



## DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE: EVIDENCES FROM GULF COLLEGE, OMAN



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### ABSTRACT

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The recent developments in the field of human resource management such as manpower outsourcing led to complex issues on multiculturalism and workforce diversity. On the other hand, increasing globalization requires human resource management keep abreast with diverse cultures, values, beliefs and backgrounds. Therefore, capitalizing on workforce diversity is an important issue for leadership and management today. The paper evaluated the workforce diversity in Gulf College Oman in terms of four (4) dimensions; personality, internal, external and organizational. It also discussed the diversity dimensions affecting workforce personality as well as recessive and progressive diversity dimensions. Descriptive research was employed using a self-made survey tool anchored on 'Dimensions of Diversity Wheel' by Gardenswartz & Rowe (2003) and 'Dimensions of Diversity' by Compass Point Management Group Inc. (2010). Frequency count, mean, average weighted mean and rank were used to statistically analyze the gathered data. Results show that workforce diversity is highly evident in Gulf College Oman. Therefore, a differentiated employee development plan addressing various issues and concerns on workforce diversity should be developed. Motivational techniques should also be in place to further enhance productivity. The college should set the 'music' that transcends all boundaries to unify its people and achieve its goals.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

People around the world no longer live and work in an insular marketplace. The organizations face the complexity of dealing with multiculturalism and workforce diversity due to manpower outsourcing. The impact of globalization led to paradigm shift and innovation that changes the mind-set of every worker. It requires human resource management keep abreast with diverse cultures, values, beliefs and backgrounds. The recent trend in the global industry is that the workforce is more diverse (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2012). These developments require human resource

management to be more creative and open to change. Various companies are largely becoming accustomed to managing heterogeneous workforce as forged by changes on migration, outsourcing and globalization. In the light of identifying diversity, two theories are becoming prominent, Dimensions of Diversity by [Gardenswartz and Rowe \(2003\)](#) and the [Compass Point Management Group Inc. \(2010\)](#).

[Gardenswartz and Rowe \(2003\)](#) presented diversity in the 'Dimensions of Diversity' wheel. The Four Layers Model includes personality, internal dimensions, external dimensions and organizational dimensions. The '*Personality*' includes an individual's likes and dislikes, values, and beliefs. It is shaped early in life and is both influenced by, and influences, the other three layers throughout one's lifetime and career choices. The '*Internal dimensions*' include uncontrolled aspects in which many divisions between and among people exist and which forms the core of many diversity efforts such as race or gender ([Loden & Rosener, 1991](#)). These include factors such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, physical ability and race. *External dimensions* include aspects of lives which can be controlled, which might change over time, and which usually form the basis for decisions on careers and work styles. This layer often determines, in part, with whom friendships were developed and for what work was done. This layer also tells much about whom one person likes to be with ([Loden & Rosener, 1991](#)). They are factors such as income, personal and recreational habits, religion, education, work experience, appearance, marital status, and geographic location. Lastly, *Organizational dimensions* concern the aspects of culture found in a work setting. While much attention of diversity efforts is focused on the internal dimensions, issues of preferential treatment and opportunities for development or promotion are impacted by the aspects of this layer. They include factors such as management status, unit or division, work field, seniority, and union affiliation.

Meanwhile, the [Compass Point Management Group Inc. \(2010\)](#) clearly presented the dimensions of diversity. A person's primary dimensions of diversity are the core because they exert an important impact on early socialization and a powerful, sustained impact through every state of life. These six dimensions represent the core of diverse identities as age, ethnicity, gender, mental/physical abilities and characteristics, race, and sexual orientation. For some individuals there may be a seventh and even an eight dimensions of diversity included in the core: i.e. religion is a core difference for some of us, but not for all. The dimensions were further elaborated beyond the six core dimensions because there are many secondary dimensions that play an important role in shaping values, expectations, and experiences as well. These include communication style, education, family status, military experience, organizational role and level, religion, first language, geographic location, income, work experience and work style. Like core dimensions, these secondary dimensions share certain characteristics. Generally, they are more mutable, and less visible to others. They also vary in the degree of influence they exert on our individual lives. Many of these secondary dimensions contain an element of control or choice. Together the primary and secondary dimensions give definition and meaning by contributing to a synergistic, integrated whole – the diverse person.

