 employees participating as survey respondents. Results revealed that hotels employed more female workers than male workers; however, if given a choice, they preferred to hire more male applicants in the future. Both hotel management and employees demonstrated a high level of gender awareness. Additionally, a significant relationship was observed between management's level of understanding and the number of employees hired. The study recommends that hotel management implement gender-sensitive policies and conduct seminars on gender sensitivity to prevent gender-related issues and promote gender equality in the hospitality industry. Future research should consider a larger population to obtain more accurate and comprehensive data.

Keywords: Establishment, gender, hospitality, hotel management, and Mati City

INTRODUCTION

In the Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management program, the classification of gender is not a significant issue. This course welcomes competent students with a high regard for their talents and abilities, regardless of their gender. We also assure you that these skills will be enhanced through challenging activities, providing a stepping stone to success. However, the knowledge acquired during college days has constraints that make you disqualified from the establishment you wish to apply for. One of the qualifications required is the applicant's gender.

Gender refers to the attributes that a society or culture considers "masculine" or "feminine," whereas biological sex, as male or female, is a universal fact; however, societal roles and expectations associated with gender vary across cultures (Bornstein, 1955). Gender disparity within organizations is a complex issue reflected in their structures, processes, and practices (Stamarski and Son Hing, 2015). Many industries, including hospitality, recognize the strategic importance of gender equality. Historically, greater gender equality within a company has been associated with a more harmonious and productive work environment, which motivates employees and significantly contributes to a firm's growth (Wu and Cheng, 2016). To fully harness their workforce's potential, organizations must be sensitive to gender-related issues by acknowledging the needs, aspirations, abilities, and professional value of all employees without bias, as a gender-sensitive workplace fosters an environment where human potential is maximized, ultimately enabling organizations to achieve their goals more effectively (Buddhapriya, 2013). Research in China by Yafang and Gongyong (2008) revealed that women are more likely than men to pursue a career in hospitality due to their positive perception of the industry. However, despite the high success rate of female students in hotel management programs, leadership roles such as General Manager and department heads remain predominantly occupied by men, highlighting the ongoing gender disparity in career progression within the hospitality sector (Peshave and Gupta, 2017).

According to the employees at Lanes' Katulganan in Mati, their management prefers hiring female applicants for housekeeping due to their tidiness and organizational skills. However, most hired employees are not degree holders, with many being housewives or undergraduates. A study by McMurray et al. (2016) highlights that employers prioritize personal attitude, employability skills, and relevant work experience over academic qualifications, valuing traits like trustworthiness, reliability, and motivation. Despite this, Okumus et al., (2010) found that women in the hospitality industry face challenges such as limited promotional opportunities and low wages. Additionally, a long-term study on a hotel chain in the Philippines revealed that improving human resource management strategies, particularly in reward management and training, significantly boosts employee engagement, emphasizing the industry's focus on practical skills and experience in building a dedicated workforce (Presbitero, 2016).

In Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology, most students who took BSHRM are observed to be females. It can be easily identified with just a glimpse of an eye at every single BSHRM student in the hallway and even outside the school premises. The most alarming aspect of this is that hotels nowadays tend to prefer male employees because they can handle multitasking jobs. Now, the question lies in where these females should go after graduation. Thus, this study will seek further explanations to achieve gender equality in hiring employees in the hospitality industry.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

The researcher gathered data from eleven (11) hotel establishments in Mati, and there were eighty-five (85) employees, including managers, receptionists, and maintenance personnel. They were given survey questionnaires to achieve the study's objectives. The researcher made two separate survey questionnaires. However, the hotel managers must answer both survey questionnaires, while the employees will have to answer the one intended only for them. The data were presented in graphs and tabulations that are easily understandable. The presentations of the collected data were initially presented in a graphical form, where the data were transformed into an understandable format, making it easier to interpret. The rest of the data collected were presented in tabulations.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the respondents were compiled, sorted, and analyzed using various methods to obtain the results. To achieve the first objective of the study, the number of staff of each gender in hotel establishments in Mati City was examined to determine the dominant gender in the workforce. The researcher used frequency count analysis to obtain derive the results and used correlation analysis to examined their relationship.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dominant gender employed in hotel establishment

The bar graph below illustrates the distribution of employed individuals in the selected hotel establishments by gender (Figure 1). According to the survey, eighteen (18) of the receptionists in the hotel establishments were female, and ten (10) were male. Based on the results, it was evident that females dominated the area compared to males.

