JETIR.ORG ISSN: 2349-5162 | ESTD Year : 2014 | Monthly Issue
JOURNAL OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATIVE RESEARCH (JETIR)
An International Scholarly Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

IMPACT OF WORKPLACE DIVERSITY ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF SELECTED IT COMPANIES IN INDIA

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Abstract
In today's rapidly changing global business climate, countries like India are faced with a more diversified workforce in most, if not all, of their businesses, a development that has accelerated in recent decades. It is fairly typical nowadays to discover diverse business eemployees with a wide range of training and education backgrounds. The impact of gender, age, ethnicity, and educational background on employee performance at chosen Indian IT companies known for employing a diverse workforce is investigated in this study.
The data was acquired via a self-administered questionnaire from 384 employees of Indian IT companies in various roles. The results show that there is a significant correlation between acceptance of workplace diversity and employee performance.
Index Terms: Workplace diversity, Employee performance, IT Companies,

1.0 Introduction

Most of the early research on diversity has focused on the demographic attributes of age, gender, ethnicity, race, tenure and functional background (Milliken & Martins, 1996; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). On the other hand, Van Knippenberg & Schippers, (2007) have conceptualised workplace diversity as real or perceived difference between members of a group on any characteristics that may induce the perception that the other individual is different from the self.
Workplace diversity is a multi-faceted idea that will continue to evolve as more businesses, particularly the IT industry, shift to working in and hiring personnel from a worldwide market. This, it is believed, has contributed to the impression that workplace diversity has become unavoidable and essential for long-term corporate success. This notion motivates executives to embrace and comprehend the concept of workplace diversity, as well as its challenges and rewards. Furthermore, whether the purpose of an organisation is to be an employer of choice, provide exceptional customer service, or maintain a competitive edge, workforce diversity is increasingly acknowledged and leveraged as one of the most essential, if not the most important, organisational resources.(Childs, 2005).
While diversity has the potential to have negative effects on team processes (e.g., poor communication and cooperation increase conflict) as well as team performance (e.g., lower financial indicators and team effectiveness), it also has tremendous upside potential for an organisation to gain a competitive advantage in a globalised economy when leveraged and managed effectively (Jackson, Joshi, &Erhardt, 2003).
Despite the limited emperical evidence, diversity management has been considered as a factor that can boost organisational outcomes (Pitts, 2009; Kalev,et al, 2006; Ng and Burke, 2005;). Companies with the strongest reputations for managing diversity will win the race for the best human resources while also saving money

on employee attrition and absenteeism (Cox & Blake, 1991; Wright, Ferris, Hiller, & Kroll, 1995). Furthermore, companies will benefit from the cultural insights that individuals with origins in other nations bring in terms of understanding customer behaviour and growing global markets (Cox & Blake, 1991). Finally, diverse perspectives and heterogeneity in groups can improve creativity, produce better decisions, and result in superior problem solving through critical analysis of alternatives and reduced groupthink (Bodla, Tang, Jiang, & Tian, 2018; Cox & Blake, 1991; van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004).

The low-key but steadfast change in demographic profiles of Indian cities, globalisation and the MNC culture has conclusively changed the working style and philosophy of Indian IT Sector. Modern social, economic and political considerations have altered the blueprint of the working environment. Organisations and people have to adapt to the continually changing environment to remain relevant and prosper.

A study done by the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) in 2012, reveals that non availability of talent, changing demographics, high customer expectation, globalization of business, sustainability and innovation are primary drivers for diversity in corporate India. The companies are embracing diversity for business reasons although there are no strong legislations in the Indian context.

This study aims to close that gap by arguing that every organization's future performance is contingent on its capacity to manage a varied pool of individuals capable of contributing novel ideas, perspectives, and viewpoints to their job. If firms can benefit on this melting pot of varied abilities, the difficulty and challenges that come with merging work place diversity under one roof can be turned into a strategic organisational asset. An organisation may respond to economic opportunities more quickly and creatively with a variety of talents from various cultural backgrounds, genders, ages, and lifestyles.

