

Diversity Hiring in the Purview of Providing Equal Employment Opportunity: Importance and Impact on Organizational Productivity

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Abstract:

In today's global business landscape, social responsibility encompasses diversity management, with organizations striving to enhance inclusivity of underrepresented individuals. The employee selection process is crucial in diversity management, as it influences an organization's branding and commitment to diversity. Top executives are focusing on talent diversity and inclusion to drive innovation and create a competitive advantage. Gender parity in the workplace is a social cause and business imperative. Leaders are focusing on making businesses more attractive to diverse workforces, especially female talent. Employers have struggled to balance compliance with affirmative action laws and ensure fair selection processes. This paper analyzes EEO provisions and diversity management in the United States, focusing on discrimination and efforts to address them. It discusses the unresolved EEO issues in the US, particularly gender diversity, and its implications for other countries. The paper also reviews HR challenges in employing selection methods and the impact of diversity selection practices on organizational culture.

Keywords: Human Resource Management, Affirmative Action, Stereotype, Preferential selection, Literature review, Diversity management, Workforce diversity, Diversity dimension

I. INTRODUCTION

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) is the principle that ensures all employees are treated fairly in various employment decisions, such as hiring, promotion, termination, and compensation. The concept of 'same opportunities' or 'equal opportunity' means that employers may not use certain grounds for hiring or rejecting a candidate. Diversity management involves addressing perceived differences among people, such as age, race, religion, profession, sexual orientation, geographic origin, life style, and tenure with the organization. It is more than equal employment and affirmative action; it involves creating a supportive culture that values individuals and their diverse needs and contributions.

Ensuring EEO and creating a diverse work environment are crucial for organizational effectiveness. Most employees worldwide work in organizations with a diverse and multicultural dimension, working with customers, co-workers, suppliers, and business units with diverse cultural and social identities, ethnicities, and nationalities.

Embracing Diversity, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), and Affirmative Action (AA) are three components that organizations take to create Equity in the Workplace for their employees. Equity in the

workplace is characterized by a diverse productive workforce, an inclusive environment, a more equitable and accessible work environment, and a level playing field for employee success.

An overlap might be there between Diversity, EEO, and AA, but they refer generally to three different areas of activity.

- **Diversity** refers to unique human qualities that differ from our own and those of our groups. Embracing diversity involves a comprehensive organizational and managerial process that maximizes the potential of all employees by valuing diversity in dimensions such as age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities, race, sexual orientation, education, income, marital status, and job classification.

An approach that embraces diversity:

- Includes categories broader than those addressed by Affirmative Action (ethnicity, race, gender, disabled status and veteran status)
 - Focus on developing an environment that maximizes the potential of all employees by valuing diversity interpersonally and institutionally
 - Recognizes and profits from the increasing diversity of the workforce
- **Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)** refers to nondiscrimination in employment practices. It aims to eliminate discrimination in human resource policies and practices, and provides equal access and opportunity for all.
 - **Affirmative Action** involves good faith efforts to remedy underutilization. Widespread and diverse recruitment outreach. Job-related criteria with minimal adverse impact and fair evaluation of all job applicants.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Employment discrimination is defined as unjust actions against individuals or groups that deny them equality of treatment in employment (Dovidio and Hebl 2005). It can involve processes of prejudice, defined as attitudinal biases; and stereotyping, defined as cognitive distortions and ascription of characteristics to persons or groups who differ from one's own (Dipboye and Colella 2005). EEO activities focus on preventing job-related discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping. For Exemplary purposes, we draw on definitions from the USA, as it was one of the earliest countries to pass comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. The USA was also an early adopter of diversity initiatives that first became widespread in the late 1980s. The overall goal of equal employment opportunity policies and Practices is to prevent the type of any discrimination at all stages of the employment relationship including recruitment, hiring, promotion, and lay-offs.

Workforce diversity: is defined as variation of social and cultural identities among people existing together in a defined employment or market setting (Cox 1993). It is important to note that a firm can be diverse—have numerical representation of individuals from different backgrounds—but not necessarily be inclusive or multicultural. An inclusive workplace is one that values individual and group workforce differences, cooperates by addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups in the surrounding community, and collaborates with other entities across national and cultural boundaries (Mor Barak 2005).

