

A critical review on Workforce Diversity Management

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ABSTRACT

Workplace Diversity is a growing and trending topic for the current organization. Workplace Diversity Management is pivotal for the accomplishment of organizational objectives, better efficiency, decision making, growth, and development in an organization. It is a holistic approach that includes demographics, job-related, relation-oriented diversity, task-oriented diversity, visible, invisible variables, and various other factors that impinge an organizational performance. This study elaborates a comprehensive review on characteristics of Workplace Diversity Management of past studies from 1991-2021. It covers all essential factors responsible for better management of workplace diversity.

Keywords: Workplace Diversity Management, Diversity, Organizational Performance

INTRODUCTION

Diversity is a prominent aspect of organizational outcomes. Workplace diversity is a voyage of discoveries at individual, group, and organization levels. Each level has a different aspect to evaluate, analyze the diverse individuals. Diversity is defined as mingling the similar and dissimilar minds of the individual. A similar individual connects to accomplish the organizational objective. The dissimilar individual faces difference of opinion among each other. Diversity is broadly classified into primary and secondary forms. The primary factors are demographics like age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, etc. Secondary dimensions vary geographical area, marital status, etc. (Gardenswartz and Rowe 1994) define diversity as four layers organizational factors, internal factors, external factors, individual factors. (Marilyn Ioden 1991) also define diversity as primary/internal dimensions, secondary/external dimensions, tertiary/organizational dimensions. (Makhdoomi & Nika, 2018) an in-depth literature review has been done to know the relationship between workforce diversity and organizational performance.

Diversity variable shows both positive and negative impacts on organizational performance. If diversity forwarded up to some extent it leads to negative aspect on the organization outcome. (L. Pelled, K. Eisenhardt, and K. Xin, 1999) mentioned that diversity improves the performance and create innovative solutions by the diverse skills employees. Diversity also maintains the sense of belongingness among individuals create productivity, innovation, and a competitive environment (A. Saxena, 2014) The implementation of HR strategy brings motivation to enhance the performance of employees. (Phillips, 2015) From the past 40 years, lots of researches have been conducted in different domains to find out the effect of age, gender, personality, education, tenure on group performance. Diversity increases the organizational performance and gives benefit in an organization it is termed as a value in diversity while others are considered as deleterious for the organization.

Diversity is the double edge sword that posits as a challenge in today's organization. Understanding the theoretical base of diversity is classified into social categorization, similarity/attraction, informational diversity, and decision making. In social categorization, the variation among the group based on demographics affects the group process. Every individual has a social identity based on that identity the comparison has made either as an individual or a group member. Social categorization is in the form of in-groups and out-groups. In-groups are cooperative, stable, and trustworthy while out-group members are less trustworthy, honest, and less cooperative. The in and out-group biases, stereotyping, and cognitive biases made a negative impact on the group process like conflicts, communication problems, threats, and group performance. For the concern of similarity/attraction, the similar members shared a common goal and culture which ultimately builds effective communication and increases organizational performance, better decision making, better implementation whereas dissimilar members always affect the group process and organizational performance. In concern to informational/decision making, the diverse individual has skills, ability, knowledge, creativity leads to problem-solving perspectives than the homogeneous groups this leads to a positive impact on group processes and group performance.

Outlook of Diversity

Diversity came into existence in the US in the 1960s. In 1961 John F. Kennedy President of Equal Employment goal was to end racial discrimination in employment. In 1964, Civil Rights Act was implemented for discrimination and equal opportunity. In the 1980s different forms of diversity is emerged as demographic factors like gender, age, race, culture, ethnicity, education, and sexual orientation.

Objective

The main objective of the study is the comprehensive review of literature of theoretical, empirical studies from 1991-2021. It describes the in-depth analysis of diversity management literature so to present a better framework.

Method

The method of collecting an extensive review of literature is from an electronic databaseto find articles that identify the characteristics of Workplace Diversity Management and Organizational performance. The databases are Google Scholar, Research Gate, Crossref, Scopus, and so on.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between diversity and organizational variables is determined by different factors like age, ethnicity, and gender diversity. Different demographic variables posit a significant and non-significant impact on organizational performance. ("Organizational Citizenship Behaviour: a Critical Review of Its Development in a Diversity Driven Workplace," 2019) also define diversity as a blend of surface-level i.e. age, gender, race, sexual orientation, and deep level issue (personality and work).

