Level of Diversity Climate and Level of Inclusion of Kabacan Water District (KWD) Employees in Kabacan, North Cotabato, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the "Level of Diversity Climate and Level of Inclusion of Kabacan Water District (KWD) Employees in Kabacan, North Cotabato, Phlippines". The researcher randomly selected twenty five (25) KWD employees who were administered with Mor Barak et al. Diversity Climate Scale and the Mor Barak Inclusion-Exclusion Scale (MBIE). This study also used a Descriptive Research Design. For the statistical tool, it employed descriptive statistics such as frequency count, simple percentage, and mean in describing the demographic profile of the respondents, the level of diversity climate of the respondents, and the level of inclusion of the respondents. The results showed that in terms of level of diversity climate, KWD employees scored high on Organizational Fairness and Personal Diversity Value while scored moderate on Organizational Inclusion and Personal Comfort with Diversity. Moreover, in terms of the overall level of diversity climate, KWD employees scored high. On the other hand, in terms of level of inclusion of KWD employees in the five work-organization system levels, KWD employees scored high on Work Group level and Organizational level while scored moderate on Supervisory level, Higher Management level and Social/Informal Group level. And, in terms of the overall level of inclusion, KWD employees scored moderate. Lastly, in terms of the level of Kabacan Water District (KWD) as an organization using the Inclusive Workplace Model, KWD is still on the Level II.

INTRODUCTION

"An inclusive workplace is more than just about diversity management" (Mor Barak, 2016).

Workplace inclusion will continue to be a significant issue in the work settings starting in the year 2020 and onwards (Paradiso, 2020). He further stresses that diversity management programs will not become successful without inclusion that is why organizations or companies should first have to be inclusive. The concept of "Inclusive Workplace" was first coined by Mor Barak (Mor Barak, 2016; Mor Barak, 2014; Mor Barak, 2005; Mor Barak, 2000a; Mor Barak, 2000b). Inclusive workplace is a model of work environment that accepts diversity on all levels and it is also a concept that she originated after seven years of research that involved investigating corporate executives, business managers and employees from around the world (Mor Barak, 2016; Mor Barak, 2014; Mor Barak, 2005; Mor Barak, 2000a; Mor Barak, 2000b). In addition, Mor Barak's Inclusive Workplace Model has four (4) levels; namely, Level I, Level II, Level III, and Level IV (Mor Barak, 2016; Mor Barak, 2014; Mor Barak, 2005; Mor Barak, 2000a; Mor Barak, 2000b). Furthermore, she points out that the following are the characteristic of each level of the the Inclusive Workplace Model: (a) Level I Inclusive Workplace take advantage and use employees and work group differences within

its work organization; (b) Level II Inclusive Workplace coordinates with and gives significant contribution to its local community; (c) Level III Inclusive Workplace lessens the needs of disadvantaged or minority groups in a national level; and, (d) Level IV Inclusive Workplace cooperates with individuals, groups, and organizations in an international level.

On the other hand, in the literature, there are also different factors that causes diversity in the workplace; namely, age, ethnicity, religion, race, educational attainment, gender, and length of service (Brimhall & Saastamoinen, 2019). In the Philippines, specifically, in Mindanao, issues of workplace diversity and discrimination has been an issue a long time ago. For instance, in the study of Pasion (2017) and International Alert (2017), they found out that Muslims and Meranaws are really experiencing job discrimination, particularly discriminatory hiring and employment practices and also more prone to having unsafe or exclusionary workplace culture. These findings were also supported by the study of Reyes, Mina, and Asis (2017) where they found out that there were important inequalities in career opportunities within and among ethnic groups in the Philippines particularly, among Muslims who were also considered as the worst-off ethnic groups. For these reasons, the researcher wanted to explore the workplace diversity and inclusion in this part of Mindanao, Philippines. Specifically, this study aimed to explore the level of diversity climate and the level of inclusion of Kabacan Water District employees in Kabacan, North Cotabato, Philippines. This study answered the following research questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of Kabacan Water District employees?
2. What is the level of diversity climate of Kabacan Water District employees?
3. What is the level of inclusion of Kabacan Water District employees?
4. What is the level of Kabacan Water District (KWD) as an organization using the Inclusive Workplace Model?

