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## **Do Age and Gender Matter in SMS Marketing in Fiji?**

[https://doi.org/10.33318/jpacs.2022.42\(1\)-1](https://doi.org/10.33318/jpacs.2022.42(1)-1)

*Jashwini Jothishna Narayan<sup>1</sup>, Samantha Naidu<sup>2</sup> and Tuma Greig<sup>3</sup>*

### **Abstract**

This study recognises and addresses short message service (SMS) advertising research deficits. The empirical study, grounded in the Uses and Gratification theory, presents the perceived advertising values and attitudes (PAVA) of consumers of different age groups and gender towards SMS advertisements. Data was collected from 261 mobile phone users and analysed using SPSS AMOS. The results suggest that the age and gender of consumers - matter when it comes to their PAVA towards SMS advertisements; thus, the need to tailor-make advertisements, particularly if the target markets are segmented by age and gender. The major and original contributions of this study are the different age groups and gender comparisons, using Uses and Gratification theory and a field study of a smaller South Pacific developing economy, unlike prior studies. Such a study is useful in setting the foundation for more research focussing on different age groups and gender comparative studies in smaller developing countries, larger scale research, country comparative studies, as well as ongoing SMS-related studies. Our findings provide a practical reference for marketing companies that use SMS advertisements to persuade consumers.

**Keywords:** Age; Fiji; Gender; Marketing; SMS communication

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## **Introduction**

Rapid advancements in mobile technology in the 21st century have seen an increase in the use of mobile devices as well as the number of mobile subscribers globally (Khalil et al., 2020). Despite digitalisation, the short message service (SMS), a text-based mobile communication, remains a popular and effective tool for delivering information from one person to another (Muk and Chung, 2015). SMS is considered an important tool for sharing value-added services with customers (Uddin et al., 2019). Because of its ease of use and lesser technological dependency, SMS advertising is often preferred over other mobile advertising tools (Lin and Chen, 2015) as advertisers always try to measure the effectiveness of various types of medias to maximise profitability (Gounder et al., 2021).

While much research has been carried out in both developed and developing countries, more so in the developed countries (e.g. studies by Bhatia, 2020; Khalil et al., 2020; Pongpeng and Piyaphanyamongkol, 2020; Tong et al., 2020), academic literature still falls short on empirical investigations into factors that are important for SMS advertising effectiveness. Hence, little is still known about the factors contributing to the effectiveness of SMS advertising (Sharma et al., 2021). Even with the existing literature, on different forms of mobile advertisements particularly in developed countries, there still remains a need to explore factors that influence SMS advertising value and its outcome in terms of attitude (Bhatia 2020).

While research has been done on age groups and gender perceptions towards SMS marketing, the Uses and Gratification (U&G) dimensions of “infortainment”, credibility and irritability to investigate the perceptions of different age and gender groups in a developing country in the South Pacific country has not been explored. While some studies have looked into gender perceptions, the age groups studied differ. SMS marketing research that has been done thus far (e.g. Aydin and Karamehmet, 2017) mostly focused on Generation Y, aged between 14-25 years – the mobile marketing target group. Such studies focused only on a particular age group, such as Tekkanata and Topaloglu (2015) studied the 21-23 age group, including gender; Roozen and Genin (2008) studied students aged 18-25, including gender, while Vigar-Ellis et al. (2007) studied the 18-34 age group. Coursaris et al. (2010) studied the 18-34 age group only using the U&G dimensions, however, they did not include the credibility dimension. Chhateja and Jain (2014) argue that the younger

generation is tech-savvy with an individualistic approach and high aspirations, thus willing to embrace SMS campaigns. While young consumers are commonly targeted in mobile marketing studies due to their high mobile phone ownership rates and familiarity with the rapid adoption of new technologies, scholars like Aydin and Karamehmet have called for future studies to represent different consumer segments apart from this traditional segment of young consumers. Studies on other segments in terms of other age groups are still understudied (Aydin and Karamehmet, 2017).

Some studies, like that of Adhami et al. (2015), presented a conceptual paper on both gender and age groups above and below 40 years of age but did not consider the U&G dimensions. Other scholars like Humbani and Jordaan (2015) studied the influence of gender and different age groups but also did not consider the U&G dimensions. Whereas Javeed (2015) did use the U&G dimensions and gender perception of attitude towards SMS ads, they did not investigate all U&G dimensions and did not discuss the different age group perceptions.

Other studies that have investigated consumer attitudes towards SMS ads, using few or all U&G dimensions, have not looked into gender and age group differences (e.g. Shaheen et al., 2017). Yet others like Saleem and Mustafa (2020) studied gender and age as control variables but did not investigate the gender and different age group perceptions on all U&G dimensions except discussing the impact of irritation and entertainment variables on overall consumer perception. Studies have also researched the U&G dimensions but focused on advertisements promoted through other types of media, not SMS advertisements, such as online advertising, overall (Cardoso and Cardoso, 2012) and *YouTube* (Firat, 2019).

Investigations into smaller target groups in terms of age and gender are important as marketers have realised that customisation and personalisation features of SMS ads are a better way of reaching out to the target audience (Aslam, 2016). This research has been undertaken against this backdrop, investigating the perceived advertisement value and attitude of consumers of different age groups, not just the younger consumers and gender, towards SMS in a small developing country, employing U&G theory.

Overall, literature on SMS marketing that discusses age and gender perceptions is largely skewed towards developed countries and the younger age groups.



Studies on SMS marketing in the small South Pacific developing economies, such as Fiji and other older age groups based on U&G theory, are rare.

The findings of this study make various contributions to the existing literature on SMS advertisements. Firstly it provides empirical evidence of the understudied small developing country context. Additionally, unlike prior studies, this is the first study to examine gender and age differences together, using different age brackets (of less than 20-year-olds, between 21 and 30 years, 31 and 40 years and 41 and 50 years) as suggested by scholars like Aydin and Karamehmet (2017) in a smaller South Pacific developing country, using the U&G theory. Even in online advertisement studies, ... no study included the full age range of young people solely” (De Battista, 2021: 70). This study examined four new measured variables within the U&G constructs, three of which proved useful, paving the way for the creation of even better conceptualisation. The findings present useful implications for practice in terms of gender and age group differences which practitioners can note when creating SMS ads to better appeal to their target markets. The study indicated that consumers do differ in their perception and the degree to which they are affected, given their age and gender. Thus, the need to customise advertisements, particularly if the target markets are segmented by way of age and gender.

This research was guided by the following two research questions:

- How do U&G dimensions influence Perceived Advertising Values and Attitudes (PAVA) toward SMS advertisements?
- How do the U&G dimensions influence the different age groups, male and female 'consumers' Perceived Advertising Values and Attitudes (PAVA) toward SMS advertisements?

## **Literature Review, Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development**

### ***Perceived Value and Attitude towards SMS Advertising: the Dependent Variable***

Advertising value is a measure of advertising effectiveness. It is the 'subjective evaluation of the relative worth or utility of advertising to consumers (Ducoffe, 1995, p.1). In other words, advertising value is the 'consumers' evaluation of the relative worth of the advertisement, in that consumer satisfaction will only materialise if the perceived value of the advertisement is high enough to fulfil

their expectations (Aydin and Karamehmet, 2017; Herrando and Martin-De Hoyos, 2022).

The value of advertising has shown considerable effects on consumer attitudes towards mobile advertising (Thavorn et al., 2022). Consumers perceive the received message as a worthy read if these are in line with their needs or include valuable information regarding purchase (Lin and Narasimhan, 2020).

However, acceptance of SMS may depend on many factors like age, income, the nature and frequency of the message as well as the value of the offer. In terms of age, Coursaris et al. (2010) argued that age does have a different impact on attitudes towards mobile ads. In their study, the older consumers reported a lower impact of mobile ads when compared to the younger consumers. Another study by Kaasinen (2003) reported similar results – younger consumers showed highly positive attitudes towards mobile ads. In terms of gender, while Shavitt et al.'s (1998) earlier study on traditional advertising found that males have a more favourable attitude towards ads than females, Javeed's (2015) study on Pakistani consumers found that age does not affect attitude towards SMS ads, also reporting that both males and females have similar attitudes towards SMS ads.

Given that customers' attitudes are largely affected by the U&G dimensions of irritation, information, entertainment and credibility (Tsang et al., 2004), this study employs this theory to investigate SMS ads' perceived value and attitude of consumers as these are thought to be good predictors (Liu et al., 2012). SMS ads do stimulate changes in consumer value and their belief systems, which in turn influence not only their attitude but also their purchase behaviour (Javeed, 2015). The U&G theory purports that the effects of users' motivational factors influence their attitudes and intentions (Herrando and Martin-De Hoyos, 2022), making this theory suitable for this study.

### ***Uses and Gratification Theory***

First developed in the late 1940s, the U&G theory was formulated to better understand consumers motivational elements towards the use of different media sources (Ducoffe, 1996). As per Governor and Akata (2020), this theory has its roots in Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, as it explains why individuals choose what they want to see or read. According to Margareth et al. (2006), this theory is developed from the constructs of motivations, behavioural usage and gratification. From the time this theory was proposed, it has been widely applied

in many studies, and this continues with further advancements in communication technologies (Samani and Guri, 2019). The U&G theory explains the different motives and reasons behind using different mediums (Gan, 2017), to investigate how a person uses media to satisfy needs and helps researchers understand what motivates an individual to use a particular media (Lin, 1999). Voorveld et al. (2018) elaborate that this theory can explain and help better understand an individual's psychological needs, that in turn influences the reasons and motivations of engaging with a particular media, which then fulfils user needs. The theory assumes that individuals will use media for their own purposes (Samani and Guri, 2019).

The theory has been applied extensively to various media forms as well as mass contents, including both modern as well as traditional media like the internet (Larose and Eastin, 2004), newspapers, television, smartphones (Hossain et al., 2019), social networking sites, and social media (Sutrisno et al., 2020), such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Snapchat* and *Instagram* (Phua et al., 2017).

Various studies mention the main dimensions of this theory as *Informativeness*, *entertainment* and *irritation* (e.g. Herrando and Martin-De Hoyos, 2022; Korgonkar and Wolin, 1999; Liu et al., 2012). Since the constructs of Informativeness and entertainment can be incorporated into one construct of infotainment (Herrando and Martin-De Hoyos, 2022; Liu et al., 2012) and because 'consumers' prefer information that is both relevant and interesting, the present research uses dimensions of *infotainment*, *irritation* and *credibility*. These were also used in the studies by Hongyan and Zhankui (2017) and Okazaki (2004). Overall, prior studies are inconclusive on which of the three dimensions is the most important in influencing consumers. For instance, in a recent study by Sharma et al. (2022), they found Informativeness and entertainment as the most important predictors of advertisement value while reporting that irritation reduced the effectiveness of advertisements significantly. In a previous study, informativeness, entertainment and irritation were reported as important constructs (Tsang and Liang, 2004), whilst another research reported only infotainment and irritation as the most important dimensions (Okazaki, 2004).