For a better understanding of diversity and performance(Academy & Journal, 2009) the diversity variables are classified as relation-oriented diversity like race, ethnicity,gender, age, and task-oriented diversity like education, functional background, and organizational tenure. The direct effect of diversity on performance is zero. Relations-oriented diversity has a negative impact on team performance while task-oriented diversity had a small impact on team performance.

(Seliverstova, 2021) explains the workforce diversity management definition as an individual difference that can be visible (race, ethnicity, age, gender, physical abilities, etc.) and invisible (education, competencies and skills, motivation, work experience, etc.) It also mentions workforce diversity management as equality and discrimination at the workplace.

(Yadav & Lenka, 2020) a systematic literature review of quantitative, qualitative, theoretical studies from 1991 to 2018 is taken into consideration. The study of demographics variables like (age, gender, race,) relational demography, racial diversity, cultural diversity, and team diversity was conducted.The majority of research is conducted in the USA, Canada, and European countries. The relationship-oriented dimensions like LGBT, disability, religion, language, and job-oriented dimensions such as functional, education, and tenure diversity have been ignored in diversity management research.At an individual level, cultural diversity, racial diversity, and relational demography were studied.Team diversity, workgroup diversity at the group level and top management team diversity, and diversity management practices at an organizational level.

(Akbaba, 2020)this study examines the relationship between diversity management and organizational performance. This study defines the diversity nature and characteristics, diversity management nature and meaning, cognitive resource diversity theory, social network theory, demographic diversity, and organizational performance, socio-culture diversity, and performance. Diversity as informational/decisional encourages innovation/creativity, decision making, and workplace diversity management strategies and performance in an organization. It posits that demographic diversity has a positive impact on firm performance.Well-managed diversity improves organizational performance and decision-making also. Ethnic and cultural diversity has a positive impact on organizational performance.Cognitive resource theory encourages creativity and decision-making. If diversity is not managed well it will lead to bad functioning, conflicts reduce organizational performance and ineffective organization.

(Meena & Vanka, 2013) for a better understanding of diversity management, it is taxonomies into two broad factors like hard and soft approach include the demographic dimensions like age, gender, sexual orientation, culture, and disability. Hard and soft approaches change the organization practices benefit the organization. The hard approach includes recruitment, career development, performance appraisal, reward, and promotion. Different companies have taken initiatives in terms of women's employment opportunities, upliftment of LBGT, facilities for employees, etc. Soft approaches include training, workshop, mentoring, that will change the attitude of people and brings inclusive environment for the employees.

(Saxena, 2014)analyze the diversity and its impact on organizational performance. The management of diversity is important. Diversity is categorized into demographic variables, perception, and values, geographic regions, etc. The productivity of the organization increases by the cordial interpersonal relationship between the employees.

(Al-Shamlan & P. Doblas, 2019) this study examines the influence of workforce diversity on the organizational performance of AlAhujan Group Company in Bahrain. It is a private sector company that deals in the food, personal care, fashion, and real estate sectors. The result stated that workforce diversity climate has a significant impact on organizational performance. Top management support, co-worker behavior, personal diversity also has a significant impact on organizational performance.

A study by (Knippenberg, Dreu, & Homan, 2004) explained how to manage diversity. CEM (Categorization Elaboration Model) mentioned both the mediator and moderator variables of diversity. All the previous research on diversity is failed to define the best result. For a better understanding of diversity and group performance, two issues are addressed information/decision making and social categorization. Based on informative/decision making, diversity within a group is positively related to elaboration of task-relevant and information perspective. When the group has high task ability, high motivation, strong group processing information, good decision making and require creative, innovative insights. These variables acting as a moderate that leads to better group performance. Social categorization is taxonomies into three factors. Cognitive accessibility, normative fit, and comparative fit. Cognitive is differences among gender, the normative fit is related to group performance and comparative is similarity and differences between intragroup and intergroup. The differences among individuals create intergroup biases.

(Kearney & Voelpel, 2012) mentions the demographic diversity (gender, age, and cultural background) along with the job-related diversity factors (tenure, functional background, and education) are taken and how diversity affects team satisfaction and team performance. It also highlights the mediating variables like an elaboration of information, social categorization, and moderating variables like Task type, Interdependence Time, diversity mindsets, leadership, team member personality, Occupational demography, Industry setting. Results stated the positive impact of diversity on the performance of the organization.