1.1 Literature review

Whether positive employee attitudes and actions drive company outcomes, or if positive business outcomes influence positive employee attitudes and behaviours, is a question worth examining. Staff contentment, organisational citizenship behaviour, and employee turnover all have an impact on profitability and consumer satisfaction. These findings added to the growing body of evidence that HR outcomes drive business outcomes rather than vice versa. (Koys, 2001)

Reflexivity was recognised as the main factor contributing towards the effectiveness of the teams when the impact of team composition on team process (i.e. reflexivity) and team outcomes (i.e. satisfaction, commitment, and performance) was studied. (Schippers et al. 2003). In contrast, Kochan et al. 2003, found no significant direct effects of racial or gender diversity on performance. In their longitudinal study, the selected organisation showed no significant direct effects of both the selected parameters of workplace diversity. Gender diversity influenced group processes positively, while racial diversity influenced group processes negatively.

It has been argued that simply having a diverse staff does not guarantee great results. It was discovered that: (a) Increasing diversity does not always imply an increase in talent among the group. (b) Increasing diversity does not guarantee improved motivation, commitment, or conflict resolution outcomes. (c) A more diversified group isn't always a better group. Better comprehension of the relationship between diversity and organisational performance, as well as practical strategies that can be implemented to improve diversity management are essential for optimum results..(Jayne and Dipboye 2004)

By developing a conceptual framework that supports the interaction model of diversity's impact on individual career outcomes and organisational effectiveness, researchers studied whether there was a link between diversity and organisational performance, as well as how workplace diversity influences organisational performance. The model was created to provide a framework for practitioners and academics to employ in order to develop diversity efforts based on needs assessments and empirical research. When it comes to diversity training and programmes, it was said that one size does not fit all, and that it is critical to build them on actual facts and adjust them to the organisation in question. (Prieto et al, 2009)

The impact of human resource management practises, such as recruiting and selecting, performance appraisal, remuneration, and training and development, on company performance was also investigated. According to the data, good recruiting and selection processes, effective performance appraisal practises, and firm performance have a positive relationship, according to respondents' perspectives. Management should continue to uphold the company's HR policy, effective recruitment and selection practises, and effective performance appraisal practises, according to the report. (Asuinura and Boohene, 2011)

Integrating the Social Identity Theory and diversity literature, Hsiao et al (2015) explored the link of perceived organisational diversity with Job Performance (JP), Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCB) and Turnover Intention. Specifically, a negative link between perceived diversity and turnover intention was discovered among indigenous employees while a favourable relationship was observed among non-indigenous employees

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The Study aims to look at the selected dimensions of workplace diversity i.e. gender, age, ethnicity and education; gauge their acceptance level to analyse if workplace diversity has an impact on selected variables of organisational performance. It will attempt to gather industry relevant data that will help HR professional streamline their existing diversity initiatives and bridge the gap between academic learning and practical realities for working HR professionals. The primary objectives of the study shall be:

1.To analyse the relationship between acceptance of workplace diversity and employee performance in selected IT Companies in India.

1.3 Hypothesis of the Study

The basis for formulating the hypothesis are derived from various study results undertaken by; Kochan et al. (2003); Kundu, (2003) and (2004); Patrick and Kumar, (2012) etc.

Hypothesis 1: There is a quantifiable relationship between Workplace Diversity and Employees Performance

H_1: There is significant relationship between Workplace Diversity and Employees Performance.

H_0: There is no relationship between Workplace Diversity and Employees Performance.

1.4 Research Methodology

When it comes to diversity and inclusion in IT firms, it's critical to look at how employees perceive certain demographic dimensions such as gender, age, ethnicity, and education to get a fair enough idea about the acceptance of workplace diversity in those parameters. The research also looks into the impact of workplace diversity acceptance on the dependent variables of employee performance.

1.4.1 Operational Definitions of the variables under investigation

For the purpose of present study, different terms are operationally defined with reference to diversity climate. Diversity climate is a term (version from Cox, 1994) used in this study to collectively define the influence of individual, group and organizational factors that affect support for diversity in organization.

1.4.1.i) Workplace Diversity : This refers to visible and invisible differences among people based on culture, gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, educational background, physical and mental disability, and other socio-economic factors. For the present study, workplace diversity is operationally limited to gender diversity, ethnic diversity, age diversity and education diversity.

1.4.1.ii) Acceptance of Workplace Diversity: This refers to the perception of employees towards understanding, valuing and accepting the differences and the similarities present at workforce. Acceptance of workplace diversity explains employees' positive attitude towards receptivity to the differences and similarities in culturally diverse organizational environment. For the purpose of study, accepting the similarities and differences with respect to specific diversity dimensions like gender, age, ethnicity and education which can be observed in the Indian IT Industry, have been considered.