### **Infotainment**

In SMS advertising, both information and entertainment are critical (Bauer, et al., 2005). The present study has incorporated the information and entertainment

dimensions into one construct (*infotainment*) (Ducoffe, 1995; Lin et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2012 ) as done in studies by Herrando and Martin-De Hoyos (2022), Hongyan and Zhankui (2017) and Okazaki (2004). As recently reported, “Informativeness and entertainment can aid consumers’ attitudes towards advertisement to drive them to instil the desire and ultimately purchase, while irritation can enact adverse effects” (De Battista et al., 2021: 3).

According to Ducoffe (1995) and Liu et al. (2012), the informativeness of an advertisement is what provides an individual with resourceful, practical and helpful information to make an informative decision. Studies such as those by Taylor et al. (2011) on social network ads found that informativeness has a positive effect on attitudes toward ads. The entertainment construct was reported as the construct with the strongest effect on an individual’s attitude towards digital advertisements in various studies (Liu et al., 2012; Tsang and Liang, 2004). Sharma et al. (2021) and Xiao et al. (2019) stress that consumers view SMS advertisements to obtain information only if it is interesting and relevant to them. Moreover, consumers’ motivation to use enjoyable and pleasant services like SMS can guide their perception of ease of use and usefulness (Xiao et al., 2019). As Gounder et al. (2021: 9) mentioned, “... consumers like to look at entertaining advertisements which they find interesting, enjoyable and funny. Consumers appear to be put off by advertisements which are [too] believable, ... intrusive and annoying”.

In terms of age, Arya and Kerti (2020) found that the millennials are interested in informative ads that generate a positive effect on their perceived advertising value. As per Firat's study (2019) on YouTube ads, participants aged 40 and over found ads more informative than the younger participants aged 18-29. Murillo’s (2016) study on Mexican millennials found that only a third of them confirmed clicking on a mobile-sponsored search only if it is informative. Participants aged 30-39 suggested that ads such as those on YouTube should be more entertaining and trendier than other age groups. Another study by Coursaris et al. (2010) reported lower perceptions of entertainment associated with mobile ads for older users than younger users. In terms of gender, 'Firat's (2019) study on YouTube ads found that males give more importance to informativeness than females, while Coursaris et al.' (2010) study reported that females perceive more informativeness and entertainment in mobile ads compared to males. Another study by Murillo (2016) argued that both males, as well as females, are strongly affected by entertainment. Thus, we hypothesise that,

**H1a:** Experienced infotainment gratification is positively related to the perceived advertisement value and attitude of both male and female consumers towards SMS.

**H1b:** Experienced infotainment gratification is positively related to the perceived advertisement value and attitude of consumers of different age groups towards SMS.

## **Credibility**

Mackenzie and Lutz (1989, p 50) define advertisement credibility as 'the extent to which the consumers perceive the claims about the brand/product advertised in the advertisement to be truthful and believable'. As per Salaudeen and Onyechi (2020), credibility is about information's accuracy, factuality, fairness and a balance of content. The credibility aspect and a consumer's attitude towards the advertisement are greatly influenced by the content, brand, company name and the trustworthiness and reliability of the source providing the information (Izquierdo-Yusta et al., 2015). Martins et al. (2019) revealed that perceived credibility in mobile ads has a positive relationship with perceived advertising value. Various studies (e.g. Liu et al., 2012; Martins et al., 2019; Okazaki 2004; Tsang and Liang, 2004) found that credibility of an advertisement has a significant impact on users' attitudes towards the advertisement and their behavioural intentions. Credibility can thus have the strongest positive impact on user ratings of advertising value (Arya and Kerti, 2020). A study conducted by Aydin and Karamehmet (2017) found negative attitudes towards mobile advertising where the credibility of the advertisement sources was questionable. A similar study by Karjaluoto et al. (2008) also confirmed the same. The credibility of information is important since it affects how individuals interpret, make sense of and the extent to which they can rely on that information

As per Howe and Teufel (2014), age is associated with credibility in advertisements. According to Eagan et al. (2014), only less than 50% of Gen Z judge the reliability or quality of messages which may be because of their young age and lack of experience (Zimand-Sheiner et, 2020). Maturity can influence the impact of advertisements on teens (Kuppuswamy and Narayan, 2010) since, at this age, they may be unable to judge what is 'fair'(Zimand-Sheiner et al., 2020). In terms of gender, Murillo et al's. (2016) study found that credibility in ads appeared more important to female millennials than males. We therefore hypothesise that,

**H2a:** Credibility is positively related to the perceived advertisement value and attitude of both male and female consumers towards SMS.

**H2b:** Credibility is positively related to the perceived advertisement value and attitude of consumers of different age groups towards SMS.

### **Irritation**

Advertisements that exploit human anxiety, distract attention, adversely affect human experiences (Ducoffe, 1996) and bring about discomfort, obnoxiousness (Luo, 2002), perceived intrusiveness and privacy concerns, leading to avoidant intention (Ko et al., 2019) are irritating advertisements. “Consumers are sensitive about certain products, services and even choice of words” (Gounder et al., 2021: 10). As per Yang et al. (2013), mobile advertisements with frustrating and insolent content involving negative feelings irritate individuals. Consumers find those advertisements irritating and perceive them as manipulative, offensive or insulting to their intelligence (Aydin and Karamehmet, 2017). Consumers can avoid ads on any medium because of the irritation ads create (Niu et al., 2021). Consumers reading or watching ads when using smartphones experience ad wear-out effects (Alwreikat and Rjoub, 2020) that result in irritation, negatively affecting the ad’s value (Lee et al., 2017).

In their study, Rettie and Brum (2001) reported that most consumers found some SMS annoying, so much so that they looked for ways to block unwanted messages. Research has shown that perceived irritation has a significant negative impact on advertising value (Liu et al., 2012; Martins et al., 2019) since “... if marketing SMS’s irritate the consumer then it will create the negative perception about certain products and services which ultimately hinder the purchasing” (Saleem & Mustafa, 2020: 735). As per Mustafi and Hosain (2020), the connection between irritation and purchase intent may also be affected by the value of ads and experience.

Cardoso and Cardoso (2012) while finding a consensus amongst gender on entertainment and credibility, reported that females find online advertising more informative and irritating. In contrast, 'Firat's (2019) study on YouTube ads showed that males were more irritated than females, but this did not differ for different age groups. Hence, the hypothesis that,

**H3a:** irritability is negatively related to the perceived advertisement value and attitude of both male and female consumers towards SMS.

**H3b:** irritability is negatively related to the perceived advertisement value

and attitude of consumers of different age groups towards SMS.

Some researchers used gender, age, race, education level and job status as control variables, mentioning these factors as important in influencing attitude (Wolin and Korgaonkar, 2003), whilst others suggest further exploration of such factors (Aydin and Karamehmet, 2017; Rettie and Brum, 2001; Roozen and Genin, 2008). However, our research explored the effects of different age groups and gender only, given that investigating all the factors as mentioned above is beyond the scope of this research and can limit good discussion on all factors in one article.

As per the research aim and in keeping consistency with the literature reviewed, the following conceptual model was developed as in Figure 1 below, illustrating the relationship between the U&G dimensions and consumers perceived advertisement value and attitude. The framework has been adopted and modified from the work of Saleem & Mustafa (2020).

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

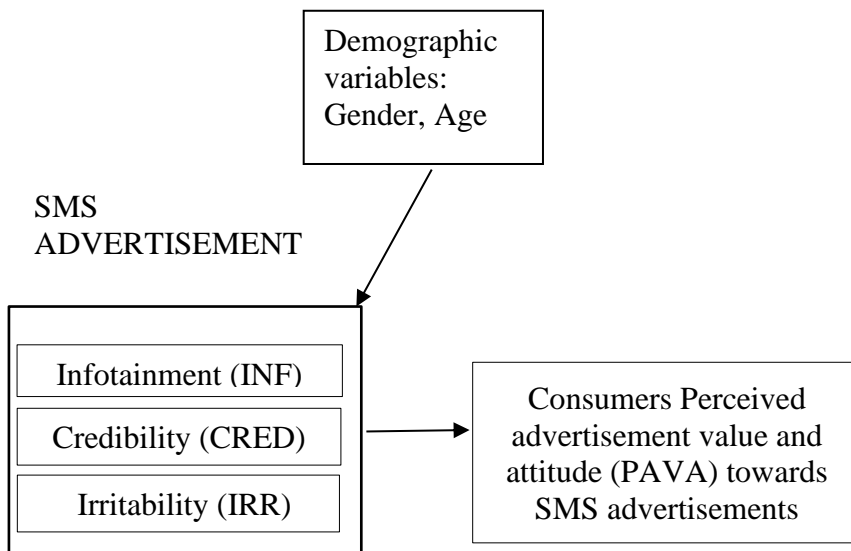


Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the U&G dimensions and consumers' perceived advertisement value and attitude.

## Materials and Methods

### *Participants and Procedure*

The target participants for this study were mobile phone users. While most research on SMS marketing used mixed method data collection approaches,

authors like Bhave et al. (2013) suggested that future studies employ more quantitative survey methods with larger samples to improve the validity of results. Considering Bhave et al.'s (2013) suggestion, and assuming a positivist approach, this study employed a convenience sampling method through an online survey. This is also in line with Roozen and 'Genin's (2008) suggestion of an online questionnaire to reach out to different groups. A pilot test was carried out with 12 respondents to ascertain whether or not the survey instrument was clear and easy to understand. These respondents included university (The University of the South Pacific) students, friends and academic colleagues of the researchers who own and use mobile phones. All pilot study respondents understood the content and structure of the survey and filled them out appropriately. Thus, no changes were made to the survey questionnaire. Therefore, their responses were not included in the final dataset. The main survey was then conducted on Facebook. Since an online questionnaire helps reach out to different groups (Roozen & Genin, 2008), links to the revised questionnaire were messaged by the authors of this paper to their Facebook friends. The Facebook users are already part of the online community, most of whom access their Facebook using their mobile phones. Participants were further requested to forward the link to their acquaintances for a diverse sample and to reach out to others unknown to the researchers. Participation was voluntary, and participants were allowed to decline participation if they found any question inappropriate. The survey was conducted in May 2020 and collected 261 responses. The sample size is similar to the sample size of 271 in Bhatia's study (2020). Table 1 provides the demographic profile of the present study's sample.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	N	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	113	43.3
Female	148	56.7
<b>Age</b>		
less than 20	48	18.4
21-30	123	47.1
31-40	54	20.7
41-50	20	7.7
51 and above	16	6.1



## ***Measures***

The infotainment (INF) construct has eight measurement items (1. SMS ads provide helpful information to keep individuals updated with various products and services; 2. SMS ads provide timely information on various products and services; 3. SMS ads provide relevant information on various products and services; 4. SMS ads are more valuable when they have incentives for products, brands or deals; 5. SMS ads are a good source of advertisements; 6. SMS ads are interesting; 7. SMS ads are enjoyable and funny, and; 8. SMS ads are pleasing) sourced from the work of Ducoffe (1995); Liu et al. (2012), and Yang et al. (2013). The credibility (CRED) construct has four measurement items (1. SMS ads are trustworthy because of the company and brand name used in the advertisement; 2. I believe that SMS ads are a good reference point for purchasing products; 3. SMS ads are reliable, and; 4. SMS ads are believable) sourced from Liu et al. (2012) and Yang et al. (2013). The irritation (IRR) construct has three measurement items (1. I feel that some SMS ads are irritating when the ads keep popping up; 2. I feel that some SMS ads are frustrating and produce negative feelings and; 3. I feel that some SMS ads' contents are intrusive and annoying) sourced from the work of Ducoffe (1995) and Liu et al. (2012). The perceived advertisement value and attitude (PAVA) construct has three measurement items (1. I like to look at mobile advertisements; 2. On average, brands that are advertised on mobiles are better in quality and; 3. SMS ads affect my decision to purchase a product or service) sourced from Ducoffe (1995) and Chowdhury et al. (2006).