Oman is no exception in the issue of workforce diversity. It is fast becoming a manpower pool with mixtures of vivid colours of cultures, religion, races and origins. After signing the WTO Treaty, the onslaught of global competition has forced Omani companies to compete globally and they have no choice but to perform or perish. They are forced to become flatter, flexible, diverse and global within the given environmental constraints and are shedding their traditional management practices ([Khan, 2010](#)).

The recent statistics by the [National Center for Statistics and Information \(NCSI\) \(2015\)](#) showed that Oman's expatriate workforce reached 1,614,545 as of the end of May 2015. These expats are mainly comprised of 626,721 Indians; 557,606 Bangladesh; 215,781 Pakistani; 29,880 Ethiopian; 38,914 Indonesian; 32,075 Philippines; 23,373 Egyptian, 12,781 Nepalese; and 63,571 other nationalities. These workers were segmented as 1,425,966 males and 188,579 females. The largest numbers of expatriate workers totalling 1,303,637 are working in the private sector. Furthermore,

as to educational qualifications of the expatriate workforce, 592,970 labourers have preparatory school certificates; 423,732 labourers can read and write; 243,642 workers have secondary school certificates; 52,916 workers are with diplomas; 92,621 are university graduates; 4,919 are higher diplomas holders; 5,924 are Masters degree holders and 2,780 are PhD holders.

Like any other companies in Oman, Gulf College (GC) mirrors diversity in the workplace. Since 1990 when it was conceptualized and established to offer vocational and professional qualifications, the college already attracted qualified workforce in various nationalities. At the onset of the first MBA program offered in Oman in 1996, the college led the forefront as a private institution to offer graduate program in business. The deliberate increase both in enrolment and workforce came into full blast in 2003 when the college got an approval from Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) Oman to upgrade the status to a Higher Education College offering 10 different undergraduate programs in addition to the two postgraduate programs which were already in place. This ushered in recruitment of qualified personnel from various countries to fill in the need and mandate of both the partner school in the United Kingdom and the ministry. The pressure steered the college to pool manpower with various nationalities. In 2014, Gulf College transferred to the new campus with 8,000 student capacity and is home to more than 100 academic and non-academic staff of various nationalities, religion and qualifications.

Diversity poses a big challenge to the entire management team in most companies in Oman. In an organization where varied ideas and opinions emanate from different cultures and nationalities, chaos and turmoil are more than just expectations. On a lighter side, it brings together individuals from various backgrounds that possess important skill that stimulate organizational competitiveness and growth (Fassinger, 2008). Such scenario brings in fresh new ideas from different perspectives that could lead to far better solutions to emerging concerns. The exchange of ideas creates an atmosphere of cultural acceptance that can lead to improvements in employee relations (Chaves & Weisiner, 2008). It is therefore necessary that diversity be perceived as a fusion of interrelated factors than a tangled cobweb of complex dimensions.

This study is focused on quantifying the workforce diversity in Gulf College Oman. The study is anchored on several diversity theories including the 'Dimensions of Diversity Wheel' authored by Gardenswartz and Rowe (2003) and 'Dimensions of Diversity' presented by Compass Point Management Group Inc. (2010). It answered the following queries: (1) what is the workforce diversity profile of Gulf College Oman in terms of four (4) dimensions as personality, internal, external and organizational; (2) which diversity profiles affects workforce personality; and (3) recessive and progressive diversity dimension in Gulf College. The results of the study serve as the basis for human resource development plan to enhance and promote workforce diversity.

The current undertaking is a bold attempt to assess diversity in different dimensions. In this time of globalization, it is imperative to be sensitive to the needs and expectations of the employees. Thus, the primary step in fulfilling the workers' demands is to understand the nature of workforce diversity. The study is particularly an input to the human resource department of different companies with diversified workforce in formulating development plans. The study also showcases the nature of diversity in Oman as mirrored by a private educational institution.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive-quantitative. A mostly structured self-made survey tool in the form of checklist was employed to gather data. The questionnaire is founded from the theories of Gardenswartz and Rowe (2003) and Compass Point Management Group Inc. (2010). The questionnaire is divided into four (4) parts pertaining to the dimensions of diversity which include personality, internal, external and organizational. The first part is structured as 4-point Likert scale answered by Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The last three parts are structured on their personal information and job-related qualifications. The

questionnaire was validated by three (3) experts from the field of education and research. Necessary rectification and amendment were employed.