1.4.1.iii) Employee Performance: Employee performance refers to how well a person performs in their job, completes essential tasks, and behaves in the workplace. The quality, quantity, and efficiency of work are all factors in determining performance. Goal achievement is one of the most essential aspects of employee performance In this study, employee performance considers the employees' positive inclination towards better performance influenced by workplace diversity in the organisation.

1.5 Research Design

Scale: The questionnaire statements have been modified from the following sources.

S.No	Research Variable	Scale items modified from:
1	Workplace Diversity	DeLancey R.M (2013), Patrick and Kumar (2012), Kunze, Boehm, & Bruch, (2011)
2	Employee Performance	Weiliang et al (2011), Elsaid A M (2012),

1.5.1 Validity of scale

The combined reliability alpha for all items excluding the respondents' demographic profile data is 0.846 which is considered appropriate for statistical analysis. The reliability alpha for specific groupings of items on scale is as follows:

Table 1.1: Scale Validity

S.No		N	Cronbach Alpha
1	Gender Diversity	6	.832
2	Age Diversity	6	.721
3	Ethnic Diversity	7	.898
4	Education Diversity	6	.834
5.	Cumulative Work Place Diversity	25	.930
6	Employee Performance	10	.878
7.	Cumulative Scale	65	.846

Source: Author's Research Data

1.5.1 Statistical Analysis

Suitable statistical analysis tools were carefully chosen and used to analyze the data. In this study. The statistical techniques adopted are descriptive analysis, , Pearson's correlation, and, regression analysis. SPSS, version 21, statistical software has been used to obtain the results

1.5.1.i) Sample Size

A total of 384 complete and valid responses from employees of largescale IT companies (Number of employees >2000), registered with NASSCOM and with existing diversity and inclusion policies were considered for this study.

1.5.2 Demographic distribution of sample is as follows:

Age wise distribution of the respondents in the sample: 41.7% employees belong to the age group 21-32 years. 29.2 % employees belong to the age group of 33-45 years, and 29.2% employees lie in the over 45 years of age group. It can be inferred that the major respondents belong to the age group between 21-32 years.

Gender distribution: The sample consists of 54% of male and 46% of female respondents.

Ethnicity distribution: As is evident, the sample consists of 14.6% of people from east India, 35.4% from North India, 32.3% from South India and 17.7% from West India.

Education: the sample consists of 2.1% of people with a diploma, 2.1% with a Doctorate, 37.5% with a graduation degree and 58.3% with post-graduate qualification.

Work Experience: there are 31.8 % of employees with 0-5 years of experience, 19.0% of employees are from 5-10 years of experience, 16.1% are from 11-15 years of experience, 23.4% are from 16-20 years of experience and 9.6% are from above 20 years of experience. Major group of respondents are from the experience between 0-5 years.

Marital Status: The sample consists of 37.8% single employees, 60.9% married employees and 1.3% others (divorced, widow, widower etc.). Majority of respondents are married.

Role in Organisation: In the sample there are 25.8 % of Trainee/Team Member, 20.3% of employees are Supervisor/ Team Leaders, 27.9% are Mid-Level Managers and 26% are Senior Managers.

1.5.3 Descriptive Statistics for Influence of Workplace diversity on Employee Performance

Table 1.2 : Item Statistics for Employee Performance

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. I am satisfied with the security my job provides to me.	4.1042	1.04698	384	36.1667	.875
2. I am satisfied with the variety of activities/roles my job offers.	4.0417	.91311	384	36.2292	.871
3. There are opportunities to develop multiple skills in my job.	4.1042	.94196	384	36.1667	.863
4. The overall work culture promotes happiness among the employees.	4.1250	.90545	384	36.1458	.857
5. All employees appreciate others whose backgrounds, beliefs and experiences are different from their own	3.9167	.93291	384	36.3542	.870
6. My job gives me the opportunity to share my knowledge with others.	4.0417	.97933	384	36.2292	.864
7. My colleagues are supportive and help in timely completion of work.	3.9375	.82788	384	36.3333	.864
8. My supervisor behaves fairly with all team members.	3.9375	1.03022	384	36.3333	.864
9. My company provides an environment for free and open expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs.	3.9583	1.02110	384	36.3125	.862
10. Racial, ethnic, sexual or gender based jokes or slurs are not tolerated in this organisation.	4.1042	.96388	384	36.1667	.876

(For Strongly Agree =5; Agree =4; Undecided = 3, Disagree = 2; Strongly disagree = 1)

Table 1.2 presents the result that the mean values of all the questions are in the range of 4.13 to 3.93 and the standard deviation is 1.05 to 0.83. The highest mean value (4.13%) is observed in The overall work culture promotes happiness among the employees and the lowest mean value (3.93%) was observed in All employees appreciate others whose backgrounds, beliefs and experiences are different from their own.