The above measured variables include four variables that were added to suit the consumers within this cluster of research and were sourced from Chowdhury et al. (2006), Liu et al. (2012) and Yang et al. (2013). These new measured variables were: INF 4 - SMS ads are more valuable when they have incentives for products, brands or deals, CRED 10 - I believe that SMS ads are a good reference point for purchasing products, IRR 13 - I feel that some SMS ads are irritating when the ads keep popping up and, PAVA 18 - SMS ads affect my decision to purchase a product or service. In total, this study used 18 questions more than other similar studies (e.g. Chowdhury et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2012; Yang et al., 2013). The enhanced questionnaire helped consumers better understand and correctly respond to the questions, enhancing analysis, results and discussion.

## Results

Prior to analysis, using the data screening procedure, the dataset was first checked for any missing values and outliers. While frequency tests using SPSS v25 of all variables showed no missing values, the outlier test of boxplot results did identify some outliers. A thorough manual check of each row identified as an outlier showed that these were neither outliers nor data entry errors since responses fell within the scale range. As per Orr, Sackett & DuBois (1991), some data points may be legitimate and probably represent the population as a whole if outliers remain; hence these were not removed. Data was considered Normally-distributed since skewness values ranged from -1.488 to .266, falling within the acceptable range of -2 to +2, and kurtosis ranged from -1.397 to 4.238, also within the acceptable range of -7 to +7 (Bryne, 2010). All Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) scores were <10, ranging from 1.500 to 4.733 and tolerance (t)>0.1 (Paruq et al., 2021), ranging from .211 to .667, thus multicollinearity was not an issue.

### *Assessment of measurement model*

Reliability analysis was carried out for internal validity and reliability of constructs, using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The results were well above >0.7 for good internal validity and reliability (Griethuijsen et al., 2015), being 0.904 for INF, 0.894 for CRED, 0.822 for IRR, 0.841 for PAVA.

Convergent validity was confirmed for all scales since these were within the acceptable range of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) >0.5 (Hair et al. 2016). Composite reliability (CR) scores were also >0.60 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), and the square roots of AVE were more than the inter-construct correlations, confirming discriminant validity ( Hamilton & Tee, 2015). See Table 2 below.

Table 2. Validity Analysis

	CR	AVE	INF	CRED	IRR	PAVA
INF	0.892	0.552	<b>0.743</b>			
CRED	0.926	0.759	.721**	<b>0.871</b>		
IRR	0.840	0.644	-.454**	-.349**	<b>0.802</b>	
PAVA	0.842	0.640	.753**	.686**	-.571**	<b>0.799</b>

Sqrt of AVE are the boldfaced diagonal scores.

INF=Infotainment, CRED=Credibility, IRR= Irritation,

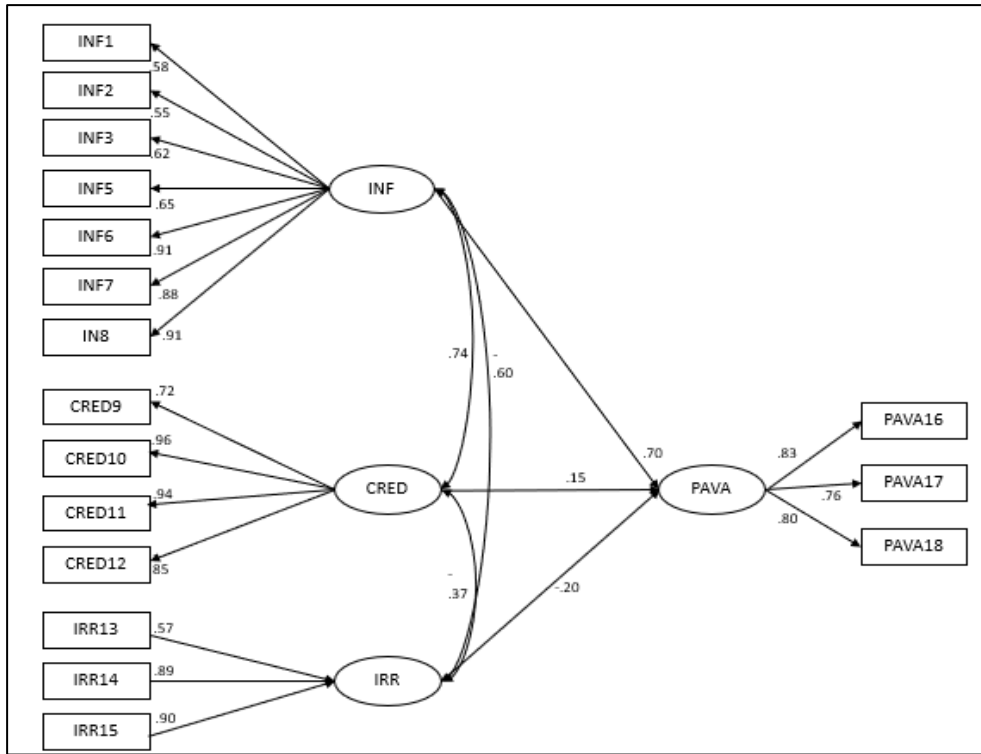
PAVA=Perceived Advertisement Value and Attitude

In addition, common method bias was tested using Harman's single factor score. The total variance for a single factor was 47%, below the 50% threshold, confirming that common method bias did not affect this 'study's 'findings'.

After the reliability and validity tests, an initial Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was carried out for the measurement model assessment for comprehensive data. In so doing, INF4 was dropped because of a lower standardised estimate, and few correlations were created between some infotainment and credibility error variables to improve model fit. A good model fit was then confirmed (CMIN/DF=2.279<3.0, NFI=0.917, IFI=0.952, CFI=0.951; PNFI=0.695, PCFI=0.721; RMSEA=0.050 (Schmitt 2011).

### ***Structural model results***

SPSS v25 and SPSS AMOS v23 were used for descriptive analysis, validity tests, and covariance-based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM) for regression path analysis to test the hypotheses. SEM proves effective when developing and expanding theories, with second, and third-order factors leading to an improved understanding of relationships that may not appear so initially (Astrachan, Patel & Wanzenreid, 2014). AMOS was employed in this research to test the hybrid model based on two relevant theories with confirmatory factor analysis, for which CB-SEM is more applicable (Ringle & Sarstedt, 2013) as it helps with the development of scales, exploratory and confirmatory analyses, latent constructs' relative salience as well as evaluates causal relationships (Byrne, 2010). As per the recommendation of Schmitt (2011), an acceptable model fit was also confirmed for the structural model (CMIN/DF=2.734<3.0, NFI=0.917, IFI=0.945, CFI=0.945; PNFI=0.728, PCFI=0.750; RMSEA=0.08). Figure 3 illustrates the Structural Equation Model.

**Figure 3. Structural Equation Model**

The results (standardised loadings) for gender and age comparisons are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Results: Gender Comparison

Factor and Item Description	Male	Female		
	SL	SL	SL	
<b>Infotainment (INF)</b>				
1. SMS ads provide helpful information to keep you up to date with various products and services and;	0.667	0.503		
2. SMS ads provide timely information on various products and services;	0.584	0.509		
3. SMS ads provide relevant information on various products and services;	0.671	0.580		
5. SMS ads are a good source of advertisements;	0.669	0.628		
6. SMS ads are interesting;	0.924	0.890		
7. SMS ads are enjoyable and funny	0.875	0.893		
8. SMS ads are pleasing	0.940	0.876		
<b>Credibility (CRED)</b>				
9. SMS ads are trustworthy because of the company and brand name used in the advertisement	0.774	0.683		
10. I believe that SMS ads are a good reference point for purchasing products	0.932	0.980		
11. SMS ads are reliable	0.972	0.922		
12. SMS ads are believable	0.817	0.867		
<b>Irritation (IRR)</b>				
13. I feel that some SMS ads are irritating when the ads keep popping up	0.569	0.575		
14. I feel that some SMS ads are frustrating and produce negative feelings	0.873	0.899		
15. I feel that some SMS 'ads' contents are intrusive and annoying	0.932	0.881		
<b>Perceived Advertisement Value and Attitude (PAVA)</b>				
16. I like to look at mobile advertisements	0.838	0.818		
17. On average, brands that are advertised on mobiles are better in quality	0.688	0.823		
18. SMS ads affect my decision to purchase a product or service	0.799	0.807		
		P value	P value	
INF → PAVA	0.632	***	0.742	***
CRED → PAVA	0.125	0.155	0.178	0.006
IRR → PAVA	-0.308	***	-0.131	0.033

SL = Standard Loadings; \*\*\* = Significant p value of <0.001

Table 4. Results: Age Group Comparison

Age (years)	< 20	21-30	31-40	41-50				
Factor and Item Description	SL	SL	SL	SL				
<b>Infotainment (INF)</b>								
1. SMS ads provide helpful information to keep you up to date with various products and services and;	0.701	0.537	0.647	0.907				
2. SMS ads provide timely information on various products and services;	0.776	0.501	0.664	0.929				
3. SMS ads provide relevant information on various products and services;	0.686	0.577	0.665	0.937				
5. SMS ads are a good source of advertisements;	0.777	0.616	0.726	0.330				
6. SMS ads are interesting;	0.924	0.897	0.902	0.945				
7. SMS ads are enjoyable and funny	0.782	0.883	0.871	0.952				
8. SMS ads are pleasing	0.866	0.884	0.911	1.004				
<b>Credibility (CRED)</b>								
9. SMS ads are trustworthy because of the company and brand name used in the advertisement	0.745	0.699	0.826	0.862				
10. I believe that SMS ads are a good reference point for purchasing products	0.972	0.934	0.940	1.028				
11. SMS ads are reliable	0.962	0.959	0.856	1.006				
12. SMS ads are believable	0.913	0.792	0.843	0.958				
<b>Irritation (IRR)</b>								
13. I feel that some SMS ads are irritating when the ads keep popping up	0.137	0.624	0.660	0.468				
14. I feel that some SMS ads are frustrating and produce negative feelings	1.311	0.817	0.970	1.244				
15. I feel that some SMS ads'contents are intrusive and annoying	0.630	0.828	0.960	0.747				
<b>Perceived Advertisement Value and Attitude (PAVA)</b>								
16. I like to look at mobile advertisements	0.817	0.768	0.847	0.987				
17. On average, brands that are advertised on mobiles are better in quality	0.611	0.795	0.681	0.999				
18. SMS ads affect my decision to purchase a product or service	0.904	0.765	0.790	0.890				
		P	P	P	P			
		value	value	value	value			
INF → PAVA	0.893	***	0.601	***	0.723	***	1.173	***
CRED → PAVA	0.069	.593	0.284	.001	0.138	.249	-0.266	.042
IRR → PAVA	-0.082	.136	-0.214	.007	-0.233	.016	-0.032	.267

