12.1 | An Introduction to Workplace Diversity

1. What is diversity?

Diversity refers to identity-based differences among and between two or more people[1] that affect their lives as applicants, employees, and customers. These identity-based differences include such things as race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and age. Groups in society based on these individual differences are referred to as **identity groups**. These differences are related to discrimination and disparities between groups in areas such as education, housing, healthcare, and employment. The term **managing diversity** is commonly used to refer to ways in which organizations seek to ensure that members of diverse groups are valued and treated fairly within organizations[2] in all areas including hiring, compensation, performance evaluation, and customer service activities. The term *valuing diversity* is often used to reflect ways in which organizations show appreciation for diversity among job applicants, employees, and customers.[3] **Inclusion**, which represents the degree to which employees are accepted and treated fairly by their organization,[4] is one way in which companies demonstrate how they value diversity. In the context of today's rapidly changing organizational environment, it is more important than ever to understand diversity in organizational contexts and make progressive strides toward a more inclusive, equitable, and representative workforce.

Three kinds of diversity exist in the workplace (see **Table 12.1**). **Surface-level diversity** represents an individual's visible characteristics, including, but not limited to, age, body size, visible disabilities, race, or sex.[5] A collective of individuals who share these characteristics is known as an identity group. **Deep-level diversity** includes traits that are nonobservable such as attitudes, values, and beliefs.[6] **Hidden diversity** includes traits

These hidden traits are called **invisible social identities**[8] and may include sexual orientation, a hidden disability (such as a mental illness or chronic disease), mixed racial heritage,[9] or socioeconomic status. Researchers investigate these different types of diversity in order to understand how diversity may benefit or hinder organizational outcomes.

Diversity presents challenges that may include managing dysfunctional conflict that can arise from inappropriate interactions between individuals from different groups. Diversity also presents advantages such as broader perspectives and viewpoints. Knowledge about how to manage diversity helps managers mitigate some of its challenges and reap some of its benefits.

Types of Diversity	
Surface-level diversity	Diversity in the form of characteristics of individuals that are readily visible including, but not limited to, age, body size, visible disabilities, race or sex.
Deep-level diversity	Diversity in characteristics that are nonobservable such as attitudes, values, and beliefs, such as religion.
Hidden diversity	Diversity in characteristics that are deep-level but may be concealed or revealed at discretion by individuals who possess them, such as sexual orientation.

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CONCEPT CHECK

1. What is diversity?
2. What are the three types of diversity encountered in the workplace?

12.2 | Diversity and the Workforce

2. How diverse is the workforce?

In 1997, researchers estimated that by the year 2020, 14% of the workforce would be Latino, 11% Black, and 6% Asian.[10] Because of an increase in the number of racial minorities entering the workforce over the past 20 years, most of those projections have been surpassed as of 2016, with a workforce composition of 17% Hispanic or Latino of any race, followed by 12% Black and 6% Asian (see Exhibit 12.2). American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders together made up a little over 1% of the labor force, while people of two or more races made up about 2% of the labor force.[11] Women constitute approximately 47% of the workforce compared to approximately 53% for men,[12] and the average age of individuals participating in the labor force has also increased because more employees retire at a later age.[13] Although Whites still predominantly make up the workforce with a 78% share,[14] the U.S. workforce is becoming increasingly more diverse, a trend that presents both opportunities and challenges. These demographic shifts in the labor market affect the workforce in a number of ways due to an increasing variety of workers who differ by sex, race, age, sexual orientation, disability status, and immigrant status.

Blind Recruiting

An increasing number of companies are testing a new and innovative way of recruiting. *Blind recruiting* is a process by which firms remove any identifying information about applicants during the recruitment process. An example of this may include anonymous applications that omit fields requesting information such as an applicant's name or age. Using computer application technology, some companies like Google administer surveys to their anonymous applicants that measure the abilities required for the job before they are considered in the next step of the recruitment process. Alternatively, companies may request that applicants remove identifying information such as names and address from their resumes before applying for positions. As resumes are received, hiring managers can assign a temporary identification number.

