

Diversity Management in HRM for Socially Responsible and Sustainable Business

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Abstract

With the increase in technological developments and advent of globalization, the work environment is undergoing a constant transformation. Globalization seems to affect every aspect of business including human, social, political, and financial. Pertaining to such global trends, the management has to deal with a diverse workforce having different backgrounds, origin, skills, and qualifications. Diversity Management becomes a very crucial component of HRM policies and programs so as to ensure just and fair work environment. Further, as the organizations operate on a global level, continuous profitability and growth becomes a challenge. In this regard, diversity management of employees help to develop competitive edge for the organizations by enhancing their innovation and collaborative decision making. Furthermore, it also helps to build a stronger foundation of organization's corporate social responsibility. This further highlights that HR department helps to fulfil the moral as well as financial objectives of the organization by developing diversity training programs. Human capital, being the most significant asset in the organization requires effective leadership and organizational support. For this, diversity management policies reflect anti-discriminatory framework to encourage employee inclusiveness. This has a positive implication on organization's productivity and enhances employee performance. Thus, globalization gives rise to the need of diversity management through HR activities and policies for ensuring long term profitability, social responsibility, and sustainability.

Keywords

Human resource, Diversity management, CSR, Globalization, Sustainability, Social responsibility, Workplace behavior.

1. Introduction

With the advent of globalization, every sphere in business related to social, economic, political, and human spheres is undergoing significant changes. Today, globalizations and technological advancements have resulted in the formation of a knowledge economy directly affecting the practices and policies pertaining to Human Resource Management (Sukolva & Ceniga, 2019). Consequently, diversity in workforce has entered the global business scenario bringing employees from different background, origin, race, or age to work together (Barak, 2016). A diverse workforce has a significant role to play as its values are integrated in the organization's culture. In this regard, HRM department is confronted with the challenge of devising such HR policies and programmes that help managing the diverse human capital and integrating it with organization's goals (Joshua, 2019). Further, the organizations today are facing the pressure to integrate socially responsible behavior for its sustainability and competitiveness (Dickie & Soldan, 2008). For this reason, it becomes crucial to manage the workforce diversity for maximizing the efficiency of employees.

Today, managing a diverse group of people in the organization has multi fold importance for enhancing the global sustainability of business. With respect to this, HR policies for diverse workforce reflect the fulfilment of social responsibility through employee's inclusiveness (Madera, Dawson, & Neal, 2016). It further strengthens the CSR of an organization by working towards employee justice, morality, and anti-discrimination measures (Madera, 2013). Abundance of research is present in diversity management and its related HR policies in the past (Choi & Rainey, 2010). However, a critical literature review highlights that there is only limited research done for examining how HR policies related to diversity management help in attaining CSR, sustainability, and competitiveness. Further, the organizations today are being more attracted to maintaining a multicultural and a dynamic workforce for managing its global operations. For this reason, the organizations are investing heavily in HR for devising diversity programmes to promote better employee learning and organizational attraction (Starostka-Patyk, Tomski, & Zawada, 2015). Thus, managing workforce diversity needs to be studied from both the moral and well as business perspective in the international business setting.

2. Objectives of the Paper

The main aim of the paper is to highlight the crucial role of HRM policies and framework in managing employee diversity that enhances organization's sustainability and competitiveness.

The objectives explored in the paper are outlined below:

- To critically review the research literature for understanding how globalization results in increased employee diversity. Further, to explore the concepts like sustainable HRM, EDM Framework, and integration of legislation and HR for diversity management.
- To examine the positive impact of managing a diverse workforce pertaining to both human and financial well-being of an organization.
- To analyze the concept of DM as a catalyst for social change by developing fair work places in the society.
- To study HR and DM policies as a measure of CSR for organizations.
- To highlight the implications for management for developing a collaborative framework for inclusive decision making.
- To outline the numerous challenges related to management, employee behavior, and organizational structures that restrict a well-developed diverse workplace.
- To highlight numerous recommendations for managerial action along with the scope for future research.

3. Review of Literature

3.1 Globalization of Economies

Managing the diversity among employees became a relevant subject of research due to increase in globalization and complexity in the knowledge economy. For attaining success at a global level, organizations need a diverse workforce to create a broader and dynamic global perspective through their organizational structure and hierarchies (Moeller, Harvey, & Maley, 2017). Further, as the business move towards new work cultures, the focus of the HR has gradually shifted to improving the efficiency of diverse human capital on a global level that can compete in the international labor market as well (Raco & Kesten, 2018). In addition to this, the business today is operating in distant regions and different time

zone which has transformed organizational culture into multicultural business domains (Nart, Yaprak, Yildirim, & Sarihan, 2018). Consequently, workforce diversity management helps to develop corporate social behavior for mitigating employee differences and work in a more collaborative environment (Karriker, Madden, & Katell, 2017). This reflects the significance of HRM for integrating the global business perspectives and work practices for strengthening sustainability (Oblizgin, et. al., 2016). Thus, globalization of economies has fostered the need of developing and managing a diverse workforce.

