Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Managers and Employees Attitude Towards Managing the Workplace Diversity

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Abstract

In this era of globalization, workplace diversity has become the salient aspect of any organization. It helps to increase productivity, efficiency and maintain a positive work environment within the organization. The study assessed the attitude difference that managers come across and how to get benefited from the diversity in the workforce. The investigation was set out to find the relationship between openness to diversity and managerial attitude,

based on the data collected from 213 managers of the companies working in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The hypotheses are used to guide the study and are tested using ANOVA. The result revealed that there exists a relationship between the manager's demographic factors, like nationality, and the attitude towards managing the workplace. Organizations will look at the numerous benefits of this research and explain the managers' attitudes towards managing the multicultural workforce diversity in Saudi Arabia and its benefits within the company with different expertise to do the task in an effective and efficient manner. Thus, this research will benefit the organizations by explaining the managers' attitudes towards managing the multicultural workforce and also showing how diversity can lead to perform a task in an effective and efficient manner.

Keywords: Diversity management, Managers attitude, Human resource management, Workplace diversity, Organisational psychology

1. Introduction

Diversity management has a vital role to play in today's organization life, with an increase in the globalization for greater workforce diversity (Williams & O' Reilly, 1998). Diversity management is being defined in various ways. The term diversity management refers to a systematic and planned commitment to recruit and retains employees from diverse demographic backgrounds (Hiranandani, 2012). Diversity management can be a little more than proportional representation of various demographics and social groups in the workplace. According to Williams & O' Reilly (1998), diversity is defined as the extent of cohesiveness among team members on specific demographic dimensions, how ethnicity is explained and its impact on team process and performance. Further, diversity should understand various viewpoints and their approach to work so that members of different identity can group together (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Kamal & Ferdousi, 2009). Recent studies have highlighted that group diversity attitude have increased group outcomes. Today's workforce is a blend of people from different backgrounds who are connected by sharing attitudes, languages, desires and work behaviour (Deluca & McDowell, 1992; Morrison, 1992; Rosen Lovelace, 1991).

According to Fujimoto, Hartel and Hartel (2004), the diverse groups will have higher decisions effectiveness when showing positive diversity attitudes. Diversity is now considered as a vital aspect of business strategy and hence is now being incorporated in most companies, as it helps in increasing productivity and improving the quality of management (Meena & Vanka, 2013). The agglomeration of people will perform better when openness to diversity is high. It is observed that a pleasant working atmosphere will enhance the effectiveness among the team members and have a comparative advantage over others. The recent research on understanding the role of group member attitudes regarding diversity and in particular understanding the factors that affect the cross-cultural management has enhanced productivity. (Hobman et al., 2004; Richard, Barnett, Dwyer, & Chadwick, 2004). As the System Theory suggests, any change in the organization will trigger changes in the major components, which will try to manage the human factor in the organization such as the demographic of the workforce. Managing diversity is based on the diversity approach, which emphasizes that people are an important resource needed to acquire and achieve a competitive advantage that will benefit the organization. Hence, the approach that emphasizes on managing diversity appropriateness will enable fairness by changing the structure, policies and practices in the organizations, thereby

creating equality in the workplace. So, diversity is considered as a source of competitive advantage to the organization and performance. This will help to manage the diverse workforce to increase its effectiveness by changing organization's practices or attitudes of the people (Meena & Vanka, 2013). Therefore, to increase competitive advantage and performance in the adverse workforce, the managers' attitudes towards the team should be positive.

The hypothesis will examine the effect of diversity attitudes among the managers' leadership skills in the multicultural organization. Many researchers have expressed their need for more research on diversity aspects. Cummings (2004) has come up with new studies on what types of diversity will affect the multicultural organization. Hence, the research question that guides this study is – what will be the influence of demographic variables towards the attitude in the leadership skills?

In this study, we have focused on companies in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The companies in Riyadh have been recruiting and retaining international staff from around the globe. The managers in these companies have to deal with different ethnicities of people and to make them work on the project or tasks. Some studies revealed that attitudes towards the international members are not so widely accepted (Skachkova, 2007; Wells, Seifert, Park, Reed, & Umbach, 2007). This will affect the employee's productivity and effectiveness to do their tasks in a proper way. Therefore, the attitude towards the employee diversity will affect the effectiveness and productivity of the organization. Hence, it is assumed that a sound environment in the organization will aim for effectiveness, productivity and ultimately competitive advantage (D'Netto & Sohal, 1999).