In Mati, being a receptionist means more than just welcoming and registering guests at the hotel. It also involves cleaning rooms, serving food, doing laundry, and often being tasked with managing the hotel when the manager is not around. That is because they usually have few people working in the establishment with few guests checked in, and they do not have many guests every single day, unlike hotels in bigger cities. Busy days only occur when the town holds a big event, such as the summer frolic, which happens only once a year. Tourists come from different cities and experience the Mati City. Only then will a receptionist stay at their post on the reception desk and attend to the guest rather than performing other tasks.

Moreover, hotel management would be glad to have female receptionists because females are more likely to have a pleasing personality that attracts guests the most. Kattara (2005), also stated that females tend to be more attractive to customers (male customers), better at handling customers and more accepted than their male counterparts in people-oriented positions.

Although the dominant gender employed in Mati was female, there was undoubtedly still a long way to go before the hospitality industry could achieve true gender equality. The aim of the hotels was to increase the representation of women in the hospitality sector. However, the main problem facing the industry is that there are far fewer females in higher positions in the sector than males, and as of 2009, only six percent of board director positions were held by women. To address gender imbalances, they implemented several initiatives to support women in reaching the top.

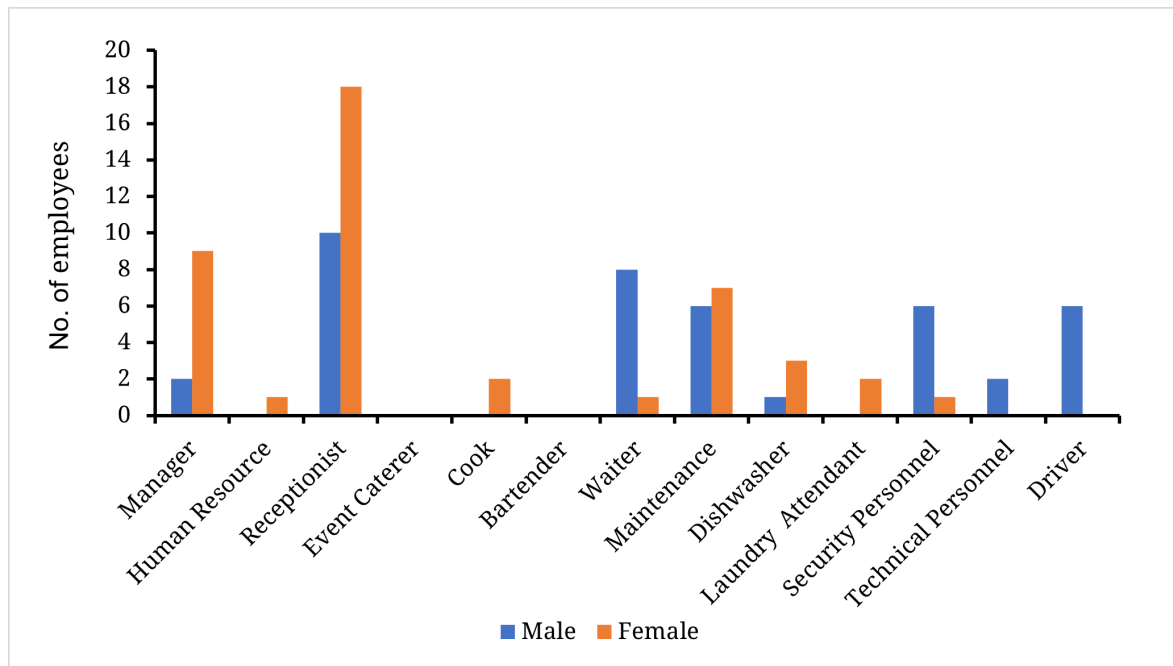


Figure 1. Frequency distribution of hotel staffs' position/designation categorized according to gender.