3.2 Sustainable HRM

In recent years, sustainable HRM has developed into a research concept for explaining new work concepts and management frameworks (Baum, 2018). Sustainable HRM is a broader term that covers various aspects of people's management to attract, retain, and develop the human capital in the most effective manner (Guerci & Pedrini, 2014). Organizations being open systems and centre for diverse resources, it becomes necessary to manage external and internal relationships among people at work (Muller-Christ, 2011). Furthermore, sustainable HRM further explains strategic HRM with new dimensions as it involves human and social objectives along with financial objectives (Kramar, 2014). Sustainable HRM Framework involves four perspectives that focus on integrating CSR with long term vision while strengthening the human capital. The framework involves psychological approach for developing people's skills and abilities to achieve competitive advantage; sociological approach for fulfilling responsibility towards stakeholders and society; strategic HRM approach to effectively manage employability aspects and work environment; Green HRM approach to minimize the negative impact on planet and environment (De Prins, et al., 2014). However, scarce literature is available on sustainable HRM which builds the need to further study its framework and business implications (Rompa, 2011). Thus, sustainable HRM is an umbrella concept that helps to fulfill both ethical and business motives.

3.3 Employee Diversity Management Framework

For understanding employee diversity management, organizations are required to analyze the factors and variables related to it (Guillaume, et al., 2017). Today, the organizational structures have transformed into flatter and more heterogeneous structures (Stark, 2001). This results in the need for developing an EDM Framework that can be implemented at firm level for managing people's diverse competencies (Carstens & De Kock, 2017). Consequently, EDM framework outlines HRM policies and programs that promotes hiring and management of a diverse human capital to compete globally (McGrandle, 2017). Such HR initiatives are resulting in developing more adapt and innovation-driven organizations (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 2004). Further, the framework enables the HR to outline the diverse competencies that needs to be inculcated in managers and leaders for driving business goals. Thus, the framework plays a crucial role in leveraging the uniqueness of employees and leaders to attain competitive advantage.

3.4 Integrating HRM and Legislative Framework for Diversity Management

HRM is also affected by the political regimes and legislative guidelines while operating in international business environment. With respect to this, it becomes crucial to constantly analyze macro and micro environment for studying global trends and formulating HR policies accordingly (Moeller, Harvey, & Maley, 2017). It helps to develop the organizational talent and build competitive flexibility and creativity in a strategic manner. Further, mandatory guidelines have been formulated by various bodies that must be incorporated in HR policies for ensuring anti-discriminatory work behavior (Reguera-Alvarado, Fuentes, & Laffarga, 2017). In addition to this, countries like Australia, US, Canada and many others focus on eradicating any social inequality arising out of multicultural diverse workforce (Jaime, 2018). Also, the federal HR laws are constantly being reviewed through further research on

diversity management to devise just and equitable labor laws and human capital theories. Thus, sustainable HRM has to integrate legislation acts and regulations for effective diversity management.

4. Positive Impact of Diversity Management

4.1 Business Profitability and Innovation

Managing employee diversity fosters innovation and creativity among employees that enhances organizational productivity (Mazibuko & Govender, 2017) Since the business reacts to social and environmental pressures, sustainable HRM helps to develop the skills and competencies of employees at a global level (Waite, 2014). Diversity management helps to understand employee behaviors and work ethics that improve employee commitment resulting organizational citizenship behavior (Moon, 2018). This implies that a heterogeneous work environment gives rise to a greater pool of skills and competencies that can be merged for profitable outcomes. For maintaining continuous growth and profitability, employee creativity and innovation is the key that can deal with global complexities (Sheppard, 2018). A diverse workforce results enhancing information sharing, collaborative decision making, and innovation-driven solutions that are directly reflected in firm's productivity. Thus, sustaining profitability and innovation is achieved through managing people at work and their diverse needs and behaviors.

4.2 Competitive Advantage and Sustainability

EDM strengthens the organization's competitive edge as HR policies are formulated in a just and equitable manner. This implies that HRM interventions like equal opportunity, inclusive work environment, fair accountability, performance measurement, diversity training, employee involvement, and other HR aspects improves employee growth resulting in improved organizational performance (Starostka-Patyk, Tomski, & Zawada, 2015). Further, human capital is the organization's core competency as it uses its abilities and expertise for accelerating business compatibility.