\*\*\* = significant p value of  $p < 0.001$

As per the results, infotainment (INF) depicts the strongest association with both the males and females' perceived advertisement value and attitude (PAVA: H1a), more so for females ( $\beta = 0.742$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Credibility (CRED) does not significantly impact for males but was significant for females with  $\beta = 0.178$ ,  $p < 0.05$  (H2a) while irritation (IRR) was significant, more so for males with  $\beta = -0.308$ ,  $p < 0.001$  (H3a). Results for age showed that INF has a significant association with PAVA for all age groups, indicating the strongest impact on

the oldest group, the 41-50 year olds. CRED had a significant impact on the 21-30 year olds ( $\beta = 0.284, p < 0.05$ ) and 41-50 year olds ( $\beta = -0.266, p < 0.05$ ) only but is negative for the latter age group. IRR (F3) showed significant impact on 21-30 ( $\beta = -0.214, p < 0.05$ ) and 31-40 year olds ( $\beta = -0.233, p < 0.05$ ) only. Interestingly, all three dimensions (INF, CRED and IRR: H1b, H2b, H3b) showed significant positive impact for the 21-30 year olds only. However, for the older group of 31-40 year olds, only INF and IRR were significant. Lastly, for the oldest of the four groups (41-50 year olds), only INF and CRED were significant but negative for CRED. Table 5 summarises the structural model relationships.

Table 5. Structural Model Relationships

Hypothesis	Decision	Interpretation
<b>H1a:</b> Experienced infotainment gratification is positively related to the perceived advertisement value and attitude of both male and female consumers towards SMS.	Supported	The positive relationship between infotainment and PAVA towards SMS is confirmed but is stronger for females.
<b>H1b:</b> Experienced infotainment gratification is positively related to the perceived advertisement value and attitude of consumers of different age groups towards SMS.	Supported	The positive relationship between infotainment and PAVA towards SMS is confirmed since it is significant for all age groups, being strongest for the oldest group, 41-50 year olds.
<b>H2a:</b> Credibility is positively related to the perceived advertisement value and attitude of both male and female consumers towards SMS.	Partially supported	The positive relationship between credibility and PAVA towards SMS is partially confirmed since results are significant only for females.
<b>H2b:</b> Credibility is positively related to the perceived advertisement value and attitude of consumers of different age groups towards SMS.	Partially supported	The positive relationship between credibility and PAVA towards SMS is partially confirmed since it is only significant for the 21-30 year olds and is significant but negative for 41-50 year olds.
<b>H3a:</b> Irritability is negatively related to the perceived advertisement value and attitude of both male and female consumers towards SMS.	Supported	The negative relationship between irritability and PAVA towards SMS is confirmed for both, moreso for males.
<b>H3b:</b> Irritability is negatively related to the perceived advertisement value and attitude of consumers of different age groups towards SMS.	Partially supported	The negative relationship between irritability and PAVA towards SMS is only confirmed and significant for the 21-30 and 31-40 year olds.

## **Discussion**

### ***Discussion of results***

As per the empirical results of this study, while infotainment is positively related to both male and female consumers' perceived advertisement value and attitude towards SMS, the impact was higher for females than males. The study by Karjaluoto et al. (2008) reported similarly - males appeared less likely to be persuaded by mobile marketing when compared to females. This may suggest that females seek more helpful, timely, relevant, valuable, interesting and entertaining SMS advertisements than males.

The empirical results of this study also confirmed that infotainment is positively related to consumers' perceived advertisement value and attitude for all age groups towards SMS, strongest for the oldest of the four groups (41-50 years). For the less than 20-year-olds, credibility and irritation were not significant. While various studies (e.g. Tsang and Liang, 2004) have shown that an advertisement's credibility has a significant effect on 'users' attitudes towards the advertisement, this 'study's empirical results could not confirm this for the youngest consumers. The impact was also not as much for the 21-30-year-olds. This may be because this group more readily believes in SMS, is more excited about SMS and is less irritated by frequent SMS compared to older consumers.

Furthermore, it is evident from the various age groups' results that the 21-30-year-olds are the most affected by all three dimensions of infotainment, credibility and irritation. This is because they are considered the e-generation, being more tech-savvy and reliant on their mobile phones compared to the other age groups. This empirical finding concurs with previous studies (Bhave et al., 2013; Chhateja and Jain, 2014; Roozen and Genin, 2008) that argued that SMS campaigns are particularly successful in the younger segments of the market because they are tech-savvy and demonstrate stronger consumer and individual traits. However, for the older group of 31-40-year-olds, only infotainment and irritation are related to their perceived advertisement value and attitude, more so infotainment. This may be because, being older and generally busier than other age groups, the 31-40-year-olds are less tolerant of frequent SMS and more concerned about relevant information. For the oldest of the four groups - the 41-50-year-olds, infotainment and credibility are related to their perceived advertisement value and attitude, with credibility reporting negative relation. This may be because these customers are more cautious and do not readily



believe in SMS advertisements, making them more sceptical and difficult to persuade. Overall, the comparative results indicate that consumers of different age groups have different perceived advertising values and attitudes towards SMS advertising.

### ***Theoretical contributions***

The findings of this study make various contributions to the existing literature on SMS advertisements. First, this study provides empirical evidence from a developing country perspective, particularly a small South Pacific nation.

Second, another contribution of this research is the gender and age group comparisons when investigating consumers' perceived value and attitude towards SMS. This study is the first to examine gender and age group differences, using different age brackets, employing all U&G dimensions. Scholars (e.g. Aydin and Karamehmet, 2017) suggested that future studies should explore different consumer segments apart from the traditional segment of young consumers. In addressing this gap, this study provided empirical evidence of differences in consumers' perceived value and attitude towards SMS for males, females, and the age groups of less than 20, 21-30, 31-40 and 41-50 year-olds.

Lastly, while the present study used existing variables, it added four new measured variables within the three U&G constructs. These were:

- “SMS ads are more valuable when they have incentives of products, brands or deals(INF4-infotainment);
- “SMS ads are a good reference point for purchasing products” (credibility);
- “some SMS ads are irritating when the ads keep popping up” (irritation); and
- “SMS ads affect my decision to purchase a product or service” (perceived value and attitude).

The INF4 scale item was dropped with lower loading while the other three proved useful, paving the way for the creation of a more refined questionnaire

### ***Implications for Practice***

Marketers need to consider gender and age group differences when creating SMS advertisements (Luxton & Ferraro, 2009) and, tailor their advertisements, especially if they segment their markets in terms of different age groups and gender. Companies need to consider such demographic factors of their target

segments (Firat, 2019). Their SMS advertisements would then most likely better appeal to their target markets. As Bhave et al. (2013) mentioned, personalised messages can increase consumer involvement. The more involved the consumer, the more likely they will be persuaded to purchase what is advertised. For instance, for less than 20-year-olds, credibility and irritation are not significant, but infotainment is. As such, marketers should focus on creating , relevant, incentivised, and enjoyable advertisements for this age group. What is worth noting is that marketers must be mindful that what may be relevant and interesting to one age group may not be so for other groups. For the 21-30-year-olds who are affected by all three dimensions of infotainment, credibility and irritation, marketers should ensure that their advertisements provide useful information that captures interest, is believable, is the truth, mentions trusted brands without exaggeration and is not annoying in any way. For the older group of 31-40-year-olds who are affected by infotainment and irritation, more so infotainment, the focus should be on relevant and interesting SMS which are not annoying, manipulative or insulting in any way since this group appears to be the most sensitive. Since older mobile users get annoyed more easily, 'a more prudent approach is recommended in terms of the design and execution of the mobile ad campaign' for older users (Coursaris et al. (2010). For the 41-50-year-olds, who are affected by infotainment and credibility, advertisements should mention well known, trusted brand names and believable benefits from product usage without any exaggeration. "Although older consumers show a positive attitude towards mobile advertising, but they are comparatively more watchful, whereas younger consumers show a much more satisfactory attitude towards mobile ads as compared to older ones" (Javeed, 2015: 129).

In terms of gender, the impact of infotainment is higher for females. Coursaris et al. (2010) study reported the same on informativeness and entertainment. Thus, if the female group is the target market, then more effort should be made towards providing information that females find more relevant, offering desirable incentives with content that females perceive as enjoyable. If a target market is well selected with a good marketing strategy and a non-aggressive message; the SMS marketing campaigns can represent an efficient communication instrument. (Costea & Nedelea, 2014).

### ***Research Limitations and Future Directions***

Like any other study, the present study has some limitations that can be used to inform future research. Firstly, this study may not present a holistic SMS

advertising scenario. The sample is skewed towards the 21-30-year-olds and females of one South Pacific developing economy, but one that has been rarely studied in this subject matter. However, it encourages marketing scholars to examine the subject matter further, making gender and age group comparisons in other smaller developing countries. Secondly, because convenience sampling was employed, this may limit the generalizability of findings (Ellis and Levy, 2009). Therefore, future studies may employ other data collection methods. Thirdly, this research employed a quantitative research approach. Therefore, future studies can adopt a mixed methodology for better understanding.

Notwithstanding, the 'Harman's single factor test of 47% confirms that common method bias did not affect this 'study's findings, thus, the findings do provide a meaningful basis for future comparative and large-scale studies. Additionally, R squared, which is the explained variance was 60%, reflecting high predictive power; still, the model can be improved further. Future research can also look into adding more variables to the U&G model, such as urgent needs and message timing. For instance, if the product advertised is what is needed by the consumer at that time and is sent at a time when the consumer is not too busy, then consumer's perceived advertisement value and attitude will most likely be positive. In addition, as Margareth et al. (2006) suggested, future researchers can combine the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) with the U&G theory. TAM is also a motivational theory. Furthermore, based on our findings and given the different impacts on consumers of different age groups and gender, future studies can carry out comparative studies and investigate the impact on these groups between different developing and/or developed countries. Studies can also explore the impact of other factors, such as ethnicity/race, education level, religion, job status, cultural dimensions etc., that were not covered and beyond the scope of this study.

## **Conclusion**

The study contributes to a better understanding of consumers' perceived value and attitude towards SMS advertising from a smaller developing country context. As Mustafa et al. (2019) argued, the behaviour of Asian consumers is very different from that of Western consumers. This paper presents a similar argument: the behaviour of smaller Pacific Island consumers can also differ. The findings of this study indicate that consumers differ in their perception and the degree to which they are affected, given their age and gender, This study collected data from 261 mobile phone users using the quantitative approach and

a convenience sampling technique.

The empirical results suggest that the age and gender of consumers do matter when it comes to their perceived advertising value and attitude towards SMS advertisements, thus, the need to tailor- make advertisements, particularly if the target markets are segmented by age and gender.

