

# Perceived diversity and organizational performance

[Business](#), [Organization](#)



Article: Richard S. Allen, Gail Dawson, Kathleen Wheatley, and Charles S. White (2008). Perceived Diversity and Organizational Performance. *Employee Relations*, 30(1), 20-33. A. The problem What is the problem being investigated? Diversity in the workplace is an issue which may either increase or decrease productivity depending on the organizational culture. Depending on the way that the management or employees view diversity, it may either be a source of motivation and creativity, or conflict in an organization. It is therefore important to investigate the effects of diversity in different organizations.

This paper aims at analyzing how employees in different management and non-management levels perceive diversity. It also aims to investigate the perception of these employees with regards to the effects of diversity on the performance of the organization. What are the variables in this study? According to Richard et. al. (2008), the paper uses a survey as a means of acquiring information on the subject of interest with the aim of generalizing the findings. There are 391 professionals or managers who participate in the survey. The participants are from 130 organizations in southeastern US.

It is important to note that there are potential weaknesses in this survey. Since the managers are sourced from southeastern parts of US, they cannot be used to generalize the findings. This is due to the possibility of sharing similar culture or values, since they are from one part of the US, and this might influence their opinions and feedback from the survey. The researchers should have carried out a random sample from all parts of US.

The sample size can also be said to be too small to generalize over the millions of professionals and managers in US. What are the hypotheses?

It is important to note that the paper uses perceived diversity by employees as opposed to actual diversity by employees. This is done in order for the author to gain a broader understanding on the concept of diversity. Diversity is multi-dimensional and viewing it from the perception of employees will enable the author to capture the attributes which cannot be seen by the naked eye. It is also reasonable to use perception since in most cases perception is reality. According to Richard et. al. (2008), the first hypotheses is that at the senior level of management, perceived diversity relates positively to perceived performance.

This hypothesis holds if diversity at the senior levels of management positively influences direction and the making of strategic decisions by the senior management. The second hypotheses states that at other positions of management, the perceived diversity relates positively to perceived performance. This hypothesis holds if diversity at other positions of management helps organizations adapt and deal to needs of the customers, which gives the firm a competitive advantage. The third hypotheses states that in non-managerial positions, perceived diversity and perceived firm performance will be positively related.

B. Review of the literature How secondary sources cited in the article support the current study? The authors use secondary sources of data when doing research. This is illustrated by the use of journals as references in writing the research paper. The journals are used to support the arguments put forward

by the author. For instance, when introducing the topic, the author uses the journals to explain the benefits and costs of diversity in organizations, according to the views of scholars such as Robinson, Dechant, Carlozzi, Cox, Blake, McAllister, Mattis and others.

There are different advantages that are associated with the use of academic journals when undertaking research. One advantage is that journals are cheap to access since they are available on the Internet. Another advantage is that they cover a broad range and perspectives of topics, which help researchers, gather comprehensive data on their subject of interest. However, journals possess disadvantages for instance; it is difficult to corroborate data acquired. Journals are also prone to bias if the original writer was biased when writing a journal and the authors use the same journal when conducting research.

C. Methodology Sampling Who or what do the authors use as the “ sample” in this study? In this research, the sample is the professionals or managers who participate in the survey. The researchers use a mix of minority and majority respondents for sampling. These include 154 female and 237 male respondents, who include 75 black, 303 white, 3 Asian, 5 Hispanic and five 'other' respondents. The sample also contained both non-managerial and managerial respondents. Managers comprised 79% of the population while professionals and non-managers comprised 8% and 13% respectively.

What is the population? What is the sample size? The population is the professionals and managers present in US or any other specified objective of the researcher. The sample is used to act as a representation of the

population. The population is therefore any person who the sample will be deemed to be representing. The sample size is 391 in number, and the attributes being investigated will be deemed to represent the entire population. Instrumentation What is the instrument(s) used to measure the data? According to Richard et. al.

(2008), structured interviews were used to collect data in order to make sure that the sample was representative. Since random samples were not feasible under the circumstances, convenience samples were used. Respondents were evaluated according to perception of diversity among the non-managerial, other managerial and senior managerial positions. A five point scale which ranged from 'strongly disagree' to strongly agree' was used. The respondents were also evaluated according to their perception on the performance of their organization on productivity, quality, profitability, return on equity, market share and overall performance.

A scale with five points was used, and these ranged between 'among the best in the industry' to 'among the worst in the industry'. D. Results What were the results of the study? The results revealed that 42% of respondents strongly agreed that in non-managerial positions, minorities were proportionately represented. In managerial positions, only 22% shared similar views. Only 10% of the senior managerial respondents viewed the minorities as proportionately represented, with 26% strongly disagreeing. In measuring organizational performance, regression analysis was used and the results revealed that the first hypothesis was the most supported.

The third hypothesis was also strongly supported, unlike the second hypothesis. E. Conclusions and recommendations What, if any, conclusions or recommendations do the authors make? The conclusion reached by the authors is that perception of diversity has a positive effect on the perception of organizational performance, especially within the non-managerial and senior management organizational levels. It therefore becomes important for organizations to create perception of diversity in the workforce.

Generally, the research findings reveal that organizations should invest in diversity in order to motivate employees and improve performance. Diversity should be embraced in all management levels, and not only the lower level management, in order to enjoy benefits of diversity across all organization levels. Recommendations include investing in diversity through minority mentoring programs, minority support networks, and diversity awareness training. References. Richard S. A. , Gail D. , Kathleen W. , Charles S. W. (2008). Perceived Diversity and Organizational Performance. *Employee Relations*, 30(1), 20-33.