Although more companies are using this method of recruiting, the idea is not new for symphony orchestras, many of which have been using blind auditioning since the 1970s. In some instances musicians audition behind screens so they are evaluated only by their music. This process removes bias associated with race and gender because the performer cannot be seen and only heard. A study investigating this practice examined 11 symphony orchestras that varied on the use of blind auditions. Researchers found that blind auditions increased the likelihood that a woman would be hired by between 25 and 46%. A recruitment process like this can help organizations attract more candidates, hire the best talent, increase their workplace diversity, and avoid discrimination liability.

Sources: Grothaus, M. (Mar 14 2016). How "blind" recruitment works and why you should consider it. Fast Company. Retrieved from https://www.fastcompany.com/3057631/how-blind-recruitment-works-and-why-you-should-consider; and MIller, C.C. (Feb 25 2016). Is blind hiring the best hiring? The New York Times Magazine. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/magazine/is-blind-hiring-the-best-hiring.html.

Discussion Questions

1. Should all companies use blind recruiting in place of traditional recruiting, or are there exceptions that must be considered?
2. If blind recruiting helps eliminate bias during the recruitment process, then what does that say about social media platforms such as Linked In that are commonly used for recruiting applicants? Will using those platforms expose companies to greater liability compared to using more traditional means of recruiting?
3. How does blind recruiting help organizations? How may it hinder organizations?

7. What can organizations do to ensure applicants, employees, and customers from all backgrounds are valued?

Organizations that are committed to equality and inclusion must take steps to combat the examples of discrimination and harassment that have been covered in this chapter. And they must take steps to make

diversity a goal in the pre-employment stages as well as in the post-employment stages. Anyone with managerial or supervisory responsibilities should pay careful attention to hiring and performance-rewarding practices, and make sure to rely on relevant information for making decisions and ignore race-based stereotypes. The following are examples of what leaders and organizations can do make sure employees feel valued.

Interview Selection Process

To ensure fairness for all applicants, organizations should use **highly structured interviews** during the selection process to avoid bias based on race or gender.[146] Highly structured interviews consists of the following 15 characteristics: "(1) job analysis, (2) same questions, (3) limited prompting, (4) better questions, (5) longer interviews, (6) control of ancillary information, (7) limited questions from candidates, (8) multiple rating scales, (9) anchored rating scales, (10) detailed notes, (11) multiple interviewers, (12) consistent interviewers, (13) no discussion between interviews, (14) training, and (15) statistical prediction."[147] Similarity bias can occur when interviewers prefer interviewees with whom they share similar traits. Organizations can mitigate this challenge if all 15 characteristics of a structured interview are used consistently with each job applicant.

Diversified Mentoring Relationships

Thanks to the rapid growth of international travel and globalization, managers are often called upon to manage a workforce that is increasingly diverse. Research has shown that racially and ethnically diverse firms have better financial performance than more homogeneous firms, because, as mentioned, employees from different backgrounds and with different experiences can give the firm a competitive advantage in various ways. It is necessary, however, that managers and those in positions of power are adequately equipped to manage diverse workforces in ways that are beneficial to all. **Diversified mentoring relationships** are relationships in which the mentor and the mentee differ in terms of their status within the company and within larger society. The differences could be in terms of race, gender, class, disability, sexual orientation, or other status. Research has found that these types of relationships are mutually beneficial and that the mentor and the mentee both have positive outcomes in terms of knowledge, empathy, and skills related to interactions with people from different power groups.[148]

Diversity Training Programs

As the workforce becomes increasingly more diverse, managers will face a major challenge in understanding how to manage diversity. One of many decisions to be made is whether an organization should offer diversity training and, if so, what topics and issues should be addressed based on the organizational goals.

There has been a debate over the effectiveness of corporate diversity training since the Civil Rights Act of 1964 helped prompt corporate diversity training with the organizational goal of simply being compliant with the law. Prior research shows that it can be effective, ineffective, or even detrimental for employees,

but as diversity training has evolved through the years, it has become an important factor in helping employers manage diversity.

In the 1980s through the late 1990s, diversity training evolved from focusing solely on compliance to addressing the needs of women and minorities as they entered the workforce at a faster rate. Unfortunately, this type of training was perceived by Whites and men as singling them out as the problem; sometimes such training was even formatted as "confession" sessions for White employees to express their complicity in institutional racism. Not unexpectedly, this type of training would often backfire and would further separate employees from each other, the exact opposite of its intention.