Kabacan Water District (KWD) is located in Kabacan, North Cotabato, Philippines and it is a Government-Owned and Controlled Corporation (GOCC). KWD was established on October 15, 1980 and is now classified as Category C Water District.

METHODS

Participants

The respondents of this study/research were twenty five (25) permanent employees of Kabacan Water District (KWD) who were randomly selected using simple random sampling.

Procedure

In the conduct of this study, first, the researcher sought the permission of theGeneral Manager of Kabacan Water District (KWD)and the researcher's request to evaluate the Kabacan Water District (KWD) and to conduct a study/research about diversity perception and workplace inclusionwas granted. Second, the researcher randomly selected twenty five (25) permanent employees of Kabacan Water Districtand administered the two (2) questionnaires, the Mor Barak et al. Diversity Climate Scale and Mor Barak Inclusion-Exclusion Scale (MBIE). Third, data were gathered, analyzed and tabulated.

Measures

The demographic profile of the respondents were also also included in the research questionnaire such as their age, gender, civil status, ethnicity, educational attainment, and

number of years in service at Kabacan Water District (KWD).Additionally, this research also utilized the following two instruments: first, the Mor Barak et al. Diversity Climate Scale which is a 16-item scale.It is also a 6-point Likert Scale which can be answered from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree). Items 1, 9, 15, and 16 were reversely scored. It measures the respondent's perception about the diversity climate in their organization. Mor Barak et al. Diversity Climate Scale also has two dimensions which are organizational dimension and personal dimension. Each dimension has factors. The organizational dimension consists of fairness and inclusion while the personal dimension consists of personal diversity value and personal comfort with diversity.Organizational dimensions are the views of employees with regards to company policies and regulations that may impact the employees in the minority groups in terms of organizational fairness factor (special treatment in the organization's hiring and promotion process) and organizational inclusion factor (mentoring programs and preservation of the organizational culture). On the other hand, personal dimension are the employees views with personal diversity value (significance of diversity to work groups and to the company/organization) and personal comfort with diversity (employees' level of comfort in relating to other work groups in the organization). In terms of the interpretation of scores, the higher the scores on subcales, the more positive is the respondents' diversity perception.The scale also has good internal reliability and has sufficient evidence to support the four factor model structure (Mor Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998).

Second, the Mor Barak Inclusion-Exclusion Scale (MBIE) is a 15-item scale and also a 6-point Likert Scale which can be rated from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree). Items 5, 8, and 15are reversely scored. It determines the degree to which employees are feeling included in the company/organizational processes. In addition, it also determines the employee's sense of inclusion in the work/organizationfive system levels namely, work group, organization, supervisor, high management, and social/informal. In terms of the interpretation of scores, the higher scores in the Mor Barak Inclusion-Exclusion Scale (MBIE) indicate higher sense of inclusion (Mor Barak, 2016).For the interpretation of scores of the above-mentioned tests, the mean was used with the following interpretation; 4.50-6.00 = high, 2.50-4.49 = moderate, and 1.00-2.49 = low.

Data Analysis

This study employed descriptive statistics such as frequency count, simple percentage, and mean in describing the demographic profile of the respondents, thelevel of diversity climate of KWD employees, and thelevel of inclusion of KWD employees.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion of the demographic profile of Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees, the level of diversity climate ofKabacan Water District (KWD) employees, the level of inclusion of Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees, and the level of Kabacan Water District as an organization using the Inclusive Workplace Model.

The Demographic Profile of Kabacan Water District (KWD) Employees

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents and it answers the first research question, "What is the demographic profile of Kabacan Water District employees?" Table 1

shows the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, civil status, ethnicity, educational attainment, and number of years in Kabacan Water District.