A critical rationale for employers to implement EEO and diversity management strategies emanates from dramatic shifts in labor force demographics. Across a wide majority of nations, women's workforce participation rates continue to increase. In 2000, female labor force participation rates were 63 percent in the USA and averaged 45 percent in Europe, although with high variation across countries (UN 2000). In the USA, the participation rate of women is expected to grow faster than that of men over the period from

2002 to 2012: a 1 percent increase in the representation of women compared to a 1 percent decline for men (Labor Force 2003).

In developing nations, however, lower educational opportunities for women remain barriers to higher labor force participation (Weichsel baumer and Winter-Ebmer 2003). In the USA and other developed countries, the problem of reconciling work and family life is a growing issue affecting both men and women's employment experiences. Employers will need to be able to move beyond adopting formal work and family policies to create cultures that allow for workers with care giving demands to be included in mainstream corporate cultures (Kossek 2006).

In contrast, in developing countries, increased diversity will largely emanate from foreign employers seeking to hire unemployed and underemployed native workers. Employers who can effectively manage the distinct EEO and diversity issues related to demographic shifts in different labor markets in their domestic and global operations are likely to be regarded as employers of choice and attract the best talent. Organizational implications- Future research Selection practices to enhance organizational inclusiveness and justice perceptions. Kim and Gelf (2003), Rau and Adams(2005). Thomas and Wise (1999) Minority candidates and other targeted group members are more attracted to firms with minority recruiters and firms with an EEO/diversity statement, which can be affected by the presence of other supportive organizational policies. Targeted recruitment should focus on the combined, mutually reinforcing effects of recruiter characteristics and organizational policies on applicant attraction. Past research has often used student subjects in experimental laboratory research. This could be extended to field research using more relevant samples.

Management of diversity, multiculturalism, and workforce inclusion strategies are viewed as a proactive approach to EEO management. EEO historically has been more focused on legal compliance, or reacting to remedying past discrimination. The fundamental challenge employers face in implementing EEO practices is to not only ensure legal compliance but also to foster productivity, and to effectively link EEO activities to environmental changes such as demographic labor market shifts, globalization, and strategic business goals.

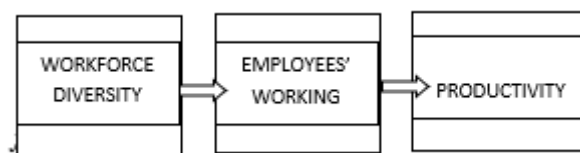


Fig.1: Impact of workforce diversity on productivity

III.OBJECTIVES

1. Understanding and defining Equal Employment, and understanding Diversity in the light of EEO in a developed country like US
2. To analyze whether the organization’s organizational recruitment strategy and diversity strategy are aligned and to ensure the talent acquisition processes and systems adopted by the organizations to is free of bias.
3. To examine whether EEO is just a matter of compliance or a genuine effort to promote a diverse work culture for the organizations.
4. To study the impact of Diverse workforce in an organization.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The methodology of this research was doctrinal including available literature and reports on the topic. Qualitative analysis of data was done, and inferences have been drawn from this analysis. Literature review is based on Published papers, reports and article based on diversity and EEO applicability in the US and India.

V. DATA COLLECTION

The study considered secondary data. The secondary data comprises of data from existing literature through literature review, websites of national organizations, government reports, journals, news and others.

VI. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1.Are the organization’s organizational recruitment strategy and diversity strategy aligned?

In today's interconnected world, diversity is a crucial aspect of modern society, influencing workplaces and societal dynamics. In the business environment, diversity encompasses more than just gender, race, ethnicity, and includes employees with diverse religious and political beliefs, education, socioeconomic backgrounds, sexual orientation, cultures, and disabilities. Companies are increasingly recognizing the benefits of promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace, which can lead to a more open, diverse, and inclusive society.

PWC conducted an international survey of executives responsible for diversity within their organizations, involving 328 respondents from 18 different countries and sectors. The study included 4,792 respondents from over 70 countries. The majority of respondents were currently employed or about to start their first job, with females accounting for 82% of the total. The study also revealed that 32% of the respondents were career starters, 52% were job movers, 8% were job hunters, and 8% were career returners.

The research analyzed the perceptions of talent from each of the four generations in the workforce: -4% Generation Z, -72% Millennials, -19% Generation X, and 5% Baby Boomers. The combined findings from these two studies provide insights into current trends in diversity and talent attraction, as well as the career aspirations and expectations of the modern workforce.