Description of Items on Scale

The mean value with standard deviation is calculated for 10 items, which describe the perceptions of employees towards influence of diversity considerations in employee performance. Results show that respondents nearly agree to overall work culture promotes happiness among the employees (mean = 4.13), and have highly positive response for racial, ethnic, sexual or gender based jokes or slurs are not tolerated in this organisation (mean = 4.10). Their perception towards satisfaction with the security their job provides them is also very high (mean = 4.10), while they are also highly positive towards satisfaction with the variety of activities/roles their job offers (mean = 4.04). They have positive response to there are

opportunities to develop multiple skills in their job (mean = 4.10). Standard deviation for all the items is low, indicating that, all responses are consistent.

1.6 Hypothesis Testing

For Normality of Data the variables to be tested were checked as follows:

Table 1.3: Descriptives of variables being tested

Variable	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Statistic	Std Error	Statistic	Std Error
Workplace diversity	384	3.8183	.71099	-.292	.125	-.468	.248
Employee Performance	384	4.0271	.66222	-.201	.125	-.664	.248

Skewness measures the symmetry of a distribution, i.e., up to what extent the distribution of values deviates from symmetry around the mean (George and Mallery, 2009; Hair et al, 2006). A value of zero represents a symmetric and evenly balanced distribution, whereas a value between -1 to +1 is considered excellent for most psychometric purposes (George and Mallery, 2009).

The values ((Workplace Diversity = -0.292), (Employee Performance =-0.201 in the table 4.38 (a) given above falls between suggested values (-1 to +1) which means data is normally distributed.

Kurtosis is a measure of the flatness or peak of a distribution as compared with a normal distribution (George and Mallery, 2009; Hair et al., (2006). Like normality, a kurtosis value near zero indicates a shape close to normal. As with skewness, a value between -1 to +1 is considered excellent for the most psychometric purpose (George and Mallery, 2009).

For our data, values of variables ((Workplace Diversity = -0.468), (Employee Performance =-0.664 falls under the suggested range, suggesting data is normally distributed.

1.6.1. Workplace Diversity vs Employee performance.

H0: There is no significant association between Workplace Diversity and Employee Performance

H1: There is a significant association between Workplace Diversity and Employee Performance

Table 1.4 (a) Correlations between Workplace Diversity and Employee Performance

		WPD	EPR
WPD	Pearson Correlation	1	.778**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	193.612	140.225
	Covariance	.506	.366
	N	384	384
EPR	Pearson Correlation	.778**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	140.225	167.958
	Covariance	.366	.439
	N	384	384

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The value of Pearson correlation coefficient between Workplace Diversity and Employee Performance is 0.778, and it is significant at 1% level of significance thus, it may be concluded that Workplace Diversity has a significant correlation with

Employee Performance. The covariance is shown at 0.366 which reinforces the movement of both variables in the same direction.

Direction of relationship-There is a positive relationship between workplace diversity and employee performance because the value of correlation coefficient is positive.
Strength of relationship- The value of this correlation coefficient (0.778) falls under coefficient range from ±0.71 to ±0.1. Therefore, the relationship between workplace diversity and employee performance is high.

