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WORK-PLACE DIVERSITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines workplace diversity and productivity. The study adopted social identity theory which explains the concept of workplace diversity and how it improves productivity. After examining relevant literature and various research studies, it was found that workforce diversity is strength for any organization but people still stick to their views and so consider diversity as a problem but if managed properly, can increase productivity. Therefore the study concluded that managing diversified workforce is the biggest challenge in front of the human resource management department of the organizations. A diverse workforce offers a number of benefits, including increased creativity, problem solving, and adaptability to change, all of which may contribute to increased productivity. The study recommended that organizations should adopt key components like leadership, training, research, analysis and change of culture and human resource management systems and follow-up activities like additional training, discussions about diversity issues with the group members to improve productivity. Managers should create and promote an organizational culture that optimizes the value of diversity, and they must employ that culture to manage different groups of employees, project teams, corporate start-up teams, client service response teams, and top executives.

Keywords: Work-place diversity, Age diversity, Gender diversity, Productivity

Introduction

The global economy is changing dramatically as we approach the twenty-first century. We are heading towards a future where obstacles to cross-border commerce and investment are eroding, perceived distances are decreasing owing to improvements in transportation and telecommunications technology, and in short, the world is becoming a global village day by day as a result of globalization (Alesina et al., 2000). Organizations must employ an effective and efficient staff that can manage such a competitive climate in order to thrive in this kind of cutthroat competition. Employees' age, cultural origin, physical abilities and impairments, ethnicity, religion, gender, and sexual orientation are all examples of workforce diversity (Kerr and Lincoln, 2010). Putting together a staff with the right balance of talents is a critical part of a company's production strategy.

Hiring employees with complementary skills will boost production and profitability. People with different histories than the majority may discover fresh solutions to issues that have been invisible to employees in the majority group (Alesina et al., 2000; Kerr and Lincoln, 2010; Peri et al., 2015). A company with a diverse workforce, on the other hand, may need to invest resources in integrating employees into cohesive teams. There isn't a single person who is identical to another. Gender, culture, ethnicity, social and psychological traits, as well as views and biases, all vary. For millennia, society has made distinctions based on these factors (Ahmad & Rahman, 2019). Workforce heterogeneity is caused by diversity. In today's world, every company must employ a diverse staff, yet managing such a workforce is a major problem for management. The major advantages of diversity and how they affect productivity are discussed in this research. This list is accompanied with a list of issues that may arise as a result of diversity, particularly when inadequate planning is employed. Finally, this research looks at ways to deal with diversity in a manner that benefits both workers and the business (Peri et al., 2015). Every company must employ a diverse staff. Organizations that hire quality and competitive staff, regardless of age, attitude, language, gender, religion, or caste, can only compete in the marketplace in the present environment. Any organization's human resource is a valuable resource. By itself, capital and physical resources cannot enhance efficiency or lead to a higher rate of return on investment (Kerr & Lincoln, 2010).

The use of monetary or material resources to achieve organizational objectives is accomplished via the combined and coordinated efforts of individuals. However, in order to maximize human resource performance and allow them to face larger difficulties, these attitudes, efforts, and abilities must be honed from time to time (Ahmad & Rahman, 2019). The company will not be able to move a single inch without workers. As a result, resource management is a major concern. Human resource management is concerned with managing the organization's "human element" in order to accomplish corporate goals while also promoting employee growth and happiness (Ahmad & Rahman, 2019). When businesses hire people of varying ages, genders, perceptions, attitudes, castes, religions, and regions, management and workers will find it challenging to manage and adapt to the new environment.

Embracing variety offers unique benefits for a company, while disregarding diversity has distinct drawbacks. Managers of all ethnic backgrounds are often unprepared to deal with cultural differences (Ahmad & Rahman, 2019). The question of how managers can prepare their organizations to accept diversity in the workplace is a significant one. The university is a melting pot of cultures, and it faces the problem of managing workers from many social groups. In terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and experience, these workers are diverse (Peri et al., 2015; Ahmad & Rahman, 2019). Employees' perceptions of the company were shaped by

these qualities, which had a long-term effect on their performance. The current research looked at the impact of diversity on employee performance.