However, business transactions tend to ignore their negative consequences on neighborhood and environment (Hemet & Malgouyres, 2018). For this, HRM intervene in employee

management and business operations for preserving human, social, and financial growth in an effective manner. Keeping this in mind, HR helps to develop an open information culture for sharing human knowledge and skill resources. Further, it incorporates the idea of sustainability in corporate strategy that is practiced among leaders and people at work (Chou, Chen, & Conley, 2015). Thus, it results in better collaboration among business objectives, social, and environmental systems.

4.3 Talent Management and Employee well-being

Diversity management of employees is directly linked to people's recruitment and retention of diverse talents. This means that effective diversity is achieved when HR is able to recruit a globally diverse talent workforce to deliver the requirements in the international domain (Cukier & Smarz, 2012). For successfully developing competitive advantage, developing a diverse group of talent that reflects heterogeneous skills, qualifications, and problem solving capacity is very important. Further, HR outlines diversity training and employee education programs for enhancing social learning, communication, and trust (Grillitsch & Chaminade, 2018). Additionally, the diverse HR framework develops a heterogeneous climate that promotes employee involvement and work fairness. For this, strategies like open communication, continuous feedback, development opportunities, anti-discriminatory procedures helps in employee well-being (Broda, et al., 2018). Thus, it implies that DM helps business to comprehend CSR through just and equitable means.

5. Catalyst for Social Change

Diversity management works towards bringing a social change on a macro level. With respect to this, EDM programs are devised on concepts like enhancing employee worth and dignity and also developing employee's competency for better growth and career. In a globalized business network, employees from various communities, demographics, and minorities come together to work which might result in conflicts and tensions due to differences (Fujimoto & Hartel, 2017). However, diversity management is aimed at mitigating such differences and promoting a fair work place where respect is directly linked to performance. Furthermore, HR policies, education and training initiatives help in employee involvement and bringing everyone at par.

Additionally, sustainable HRM is recognized as a potential research topic for collaborating business and moral perspectives resulting in positive growth of society (Jolanta, 2018). Hence, diversity management enables HR to develop management framework that discourages inequality, discrimination, intercultural differences, and nepotism.

6. DM for Morality and CSR

With the transformation of work demographics and external environment, the organizations today are more responsive to managing their CSR score. Keeping this in mind, the HR department is devising diversity policies and practices as a mandatory part of their organizational structure for including a diverse workforce (Gundemir, et al., 2017). Further, diversity management is viewed with moral objectives to maintain peace and equality in both private as well as public sector organizations. Additionally, diversity management by HR directly measures CSR as it examines the intent of organizations to remain just and fair to employees and stakeholders (Ellemers & Rink, 2016). Not only this, such CSR framework including workforce diversity strengthens organizational and employee attractiveness (Avery & McKay, 2006). Consequently, it builds the market goodwill of the organization in the eyes of the current employees as well as the job seekers and other external partners (Backhaus, Stone, & Heiner, 2002). Thus, diversity management fosters a better CSR score and fulfils the moral obligations for the organization.

7. Managerial Implications

7.1 Ethical Decision Making

EDM requires the development of a management framework and business practices for handling diversity complexities in a sustainable manner. For this, HR, management and leaders are expected to conceptualize and implement inclusionary policies and structures for developing a heterogeneous workforce (Jordan, 2018). This can be achieved if open communication, transparency, collaborative participation, and democratic decision making is adopted. This means that HR must ensure that ethical decision making is done purely on merit basis without any bias related to color, gender, or race. Such an approach will help to maintain an employee-friendly

organization and promote overall productivity and competitiveness (Moeller, Harvey, & Maley, 2017). In addition to this, leadership training programs are needed to measure employee performance fairly. Hence, such managerial initiatives will help in improving employee satisfaction at work.

7.2 Investment in Diversity Management Programs

For continuous growth and organizational development, organizations need to invest in programs that promote diversity among employees (Madera, Dawson, & Neal, 2016). For this, the HR needs to integrate with management for understanding the dynamics of employee behavior and develop diversity strategies accordingly. Further, managers need to examine the key factors that enhance employee performance and what policies would develop such competencies among diverse group of employees (Wallace, et al., 2008). Investment in diversity management will symbolize the organization as the one with egalitarian values (Edelman, et al., 2011). It implies that investing in resources for promoting diversity will bring higher returns for the organization in the longer run (Yang & Konrad, 2011). Additionally, training and education programs will develop employee's intellect and aptitude towards a heterogeneous work culture. Hence, employee attitudes, and values must be analyzed to devise training programs and enhance organizational value.