Recently, diversity training has evolved to focus on (1) building cultural competencies regarding fellow employees, (2) valuing differences, and (3) learning how diversity helps make better business decisions. This perspective toward diversity training is more effective than simply focusing on causes of a lack of diversity and the historical roots of discrimination. Understanding how to comply with the law is still important, but training has a greater effect when the other factors are also included.

A recent study investigated various diversity-training methods, including having participants engage in activities on perspective taking and goal setting. For perspective-taking activities, participants were asked to write a few sentences about the challenges they believed minority group members might experience. Goal-setting activities involved writing specific and measurable goals related to workplace diversity such as crafting future policies or engaging in future behaviors. Researchers found that when these activities were used as a diversity-training method, pro-diversity attitudes and behavioral intentions persisted months later.

Issues regarding employee sexual orientation have also been introduced into corporate diversity training in recent years. Because employees' religious beliefs are protected by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, employers should be sensitive to balancing the rights of lesbian, gay, and bisexual employees and employees' religious rights. Attempting to protect the rights of one group and not be perceived to disrespect another is a difficult situation for managers. In order to mitigate any backlash from some employees, employers should seek feedback from all groups to learn the best ways to accommodate them, and should assess the organizational climate. Additionally, managers should explain how diversity based on sexual orientation aligns with the company's strategic objectives and explain the company's legal position with supportive reasoning. Lastly, based on their organizational climate and how it reshapes itself over time, some companies may wish to address diversity training on sexual orientation in a voluntary training separate from other diversity issues.

Discussion Questions
1. Why do you believe diversity training is resisted by some employees?
2. Do you believe there will always be a need for workplace diversity training?
3. How would you determine what types of diversity training are needed at your company?

Visible Leadership

Another key to ensure that employees are treated fairly is utilizing appropriate leadership strategies.[149] Leadership must sincerely value variety of opinions, and organizational culture must encourage openness and make workers feel valued. Organizations must also have a well-articulated and widely understood mission and a relatively egalitarian, nonbureaucratic structure. Having such a work environment will ensure that the attitudes and values of employees are aligned with those of the organization. In this way culture serves as a control mechanism for shaping behaviors.

Strategies for Employees

Individuals can increase positive employment outcomes by obtaining high levels of education, because for all groups education is a predictor of employment and increased earnings. Individuals can also seek employment in larger firms, which are more likely to have formal hiring programs and specific diversity provisions in place. Individuals of any race or ethnic background can also take steps to eliminate discrimination by being aware of their own personal stereotypes or biases and taking steps to challenge and address them.

CONCEPT CHECK ✔

1. How can managers ensure fairness in the interviewing and selection process regarding diversity?
2. What is the role of leadership regarding diversity?

🔑 Key Terms

access discrimination A catchall term that describes when people are denied employment opportunities because of their identity group or personal characteristics such as sex, race, or age.

access-and-legitimacy perspective Focuses on the benefits that a diverse workforce can bring to a business that wishes to operate within a diverse set of markets or with culturally diverse clients.

age discrimination Treating an employee or applicant less favorably due to their age.

Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) Forbids discrimination against individuals who are age 40 and above, including offensive or derogatory remarks that create a hostile work environment.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Prohibits discrimination in employment, public services, public accommodations, and telecommunications against people with disabilities.

cognitive diversity Differences between team members regarding characteristics such as expertise, experiences, and perspectives.

cognitive diversity hypothesis Multiple perspectives stemming from the cultural differences between group or organizational members result in creative problem-solving and innovation.

covert discrimination (interpersonal) An interpersonal form of discrimination that manifests in ways that are not visible or readily identifiable.

deep-level diversity Diversity in characteristics that are nonobservable such as attitudes, values, and beliefs, such as religion.

disability discrimination Occurs when an employee or applicant is treated unfavorably due to their physical or mental disability.

discrimination-and-fairness perspective A culturally diverse workforce is a moral duty that must be maintained in order to create a just and fair society.

