

# Integrated Analysis of Effective Leadership and Diversity Management as a Strategic “Brainbox” of Organizational Growth and Success

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## Abstract

Globalization has introduced so many factors into the business world which have unarguably changed the ways businesses are conducted. One of such plethora of factors is the varying circumstances that becloud the existence of people in areas of differences and similarities anchored on several elements such as gender, race, religion, ethnicity, physical abilities, and disabilities, colour, age, family status, language, generation etcetera. These differences have become issues of identities that are highly cherished and recognized by society and the people within them. It is certainly an unavoidable responsibility of the organization to ensure that these differences and similarities are effectively managed through the tool of diversity management to ensure that people or employees feel belonged irrespective of the characteristics that define their personality. By so doing, an organization is not only creating a level playing field of equality but also strengthening the path of success and growth it aspires to attain. In other words, it is very expedient for organizations to ensure that the differences that exist within the organizations are well managed to pave the way for inclusivity to receive the accrued benefits. It is understandably factual that diversity management is a form of strategic brainbox that organizations can leverage to introduce and actualize the goals and objectives they have set out to achieve. In other words, diversity management presents organizations the ample opportunity to retain customers, suppliers, and even employees who belonged to the activities of the organizations and this of course goes a long way in adding value to the growth and success drives of the organizations that adopt and practice this concept effectively and efficiently in a transparent and open manner.

**Keywords:** Brainbox Strategic, Diversity Management, and Strategic Success Organizational

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## Introduction

The continuous expansion of the world in terms of population and the accompanying changes that have greeted the global space which of course have made the world a global village are issues that need attention and interest on how the differences among people are well managed for optimum results not just to the society but to all the different components including the organizations. The view of Kaur and Arora corroborated the globalization of society wherein they stated that the entire world in its present state is assuming a global village and the cross-border distances keep reducing in a very quick manner with a high level of interconnectedness across all the components of the world, the business components inclusive (Kaur & Arora, 2020). In view of ensuring the maintenance of interconnectedness among people which has been deeply introduced by the globalized world, there becomes the need for means to be devised to actualize this goal. It is a sacrosanct fact that there are so many ways that have been devised to ensure that this interconnectedness of a thing gains massive support; however, one of such indisputable and effective ways to ensure efficient management of interconnectedness is the adoption of diversity management which has attracted so many interests from scholars. The essence of diversity management becomes necessary going by the numerous features that characterize the individuals' differences as rightly buttressed by the submission of Itam and Bagali that diversity entails all characteristics of the individuals or groups which include the likes of a religion, gender, race, national origin, affectional orientation, personality, age, language, education, lifestyle, marital status, beliefs, geographical origin, tenure with the organization, the job and the economic status (Itam & Bagali, 2018). Several other scholars have tried to establish what constitutes diversity. Some strongly believed that age, disability, family status, ethnicity, sex,

gender identity or expression, generation, language, neurodiversity, life experiences, sexual orientation, religion, belief and spirituality, race or colour, physical characteristics, and veteran status (Ganeshan & Vethirajan, 2022). All these characteristics requires the right environment for them to serve as strengths and the best way these could be harnessed to fetch the optimum result is through adequate management, hence, the concept of diversity management. Diversity management is considered a very critical aspect of managing people and their features as it has its sole focus on human and cultural diversity in organizations which are expected to be of huge benefit to every party involved (Vielfalt, 2014). It is considered a managerial approach that stresses variety in the workplace as one of the very key indicators of tilting toward efficiency in terms of work (Keil, et al., 2007). In other words, diversity management brings about inculcating a sense of belonging in all employees of an organization irrespective of the differences that exist among them thus entrenching in the organization a huge level of effectiveness and efficiency in the output of the organization since every individual feel involved. It simply increases their sense of participation and this in its overall state encompasses the principle of inclusion. It is a concept viewed as a means of attaching value to employees as well as ensuring their full participation in the entire activities carried out in an organization (Hanappi-Egger, 2012).

In all, the study aims at evaluating thoroughly the uniqueness and relevance of diversity and management in relation to the overall growth and success of the organization and why it remains an incontrovertible decision for organizations irrespective of the status to ensure that the principle of diversity management and inclusion are effectively and robustly adopted and implemented.