### **Declaration of Interest and Disclosure Statement**

The authors report that there are no competing interests to declare.

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## **Gender Perceptions towards Diversity Management Practices in the Public Sector**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to examine the differences in the perception of male and female employees towards diversity management and their work outcomes in a highly male-dominated culture in the Public Sector. A quantitative survey of 114 public sector employees was analysed using structural equation modelling. Overall, the findings reveal that diversity management has a positive and significant impact on both genders' work outcomes of affective commitment, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, work group performance and inclusiveness of organisational culture. However, the male employees reported lower levels of organisational commitment than the female employees. This study highlights key suggestions for policymakers and public managers, such as diversity strategy, top leadership commitment, diversity training programs, team bonding exercises, strengthening of family-friendly programs and other suggestions. The theoretical contribution of this research is the integration of representative bureaucracy theory, commitment management theory and social cognitive theory for a robust argument for diversity management in the public sector. Studies on gender perceptions in developing small island countries are rare. This study is the first of its kind in the subject country. It identifies the distinct gender norms in society and the role of diversity management.

**Keywords:** Developing country, Diversity Management, Gender perceptions, Male-dominated culture, Public sector

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## **Introduction**

Today, more women than ever are educated and participate in the labour market (OECD, 2020). Despite progress in OECD countries, women and other disadvantaged groups face discrimination entrenched in social norms, lack of networks and accessibility issues, resulting in the substantial labour market and wage gaps even in the public sector – this threatens social cohesion (OECD, 2020).

This study focuses on a developing South Pacific country, Fiji, where the female labour force participation rate is 38 per cent, and the female share of managers is 39 per cent (International Labour Organization, 2020). However, increasing labour force participation does not mean narrowing gender gaps in the workplace (Fiji Women's Rights Movement, 2018). These gaps include unequal access to employment, unequal pay between men and women, and limited access to social protection and senior leadership positions. A study conducted by Tebbutt Research commissioned by Fiji Women's Rights Movement revealed that the sector reporting the highest incidence of harassment was the tourism sector, followed by the public service, health and retail sectors (Fiji Women's Rights Movement, 2016). Discrimination in the workplace, including those against women and disabled workers, leads to economic and social costs such as absenteeism, emotional distress, and potential social breakdown (International Labour Organization, 2021). A workplace free from discrimination and harassment leads to better work performance and higher productivity (International Labour Organization, 2021). Thus, managing gender diversity is crucial for an inclusive and equitable work environment.

Initial work on Diversity Management began in the USA to create a more positive business perspective of productivity from a heterogeneous workforce (Thomas, 1990). Among the many aims of diversity management, one is preventing discrimination against disadvantaged groups such as women and minorities and their equitable treatment (Soni, 2000; Thomas 1990). Diversity practices have prevented organisations from exacerbating traditional gender inequalities (Kim & Park, 2017).

Most studies on diversity management have been conducted in the Western context. For instance, empirical studies in the USA found a positive effect of diversity management on employees' work outcomes and behaviour (Choi & Rainey, 2010; Kim & Park, 2017; Pitts, 2009). It is noteworthy that while there

have been numerous geographically spread studies on diversity management (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015b; Ghasemi, 2014; Kehoe & Wright, 2013; Koç et al., 2014; Kundu & Mor, 2016; Magoshi & Chang, 2009; Ordu, 2016), only a few studies have examined gender-based perceptions of diversity management on work outcomes (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015a; Choi & Rainey, 2010; Kim et al., 2015). To date, very few studies have highlighted gender-based perceptions of diversity management in a male-dominated society such as one in South Korea (Kim et al., 2015). In the context of smaller developing countries, there are no studies that distinguish between male and female perceptions of diversity management in a male-dominated society. This study cannot, however, be generalised to other contexts because of different sociocultural orientations, power structures and socio-political efforts to eliminate gender discrimination and workforce diversity. Furthermore, every organisation has its own organisational culture, values and workforce diversity which makes it difficult to design and implement a commonly accepted diversity-related programme for all organisations (Jin, Lee, & Lee, 2017).

This research is significant because it highlights the male and female employees' perceptions of diversity management on their individual (affective commitment, organisational commitment and job satisfaction), group (work group performance) and organisational (inclusive organisational culture) work outcomes in a developing country's public workforce in a male-dominated culture. This study contributes to the literature in two ways. Firstly, the integration of representative bureaucracy theory, commitment management and social cognitive theory to explore diversity management and employee work outcomes. The combination of these theories strengthens the argument for effective diversity management in the public sector for improved service delivery and effectiveness. Secondly, we provide evidence from a smaller island developing context and extend the literature from US-centric and Asian contexts.

### **Gender and Cultural Context**

Although significant progress has been made in Fiji to dismantle systematic gender-based discrimination in society and the workplace, the issue remains salient. While educated women from all ethnic groups have greater opportunities for employment and are getting their voices heard, this developing country remains a male-dominated society (Naidu, 2013) Despite the progress of women in Fiji's parliament, patriarchy is a major force that hinders the



advancement of women in the political sphere (Chattier, 2015). Men are seen as legitimate political leaders by indigenous Fijians (iTaukei) and non-indigenous (Indo-Fijians) ethnicities (Naidu, 2013). The gender norms of ethnicities, such as women's domesticated role in the homes of Indo-Fijian households and few rights to inherit land and property or take part in public decision-making in iTaukei households, strengthen the patriarchal culture (Chattier, 2015). However, in the past few years, females have been able to transgress and negotiate gender roles as there has been progress in female employment in the public sector workforce and socio-economic developments such as education (Chattier, 2013). For instance, statistics show an increase in gender diversity in Fiji's public sector workforce. The total number of public employees in 2017 was 47,928, of which 56 per cent were male, and 44.33 per cent were female employees (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Much of this change has been influenced by the women's movement and civil society activism in Fiji as they are advocates of gender parity (Chattier, 2015). Historical employment legislation also played a central role for gender equality in female employment.

## **Literature Review**

Most public agencies around the world have implemented some form of diversity management initiatives (Soni, 2000) with the goal of increasing organisational effectiveness (Naff & Kellough, 2003). These include the Government-Wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2011 in the USA, Framework for Action 2008 in Canada (Ohemeng & MacGrandle, 2015), Equality Act 2010 in the UK (Klarsfeld et al., 2014), Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 in Australia (Stone, 2017) and Human Rights Act 1993 in New Zealand (Deborah et al., 2000). In Fiji, gender diversity in the public sector was realised through the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy in the late 1990s by Public Service Commission (International Labour Organization, 2019) and later in the Employment Relations Act 2007, which prohibits discrimination in employment. New public management (NPM) reforms in Fiji have introduced human resource diversity management practices in recruitment and selection, training and development and career development.

Diversity management is the latest development in a sequence of strategies aimed to: better represent the excluded minority in employment, recognise the cultural differences between groups of employees and make practical allowances for these differences in organisational policies (Wrench, 2007). There are two widespread practices of diversity management. Diversity

practices in the recruitment process make the workforce more diverse (Avery and McKay, 2006). Diversity training is another prominent practice to raise awareness of managers and employees on diversity-related stereotypes and biases and focuses on the inclusion of minorities and vulnerable groups (Alhejji et al., 2016). Recent research shows that female employees reported more favourable perceptions of diversity management practices than male workers (Kim et al., 2015; Mousa et al., 2020). In this research, diversity management is conceptualised through Pitts's (2006) lens. It has three interrelated components of recruitment and outreach, valuing differences and pragmatic policies and programs such as mentoring opportunities to provide a culture of support for minority employees.

### **Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development**

Representative bureaucracy theory, commitment management theory and social cognitive theory are used to explain the relationship between diversity management and its effect on male and female employees' various work outcomes.

The argument for diversity management in the public workforce has been envisioned with the theory of representative bureaucracy (Pitts, 2005). It postulates the public service to be inclusive of diverse races, nationalities and religions that reflect pluralism in society (Long, 1952). Representative bureaucracy warrants equal opportunity and representation of diverse groups' interests in policy decisions (Adusah-Kaikari & Ohemeng, 2014). Rice (2010) expands the rationale for equity-based diversity management to improve decision-making in public organisations rather than diversity through population changes. Pitts (2009) proved that employees have a high level of work group performance when supported by diversity management practices for responsive public service. However, this theory fails to show how diversity management affects other individual and organisational work outcomes for responsive public service. Therefore, the use of commitment management theory explains the reciprocal relationship between diversity management and various work outcomes, and social cognitive theory details the psychological processes involved between an organisation's diversity management strategies and employees' behaviour towards their work outcomes. These two theories suggest diversity management will improve employees' work outcomes, which means that employees will be productive and effective in their public service delivery. In addition, it implies that with improved work outcomes, the

employees will feel included and represented, thus, effective in decision-making for diverse groups of people. Therefore, this aligns with the theory of representative bureaucracy's argument.

Commitment management theory views the relationship between an organisation and its employees as an exchange of commitment (March & Simon, 1958). When an organisation expresses its commitment to its workforce through diversity management strategies and practices, the employees, in return, reciprocate with their commitment to the organisation (Romanenko, 2012). Empirical studies support this (Ghasemi, 2014; Kundu & Mor, 2016; Magoshi & Chang, 2009). Diversity management human resource practices affect various individual and organisational level work outcomes (Stone, 2017). In this study, we extend this theoretical perspective and add four work outcomes: affective commitment, job satisfaction, work group performance and inclusive organisational culture. The reciprocal relationship between diversity management and these work outcomes will be investigated.

Social cognitive theory, as a psychological approach to learning and cognition, explains the triadic reciprocal determinism between the external environment, internal person factors and behaviour (Gibson, 2004). Self-efficacy is the most researched sub-theory related to the capability beliefs of an individual to successfully complete a specific task (Bandura, 1997). The concept of self-efficacy can be integrated with psychological climate to explain the overall psychological approach. The psychological climate is the property of the individual that depicts experience-based meanings at the workplace based on the organisational structures, processes and events (Parker, et al., 2003). Individuals judge the extent to which the work environment is beneficial to their sense of well-being (Carless, 2004). When organisations effectively implement HR diversity policies and practices (as a factor of the external environment), it can create a positive psychological climate (Doghan et al., 2019) and simultaneously boost the self-efficacy of the employees to do better at the workplace, which could influence employee job satisfaction and performance. Furthermore, positive perceptions and capability beliefs can affect employee affective, organisational commitment, workgroup performance and feelings of inclusivity in the work environment. The proposition by Doghan, Bhatti and Juhari (2019) on job satisfaction is tested in this research. Four additional work outcomes are explored through this theoretical lens as well.

In line with these theories, diversity management policies and practices provide

a culture of inclusion and equity in opportunities for both genders in male-dominated cultures to enhance their work outcomes. Representative bureaucracy theory has not been previously integrated with other theories in a diversity paper to explain the work outcomes. To the authors' best knowledge, this is the first paper to integrate representative bureaucracy theory with others to provide a robust argument for diversity management on these work outcomes in the public sector. The application of these theoretical concepts in Fijian organisations further makes it unique.

