THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKFORCE DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AS A GLOBAL IMPERATIVE – A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Abstract: Workforce diversity is an international phenomenon in developed and developing countries. Diversity is an issue that has gotten a lot of attention in many fields; diversity and inclusion have become accepted as a global business topic. Workplace diversity (WPD) is a holistic concept that refers to company employees' disparities. It refers to the complex physical, sociological, and psychological characteristics characterising an individual or group, such as gender, race, sexual orientation, and religious or political beliefs. Academics and practitioners alike are paying increased attention to workforce diversity. This research aims to investigate and provide a conceptual understanding and significance of diversity. especially workplace diversity in different countries; the literature also examines their methodology to investigate workforce diversity. Also, this paper explores literature about the increasing global influence of workforce diversity and its effect on the workplace drawing on previous studies. In addition, because of the benefits to the organisation and the people who work there, diversity in the workplace has become a meaningful and significant topic. The research took a qualitative approach through a comprehensive review of previous literature. The primary purpose of this article is to review the literature on workforce diversity on a global basis.

Keywords: Diversity, Inclusion, Workforce, WPD content analysis

JEL classification codes: M14, O15

1. Introduction

Globalisation in the twenty-first century necessitates more attention and connection than ever before among people of various cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds. People no longer live and work in a solitary marketplace; they are now members of a global economy that includes competitors from practically every continent. Although several papers have been written on the subject, there has yet to be a comprehensive study of workforce diversity worldwide. As a result, for-profit and charity businesses require diversity to be more creative and adaptable to change (Őnday, 2016). The main goal of this article is to review recent literature on global workforce diversity. Hence, managing enterprise diversity is becoming increasingly crucial as globalisation and migration increase. Globalisation is becoming more prevalent, and technological advancements are making it simpler to be in two locations simultaneously. The term "diversity" encompasses a wide range of concepts comprising many dimensions of diversity such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, educational diversity,

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functional, tenure, sexual orientation and physical disability. In addition, with the rise of globalisation, workforce diversity, which refers to more than one characteristic being present among employees, has been an issue of great interest among organisational researchers and managers.

Furthermore, diversity study garners much attention because of socio-cultural changes, economic transformation, globalisation, and individuals migrating to pursue better opportunities (Roberson, 2019).

Workforce diversity is a primary concern for most businesses. Today's businesses must be able to recognise and effectively manage worker diversity. The primary goal of this essay is to review recent literature on global workforce diversity and the methodology used to examine the workforce diversity in different countries and continents around the world, so the paper's objectives are: 1) to explain the importance of diversity. 2) to examine the workforce diversity from a global view. 3) to highlight the evolution of diversity and inclusion. 4) to see how the researchers investigated workforce diversity in different countries and their methodology.

2. Literature review

2.1. The importance of workforce diversity

The state of being unique is referred to as diversity which also refers to being different (Mousa, 2019). Workforce diversity refers to the differences and the similarities among employees in terms of race, cultural background, nationality, religion, age, sexual orientation, physical abilities, disabilities, etc. (Saxena, 2014). However, to boost efficiency and profitability in today's workplace, there is a strong need to focus on workplace diversity. The term "diversity" has been a topic of considerable discussion in numerous fields and dimensions of life all over the world as the relevance and benefits of many aspects of variety become increasingly widely recognised by people all over the world . From a focus on racial differences, in the beginning, the term "diversity" has expanded to cover sex, political affiliation, cultural affinity, gender identity, religion, and sexual orientation (Roberson, Ryan, and Ragins, 2017).

Diversity has become a trending topic in literature (Selmer, Lauring, and Jonasson, 2013; Wolfson, Kraiger, and Finkelstein, 2011). Furthermore, due to the complicated nature of mixed cultures, this task is particularly draining for countries with more significant immigration rates (Neumark and Hellerstein, 2003; Selmer et al., 2013). In 2017, leaders throughout the world were struggling to discover ways to foster tolerance and respect for multiple group identities; from 2016 to now, experts examining non-Christian immigrants and ethnic minority groups, such as the Black Lives Matter movement, have been focusing on this topic (Morris, 2017). Hence, with multinational corporations operating in various countries, it is critical to learn how to utilise in various geographies; diversity and inclusion positively impact the bottom line.

2.2 Workforce diversity in global view

Workforce diversity acknowledges that people differ in several ways, both visible and unseen. According to D'Netto, Shen, and Tang (2011), two important underlying causes that have led to worker diversity, particularly in Western economies, are globalisation and increasing internationalization. On the one hand, the two factors have facilitated cross-border trade and corporate expansion; on the other, they have resulted in a massive influx of international migration. However, not all cross-border migrations are caused by pull causes. Instead, escalating political tensions worldwide, notably in the Middle East, have driven many individuals to seek refuge. In reality, the global refugee crisis has expanded in the last decade. All of these causes have resulted in a shift in socioeconomic patterns and

the demographic makeup of the growing workforce in both developed and developing nations (Hunt et al., 2015).

