

EDITORIAL

Diversity, Inclusion, and Human Resource Management: A call for more belongingness and intersectionality research

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In this editorial, we present a set of articles that continue to interrogate and contribute to the concept of diversity, inclusion, and the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in managing diversity and fostering inclusion in the workplace. We conclude with a call for more research on belongingness (i.e., a desire to gain a sense of social acceptance and validation, to build lasting and profound connections with others; Bryer, 2020) and intersectionality (i.e., an individual's embodiment of multiple dimensions of diversity; Köllen, 2021; Talwar, 2010).

Drawing on social categorization theory (Turner, et al., 1987), social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004), the term *Diversity* refers the coexistence of human differences (including their intersectionality) on the grounds of colour, race, ethnicity, gender, identity, age, physical attributes, ethical values, nationality, education, experiences, knowledge base (Kaur & Arora, 2020; see also Milliken & Martins, 1996), status, expertise or style (Jackson, Stone, & Alvarez, 1993), functional background and tenure (Wiersema & Bird, 1993), personality, knowledge and skills, differences in social and network ties (Mannix & Neale, 2005), sexual orientation (Byington, Tamm, & Trau, 2021), physical ability/disability (Bainbridge & Fujimoto, 2018), religion (Héliot, Gleibs, Coyle, Rousseau, & Rojon, 2020), and neurodiversity (Bruyère & Colella, 2022). Altogether, Williams and O'Reilly (1998) conclude that diversity refers to 'any attribute people use to tell themselves that another person is different' (p. 81).

Researchers also see diversity as more than a set of a priori social demographic characteristics but as an organizational-specific understanding of diversity that is predicated on the ways in which employees' social cultural, social economic, and demographic differences impact work negatively or positively, all of which may, in turn, shape the approaches to the way organizations manage differences (Janssens & Zanoni, 2005).

In addition, we are aware that the outcomes of diversity (especially in teams and workgroups) are mixed. For example, while there is evidence that heterogenous than homogeneous workgroups are linked with innovation (Schubert & Tavassoli, 2020), quality decision-making (Gomez & Bernet, 2019), creativity (Aggarwal & Woolley, 2019), and problem solving (Cox & Blake, 1991), they are also connected with lower levels of cohesion, satisfaction (Good & Nelson, 1971), and conflict (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012) in workgroups. To overcome the inconsistent relationship between workgroup diversity and performance, Van Knippenberg, Van Knippenberg, De Cremer, and Hogg (2004) proposed a categorization-elaboration model, which addresses the combined effects of diversity on group performance by integrating theoretically the positive and negative perspectives of diversity into a unified framework. In this regard, categorization-elaboration model incorporated social categorization and

information decision-making theory to assist in a deeper understanding of the impact of diversity, especially in team environments.

While the concept of diversity continues to be refined, the management of workplace diversity doggedly remains a challenge for organizational leadership, managers, and HR professionals in the 21st century. Further to the mixed findings for the construct of diversity in the workplace (Roberson, 2019), recent studies suggest that new challenges are emerging. More specifically, and as echoed in recent social movements such as ‘#Black life matters’ and ‘#ME too’, the challenges related to diversity, we believe, include systemic inequality, inclusion, and problems related to intersectionality. In this respect, the promise of diversity and its reality (Mannix & Neale, 2005) seem to be incongruent as the achievement of the promise of diversity continues to be elusive. While inequality refers to the uneven distribution of individuals’ access to financial and non-financial resources in society (Bapuji, Husted, Lu, & Mir, 2018) and organizations, inclusion is related to the collaborative environment that enhances belongingness, participation, and contribution (Kaur & Arora, 2020). In addition, and as earlier established, intersectionality describes everyone’s embodiment of at least one manifestation of every dimension of diversity (Köllen, 2021) that ‘are simultaneously expressed’ (Talwar, 2010, p.15). In sum, these three key challenges continue to plague organizations and have a lot of implications for organizational HRM. Yet, clearer HRM intentions and practices are yet to be prioritized in workplace diversity, inclusion, and intersectionality research. In this issue (29.6), we contribute to the current discussion on the challenges plaguing organizations with respect to diversity, equality, inclusion, and intersectionality and the role of HR practices in minimizing these challenges.

Diversity

We have previously shown that diversity includes the coexistence of employees with a wide variety of sociocultural, socio-economic, and demographic attributes (Roberson, 2019). With hundreds of articles, *Journal of Management & Organization* continues to probe the issue of diversity and its management in organizations in atypical contexts outside the UK and USA, such as Italy, New Zealand, and Turkey (see, e.g., Galbreath, Lucianetti, Tisch, & Thomas, 2022; Ngocha-Chaderopa & Boon, 2016; Özbilgin & Yalkin, 2019; Waisman-Nitzan, Gal, & Schreuer, 2019).