2. Literature Review

It is believed that effective management of diversity can recognize different people around the sphere with different backgrounds, cultures, languages and experiences that can bring new ideas to the workplace. Organizations are at a competitive advantage when they have a diverse workforce. It enables the companies to tap into diverse capabilities; however, it is only possible to get the maximum benefit when the diversity is well managed (Meena & Vanka, 2013). According to Walter and Cookie (2001), the diversity management can be distinguished by hard approach or soft approach. Hard approach emphasizes on the workforce as an important source of resources through which the organization achieves competitive advantage, whereas soft approach is an emphasis on workforce attitudes, its commitments, involvement and communication towards the development of the organization. It is a practice in the multinational companies to employ diverse people so that with this diversity the multinational companies can perform better and would have a comparative advantage in terms of dealing with the clients. Diversity will help the company to achieve their business objectives while maximizing the contributions of employees (Cornelius, 1999). One of the specific notions of the diversity management concepts is that the diverse workforce in terms of demographic factor dimensions as gender, race, social background, age, and ethnicity will create productiveness and also create synergies that surpass the potential of a homogeneous workforce.

Employees from varied cultural backgrounds get an equal access to opportunity and also to required preparation for future demanding assignments (Loden & Rosener, 1991; Morrison, 1992; Schreiber et al., 1993). Working with diverse people using their languages and attitude

will involve creativity to contribute their common goal in a   way that gives an organization a competitive edge (Derseky, 1994; Fernandez, 1993; Morrison, 1992). A strong correlation is being shown between good diversity practices and profits (Hayles & Mendez, 1997). This has increased creativity; better problem-solving and reaching for better solutions (Adler, 1986) and hence to get benefited, diversity should be managed effectively.

The foundation for effective management strategies for diversity lies in the relationship between three variables; the type of diversity (race, gender, function and others), initiatives for diversity management (recruitment management, management policies, sensitivity trainings and others) and work-related outcomes (Pitts, 2006). There have been very less attempt to establish a theoretical framework to understand the impact of diversity on the organizations (Selden & Selden, 2001; Soni, 2000; Thomas & Ely, 1996). There are some theoretical researches that try to find the connection between attitudes and integration (Soni, 2000). Thus, managers think that it is inappropriate to manage something that is more important than diversity. Therefore, change in diversity in the workplace is more imperative than the manager's attitude towards diversity practices in their organization.

Several studies have attempted to understand the culturally diverse workforce that can lead to improved performance (Linnehan & Konrad, 2005). The best way to increase the success of managers in diversity management can be explained by understanding the attitude towards diversity management. The diversity management in the organization on the managerial level that is being laid down by Adler and Gundersen (2007) proposes six guidelines for managers by describing the process of implementation as (pp. 145-147):

Task-related selection

The manager should ensure that the team he selects is based on the abilities rather than ethnicity and should ensure that it is homogeneous in ability levels for accurate communication and heterogeneous attitudes to ensure a solution to the problems.

Recognize the difference

The manager should recognize the cultural differences and should accept the cultural differences rather than rejecting it. Once the managers recognize the actual difference, they can also differentiate their stereotypes from the actual personalities and behaviours of team members.

Establish a vision

The manager needs to help the team to maximize its effectiveness to transcend individual differences. It will focus on collaborating and cooperation that will decrease prejudice and increase mutual respect.

Equalizing power

Managers should distribute power based on the ability of each member not based on preconceived gradients of relative cultural superiority.

Mutual Respect

Managers should ensure the equal status, close contracts, and cooperative efforts that will help to attain the common goal.

Feedback

Managers should understand the value of feedback. External feedback will help the manager to see as a team and help the team to value its diversity, recognize contribution and trusts for the collective judgment.

Managers constantly balance the divergence and convergences while gathering new ideas from the team member to make an agreement on particular decisions and actions, which is not an easy task to manage. The most diverse team will have the potential to become more effective and productive team in the organization. Diversity management practitioners and organizations who address the diversity hold a variety of perspectives and paradigms about diversity management. De Rosa (1992) has mentioned six different approaches to diversity that are as follows:

Affirmative action/equal employment opportunity (AA/EEO): It makes sure that the company is following the set rules and regulations

*Valuing differences***:** It enables an appreciation of human differences by enhancing personal and interpersonal awareness.

Managing diversity: It enhances productivity, thereby profiting the organization

Intercultural relations: It leads to a better understanding of human differences based on interpersonal communication.