8. Challenges in Workforce Diversity Management

8.1 Appreciation of employee differences

EDM does not only require managers to work collaboratively in diverse teams and promote fair employee treatment. Rather, it also imposes the challenge of recognizing employee uniqueness and their distinct contribution towards organizational goals (Mazibuko & Govender, 2017). However, managers tend to be bias and may unconsciously support a particular employee group that increase the workplace complexity.

8.2 Lack of diversity intelligence

Global business environment comprises of different class workers with different abilities and knowledge. However, managers in the HR might lack diversity intelligence due to which the capabilities of some workers remain unidentified and underdeveloped (Hughes & Brown, 2018). Consequently, some marginalized workers are left behind with no optimal development of their skills and talents.

8.3 Lack of communication

Open communication and trust are foundational mechanism for developing diversity management practices in the organizations (Olusegun, Abdurraheem, & Nassir, 2018). However, hierarchical complexities might hinder open communication and knowledge sharing among employees. Certain times, work places develop into stringent work zones where every worker prioritizes their personal motives to organizational goals. This further widens the gap between employees from different backgrounds and qualifications.

8.4 Ineffective leadership

Challenges arise when workforce diversity is handed over to ineffective leaders. In this respect, diverse employee teams express heterogeneity in terms of their opinion and decision making (Weberg & Weberg, 2014). With the absence of collaborative direction and high performing leadership, diversity results in conflicts and hinders employee performance. Thus, diversity training programs for management must be a crucial part of developing a diverse organizational culture.

8.5 Absence of supportive environment

Diversity Management for building sustainability and competitiveness is a transformational change which requires constant support and collaboration from employees and managers. The policies and diversity training programs by HR will prove fatal if the employees do not support them and develop positive attitude towards them (Madera, Dawson, & Neal, 2016). So, HR needs to develop diversity ideas in the work culture for tackling the challenge of employee resistance towards the same.

9. Recommendations and Scope for Future Work

To survive in a global market scenario, organizations are actively engaged in recruiting and maintaining a diverse workforce. For achieving this, the research helped in outlining some recommendations that could be implemented in the organizational culture. Management must begin with effective diversity collaboration while treating the people of the organization equally. Along with formal communication channels, informal communication and use of social media needs to be encouraged to increase employee inclusiveness. Furthermore, HR must focus in diverse recruitment for ensuring the required mixture of different backgrounds and qualifications. The HR framework for EDM must be established through mechanisms like knowledge sharing, transparency, and continuous feedback. For this purpose, comprehensive diversity training programs for both employees and managers will contribute towards developing right competencies. As discussed before, effective recognition policies for everyone's contribution should be implemented so as to bring employee satisfaction at work. Additionally, management should focus on bringing social change by developing an open organizational culture for different communities and unidentified minorities. Thus, such managerial initiatives will help in bridging the gap within diverse teams and will foster a path of longer business sustainability.

Current research focused on employee and managerial aspects of diversity management. Further, in-depth research is required to analyze the different factors that affect the moral as well as profit objective of any organization. Future research should also focus on the behaviour of external business partners and how they are affected while working in a diverse organization. Additionally, emerging work concepts like flexible work hours, freelancing, and work automation can be studied with respect to diversity management programs.

10. Conclusion

The purpose of the paper was to study the significance of diversity among employees in today's global organizations and how its management helps in building sustainability along with fulfilling the corporate responsibility. Through an in-depth analysis of literature, it was found that globalization of economies introduced a paradigm shift

in the composition of the workforce due to which people from different cultures and backgrounds could work together in a similar work environment. Furthermore, with the awareness in society, the pressure on organizations has increased for working towards effective people's management to fulfill social and financial objectives. This suggested the use of sustainable HRM framework that encompasses psychological, sociological, strategic, and green approach to HRM practices. Also, the literature highlighted the use EDM framework to implement diverse competencies among employees at different levels in the organization. It further enables HR to devise policies for developing diverse set of competencies among managers and employees. The affect on HR policies to confirm with the human legislations pertaining to particular regions leads to redesigning of HR programs and guidelines. This is done to ensure anti-discriminatory work behavior to remove any sort of social inequality among the employees from diverse cultures and minorities. The research in the report also concluded that HR practices promoting diversity helps in improving profitability, innovation, competitive advantage and sustainability in the longer run. Moreover, it is used as a driver for employee wellbeing and talent management. Programs concerning diversity management help in fulfilling the social responsibility and ensures that effective social practices are implemented that helps in societal development on a broader level. In order to achieve this, the management also needs to mitigate the challenges pertaining to lack of communication, diversity intelligence, appreciation of differences, ineffective leadership, and supportive environment. Thus, such practices will help in successfully managing the diversity among employees.

11. References

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