In this issue (29.6), we first explore the concept of general diversity, namely values, beliefs, ethnic minorities, and gender. In their article, ‘Perceived value-congruence and employees change beliefs’, Rahn, Soutar, and Lee investigate the effects that employees’ perceived values-congruence with their organisation, supervisor and colleagues had on the beliefs about an organisational change implementation. Data from 251 respondents show that all three types of perceived values-congruence (i.e., congruence with their organization, supervisor, and colleagues) affect the change-related beliefs, while a strong support is found for the mediation role of trust and the quality of communication.

Pio, Kristjánsdóttir, and Christiansen, in their article ‘Glass hearts?! Successful visible ethnic minority women migrants at work in Iceland and New Zealand’, compare how visible ethnic women migrants experience their journey to professional success in these two countries. For visible ethnic women migrants in Iceland, success means independence, hard work, and alignment with other women, whereas in New Zealand, success is experienced through religion and giving back to the community. These differences are explored and theorized, contributing to an expanding literature on migrants’ complexities that surpass monolithic representations of gender at work.

Still on gender diversity, Abbey and Adu-Danso, in their article ‘Gender diversity and productivity in manufacturing firms: evidence from six Sub-Saharan African (SSA)’, revisit the relationship between gender diversity and firm productivity using data from 1,082 manufacturing firms in six sub-Saharan African countries. They test the gender diversity–productivity proposition by exploring structural differences (heterogeneity) across manufacturing firms using the industries without smokestacks classification. Their findings suggest that gender diversity promotes firm productivity at lower levels, whereas the industries without smokestacks firms do nothing better in promoting the diversity–productivity link.

Additionally, and in their paper, 'Effects of board gender diversity and sustainability committees on environmental performance: a quantile regression approach', Muhammad and Migliori investigate the effect of board gender diversity and sustainability committees on environmental performance in Italy. Using a quantile regression approach and a sample of publicly listed firms, their findings reveal that board gender diversity and sustainability committees are positively related to environmental performance. Also, large Italian firms with three female directors maintain a stronger attitude towards environmental sustainability.

Biloslavo, Edgar, and Rusjan picked up on the thread of diversity, but from a different angle. Their paper, 'Categorisation of organisation dualities using the Delphi technique', presents the case of a non-traditional use of the Delphi method to explore organizational duality and to reach a consensus on the 23 organizational dualities. This, in turn, allows for a classification into a three-tier organizational policy model. Their research advances conversations in strategic management while increasing confidence in the adoption of the Delphi within both interpretivist studies and paradox research.

Next, we move to the strand of *identity* within the theme of diversity. In their article, 'An interprofessional perspective on healthcare work: physicians and nurses co-constructing identities and spaces of action', Lokatt, Holgersson, Lindgren, Packendorff, and Hagander examine how professional identities are invoked, constructed, and reconstructed in everyday work interactions. An analysis of their qualitative data from interviews and participant observation at a large Swedish hospital suggests three main processes in the construction of a space of action: hierarchical, inclusive, and pseudo-inclusive. In these interactions, existing inter-professional divides and power relations are sustained, preventing the development of integrated inter-professional teamwork.

Moreover, Zhou, Dou, and Wang, in their article 'A double-edged sword: when does identity threat affect unethical behaviour?', propose and test the role of publicness of identity threat and unethical behaviour. Data from one online experiment with 197 participants (mixed design) and one laboratory experiment with 86 participants (between-subject design) reveal that when individuals' identity threat is from the public sphere, it increases their unethical behaviour, but when the threat is from the private sphere, their unethical behaviour decreases. The theoretical and practical implications of their results are discussed.

So far, the above articles have demonstrated, across contexts, the complex interplay between diversity indices of values, gender, identity, and power relations that need to be carefully considered to enact inclusive HRM practices for more diverse and inclusive workplaces.

Inclusion

While diversity speaks to employees' differences, inclusion is about synergizing those differences to bring more meaning and collaboration (Roberson, 2020) at work. It is concerned with creating a culture (internal processes, practices, and policies) where all employees (including diverse employees) have an opportunity to be included in their organizations (Nishii, 2013). This suggests that inclusion is the essential lubricant in the wheel of effective workplace diversity management. It describes the optimum utilization of differences in the workforce for the growth and success of organization (Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion, 2017). Moreover, it involves the provision of a perception of involvement, empowerment, recognition, integration, and respect to people with differences (Mor Barak & Daya, 2013), while encouraging and promoting diversity for fruitful and beneficial results (Global Diversity Practice, 2017) such that the richness of ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives are harnessed to create business value (Kaur & Arora, 2020).

