

Essay on diversity in the workplace

[Business](#), [Company](#)



When talking about diversity, people always tend to define it in terms of difference in race, sex, socioeconomic status, religion, etc. and the treatment of other people in relation to these differences. When taken merely from the context of society, diversity would only be viewed as discrimination by prototypes. Prototypes refer to the standardized mindset of people from other culture, race, religion, etc. towards particular people. For instance, black people are viewed as slaves and as bad people, even if they are not at all or maybe not every black person is. Making prototypes is a social issue that leads to unjust treatment upon people having differences from the people in majority. Now when it comes to the context of the workplace, diversity may still refer to certain differences but is not limited to certain qualities - like race, religion, and sex - that lead to creation of prototypes. It also addresses the various conditions an individual belonging to a certain company/business may have, that may cause them unjust treatment from employers or other [private/public] company officials. When talking about diversity in the workplace, this includes certain laws enacted by the government as a means of addressing any mistreatment in society. In the discussion of this issue, the concept of diversity is taken in various social and legal contexts and from the perspectives of various disciplines including sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, marketing, and even organizational theory (Gröschl 4).

This diversity in workplace pertains to the employment issues, and there are a number of laws that address these issues. Each law covers a limited spectrum of employment issues (Guerin and DelPo 11) and each of them is applied to certain employment situations: hiring, background checks,

testing/examination, first-day paperwork, benefits, compensation, hours of work, health and safety, investigations, leave/time off, unions/organizing, ' whistle blowing', layoffs, and even terminations. Under hiring circumstance, the laws address any unjust use of an individual's difference(s) as a basis on the decision whether he/she will be hired. Under background check, which is also related to hiring, the laws prohibit any unjust standardization of qualifications for employment. Under compensation, the laws prohibit any unjust treatment, having the employer/company required to have every employee paid the same amount of compensation as of the rest of the employees despite any diversity. Under terminations, the law prohibits the company from doing such actions unjustly in the basis of the difference of any employee. There are more employment situations other than these and in each of them, laws have specific statement of prohibitions. Nevertheless, it would be worthy to closely look at some of the common laws - namely ADA, FMLA, Title VII, and ADEA - that address these employment issues. One of the common laws is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which was enacted in 1990. The ADA prohibits any discriminative act against persons with disabilities in State and local government services, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications (Office of the General Counsel Tbr. edu). When talking about disability, this pertains to any physical and/or mental impairment that significantly limits the person's major life activity. This has to do with the human senses such as blindness, deafness, etc. and with other physical impairment such as inability to walk and/or to work with both hands. This law is applied to the workplace in various situations. For instance, employers are not to make an employee's

disability a justification for a decreased amount of compensation. Or it should never be a basis for hiring and/or termination. Companies should make appropriate modifications in their policies, practices, and procedures to allow persons with disabilities to affording goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations (Jones 2). However, the ADA does not interfere with an employer's right to hire the best qualified candidate for the job to be done, nor does the ADA impose any obligations (Office of the General Counsel Tbr. edu). The ADA's purpose is to forbid any discrimination against a qualified applicant or employee due to any disability.

Another common law is the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) which provides covered employees with up to twelve weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave for specific family and medical reasons (Office of the General Counsel Tbr. edu). Medical reasons could be the following: birth and care of the new born child of the employee; care for an immediate family member (parent, spouse, or children) having serious health conditions; and the employee himself/herself experiences serious health condition and is required to go to or stay in the hospital, or to have certain extent of rest. A covered employee should return to work after the designated extent of leave unless continuation or recurrence of the health condition occurs. The company should allow any person with such conditions the privilege of taking the leave, and when the covered employee returns, he/she should still be accepted with the same benefits, compensation, and other employment terms.

Another common law is the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of

1967. The ADEA prohibits employment discrimination against persons 40 years of age or older (U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Eeoc. gov). As people get older, they also decrease in their capability to do hard and serious jobs. Nevertheless, the ADEA prohibits any company to make the old employee have lessened benefits, compensation, or even terminate the old employee in the basis of his/her age.