Managing a diverse staff is a major issue for any company. Each person is distinct from the others due to their differing religious beliefs, educational backgrounds, age, and perceptions (Peri et al., 2015). When individuals of all kinds of thinking, perceptions, and generations come together to work in the same location, a scenario may arise in which all of these diverse types of people may not agree on the same thing. At that moment in time, it will have an impact on people's interpersonal relationships. Age, gender, caste, experience, professional qualification, and workers from different geographical areas are all factors that contribute to workforce diversity, according to the study.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Baseline Theory

This research focuses on Tajfel's (1982) Social Identity Theory which explains how workplace variety, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and experience, affects employee productivity. Three distinct theoretical frameworks are advocated by the phrase diversity's theoretical model. To begin, there is social categorization, which describes how individuals are classified based on social characteristics such as age, gender, and ethnicity, and how stereotypes are formed as a result of these differences. This is the essence of social identity theory. According to social identity theory, one's self idea is formed through belonging to particular social groups that are pursuing a similar objective.

Organizations now face diversity issues from a variety of sources, including demographic shifts in the labor and consumer populations, as well as globalized markets and worldwide competitiveness. The research focuses on the methods to handle diversity strategically. According to the research, effective diversity management necessitates HR managers possessing leadership, organizational development, change management, psychology, communication, measurement, and evaluation abilities (Hamdani & Buckley, 2011).

Concept of Workplace Diversity

In this study, the terms workplace diversity and workforce diversity are used interchangeably since they refer to the same thing when discussing workplace diversity. One method for a business to become more productive is to manage diversity. It's more than just being a good corporate citizen or following affirmative action guidelines. It's also about integrating women and minorities into a mostly masculine society. Managing diversity necessitates a difficult assessment of workers' underlying preconceptions (Peri et al., 2015). Biases and biases regarding people's differences must be exposed and addressed so that differences may be fully appreciated and utilized. Workplace diversity may be defined by a variety of factors, including sex, age, gender, and ethnicity.

Surface-level variety may be seen in the differences between these criteria. It may, however, happen in terms of personalities, attitudes, and skill sets. Deep-level diversity exists when a company includes workers who vary based on various factors. For a variety of reasons, both levels are necessary in the workplace (Kearny & Gebert, 2009). Discrimination and stereotyping have historically prevented competent individuals from achieving their goals. People from all walks of life are taking advantage of the chance to build their professions in the manner they choose now that the world is becoming more inclusive. Companies now have access to a more diversified pool of talent at the same time (Peri et al., 2015). They now

have more options when it comes to hiring workers. In this instance, embracing greater diversity benefits both companies and workers. In an increasingly global market, organizations with varied personnel are better equipped to serve different external clients (Kearny & Gebert, 2009). These organizations have a greater knowledge of the legal, political, social, economic, and cultural environment's needs.

Age Diversity

Another source of variety in companies is the graying workforce. The aging of the baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) led to the increase in the median age. This implies that the number of middle-aged people is rapidly increasing (Backes-Gellner & Veen, 2009). The number of younger employees is decreasing, while the number of elderly workers is increasing (over age sixty-five). This shift in labor profile has far-reaching consequences for businesses. As businesses pursue flatter organizations and eliminate middle-management positions, the employment shortage among middle-aged employees will worsen. Older employees are often paid more, and businesses with a significant number of aging baby boomers may find these pay scales to be a competitive disadvantage (Peri et al., 2015). Companies, on the other hand, may benefit from a more seasoned, stable, dependable, and healthier staff. The baby boomers are well-educated and skilled, and their experience may be a valuable addition to businesses.