(Joubert, 2017) The qualitative study of diversity management examines the strategies used by financial institutions in Africa. It addresses the issues of diversity management like stereotyping prejudice, discrimination, conflict/misunderstandings, disrespect, language communication gaps, hierarchical levels, cultural difference, and so on. Workplace diversity is managed properly then it leads to the benefits of employees like improved communication, trust, work as a team, respect, friendship, and so on. It also benefits the organization like increased productivity, creative new ideas, goal accomplishment, and good environment, and so on.

(Sacramento et al., 2013) for effective diversity management, a social identity approach is adopted and a multilevel model is developed that include workgroup factors like inclusion, leadership), organizational factors (policies, practices, diversity belief, societal factors (legislation, socioeconomic, culture) these factors brings innovation and creativity among individuals because effectiveness is not only factors of diversity but self-efficacy, motivation is also important.

(Mariappan & Raghavan, 2020) It defines diversity management as an approach applied in management functions like planning, organizing, managing, and coordinating. Diversity management is a part of human resource management like identifying, implementing, harmonizing individual entities. If diversity is managed effectively and efficiently it leads to employment opportunities to work, grow; develop their skills, abilities, innovation, effective coordination, and communication in the organization.

(Bamber, Bartram, & Stanton, 2012) the objective of the study is to know the attitude of employees towards diversity, strategies to enhance performance, barriers for accepting diversity, strategies for inclusion, and increasing awareness about diversity. It also identifies the discrimination and barrier found at the workplace like prejudice, ethnocentrism, blaming the victim, stereotypes, harassment, backlash. It further mentions the strategies for inclusiveness. The differences across gender, the age for increasing the awareness about workplace diversity examine in the study. The sample is of 300 IT employees of India. The result shows that if diversity is managed then it should lead to better financial performance, better results, and better commitment in an organization.

(Cletus, Mahmood, Umar, & Ibrahim, 2018) it mentions the prospects and challenges in the organization. Modern firms, organizations adapt the diversity and its climate. It is also attuned that diversity fosters critical thinking, skills, innovative ideas, employee growth and development, corporate attractiveness, and so on. The challenges of the workplace are ethnic, gender, cultural issues, communication, generation gaps, mental and physical disabilities. These challenges dampen teamwork, morale, and organizational efficiency. To tackle these long-term challenges organizations must provide training, build communication, empowered culture, build team spirit, define job descriptions for success in a climate of organizational management.

For improvement of organizational performance (Kundu & Bansal, 2015) mentioned the HR practices and strategies which positively influence the performance of an organization. The strategies which garnered some variables are recruitment, selection, training, diversity support group, career development, performance appraisal, and diversity audit. If these strategies are implemented in a proper direction then they endanger a positive impact on an organization. (Meena, 2015) Organizational performance is increased by understanding the different dimensions of diversity varies from country to country. The challenges of demographics dimensions of gender are the glass ceiling, stereotyping, sexual harassment, and the issue of work-life balance. Regarding age, there is a different work style and work value. Regarding region of origin, favoritism issues, cultural issues, discrimination on origin basis, and cultural prejudice are found. Concerning physical disability facilities, infrastructure issues, different attitudes, and beliefs of employees are found. In terms of sexual orientation bullying, discrimination at workplaces is found. Based on socio-cultural dimensions the caste, religion, and language challenges impact the organization's performance.

Some barriers hinder the success of diversity management. For removing these barriers various diversity initiatives were taken like leadership and management, education and training, community relations, communications, performance and accountability, workplace balance, career development, and planning. These barriers vary from different organizations and need to tackle out properly. The strategic plan, senior management support, and commitment, training, and education are required for tackling barriers. (Rose Mary, 2004).

Diversity also has benefits and challenges mentioned in a study (Seliverstova, Y., & Pierog, A. 2021) this study mentions diversity and inclusion, equal employment opportunity, and diversity management. It also explains the advantages of diversity management like it attract and retain talent, promotes creativity, flexibility, increases productivity, expands output, and so on. The challenges of workforce diversity management are conflicts, the need for training, harassment, less productivity, etc.