Respondents of the study were 60 lecturers and personnel from the different departments of Gulf College including Faculty of Business Studies (FBS), Faculty of Foundation Studies (FFS), Faculty of Computing Studies (FCS), Registration Department, Learning Resource Centre and Administration Department. The respondents were conveniently chosen based on availability and willingness. The researchers personally conducted the survey from the period May to August 2015. The initial intention was to cover the entire workforce of the Gulf College Oman of 103(excluding security and utility personnel) at the time of the conduct of survey. However due to availability and other personal factors, only 60 were able to complete the survey. The sample size is acceptable because it comprises 57% of the entire population whereas using Slovin (Guilford, 1973) formula the sample is acceptable at 8% margin of error. The formula suggests that margin of error is within the range, 5% to 10%. Responses were tabulated and descriptive analyses were used for the computed mean, weighted mean and rank.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 1. *Workforce diversity profile of Gulf College Oman*

Table 1 shows that respondents strongly agree on the assumptions that ‘people live to learn, love and share’ with a weighted mean of 3.75 at rank 1. They agree that ‘every individual needs to be motivated and challenged to achieve something for themselves’ with a weighted mean of 3.45 at rank 2. With a weighted mean of 3.43, the respondents agree that ‘man is born with rights and obligation’ at rank 3. Ranked 4 with a weighted mean of 3.37, the respondents agree that ‘every person commits mistake that he/she has to correct upon asking for forgiveness’. They also agree that ‘every person is gifted with great attitudes; it is the environment makes him otherwise’ with a mean weight of 3.35. Likewise, they agree on the assumptions that ‘every person is born free to do all things that will make him happy’ with a weighted mean score of 2.9 and ranked the least.

Moreover, it can be gleaned from the table that the general responses of the respondents in terms of perceptions fall under the interpretation “Agree”. Topping the list is the perception that ‘every work is noble that one has to put love and extra care in its performance’ with a weighted mean of 3.45. Ranked 2 with a weighted mean of 3.37, ‘men and women are equally great teachers’. Likewise, respondents agree on the following: ‘men and women are naturally good and hardworking, they just need to be motivated and inspired (3.27); ‘men and women are created equal in rights and obligation’ (3.25); people with different attitudes can work harmoniously in the workplace (3.17) and people use each other to achieve personal goals and objectives (3.12).

As presented in the table, all the items have “Agree” interpretation in terms of feelings. Majority of the respondents ranked ‘love being and working with other people’ as number 1 with a weighted mean score of 3.37. Ranked 2 with a weighted mean of 3.33, ‘have strong principles and never compromise principles with personal gains’. ‘Opinionated but respect opinions of others’, ranked 3 with a weighted mean score of 3.28. Ranked at even 4.5 are ‘accept ideas of other people even though it contradicts own ideas’ and ‘accept rejection with confidence’ with a weighted mean score of 3.18. Ranked the least with a weighted mean score of 3.05, ‘like to lead other people and motivate them to follow through with own principles’.