Both favorable and negative age stereotypes exist for older and younger employees. Organizations face the problem of age diversity, according to Kunze& Parsons **(**2009), since it is normal for people to gravitate toward their own groups at the expense of others. He went on to say that if an employee's age is used as a major criterion for differentiation, other age groups would feel uneasy, and there will be a feeling of emotional instability and prejudice inside the institutions. Backes-Gellner (2009) claim that age group diversity may have a negative impact on worker productivity due to differences in beliefs, attitudes, and interests across different age groups. Generational divides are a common cause of poor productivity, disputes, and conflicts. Each generation felt that its qualities were unrivaled, and that there was no reason to be concerned about generational differences (Rowe, 2010). A stronger intergenerational contract in the workplace is another consequence of the aging workforce (Greenberg & Baron, 2003).

Employees who were formerly separated by conventional company hierarchies (with older workers at the top and younger workers at the bottom) are now working together as companies become flatter (Backes-Gellner & Veen, 2009). The silent generation (people born between 1930 and 1945), a small group that includes most organizations' top managers; the baby boomers, whose large numbers give them a strong influence; the baby bust generation, also known as Generation X (those born between 1965 and 1976); and the subsequent generation, tentatively known as Generation Y or the baby b (Greenberg & Baron, 2003; Griffin, 2005). Although each generation has its own unique characteristics, each generation is distinct from the others in general.

Managers have the difficulty of integrating these people into a coherent group due to significant variations in attitudes and beliefs across these four generations (Griffin, 2005). As previously said, the silent generation now holds the majority of leadership posts. The silent generation is seen by baby boomers as indolent and having done nothing to address societal inequity. Baby boomers are more active when it comes to employee rights and seek for moral rights in the workplace (Griffin, 2005). The baby busters, who are fresh to the workforce, are impatient, want immediate satisfaction, and think that family comes first. They despise the

baby boomers' achievement-oriented mentality and consumerism. Managing such a wide range of viewpoints is problems that must be overcome (Robert & Vance, 2008; Griffin, 2005).

Gender Diversity

In 1970, the word gender was used to replace the term sex in describing the characteristics of men and women (Unger, 1979). Gender refers to a person's self-identity, or how strongly he or she identifies with the masculine or feminine as defined by society. Similarly, owing to their inborn inclinations, natural association, and perceptions about which kind of conduct, attitude, cognitive ability, or interest draws one sex over the other, certain expectations are associated with male or female. These gender disparities have an impact on how people behave in the job. Gender diversity may sometimes have a negative impact on behaviors such as discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping. Eventually, this mindset has a detrimental impact on working efficiency.

According to Singh and Vinnicombe (2004), it is a cause for worry since women's abilities, talents, and aptitude are not completely acknowledged and therefore underutilized. Typically, businesses favored males over females because they believed males could perform better in management roles. According to Carr-Ruffino (2003), owing to mishandling of gender problems, workforce diversity in the company has become superfluous. Similarly, Kochan, Bezukova, and Thomas (2002) said that women must be involved at all levels of the organization to improve overall efficiency. Gender diversity, according to Connel (2002), is favorably related to worker performance. On the other hand, Williams and O'Reilly (1998) suggested that gender heterogeneity is a cause of team performance limitations. However, gender heterogeneity offers businesses with competitive benefits (McMillan-Capehart, 2003).

Ethnic Diversity

According to Sayers (2012), ethnicity refers to people who share a similar culture, tradition, traditions, regular practice, clothing, beliefs, and values. According to Makokolo (2005), ethnicity is defined as a tribal grouping that has a similar history of origin and develops a feeling of shared destiny. Timmermans et al. (2011), argue that ethnicity may be used as a replacement or alternative to cultural background. The ethnic diversity among the members may lead to inventive and creative performance. Pitts et al. (2010) stated that since institutions are growing increasingly diverse from a racial standpoint, it is reasonable to investigate how different ethnic groups act at work.