### **Statement of Problem**

According to research from Bersin undertaken by Deloitte, 77 percent of the organizations that were surveyed strived to practice inclusion while 12 percent of the surveyed organizations have done well to actualize the principle of diversity and inclusion (Deloitte, 2017). For McKinsey's research on 'Delivering through Diversity', it was revealed that 40 percent of organizations in Australia achieved business leadership premised on gender diversity while in the United States, about 34 percent of organizations adopted this practice and then followed by the United Kingdom with 32 percent (Co., 2018). The government of Indian has put in place measures to ensure the adequate practice of gender diversity but despite this long initiative, only about 28 percent of the entire workforce in Indian constitute women of the 48.5 percent of the female population in the country (Das, 2018). The above case of India, in particular, shows the level of gaps in the workforce which of course requires urgent and proactive measures to tackle. It is a known fact that differences in the workforce, if not well managed, can bring about inefficiency and an unproductive scenario of employees. The absence of diversity management in an organization has been described as capable of leading to ineffective functional of employees, and conflicts among the employees which of course have the capacity to reduce the performance of an organization (Akbaba, 2020). It therefore, means that the concept has in abundance beneficial factors it brings to the organization. Despite the benefits attached to diversity and inclusion, its non-effective adoption and implementation remain an issue of concern; hence, the interest of the current study to critically examine the benefits of diversity management and perhaps the challenges that are responsible for its non-implementation all geared towards the overall interest of the organization as regards its contribution towards the growth and success of the organization across the board.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study among other things seeks to establish the role of diversity management in relation to it being a strategic brainbox for the growth and success of the organization in general terms. In a nutshell, the study strives to establish the fact that diversity management is genuinely a strategic brainbox of organizational growth and success which should be adopted and practiced by organizations with a full sense of responsibility and strong attention and focus.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Definition of Leadership.**

Leadership is perhaps the most vital and important element required across all spheres of human endeavors because of the immense roles it plays. It has become a very strong integral part of an organization's operation due to the influential effect it has on the organization towards the realization of goals and objectives. Leadership can be defined as the process-oriented concept with non-specific practices of challenging the process by inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way as well as encouraging others (Klingborg, Moore and Varea-Hammad, 2006). On the part of Ganta and Manukonda, leadership is defined as a kind of power possessed by an individual who has the capacity to influence the values, beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes of others (Ganta and Manukonda, 2014). The imperative nature of leadership becomes non-negotiable, and this is strongly linked to the influential roles it plays in any stratum where it is practiced effectively. As rightly put by Grint, an individual who demonstrates strong leadership qualities will ultimately serve as a role model to those

he leads because the leader who is able to effectively achieve results will gain the trust and admiration of the people, a situation that will further allow him to influence the values, beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes of the followers (Grint, 2007). Perhaps, the position of Grint unarguably explains the rationale behind the clamor for good leadership among organizations all over the world.

### **The meaning of Diversity**

The growing nature of the global population has given rise to a series of factors that have affiliations with heterogeneity in the labor market and by extension the entirety of the workforce. These factors arising from the heterogeneous nature of the workforce include demographic changes, people with disabilities, the need for women's employment drive, and lots more (Vielfalt, 2014). According to Griffin and Moorhead, diversity can be defined as the similarities and differences arising from certain factors such as age, gender, ethnic heritage, race, sexual orientation and physical abilities, and disabilities among the employees in an organization (Griffin & Moorhead, 2006). It can also be described as the concept that refers to the different types of people and their different characteristics within the organizations (Lussier & Hendon, 2019). Going further, Itam and Bagali defined the concept as being anchored on four major categories which are racial, sexual, and ethnic balance, understanding other cultures, culturally different values, and being widely inclusive (Itam & Bagali, 2018). A careful evaluation of the positions of different scholars on diversity clearly indicates that diversity has a strong link with the differences that exist among the employees or personalities in an organization as rightly corroborated by the submission of Kreitz that diversity simply entails any considered significant difference alike that separates or perhaps distinguishes an individual from another (Kreitz, 2008). Such differences according to different scholars are peculiar to the people bearing these characteristics; hence, there is a need for total respect for such characteristics or identities they embody. The necessity for diversity to be adequately considered and adopted with seriousness by organizations stem from the fact that it has very undeniable links with the activities of the organization across all facets as its absence may be detrimental to the collective goals and objectives of the organization. Its adoption and thorough practice on the other hand has huge benefits, among which is the sense of belonging and participation it impresses on the employees across the different characteristics that distinguish them. This assertion is backed up by the view of Saxena that diversity ensures that there is a sense of belongings among the individuals thus creating a plethora of benefits such as productivity, and innovations from the individuals as well as leading to a very healthy competitive environment (Saxena, 2014). The above, therefore, bequeath on the different organizations to ensure that the characteristics among the individuals in the organizations are adequately and effectively managed and this is where the concept of diversity management has its own role.