Preferred gender to hire

As illustrated in Figure 2 that 7 out of 11 hotels prefer to hire male applicants for most job positions, including Chef/Cook, Bartender, Waiter, Maintenance, Security Personnel, and Driver. According to Baum (2013), businessmen prefer to hire men over women for specific jobs within hotels. Hotel management would often rather have a member of staff who is keenly interested in putting everything to work. In this case, women were still discriminated against in the hospitality industry sector.

Moreover, according to hotel management, they preferred to hire more female receptionists than male ones. In many parts of the world, it is still considered a position best suited for women. It isn't as if either gender can work in this career with equal success. Therefore, gender has little to do with job performance. The success of hotels relies on customer satisfaction, whereas male managers are more focused on achieving financial goals for the hotels (Li and Leung, 2001).

On the other hand, for the managers, there were nine of the respondents who were female managers, and there were only two of them who were males. Hotels that supported women stated that, "it is hospitality businesses themselves who have the most to gain from creating a more diverse workforce and offering greater opportunities to have female staff." This only means that there was nothing wrong with being a female hotel manager and that they can do what their counterparts can.

Technically, when it comes to driving and technical preferences, hotel management tends to prefer males for the job.

Apart from that, there were seven individuals, female to be specific who have participated in the survey and there were six male personnel for the maintenance. According to The Watford Hotel, an international hotel chain in North Dakota, the job requires men to perform this role, specifically, someone who can lift up to 60 lbs (27kg). and push and pull carts and equipment weighing up to 250 lbs (11kg). on a regular and continuing basis. Must be able to bend, stoop, squat and stretch to fulfill maintenance-related tasks.

Lastly, eight male servers were who have been surveyed, and only one female waiter. This result has a lot to elucidate with the numbers of each respective gender. This is because, according to the Conflict theory of Karl Marx, “social problems are created when dominant groups exploit or oppress subordinate groups. The same thing applies within the hospitality industry; men are usually in higher positions than women. For example, you can hardly see any women who have become a captain waiter because most hotel management chooses men to be the captain waiter, and women remain subordinate to men.”

It is not that hotel management does not trust females in this category since there were also female drivers and technicians; however, males were generally more productive in this area. The Conflict Theory of Karl Marx best explains this state that “it is best to understand as men attempting to maintain power and privilege to the detriment of women. Therefore, men can be seen as the dominant group and women as a subordinate group while certain gender roles may have been appropriate in a hunter-gatherer society,” and the researcher can compare this statement to the result as the men dominate as the preferred gender to hire by the hotels in the Mati City. However, some organizations support the participation of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Women organization provides access and opportunity needed to advance women's careers in this area. This will help increase the possibility of women getting hired as technician not just their male counterpart.

The result also shows that few hotels were unable to choose whether a job position is for a male or female. Since most hotel management in Mati City cannot afford to hire more employees, as those job positions are typically reserved for larger hotels. Thus, hiring more people is a waste of money and time when there is not much to do, especially when it is not the season for tourists and guests to visit the area. Hotel management would often hire part-timers or on-call staff during seasonal days, such as the Summer Frolic held in Dahican, Mati City, where thousands of tourists are looking for a place to stay. This is the busiest time of the year for all hotels in Mati City.