Ethnicity is a two-edged sword with benefits and drawbacks (Opstal, 2009). Cultural conflicts may impact an organization's quality, result, and profits. Conflicts, confrontations, and collisions, arise as a result of ethnic variety and social categorization (Dahlin et al. (2005), Benschop (2001) noted that Inequity is a disadvantage of ethnic variety. Furthermore, Van Esbroek et al. (2008) concluded that managing a diverse workforce is critical for protecting institutional advantages and eliminating ethnic diversity weaknesses that may negatively impact employee performance.

Work Experience Diversity

Workplace experience is defined as a worker's knowledge, competence, and capacities gained throughout the course of his or her professional career in a particular field (Carr et al, 2006). In every company, according to Pinder (2014), experienced workers are in charge of creating organizational revenue rather than output. A key to success is hiring an individual with

sufficient expertise, knowing the work requirements, goals, and difficulties connected with the positions (Morgan, 2015). According to research performed by the World Bank Group (2012), experienced workers drive the success of the organization since they have completed a number of trainings that ultimately affect individual performance. Employee experience demonstrates sincerity, consistency, and advancement in professional expertise, all of which have an impact on the organization's success.

Geographical Regions

Employees coming from various geographical regions with their different mindset create contradiction among employees (Saxenaa, 2014). Sorting workers, especially highly skilled workers choose where to live and work, and they tend to choose places with residents similar to themselves (Saxenaa, 2014.). As a result, small initial differences between places may give rise to large disparities of people across space – shaping regions' industry mix, investment attractiveness and, ultimately, productivity (Saxenaa, 2014).

Language

The next factor that influences the work environment is language. Because of the various geographical regions to which they belong, people may speak different languages at work. As a result, individuals may encounter difficulties. Knowledge of cultures and faiths, as well as the capacity to speak several languages, may therefore be significant human capital resources that influence business success. Workers may vary along these dimensions as well, which may have an impact on company productivity (Lazear, 1999). For sorting within and across nations, language and literacy abilities are obviously essential (Bratsberg et al., 2013; Chiswick and Millar, 2015; Adserà & Pytliková, 2015, 2016).

Religious Values

According to Koenig et al. (2012), values are religious beliefs, practices, rituals, and symbols that are well-organized to facilitate the proximity of the sacred or transcendent (God, a higher power, or truth/the highest reality), as well as to foster an understanding of a person's relationships and responsibilities to another person in a community. Meanwhile, according to Al-Goaib (2003), religious values in Islam include a dedication to the foundations of Islam via practice and theoretical beliefs with compliance against God's rights, such as following God's commands, protecting others' rights, avoiding evil actions, and conducting prayer. Individuals who are labeled as religious are individuals who not only have religious ideas but also put them into practice in their daily lives. Employees come into the organizations with these religious beliefs which might affect their social attitude towards others (Barhem et al., 2009)

Problem of Workplace Diversity

We must acknowledge the possible difficulties of diversity, lest we create an excessively rosy image of it. Resistance to change, a lack of cohesion, communication issues, disputes, and decision-making are all significant issues. Those are more drawn to and comfortable with people who are similar to them. When people are forced to engage with people who are not like them, it is understandable that diversity initiatives would be greeted with a lot of opposition. Instead than mistakenly thinking that everyone supports diversity, managers should be prepared for it. The issue of cohesion, the unseen "glue" that keeps a group together, is another possible difficulty with diversity. The majority of individuals favor cohesive, or closely linked, groupings. It takes longer for a varied group of people to come

together and form a cohesive one. Furthermore, organizations that are cohesive have greater morale and better communication. We may deduce that developing good morale in heterogeneous groups may take longer. Communication difficulties may be particularly difficult for culturally diverse populations. Misunderstandings may arise, reducing the efficacy of work groups. There may be disagreements, and decision-making may take longer.