### **Diversity Management.**

With the characteristics that bring about differences among the people in an organization, there is certainly the need for these differences to be effectively managed to serve as strength to the organization; hence, the reason behind diversity management. Diversity management can be defined as a managerial approach that lays emphasis on variety in the workplace as one of the indicators of higher work efficiency (Keil, et al., 2007). Olsen and Martins defined diversity management as the utilization of human resources management practices for the purpose of maintaining variations in human capital and also ensuring that such variations or differences do not pose a negative influence on the pursuit of the goals and objectives of the organizations (Olsen & Martins, 2012). Diversity management can also be described as the "planning and implementing organizational systems and practices to manage people so that the potential advantages of diversity are maximized while its potential disadvantages are minimized (Raghavendra et al., 2018, p. 160). The basic instrumental function of diversity management is to ensure that the differences of the people which are the offshoots of their characteristics alongside the lines of ethnicity, racial background, gender, color, physical status, religion, and lots more must be well managed by organizations for maximum results as specifically put that the basic notion of diversity management the diversity of the individual employee is well recognized so as to serve the purpose of ensuring the economic success of the organizations (Vielfalt, 2014). This assertion clearly aligns with the incontrovertible fact that a well-managed diverse workforce has the unrestricted potential and capacity to better the lots of the organizations especially as it further strengthens the organizations' pursuit of the actualization of goals and objectives while the otherwise of this may create a danger looming situation for the organizations. For an organization to catch up and maintain the momentum of globalization across the world as related to the survival of the organizations, there is need for the adoption and effective practice of diversity management and inclusion (Folakemi, Anthonia, Olaleke, Friday, & Dayo, 2019). In a nutshell, the existential state of organizations in a globalized world especially organizations striving to get internationalized must strictly and eventfully be engaged in the right and adequate practice of diversity management as this will help guarantee their sustainability drive in the globalized world as well as the fulfillment of the set-out goals and objectives. A well-managed diverse group of individuals ultimately brings about the right principle of inclusion.

### **Inclusion Defined**

The key essence of managing diversity in the organization is to ensure that the people are included in the organization's activities across the board. Inclusion according to Ponce-Pura is the individuals' sense of belonging in terms of their experiences and perceptions which are recognized for qualities and the individuality in the context of the organization (Ponce-Pura, 2014). On his part, Roberson defined inclusion as the elimination of every form of hindrance which could prevent the employees from full participation and contributing to the activities of the organizations (Roberson, 2006). The deliberate attempt by organizations on how well their employees connect with one another, engage, and utilize people across all the major differences could also be described as inclusion (Ferdman, 2013). Gasoreck went further to define inclusion in an encompassing manner which according to this scholar includes; employees being valued with their ideas taken into strong account and adopted, employees partnering successfully both in and across departments, a sense of belonging by current employees, and the attraction of prospective employees to the organization, sense of commitment of employees to one another, the organization and the goals and objectives of the organizations, and the organization continues to foster flexibility and choice as well as attend to the diversity that exists in the organization (Gasoreck, 2000). For the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion, inclusion simply refers to the optimum utilization of the differences that exist among the employees to actualize maximum organizational growth and success (ENEI, 2017). It can also be explained to mean the encouragement and enhancement of diversity in the workplace with the sole aim of achieving the needed rewards and commitments from the employees in relation to the pursuit of the goals and objectives of the organization (Practice, 2017). The hallmark of inclusion is that it creates a huge sense of belonging and participation in the individual employees since they are not subjected to any form of discrimination on the ground of their characteristics by the organization or fellow employees. In other words, employees have the freedom to be or express themselves within the vicinity of the workplace while their differences and similarities are adequately explored by the organization to the functionality and performance of the organization.