While previous empirical research has improved our understanding of the effects of diversity management, particularly age diversity management (Bieling, Stock, and Dorozalla, 2015; Boehm et al., 2014; Rabl and Triana, 2014), the vast majority of prior studies were confined to single-country studies, most notably in the United States and Western Europe (Drabe, Hauff, and Richter, 2015; Flynn et al., 2013). Prior research reveals, however, that the design, execution, and success of diversity management varies between nations (Peretz, Levi, and Fried, 2015) due to institutional and cultural differences (Lauring, 2013; Stoermer, Hildisch, and Froese, 2016).

Hence the increasing globalisation and socioeconomic changes have recently resulted in the free movement of labour (Sanghvi, 2019), resulting in a workforce that is more diverse than ever before (Meena and Vanka, 2017; Tamunomiebi and John-Eke, 2020) and practically every organisation is free to form its diverse human capital. These variables have amplified employee interaction (Ramsiary and Raya, 2015) and created new challenges for businesses of all sizes (Shen, Tang and D'Netto, 2014), emphasising the importance of managing a diverse workforce.

3. Methodology

A systematic review of relevant literature has been conducted to assess the different types of diversity. Accordingly we have selected articles related to diversity in the work environment specifically in different countries around the world after we found many articles about diversity in the work environment, but we only select 18 article in this study that are appropriate for the content of this article. In this study, we identified the different operationalisation of diversity dimensions and the most encountered methods of diversity measures considered in research in different countries around the world classified according to the continents of the world, Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, South America).

Conclusively, this study addressed the existing reasons for the inconsistent results and proposed a future research agenda to overcome the inconsistencies. Search engines on the internet were employed (Web of Science, Springer, Google Scholar) for getting the study research needed for this article. The study's objective is to examine and synthesise existing research and deliver the evidence; thus, a systematic review approach will be applied to this study.

The systematic review methodology is the most reliable and precise method to collect articles, which have severe conditions for search procedure and paper selection to be included in the research, and is typically carried out to assess the nature of existing knowledge and gaps on specific issues on a distinct subject (Mengist, Soromessa and Legese, 2020; Snyder, 2019).

4. Workforce diversity in different continents

Workplace diversity is becoming more widespread as the world continues its globalisation process. Civil rights, affirmative action, reverse discrimination, quotas, racism, and sexism are just a few terms used to describe diversity. "Differences" exist in all human organisations. Gender, culture, race, and social and psychological features vary, but so are people's viewpoints and prejudices.

Nonetheless, workplace diversity is primarily researched in affluent countries (e.g., the United States, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Australia), with only a few studies recorded in developing countries (e.g. China and India).

4.1. Workforce diversity history and aspects

Since the end of the Second World War, large-scale immigration has resulted in unparalleled ethnic-racial variety in both the United States and Western Europe. On both sides of the Atlantic, the benefits and problems of diversity are hotly debated, from affirmative action and racial inclusion on college campuses to cultural competency and diversity training in the workplace (Wessendorf, 2014; Alba and Foner, 2015; Warikoo, 2019).

Many countries now pride themselves on being fully diverse; furthermore, according to Harris (2002) and Jonsen et al. (2011), the origins of diversity management discourse can be traced back to equal employment initiatives and affirmative action protocols in the United States in the 1960s. Since this concept has piqued the interest of researchers in fields such as public policy, public administration, sociology, humanities, marketing, and public relations, HRM scholars, on the other hand, have only scratched the surface of this vast research field in the last two decades since noticing demographic shifts in the labour market, growing interest in business ethics, corporate globalisation, and European government policies to include foreigners and immigrants in their labour markets (Ravazzani, 2016).

Furthermore, the prominence and relevance assigned to each or group of these diversity dimensions vary by country, and their impacts can be contradictory. While gender inequality is the oldest and most widely discussed diversity issue in the world, religion is the most important in India and the Middle East, multiculturalism, languages, and religion in Africa, racial equality in the United States and South Africa, and sexual orientation in Western countries and the United States. Indeed, diversity has the capacity to provide various positive effects in a variety of ways.

However, this is contingent on elements such as diversity awareness, sophistication, experience, education, and emotional intelligence, which has been identified as a critical determinant of competency in diversity management (Oyewunmi, 2018).