## **Research Hypotheses**

### **Affective commitment**

Affective commitment reflects the emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1991). In a previous study by Cho and Mor Barak (2008) in a highly dominated male culture in Korea, male workers had a higher level of affective commitment than female workers. This is because of the Korean cultural context that emphasises a woman's primary responsibility to her spouse and family. However, in the presence of workplace diversity management programs, the findings can differ. Empirical studies show that diversity management has a positive impact on employees' affective commitment (Groeneveld & Ashikali, 2015a; Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015b; Kehoe & Wright, 2013). Ashikali and Groeneveld's (2015a) analysis of gender groups showed that diversity management is associated with high levels of inclusion, boosting the affective commitment of both male and female employees in the Dutch public sector. It is assumed that the findings will be same in other male-dominated cultures. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- Hypothesis 1a: Diversity management has a positive and significant effect on male employees' affective commitment.
- Hypothesis 1b: Diversity management has a positive and significant effect on female employees' affective commitment.

### **Organisational commitment**

Organisational commitment refers to an employee's strong belief to accept organisational goals and values and exert considerable effort in support of the organisation with a wish to remain (Angel & Perry, 1981). Research by Kim, Lee and Kim (2015) in highly male-dominated Korean society revealed no

difference in the level of organisational commitment of male and female employees. Empirical studies show that diversity management has a positive impact on employees' organisational commitment (Magoshi & Chang, 2009; Ghasemi, 2014; Kundu & Mor, 2016). In a male-dominated culture, it is assumed that diversity management practices at the workplace will leverage male and female workers' perceptions of organisational commitment to be similar. This leads to the following hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 2a: Diversity management has a positive and significant effect on male employees' organisational commitment.
- Hypothesis 2b: Diversity management has a positive and significant effect on female employees' organisational commitment.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is defined as the degree to which employees have positive attitudes toward their jobs (Stone, 2017). Empirical research shows that diversity management efforts have a positive impact on employees' job satisfaction (Pitts, 2009; Koç et al., 2014; Ordu, 2016). Pragmatic policies and practices under diversity management, such as mentoring opportunities, family-friendly policies and flexible working hours, influence job satisfaction (Pitts, 2006). Diversity management encourages an environment of cultural diversity where employees' differences are recognised and valued, thus enabling them to work to their full potential in a more productive environment (Wrench, 2007). Diversity management values gender differences and provides equity in opportunities and policies for male and female workers, influencing job satisfaction. Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- Hypothesis 3a: Diversity management has a positive and significant effect on male employees' job satisfaction.
- Hypothesis 3b: Diversity management has a positive and significant effect on female employees' job satisfaction.

### **Work Group Performance**

As the demographic profile of workers becomes more diverse in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and other dimensions of diversity, HR scholars and practitioners need to cope with managing diversity within the workforce (Klarsfeld et al., 2014). It requires organisations to grasp the advantages of diversity and mitigate associated threats. In line with representative bureaucracy

theory, a public service that reflects a pluralistic society will be responsive to citizens' needs. Diversity management provides and promotes diversity through recruitment outreach, valuing differences and pragmatic policies improve the group performance of workers. Empirical evidence by Pitts (2009) supports this. In the case of a male-dominated culture, it is assumed that diversity policies and practices will be based on fairness and equity. It considers the differences between male and female workers to help them perform effectively in teams, thus being responsive to population needs and concerns. This leads to the following hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 4a: Diversity management has a positive and significant effect on male employees' workgroup performance.
- Hypothesis 4b: Diversity management has a positive and significant effect on female employees' workgroup performance.

### **Inclusive Organisational Culture**

The diversity management perspective follows an inclusionary approach whereby differences are recognised and valued, and new perspectives are integrated into decision-making and problem-solving processes (Pless & Maak, 2004). To develop a strong culture of inclusiveness, leaders must practice inclusive leadership to recognise the differences between employees, regardless of their social, cultural and physical backgrounds (Myung et al., 2017). Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015b) prove that diversity management positively impacts employees' perception of an inclusive organisational culture. Particularly in male-dominated cultures, gendered norms and stereotypes of women often exclude them in the decision-making process. However, diversity management recognises and values gender differences and actively encourages the participation of women in the workplace. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- Hypothesis 5a: Diversity management has a positive and significant effect on male employees' inclusive organisational culture.
- Hypothesis 5b: Diversity management has a positive and significant effect on female employees' inclusive organisational culture.

## **Research Method**

### *Design*

In this study, the survey method was employed to collect data from participants. Most diversity studies are empirical; thus, this research method was adopted (Yadav & Usha, 2020). The survey questionnaire focused on employees' perceptions of diversity management and their individual, group and organisational work outcomes. Ethics approval to conduct this study was obtained from the University of the South Pacific Research Ethics Committee. All survey participants were thoroughly informed about the purpose of this research, which was detailed at the beginning of the questionnaire.

### *Sampling*

The research was conducted in two public sectors organisations, the Ministry of Education Heritage and Arts (MEHA) and the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources (MLMR), because of easier accessibility. A total of 205 questionnaires were distributed, and 114 were received, with a response rate of 56 per cent. Purposive sampling was used to select participants currently employed in the public sector (those holding non-managerial positions) based on the characteristics of demographic diversity. Questionnaires were hand-delivered to the participants during their working hours and collected after a week.

### *Measures*

The questionnaire was designed around a Diversity Management scale (independent variable) and five hypothesis scales (dependent variables). All the items in the scale were measured using Likert scale ratings of "1" as "Strongly Disagree", "2" as Disagree, "3" as Neutral, "4" as Agree and "5" as "Strongly Agree".

A three-item scale was adopted from Pitts (2009) to measure Diversity Management. A job satisfaction scale of two items and a workgroup performance scale of one item as adopted from Pitts's (2009) study. The workgroup performance scale was further modified by adding two questions, "I receive constant feedback on how I am doing in my job" and "I receive the training I need to perform my job effectively". The inclusiveness of the organisational culture scale was adopted from Ashikali and Groeneveld

(2015b). However, only five items were chosen because two statements on discrimination and intimidation were considered similar and combined into one statement: “I find the organisational policies to be fair and non-discriminatory”. The affective commitment scale had three items adopted from Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015b). The organisational commitment scale had three items adopted from Kundu and Mor (2016) and Magoshi and Chang (2009). Another question was added from the supported literature: “I strongly feel connected with the organisation’s vision, mission and goals” (Angel and Perry, 1981). The items were added to the scale to improve reliability, which was tested using Cronbach’s alpha analysis. Appendix 1 contains the questionnaire.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Participants

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>N (Frequency)</b>	<b>% (Percentage)</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
iTaukei	51	45
Indo-Fijian	57	50
Others	6	5
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	45	39
Female	67	59
LGBTQI	2	2
<b>Age</b>		
20-29 years	49	43
30-39 years	39	34
40 years above	6	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100</b>

In this study, out of 114 participants (59% of participants) were from MEHA, and 41% from MLMR.

### *Analysis*

SPSS v25 was used for descriptive analysis of data, while SPSS AMOS v22 was used to carry out SEM to perform hypotheses testing to support research and theory.

### **Results**

AMOS was employed in this research to test the selected relevant theories with confirmatory factor analysis, for which CB-SEM is more applicable (Hair et al., 2013) as it helps with the development of scales, exploratory and confirmatory



analyses, latent constructs' relative salience as well as evaluates causal relationships (Byrne, 2010).

Prior to analysis, for the data screening procedure, the dataset was checked for any missing values and outliers. While frequency tests using SPSS v25 of all variables showed no missing values, the boxplot results outlier test identified two outliers in the Affective Commitment scale. A thorough manual check of the two identified outliers showed data entry errors of 44 and 33 instead of 4 and 3. These were corrected.

For exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity are the key assumptions. The KMO statistic should be  $>.50$ , while Bartlett's test of sphericity should be statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$  (Pallant, 2013). KMO (0.915) confirms the adequacy of this study's sample size. Bartlett's test was also significant, confirming the correlation matrix's suitability for factor analysis.

Furthermore, data were considered normal since skewness values were between -2 to +2 and kurtosis between -7 to +7 (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 2010). Principal component analysis (PCA) is the most common method for factor extraction. Rotation was carried out using the Varimax rotation method. All communalities were  $>0.40$  and were thus important for factor extraction.

All Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) scores were  $<10$ , ranging from 1.871 to 3.255, and tolerance (t)  $>0.1$  (Paruq et al., 2021), ranging from -0.635 to 4.581, thus multicollinearity was not an issue. Common method bias was calculated using Harman's single factor test, which was 46.99%, below the 50% threshold, confirming that the findings of this study are not affected by common method bias.

### *Reliability and validity*

Cronbach's alpha test was performed to confirm the reliability of the scales used in this study. The six scales have acceptable to good internal reliability, with Cronbach's alpha being 0.740 for Diversity Management (DM), 0.900 for Inclusiveness of Organizational Culture (IOC), 0.930 for Affective Commitment (AC), 0.864 for Organizational Commitment (OC), 0.748 for Job Satisfaction (JS) and 0.705 for Work Group Performance (JP); all  $>0.7$  threshold (Griethuijsen et al., 2015).

Convergent validity (average variance extracted-AVE) was confirmed, as almost all scales were within the acceptable range,  $>0.5$  (Hair et al., 2016), with 0.83 for AC, 0.68 for OCom, 0.61 for JS, and 0.74 for IOC, except for JP ( $0.47 < 0.5$ ). Because the convergent validity for the JP construct was  $<0.5$ , composite reliability was further computed for this construct. Composite reliability for JP is  $0.72 > 0.6$ ; thus, convergent validity for JP was also acceptable (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity was confirmed for all constructs since the square root of AVE was  $<0.85$  for all scales except for the AC construct. Maximum shared variance (MSV) and average shared squared variance (ASV) were thus computed for this construct; both were less than AVE, 0.14 and 0.12, respectively; thus, discriminant validity was also confirmed for this construct. The table below presents these calculations.

Table 2. Convergent validity and Discriminant validity

			<b>Convergent validity</b>	<b>Discriminant validity</b>
<b>Indicator variables</b>	<b>Latent Variables</b>	<b>Standard Loadings</b>	<b>AVE</b>	<b>Sqrt of AVE</b>
AC1	AC	0.824		
AC2	AC	0.951		
AC3	AC	0.951	0.829	<b>0.910</b>
OCom1	OCom	0.812		
OCom2	OCom	0.943		
OCom3	OCom	0.696	0.678	0.823
JS1	JS	0.707		
JS2	JS	0.847	0.609	0.780
JP3	JP	0.742		
JP2	JP	0.699		
JP1	JP	0.596	<b>0.465</b>	0.681
IOC2	IOC	0.788		
IOC3	IOC	0.910		
IOC4	IOC	0.899		
IOC5	IOC	0.84	0.741	0.860

Table 3. Composite Reliability

Indicator Variables	Latent Variables	Standardised Loadings (SL)	Sum of SL	Sq of sum of SL (C)	C+M E	Composite Rel=C/(C+ME)
JP3	JP	0.742				
JP2	JP	0.699				
JP1	JP	0.596	2.037	4.149	5.754	0.72

Table 4. AVE, MSV and ASV

Factor 1: AC	Standardised Loadings	Shared Variance	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV
AC1	0.95	0.77	0.94	0.83	0.71	0.63
AC2	0.95	0.76				
AC3	0.83	0.84				

After the reliability and validity tests, an initial Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was carried out for the measurement model assessment for overall data. A few indicators were dropped because of lower standardised loadings. An acceptable model fit was then confirmed (CMIN/DF=1.739<3.0, NFI=0.902, IFI=0.956, CFI=0.955; PNFI=0.664, PCFI=0.703; RMSEA=0.08 (Schmitt 2011). The below Figure presents the measurement model.

