

Managing diversity in organizations

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Diversity management has recently attracted a lot of attention in both academia and practice. Globalization, migration, demographic changes, low fertility rates, a scarce pool of qualified labor, and women entering the workforce in large scales have led to an increasingly heterogeneous workforce in the past twenty years. In response to those ongoing changes, organizations have started to create work environments which address the needs and respond to the opportunities of a diverse workforce. The implementation of diversity policies and practices and the creation of an organizational culture that values heterogeneity have been the focus of recent organizational initiatives. Likewise, research on workplace diversity and its management has gained importance in management sciences. Academic scholars have started to examine the positive and negative effects of workplace diversity on employee well-being, team performance and on overall organizational effectiveness. However, the findings of empirical studies are often ambiguous since relationships between diversity measures and outcomes are complex and based on a variety of contingencies. Further empirical studies as well as theory development is required to clarify these complex relationships. Scholars are only beginning to build theoretical frameworks regarding the impact of workplace diversity and programs on various workplace outcomes. This special issue aims at shedding light on some of these open research questions by including both theoretical and empirical contributions.

The first paper by Eric Kearney, Leibniz Universität Hannover/GISMA Business School and Sven Voelpel, Jacobs University Bremen provides an extensive review of the literature on team diversity and its effects on work group performance and group member satisfaction. Guided by a research framework that includes the two main theoretical perspectives that are usually cited to explain diversity's effects—the information-elaboration

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and the social categorization perspective—a complex model of direct effects, mediating and moderating effects of team level diversity on team performance is examined. The authors conclude with suggestions for future research and practical recommendations for managers involved in leading diverse work groups.

The second paper by Sebastian Stegmann and Rolf van Dick, both from Goethe University Frankfurt and Marie-Élène Roberge, Northeastern Illinois University proposes a theoretical model of the processes that mediate and moderate the team diversity-performance relationship that complements the well-established cognitive perspective (as documented in the first paper of this special issue) by adding an emotional perspective. They introduce the concept of empathy to team diversity research, an emotional state which arises from the comprehension and apprehension of fellow group members' emotional state. The authors propose that empathy may enhance the performance of diverse teams through within-group member and between-group member processes. A complex theoretical framework that identifies a mediating effect of empathy on the diversity-performance relationship and specifies moderating conditions for this relationship provides a rich avenue for future research.

The third paper by Stefan Schaffer and Sven Voelpel, both Jacobs University Bremen and Eric Kearney and Ralf Koester, both from Leibniz Universität Hannover/GISMA Business empirically investigates the role of feedback from coworkers on the level of innovation in age diverse teams. Given demographic change and the aging of the workforce of many organizations, their findings broaden the still fragmentary knowledge of the conditions under which aging is likely to have more or less positive effects on innovative work behavior.

The fourth paper by Elke Wolf, the University of Applied Sciences Munich, Miriam Beblo, the Berlin School of Economics and Law, and Clemens Ohlert, the University of Hamburg analyses wage inequality with respect to gender and nationality within German establishments. Their findings are based on a large-scale analysis based on linked employer-employee data from the Institute for Employment Research (LIAB). Drawing on organizational theories the authors inquire as to how firm characteristics are related to the variation of intra-firm pay gaps and derive hypotheses about which establishments have a greater incentive and/or are more able to pursue wage equality in their workforces.

The final paper by Jana Oehmichen and Michael Wolff, Georg-August-University Göttingen, and Marc Steffen Rapp, Philipps-University Marburg, empirically discusses the role of different types of ownership concentration on the percentage of women on management boards. The authors thereby distinguish between institutional and individual owners and national and foreign owners. The analysis is based on 15,976 management board member positions from 2000–2007 in approximately 600 German-listed companies. With their paper they contribute to the current public discussion on diversity in companies' boardrooms.