In our issue (29.6), we engage the challenge of inclusion in organizations. For example, the article 'Influence of work design and work status on part-time employees' inclusion and work engagement: some Australian evidence' by Sarich, Kiffin-Petersen, and Soutar, examines the relationships between work design factors and inclusion for part-time (PT) employees and identifies how perceived inclusion and work engagement of PT and involuntary PT employees compares with full-time employees. Using data from an online questionnaire in Australia, a PT work design model is developed and tested

across two independent samples using partial least squares. Results suggest that PT and involuntary PT employees feel less included in the workplace compared to full-time employees. In addition, PT employees' perceived inclusion is related to proactive behaviours, autonomy, and job crafting. Implications for the management of PT employees are discussed.

Still on the theme of inclusion, Griffiths, Pio, and McGhee investigate inclusion champions in organizations. Specifically, in their article, 'Tempered radicals in manufacturing: Invisible champions of inclusion,' the authors examine how tempered radicals (i.e., acutely attuned to individual difference) use their abilities as change agents to foster inclusion. Based on 24 qualitative interviews using a narrative inquiry methodology, this study proposes a framework to illustrate the key characteristics (e.g., being different from the dominant culture of the organization/society, being true to their values and identity, and implementing disruption and change) of the tempered radical for fostering inclusion in the workplace. This finding connotes the critical role of champions' individuality for increasing inclusion in organizations.

The article 'Creating an age-inclusive workplace: The impact of HR practices on employee work engagement' is our last in this issue. In this article, the authors Fan, Song, Fang, and Chen draw on social exchange theory to examine how age-inclusive HR practices impact work engagement by shaping the age-diversity climate and perceived organizational support (POS). Their analysis of a sample of 983 employees from 48 organizations in China highlights the direct impact of age-inclusive HR practices on work engagement. Moreover, age-diversity climate and perceived organizational support mediate the association between age-inclusive HR practices and work engagement. Finally, their results demonstrate that diversity beliefs play a moderating role in the association between age-inclusive HR practices and perceived organizational support. We have so far emphasized the connection between diversity and inclusion and have alluded to the importance of HRM interventions in working with diverse individuals regardless of their looks, demographic indices, and identity to create a more inclusive workplace. Below, we reflect on diversity, inclusion, and their connection with HRM.

Diversity, inclusion, and HRM

A critical issue in diversity and inclusion for contemporary organizations is the effective management of diversity, especially to bring relief to the 'pains' of employees that are associated with some form of diversity to achieve the promise of diversity. To do this, organizations continue to invest hugely in the management of diversity (through HRM practices) with the goal to enhance the performance of a heterogeneous workforce and the inclusive development of people with differences (Yadav & Lenka, 2020). In this respect, there are suggestions that the individuals who are representative of diversity indices must be acknowledged for their holistic development (Yadav & Lenka, 2023) and contributions to their respective organizations.

Thomas (1992) refers to diversity management as a business model that informs organization strategies on recruitment, retention, and inclusive development of individuals from a variety of backgrounds. Building on earlier affirmative actions (Edelman, Fuller, & Mara-Drita, 2001; Oppenheimer, 2016), diversity management also connotes an aspect of HRM charged with implementing measures that will make the organizational more diverse and/or address how to make the workplace more inclusive (Köllen, 2021).

In this regard, diversity management HR practices play a significant role in embedding diversity in organizations while ensuring inclusion experiences of diverse others in the workplace to ensure fair processes and outcomes (Fujimoto, Härtel, & Azmat, 2013). On this note, Nkomo, Bell, Roberts, Joshi, and Thatcher (2019) suggest that diversity is at a critical juncture and needs more research on generating a knowledge of the mechanisms, processes, or practices that foster equality and inclusion in the workplace. Along the same line, Shore, Cleveland, and Sanchez (2018) suggest that an inclusive organization is one with inclusion practices and processes that are core to the fabric of the organization. Such inclusive organizations will embrace the synergy in the inclusive climate, inclusion practices,

perceived organization inclusion, leader inclusion, and work group inclusion. In fact, Ferdman (2017) sums it up succinctly, 'In inclusive organizations ... people of all identities and many styles can be fully themselves while also contributing to the larger collective, as valued and full members' (p. 235).