(Ongori, 2007) this study defines diversity as a systematic approach to retain, attract, reward the employee. It is also categorized on a demographic basis like age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture. Managing diversity is significant in an organization as it leads to different benefits in the organization like better decision making, higher creativity and innovation, greater success in marketing to foreign and domestic ethnic minority communities, equal opportunity, employment equity/affirmative action, and human rights legislation. At the same time, it has also some disadvantages like the cost of training, labor turnover, absenteeism, high cost of training, etc.

(Kaur, Kaur, Sahay, & Saini, 2020) this study examined the diversity management of Fortune 500 companies from which top 5 companies are taken in the banking, telecom, and education sector. It mentions the advantage of workplace diversity like it helps in growth, development, innovation, culture development, retain skills, talent in the organization. It also further mention the challenges of diversity like communication barrier, discrimination, biases on nationality and culture basis, ineffective implementation of policies, and so on. It further mentions the suggestions for improving workplace diversity like clear policies, procedures, motivation of employees, training, and education, respect, and value to different cultures of people.

(Sigroha, 2021) Diversity is pivotal in an organization as it encourages performance, builds innovative ideas, etc. Leadership commitment is also necessary for an organization. It is also examined that proper strategy, diversity training, and educating people for diversity are significant in an organization.

(Syed & Tariq, 2017) Diversity means policies and practice includes recruitment, retaining and managing diverse employees for accomplishment of organizational objective. Global Diversity means the difference exists within and between different countries socially, legally, politically as well as to understand one's environment. It is also mentioned that diversity was originated from the United States later on followed by western countries like Canada, United Kingdom, and Australia. Diversity is also found in BRICS countries, the fastest-growing countries. Diversity is also found in Islamic countries' emphasis is on gender equity and diversity policies at the workplace. For better management of global diversity organizations are responsible to give equal access, employment, motivation, reduce individual and cultural differences.

(Syed & Pio, 2010) This study examines the attitude and experience of Muslim migrant women in Australia. It mentions the veil of diversity has been divided into macro societal, meso organizational, and micro individual levels. At macro level, ethnicity and religion were considered. At meso organizational policies, organization structure, routine, customer dealings. At the micro-level issues related to ethnicity and dress code were taken. It takes into consideration the cultural differences, gender, ethnicity, migrant labor factors, religious differences, etc. This study contributes to the implementation of diversity practices in an organization by eliminating discrimination and stereotypes.

(Sabharwal, 2014) Diversity could be better managed by inclusion. Inclusion leads to a better result and productive organizational environment, supportive leadership, employee empowerment, fair and equal treatment from management are also necessary.

Diversity could be developed by female employees who perceive high work involvement in terms of training, performance appraisal, compensation, reward, training, and development as compared to a male member (Joy, 2016).

(Handayani et al., 2017) this study examines how workplace diversity improves organizational performance and increases organizational effectiveness in an organization. The literature has reached the five main perspectives, first by the best-talented employees' workplace diversity improves the cost and encourages work of employees. Second, workplace diversity encourages customer relationships. Third, workplace diversity decreases costs in respect of turnover, absenteeism, and lawsuit. Fourth, workplace diversity brings development and sustainable business success. The result shows the positive impinge on organizational performance. Rather than going for the race, gender, and women minorities if diversity could be managed easily then it will lead to organizational growth. It is also found that innovation, creativity, competitive advantage increases the profitability and performance of the organization. Managing diversity is significant for individuals, employees to bring competitive advantage and profitability to the organization. Diversity is also influenced by an innovation (Bamber, G. J., Bartram, T., & Stanton, P. 2017) highlight the role of HRM specialists in six ways for the innovative workplace. Firstly, HRM specialist makes the strategies that foster development. Secondly, they should recruit creative and innovative employees in an organization. Thirdly, labor should perform their duty well if they attain training, skills, and other opportunities to bolster their condition. Fourth, support to physically disabled and minorities. Fifth, HRM specialists should encourage performance by focusing on creativity, agility. Sixth, team coordination with the line manager and other members leads to good organizational policies and practices.

The innovative policies and practices adopted at the workplace is the best practice in Europe to elevate the condition of an organization. Innovation leads to better organizational performance and good quality of life (Pot, 2010).