Table-1. Self-assessment of the personality dimension of GC workforce

| Indicators  | WM   | Interpretation | Rank |
|---|------|----------------|------|
| Assumptions   |      |                |      |
| People live to learn, love and share.   | 3.50 | SA             | 1    |
| Every individual needs to be motivated and challenged to achieve something for themselves   | 3.45 | A              | 2    |
| Man is born with rights and obligation  | 3.43 | A              | 3    |
| Every person commits mistake that he/she has to correct upon asking for forgiveness         | 3.37 | A              | 4    |
| Every person is gifted with great attitudes, it is the environment that makes him otherwise | 3.35 | A              | 5    |
| Every person is born free to do all things that will make him happy                         | 2.92 | A              | 6    |
| GWM   | 3.34 | A              |      |
| Perceptions   |      |                |      |
| Every work is noble that one has to put love and extra care in its performance.             | 3.45 | A              | 1    |
| Men and women are equally great teachers  | 3.37 | A              | 2    |
| Men are naturally good and hardworking; they just need to be motivated and inspired         | 3.27 | A              | 3    |
| Men and women are created equal in rights and obligation                                    | 3.25 | A              | 4    |
| People with different attitudes can work harmoniously in the workplace                      | 3.17 | A              | 5    |
| People use each other to achieve personal goals and objectives                              | 3.12 | A              | 6    |
| GWM   | 3.27 | A              |      |
| Feelings  |      |                |      |
| Love being and working with other people  | 3.37 | A              | 1    |
| Have strong principles and never compromise principles with personal gains                  | 3.33 | A              | 2    |
| Opinionated but respect opinions of others  | 3.28 | A              | 3    |
| Accept ideas of other people even though it contradicts own ideas                           | 3.18 | A              | 4.5  |
| Accept rejection with confidence  | 3.18 | A              | 4.5  |
| Like to lead other people and motivate them to follow through with own principles           | 3.05 | A              | 6    |
| GWM   | 3.23 | A              |      |
| Group Norms   |      |                |      |
| Behave according to a common rule and regulation  | 3.45 | A              | 1    |
| Work well with other people   | 3.42 | A              | 2    |
| Adopt to the culture of the group working with  | 3.30 | A              | 4    |
| Take action of the group as one   | 3.30 | A              | 4    |
| Believe that synergy is better than individualism   | 3.30 | A              | 4    |
| Respect the decision of the majority regardless of contradictions                           | 3.23 | A              | 6    |
| GWM   | 3.33 | A              |      |

As to the last category group norms, the respondents agree that 'people behave according to a common rule and regulation' with a weighted mean of 3.45 and ranked 1. 'Work well with other people', ranked 2 with a weighted mean of 3.42. Ranked 4 and with a weighted mean of 3.30 are the following: 'adopt to the culture of the group working with'; 'take action of the group as one'; and 'believe that synergy is better than individualism'. The ranked least is the statement 'respect the decision of the majority regardless of contradictions'.

**Table-2.** Workers' Self-assessment of attitudes and what they value in the workplace

| Attitudes       | F  | R    | Values          | F  | R    |
|-----------------|----|------|-----------------|----|------|
| Cooperative     | 13 | 1    | Family          | 18 | 1    |
| Hardworking     | 12 | 2    | Respect         | 13 | 2    |
| Friendly        | 10 | 3    | Friendship      | 12 | 3    |
| Respectful      | 9  | 4.5  | Honesty         | 10 | 4    |
| Punctual        | 9  | 4.5  | God             | 9  | 5    |
| Helpful         | 8  | 6    | Trust           | 5  | 6.5  |
| Positive        | 5  | 7.5  | Work            | 5  | 6.5  |
| God fearing     | 5  | 7.5  | Dignity         | 4  | 8.5  |
| Dedicated       | 4  | 8    | Health          | 4  | 8.5  |
| Motivated       | 3  | 11   | Time            | 3  | 10.5 |
| Enthusiastic    | 3  | 11   | Love            | 3  | 10.5 |
| Open minded     | 3  | 11   | Kindness        | 2  | 14.5 |
| Efficient       | 2  | 14.5 | Money           | 2  | 14.5 |
| Experienced     | 2  | 14.5 | Environment     | 2  | 14.5 |
| Creative        | 2  | 14.5 | Peace of Mind   | 2  | 14.5 |
| Loving          | 2  | 14.5 | Knowledge       | 2  | 14.5 |
| Accurate        | 1  | 24   | Life            | 2  | 14.5 |
| Diligent        | 1  | 24   | Privacy         | 1  | 21   |
| Assertive       | 1  | 24   | Forgiveness     | 1  | 21   |
| Honest          | 1  | 24   | Bible           | 1  | 21   |
| Extraordinary   | 1  | 24   | Wisdom          | 1  | 21   |
| Flexible        | 1  | 24   | Himself/Herself | 1  | 21   |
| Strict          | 1  | 24   | Character       | 1  | 21   |
| Educated        | 1  | 24   | Belief          | 1  | 21   |
| Fair            | 1  | 24   |                 |    |      |
| Sense of humor  | 1  | 24   |                 |    |      |
| Peaceful        | 1  | 24   |                 |    |      |
| Committed       | 1  | 24   |                 |    |      |
| Focused         | 1  | 24   |                 |    |      |
| Output-oriented | 1  | 24   |                 |    |      |
| Proactive       | 1  | 24   |                 |    |      |

Table 2 shows the rank in terms of the respondents' attitudes and values in the workplace. As to the respondents' attitudes in the workplace, cooperative, ranked 1; hardworking, ranked 2; and friendly, ranked 3 with 13, 12, and 10 respondents, respectively. It is followed by respectful and punctual with 9 respondents a piece. Other respondents are positive and God-fearing with 5 respondents each.

