Dıversıty in Dıversıty Management

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Abstract

This study will examine diversity and diversity management among people in the society and workplaces. As known in general, diversity is used to determine differences and understanding values and characteristics of different people. Managing differences has an important role among people or groups in different areas. Different factors can affect diversity and people with different characteristics can work together even if they have some conflicts among them. The importance of managing diversity should be examined and benefits should be indicated with several steps of diversity management. Several workforces will take a place with several characteristics of people or workers in the organizations.

Key words: Diversity, diversity management, inclusion, differences.

1. Diversity

Diversity is used to determine differences and understanding values and characteristics of different people. The term involves different descriptions such as respecting, understanding, appreciating, sharing ideas, finding different solutions based on the characteristics and reflections of individuals.

1.1 Introduction and Definition

In a word, diversity can be defined as a point of difference. Coffey (n.d.) says that diversity is a term for valuing and promoting differences, similarities and unique characteristics of groups and individuals in different areas in the word. It is the explorationof these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. In today's world, no one can deny that evebody is unique and different by having different characteristics and ideas. So, it can be said that "diversity is no more than just tolerating differences" (Edopkolo, n.d. :3).

"The true meaning of valuing diversity is to respect and enjoy a wide range of cultural and individual differences, thereby including everybody" (Dubrin, 2007, pg:381). On the other hand, it can be defined that diversity is related to appreciation to the variety of characteristics such as; gender, age, disability, religion and so on that make individuals unique in an environment and athmosphere. As known in general, the term "diversity" refers to the differences which are both visible and non-visible in every workplace, though not all differences can be recognised as relevant. All diversity elements among people especially applicants, employees, or customers can be effective for every aspect of management literature such as; HRM, organizational behavior, and strategic management (Bell et. all, 2009: 5).

1.2 Diversity and Inclusion

As mentioned before, diversity is a term about understanding differences and it can be said that it is the inclusion of differences and different people who have different characteristics, values from different races and culture. As Coffey (n.d.:21) stated that diversity is more than just tolerating variety, because it is understanding, appreciating, and respecting others as well.

Inclusion is part of everyday living where all of us one way or another want to belong or embraced. It's about focusing on the needs of every individual and ensuring the right conditions are in place for each person to achieve his or her full potential. Inclusion should be reflected in an organization's culture, practices and relationships that are in place to support a diverse workforce.

In simple terms, diversity is the mix; inclusion is getting the mix to work well together
(http://www.rbc.com/diversity/what-is-diversity.html)

2. *Factors That Affect Diversity*

Several factors can be counted that affect diversity among people and in the organizations such as; giving workers a chance to be trained, long-term evaluation of training results, awarding successes among people and managerial rewards for increasing diversity, and believing the power of inclusionary in the organization (Rynes and Rosen, 2006:24).

Different characteristics are aother factors that affect diversity and diversity management. Examples of these characteristics are: age, culture, cognitive style, disability (both mental and physical),background (economic, geographic, and psychological), ethnicity, race, education,gender identity,language(s) spoken,partnered status, physical appearance, political affiliation, religious and so on.

3. *Managing Diversity*

Managing diversity is a part of the business world's and diversified society, customer base, market structure and overall business environment. Diversity management refers to be able to manage heterogeneous mix of people in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, race, religion, and sexual orientation (Robbins and Judge, 2009:5). It is true to say that diversity management is essential to the companies and success.

On the other hand, diversity management is a strategy that provides positive workplace environment and relationship among people. While individuals have their own ethics, characteristics, thoughts, and values; diversity management can encourage people to tolerate others because, no one can deny that everyone is unique.

Rather than focusing on race, ethnicity, gender studies, or other specific areas, diversity management should be broad in coverage, but limited to those groups who have historically experienced differential treatment in their particular country (Konrad, 2003; Linnehan & Konrad, 1999; Mor Barak, 2005 as cited in Bell et. all, 2009:6).

3.1 Benefits of Managing Diversity

Diversity management can be a tool to convert a hostile and friendly worklace environment. By the way, managing diversity have an important role to conduce to encourage the development of latent and non-visible attitudes, skills, and talents among people and employees.

Increasing performance and productivity can be count as an other benefit of diversity management (Edopkolo, n.d.:12). Thanks to diversity management, people can be noticed to understand that everyone is not the same and differencies can be obliged to live together in today's workplaces and environments.

Diversity management can be integrated into different areas in the workplace and many management styles. One of the main advantages of diversity management is to adapt people working together in today's challenges.

"The overall goal of diversity is not only to tolerate those who are different from us, but also to allow the differences of others to enrich our view of the world and to learn to work cooperatively with them" (Robinson-Wood, 2009:2, as cited in O'Brien, n.d.:21) .

3.2 Dilemma of Differences

The dilemma of difference is whether to recognize or not the differences, as either way there are negative implications or they have some risks associated with stigma, devaluation, rejection or denial of relevant opportunities in an organization or in the society (Norvich, 2007:45). It grows in the society from the ways that assing the people to categories based on their differences and personal attitudes. "People have used categories based on age, race, gender, ethnicity, religion and disability" (Minov, 1990:21) to decide who is eligible and who is suitable for the job, position or particular activity in an organization or in a society.

Even if it seems to give a negayive effect to the organization, categorization among people can help them to understand the others and their functions. Differences make people unique and there will be many different ideas to solve the possible problems when occurred.

4. How to Manage Diversity in an Organization

One of the most important and also wide-base issues which are faced in an organization is adapting people who are different from each other to work together (Robbins, et. all, 2009:14). It can be easy to manage diversity in an organization by educating people, communicating, and also by implementing a diversity management program, telling and teaching workers how to manage differences and what the benefits are (Turnbull, et. all, 2010:35).

4.1 Diversity in the Workplace

"Workforce diversity means that organizations are becoming a more heterogeneous mix of people in terms of gender, age, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation" (Robbins and Judge, 2009:7). The context of workplace diversity has a meaning of tolerating multiple views. People who have multiple lifestyle backgrounds have to work together and tolerate each other.

Table 1: Major Workforce Diversity Categories
Gender
Race
National Origin
Age
Disability
Domestic Partners
Religion

Robbins, S. P. & Judge, T. A. (2009). Essentials of organizational behavior.

5. Conclusion

As the world becomes global, the managers' jobs are changing. In broad terms, diversity is any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups, workers, and people from the others. That means people should respect for and appreciation of differences in ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, education, and religion. But no one can deny that it's more than this. Diversity management has an important role for the organizations. It is significant to understand diversity in diversity management to manage people.

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