Yet, there is a substantial, persistently and disturbing mounting evidence about economic inequality (Nkomo et al., 2019), discrimination (differential treatment of individuals on the basis of their assumed or actual group membership or social identity or when persons in a social category are put at a disadvantage in the workplace relative to other groups with comparable potential or proven success; Dipboye & Halverson, 2004; DiTomaso, 2015), loneliness (an experience of a deficit between actual social relationships and desired social relationship in quality and in quantity; Perlman & Peplau, 1981), social isolation (a lack of social contacts in terms of social network size, diversity, or frequency; de Jong-gierveld, van Tilburg, & Dykstra, 2006), and ostracism/exclusion (the feeling of being overlooked or ignored/excluded by others; Ferris, Brown, Berry, & Lian, 2008; Sharma & Dhar, 2022) that require more targeted HR inclusive practices for amelioration. The above issues remain a real challenge in organizations. To minimize these challenges, we argue that HR practices in managing diversity should include belongingness. While the term belonging may be well-researched in other social science fields, it has attracted much less attention in the HRM field (e.g., McClure & Brown, 2008; Seriwatana & Charoensukmongkol, 2021). More research is needed on belongingness as an anchor of HRM studies to promote inclusive organizations.

In this regard, we advocate for more proactive and specific inclusive HRM research and practices targeting marginalized groups in various contexts and to confront the complexities in managing diversity and inclusion amidst an increasingly heterogeneous and complex world. This would require researchers and practitioners to enact inclusive HRM consciously and aggressively for marginalized social groups in specific contexts. Inclusive HRM may encompass practices ranging from recruitment (e.g., of people of colour, promotion of women, and ethnic minorities), training (Alhejji, Garavan, Carbery, O'Brien, & McGuire, 2016), and organizational diversity learning to performance appraisals and rewards. These practices can be customized for specific marginalized groups to address types of inequality, such as ensuring fair pay for heavy workloads among low-income factory workers and developing inclusive leadership for individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds (Fujimoto, Ferdous, & Wali, 2023).

On a similar note, equality is also a persistent challenge (Buckley, Doh, & Benischke, 2017; Özbilgin & Erbil, 2021). Workplace equity refers to resources and the need to provide additional or alternative resources so that all groups can reach comparable, favourable outcomes (Fujimoto, Härtel, & Azmat, 2013). However, equal access and opportunity in organizations still seem a distance away (Catalyst, 2005). The above raises a question as to whether the HR diversity management programmes are just a mere 'lip service'. In this regard, researchers (e.g., Cooke, Dickmann, & Parry, 2023) have called for new research from the perspectives of those with such lived experience to understand and help provide HR support to overcome these challenges. Altogether, we reiterate Cooke, Dickmann, and Parry's (2023) proposal of a human-centred approach to HRM and a call for more HRM research to be more practice-oriented to enhance its relevance to business, community, and society (Cooke et al., 2022).

Perhaps there is inequity in the way researchers engage the different indices of diversity. While there is a substantial work in diversity, equality, and inclusion, some aspects (e.g., neurodiversity; Doyle, 2020) need more attention. Neurodiversity refers to a range of neuro-cognitive developmental conditions such as autism-spectrum disorders, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, and Tourette syndrome (Hennekam et al., 2022). More research is needed in this area to have a more in-depth understanding of how this category of people can be supported in organizations through HR practices.

Finally, we call for more research on *intersectionality* in diversity research. Proponents of intersectionality research (e.g., Davis, 2008) describe it as a study of the 'interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual's lives, social practices, institutional arrangement and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of this interaction in terms of power' (p. 68). For example,

intersectionality encompasses where individuals are part of diverse communities, such as when they are women, black, and/or neurodiverse. More studies are needed in this area to empirically unpack the lived experience of these diverse employees that may be caught up with multiple dimensions of diversity in organizations and how HR practices can assist in promoting their development, growth, and sense of belonging while fostering their inclusion at work.

Conclusion

Diversity and inclusion continue to be a major challenge in contemporary organizations. The increasing global trend in social movements suggests that these challenges are not waning, and organizations are facing pressure to manage diversity effectively, especially in the face of rising global geopolitical tensions. The papers included in this issue (29.6) contribute to the debate in this area. While these articles have not spoken directly to diversity management, we have attempted to connect the issues raised in the papers to diversity management through HR practices. In sum, we call for more research in diversity management and HR practices that genuinely and transparently promote equality, inclusion, belongingness, and intersectionality at work.

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