Table 1. The Demographic Profile of Kabacan Water District (KWD) Employees.

|	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age		
21-30	10	40 %
31-40	7	28 %
41-50	5	20 %
51-60	2	8 %
61-70	1	4 %
Total	**25**	**100 %**
Gender		
Male	12	48 %
Female	13	52 %
LGBTQ+	0	0 %
Total	**25**	**100 %**
Civil Status		
Single	9	36 %
Married	14	56 %
Widowed	1	4 %
Divorced/Separated	1	4 %
Total	**25**	**100 %**
Ethnicity		
Cebuano	5	20 %
Ilocano	13	52 %
Ilonggo	7	28 %
Total	**25**	**100 %**
Educational Attainment		
High School Graduate	1	4 %
College Level	4	16 %
College Graduate	12	48 %
Master's Degree Holder	8	32 %
Total	**25**	**100 %**
Number of Years in KWD		
1-5	10	40 %
6-10	5	20 %
11-15	5	20 %
16-20	3	12 %
21-25	2	8 %
Total	**25**	**100 %**

In term of age, 40% of the respondents were in the age range of 21-30 and 20% of the respondents were in the age range 31-40. Therefore, majority of the respondents were in the generations of Millennials and Gen Z. According to Fuscaldo (2022), millennial workers are those people who were born in the year 1981 up to 1996 and they are considered as the largest living generation(83.1 million) at the moment. Moreover, as workers, milennials also seem to be tech savvy and who loves social media. They are also the type of workers who are not just concern about their salary but who are also particular about their participation in the decision-making process of their company or organization(Fuscaldo, 2022). On the other hand, Gen Z-ers are workers who were born from 1995 until 2015. According to Cabrera (2018), Gen Z-ers are workers who also tech savvy, concern about their career growth, competitive, would choose face-to-face communication, excellent at multi-tasking, and are very open to new ideas.In terms of gender, there wasalmost an equal number of female and male respondents. However, there were no respondents who are members of the LGBTQ+ community. In terms of civil status, there was almost an equal number of married and single respondents. In terms of ethnicity, KWD employees came from diverse cultural background. In terms of educational attainment, majority of KWD employees were college graduates and master's degree holders. Lastly, in terms of number of years in KWD, more than half of the respondents were in KWD for 6-25 years now. According to Brimhall and Saastamoinen (2019), it wasalso important to explore the demographic profile of the employees because the factors that usually causes diversity in the workplace are age, ethnicity, religion, race, educational attainment, gender, and length of service.

The Level of Diversity Climate of Kabacan Water District (KWD) Employees

Diversity climate is defined as the collective employee viewpoint regarding how their organization's policies and practices are encouraging and rewardingdiverse groups in their organization, and on how their organization are implementing these policies and practices that include all employees in the organization especially those with diverse background (Mor Barak, 2016; Mor Barak, Cherin, &Berkman, 1998).

Figure 1 below presents the level of diversity climate of the respondents and it answers the second research question, "What is the level of diversity climate of Kabacan Water District employees?" Specifically, Figure1 below shows the level of diversity climate of Kabacan Water District employees in terms of organizational dimensions (organizational fairness factor and organizational inclusion factor) and personal dimensions (personal diversity value and personal comfort with diversity). In terms of organizational fairness, majority of Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees scored **high**with a mean of **5.17 (high)** which means that majority of Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees perceived their organization to be **highly fair** in their policies and procedures specifically, in their recruitment and promotion policies and procedures especially for those KWD applicants and KWD employees with diverse backgrounds. According to Sheppard, Lewicki, and Minton (1992), high organizational fairness have the following benefits: (a) equitable salary improves employee performance; (b) equal treatment among the employees especially those with diverse background improves employee camaraderie; and (c) employee participation including those of minority groups in the decision-making process promotes commitment to anorganizational decision.

