

From Bias to Balance: Gender Equality Practices in Accommodation Establishments in Southern Oriental Mindoro, Philippines

Kristene Jey Fallaria, Laiza S. Relox, Liezel P. Sapungan, Dr. Madonna P. Melchor, Zarah A. Cruzado

Mindoro State University-Bongabong Campus

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ABSTRACT

This study examines gender equality practices in the hospitality industry in Southern Oriental Mindoro, Philippines, with a particular focus on how gender biases influence recruitment, task allocation, career advancement, and employee satisfaction. Despite substantial advancements in gender equality both globally and nationally, gendered divisions of labor persist in the hospitality sector, where women and LGBTQ+ employees are often relegated to lower-paying, customer-facing roles, while men dominate managerial positions. This study uses descriptive and statistical analyses to assess the demographic profile of employees and the prevalence of gender biases in various organizational processes. Results indicate that traditional gender roles continue to shape job assignments, limiting opportunities for women and LGBTQ+ individuals to advance to leadership roles. The findings align with global and local studies that highlight the persistence of gender inequality in recruitment practices, career progression, and task allocation. Recommendations for addressing these biases include implementing gender-neutral recruitment practices, promoting competence-based promotions, and providing inclusive training programs. The study contributes to understanding how organizational cultures, HRM practices, and institutional policies can be modified to create more equitable and inclusive work environments in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Accommodation, Bias, Equality, Gender, Hospitality

INTRODUCTION

Equal access to opportunities, resources, and rights for all people, regardless of gender, is guaranteed by gender equality, a fundamental human right. In addition to promoting social justice, achieving gender equality is crucial for building prosperous and inclusive communities. But even with major advancements made around the world, gender inequality still exists in several areas, especially the workplace, where prejudices still affect hiring procedures, job descriptions, and prospects for career progression.

Globally, gender equality has been emphasized through international frameworks like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), both of which call for the removal of gender-based discrimination and the promotion of equal treatment for all individuals. These global efforts aim to eliminate the barriers that prevent women and marginalized genders from enjoying equal rights and opportunities. Despite these international commitments, however, gender inequality remains pervasive, with women and LGBTQ+ individuals facing systemic barriers that hinder their access to equal opportunities, particularly in professional settings (United Nations, 1948; United Nations, 1979).

In the Philippine context, gender equality has been addressed through national laws such as the Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act No. 9710), which guarantees women equal access to resources and opportunities. The Philippines has made substantial progress in reducing gender gaps in education, health, and political empowerment. Nevertheless, despite these advancements, gender biases persist across various sectors, including

the workforce. Women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and men in non-traditional roles still face challenges in accessing career advancement and leadership opportunities, as traditional gender roles continue to influence job assignments, recruitment practices, and promotion opportunities (Republic of the Philippines, 2009).

In the hospitality industry, a key sector contributing significantly to the Philippine economy, gender inequalities are also prevalent. Women are typically employed in customer-facing roles, such as receptionists and housekeepers, while men are more likely to occupy managerial or technical positions. These gendered divisions of labor often arise from deeply rooted stereotypes and traditional views on gender roles. Batool et al. (2023) point out that while many hospitality establishments implement gender equality policies, these policies are often undermined by organizational practices that favor male-dominated leadership roles. Similarly, Academic Conferences International (2024) highlights how gender-based biases continue to hinder women and LGBTQ+ individuals in progressing to leadership positions despite their qualifications.

In Southern Oriental Mindoro, gender equality in the hospitality industry mirrors the broader trends observed in the national context. Although the region's hospitality sector plays an important role in the local economy, traditional gender roles continue to shape job assignments and career progression. Women and LGBTQ+ employees often find themselves limited to less visible and lower-paying roles, while men dominate managerial positions. This study aims to assess the gender equality practices in accommodation establishments in Southern Oriental Mindoro, focusing on how gender biases manifest in recruitment, task allocation, career advancement, and overall employee satisfaction. By evaluating the effectiveness of current gender equality policies, this research seeks to identify areas for improvement and provide actionable recommendations for creating a more inclusive and equitable work environment in the region's hospitality sector.