4.2. Evolution of diversity and inclusion

Kelly and Dobbin (1998); Edelman et al. (2001) conducted two extensive studies that emphasised the rise and decline of the term "diversity." These researches revealed that until 1987, there was very little published about diversity 1987; however, following this, the number of practitioner journal papers referring to the notion skyrocketed, peaked in 1993, and then gradually declined over the next three years. Furthermore, Litvin (1997) conducted a landmark review of organisational behaviour textbooks in the early 1990s, which indicated the tendency to problematise individual differences and then promote diversity management as the solution. This sense of transition led to the genesis of diversity management in the early 1990s. Indeed, by the beginning of 2010, the number of publications on the topic 'inclusion' was more or less on a par with equality. However, the various trends appear to diverge to the extent that interest in equality has stayed constant while interest in inclusion has increased (Oswick and Noon, 2014). According to Biggs (2017), Frederick A. Miller was the first person to recognise the need for diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Since 2010, the diversity conversation has shifted to one of inclusion (Oswick and Noon, 2014).

This transition was necessary because diversity focuses on the characteristics of the employee. In contrast, inclusion focuses on the organisation's characteristics, including organisational culture and climate, in order for different individuals (from various backgrounds) to be entirely accepted and fairly compensated by the organisation. On the other hand, inclusion aims to create an environment that promotes variety.

4.3. Results and Discussion

Workforce diversity is a significant collective research phenomenon encompassing various dimensions, including demographic, cultural, informational, organisational, and cognitive

diversity. Workforce diversity is one of the developing themes that will be investigated in the future since it has the potential to play a significant role in the global market. Our modern world is full of international markets distinguished by various items and handled by a diversified collection of people. Society nowadays is getting multifaceted and diverse as individuals' identities are formed by gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability, ethnicity, race, educational background, political affiliation, socioeconomic status, skills, functions, culture, nationality, and generational cohorts (Kossek, Lobel, and Brown, 2006; Sabharwal, Levine, and D'Agostino, 2018; Roberson, 2019). Workforce diversity include all of these aspects and characteristics. Hence, workforce diversity has gotten much attention from researchers over the years, and it has become a big part of public administration.

Following are some researchers' methods of examining diversity:

- Researchers have addressed the mixed findings with the support of different theories in the literature on diversity management
- Diverse notions have been operationalised in different ways by different researchers. For example, some scholars have calculated the diversity index by combining all factors equally (Riordan and Shore, 1997)
- Several researchers have looked into various data types and come up with conclusions.
 Some have used longitudinal data (Klein et al., 2011; Kearney and Gebert, 2009)
- Researches have hypothesised different shapes of the relationship between diversity and organisational performance. Several scholars have studied the linear relationship.

<u>Table 1 (a;b;c;d)</u> summarises the selected literature for the research analysis and provides a general overview of their methodology in six contients respectively. Table 1a shows the results from the Europe continent.

Author(s)	Article title	Methodology	Country	Journal
(Podsiadlowski et al., 2013)	Managing a culturally diverse workforce: Diversity perspectives in organisations	Semi-structured, problem-centered interviews	Austria	International Journal of Intercultural Relations,
(Brunow et al., 2019)	Exports of firms and diversity: an empirical assessment for Germany	Survey	Germany	Empirica, Springer Science+Business Media
(Hedija & (Němec, 2021)	Gender diversity in leadership and firm performance: evidence from the Czech Republic	Secondary data & regression model	Czech	Journal of Business Economics and Management
(Ozturk and Tatli, 2016)	Gender identity inclusion in the workplace: broadening diversity management research and practice through the case of transgender employees in the UK	Interviews	United Kingdom	The International Journal of Human Resource Management
(Baixauli-Soler et al., 2016)	Executive directors' compensation and monitoring: the influence of gender diversity on Spanish boards	Secondary data	Spain	Journal of Business Economics and Management

 Table 1a: Summary of the articles examined in Europe continent

Source: Authors editing

Four articles examined in North and South America and Australia, the results are presented in Table 1b.

Author(s)	Article title	Methodology	Country	Journal
(Cho et al., 2017)	Does diversity matter? exploring workforce diversity, diversity management, and organisational performance in social enterprises	Interviews	United States	Asian social work and policy
(Evans and Suklun, 2017)	Workplace diversity and intercultural communication: A phenomenological study	Interviews	United States	Cogent Business and Management
(Raineri, 2018)	Diversity management in three Latin American countries: an institutional theory perspective	Survey & interviews & Secondary data	Latin America	Academia Revista Latino americana de Administración,
(Davis et al., 2016)	Workplace diversity management in Australia What do managers think and what are organisations doing?	Survey	Australia	Equality, diversity and inclusion

Table 1b: Summary of the articles examined in North and South America and Australia

Source: Authors editing

Six articles examined in Asia continent, the most common method was the questionnaire (Table 1c).