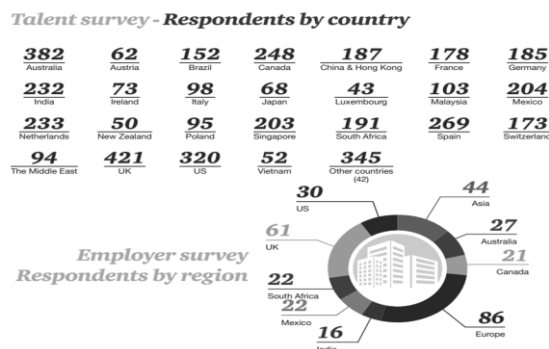


Fig.2: Survey Report (source: iwd-female-talent-report by pwc)

As per the report:

Inclusive recruitment practices currently being used by employers:

The three diversity practices that emerge from this research as the most popular are, firstly, ensuring the diversity of the interview panel or interviewers throughout the interviewing process (52%);

Secondly, training recruitment professionals so they are equipped to focus on driving more inclusive recruitment efforts (49%); and

Thirdly, reviewing role descriptions to ensure use of inclusive language (48%).

Has your organization introduced any of the following diversity practices?	Yes	No but exploring	No and not currently exploring
We train our recruitment professionals so they are equipped to focus on driving more inclusive recruitment efforts	49%	25%	20%
We ensure diversity of interview panel/interviewers throughout the interviewing process	52%	21%	23%
We review role descriptions to ensure use of inclusive language	48%	24%	21%
We have introduced ‘Blind’ applications (for example removed names, gender, age, university details from resume)	27%	24%	44%
We offer enhanced referral benefits for diverse hires as part of our employee referral scheme	28%	24%	41%
We offer head hunters/recruitment agencies enhanced commission for diverse hires	26%	21%	44%
We passively manage a diverse candidate pipeline of potential hires	36%	27%	29%

Table 1

The IWD report reveals that 71% of employers who have adopted diversity practices have seen an increase in female applicants, graduate hires, experienced hires, and external female leadership appointments. However, only 46% of employers have established diversity recruitment targets, suggesting the potential impact of gender targets could be significant. Establishing gender diversity recruitment targets was the most impactful practice, with 28% of respondents stating it was their most impactful practice. Despite significant efforts, less than half of organizations have adopted many of the fundamental practices identified as critical to enabling inclusive recruitment, and many organizations are unclear on which practices are having an impact. The potential impact of gender targets could be significant, as only 46% of employers have established such targets.

2. Which of the implemented diversity practices have had the most impact in delivering results?

Top five practices identified (as per the report) having most impact by respondents who said their adopted diversity practices were having a positive impact on their recruitment efforts:

Rank 1	Establishing gender diversity recruitment targets
Rank 2	Delivering diversity/ unconscious bias training to our interviewers
Rank 3	Establishing equality policies
Rank 4	Actively focusing on having an inclusive talent brand
Rank 5	Requiring mandatory diverse slates for open positions

Table 2

It is evident that candidates are increasingly seeking an accurate and honest impression of an employer's workplace experience and culture before making a decision to join them. They value an authentic picture

where the workforce reflects the society in which the organization operates and fosters an inclusive environment. Over half of women are looking for active diversity progress when deciding whether to work for an employer. In surveys, males (86%), and females (74%), respondents indicated that an employer's policy on diversity, equality, and workforce inclusion is given importance when deciding whether to work for the company. **(Source: The female millennial: A new era of talent, PwC 2015)**

3. What are the Best Practices and Strategies for Diversity Recruitment?

On studying the research on best practices in EEO strategies it suggests that workplace inclusion is most enhanced when recruitment and selection efforts incorporate multiple methods. This helps limit the risk of overly relying on a single recruitment method that doesn't effectively tap into ethnically and racially diverse talent pools. Advertising in the New York Times may not reach as many members of under-represented groups as using the Internet and radio. Selection decisions should not be based on performance in a single method, as it may have adverse impacts on a particular group. Instead, decisions should be based on good performance from several selection data sources, preventing weeding out members of a protected class due to lower performance on a single method.

There are many 'best practices' in developing a selection and recruitment process that promotes diversity and EEO effectiveness, employers are using various methods to attract a diverse talent pool. Some employers hire minority recruiters who mirror a more diverse applicant pool. Structured interview protocols are also effective because they ensure procedural consistency in the data collected from each applicant, and similarity in the interview experience. Publicizing statements of an organization's commitment to diversity in recruitment materials is also important to send a message of openness to individuals of many backgrounds.