Aim of the Study

This study aims to assess gender equality practices in Southern Oriental Mindoro's accommodation establishments.

Specific Objectives

- To examine the demographic profile of employees in accommodation establishments in Southern Oriental Mindoro, specifically looking at gender, marital status, educational attainment, age, and years of service.
- To assess gender bias in recruitment, task allocation, career advancement, and overall employee satisfaction, particularly focusing on gender-based disparities and biases present in these processes.
- To propose a program that promotes gender equality and addresses the identified gender biases in recruitment, task allocation, and career advancement, with a focus on creating a more equitable work environment in the hospitality sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender equality in the workplace has long been a topic of significant concern, especially in industries such as hospitality, where gender roles are often strictly defined. In many workplaces, women are more likely to be assigned customer-facing and lower-paying roles, while men typically occupy managerial or technical positions. Despite advances in gender equality, biases and discriminatory practices continue to persist in many sectors, particularly in recruitment practices, task allocation, and career advancement opportunities.

Research has shown that Human Resource Management (HRM) practices play a vital role in either reinforcing or mitigating gender biases in the workplace. HRM practices such as performance evaluations, training, and promotion policies can contribute significantly to ensuring equal treatment and opportunities for all employees, regardless of gender.

For instance, Melchor (2024) examined the role of HRM practices in reducing gender bias and improving employee performance in retail establishments. The study found that gender-neutral recruitment practices and inclusive training programs help eliminate gender-based discrimination and ensure that employees are treated fairly, regardless of their gender.

In a similar vein, Silva and Couto (2023) explored gender bias in the European hospitality industry, identifying that women are disproportionately placed in lower-level, service-oriented roles, while men are more often promoted to managerial positions. Their study emphasized the need for more equitable hiring and promotion practices, as well as the importance of gender diversity policies that promote fair career advancement.

Similarly, Poquiz (2023) noted that despite efforts to introduce gender diversity management practices in the hospitality sector, these policies are often undermined by organizational cultures that continue to prioritize men in leadership roles.

Another significant study by Zarsuela et al. (2023) examined gender equality in the hospitality industry in the Philippines, particularly focusing on employees' access to career advancement opportunities. The study found that women and LGBTQ+ employees are often relegated to lower-paying roles with limited career growth, which is partly due to deeply ingrained societal stereotypes. It highlighted the importance of institutionalizing gender equality policies that go beyond written rules and actively challenge traditional gender norms.

Locally, in Southern Oriental Mindoro, Darroca et al. (2024) investigated how traditional gender roles continue to shape job assignments and career advancement in the region's hospitality industry. The study found that women and LGBTQ+ employees face significant challenges in career progression, as they are often assigned to roles that are less visible and lower-paying, while men dominate managerial positions. The study called for the adoption of gender-neutral recruitment and task allocation practices to create a more equitable and inclusive workplace.

These studies collectively highlight the ongoing challenges of gender inequality in the workplace, particularly within the hospitality industry. They point out that while gender equality policies are essential, they must be accompanied by organizational culture changes, inclusive HRM practices, and robust employee development programs to ensure true gender equality in the workplace.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in three prominent theories that help explain the dynamics of gender equality and HRM practices in the workplace. These theories provide the lens through which the study will explore how gender biases manifest in recruitment, task allocation, and career progression, particularly in the hospitality industry.

The Social Role Theory, proposed by Eagly (1987), asserts that gender differences in behavior, roles, and perceptions are largely shaped by societal expectations about how men and women should behave. According to this theory, men and women are socialized into distinct roles based on traditional gender norms, which influence their behavior in professional settings. In the context of this study, Social Role Theory helps explain why women are often assigned lower-paying, customer-facing roles in hospitality, while men are placed in higher-paying managerial positions. This theory suggests that these roles are not necessarily based on inherent abilities but are socially constructed and maintained through cultural norms and expectations.

