
A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF WORKPLACE DIVERSITY AND WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Diversity in the workforce and rising concerns about employee engagement are higher education sector's characteristics. At present, higher education faculties and staff hail from a diverse range of demographic, psychological, and sociocultural backgrounds. Diversity has a intricated association with employee engagement, even though it is frequently associated with creativity and institutional excellence. In this paper, the researches on workplace diversity and workforce engagement in higher education is exhaustively reviewed. It outlines important dimensions, empirical findings, moderating variables, research gaps, and theoretical findings. The review highlights different opinions about the correlation between diversity and performance. The paper concludes by suggesting future research topics, specifically in the Indian higher education context.

Keywords: Workplace Diversity, Workforce Engagement, Higher Education, Organizational Culture, Surface Diversity, and Deep Diversity.

INTRODUCTION

Institutions of higher learning are knowledge-intensive enterprises that rely heavily on human resources to impart well-rounded education, advance research, and contribute to socioeconomic development. Globalization, increased student enrollment, affirmative action policies, gender inclusion programs, and faculty internationalization have all contributed to substantial transformations in higher education during the last few decades. As a result, today's colleges have a diverse workforce in terms of demographics, sociocultural, and psychology.

Workforce diversity encompasses the similarities and variations among employees regarding age, sex, ethnic origin, religious background, academic background, socio-economic status, personality traits, attitudes, and beliefs (Patrick & Kumar, 2012; Harvey & Allard, 2012). Diversity is typically divided into two categories: deep-level diversity, which includes less obvious traits like personality, views, and work ideals, and surface-level diversity, which includes observable traits like age and gender (Akhigbe & Shedr, 2017; Mohammed & Angell, 2004). Employee engagement has become a crucial factor in determining company effectiveness at the same time. The term "employee engagement" describes how involved workers are in their jobs on a cognitive, emotional, and physical level (Janetius et al., 2016). Academic personnel that are diligently involved in the course of their professional roles exhibit vigor, dedication, and absorption in their academic obligations, which improves student outcomes and institutional success.

The association between workplace diversity and workforce engagement in higher education institutions is still unclear despite the fact that both topics have been thoroughly explored separately. In order to identify research gaps in the higher education system and to synthesize the body of knowledge on workplace diversity and workforce engagement, this study does a systematic literature review.

2. APPROACH

To examine previous studies on workforce diversity and employee engagement in higher education and allied fields by using methodical literature review.

2.1 Method of Search

Peer-reviewed journal articles, reports, research papers, and scholarly studies referenced in the research description served as the basis for the review such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, Emerald, ABI/Inform, Springer, and Scopus are among the databases cited in previous studies.

2.2 The following keywords were used in all the studies:

" Workplace diversity " OR " Workforce diversity " OR " Deep-level diversity " OR " Surface-level diversity " AND " Work engagement " OR " Employee engagement " OR "Organizational culture" AND " Universities " OR " Higher education." During screening of studies, dimensions related to diversity, contextual factors, engagement results, and organizational culture were considered.

3. ANALYSIS OF CONTENT

Three key themes were derived from the evaluated literature:

1. Organizational Outcomes and Diversity
2. Workforce Engagement and Diversity
3. The Moderating Effect of Organizational Culture.

3.1 Organizational Outcomes and Diversity

Mixed outcomes are found in empirical research work on employee diversity and performance. According to Bor and Wanyoike (2019), employee performance and ethnic diversity are significantly positively correlated. According to Qasim (2017), job performance in the education industry was positively impacted by worker diversity. In a similar vein, Alghazo and Shaiban (2016) found strong correlations between performance outcomes and age and gender diversity. On the other hand, Makhdoomi and Nika (2017) discovered no connection between employee performance and overall diversity. While gender heterogeneity had a favorable effect, R and Selvar (2015) found inverse relationship between age and ethnic diversity and performance. These results imply that contextual factors may influence diversity's impact and that diversity by itself is sufficient better results.

3.2 Employee Engagement and Workforce Diversity

Only a small body of research exists that particularly looks at the association between diversity and involvement. While gender and other factors exhibited lesser correlations, Narayanan and Raina (2018) discovered that age diversity had a significant impact on employee engagement. Using regression analysis, Panicker and L. (2018) found a strong association between workplace engagement and workforce diversity.

Yadav and Katiyar (2017) highlighted the significance of deep-level variety and emphasized the part that individual traits play in determining engagement. Employee involvement greatly enhances institutional efficacy, according to studies conducted in higher education settings (Hakeem & Gulzar, 2015). Nevertheless, full integrative models are still hard to come by.

3.3 The Influence of Organization Culture as a moderator

Shared norms, values, and beliefs that direct behavior inside an organization are referred to as organizational culture (Hill & Jones, 2009). According to research, diversity's impact on engagement is influenced by culture. Obuma and Worlu (2017) discovered that the association between workplace diversity and workforce engagement in financial institutions was mediated by organizational culture. Heterogeneity and organizational climate in public colleges are significantly correlated, according to Bana et al. (2016). Diverse workforce is more involved and committed when there is an inclusive culture that is marked by justice, trust, involvement, and openness. On the other hand, cultures that are weak or exclusive may lessen the benefits of variety.

4. SIGNIFICANT RESEARCH DEFICITS

The review finds a number of gaps:

- An excessive focus on superficial variety (gender, age).
- Insufficient investigation of deep-level diversity dimensions.
- There are few studies offered at Indian universities.
- Inadequate incorporation of organizational culture as a moderator.

5. CONCLUSION

Workforce diversity is a basic feature of universities. Even though diversity can lead to numerous advantages like increased creativity, broad spectrum of opinions and, its impact on cultural and contextual factors. The findings presented in the literature are contradictory and not consistent. There is a clear need of integrative research models to assess the moderating effect of organizational culture within institutions, particularly in the Indian context, and includes both surface-level and deep-level diversity characteristics. In future studies, multidimensional researches should be conducted to understand the impact of workplace diversity on employee engagement in long term.

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