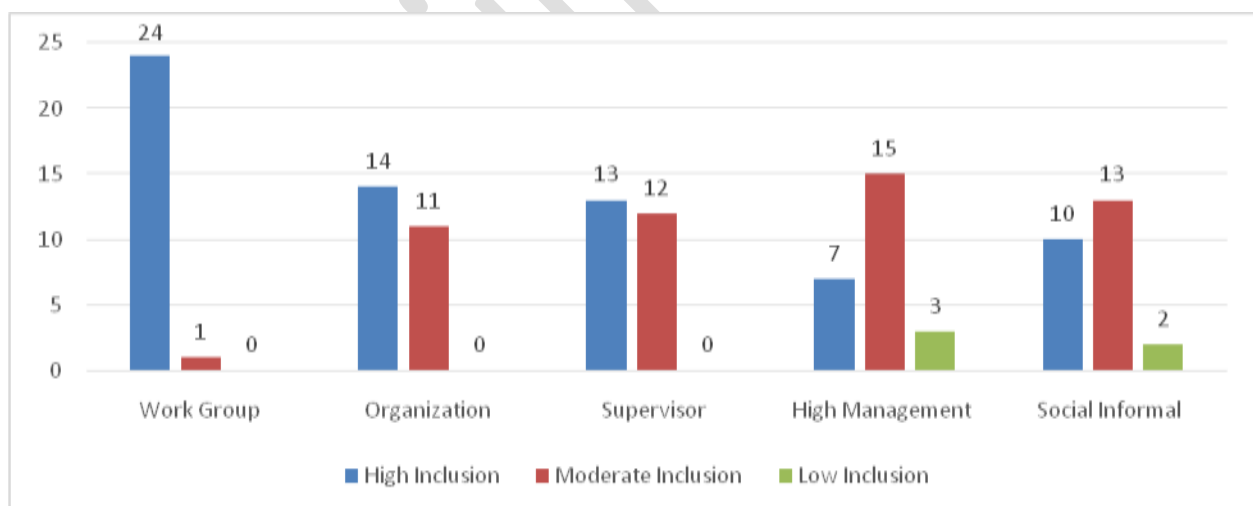**Figure 1. The Level of Diversity Climateof Kabacan Water District (KWD) Employees.**
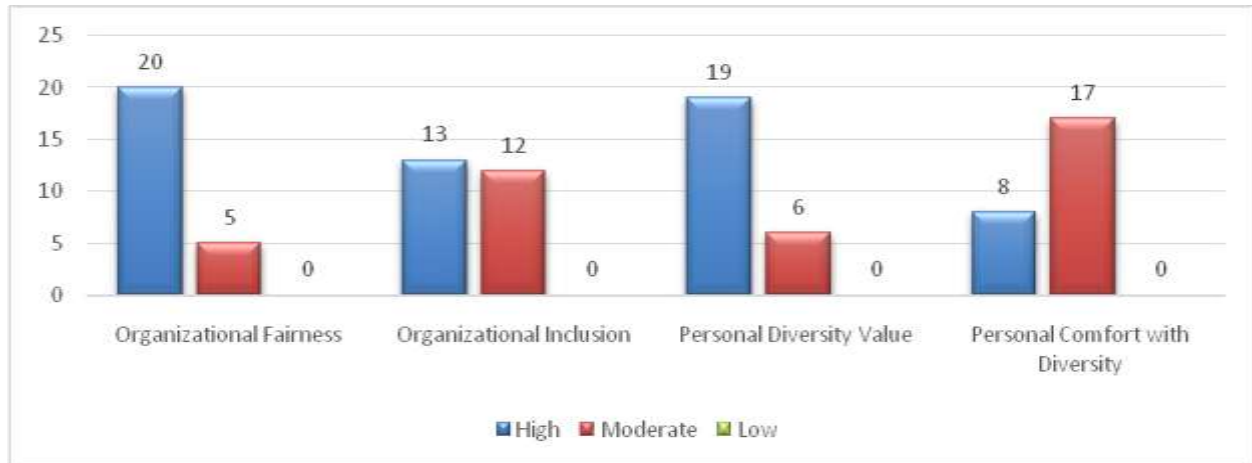
In terms of organizational inclusion, majority of Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees scored **moderate** with a mean of **4.46 (moderate)**which means that KWD employees perceived their organization to be **moderately inclusive**of KWD employees with diverse backgrounds.According to Wong (2020), inclusive organizations tend to have the following characteristics: (a) have wider talent pool and tend to be hiring the best applicants because they are expanding their recruitment with more diverse applicants; (b) have employees with higher organizational engagement and trust because highly included employees will go above and beyond the call of duty; (c) have new perspectives and innovation because the more diverse organizations are in terms of gender, age, education, career path, and others, the more innovative they are; (d) have better decision-making because diverse teams usually outperforms and make better decisions that individual decision makers; (e) have improved performance because of increased productivity; and (f) have stronger organizational results and outcomes.In terms of personal diversity value, majority of Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees scored **high** with a mean of **4.89 (high)**which means thatKWD employees personally perceived diversity to be **highly** important or valuable to their work groups and totheir organization, which is the Kabacan Water District.According to Barkman and Speaker (2014), organizations with high personal diversity value appreciates differences between their employees and acknowledges that these employee differences are valued organizational asset. In addition, high personal diversity value among employees in the organization also indicates that employees respect individuality in their organization while promoting respect for other employees and it also emphasizes the significant contributions of different works especially the minority groups in the workplace (Barkman& Speaker, 2014).In terms of personal comfort with diversity, majority of Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees scored **moderate** with amean of **4.21 (moderate)**which means that KWD employees seems to be only**moderately comfortable**in terms of accepting other employees with diverse backgrounds. It could alsobe one of the reasons why KWD employees only scored moderate in organizational inclusion. However, it can also be understandable among KWD employees because of the fact that workplace diversity and workplace inclusion will always challenge employees' comfort zones thereby causing sometimes personal discomfort. Generally, in