Human Capital Theory, as discussed by Becker (1964), posits that individuals invest in education, training, and experience to enhance their skills and increase their productivity. However, the application of this theory to gender equality highlights how investments in human capital may be unequal due to gendered perceptions and expectations in the workplace. Women, for example, may face barriers in gaining equal access to leadership training and career advancement opportunities despite having similar qualifications and work experience as their

male counterparts. This theory is relevant to understanding how HRM practices in hospitality establishments may inadvertently perpetuate gender biases by not equally investing in the human capital of all employees.

Discrimination and Social Justice Theory, as described by Rawls (1971), suggests that fairness in society can only be achieved when the inequalities that exist between different social groups are addressed. In the workplace, this theory emphasizes the need for equal treatment and opportunities for individuals, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation. Rawls's theory of justice as fairness argues that policies should be designed to benefit the least advantaged members of society, thus ensuring a more just and equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. This theory is particularly relevant to understanding how gender biases in the workplace can be reduced through HRM policies that promote gender equity in recruitment, promotions, and pay.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a descriptive, quantitative research design to assess how gender equality is promoted among hotel staff. A modified survey questionnaire was used as the primary tool for data collection, featuring both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was administered to 50 hotel employees from various lodging establishments in the Second District of Oriental Mindoro. All participants had direct contact with guests, ensuring a representative sample of customer-facing staff.

Permission to distribute the survey was obtained from the hotel managers, who coordinated with the personnel department to ensure the availability of employees. Once permission was granted, the researchers visited the selected hotels to distribute the questionnaires. Participants were informed about the study's purpose and voluntarily agreed to participate.

The data collected were analyzed quantitatively using frequency and percentage to describe the demographic profile of the participants, as well as to assess gender biases in recruitment, task allocation, career advancement, and employee satisfaction. The weighted mean was used to evaluate the responses regarding gender equality practices and to identify areas of potential bias.

Ethical considerations were strictly followed throughout the study. The anonymity of participants was maintained, and their involvement was entirely voluntary. No identifying information was collected, ensuring confidentiality. Only objective data and conclusions were presented based on the statistical analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results and discussion of the study are presented in the following sections to further describe, examine, and comprehend the data gathered.

Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the respondents is summarized in Table 1. A majority of respondents (38%) were between 26 and 35 years old, followed by 32% aged 25 or younger. Gender-wise, 54% were female, 24% male, and 14% identified as gay, while 4% identified as lesbian and bisexual. In terms of educational attainment, 58% had a college degree, 26% had vocational training, and 16% completed high school.

Regarding gender equality practices, Table 2 highlights that the hospitality industry still places greater emphasis on physical appearance than competence in recruitment (mean = 3.00), which aligns with findings by Poquiz (2023) on gender bias in hiring practices. Respondents also reported more complaints about female and LGBTQ+ employees compared to their male counterparts (mean = 2.52), indicating persistent gender-related biases in customer interactions.

The study found gender disparities in career advancement. Women and LGBTQ+ employees were often relegated to lower-paying, less visible roles (mean = 2.92), which supports Zarsuela et al. (2023), who found similar challenges for women in the hospitality industry. In contrast, men were more likely to occupy managerial positions, confirming Silva and Couto's (2023) observations on gender imbalances in promotions.

Furthermore, the analysis of gender-based work allocation revealed that women and LGBTQ+ workers were often assigned tasks requiring less physical labor (mean = 2.92), while men dominated managerial roles (mean = 3.04). This reflects the findings of Batool et al. (2023), who noted that gender biases still influence task allocation and hinder career development.

These findings suggest the need for gender-neutral recruitment practices, gender-inclusive training programs, and a focus on competence-based promotions to address the biases in the hospitality sector.

Gender Equality about Work Place Gender Bias

The results of the study indicate that gender biases remain entrenched in the hospitality industry, influencing recruitment, task allocation, and opportunities for career progression. Recruitment practices were found to place higher emphasis on physical appearance rather than competence (mean = 3.00), revealing the persistence of traditional gender norms that can disadvantage employees who do not conform to expected gendered presentations.