As to the respondents' values in the workplace, rank 1 which they value most is the family, respect at rank 2 and friendship, rank 3 with 18, 13 and 12 respondents, respectively. Honesty and God followed at ranks 4 and 5, respectively. The least they value are privacy, forgiveness, bible, wisdom, himself/herself, character and belief each having one respondent.

Table 3 shows the Internal Dimension of the workforce diversity of GC as to distribution of the respondents by age, gender, physical ability, ethnicity and race. 23 respondents or 38% are 30-39 years and the majority, 18 respondents or 30% are 40-49, 11 respondents or 18% are 20-29 and 8 respondents or 13% are 50-59 and the minority.

This table further shows the data on gender. Thirty-two respondents or 53% are female and the rest are male. This simply shows that there are more female staff than male.

Table-3. Internal Dimension of the Workforce Diversity

| Indicators       |                          | F  | %  | R   |
|------------------|--------------------------|----|----|-----|
| Age              | 30 - 39                  | 23 | 38 | 1   |
|                  | 40 - 49                  | 18 | 30 | 2   |
|                  | 20 - 29                  | 11 | 18 | 3   |
|                  | 50 - 59                  | 8  | 13 | 4   |
| Gender           | F                        | 32 | 53 | 1   |
|                  | M                        | 28 | 47 | 2   |
| Physical Ability | No Physical Disability   | 59 | 98 | 1   |
|                  | With Physical Disability | 1  | 2  | 2   |
| Ethnicity        | Filipino                 | 23 | 38 | 1   |
|                  | Indian                   | 20 | 33 | 2   |
|                  | Omani                    | 5  | 8  | 3   |
|                  | Iranian                  | 3  | 5  | 4.5 |
|                  | Pakistani                | 3  | 5  | 4.5 |
|                  | Sudanese                 | 2  | 3  | 6.5 |
|                  | Jordanian                | 2  | 3  | 6.5 |
|                  | Bedouin                  | 1  | 2  | 8.5 |
| Race             | Tunisian                 | 1  | 2  | 8.5 |
|                  | Asian                    | 52 | 87 | 1   |
|                  | White                    | 5  | 8  | 2   |
|                  | Black/African American   | 3  | 5  | 3   |

As to physical ability, it can be gleaned from the table that almost all of the respondents have no physical disability.

Speaking of ethnicity, the table presents that majority of the respondents are Filipino, about 23 or 38% followed by Indian with 20 or 33%. The rest are Omani with 5 respondents, Iranian and Pakistani with 3 respondents each, Sudanese and Jordanian with 2 respondents each while Bedouin and Tunisia with one respondent a piece.

Majority of the workforce in GC with 52 respondents or 87% are Asian, 5 respondents or 8% are white and 3 respondents or 5% are Black/African American.

As to the country of origin of GC workforce, majority came from the Philippines (23) with 38% and ranked 1. India with 20 comprising 33% of the workforce ranked 2. The host country Oman employed 5 of its nationals with 8% ranked 3. Iran and Pakistan shared the same number with 3 each constituting 5% each of the total workforce ranked 4.5. While from Sudan and Jordan each constitute 2 equivalent to 3% each of the total workforce ranked 6.5 while Egypt and Tunisia shared one each for 2% each of the total workforce and ranked 8.5.

Majority of the workforce's income ranged from 901-1,100 OMR, 23 were in that bracket equivalent to 38%. Sixteen of the workforce income ranged from 701- 900 OMR, it was ranked 2 with 27%. The least income ranged from 100-300 OMR and four were recipients of the ranging amount.

As to personal habits, it can be gleaned from the table that family activities are given importance by 31 respondents at rank 1. Reading ranked second enjoyed by 31 respondents, shopping ranked third with 20 respondents, religious activities ranked fourth with 18 respondents. 17 respondents were focused in research, 15 in cooking, 14 liked to go out, 11 enjoyed sleeping while internet surfing and listening to music by the remaining 2 respondents.

Table 4 showed that as to recreational habits, 25 respondents were inclined to entertainment, 25 respondents to social activities and 25 respondents to education. On the other hand, 19 respondents were inclined in sports, 14 to adventure and lastly 10 to amusement.