For managing workplace diversity the influence of leadership also plays a vital role. In a study by (Mukherjee, Gambhir, & Yaswi, 2015) sample of 213 managers was taken. Leadership commitment influences the attitude of the manager. The findings show the different demographic factors including age gender, length of service, education, religion, nationality of employees influence the attitude of the employees for managing workplace diversity.

In another study on leadership (Zehir, Sehitoglu, & Erdogan, 2012) different types of leadership style are mentioned like transformational, transactional and laissez faire. Transformational and laissez-faire have significant impacts while transactional leadership has no impact. It has an impact on organizational performance, decision-making, and employee empowerment.

(Ojokuku, Odetayo, & Sajuyigbe, 2013) study define both positive and negative impact between leadership style and organizational performance in Nigerian Bank.

It is also examined that diversity management is significant for improving organizational efficiency. (Inegbedion, Sunday, Asaleye, Lawal, & Adebajji, 2020) the study had a sample size of 178 multinational companies in Nigeria highlights the diversity management encourages the efficiency of an organization by cultural diversity, conflict management, employee work attitude, perceptions of employees, and teamwork. Results stated the employees' perception of marginalization, cultural diversity management, conflict management has a positive impact on diversity management. Furthermore, diversity management and teamwork have a positive influence on organizational efficiency. The relationship between diversity management and corporate performance is also mentioned in a study (Miebi, 2014) of a manufacturing firm in Nigeria. The results revealed that workforce diversity has a significant inverse impact on corporate performance. Corporate Structure and Communication will moderate the inverse relationship between workplace diversity and corporate performance. Corporate culture also moderates the inverse relationship between diversity and corporate performance.

CONCLUSION

This study presents a holistic approach to diversity management by focusing on past literature. Diversity management could be better understood by the demographic variables like age, gender, ethnicity, culture, and job-related factors like (tenure, functional background, and education. It is also further classified as relation-oriented diversity like race, ethnicity, gender, age, and task-oriented diversity like education, functional background, and organizational tenure. It is also examined that workforce diversity management as individual differences which can be visible (race, ethnicity, age, gender, physical abilities) and invisible (education, competencies and skills, motivation, work experience). These variables have different impinge on organizational performance. Sometimes, organizations are taken initiatives in the form of recruitment, selection, training, development, performance appraisal, motivation, and career development. These factors encourage organizational performance. Diversity management has some advantages and disadvantages like it attract, retain, reward, motivate employees, increased cost of training, labor turnover, absenteeism, etc. It is also examined that for encouraging organizational performance human resource strategies and policies were adopted so that it leads to good financial performance, better results, and best commitment in the organization. The dimensions of workplace diversity are full of challenges like discrimination, bullying, favoritism, and cultural issues, communication

issues, physical and mental disabilities. These issues will be a serious matter of concern for the organization and hinder the success of diversity management.

The suggestions for improving workplace diversity are to value the employees, provide training and other personality development program, and motivate employees, and so on. Management of workplace diversity is pivotal, if it is not managed well then it leads to conflicts, reduces organizational performance, and decreases organizational efficiency. It is attuned that at an individual, organizational, societal level the implementation of diversity practices eliminates the discrimination and stereotype issues in an organization. It is also considered that diversity is managed properly if there is inclusion, leadership support, employee empowerment, and fair treatment in the organization. It is also attuned from the literature that participation of women leads to high-performance work standards staffing and recruitment, performance appraisal, compensation, reward, training, and development leads to workplace diversity management. Furthermore, for improving the effectiveness in an organization the encouragement of employees, building customer relationships, decreasing the cost of turnover, absenteeism is pivotal. Workplace diversity is influenced by the innovative employees who perform their skills, abilities, and capabilities in an organization that leads to improvement, growth, and development.

In addition to this, leadership also influences the attitude of employees, helps in decision making, employee empowerment, and for management of workplace diversity. The literature also mentioned that diversity management influences organizational efficiency through cultural diversity, conflict management, employee work attitude, perceptions of employees, and teamwork. The relationship between diversity management and corporate performance is examined results revealed that workforce diversity has a significant inverse impact on corporate performance. It is analyzed from the past studies that the majority of research on diversity is conducted in the USA, Canada, and other European countries. So there is a need to conduct more research in India because it is a diverse nation where a person belongs to different cultures, languages, religions. Future studies will be more insightful, in-depth by taking into consideration of other variables for a better result.

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