Sexual harassment was reported by employees across gender identities (mean = 2.36), signaling ongoing concerns about workplace safety and respect. Female and LGBTQ+ employees also received a disproportionately higher number of customer complaints compared to male employees (mean = 2.52), suggesting that gender-based prejudice affects customer service dynamics.

Although civil status had a relatively low impact on hiring decisions (mean = 2.70), indicating some progress in recruitment equity, women and LGBTQ+ employees still reported needing to exert additional effort to prove their authenticity and competence at work (mean = 2.60), reflecting continued gendered obstacles.

These findings are consistent with recent literature documenting gender inequities in the hospitality and tourism workforce, where structural barriers contribute to differential role assignments, constrained career advancement, and persistent workplace norms that disadvantage women workers.

For example, Perera (2024) identified multiple cultural, social, organizational, and workplace challenges that inhibit women's entry and advancement in the hotel sector in Sri Lanka, including safety concerns, stereotypical role expectations, and limited career progression opportunities. Moreover, Türkmendağ and Karaman (2024) highlighted gender inequality in the professional culinary and tourism labor market in Turkey, showing that disparities in managerial approaches, promotion opportunities, and working conditions contribute to unequal treatment and career barriers for women in tourism and hospitality roles.

Gender Equality about Parity in Appraisal and Growth Opportunities

The findings show that employees generally agree that there is moderate parity in appraisal and growth opportunities in the hospitality industry (composite mean = 3.44), as compensation (mean = 3.58) and retirement benefits (mean = 3.78) are perceived to be relatively equitable across genders. Performance evaluations are viewed as impartial regardless of gender expression (mean = 3.32), and workplace diversity is noted (mean = 3.36). However, the lower rating for how legal strategies treat women and LGBTQ+ employees compared to men (mean = 3.00) suggests that formal policies may not yet fully reflect perceived equality.

These results imply that although some progress has been made in formal equality measures, deeper organizational and cultural barriers remain that could undermine genuine equality in recruitment, appraisal, and

progression. It is necessary for the industry to strengthen inclusive policies, enforce transparent performance and pay systems, and provide targeted training and leadership support.

These findings align with recent studies showing that gender bias continues to influence role assignment and career development in hospitality. For example, a study by Cordero and Almonte (2023) in the Philippines reveals that despite legal protections, gendered hiring practices and role segregation persist, where women are often assigned to lower-paying positions and men occupy leadership roles.

A global study by Lee (2022) also highlights that the gender wage gap remains a significant issue in hospitality management, with women in senior positions earning significantly less than their male counterparts. Additionally, research by Peralta and Cruz (2024) emphasizes that although some gender equality initiatives are in place, personal and systemic factors continue to limit women's advancement in the sector, pointing to the need for structural change alongside policy efforts.

Gender Equality about Natural Gender Differences

The results of the study indicate that discrimination related to gender and sexual orientation persists in the hospitality industry, as respondents strongly agree that the concept of employment causes discrimination against a broad spectrum of orientations (mean = 3.00). At the same time, they also agree that the industry only moderately favors LGBTQ+ employees (mean = 2.62) and that inherent orientation differences are used to determine job fit (mean = 2.82);. However, preferences for young, unmarried applicants are not strongly endorsed (mean = 2.46), there is clear agreement that women and LGBTQ+ workers face obstacles to upward mobility and struggle to articulate their orientation and advancement opportunities (mean = 2.72), resulting in an overall composite mean of 2.72 that reflects general agreement on the presence of inequality.

These findings imply that even where some inclusive practices appear to be emerging, underlying biases and structural barriers related to recruitment, job placement, and career advancement remain entrenched, highlighting the need for organizations to strengthen anti-discrimination policies, implement transparent career pathways, and provide ongoing gender-sensitivity and inclusion training to ensure equal opportunities.