terms of the overall level of diversity climate, Kabacan Water District employees scored **high** with a mean of **4.68 (high)**.

The Level of Inclusion of Kabacan Water District (KWD) Employees

Climate of inclusion is defined as employees' collective perception on how their organization values diversity and on how their organizational policies and practices provide and implement equal access to employees with diverse backgrounds (Mor Barak, 2016; Mor Barak, Cherin, &Berkman, 1998).Figure 2 below presents the level of inclusion of the respondents and it answers the third research question, "What is the level of inclusion of Kabacan Water District employees?" Specifically, Figure 2 below shows the level of inclusion of Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees in the following five work-organization system levels: work group, organization, supervisor, higher management, and social/informal group. In terms of work group inclusion, most of the Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees scored **high** with a mean of **5.29 (high)**which means that most of KWD employees perceived themselves to be **highlyincluded** in their work group. According to Shore, Randel, Chung, Dean, Ehrhart, and Singh (2011), high work group inclusion may indicate that employees of that particular work group are perceiving themselves to be valued members of their work group because they are experiencing in their work group a treatment that satisfy both their belongingness and uniqueness needs. In fact, according to Chung, Ehrhart, Shore, Randel, Dean, &Kedharnath (2020), work group inclusion has a more proximal influence than the organizational level inclusion.

Figure 2. The Level of Inclusion of Kabacan Water District (KWD) Employees in the Five Work-Organization System

In terms of organizational level inclusion, majority of Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees scored **high**with a mean of **4.60 (high)**which means that KWD employees perceived themselves to be **highly** included in the organizational level.High level of organizational inclusion may indicate that employees may be more excited and committed to their organization (Hunt, Yee, Prince, & Dixon-Fyle, 2018; Hunt, Layton, &Prince,2015). In addition, they also points out that employees who have high level of organizational inclusion tend to perform better and may tend to choose to stay longer in their organization (Hunt, Yee,