Table-4. External Dimension of the GC Workforce Diversity

| Indicators              |                   | F  | %  | R   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----|----|-----|
| Country of Origin       | Philippines       | 23 | 38 | 1   |
|                         | India             | 20 | 33 | 2   |
|                         | Oman              | 5  | 8  | 3   |
|                         | Iran              | 3  | 5  | 4.5 |
|                         | Pakistan          | 3  | 5  | 4.5 |
|                         | Sudan             | 2  | 3  | 6.5 |
|                         | Jordan            | 2  | 3  | 6.5 |
|                         | Egypt             | 1  | 2  | 8.5 |
| Income (in Omani Rials) | Tunisia           | 1  | 2  | 8.5 |
|                         | 901 - 1,100       | 23 | 38 | 1   |
|                         | 701 - 900         | 16 | 27 | 2   |
|                         | 501 - 700         | 7  | 12 | 3   |
|                         | 1,101 and above   | 6  | 10 | 4   |
|                         | 100 - 300         | 4  | 7  | 5.5 |
| Personal Habits         | 301 - 500         | 4  | 7  | 5.5 |
|                         | Family activities | 31 | 20 | 1   |
|                         | Reading           | 30 | 19 | 2   |
|                         | Shopping          | 20 | 13 | 3   |
|                         | Religious         | 18 | 11 | 4.5 |
|                         | Research          | 17 | 11 | 4.5 |
|                         | Cooking           | 15 | 9  | 6.5 |
|                         | Going out         | 14 | 9  | 6.5 |
| Recreational Habits     | Sleeping          | 11 | 7  | 8   |
|                         | Entertainment     | 25 | 21 | 2   |
|                         | Social Activities | 25 | 21 | 2   |
|                         | Educational       | 25 | 21 | 2   |
|                         | Sports            | 19 | 16 | 4   |
|                         | Adventure         | 14 | 12 | 5   |
| Religion                | Amusement         | 10 | 8  | 6   |
|                         | Christianity      | 28 | 47 | 1   |
|                         | Islam             | 23 | 38 | 2   |
|                         | Hinduism          | 7  | 12 | 3   |
| Educational Background  | Jainism           | 2  | 3  | 4   |
|                         | Doctorate Degree  | 24 | 40 | 1   |
|                         | Master's Degree   | 23 | 38 | 2   |
|                         | Bachelor's Degree | 12 | 20 | 3   |
|                         | Secondary school  | 1  | 2  | 4   |

Speaking of religion, the workforce was a mixture of four religions namely: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Jainism. Christianity topped the list with 28 respondents which, constitutes 47 % of the total, followed by Islam with 23 respondents constituting 38%. Hinduism and Jainism with a total of 7 and 2 respondents ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, respectively, this comprised 12% and 3% of the total respondents.



The table shows that 24 or 40% of the respondents are doctorate degree holders, 23 or 38% are master's degree, 12 or 20% earned bachelor's degree and 1 or 2% with high school diploma.

Table-4. Continued...

| Indicators      |  | F  | %  | R   |
|-----------------|--|----|----|-----|
| Work Experience | With more than 5 years academic and/or industry-related experience | 46 | 77 | 1   |
|                 | With less than 5 years academic and/or industry-related experience | 9  | 15 | 2   |
|                 | No academic and industry experience                                | 3  | 5  | 3   |
|                 | New in academic field but with industry-related experience         | 2  | 3  | 4   |
| Appearance      | Peaceful   | 35 | 58 | 1   |
|                 | Playful  | 9  | 15 | 2   |
|                 | Powerful   | 7  | 12 | 3.5 |
|                 | Precise  | 7  | 12 | 3.5 |
|                 | Strict   | 1  | 2  | 5.5 |
| Parental Status | Dynamic  | 1  | 2  | 5.5 |
|                 | 1-3 kids   | 35 | 58 | 1   |
|                 | No kids  | 17 | 28 | 2   |
|                 | 4-6 kids   | 8  | 13 | 3   |
| Marital Status  | Married  | 41 | 68 | 1   |
|                 | Single   | 14 | 23 | 2   |
|                 | Separated  | 4  | 7  | 3   |
|                 | Widow  | 1  | 2  | 4   |

Comparatively speaking, the majority of respondents have 'more than 5 years academic and/or industry-related experience'. 'With less than 5 years academic and/or industry-related experience' ranked second. 'No academic and industry experience' ranked third and 'new in academic field but with industry-related experience' ranked the last.