Benefits of Diversity

Organizational productivity may be boosted by diversity. According to Saxenaa (2014), there are many benefits to diversity that may contribute to increased productivity. Organizations may benefit from diversity in five ways. First, diversity management may assist businesses in attracting and retaining the finest human resource available. Companies that consistently rank at the top of “best places to work” rankings excel at managing diversity. Second, marketing initiatives may benefit from diversity.

Markets are growing increasingly diversified, just as workforces are. By relying on the ideas of workers from different cultural backgrounds, a diverse staff may help the business enhance its marketing strategies. Third, variety fosters innovation and creativity. To promote innovation, the most creative businesses purposefully bring together diverse teams. Fourth, variety leads to improved problem-solving abilities. Diverse groups bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to bear on issues and choices. They also promote critical thinking at a greater degree. Fifth, diversity improves the adaptability of an organization. Narrow thinking, rigidity, and conventional definitions of "good" work styles define inflexible companies (Saxenaa, 2014). Diversity, on the other hand, causes an organization to question old ideas and become more flexible. For a company that manages diversity well, these five benefits can add up to increased productivity.

The capacity of a company to accept diversity and reap the advantages is critical to its productivity. As noted by Saxenaa (2014), multiple advantages are observed when companies regularly evaluate their management of workplace diversity problems, create, and execute diversity strategies, including:

i. Diversity fosters creativity and productivity, as well as a world-class culture capable of outperforming the competition.

ii. In an increasingly global market, a multicultural company is better equipped to service a varied external customer. Such organizations have a greater grasp of the needs of other countries' legal, political, social, economic, and cultural contexts (Adler, 1991).

iii. Creativity flourishes in a diverse environment (Morgan, 2015).

iv. In dealing with difficult problems, multicultural companies have been shown to be better at problem solving, have a greater capacity to extract extended meanings, and are more likely to exhibit various viewpoints and interpretations.

v. Organizations with a varied staff may provide a wider range of solutions to issues in service, sourcing, and resource allocation.

vi. Employees from various backgrounds bring unique skills and experiences to the table when it comes to proposing ideas that are adaptable to changing markets and consumer needs.

vii. A broad set of talents and experiences (Saxenaa, 2014).

viii. A varied staff that is comfortable expressing different points of view allows for a wider pool of ideas and experiences to be shared (Morgan, 2015).

Concept of Productivity

Productivity is critical for both economic development and organizational well-being. As a result, there is little question that the potential drivers of productivity should be investigated. When studying the drivers of productivity at the aggregate (society) level, researchers have mostly focused on variables such as human capital, research and development, and innovation, all of which have been proven to be positively linked economic growth. Productivity measures how efficient and effective an organization's activities are (Robbins & Coulter, 2013). Despite the fact that words like productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness are often used interchangeably and have different meanings, we must not confuse productivity with efficiency and/or effectiveness (Robbins & Coulter, 2013). Because a particular action will not be productive if it is just efficient but not effective, or effective but not efficient, productivity needs both efficiency and effectiveness. In economic terms, productivity is defined as the relationship between output and input.

An organization's input element is made up of resources utilized in the product production process, such as labor, materials, and energy. The term "output" refers to a specific product or service, as well as the quantity of both (Robbins & Coulter, 2013). The quantity of output produced per unit of input (labor, equipment, and capital). Productivity is a measure of a person's, machine's, factory's, system's, or other entity's efficiency in turning inputs into usable outputs. Productivity may be measured in a variety of ways. For example, productivity at a factory may be assessed by the number of hours it takes to manufacture an item, while productivity in the service sector may be measured by the income produced by an employee divided by pay (Robbins & Coulter, 2013). However, productivity is defined in this research as the overall output produced by an organization as a consequence of a low amount of worker input. As a result, properly managing diversity becomes one of the most effective ways to boost productivity.