Prince, & Dixon-Fyle, 2018; Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015).Thus, high level of organizational inclusion among Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees might also be one of the reasons why majority of the KWD employees have opted to stay in the organization for 6-25 years (*See Table 1*). In terms of supervisory levelinclusion, majority of Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees scored **moderate** with a mean of **4.45 (moderate)** which means that KWD employees only perceived themselves to be**moderately** included by their supervisors.Supervisorylevel inclusion may indicate that employees have been provided by theirsupervisors' safe spaces in the workplace to express and cultivate their individual identities and their supervisors also exhibit genuine sense of openness to multicultural competence and inclusion (McCallum, Shupp, and Wilson, 2018). In fact, in this recent qualitative study of McCallum, Shupp, and Wilson (2018) involving 17 supervisors, they stresses the important role of supervisors in role modelling inclusive behaviors and practices in the organization.In terms of higher management inclusion, majority of Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees scored **moderate**with a mean of **3.91 (moderate)**which means that KWD employees only perceived themselves to be **moderately** included in the higher management level. A highly inclusive management is defined as managing and leading a diverse group of people effectively while preserving their employees' uniqueness and it has also a leadership style that prohibits all forms of discrimination (Resources for Employers, 2022). Lastly, in terms of social/informal group inclusion, most of Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees scored **moderate** with a mean of **4.20 (moderate)** which means that KWD employees only perceived themselves to be **moderately** included in social/informal groups. Informal/social groups are the personal relationships of the employees with each other that also unite them in the workplace and it is also made up of groups of common interest (Hartzell, 2012). Moreover, Hartzell (2012) also explains that informal/social groups are also friendships, cliques, and social circles between employees and employees make these informal groups freely based on their likes, dislikes, common interests, feelings, and emotions with each other. Generally, in terms of the overall level of inclusion, Kabacan Water District employees scored **moderate** with a mean of **4.49 (moderate)**.

The Level of Kabacan Water District as an Organization Using the Inclusive Workplace Model

An inclusive workplace is more than just about diversity management instead it has strong value foundation that penetrate all the five work-organizational system levels such as work group, organization, supervisor, higher management, and social/informal groups to give access to extensive coverage of diversity (Mor Barak, 2016). In addition, she also points out that an inclusive workplace is not only inclusive within its own workforce but should also be active in its community, in the national level, and in the international level (Mor Barak, 2016). Mor Barak's Inclusive Workplace Model has four (4) levels; namely, Level I, Level II, Level III, and Level IV (Mor Barak, 2016; Mor Barak, 2014; Mor Barak, 2005; Mor Barak, 2000a; Mor Barak, 2000b). Futhermore, she points out that the following are the characteristic of each level of the the Inclusive Workplace Model: (a) Level I Inclusive Workplace take advantage and use employees and work group differences within its work organization; (b) Level II Inclusive Workplace coordinates with and gives significant contribution to its local community; (c) Level III Inclusive Workplace lessens the needs of disadvantaged or minority groups in a national level; and, (d) Level IV Inclusive Workplace cooperates with individuals, groups, and organizations in an international level.This section answers the last research question, "What is the level of Kabacan Water District (KWD) as an

organization using the Inclusive Workplace Model?" Therefore, based on the data gathered, presented and discussed, and based also from an informal conversation with the current KWD's Division Manager of Administrative and General Services Division who was also handling the human resource division, and also based from the personal observation of the researcher, the researcher concludes that the Kabacan Water District as an organization was already on the **Level II** of Mor Barak's Inclusive Workplace Model (Mor Barak, 2016; Mor Barak, 2014; Mor Barak, 2005; Mor Barak, 2000a; Mor Barak, 2000b).Kabacan Water District (KWD) as an organization wasalready on the **Level II** of Mor Barak's Inclusive Workplace Model (Mor Barak, 2016; Mor Barak, 2014; Mor Barak, 2005; Mor Barak, 2000a; Mor Barak, 2000b) because KWD already have diversity and inclusive policies and have already implemented these diversity and inclusive policies and practices within their organization (Level I) and this was evidentby their employees responses in the survey conducted by the researcher using the Mor Barak et al. Diversity Climate Scale and Mor Barak Inclusion-Exclusion Scale (MBIE). Moreover, KWD was also nowcordinating, giving significant contributions, and helping disadvantaged groups in their local community (Level II). For instance, Kabacan Water District already have conducted or implemented community outreach programs to help disadvantanged groups in the local community such as distributing free water to families affected by the flood in Kabacan, North Cotabato, Philippines,attending the first-ever basic fire safety training conducted by Kabacan Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), attending community meeting in far-flung barangay of Kabacan such as SitioKibawe, Barangay Magatos, joining the community culminating activities and programs, helping the Typhoon Odette victims in CARAGA Region, and others. In fact, Kabacan Water District was awarded by the Philippine Civil Service Commission Regional Office XII (CSC-RO XII) as one of the thirteen (13) government agencies in Region XII which has met the standards/indicators for PRIME-HRM Maturity Level 2 in one HRM System – Recruitment, Selection, and Placement (RSP). Moreover, Kabacan Water District as an organization was also an ISO-Certified organization.