Lastly, another common law is the Title VII of the Civil Right enacted in 1964. The law prohibits any discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, and sex in every aspects of employment (Guerin and DelPo 13). For instance, it forbids any sexual harassment particularly when a person in authority makes employment decisions contingent upon sexual favors, and when there is unwelcomed sexual conduct which keeps an employee from performing his/her job appropriately (Office of the General Counsel Tbr. edu).

Nevertheless, since the emergence of this issue on diversity in the workplace, researchers and corporate leader sought ways to address it within their own workplaces. Policies, business plans, practices, and organizational activities have been developed through the years, and to date, this issue is still being overseen by the government and many corporations so as not to allow any issue left unaddressed However, due to the multifaceted nature of diversity, many firms have it problem to apply an all-in-one model for the solution, while at the same time maintaining the balance between risks and opportunities in relation to diversity (Gröschl 147). Many acknowledge that it is hard to find the best possible solution since disregarding any form of diversity within an organization could also

prevent any process of promotion, designation of office/position, and the likes. For instance, older employees mostly have richer inherent wisdom than with younger individuals. Old employees may have less physical capabilities but intelligence could be their main asset. If employers would place old employees in the same place with young ones, without considering their cognitive abilities, failure to make use of such diversity takes place. Another, language and cultural diversity has advantages in it as well - particularly when it comes to sales. If employers fail to utilize the opportunities in such diversity, they are mistaken. Thus, there is one principle that is used in diversity management, and that is inclusion. Companies see that addressing this is central to the achievement of workplace equality (Cornelius 299). Inclusion significantly contributes to the enhancement of competitive advantages within an organization, and making a policy that is associated with inclusion results to these things: greater success in attracting and keeping more employees, customer, partners, and suppliers; becoming more responsive to opportunities, having relationships developed; higher levels of employees' engagement to the work, including his/her motivation, commitment, and creativity; and lessened cost of wasted human capital and lost knowledge/skill (Cornelius 299). Diversity should not be esteemed as pertaining to separation but as pertaining to variety. Variety is good when it is utilized. Diversity in the workplaces should allow corporate leaders to realize that such differences of the employees [may] refer to certain corresponding variety of skills. Women have skills men won't have; older people have innate knowledge young ones won't have; people of a particular race have peculiar skills that are useful. Failure to realize these would

certainly result into the wasted of workforce and of these employees' skills, knowledge, and so on.

In addition to this plan of inclusion, the organizational leaders/committees should adopt the commitment plan. They should recognise diversity and inclusion as an important business issue (Cornelius 299), having the leadership of the company develop a set of diversity objectives linked to its business and operating goals (Marquis, et al. 5). This issue should be a part of the organization itself. Next, the leadership should have the communication plan, ensuring the communication of the policy to the public (Cornelius 299). In fact, these diversity policies and principles are included in companies' corporate mission statement in order to incorporate it into the corporate philosophy, daily practices, and way of doing business (Marquis, et al. 5). Next is the accountability plan, wherein ways of measurement/analysis are included in the corporate reports. In most corporations, managers are required to write up specific diversity plans for their corresponding departments and are challenged to monitor diversity and inclusion activities within the area of measurement. In this way, the leadership is compelled to have a directed focus on the diversity program implemented within the organization. In fact, the accountability to monitor every activity in the program allows them to be sensitive on any wrong/deficient programs and to be open for any appropriate developments. However, one particular challenge here is among the leaders. The organization should designate someone in a higher position wherein his/her absolute priority is the diversity program of the company. Thus, leaders will also be overseen in respect to their adherence to the program and the policies. Next, the leaders should

have the recognition plan, wherein any accomplishments and learning [pertaining to the program] acquired is given recognition. Lastly, the leaders should adopt the implementation plan. This is the most challenging part of any diversity program. Nevertheless, the leadership should have the ‘ just do it’ attitude. Initiation of the program may include risks and doubts on the principles within the program, but the leadership should implement it no matter what – so that they will be able to address any legal, social, and organizational issues pertaining to diversity in the workplace.

Diversity should always be addressed in any organizational body. Any discrimination and harassment does not only legally affect the harassed and discriminated person, but also negatively affects his/her emotional, physical, moral, and mental factors. Discrimination and harassment can be considered as a form of dehumanization, and it is unbecoming for a human being. Thus, organizations should seek ways to implement diversity program as the means of answering to their social, legal, moral, and organizational responsibility.

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