This aligns with contemporary gender research in hospitality, which shows that gender stereotypes in recruitment and leadership perceptions can disadvantage women and gender-diverse applicants, as gendered language and evaluation criteria influence how leadership potential is perceived in hiring processes (Beiza et al., 2024). Additionally, studies on pay and career structures reveal that women continue to be concentrated in lower-paid positions and face significant wage gaps and unequal conditions compared with men in managerial roles, indicating persistent structural inequality in the sector (Casado-Díaz et al., 2020).

Research also demonstrates that gendered organizational practices and social norms contribute to the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions in hospitality, underscoring the importance of addressing both cultural and institutional factors to promote equity (Solmaz & Ehtiyar, 2024).

Gender Equality in Gender-Based Work Allocation

The study reveals that gender-based discrimination continues to be a significant issue in the hospitality industry, particularly regarding job roles and career progression. Respondents agreed that men are preferred for administrative positions (mean = 3.04), while women and LGBTQ+ employees are often assigned less physically demanding roles (mean = 2.92) and lower-level positions (mean = 2.72). Although the workforce is not overwhelmingly male-dominated (mean = 2.44), the results indicate that a gendered hierarchy persists, where women and LGBTQ+ employees are often relegated to service-oriented or lower-tier jobs.

This is reflected in the composite mean of 2.81, signaling an overall agreement with the presence of gender inequities. These findings suggest that although progress has been made in some areas, gender biases continue

to shape recruitment, task allocation, and career advancement opportunities, particularly for women and LGBTQ+ individuals. Therefore, it is imperative that hospitality organizations adopt more inclusive hiring practices, establish clear career advancement paths, and implement training programs to address unconscious biases in recruitment and promotion processes.

Recent studies support these findings, showing that gender bias and occupational segregation remain pervasive in the hospitality industry. Gendered norms and stereotypes continue to influence job assignments, with women often concentrated in lower-paying, service-related roles, while men dominate managerial positions (Lopez et al., 2023).

Furthermore, despite formal diversity policies, significant gender gaps persist in managerial representation, with women frequently facing barriers to leadership roles due to systemic biases and unequal access to career development opportunities (Gonzalez & Ehsan, 2024). Research also indicates that while gender equality initiatives are in place, they are often insufficient in addressing the cultural and institutional challenges that hinder true equality in career progression (Ryan, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that gender-based biases continue to influence the hospitality industry, particularly in recruitment, task allocation, and career progression. Despite some advancements in formal policies, such as benefits and recruitment practices, entrenched stereotypes persist, with women and LGBTQ+ employees often relegated to lower-paying, less visible roles. Men are still more likely to occupy managerial positions, and gender biases in task allocation remain prevalent, suggesting that progress in gender equality has been limited. While some positive changes have occurred, the study highlights the ongoing challenges in achieving true gender equity in the industry.

To address these issues, hospitality organizations need to implement more inclusive recruitment and career development practices. Gender-neutral policies should be adopted, focusing on competence rather than physical appearance or traditional gender roles. Additionally, companies must ensure transparent promotion pathways, provide mentorship programs, and foster a supportive environment for women and LGBTQ+ employees to advance into leadership roles. These efforts should be coupled with comprehensive gender-sensitivity training programs that address unconscious biases and encourage inclusive organizational cultures.

Academic institutions also play a critical role in driving gender equality within the hospitality industry. Through community extension programs and research, universities can act as a bridge between the industry, government, and academia, facilitating collaborations that promote diversity and inclusivity. Academic institutions should partner with industry stakeholders and government agencies to develop gender-equity initiatives, provide specialized training, and conduct research that supports policy reforms. By strengthening these linkages, academic institutions can help address industry challenges, ensuring that gender equality is not only a goal within organizations but a shared priority across sectors.

It is recommended that future studies explore how academic institutions, government agencies, and the hospitality industry can work together more effectively to promote gender equality. Such collaborations can lead to the development of policies and programs that foster a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable workforce in the hospitality sector.

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