Workforce Diversity and Productivity

Many companies are beginning to take diversity seriously as part of their business strategy. In today's corporate world, workplace diversity has become a catchphrase (Saxenaa, 2014). People do question, though, whether technology can offer real, measurable advantages to their companies. So, what effect does workplace diversity have on productivity? Diversity management may have a beneficial spillover impact in the workplace (Saxenaa, 2014).. Women who were employed in companies that emphasized diversity were found to be competent for the jobs they held, nevertheless, the affirmative action label stigmatized women regardless of job type (Gilbert et al., 1999),

Diversity in the workplace has the potential to make teams more creative, inventive, productive, and adaptable. According to research, diversity improves performance by expanding the group's views (Saxenaa, 2014). There is substantial empirical evidence that effective diversity management and subsequent improvements in organizational performance are linked (Ozbilgin & Tatli, 2008). Companies with a diverse workforce have better job satisfaction and financial success. Diversity policy, on the other hand, may cause problems that can derail performance. As a result, individuals should be aware of how to effectively integrate diversity into the workplace (Rodriguez, 2006). We can see the shift at work because of the increasing rate of globalization, privatization, and liberalization. Gone are the days when individuals of the same age, professional qualification, experience, and religion

came together to work in an organization. In today's world, ladies and men work in equal numbers. As a result, the researcher is concentrating on these key elements of a diverse workforce that influence employee performance.

Conclusion

This study assessed how workforce diversity enhances productivity. Many studies have been conducted in recent years on various elements of workforce diversity. The varied results of previous studies greatly aided the researcher in sorting out the many variables utilized in the investigation. The study concludes managing a diverse workforce is a major problem for every organization's human resource management department. Further diversity may have four different effects on an organization's performance. First, diversity can have emotional implications, such as poorer organizational commitment or happiness, since individuals prefer to connect with others. Second, since diversity allows individuals to connect with a variety of people, cognitive consequences relate to an increase in creativity and invention. Third, a diverse workforce in a company is a sign of equality. Finally, diversity has obvious repercussions for communication processes in a group or organization, implying that workforce diversity may have both good and bad consequences.

This research highlights that although many businesses are focused on maximizing the talents of a diverse workforce, they are confronted with many difficulties such as differing viewpoints, a lack of empathy, variations in perception, and a lack of engagement. Furthermore, the author has determined that successful leadership style, rather than conventional techniques, may be used to address these problems. The desire to access the creative, cultural, and communication talents of a range of workers and utilize those skills to enhance business policies, products, and customer experiences is the greatest motivator for higher level diversity strategy. As work demands individuals to go outside of their comfort zone and encounter topics they may not be acquainted with or attracted to, diversity leaders emphasize the significance of having an open mind. The study's findings provide valuable insight into current diversity management methods. The majority of workers are confident in their ability to deal with diversity (diversity realists), but a select minority have grasped, adjusted, and are eager to work and exploit good workplace diversity (diversity optimists). Training workers to be attentive to cross-cultural differences, encouraging staff to take abroad assignments, and providing foreign language training are some of the main methods used by companies to improve productivity.

Recommendations

According to the study's findings, businesses may enhance their workers' capacity to collaborate with people from different cultural backgrounds by adopting the following techniques, which will boost productivity in the workplace.

i. Create and promote an organizational culture that optimizes the advantages of diversity, and utilize that culture to manage different groups of employees, project teams, company start-up teams, customer service response teams, and top management.
ii. Organizations can use strategies such as systematic learning about cultural differences and providing training to learn about and be sensitive to cross-cultural disparities, inspiring employees to accept job assignments, and providing language training to improve employees' capability of working with differing others or cultural diversity.
iii. Organizations may reduce misunderstanding and create connections with different people by adopting the following strategies: communicating effectively, working with

diverse people, allowing peers to share their own views, and teaching workers about differences. These methods will raise workplace diversity awareness.

iv. The research also noted that understanding the complex processes of workplace diversity may help us promote diversity. Institutional elements such as regulatory frameworks, governmental agencies, legislators, courts, professional organizations, interest groups, and the general public must also be addressed in order to comprehend the complex dynamics of workplace diversity.

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