



How gendered is recruitment?

The case of Indonesia and the Philippines

Research Highlights

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The creation of a gender-diverse workforce begins with a conscious and systematic effort to develop a gender-diverse talent pool.

At the country level, the difference in workforce participation between women and men serves as an important indicator of the extent of workforce diversity in the total population. In 2015, for example:

- In Indonesia, 82.7% of working age men were in the workforce, while only 48.9% of working age women were in the workforce;
- In the Philippines, 77.3% of working age men were in the workforce, while only 49.9% of working age women were in the workforce.

The stark difference in the levels of workforce participation between men and women underscores the generally low level of national workforce gender diversity in both countries. The data also clearly points to the untapped potential of women as a source of talent.

At the organisational level, large employers can play a significant role in encouraging greater workforce participation among women.

Attracting a gender-diverse talent pool involves developing a strong organisational reputation for diversity, and having robust human resource management (HRM) systems designed to support workforce diversity.

Studies elsewhere show that employers that succeed in fostering a gender-diverse workforce can enjoy significant benefits, such as:

- Improving talent retention;
- Increasing creativity among diverse teams;
- Improving market understanding and access; and
- Enhancing leadership effectiveness.

Gender in recruitment

Creating a gender-diverse workforce begins with gender-aware recruitment practices.

This study explores the issue on gender in recruitment from the perspective of both employers and individuals in the workforce in Indonesia and the Philippines.

- 1) Among employers, the study investigates the genderedness of online job advertisements;
- 2) Among individuals of working age, the study explores perceptions of job genderedness.

Genderedness in job advertisements

The study examined the relationship between national **culture** characteristics and **genderedness in job advertisements** in Indonesia and the Philippines.

The cultures of both countries were characterised according to the GLOBE cultural dimensions (House et al 2002), and a content analysis of online job advertisements in both countries was conducted.

Indonesia's culture is characterised as having highly defined gender roles (House et al 2002). In line with this, the study found Indonesia's online job advertisements to be highly gendered:

- **76%** of all jobs analysed from the online job site *Klasika* clearly identified a preferred gender for particular jobs
- of all jobs specifying a preferred gender:
 - 28% specified a preference for male candidates;
 - 47% specified female candidates; and
 - 25% specifically invited applicants from both genders.

By contrast, the culture of the Philippines is characterised as having more loosely defined gender roles (House et al 2002). In line with this, the study found online job advertisements in the Philippines to be less gendered:

- only **13%** of all jobs analysed from the online job site *jobmarket.ph* clearly identified a preferred gender for particular jobs
- of all jobs specifying a preferred gender:
 - 28% specified a preference for male
 - 33% specified female candidates; and
 - 40% specifically invited applicants from both genders.

The study concludes that culture plays a significant role in the genderedness of recruitment practices. Cultures with more clearly defined gender roles tend to have more gendered approaches to recruitment.

Perceptions of job genderedness

The study further conducted an online survey among people of working age in both countries to determine

whether certain candidate characteristics sought in job advertisements were typically associated with 'male' jobs or 'female' jobs.

The study confirmed that certain candidate qualities were generally associated with 'jobs for men' and 'jobs for women'. These gendered perceptions of candidate qualities point to a strong tendency among working age individuals to apply only to those jobs that are viewed as gender-appropriate.

In Indonesia, candidate characteristics typically associated with jobs for women are:

- adaptive;
- people-oriented; and
- ability to multi-task.

In the Philippines, candidate characteristics typically associated with jobs for women are:

- reliable;
- passionate; and
- strong interpersonal skills.

Interestingly, the willingness to travel, leadership skills and risk-taking were strongly associated with jobs for men among individuals of working age in both countries.

Towards a gender-diverse workforce

The study concludes that building a gender-diverse workforce requires greater awareness of deep-seated biases among **both** employers and job seekers regarding gender role stereotypes. Employers need to create gender-sensitive recruitment processes designed to actively seek and encourage greater gender diversity among candidates.

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