These data establish the fact that 'peaceful' is considered as the best appearance of the respondents, 'playful' as the second, followed by 'powerful', 'precise', 'strict' and 'dynamic' as the least.

The data on parental status shows 35 or 58% of the respondents have 1-3 kids, 17 or 28% with no kids and eight (8) or 13% with 4-6 kids. This simply shows that majority of the respondents have kids. The table shows 41 or 68% are married, 14 or 23 % single, four (4) or 7% separated and one (1) is a widow. This simply implies that majority of the respondents are married.

Table-5. Organizational dimension of the GC workforce diversity

| Indicators        |                          | F  | %  | R   |
|-------------------|--------------------------|----|----|-----|
| Functional Level  | Teaching/Education       | 40 | 67 | 1   |
|                   | Student support services | 11 | 18 | 2   |
|                   | Administrative support   | 7  | 12 | 3   |
|                   | Technical Support        | 2  | 3  | 4   |
| Work Content      | Academic                 | 40 | 67 | 1   |
|                   | Non-academic             | 20 | 33 | 2   |
| Management Status | Full time academic Staff | 40 | 67 | 1   |
|                   | Supervisory              | 9  | 15 | 2   |
|                   | Managerial               | 5  | 8  | 3   |
|                   | Junior Staff             | 3  | 5  | 4.5 |
|                   | Senior Staff             | 3  | 5  | 4.5 |

Table 5 shows that in the functional level teaching/education ranked one (1) with 40 or 67% of the total respondents, followed by student support services with 11 or 18%, administrative support and technical support with seven (7) or 12% and two (2) or 3%, respectively. As to work content, it can be gleaned that academic out- numbered non-academic staff with forty (40) or 67 % of respondents as against twenty (20) or 33% of the respondents, respectively. Speaking of the management status, majority of the respondents are full time academic staff with 40 or 67 %, nine (9) or 15 % are supervisory, five (5) or 8% are managerial, followed by junior and senior staff with three (3) or 5%, respectively.

## *2. Diversity profiles affecting the workforce personality*

The personality profile of the GC workforce is a mixture of various religious beliefs, positive assumptions, righteous perceptions, humanistic feelings and cohesive group norms with cooperative attitude and family as the most valuable treasure. The conflicting ideologies and orientation coming in from various nationalities and origins created a very interesting set of unified workforce sufficient to develop change for the better. It is interestingly clear that even though there are contrasts in all aspects, employees tend to respect individuality as reflected in the mostly 'Agree' interpretations of personal assessments. The results proved that there is 'unity in diversity' given proper human resource management.

There are various other indicators that greatly impact on personality dimension. Respondents were mixture of Christian, Muslim, and Hindu but were strong in their beliefs on God and His Supremacy. The strong sense of religion coupled with personal habits added much to their personal assessment of basic human beliefs. In the case of GC, personnel respect each other's religion through their own personal prayer time and blessed hours. On the other hand, the Oman government upholds spirituality by allowing other religious sects other than Muslim to build their churches and conduct religious assemblies.

Positivity and equality is the test for the assumptions of the respondents. The outlook of an individual is greatly affected by various personal experiences and educational endeavours. The results of the assessment show that appearance, work experience, educational qualifications and parental status have the most probable impacts on the 'Agree' assumptions of the GC workforce. People, in general, tend to develop positive attitude after hurdling all the challenges that life has to offer. As they progress from level to level, the degree of assumptions varies depending on which life status they are into. The respondents show a varying degree of assumptions specifically on taking power and responsibilities.

The last three (3) indicators test the respondents on how they perceive work, workmates and group dynamics. The personal assessment of the respondents shows an 'Agree' average on their perceptions, feelings and group norms. These indicators are heavily persuaded by territoriality and qualifications. The GC workers exude a mutual respect on various cultures, work habits and etiquettes. For instance, working groups and committees in GC are mixtures of different nationalities and specializations. The system keeps ideas flowing from various streams enabling similarities and contrasts settle down to a consensus. However, individuality leads people to different ends hence college policies and procedures remain in place.