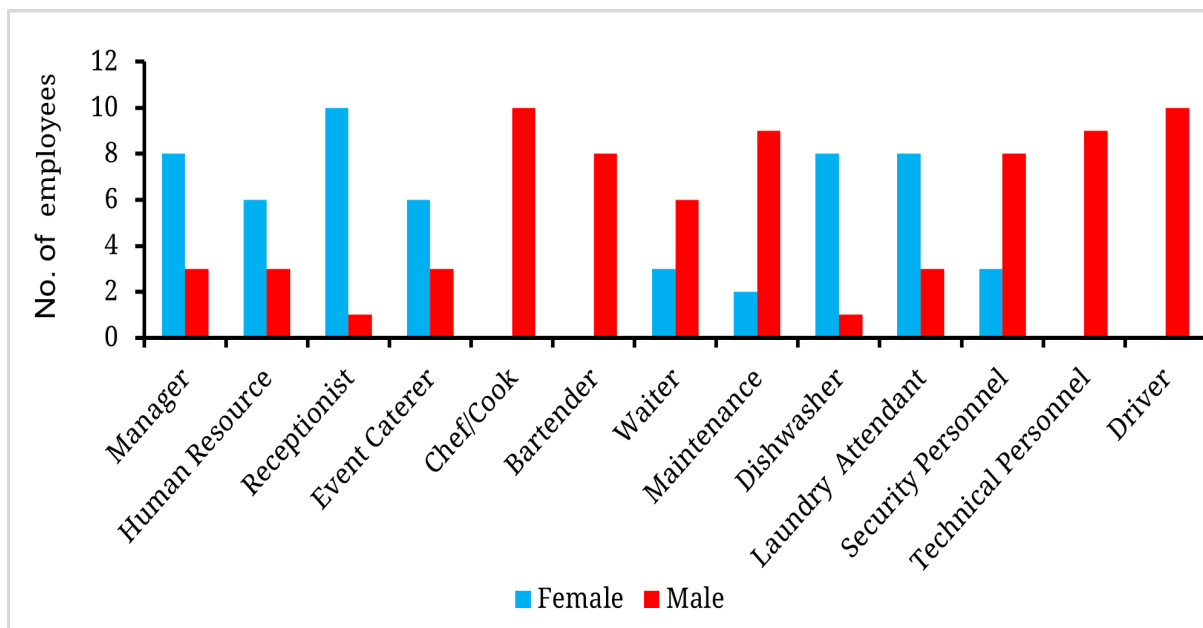


Figure 2. Frequency distribution of preferred gender to hire according to position and nature of job.

The level of awareness about gender

Table below shows that 11 hotel management was highly aware of the gender sensitivity (Table 1). Regarding items (1), which refers to the availability of segregated comfort rooms for males and females in the workplace, and (3), which prohibits dating in the workplace because it may affect work performance, the hotel management is practicing gender sensitivity within their workplace. Thus, segregated comfort rooms and dating are common and known rules that hotel staff should practice. Hotel employees who fail to do so may negatively impact their work performance and risk losing their jobs. However, some hotel management still lacks knowledge about gender sensitivity. The table indicates that a few hotel managers are unaware of certain gender-sensitive practices.

Hotel establishments should provide segregated comfort rooms not only for guests but also for employees. It is normal for management to be aware of its importance, as it will reflect on how the hotel operates by providing proper and adequate facilities for its guests and employees.

Table 1. Frequency distribution and mean of the managements' level of awareness on gender sensitivity in an organization.

Item	Level of awareness					Mean	Descriptive equivalent
	1	2	3	4	5		
1. Segregated comfort rooms for male and female should be available in the workplace.	0	1	0	1	9	4.64	Very High
2. Dressing appropriately in the workplace avoids sexual harassment motives.	1	0	0	3	7	4.36	High
3. Dating is prohibited in the workplace because it may affect your work performance.	0	1	0	1	9	4.64	Very High
4. Female employees should be given maternal leave.	0	3	1	1	6	3.91	High
5. Promotional opportunities are offered equally regardless of the gender and should be based on the employee's performance.	1	2	0	2	6	3.91	High
6. Gays and lesbian employees should be respected to avoid discrimination.	0	0	3	1	7	4.36	High
7. Employees, mostly females are emotionally sensitive so appropriate words and actions should be observed in the workplace.	0	2	2	1	6	4.00	High
8. Gender sensitive rules should be exercised in the workplace.	1	2	1	1	6	3.82	High
Overall						4.20	High

On the other hand, employees are expected to work in the workplace and there is no time allotted to date. Dating is not a crime; however, you should always do it in a proper place and proper way. Management should remind their employees that every minute that they spend working is being paid. Every company should consider establishing a policy on workplace dating. Without a clear policy, an office relationship can lead to charges of sexual harassment and legal consequences for the employer. However, some companies choose to have no policy on dating, which leaves them open to potential liability if a supervisor is shown to have sexually harassed a subordinate, for example, by giving a poor performance review to a former partner.