Author(s)	Article title	Methodology	Country	Journal
(Kundu et al., 2017)	Workforce diversity and organisational performance: a study of IT industry in India	Questionnaire Survey	India	The International Journal
(Wen and Oljaca 2020)	The Influence of Inclusion in the Relationship between Workplace Diversity and Organizational Citizenship Behavior	Questionnaire Survey	China	The International Journal of Business Management and Technology
(Won et al., 2021)	Assessing the effects of workforce diversity on project productivity performance for a sustainable workplace in the construction industry	Survey & Interviews	Singapore	Sustainable Development
(Chaudhry et al., 2021)	Do workforce diversity, inclusion practices, & organisational characteristics contribute to organisational innovation? Evidence from the U.A.E	Survey	United Arab Emirates	Cogent Business & Management
(Raewf and Mahmood, 2021)	The Cultural Diversity in the Workplace	Questionnaire	Iraq	Erbil Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences

Table 1c: Summary of the articles examined in Asia continent

(Bakir, 2017)	The Reality of Applying	Questionnaire	Jordan	International
· · · /	Human Resources			Business Research;
	Diversity Management and			
	Its Impact on			
	Workers'(Performance,			
	Cooperation, Commitment			
	and Loyalty): A Field Study			
	on the Jordanian Food			
	Industry Companies			

Source: Authors editing

Table 1d shows the results from Africa continent, three articles examined.

Author(s)	Article title	Methodology	Country	Journal
(Mousa, 2021)	Does Gender Diversity Affect Workplace Happiness for Academics? The Role of Diversity Management and Organizational Inclusion	Questionnaire	Egypt	Public Organization Review
(Mazibuko and Govender, 2017)	Exploring workplace diversity and organisational effectiveness: A South African exploratory case study	Questionnaire	South Africa	SA Journal of Human Resource Management
(Akinnusi, 2017)	Fostering Effective Workforce Diversity Management in Nigerian Organisations: The Challenge of Human Resource Management	Literature Review	Nigeria	International Review of Management and Marketing

Table 1d: Summary of the articles examined in Africa

Source: Authors editing

18 scientific papers published between 2013 and 2021 were identified as a research sample. After conducting a content analysis of the chosen publications included in the research, the sample reveals that most of the methodologies used were survey questionnaires to investigate workforce diversity, from the table, we can see three articles used interviews as a methodology. Additionally, one study (Akinnusi, 2017) used a literature review.

Analyzing the full text of the selected articles enables the authors to identify the diversity dimensions or aspects that the researchers studied, as some of the articles studied the correlation of workforce diversity with firms' performance. In contrast, other articles studied the challenge of human resource challenges in managing diversity, and other articles investigated diversity management.

The concept of diversity has gained popularity in management literature over the last two decades (Wikina, 2011). Thus, this study proposes a requirement to conduct more diversity research in different industries and countries and use different methodologies.

Conclusively, this study suggests that future researchers can explore the importance of diversity practices as a parameter for effectively managing diversity. Hence extending the number of countries would also allow future research to investigate whether diversity management practices generally converge or diverge on a global scale.

5. Limitation and Future Research Prospects

The current research summarises 18 articles from all over the world and highlights several variables associated with workforce diversity. However, the current research is limited because only three database (Web of Science, Springer, and Google Scholar) were used. It is recommended for future research that variables and dimensions identified through the current systematic literature review may be further enriched using more databases and tested using quantitative confirmatory models. The identified research articles can be analysed differently by going through their methodologies and data analysis in detail. There are chances of finding new areas of research.

Also this research has highlighted many dimensions of workforce diversity in different countries that can be studied alone or associated with other variables. Also, this study recommends that future studies continue to investigate the more contextual variables in diversity research with different methodologies to reduce the inconsistency in the findings.

6. Conclusion

This study focused on investigating the literature review on workforce diversity in different countries around the world, and the methodologies of chosen literature were identified. Diversity and inclusion have been the area of interest for practitioners and management consultants who seek to develop and implement diversity and inclusion as global strategies. It was found that most of the methodologies used in the selected articles in this study focus on surveys and questionnaires as primary data and also interviews. Hence we can find that research should use the literature review in studies on workforce diversity as a global imperative in order to gain more precise information about the effective implications of applying workforce diversity around the world, especially since countries around the world have special concerns about different dimensions of diversity according to lots of considerations.

We believe this review will aid future researchers in gaining a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the current state of existing research and future avenues in the field of diversity. Our recommendations will encourage more research in diversity and diversity management fields globally.

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