The personality dimension is clearly reflected in the attitudes and values ranked by the GC personnel. The dominating attitudes such as cooperative, hardworking and friendly speak of good human relations. Meanwhile, family, respect and friendship to be ranked with highest value will greatly impact on how one sees life in general. These indicators are contributory to how a staff performs, behaves and interacts in the workplace. As an academic institution, its role escalates to a higher level as diversity rises even more. It is then tasked to develop unity and oneness within the staff and lead them to one road ahead.

### 3. *Recessive and progressive diversity dimension in Gulf College*

The diversity of GC workforce as divided into four (4) dimensions is becoming complex yet interesting. It is an intricate matter that if handled accordingly will progress otherwise will lead to faction. Such an academic institution needs careful planning and must take into account numerous factors in staff development. Recessive and progressive diversity dimensions can create areas of concern based on its impact on work environment. Thus, it is necessary to identify dimensions and their possibilities.

Personality dimension is getting recessive. It is quite interesting to note that different nationalities, culture and religion share commonalities in their perception about work and its environment. Results of the personal assessment clearly show that there is degree of similarity although results are swayed by gender, age and religion. Additionally, attitude and values are diverse yet common behaviours are demonstrated. There is quite similar percentage of male and female workers in the college.

As to more personal details, habits are limited due to location factors. Oman is generally a peaceful place with a very distinct lifestyle and cultural practices. These added much to limit personal practices to what is allowed and possible. Furthermore, majority of the employees are peaceful in appearance with a small family. In terms of organizational dimension, highest percentage is allocated to academic segregated into various departments.

Internal and external diversity dimensions are the most diverse in GC. The college is a mixture of young and old employees ranging from newly grads to seasoned professionals. The various generations of workers make it possible for the free flow of ideas and new trends. Meanwhile, the representation of workers is dynamic with India and Philippines dominating the highest percentage of the nine (9) countries. It is also highly evident that salary range varies according to professional and academic qualifications.

Overall, it is evidential that diversity exists in GC workplace. The task of the human resource department is escalating to new heights as the diversity intensifies. The current trend of outsourcing qualified employees from across the globe gives immense challenge to the college to uphold quality people management in all aspects. Whether the dimension is recessive or progressive, there is still a need to ease out concerns to eventually realize personal and organizational goals.

## 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The paper evaluated the workforce diversity in Gulf College Oman in terms of four (4) dimensions: personality, internal, external and organizational. It also discussed the diversity dimensions affecting workforce personality as well as recessive and progressive diversity dimensions. Descriptive research was employed using a self-made survey tool anchored on 'Dimensions of Diversity Wheel' authored by [Gardenswartz and Rowe \(2003\)](#) and 'Dimensions of Diversity' presented by [Compass Point Management Group Inc. \(2010\)](#). Frequency count, mean, average weighted mean and rank were used to statistically analyze the gathered data. Results show that workforce diversity is highly evident in Gulf College Oman.

The current practices of the college are helping human resource management in the short run. Outsourcing qualified employees from other countries particularly in the Philippines fill in the gap for the lack of qualified local employees. This enables the college to realize full potential through leading an entire team of multifaceted personalities to the noble mission and vision. On the other hand, employees are expected to carry on with their tasks and uphold utmost respect to individual differences. However, the challenge comes with the sustainability of human resource management. Culture and ethics at work are two of the most primary concerns in diversity. The workforce must adhere to common practices and ethical standards and set personal matters aside. The challenge heads on to the human resource development and management.

It is highly imperative that the human resources department develop a differentiated employee development plan and address various issues and concerns on workforce diversity. The plan should embody a continued support for various nationalities in celebrating their culture through programs and activities. Furthermore, the code of ethics for employees must not only adhere to the dos and don'ts in the workplace. It should also address work habits and ethical standards which cross boundaries from nation to nation. A range of motivational techniques should be in place to further enhance employee productivity. The college must not only address issues on differences but must ponder on developing oneness.

As an academic institution, the college is mandated to uphold quality at all times. Thus, its people should work hand in hand in developing students to be better citizens of the world. To achieve this, the team of working professionals must speak and act together in realizing the mission and the vision of the college. Indeed, no matter how diversified a team is, they will still dance to the same tune. It is then for the college to give them one music that transcends all boundaries to unify its people and achieve its goals.

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