One of the most popular HR strategies, diversity training, has also been found to be most effective when not only linked to general attitudinal change, such as understanding and valuing diversity, but also operationalized in terms of specific HR practices such as interviewing techniques or performance appraisals. Other effective practices include visible Diversity Advisory Committees comprised of respected leaders, mandatory training, and targeted communications to specific minority members (Jackson 2002).

Another practice involves mentoring programs that enable formal and informal knowledge to be shared and support leadership development socialization processes. Same-race and gender mentoring programs have the advantage of enabling individuals of similar background to share common workplace experiences and learn about what works well in the particular organizational culture. Cross-gender and race programs serve different goals. One rule, however, for mentoring programs is that they should not be forced (e.g. mentors and mentees should have some choice in the matching process), and there should be mutual rewards for participation.

4. EEO as a compliance as well as organizational objective to promote a diverse work culture?

HRM activity and strategy	Level of HRM strategy	Definition	Desired outcome
HR and organizational vision, mission	Organization	The ideal reason that the organization exists and the HR roadmap for how HR	•Organizational unity and commitment and productivity

and goal alignment		activities will fulfill its stated reason for existence in consideration of EEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee focus on organization's goals
Organizational learning	Organization	Shared organizational vocabulary, practices and venues that encourage open discussion among employees of different backgrounds, training and orientation programs, mentoring programs, conflict management programs, resources and materials that are adapted to workers of many backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of how EEO and diversity issues affect organizational effectiveness • Enhanced interpersonal relations among employees • Enhanced learning among employees and organizational groups • Increased number of employees across demographic backgrounds ready for advancement
Team-building	Group	Integration of traditional power holders in the organization with non-traditional workers from different backgrounds who are emerging as leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced interpersonal skills • Enhanced integration of diverse points of view into organization's processes and decisions
HR planning	Individual	Procedures designed to recruit and select women and people of color, clear articulation of the organization's recruitment and selection processes based on job-related criteria, clear articulation of organization's commitment to diversity in recruitment and selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased representation of women and people of color • Perceptions of fair procedures by all employees • Employee support of organization

Table 3: Source: Adapted from Kossek et al. 2006.

Employers should view increasing workforce diversity, fostering creativity, reducing conflict, improving attitudes, and cultural experiences as process-oriented or intermediate outcomes. These outcomes should not be the only end products of EEO strategies, but rather should be linked to key organizational outcomes such as being an employer of choice, increased cost effectiveness, market share, positive corporate reputations, and higher productivity.

Employer objectives and rhetoric regarding EEO and diversity activities evolve over time and can be classified across stages of development. Initially, most employers focus on compliance with legal mandates, then move on to more progressive goals, embracing diversity as a moral perspective. Progressive employers recognize that they need to leverage increased diversity to promote a competitive advantage over other businesses. Focusing on competitive advantage moves the effective implementation of EEO and diversity management into the strategic HRM domain, where policies and practices are linked to an organization's strategic goals to improve business performance.

However, many firms are still striving to better link EEO efforts to organizational performance. There is a spectrum of employers' levels of development, with some responding to or minimally complying with legal mandates, while others focus on incremental programs and policies as discrete ends. Under this later stage, employers are successful in making unitary changes, hiring employees who mirror customers' demographics, and achieving an interactive organizational change toward greater multiculturalism and learning.

Many Companies like AT&T, Marriott International, .and Accenture PLC have been recognized for their commitment to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. AT&T, a technology company, was ranked top on DiversityInc's Top 50 Companies for Diversity in 2019, thanks to CEO Randall Stephenson's advocacy for inclusion and diversity management. The company has a unbiased approach to graduate recruitment and senior hiring, allowing managers to recommend individuals through their app. They also encourage open communication about race, sexuality, and religion to increase mutual understanding among colleagues. Marriott International, a hospitality company, recently launched the Serve 360 plan, investing \$5m in training for women, people with disabilities, veterans, and refugees. Accenture, a professional services company, is often ranked among the top companies for diversity, largely due to gender representation within its workforce. The impact of diversity on the organizational economy and productivity has been a growing concern, with a survey of Human Resource professionals across OECD countries showing that around two in three firms consider diversity management more important in the past five years.

