

# THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE DIVERSITY –BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

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## ABSTRACT

*Workplace diversity means the variety of differences between workforces in an organization. Workplace Diversity includes race, gender, ethnicity, age, religion, personality, tenure, education, background, sexual orientation and more. As far as the workplace diversity is concerned it is not only involves how people perceive themselves, but also based on the fact that how they perceive others. These are the perceptions what affect how they interact with each other. Workplace diversity has both benefits and challenges. Both are associated with it. HR professionals need to be aware of the different issues related to workplace diversity so that they can be prevented timely. This paper is an attempt to identify the some benefits and challenges associated with workplace diversity.*

**Keywords:** Workplace diversity, Perceptions, Challenges, Gender

## Introduction

Workforce diversity acknowledges a workforce of women and men; many racial and ethnic groups; individuals with a variety of physical or psychological abilities; and people who vary in age and sexual orientation. Managing this diversity is an international problem. Now-a -days, more and more companies are becoming heterogeneous in terms of employees composition depends on age, gender, ethnic groups and physical abilities/disabilities.etc. Because of this workforce diversity behavioural pattern of employees shows great variations. Diversity will increase substantially in the coming years. Successful organizations recognize the need for immediate action and are ready and willing to spend resources on managing diversity in the workplace. There are many benefits to having a greater diverse group of workers. However, as the workplace becomes more diverse, more challenges also arise accordingly. While, managing workforce diversity at the workplace effectively may be a challenge but, if it is managed properly, it results into increased creativity in the company because of diversity of ideas due to workforce diversity.

## Objectives of Study

- To study the concept of workforce diversity
- To study the benefits of diversity in the workplace
- To study the challenges of diversity in the workplace

## Benefits of diversity in the workplace

An organization's success and competitiveness based upon its ability to manage workplace diversity and realize the advantages. Some of the benefits of workplace diversity for an organization:

- **Wide range of skills set:** A diverse collection of capabilities and experiences, the language spoken and acknowledged along with varied cultural expertise allows a company to transfuse its horizons and serve the consumers on international basis.
- **Different viewpoints :** Workplace diversity offer a massive pool of various perspectives, ideas and experiences that bring about a solution that is consumer oriented and consequently, the need of customers are effectively taken into consideration and we as employees are able to meet expectations providing them with the best service.
- **Good performance and better results:** Organizations that inspire diversity in the workplace inspire all of their people to perform to provide the satisfactory of their performance therefore, leading towards execution of company-wide techniques which yields higher level of profit and higher productivity.
- **Increased adaptability:** Organizations using a diverse workforce can supply a wide variety of answers to problems in service, sourcing and allocation of resources. Workers from diverse backgrounds bring individual talents and experiences in suggesting thoughts which might be bendy in adapting to fluctuating markets and purchaser demands.
- **Inspires creativity and fosters innovation:** Diversity of thought inspires creativity and fosters innovation, assisting to remedy the problem and meet the expectations of the customers in new

and interesting ways. Workforce diversity increases creativity and innovations inside a corporation. As more diverse ideas are suggested, the chances of locating a workable answer are advanced. In atmospheres when brainstorming is essential, more ideas are formed because team members are culturally diverse.

- **Great opportunity for personal and professional growth:** A culturally diverse workplace will attract talented, ambitious and international specialists who will appreciate the opportunity for personal and professional growth. Working throughout different cultures can be a absolutely enriching experience that allows employees to learn about different perspectives and traditions across the globe.
- **Increase in Productivity:** Workforce diversity can bring about an increase in productivity and competitive advantages. Managers can offer more answers for clients on account of new thoughts and procedures brought into the organization. Workplace diversity increases employee morale and causes employees to desire to work more successfully and productively. Diversity in leadership within a firm enables managers to acquire new aptitudes and techniques for achieving unity within their teams.
- **Attract and retain the best talent:** In a diverse workforce, it is essential to influence the representatives to feel regarded and esteemed for their special commitment t to gain their loyalty in the long run. At this point when this is done, it will encourage shared regard amongst colleagues who value diverse culture, viewpoints and experiences of their colleagues. Not only are such firms ready to attract new talent but they can also retain existing talent because of high employee morale resulting from workforce diversity.

### Challenges of diversity in the workplace

In spite of all the benefits, the implementation of workplace diversity can sometimes cause serious problems to any organization. However, these challenges can be easily managed by the top management using strategic measures. Some of those challenges are:

- **Communication barriers:** Effective communication can be a challenge between employees of various cultures, which can directly reduce the productivity and the cohesiveness of small groups. Ineffective communication results in greater confusion, lack of interest among groups and low morale. Cultural and language barriers need to overcome for diversity programs to succeed.
- **Resistance to change:** There are always personnel who will refuse to simply accept the reality that the social and cultural makeup of their workplace is changing. The “we’ve always done it this way” mentality silences new emerging ideas that leads to inefficient work and inhibits progress.
- **Successful diversity management:** Diversity training alone is not enough for organization’s diversity management plan. A strategy need to be created and implemented to create a culture of diversity that every department should take into account and is completely powerful for an organization as a whole.
- **Implementation of diversity:** The biggest challenge faced by organization regarding diversity is proper implementation. At workplace, there must be a customized strategy to maximize the effects of diversity in the workplace for a particular organization.
- **Accommodation of Beliefs:** Diversity in cultural, religious, and political opinions can sometimes pose a challenge in a diverse workplace. Workers need to be reminded that they shouldn’t impose their beliefs on others to prevent spats and disputes. They additionally want to make sure to preserve their ethnic and personal beliefs independent of their work responsibilities and duties.
- **Different understandings of professional etiquette:** Colleagues from distinct cultures can also bring with them different workplace attitudes, values, behaviors, and etiquette. While those may be enriching and even beneficial in diverse professional surroundings, they can also cause misunderstandings or ill emotions between group members. Additionally, different approaches to punctuality, confrontation, or handling with conflict can prove an issue.
- **Discrimination:** One significant disadvantages of operating with a diverse workforce is discrimination in the part of both managers and personnel. It can exist but hidden component of a poorly controlled workplace. When a worker is being discriminated, it affects his capacity to perform well and it also have an effect on the belief of equity and raises issues of litigation.
- **Generation Gaps:** In larger diversified organizations, staffs are frequently made up of workers who variety in age from young adults to senior citizens. Inevitably, generation gaps can turn out to be a problem and the age differences can trigger "cliques" and separation of the company as a unit.

Bridging the space between multiple generations of employees can sometimes become an issue for managers attempting to set up teamwork.

- **Disabilities:** Unfortunately, employees who are mentally or physically handicapped sometimes encounter discriminatory conduct from insensitive coworkers. In few instances, employers innocently overlook handicapped employees requirements, such as ramps or special needs equipment. Creating a fair and comfortable work environment for disabled employees is vital in a diversified workplace.

## Conclusion

*In this era of economic globalization, many companies are making efforts to gain workforce diversity, which aims to appoint employees from different backgrounds to provide tangible and intangible benefits to the company. Diverse work teams deliver high value to companies. An increasingly diverse workforce provides both opportunities and challenges for the companies. Workforce diversity brings new challenges with respect of communication, team dynamics and dysfunctional conflicts. If it is not properly managed, it can result in higher turnover, more difficult communication and more interpersonal conflicts. If you expect your company to compete and succeed in this new world order, you need to take a close look at the pros and cons of diversity in the workplace. The managers need to learn how to respect the diversity.*

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