SUMMARY

This study entitled "Level of Diversity Climate and Level of Inclusion of Kabacan Water District (KWD) Employees in Kabacan, North Cotabato" answered the following research questions: (1) what is the demographic profile of Kabacan Water District employees; (2) what is the level of diversity climate among Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees; (3) what is the level of inclusion of Kabacan Water District employees; and (4) what is the level of Kabacan Water District as an organization using the Inclusive Workplace Model. The researcher randomly selected twenty five (25) permanent employees of Kabacan Water District (KWD) who were randomly selected using simple random sampling. Moreover, the researcher administered the following two instruments: the Mor Barak et al. Diversity Climate Scale to determine the level of diversity climate of KWD employees; and the Mor Barak Inclusion-Exclusion Scale (MBIE) to determine the level of KWD employees. For the statistical tool, it employed descriptive statistics such as frequency count, simple percentage, and mean in describing the demographic profile of the respondents, the level of diversity climate among the respondents, and the level of inclusion of the respondents. The results showed that in terms of level of diversity climate, Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees scored high on Organizational Fairness and Personal Diversity Value whilescored moderate

on Organizational Inclusion and Personal Comfort with Diversity. Moreover, in terms of the overall level of diversity climate, Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees scored high. On the other hand, in terms of level of inclusion of KWD employees in the five work-organization system levels, KWD employees scored high on Work Group level and Organizational level whilescored moderate on Supervisory level, Higher Management level and Social/Informal Group level.And, in terms of the overall level of inclusion, Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees scored moderate. Lastly, in terms of the level of Kabacan Water District (KWD) as an organization using the Inclusive Workplace Model, KWD is still on the Level II.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the results/findings, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Since majority of Kabacan Water District employees only scored moderate on organizational inclusion and personal comfort with diversity (under level of diversity climate) and the overall level of inclusionof KWD employees is only moderate, the researcher recommends that Kabacan Water District should be conducting regular diversity and inclusion trainings/workshops among their employees so that KWD employees will learn more and understand more about workplace diversity and workplace inclusion which may eventually make them more comfortable with diversity and inclusion.

2. Since majority also of Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees only scored moderate on Supervisory level and Higher Management level (under level of inclusion) and the overall level of inclusion of KWD employees is moderate,the researcher also recommends that Kabacan Water District should also be conducting Inclusive Leadership Trainings/Workshops among their managers to better help them learn more about inclusive leadership, diversity, and inclusion. Moreover, it will also help KWD managers understand more the importance of their managerial roles in modelling inclusive behaviors and in implementing inclusive policies and practices.

3. Since majority also of Kabacan Water District (KWD) employees only scored moderate on Social/Informal Group level, the researcher also recommends that Kabacan Water District should also be conducting "more" workplace activities that foster friendship or camaraderie among KWD employees such as having more team-building activities, having more company outings or rest and recreation activities.

4. When using Mor Barak's Inclusive Workplace Model (Mor Barak, 2016; Mor Barak, 2014; Mor Barak, 2005; Mor Barak, 2000a; Mor Barak, 2000b), Kabacan Water District (KWD) as an organization is still on Level II, the researcher also recommends that KWD has to strengthen their national linkages/connections so they may be able to conduct/implement community involvement activities to help the disadvantaged groups on a national level (Level III).

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