### **Effective Leadership and Organizational Success**

Effective leadership over the years has assumed perhaps the most important and crucial aspect needed by every organization to ensure the goals of sustainability and expansion even in the face of challenges which are products of the ever-dynamic global space and the rapid growth arising from the economic environment (Cabeza-Erikson, Edwards, & Van Brabant, 2008). There are numerous areas or ways effective leadership contributes immensely to the overall success of an organization. One such way is motivation. This implies that an effective leader strives hard to ensure that the employees of an organization are well motivated to face the tasks assigned to them in a bid to actualize the goals and objectives of the organization as corroborated by the submission of Atkinson and Mackenzie who stated that if an organization lacks effective leadership, no changes or success will be recorded in such an organization because there will be leaders that will motivate and lead the employees of the organization as well as put in place the clear directional path to follow towards achieving the set-out goals of the organization (Atkinson & Mackenzie, 2015).

Another way effective leadership can lead to the success of an organization is through learning. Effective leaders ensure that the organization adopts learning as a critical component of its operations as rightly put that an effective leader encourages the employees in an organization to acquire knowledge using certain kinds of motivators like rewards, promotions etcetera (Azzam, 2014).

Besides the above two ways effective leadership contributes to the success of the organization, it also ensures that trust is built because that is the most essential component that drives performance. The position of Lee et al. can be used to buttress the efficacy of trust in leadership as captured in their submission that trust is an essential issue in leadership for leaders because gaining the trust of the employees will facilitate the improvement of the overall performance and commitment of the employees thus leading to the success of the organization (Lee, Gillespie, Mann, & Wearing, 2010)

### **Contributions of Diversity Management to Organizational Growth and Success**

The performance and success story of organizations are totally inseparable from the spirit of collectivism and team work as strongly opposed to individualism and the principle of diversity management and inclusion are indisputably aligned with collectivism and teamwork. As such, there are indeed benefits that are expected to result from the adoption and practice of diversity and inclusion. Several scholars have lent their voices to the debates on the benefits of diversity and inclusion to organizational success and growth. Among such scholars are Al-Shamlan and Doblal who had their study examined the influence of workforce diversity on organizational performance using AlAhujan Group in Bahrain as a case; the study revealed a strong correlation between organizational performance and workforce diversity (Al-Shamlan & Doblal, 2019).

Another scholar whose work confirms the benefit of diversity and inclusion to organizational performance is Saxena who opined that the productivity of the organization experiences a monumental increase due to the

level of cordiality in the relationship between the employees (Saxena, 2014).

For Mariappan and Raghavan, an effective, efficient, and well-managed diversity has the potential of ultimately leading to employment opportunities to work, grow, develop skills, abilities, innovation, effective coordination as well as sustained communication in an organization (Mariappan & Raghavan, 2020). The submission of Mariappan and Raghavan clearly addressed the benefits of diversity and inclusion from the perspective of the employees; however, such benefits have a way of impacting positively the generality of the activities of the organizations.

Generally, the benefits of diversity and inclusion in line with the different revelations gathered during this study are discussed thus:

#### **A. Diversity and Inclusion Lead to Higher and Improved Financial Returns**

The strong and unwavering supports rendered by employees to one another on the ground of cordial relationships arising from a well-managed diversity and sense of inclusion tend to increase the level of productivity and total commitment just as organizations with adequate management of diversity have the tendency of attracting more customers with deep loyalty. All of these can lead to higher and improved financial returns. This position has been backed up by different scholars who hold the view that a workplace with a good sense and practice of inclusiveness has higher financial returns than a workplace does otherwise. Phungsoonthorn & Charoensukmongkol, (2020), the huge benefit of diversity and inclusion

According to Gephardt et al., (2016), went further to state that when companies practice diversity efficiently, they begin to outperform their competitors especially those who think otherwise about engaging in diversity management. It is expedient to state that a key reason companies that practice diversity and inclusion will likely witness higher financial returns is the fact that people who are associated with employees of ethnic groups or other characteristics will find it so easy to patronize companies that treat employees equally without any recourse to discrimination.