diversified mentoring relationships Relationships in which the mentor and the mentee differ in terms of their status within the company and within larger society.

diversity Identity-based differences among and between people that affect their lives as applicants, employees, and customers.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission An organization that enforces laws and issues guidelines for employment-related treatment according to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Equal Pay Act of 1963 An amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Provides new parents, including adoptive and foster parents, with 12 weeks of unpaid leave (or paid leave only if earned by the employee) to care for the new child and requires that nursing mothers have the right to express milk on workplace premises.

glass ceiling An invisible barrier based on the prejudicial beliefs of organizational decision makers that prevents women from moving beyond certain levels within a company.

groupthink A dysfunction in decision-making that is common in homogeneous groups due to group pressures and group members' desire for conformity and consensus.

harassment Any unwelcome conduct that is based on characteristics such as age, race, national origin, disability, sex, or pregnancy status.

hidden diversity Differences in traits that are deep-level and may be concealed or revealed at discretion by individuals who possess them.

highly structured interviews Interviews that are be structured objectively to remove bias from the selection process.

identity group A collective of individuals who share the same demographic characteristics such as race, sex, or age.

inclusion The degree to which employees are accepted and treated fairly by their organization.

integration-and-learning perspective Posits that the different life experiences, skills, and perspectives that members of diverse cultural identity groups possess can be a valuable resource in the context of work groups.

invisible social identities Membership in an identity group based on hidden diversity traits such as sexual orientation or a nonobservable disability that may be concealed or revealed.

justification-suppression model Explains the circumstances in which prejudiced people might act on their prejudices.

justification-suppression model Explains under what conditions individuals act on their prejudices.

managing diversity Ways in which organizations seek to ensure that members of diverse groups are valued and treated fairly within organizations.

model minority myth A stereotype that portrays Asian men and women as obedient and successful and is often used to justify socioeconomic disparities between other racial minority groups.

national origin discrimination Treating someone unfavorably because of their country of origin, accent, ethnicity, or appearance.

passing The decision to not disclose one's invisible social identity.

pregnancy discrimination Treating an employee or applicant unfairly because of pregnancy status, childbirth, or medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth.

Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) Prohibits any discrimination as it relates to pregnancy in hiring, firing, compensation, training, job assignment, insurance, or any other employment conditions.

race/color discrimination Treating employees or applicants unfairly because of their race or because of physical characteristics typically associated with race such as skin color, hair color, hair texture, or certain facial features.

religious discrimination When employees or applicants are treated unfairly because of their religious beliefs.

resource-based view Demonstrates how a diverse workforce can create a sustainable competitive advantage for organizations.

revealing The decision to disclose one's invisible social identity.

reverse discrimination Describes a situation in which dominant group members perceive that they are experiencing discrimination based on their race or sex.

schema theory Explains how individuals encode information about others based on their demographic characteristics.

sex-based discrimination When employees or applicants are treated unfairly because of their sex, including unfair treatment due to gender, transgender status, or sexual orientation.

sexual harassment Harassment based on a person's sex, and can (but does not have to) include unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or physical and verbal acts of a sexual nature.

sexual harassment Harassment based on a person's sex; it can (but does not have to) include unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or physical and verbal acts of a sexual nature.

similarity-attraction paradigm Individuals' preferences for interacting with others like themselves can result in diversity having a negative effect on group and organizational outcomes.

social identity theory Self-concept based on an individual's physical, social, and mental characteristics.

stereotypes Overgeneralization of characteristics about groups that are the basis for prejudice and discrimination.

strategic human resources management (SHRM) System of activities arranged to engage employees in a manner that assists the organization in achieving a sustainable competitive advantage.

surface-level diversity Diversity in the form of characteristics of individuals that are readily visible, including, but not limited to, age, body size, visible disabilities, race, or sex.

treatment discrimination A situation in which people are employed but are treated differently while employed, mainly by receiving different and unequal job-related opportunities or rewards.

work visa A temporary documented status that authorizes individuals from other countries to permanently or temporarily live and work in the United States.

workplace discrimination Unfair treatment in the job hiring process or at work that is based on the identity group, physical or mental condition, or personal characteristic of an applicant or employee.