#### *Structural equation model and hypothesised relationships*

Upon reliability and validity confirmations, SEM was created to carry out regression path analysis to test the hypothesised relationships. As per the recommendation of Hair et al. (2010) and Schmitt (2011), an appropriate fit was confirmed: (CMIN/DF=1.704<3.0, IFI=0.943, TLI=.931, CFI=0.943: all >0.9, PNFI=0.731, PCFI 0.789, both >0.5 and RMSEA=0.079<0.08). Figure 1 and Table 5 below present the overall SEM results.

Figure 1. Overall SEM

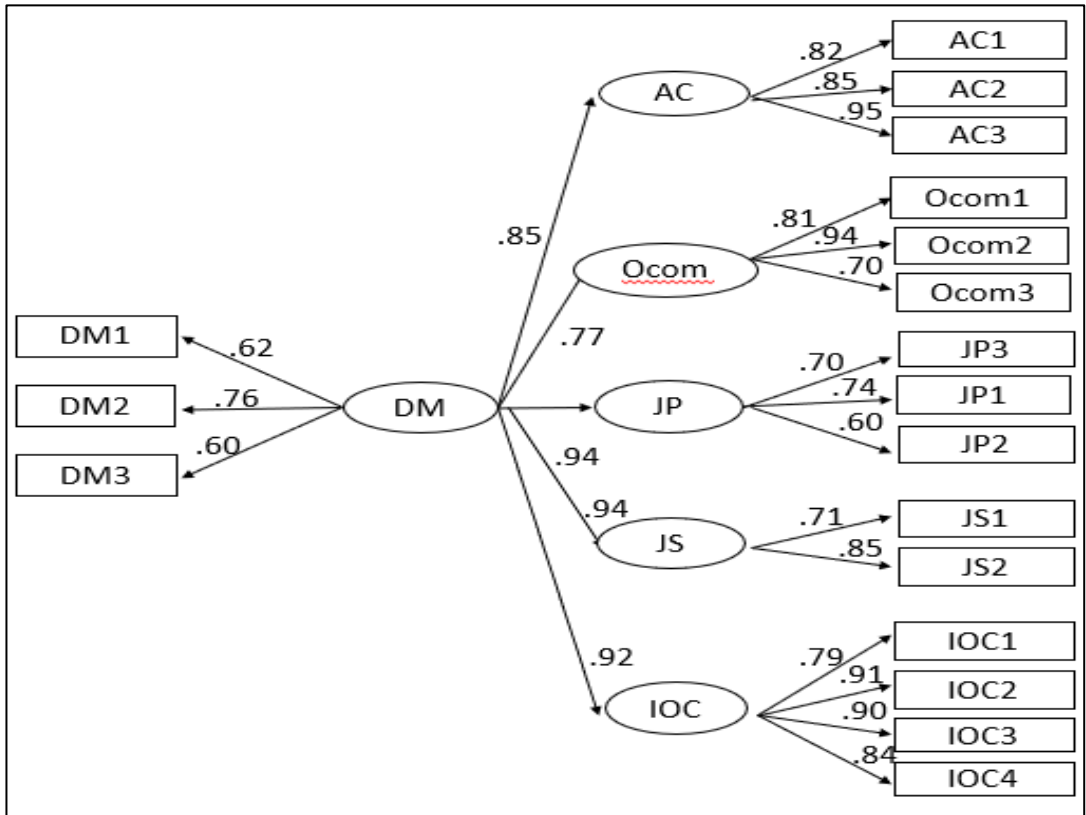


Table 5. Standardised loadings: (overall SEM)

Indicators	Description	Paths	Factors	Standardised Loadings	P
AC	Affective Commitment	<---	DM	.852	***
OCom	Organisational Commitment	<---	DM	.771	***
JP	Job Performance	<---	DM	.942	***
JS	Job Satisfaction	<---	DM	.937	***
IOC	Inclusive Organisational Culture	<---	DM	.919	***
DM1	Supervisors/team leaders in my work unit are committed to a workforce diversity which represents all segments of the society.	<---	DM	.624	***
DM2	Managers/supervisors/ team leaders work well with employees of different backgrounds.	<---	DM	.603	***
DM3	Policies and programs promote diversity in the workplace (for example, recruiting minorities and	<---	DM	.755	

Indicators	Description	Paths	Factors	Standardised Loadings	P
	women, training in awareness of diversity issues, and mentoring)				
AC1	I feel like part of the family in my organisation.	<---	AC	.824	***
AC2	My organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	<---	AC	.951	***
AC3	I feel like a strong sense of belonging in my organisation.	<---	AC	.951	
OCom1	I am willing to put in extra effort to help this organisation be successful.	<---	OCom	.812	***
OCom2	I strongly feel connected with the organisation's vision, mission and goals.	<---	OCom	.943	
OCom3	I will take up any tasks given in order to continue working for this organisation	<---	OCom	.696	***
JP1	I believe the overall work done by my work group is of good quality.	<---	JP	.596	***
JP2	I receive constant feedback on how I am doing in my job.	<---	JP	.699	***
JP3	I receive the training I need to perform my job effectively.	<---	JP	.742	
JS1	I am very satisfied with my job.	<---	JS	.707	***
JS2	I am very satisfied with my organisation.	<---	JS	.847	
IOC2	I can openly discuss my opinion without fear of negative consequences.	<---	IOC	.788	***
IOC3	My organisation has a work environment where different ideas and perspectives are valued.	<---	IOC	.910	
IOC4	I find the organisational policies to be fair and non-discriminatory	<---	IOC	.899	***
IOC5	The decisions made by managers about employees are fair.	<---	IOC	.840	***

Multigroup analysis was then done for groups of gender and age. Table 6 presents the SEM, standardised loadings, critical ratios and p values for the male employees.

Table 6. Standardised Regression Weights: (Male employees - Default model)

Indicators	Description	Paths	Factors	Standardised Loadings	Estimate	Critical Ratio	P
AC	Affective Commitment	<---	DM	.898	1.299	5.384	***
OCom	Organisational Commitment	<---	DM	.557	.468	3.177	.001
JP	Job Performance	<---	DM	.908	.863	3.372	***
JS	Job Satisfaction	<---	DM	.839	1.086	4.532	***
IOC	Inclusive Organisational Culture	<---	DM	.952	1.254	5.377	***
DM1	Supervisors/team leaders in my work unit are committed to a workforce diversity which represents all segments of society.	<---	DM	.689	.937	4.294	***
DM2	Managers/supervisors/team leaders work well with employees of different backgrounds.	<---	DM	.670	1.104	4.181	***
DM3	Policies and programs promote diversity in the workplace (for example, recruiting minorities and women, training in awareness of diversity issues, and mentoring)	<---	DM	.685	1.000		
AC1	I feel like part of the family in my organisation.	<---	AC	.816	.803	8.987	***
AC2	My organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	<---	AC	.930	.928	14.092	***
AC3	I feel like a strong sense of belonging in my organisation.	<---	AC	.984	1.000		
OCom1	I am willing to put in extra effort to help this organisation be successful.	<---	OCom	.920	1.494	7.074	***
OCom2	I strongly feel connected with the organisation's vision, mission and goals.	<---	OCom	.833	1.000		
OCom3	I will take up any tasks given in order to continue working for this organisation	<---	OCom	.805	1.596	6.226	***
JP1	I believe the overall work done by my work group is of good quality.	<---	JP	.810	1.073	3.802	***

Indicators	Description	Paths	Factors	Standardised Loadings	Estimate	Critical Ratio	P
JP2	I receive constant feedback on how I am doing in my job.	<---	JP	.763	1.277	3.683	***
JP3	I receive the training I need to perform my job effectively.	<---	JP	.572	1.000		
JS1	I am very satisfied with my job.	<---	JS	.569	.563	3.482	***
JS2	I am very satisfied with my organisation.	<---	JS	.870	1.000		
IOC2	I can openly discuss my opinion without fear of negative consequences.	<---	IOC	.712	.777	6.024	***
IOC3	My organisation has a work environment where different ideas and perspectives are valued.	<---	IOC	.928	1.000		
IOC4	I find the organisational policies to be fair and non-discriminatory	<---	IOC	.895	.910	9.769	***
IOC5	The decisions made by managers about employees are fair.	<---	IOC	.778	.855	7.185	***

\*\*\*p value is significant at 0.001 level

From the male public organisation employees' results, all hypotheses are supported ( $p < 0.05$ ). For the male employees, DM has the strongest positive influence on the inclusiveness of organisational culture (IOC) with a standardised coefficient of 0.952;  $p < 0.000$ , followed by workgroup performance (JP) with a standardised coefficient of 0.908;  $p \leq 0.000$ . The results show that DM also reported a strong positive impact on Job Satisfaction (JS) with a standardised coefficient of 0.839;  $p < 0.000$  as well as on Affective Commitment (AC) with a standardised coefficient of 0.898;  $p < 0.000$ . The weakest relationship was observed with organisational commitment (OCom), with a standardised coefficient of 0.557;  $p = 0.001$ . The male employees thus perceive that the DM by public sector organisations affect the inclusiveness of organisational culture (IOC) the most and OCom the least.