Prejudgment reduction: It involves minimizing bias and stereotypes and bringing about healing and reconciliation by way of personal and interpersonal awareness.

Anti-racism / anti-oppression, liberation theory: All levels of human systems are provided with social justice and systematic change. (DeRosa, 1992).

Thus, diversity management is originated from four different frames of references, which is stated by Brazzel (2003). The four different frames of reference for diversity management dimensions are-

Areas of Human Differences – It is categorized in different ways by various researchers and is called as dimensions of diversity. Dimensions are categorized into two primary differences and secondary differences. The primary differences include race, gender, sex, physical and mental ability, ethnicity and age while as the secondary differences include religion, class, income, and education.

Aspects of Human Experience - People are different from each other in their thinking, response, ideas, behaviour, attitudes, and core values. These responses are the aspects of human experience, which is defined as 'reality'. The aspects of human experience, when it combines with areas of human differences are also a part of the dimension of diversity.

Levels of Human System – The diversity issues have often been addressed at the individual level, involving personal, interpersonal work on the issues. The experience of an individual is combined with the involvement and membership in dominant and marginalized groups, organization and society.

Elements of Culture – Different individuals have different cultures and also apply to group cultures, organizational cultures, and national or societal cultures. The elements of culture difference are power status, authority, leadership, language, time, space, intimacy, law,

regulations, rules, norms, structures, values, beliefs, assumptions, rewards and punishments, and spirituality.

Therefore, diversity is being created by different social identity categories with similarity and dissimilarity. This has created three different dimensions of diversity, primary dimensions, secondary dimension and tertiary dimensions shown in Table 1. Thus, this study uses social-demographic traits as independent variables to operationalize the diversity as a fixed individual or group essence and encompassing a mix of human differences and similarities along any dimensions (Mazur, 2010).

Table 1. Dimensions of Diversity

Primary Dimensions	Secondary Dimensions	Tertiary Dimensions
Race	Religion	Beliefs
Ethnicity	Culture	Assumptions
Gender	Sexual Orientation	Perceptions
Age	Thinking Style	Attitudes
Disability	Geographic Origin	Feelings
	Family Status	Values
	Lifestyle	Group norms
	Economic Status	
	Political Orientation	
	Work Experience	
	Education	
	Language	
	Nationality	

Source: Mazur (2010).

The requirement in the present scenario for diversity management is to strive towards maximizing the benefits of workforce diversity. From the previous research, different researchers have found that higher ethnic diversity will cause better financial performance. It will also have the potential to create a competitive advantage and have effective management with a better return on investment. Therefore, the study aims to test the model that will reflect the managers' attitudes towards diversity and perform its leadership skills with the hypothesis:

H_1: There is a relationship between nationality of managers and attitude

H_2: There is a relationship between age of managers and attitude

H_3: There is a relationship between the gender of managers and attitude

H_4: There is a relationship between the civil status of managers and attitude

H_5: There is a relationship between education attainment of managers and attitude

H_6: There is a relationship between length of services of managers and attitude

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Sample Selection

The sample was collected using random sampling from the managers working in the companies based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire where every manager took 15 minutes to complete the survey. The survey was distributed to 350 managers working with the companies based in Riyadh. 224 complete surveys were collected, and only 213 were used for the analysis purpose; in order to ensure accurate analysis after performing the missing data, outlier and normality test. The questionnaires that were fully completed make up to 61% return rate.

3.2 Data Collection, Instruments, and Analysis

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of two major sections, demographic and leadership skills adopted by the managers in the workforce to achieve their organizational objectives. The research instrument used in this study comprised of a structured close-ended questionnaire with a list of answer options based on a six-point Likert scale (1=very ineffective, 2=ineffective, 3=less effective, 4=moderately effective, 5=effective, 6=very effective).

The descriptive analysis was used to analyse the socio-demographic profile of the respondents and further, the data were analysed using ANOVA and correlation to determine the effect on socio-demographic and managers' attitudes in dealing with a diverse workforce to achieve the organizational objectives.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Socio-demographic Profile of Respondents

Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, which comprised of nationality, age, gender, marital status, education level, lengths in the service. Based on Table 2, there were 139 (65.3%) of Saudi nationality, 30 (14.1%) of Egyptian nationality, 16 (7.5%) of Pakistani, 10 (4.7%) of Indian nationality and nationality from Jordan, Syrian and Lebanese, which compromise around 18 (8.5%) in the study. There were 209 (98.1%) male respondent and 4 (1.9%) female respondents. The respondents were categorized into five groups, namely less than 29 years old, between 30-34 years old, 35-39 years old, 40-49 years old and above 50 years old. The majority of the respondents was categorized between 35-39 years old (30%). Most of the respondent 176 (82.6%) is married, and only 37 (17.4) respondent is single. 114 (53.5%) respondent is college graduates, and 69 (32.4%) of the respondents have 5-9 years of service.