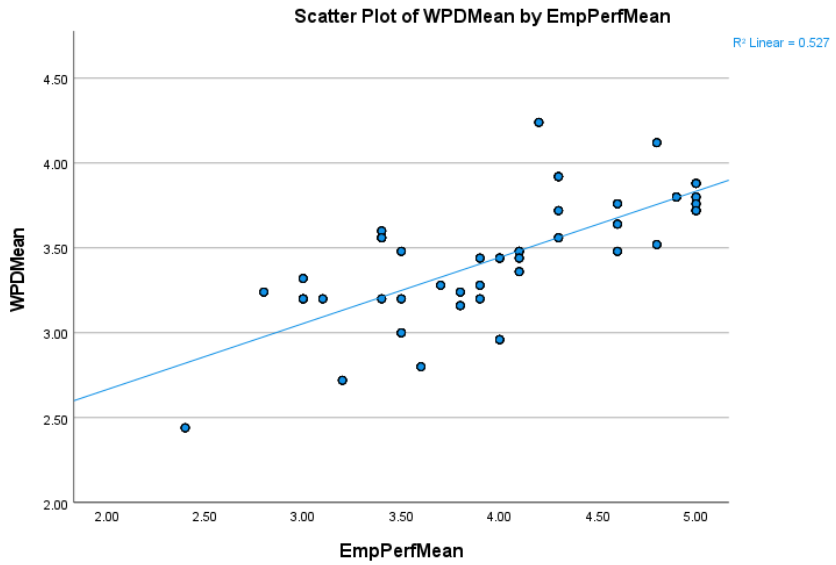

Figure 1.1: Scatterplot of WPD vs EPR

Further, since the high value of correlation coefficient (r =0.78) suggests a strong positive correlation, as is also evident from the scatterplot of WPD vs ERR (Figure 4.10) we can use a regression analysis to obtain a relationship between the variables.

Table 1.4 (b) Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durban Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.778[a]	.605	.604	.41692	.605	584.286	1	382	<.001	2.323

a. Predictors: (Constant), Workplace Diversity WPD
b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance EPR

To test this hypothesis regression was applied to see the effect of Workplace diversity on Employee performance taking EPR as response variable and workplace diversity (WPD) as the criterion variable.
As per the analysis, the Coefficient of Determination value (R^2) shows that WPD explain 60% variation in employee performance (Adj. R^2 = 0.604). The overall model was found to be significant (F = 584.29, p<.001)
From the model summary it can be observed that multiple correlation coefficient R=0.778 and Adjusted R^2 =0.604, R^2 change is also 0.605 and these values are significant because p value is zero which is less than 0.05, which indicates that the strength of association is significant. The value for Durbin- Watson is 2.32, and this test statistic values in the range of 1.5 to 2.5 are relatively normal. This leads to the verification of the regression fit as shown in the following ANOVA table

Table 1.4 (c) ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	101.560	1	101.560	584.286	<.001[b]
	Residual	66.399	382	.174		
	Total	167.958	383			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Workplace Diversity

To test the hypothesis that all model coefficients are zero, analysis of variance is applied and the results of ANOVA table exhibits that this hypothesis is rejected at 1% as well as 5% level of significance and it should be concluded that the model coefficients differ significantly from zero. In other words we can say that there exists enough evidence to conclude that slope of employee performance regression line is not zero and hence, workplace diversity is useful as predictor of employee performance.

Table 1.4 (d) Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.262	.116		10.841	<.001
	WPD	.724	.030	.778	24.172	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance EPR

Table of coefficients shows that workplace diversity has a highly significant impact on employee performance (t = 24.72, p<.001) From the table of coefficients, the regression equation can be obtained as:

Employee Performance = 1.262 + 0.724*WPD

A histogram for regression standardized residual is plotted and it can be easily observed that its shape is approximately normal. Thus the assumption of regression analysis about the normality of residuals is also fulfilled.

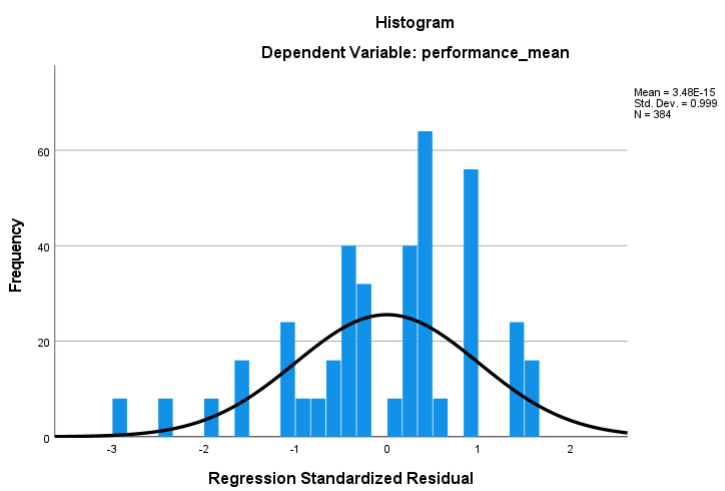

Figure 1.2: Histogram of regression standardised residual of EPR

1.7 Findings of the study

According to (Abadina and Mba, 2014), demography is the study of the total social situations of different individuals within the social and economic sector, and it aids in determining the population's quantitative features. As a first phase in the research, the demographic profile of the respondents was examined in order to better understand the diversity of IT organisations in India. To understand variance amongst groups in the demographic and socio-economic factors, an ANOVA was carried out and from the consolidated results, the following inferences were drawn:

i. There is a significant variance amongst groups on acceptance of workplace diversity in terms of gender, age, education and work experience of the respondents. No variance was detected for ethnicity, marital status and role in organisation.

ii. There was a significant variance between groups as regards employee performance, for gender and marital status; while no variance was detected for age, education, ethnicity, work experience and role in organisation.

