

Free article review about team leadership

[Sociology](#), [Community](#)



Abstract

The following work is aimed at reviewing the article by Dann van Knippeberg and Michaela C. Shippers (2007). Their article addresses the developments in the field of work group diversity since the publishing of the work by Williams and O'Reily (1998), offering a review of 40 years of research in the field of demography and diversity of organizations. Topicality of the study is called forth by an increase in diversity in groups that can be traced in all spheres of work. The article under study examines different approaches and conceptualizations of diversity with special attention to studying the effects of diversity on the performance of the group. The most important finding of the research is concerned with the fact that different types of diversity can have different effects on groups' performance. Additionally, the avenues for future research and the role of diversity studies in management are discussed.

Groups in organizations are becoming increasingly diverse over the years. This trend calls forth an increase in scientific interest to the phenomenon of diversity and its role in group performance. The research on work group diversity issues by Dann van Knippeberg and Michaela C. Shippers (2007) addressed the developments in the field of work group diversity since the publishing of the work by Williams and O'Reily (1998), offering a review of 40 years of research in the field of demography and diversity of organizations. The research under study is aimed at reexamining largely inconsistent results of the work by Williams and O'Reily (1998) with respect to more sophisticated conceptualizations of diversity and its effects than the ones considered in the work that served a starting point for the article. The

research is based on a wide range of sources that were found through PsycInfo search of abstracts and titles, as well as manual search (Van Knippeberg&Shippers, 2007, p. 517).

Introducing the issue of group diversity in broad strokes, the authors provide the vision of the basics of diversity conceptualization. Diversity is considered as a combination of differences between individuals that may lead to the perception that another person is different from self. In other words, diversity is seen as a characteristic of social grouping that reflects the degree to which objective or subjective differences between group members exist ((Van Knippeberg&Shippers, 2007, p. 519).

After considering basic approaches to diversity and its effects, the authors return to conceptualization of diversity. The typologies of diversity are based on the attributes that are different among group members. The typologies include the distinction between demographic attributes that are readily observable and not specifically related to the job (e. g., gender race, ethnicity), as well as more job-related attributes that may include differences in group members' educational background and previous experiences. In addition the authors suggest that it is important to take into account the differences in personality, attitudes and values that are hardly observable, but are likely to exert significant influence on the group performance.

The key suggestion lies in the fact that demographic diversity and diversity in attitudes and values usually prevents the group from the effective functioning while job-related dimensions (e. g., education, job experiences) have positive effect on the group work. Another important finding lies in the lack of information concerning simultaneous effect of different dimensions of

diversity on group performance and the effects of the mode of work in the group (e. g., the degree of the group members' interdependence in their activities) on the diversity-related influences.

Concluding the authors mention that the current transfer to more complex conceptualizations of diversity and additional attention paid to the processes, mediating the effects of work group diversity goes beyond 1998 state of the art (Van Knippeberg&Shippers, 2007, p. 532). However, the trend to the lack of empirical and theoretical data concerning the effects of diversity has been enduring since 1998. As future avenues for research the authors suggest developing more complex conceptualizations of diversity, further study about the salience of social categorization, as well as researching into the phenomenon of subgroups and its relation to diversity.

I agree with the major points of the research work under study. As for me, understanding diversity, its types and being able to apply this knowledge to predicting the effects of diversity on the work of a particular group is crucial for efficient group composition. To my mind, the most important avenue for future research is getting the insight of the effects of different types of diversity on group performance in different spheres where work groups operate. It is also valuable to study the relationship between diversity effects and effects, exerted by other factors that affect workgroup performance.

The study is applicable to each organization that aims at considering diversity influence in terms of group composition. Diversity can be viewed as an important factor in the leadership of an educational institution that needs to be considered both in daily leadership and conflict management.

References

Van Knippeberg, D., Shippers, M. C. (2007). Work group diversity. Annual Review of Psychology, pp. 515-541