Table 7. Standardised Regression Weights: (Female employees - Default model)

Indicators	Description	Paths	Factors	Standardised Loadings	Estimate	Critical Ratio	P
AC	Affective Commitment	<---	DM	.813	1.005	6.634	***
OCom	Organisational Commitment	<---	DM	.804	0.995	6.973	***
JP	Job Performance	<---	DM	.951	1.205	6.374	***
JS	Job Satisfaction	<---	DM	.974	1.115	7.281	***
IOC	Inclusive Organisational Culture	<---	DM	.896	1.202	7.253	***
DM1	Supervisors/team leaders in my work unit are committed to a workforce diversity which represents all segments of society.	<---	DM	.615	.728	5.138	***
DM2	Managers/supervisors/team leaders work well with employees of different backgrounds.	<---	DM	.543	.619	4.468	***
DM3	Policies and programs promote diversity in the workplace (for example, recruiting minorities and women, training in awareness of diversity issues, and mentoring)	<---	DM	.773	1.000		
AC1	I feel like part of the family in my organisation.	<---	AC	.766	.854	9.167	***
AC2	My organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	<---	AC	.957	1.014	14.654	***
AC3	I feel like a strong sense of belonging in my organisation.	<---	AC	.932	1.000		
OCom1	I am willing to put in extra effort to help this organisation be successful.	<---	OCom	.797	.877	9.638	***
OCom2	I strongly feel connected with the organisation's vision, mission and goals.	<---	OCom	.992	1.000		
OCom3	I will take up any tasks given in order to continue working for this organisation	<---	OCom	.659	.687	6.652	***



Indicators	Description	Paths	Factors	Standardised Loadings	Estimate	Critical Ratio	P
JP1	I believe the overall work done by my work group is of good quality.	<---	JP	.467	.357	3.680	***
JP2	I receive constant feedback on how I am doing in my job.	<---	JP	.673	.763	5.490	***
JP3	I receive training I need to perform my job effectively.	<---	JP	.779	1.000		
JS1	I am very satisfied with my job.	<---	JS	.764	.860	7.228	***
JS2	I am very satisfied with my organisation.	<---	JS	.850	1.000		
IOC2	I can openly discuss my opinion without fear of negative consequences	<---	IOC	.809	1.044	9.127	***
IOC3	My organisation has a work environment where different ideas and perspectives are valued.	<---	IOC	.912	1.000		
IOC4	I find the organisational policies to be fair and non-discriminatory	<---	IOC	.912	.971	12.036	***
IOC5	The decisions made by managers about employees are fair.	<---	IOC	.855	.971	10.459	***

\*\*\*p value is significant at 0.001 level

For the female public organisation employees, all five hypotheses are also supported, given significant p values. Unlike the male employees, however, for the female employees, DM has the strongest positive influence on job satisfaction (JS) with a standardised coefficient of 0.974;  $p < 0.000$ , followed by workgroup performance (JP) with a standardised coefficient of 0.951;  $p < 0.000$  and inclusiveness of organisational culture (IOC) with a standardised coefficient of 0.896;  $p < 0.000$ . The results show that DM also reported a strong positive impact on affective commitment (AC) with a standardised coefficient of 0.813;  $p < 0.000$  as well as on organisational commitment (OCom) with a standardised coefficient of 0.804;  $p < 0.000$ .

## Discussion

The findings of this study proved the assumption that the presence of diversity management efforts in public organisations in a male-dominated society demonstrates equity in opportunities and policies. This is reflected in female

employees' perception of high levels of their work outcomes. This study supports Kim, Lee and Kim's (2015) view that the presence of diversity management attenuates or removes gender differences in organisational commitment in male-dominated cultures. The finding of this study on organisational commitment is similar to Magoshi and Chang (2009) and Kim, Lee and Kim (2015). They report a positive effect of diversity management on both genders' commitment in Japan's and Korea's male-dominated cultures. This study also shows that diversity management has removed gender differences on other work outcomes of affective commitment, job satisfaction, work group performance and inclusiveness of organisational culture. The benefits of diversity management in Fiji's case may have been facilitated by changing political, cultural norms and leadership capabilities. The institutionalisation of diversity management via public sector reforms with the aim of effective public service delivery has pushed for wider acceptance of diversity management initiatives (open merit recruitment and training) by senior management. It has challenged gendered norms in Fiji's society by encouraging women to apply for job positions and their active participation in the workplace. The male-dominated orientation is likely alleviated through NPM reforms of diversity initiatives. Furthermore, research shows that with the political and cultural changes, there has been a shift towards a hybrid style of leadership adopted by Fijian cooperatives (business leaders) (Eti-Tofinga et al., 2017). Leaders are more inclusive in their approach to changing their leadership style based on context and legitimacy for their followers. Research also highlights leadership capabilities of Fiji's public sector organisations permanent secretaries as more strategic oriented, result oriented and fostering productive working relationships with a focus on valuing diversity (Andrews, 2019). These evolving leadership capabilities could be another factor which has allowed for diversity management initiatives to be effectively implemented by senior leaders despite the male-dominated cultural norms in society.

The findings on organisational commitment are similar to Kim, Lee and Kim (2015) and Magoshi and Chang's (2009) study in Korea's and Japan's male-dominated cultures. Diversity management has a positive impact on both genders' organisational commitment. The findings of Ashikali and Groeneveld's study (2015a) on affective commitment are similar, as diversity management positively impacts the affective commitment of male and female employees in the public sector. In addition, the findings of this study are in accordance with those of Pitts (2009) on job satisfaction and work group performance, Koç, Çavuş and Saraçoğlu (2014) and Ordu (2016) on job

satisfaction and Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015b) on inclusive organisational culture. The positive work outcomes of both genders show that public sector organisations are taking good diversity management initiatives to satisfy the needs and concerns of their diverse employees. Therefore, implying an effective public service delivery and inclusivity in decision-making for diverse groups of people of both genders.

Female employees perceive diversity management efforts have a strong positive influence on all factors, with standardised coefficients ranging from 0.804 to 0.974. Interestingly, male employees perceive that the impact of diversity management efforts on organisational commitment is not as much as the impact on other factors. This is unlike female employees, who perceive a much higher impact of diversity management efforts on organisational commitment. This may be because females find diversity management efforts more encouraging and fairer compared to no diversity management efforts. A high level of commitment from employees demands family-friendly policies from the organisation (Osterman, 1995). There are government-regulated family-friendly policies of family care leave, maternity leave, paternity leave and MEHA teacher transfer policy. In being fair to females with diversity management efforts, organisations should be mindful of how such policies may affect the perception of male employees' commitment to the organisation.

### **Theoretical contribution**

This paper contributes to diversity management literature based on public employees' gender perceptions of their work outcomes in a male-dominated society. The application of representative bureaucracy theory, commitment management theory and social cognitive theory contribute to organisational development. The integration of these three theories brings about a robust argument for diversity management in the public sector while providing a culture of inclusion for both genders, this being the major theoretical contribution of this paper. The proposals of these theories are reinforced in the context of Fiji's public sector organisations. The confirmation of hypotheses in this research paves the way for future modifications and integration of theories in diversity management research. Effective diversity management policies and practices have a positive impact on both genders' work outcomes. This implies employee responsiveness in effective public service delivery and decision-making, as argued by the representative bureaucracy theory. When provided with diversity management strategies, employees reciprocated with

commitment, high job satisfaction, improved workgroup performance and feelings of inclusivity via positive psychological climate and self-efficacy beliefs. Public sector organisations should be persistent with diversity management initiatives to improve and enhance employees' work outcomes for greater organisational effectiveness and performance.

## **Practical Implications**

This study showed that diversity management is crucial for organisational effectiveness. There are several suggestions for organisations to yield the best outcomes from diversity management practices. First, a diversity strategy for public sector organisations is proposed. Any diversity strategy adopted should be aligned with the government's HR plan, such as the workforce business plan or the national development plan for the entire public sector. This will allow diversity management initiatives to be fully implemented, strengthened and realised at all levels in the entire public service (Ohemeng & McGrandle, 2015). Specifically, in male-dominated cultures, formal diversity management strategies will potentially reduce workplace discrimination targeted at women to a great extent. Second, diversity training programs that focus on creating awareness and dealing with demographic differences of gender should be provided to all public employees. Awareness training increases participants' self-awareness of diversity-related issues such as stereotyping (Cox & Blake, 1991). Employees should be consulted when designing such programs for wider acceptance and to dismantle gendered norms about women in society and the workplace. Team bonding exercises such as organisation retreats, small project teams and team-based workshops will help employees develop social bonds for greater team cohesiveness. It is proposed that family-friendly policies be strengthened to improve organisational commitment from employees while creating a positive climate for diversity. The provision of in-house childcare facilities, flexible working hours and awareness of existing family-friendly policies will improve organisational commitment. In doing so, organisations need to understand differences between the genders and administer policies that are favourable for male employees as well. Top leadership and management commitment are necessary to communicate the vision and fuel enthusiasm for diversity efforts through policies and practices (Verma, 2015). Managers should be persistent in their efforts to provide supportive mentoring opportunities to all employees specifically females to constantly boost their self-efficacy to sustain high levels of job satisfaction. To dismantle workplace discrimination and fully realise the benefits of diversity management at the workplace in male-

dominated cultures, effective implementation of such policies and practices is needed.

### **Limitations and future research directions**

The first limitation is the small sample size of the participants due to time and resource constraints. This limits the generalizability of research to other public sector organisations. Future research could include employees from other public organisations to increase the sample size and to better comprehend their perceptions of diversity management. In addition, mixed method or supplementary qualitative research is suggested to explore management's perceptions of diversity management. Including managers and supervisors from all levels and departments will provide a comprehensive view. This will provide a more credible understanding of the diversity management phenomenon in organisations, employee behaviour and their work outcomes. Future studies could also explore the impact of diversity management on other dependent variables, such as trust, employee turnover, and adaptability, to further explore the importance of diversity management.

### **Conclusion**

This study showed that both genders perceive positive effects of diversity management on their work outcomes without significant differences; males, however, perceived lower levels in organisational commitment. Diversity management strategies need to consider differences between both genders to improve organisational commitment for all employees. In a highly male-dominated context, diversity management in organisations plays a crucial role in dismantling gendered norms about females and brings about equity in policies and practices, thus improving work outcomes for both the employees and the organisation. With the NPM reforms of diversity initiatives and changing political, cultural and leadership norms, diversity management has been gradually implemented in public sector organisations. These factors have reduced the restrictions of society's gendered norms by giving women equal opportunities (career development, decision-making) in the workplace.

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## Appendix 1

Variable	Statement	Mean	Standard deviation
<b>Diversity Management (Independent Variable)</b>	1.Supervisors/team leaders in my work unit are committed to a workforce diversity which represents all segments of the society.	4.16	0.76
	2.Policies and programs promote diversity in the workplace (for example, recruiting minorities and women, training in awareness of diversity issues, mentoring).	3.99	0.81
	3.Managers/supervisors/ team leaders work well with employees of different backgrounds.	3.95	0.86
<b>Inclusiveness of Organizational Culture</b>	1.Where I work, I am treated with respect and dignity.	4.11	0.73
	2.I can openly discuss my opinion without fear of negative consequences.	.67	1.02
	3.My organisation has a work environment where different ideas and perspectives are valued.	3.85	0.92
	4.I find the organisational policies to be fair and non-discriminatory.	3.85	0.86
	5.The decisions made by managers about employees are fair.	3.59	0.96
<b>Affective Commitment</b>	1.I feel like part of the family in my organisation.	3.90	0.89
	2.My organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	4.42	4.71
	3.I feel like a strong sense of belonging in my organisation.	4.06	2.87
<b>Organisational Commitment</b>	1.I am willing to put in extra effort to help this organisation be successful.	4.29	0.85
	2.I strongly feel connected with the organisation’s vision, mission and goals.	4.21	4.75
	3.I will take up any tasks given in order to continue working for this organisation.	4.04	0.87
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>	1.I am very satisfied with my job.	4.04	0.79
	2.I am very satisfied with my organisation.	3.85	0.85
<b>Work Group Performance</b>	1.I believe the overall work done by my work group is of good quality.	4.28	0.67
	2.I receive constant feedback on how I am doing in my job.	3.82	0.91
	3.I receive training I need to perform my job effectively.	3.68	1.08



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