5. Impact on organisational economy and productivity?

As evident from above statements, with increasingly diverse societies, there has been a strong interest in better understanding whether and how diversity affects economic outcomes. Findings of a survey of Human Resource professionals across a range of countries show that participating firms have become increasingly concerned with this topic; around two in three think that the topic of diversity management has become more important in their firm in the past five years

Possible channels of influence of diversity on economic outcomes	
Potential positive channels	Potential negative channels
Within firm	
Creativity and innovative thinking: teams with diverse backgrounds, experiences and ideas	Lower productivity: e.g. due to communication difficulties
Positive self-selection: unobservable characteristics such as grit and determination to overcome additional hurdles, e.g. labour market discrimination; positive selection of who migrates	More intra-group conflict: e.g. due differences in worldviews, discrimination

made facilitation and new markets: easier access to markets abroad, better understanding of diverse customer base, new clients	
‘Spillovers’	
Increased availability of goods and services: e.g. catering to needs and consumption patterns of diverse clients	Lower preferences for redistribution: e.g. taxation, investments in public goods
Increased social cohesion: through stronger labor market inclusion and interactions at the workplace	Reduced trust and social interactions: e.g. perceptions of whether others can be generally trusted

Table 4: Source: Based on (Ozgen, 2018[1]).

Table 4 (above) highlights the main channels proposed on how diversity could positively or negatively impact outcomes at a firm level or affect societies more broadly. There is a large, multi-disciplinary interest on the impact of diversity, including the field of management and HR, psychology and economics, including labor economics, trade and the political economy literature.

In a similar study by Boston Consulting Group has found that companies with more diverse management teams have 19% higher revenues due to innovation. This finding is significant for tech companies, start-ups and industries where innovation is the key to growth. It shows that diversity is not just a metric to be strived for; it is actually an integral part of a successful revenue-generating business.

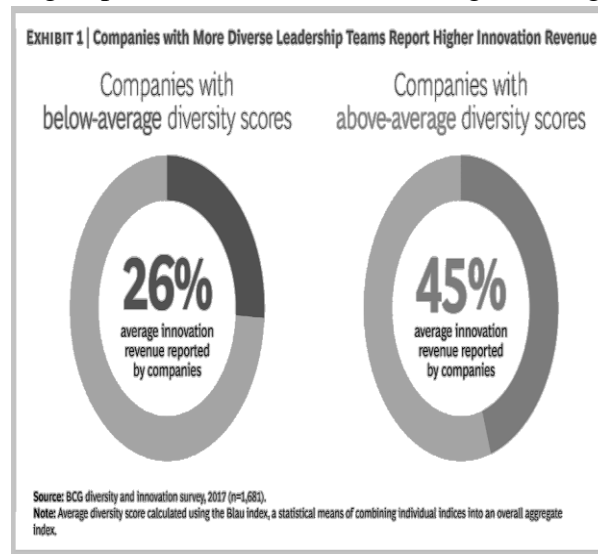


Fig 3: BCG Survey Report

VII. CONCLUSION

Talent diversity is a global priority for businesses, driving innovation, strengthening corporate brands, and enhancing customer satisfaction. Organizations must increase diversity recruitment, particularly at senior levels, to attract diverse candidates, especially female ones. This paper highlights the growing appetite among employers and the modern workforce for gender-inclusive recruitment. The recruitment function is being revolutionized by technology change, skills competition, and attracting a blend of traditional and contingent employees.

Inclusive recruitment is not only the right thing to do but also the smart thing to do. After onboarding, the hired talent requires development, engagement, progressing, and retention. Core concepts in Equal

Employment Opportunity (EEO) and diversity management are defined, and employer rationales, HR strategies, and outcomes from these activities are discussed.

Employees in different countries often define EEO and diversity differently, leading to different HR strategies to solve perceived problems and affect the perceived valence of preferred solutions. Research suggests that EEO best practices involve clear and transparent HR procedures and decision-making processes grounded in prevention of adverse treatment and impact. Adopting EEO policies to comply with legal standards is a critical first step in effective diversity management. However, the presence of policies does not necessarily foster deep cultural change or commitment to widespread implementation and integration of diversity initiatives without top management commitment and leadership.

Employers gain the greatest benefits from EEO activities as they learn to hire, effectively develop, and utilize the potential of individuals from various backgrounds, linking these HR initiatives to their strategic and business objectives.

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