Table 2. Sample distribution across different Background Variables - Managers

Respondent Profile	Frequency (n=213)	Percentage %
Nationality		
Saudi	139	65.3
Pakistani	16	7.5
Egyptian	30	14.1
Indian	10	4.7
Others	18	8.5
Age		
Less than 29	24	11.3
30 – 34	55	25.8
35 – 39	64	30.0
40 – 49	48	22.5
50 and Above	22	10.3
Gender		
Male	209	98.1
Female	4	1.9
Civil Status		
Married	176	82.6
Single	37	17.4
Education Attainment		
High School Graduate	11	5.2
College Undergraduate	13	6.1
College Graduate	114	53.5
Master Degree	62	29.1
Others	13	6.1
Length of Service		
Below 1 Year	3	1.4
1 – 4	29	13.6
5 – 9	69	32.4
10 – 14	49	23.0
15 – 19	31	14.6
20 and Above	32	15.0

4.2 Assessment of Reliability

Cronbach's (1951) alpha coefficient was used to test the reliability of the scale. Table 3 shows the reliability value as 0.870. According to Nunnally (1978), the reliability of 0.70 or higher is acceptable. The questionnaire was administered face to face for the first time to make them understand the purpose of the study and was given time to send the responses later through e-mail or by post.

Table 3. Reliability Test of 213 Respondents

Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
0.870	6

Table 4 shows the mean score of attitude which was 4.73 out of 6.00 and thus signifying that managers in Riyadh are having a higher behaviour attitude towards the employee working in the organization.

Table 4. Mean score of attitude

		Mean	Std. Deviation
ATTITUDE SCORE*		4.73	1.23
1	Manager treats each employee as an end rather than as a means to an end [MGMTRT]	4.60	1.223
2	Does not dismiss or downgrade other culture values [CULVAL]	4.66	1.141
3	Does not regard his culture as superior to the other's culture [SUPCUL]	4.71	1.317
4	Minimizes ethnocentrism among members in a diverse workforce, thus conflict within the organization was minimized or avoided [MINETHO]	4.79	1.224
5	Understands the employee's individual differences [EMPIND]	4.80	1.111
6	Treats all employees equally regardless of their Nationality, gender, age, religion, and social organization [EMPEQU]	4.84	1.343

n=213; * Measured by 6 individual items.

Table 5 represents the intercorrelations among all the variables used in the present study. It is apparently showing that the 6-item measures of attitude towards managing the team was significantly associated with one of the five demographic variables. The correlations between managers' attitudes were significant at 0.01 significance level, which confirms that the effects will be controlled for a positive correlation. The strongest correlations were between age and length of services (r = 0.676, p<0.01).

According to Table 5, age is significant with nationality (r=-0.135, p<0.05) is negatively correlated. Civil status is significant with age (r=0.450, p<0.01) and gender (r=0.210, p<0.01) and is positively correlated. Educational attainment is significant with age (r=0.177, p<0.01) and length in services is significant with age (r=0.676, p<0.01), civil status (r=0.426, p<0.01) and education attainment (r=0.135, p<0.05) is positively correlated and whereas attitude is significant with civil status at (r=0.148, p<0.05) which is positively correlated.

The outcomes show that a positive correlation will have relatively high scores on one variable to a low score, which are paired with relatively high scores on the other variable and whereas on the negative correlation shows that high scores on one variable are paired with relatively low scores on the other variable.

Table 5. Correlation Table for the relationship between demographic factors and attitude

	Mean	S.D.	Nationality	Age (In Years)	Gender	Civil Status	Educational Attainment	Length of Service	Religion
Nationality	1.84	1.313							
Age (In Years)	2.95	1.162	**-.135***						
Gender	1.02	0.136	-.035	-.083					
Civil Status	1.17	0.380	-.009	**-.450****	**.210****				
Educational Attainment	3.27	0.863	-.118	**.177****	.000	-.104			
Length of Service	3.81	1.309	-.098	**.676****	-.059	**-.426****	**.135***		
Religion	1.08	0.304	.104	.025	-.036	.002	-.076	-.044	
Attitude Composite Score	28.22	5.865	.092	-.117	-.052	**.148***	.078	-.065	-.023

*. Significant at 0.05; **. Significant at 0.01.