1.7.1 Findings as per research objectives.

a. The relationship between workplace diversity and Employee Performance: Based on the previous literature, workplace diversity was taken as a predictor of Employee Performance in selected Indian IT companies. Regression analysis was conducted to check the relationship between the two variables and the data analysis supported the hypothesis.

Statistical test results concluded that workplace diversity has a significant positive correlation with Employee Performance. As per the regression analysis, Workplace Diversity explains 60% variation in employee performance. There also exists enough evidence to conclude that since slope of employee performance regression line is not zero, workplace diversity is useful as predictor of employee performance.

This result is supported by previous research, wherein Khan, (2019) Deluca and McDowell, (1992 and Adler, (1986) have said that workforce diversity is a factor that influences employee performance, and good human resource diversity strategies are thought to improve employee and organisational performance.

1.8 Implications of the study

Attempting to promote workforce diversity in a multicultural society is just the proper and ethical thing to do as corporate citizens, regardless of the economic consequences. Diversity management is clearly crucial for any firm, particularly in the service industry, where consumers and stakeholders can evaluate performance.

As a result, diversity management becomes increasingly important for both individual and organisational progress. Since manpower is an organization's backbone, top-level management must leave no stone left in ensuring the organization's success. Organizational greatness would undoubtedly be facilitated by a diverse collection of individuals operating as a cohesive team.

Large-scale IT businesses in India have implemented policies to assist employees in adjusting to their new work environment and providing suitable career assistance. In the domain of training and development, this area offers a broader scope of study for human resource managers. The creation of training modules for various levels of management can lead to a more thorough examination of workplace diversity policies and their impact on employee performance.

1.9 Conclusion

Contrary to the findings of Guillaume et al., (2014), van Knippenberg and Schippers, (2007) Williams and O'Reilly, (1998) and Milliken and Martins, (1996) who proposed that diversity had mixed effects on employee outcomes, this study found that workplace diversity has a positive effect on employee performance.

Organizations need to first create an environment that promotes healthy workplace diversity before reaping the rewards. As seen from the findings of the study, acceptance of workplace diversity by the employees demonstrates a positive effect on employee performance.

1.9.1 . For increased acceptance of workplace diversity.

I. Open communication system. Employees should be informed of mechanisms for reporting disparity issues through the company intranet. The organisation should also provide a less formal procedure for reporting harassment, discrimination, or inequality without being identified and consequently penalised. Impartial reporting channels such as a complaint cell, specified e-mail ID or an anonymous complaint drop-box can be established.

II. Conducive environment: The IT companies need to develop an environment that encourages diversity in the workforce and formulate training modules to help employees understand the benefits of diversity. They could also create a mechanism for assessing policies and practises that takes into account employee input without discrimination.

III. Proactive HR Initiatives: IT firms should create a dedicated department or wing to address all forms of diversity management challenges, such as harassment and discrimination complaints. Employee confidence will increase and a more positive diversity feedback system will be possible with dedicated personnel with direct reporting routes to upper management for effective results.

1.9.2. To increase impact of workplace diversity on employee performance

I. Performance evaluation: Analyse employees' attitudes, especially how they work with others, while drafting reviews. It is the employer's responsibility to resolve the issue if it is discovered that an employee exclusively allocate work to persons of a specific gender, culture or race; or if an employee dismisses the views of people under or above a certain age. Identify problems with employees and bring them up during performance evaluations.

II. Increase staff welfare activities: Off-site interactions, picnics, informal hobby clubs, volunteering programs, physical/mental well-being programmes are all types of welfare activities that aid greater amalgamation of the workforce and aid employee performance.

III. Common language: encouraging use of a common language for official interaction will help make employees feel part of the group and enhance performance.

1.9.3 Future Research Suggestions

i. Combine effects of workplace diversity with diversity management practices
ii. Combine effects of other diversity dimensions, both evident and implied.
iii. Study unexplored dimensions like cultural perceptions or regional/language identities.

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