Level of awareness about gender sensitivity of the employees

Table 2 shows that the level of awareness among hotel employees was high, with most employees being highly aware of gender sensitivity in the workplace. However, on items (5), Promotional opportunities are offered equally regardless of gender and should be based on the employee's performance; (7) Employees, mostly females are emotionally sensitive, so appropriate words and actions should be observed in the workplace and (8) Gender-sensitive rules should be exercised in the workplace, some employees answered "Not Aware" but on items (1) Segregated comfort rooms for male and female should be available in the workplace, (2) Dressing appropriately in the workplace avoids sexual harassment motives., (3) Dating is prohibited in the workplace because it may affect your work performance, and (6) Gays and lesbian employees should be respected to avoid discrimination; the result shows that the employees were very much aware of the following gender-sensitive practices.

The results show that employees are practicing gender sensitivity in their workplace. A gender-sensitive workplace fosters the optimal conditions for the full utilization of human potential within an organizational setting. Therefore, people within the organization need to be aware of the broadest possible range of life options available to men and women. It helps organizations effectively realize their goals (Buddhapriya, 2013).

Table 2. Frequency distribution and mean of the employees' level of awareness on gender sensitivity in an organization.

Item	Level of awareness					Mean	Descriptive equivalent
	1	2	3	4	5		
1. Segregated comfort rooms for male and female should be available in the workplace.	0	1	0	3	42	4.87	Very High
2. Dressing appropriately in the workplace avoids sexual harassment motives.	1	0	0	6	39	4.78	Very High
3. Dating is prohibited in the workplace because it may affect your work performance.	0	2	0	2	42	4.83	Very High
4. Female employees should be given maternal leave.	2	5	4	3	32	4.26	High
5. Promotional opportunities are offered equally regardless of the gender and should be based on the employee's performance.	4	4	7	9	22	3.89	High
6. Gays and lesbian employees should be respected to avoid discrimination.	0	0	3	2	41	4.83	Very High
7. Employees, mostly females are emotionally sensitive so appropriate words and actions should be observed in the workplace.	4	2	3	8	29	4.22	High
8. Gender sensitivity rules should be exercised in the workplace.	5	4	6	3	28	3.98	High
Overall						4.46	High

Segregated comfort rooms and dressing appropriately would lessen the possible sexual harassment in the workplace. Such problems are common nowadays; management should take preventive action to address the issues. According to Kogan (2007), dividing bathrooms by gender strengthens conventional gender roles and the societal frameworks

related to them. He also examines the historical shifts in these practices, their impact on gender identity and equality, and how they perpetuate societal divisions.

Dressing appropriately is essential, as what you wear in the workplace will signify how you respect yourself. Since you work in the hospitality industry, employees should present themselves professionally and avoid overdressing. Body-revealing clothes should not be worn to prevent sexual harassment as it may affect the concentration of your coworker and will lessen their productivity at work. One important aspect of dressing appropriately is to do so with confidence and comfort. Dress affects how others perceive traits such as competence and professionalism, as well as how employees believe their clothing decisions impact their performance and success in the workplace. It emphasizes that both formal and casual dress codes can impact workplace relationships, influencing how individuals are perceived by colleagues, managers, and clients (Karl and Peluchette, 2006).

Dating is commonly prohibited in an organization because it can affect employees' working performances. Employees should work as a team, not as a couple, within an organization. According to Bridget Miller, legally, the employer can enact a policy that prohibits employees from dating one another. However, prohibiting it could decrease morale and even result in the loss of employees (Miller, 2015). According to her, there are potential pitfalls of employee romances. These are:

1) Productivity losses. These could occur if too much time is spent on personal pursuits rather than work. There could also be problems if the relationship becomes a distraction for other employees in any way.