Table 6 shows the ANOVA analysis for nationality with test statistics of $F_{(26,186)} = 1.65$, p<0.05. The F statistics are significant at the 0.05 level, and hence we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant difference among managers. However, the other demographic factors are not significant.

Table 6. ANOVA analysis of demographic factors with attitude

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Nationality	Between Groups	68.472	26	2.634	**1.651**	**.031**
	Within Groups	296.777	186	1.596		
	Total	365.249	212			
Age (In Years)	Between Groups	29.477	26	1.134	.821	.717
	Within Groups	256.955	186	1.381		
	Total	286.432	212			
Gender	Between Groups	.485	26	.019	1.008	.459
	Within Groups	3.440	186	.018		
	Total	3.925	212			
Civil Status	Between Groups	3.572	26	.137	.947	.543
	Within Groups	27.000	186	.145		
	Total	30.573	212			
Educational Attainment	Between Groups	15.936	26	.613	.804	.739
	Within Groups	141.877	186	.763		
	Total	157.812	212			
Length of Service	Between Groups	40.139	26	1.544	.889	.624
	Within Groups	322.969	186	1.736		
	Total	363.108	212			
Religion	Between Groups	2.250	26	.087	.926	.572
	Within Groups	17.393	186	.094		
	Total	19.643	212			

Thus, the Table 7 shows the summary results of hypothesis, which indicates the relationship between demographic factors and the manager's attitude.

Table 7. Summary results of hypothesis

Hypothesis	Statement	Results
H_1	There is a relationship between nationality of managers and attitude	**Accept**
H_2	There is a relationship between age of managers and attitude	Reject
H_3	There is the relationship between the gender of managers and attitude	Reject
H_4	There is the relationship between the civil status of managers and attitude	Reject
H_5	There is a relationship between education attainment of managers and attitude	Reject
H_6	There is a relationship between length of services of managers and attitude	Reject
H_7	There is a relationship between nationality of managers and attitude	Reject

5. Conclusions

Diversity management has the potential to play a significant role in today's environment. It is obvious that diversity management at some level requires the leadership style that fully recognizes and embraces the ability to make it to the next step. Each diversity management should be customized to fit the actual situation by accepting the diversity that is increasing in all areas of the world.

Shore (2009) stated that the employee with different nationality are being grouped together and can have marginalization, assimilation, separation, and integration. The assumption of an integrative approach will help the different nationals to assimilate the values, beliefs and ideologies and will have positive outcomes. Thus, a diverse workgroup comprising of employees from different nationalities can strongly influence the social, organizational, group and individual outcomes (Cox et al., 1991).

The results show that the present study has some support for demographic factors towards the manager's attitude of the diverse employees. It found a systematic difference in nationality towards the manager's attitude in managing the team. It is recognized that the factors such as nationality, age, gender, civil status, education attainment, length of service and religion are the factors that may be systematically associated with the differences in managers' attitudes towards managing the team. However, several factors that were expected to influence the manager's attitude in managing the team were found to be irrelevant. With regards to nationality, the result shows that manager's attitude towards different nationality of employees will have an effect on the attitude of the managers in managing the employee.

The result displays that the attitude of the managers towards managing the diverse workforce is only governed by the nationality. National diversity in the organization is considered as an optimistic view. The optimistic view is derived from social identity, and similarity attractions paradigms that can assume an individual to have a preference for own group (Shore, 2009). The earlier study that has discussed on cultural diversity which actually happened because of different nationality employees in the workforce has found that the effect of cultural

homogeneity on individual effectiveness and group performance was not consistent and it also influenced organizational outcomes.

Thus, diversity is typically viewed as something to deal with or manage in both research and practice which is clear from the study that there are core human issues of respect, dignity, and clear values at the managerial as well as the organizational level that will not be tied to the demographic or cultural attributes (Shore, 2009). Thus, the findings suggest that managers who are working with the companies in Riyadh have the perception that promoting different nationality in the workplace will help to keep the workplace more pleasant and competitive. Thus, managers and employees play an important role to diffuse the knowledge and skills in the workforce to have better performance in a diverse team.

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