#### **B. The practice of Inclusiveness and Diversity Enhances Effectiveness Among Employees**

Effectiveness is a direct product of satisfaction; a sense of belongingness and participation and all these critical features are fully embedded in diversity and inclusion. In other words, when employees have in them a sense of belongingness, participation, and satisfaction on the job, the byproduct is undeniably going to fetch effectiveness and efficiency as the results. This implies that diversity and inclusion allow the employees to act thoroughly having a sense of freedom which inadvertently leads to the perceptions on the part of the employees of an undeniable sense of belongingness, and participation as well as creates the impression of being unique among others in the organizations (Gephardt, Grassi, McCormick, & Shelton, 2016; Ortlieb & Sieben, 2014). The effectiveness of employees in the workplace as a result of inclusivity ensures satisfaction on the job and this of course by extension leads to a high level of productivity and commitment on the part of the employees as accordingly backed by the submission of Back et al., which the relationship between inclusiveness and employee effectiveness clearly shows that inclusion ensures employee satisfaction, thus generating enhanced productivity on the part of the employees (Back, Lowry, & Cartier, 2018). All the submissions of these scholars expressly supported the fact that diversity and inclusion ensure increased and sustained effects on the part of the employees. Therefore, it is beholding on organizations to ensure that they engage in the practice and adoption of diversity and inclusion since it is certain that employees tend to work more productively when they feel a sense of belonging and inclusiveness which in turn ensures the performance of the organizations across the board (Moon & Christensen, 2020)

#### **C. Diversity and Inclusion Leads to Organizational Growth**

One of the surest ways a business or organization can grow speedily is by leveraging the opportunities presented by diversity and inclusion. First, a perfect understanding of the marketplace can be achieved by organizations that adopt and practice diversity and inclusion (Kim, 2006; van Knippenberg, 2007). The key reason for the role of diversity and inclusion in serving as a benefit to organizations in areas of understanding the marketplace is premised on the ground that customers and suppliers are becoming more diverse and for organizations to gain penetration into such diverse markets with diverse customers and suppliers, there is the need to employ the services of individuals who understand the diverse background of these people and such could only be made realistic and result-oriented if the organizations entrench in the people through diversity and inclusion the sense of belongings and participation (Farrer, 2004; Lowther, 2006). The simplest explanation of diversity and inclusion being a benefit to organizations in the understanding of the marketplace is that it affords the organizations the opportunity to have first-hand knowledge about the diversity of the customers and suppliers which accords to such organizations a strong competitive edge over others.

According to O'Donovan, 2018, the following are some of the benefits of practicing diversity and inclusion in an organization. They include:

- Cost savings in areas such as reducing turnover, reducing absenteeism, and reducing legal costs arising from discrimination and other lawsuits.
- Winning talent war as employees who feel included in the decision-making process will likely wish to

be part of the organization.

- Improving the innovation and creativity potential of the employees which in turn contributes to the overall growth and success of the organizations.
- Increase flexibility.
- Ensures business growth in areas of market expansion and a better understanding of the marketplace.
- Increased commitment
- Enhances employee confidence, morale, and job satisfaction.

Fig. 1: Benefits of Diversity and Inclusion

Source: O'Donovan, 2018

## Conclusion

The level of globalization in the business world and its huge implications on the collectivity of businesses across all areas most especially the profitability, sustainability, competitive and expansionary realms cannot be overemphasized just as the urgency for organizations to ensure the maximum and unwavering commitment of the employees in a bid to gaining a competitive advantage over others cannot be in any way overlooked. In all of these, there becomes a key role for the organizations to play and that is the singular role of ensuring that the employees and indeed everyone affiliated with the organizations are made to feel belonged; hence, the popularity of the concept of diversity management which has since become a child of necessity for all organizations across the globe especially those that are very interested in going international. It is a fact that organizations are made up of employees who are of different backgrounds and circumstances which by nature assume different characteristics. Also, the globalized situation of the business world implies that there are so many stakeholders, most visibly customers, and suppliers who also share the same fate as the employees coming from different backgrounds and circumstances. Having the full understanding of this sacred fact by the organizations, it, therefore, becomes a non-negotiable fact for organizations to leverage the diversity of these people to gain the needed competitive advantage as well as ensure the actualization of the goals and objectives. These underlying facts imply that diversity management is unarguably a concept that must be thoroughly embraced by all organizations as the benefits it offers are numerous and useful to the growth and success of the organizations. As clearly stated, a well-managed diverse group breeds inclusion which further creates a sense of belonging and participation that in the long run generate a high level of effectiveness, efficiencies, productivity, creativities, and innovations which are all needed to make organizations great and prosperous. As can be attested to by the views of the different scholars in the study, diversity management can be in a way described as the strategic brainbox of the growth and ultimate success of any organization owing to the inestimable roles it plays in improving the fortunes of an organization that is firm in its adoption and practice. The study has been able to establish the usefulness and relevance of the instrument of diversity and inclusion towards the attainment of organizational growth and success especially in the era of globalization which has become the hallmark of the entirety of society, the business circle highly inclusive.

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