2) Security issues. This may be a concern if a personal romantic dispute escalates into violence. Favoritism. This is primarily a risk if one of the partners holds a supervisory position or can otherwise grant favors to the other. In some areas, sexual favoritism is also illegal or could be deemed discriminatory.

3) Retaliatory behavior. If the relationship goes sour, one partner (or both) may not be inclined to work cooperatively with the other. If escalated, it could even become a situation in which one former partner can demote, terminate, or give negative reviews to the other—all of which could lead to problems (including lawsuits).

4) Sexual assault or harassment charges. If dating is allowed, it may foster an environment where more activity occurs that could give rise to a harassment claim. For example, if someone in a supervisory position requests dates as a prerequisite for positive performance reviews, that would be sexual harassment. Additionally, if a regular relationship ends, it could result in a situation where one former partner has a claim of harassment against the other. Even regular relationship activities can create an atmosphere that promotes harassment of others.

5) Turnover. If there are relationship problems, there's an increased likelihood that one or both of the partners will opt to leave the employer to remedy the situation. This is also a concern when the relationship is going well—a partner may feel their options are limited at the company due to the relationship. Either way, higher turnover can result.

6) Reputation damage. Even in the absence of any illegal activity, a relationship can still raise eyebrows if it is discovered, especially between a supervisor and a subordinate. This can lead to other problems, such as a loss of confidence from clients or shareholders.

On the other hand, gays and lesbians who work in an organization should be respected. Discrimination among coworkers will result in mental stress and also affect one's self-esteem. And it may give the impression that they don't belong in the group. It is also essential to respect each other's differences, whether you become a man with

the heart of a woman or vice versa. Gender discrimination is often common to gays and lesbian since they portray their opposite sexes and act as one. But these cases are widely known, and most of the discriminated understand the nature of their surrounding people. According to Bostwick et al., (2014), numerous authors have pointed to the institutional and interpersonal discrimination that sexual minorities face as a potential explanation for such disparities.

Relationship between the level of awareness of the management and its employees on gender sensitivity

Table 3 shows that the Pearson correlation is 0.366 ($P = 0.011$) at the 0.05 level. The relationship was said to be a weak uphill (positive) linear relationship. Since $P=0.0011 < 0.05$, there is a statistically significant relationship between management's level of awareness and employee's level of understanding. It illustrates that they have the same perception of gender sensitivity within their workplace.

Table 3. Correlation between managements' level of awareness and employees' level of awareness on gender sensitivity in an organization.

Variable	Mean	Pearson R Correlation	Significant (2-tailed)	Decision
(Level of Awareness) Management	4.20	0.366	0.011	Reject H_0 (i.e., correlation is significant at the 0.05 level)
Employees	4.46			

The mean result from the employees is relatively higher than that of management, which is good because it shows that the employees are well-informed and have been able to practice gender sensitivity. The management's level of awareness is lower than that of its employees because the managers themselves are more focused on managing the hotel. Managers play an essential role in hotel establishments; understandably, employees should learn from them. Managing employees and the hotel is quite a task; they should be more knowledgeable than the employees in some aspects. In other words, both employees and management acknowledged that there are gender-sensitive issues, and these issues exist not only in their workplace but also in society as a whole. And the fact that it is happening nowadays won't change the perception of each person living in the society.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study conducted, hotel establishments in Mati City employed more female employees who were currently working in various job positions. If you look closely at the result, the number of female and male employees were almost equal. Therefore, hotel establishments in the City of Mati did not exhibit bias against gender in their hiring practices. However, the results for the second objective indicate that hotel management would prefer to hire male applicants over female applicants due to certain factors. The hiring of more people would depend on how much the hotel can accommodate a large number of guests. Therefore, if management had more male applicants, they would gladly accept them, as it would give the hotel more advantages. On the other hand, the level of awareness of both management and employees has a statistically significant relationship. They have the same perception of

gender sensitivity. Based on the survey conducted, the hotel establishments in Mati City were found to be practicing gender sensitivity.

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