

# Diversity Change Agents at Corporate Level

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**Abstract**— The aim of this study is “to investigate the change agents at corporate level”. 240 participants were selected from two industries; Services & Manufacturing Industries, aged 24-45. It was hypothesized that “diversity change agent would be present more in service industries as compared to manufacturing industries”. Results support the hypothesis ( $t=8.54$ ,  $df=238$ ). Demographic sheet was used to collect personal information of participants. Diversity Change Agent Questionnaire was used to identify diversity change agents, developed by Lee Gardenswartz and Anita Rowe. SPSS was used for statistical analysis.

**Index Terms**—Behaviour, change agents, corporate culture, diversity, diversity management, employees, manufacturing industries, service industries stereotypes, workforce

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This paper investigates the diversity management at corporate level and argues how an organization can manage diversity effectively. Diversity refers to a diversity within a workforce, differences in easily perceived characteristics, such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, or disability, that do not necessarily reflect the ways people think or feel but that may activate certain stereotypes **Robbins, Judge & Vohra**[1]. Workplace diversity refers to the variety of differences between people in an organization and it's not only involves how people perceive themselves, but how they perceive others. Those perceptions affect their interactions **Greenberg**[2]. Many researchers focus on questions that arise when the workforce is acknowledged as a heterogeneous mix of people with different backgrounds, experiences, values, and identities **Joshi & Jackson**[3].

Diversity has a direct link to stereotypes, a distorted perception about a group, ethnic group or culture, such as “women are so emotional” or “Cricket players are stupid”. Stereotypes can be defined as a generalization usually exaggerated or oversimplified and often offensive, that is used to describe or distinguish a group **The American Heritage** [4]. Gender issues can strongly affect diversity. There are a lot of gender issues like; communication styles and decisions, perceptions attitudes, opportunities, judgments and even sexual harassment. Race can also affect on diversity and it's defined as a group of people sharing a general geographic origin that genetically spread physical characteristics. These innate characteristics affect an individual's behavior, performance and abilities. Cultural issues may also affect diversity as a group of people have different backgrounds. They have their own standards of social communication, values and beliefs. It can influence employee relationships through different kind of communication or family and can appear to be with different justifications for better treatment. Research indicates that multiculturalism presents several challenges in the workplace **D'Netto et al.** [5].

They have their own standards of social communication, values and beliefs. It can influence employee relationships through different kind of communication or family and can appear to be with different justifications for better treatment. Research indicates that multiculturalism presents several challenges in the workplace **D'Netto et al.** [5]. Age can be an alarm for increasing diversity issue. As senior employees don't want to see active and fresh talent in front of them, they usually throw bad or negative comment on young or junior employees. It also produces communication gap based on different levels of knowledge, understanding and experience, and for prejudicial behavior based on age. Thus, there are many factors that can make reason for increasing diversity. International migration and globalization, this human capital has become extremely diverse. Narrow definitions tend to define diversity in terms of race, gender and ethnicity **D'Netto et al.** [5]. Employees who believe their employer discriminates against people based on their ethnicity experience stress and low commitment (**Sanchez & Brock** [6]. Diversity management is closely related to the Human Resource function. HR diversity management practices have significant impact on employees, especially employees from different ethnic backgrounds **D'Netto et al.** [5]. HRM is a set of distinctive activities, functions and processes that are directed at attracting, directing and maintaining an organization's human resources **Lado & Wilson** [7]. Several theories discusses how does successful change happen. **Kritsonis** [8] discussed the seven step theory. **Lippitt, Watson, and Westley** [9] created a seven-step theory that focuses more on the role and responsibility of the change agent than on the evolution of the change itself. Information is continuously exchanged throughout the process. The seven steps are: Diagnose the problem, assess the motivation and capacity for change, and assess the resources and motivation of the change agent. This includes the change agent's commitment to change, power, and stamina, choose progressive change objects. In this step, action plans are developed and strategies are established, the role of the change agents should be selected and clearly understood by all parties so that expectations are clear. Examples of roles are: cheer-

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leader, facilitator, and expert, Maintain the change, Communication, feedback, and group coordination are essential elements in this step of the change process, gradually terminate from the helping relationship. The change agent should gradually withdraw from their role over time. This will occur when the change becomes part of the organizational culture.

A manager should understand these issues and should be able to create workplaces where employees from all backgrounds fully utilize their skills and feel personally comfortable. An achievement oriented organization depends primarily on a dynamic human resource with the required skill sets, diversified knowledge, and updated skills to ensure that it is adequately trained to accomplish its goals and achieve its objectives. According to **Government Accountability Office (GAO)**, combination of the identified practices should be considered when an organization is developing and implementing diversity management. They also identify nine practices for leading diversity management; Top leadership commitment, Diversity as part of an organization's strategic plan, Diversity linked to performance, Measurement, Accountability, Succession planning, Recruitment, Employee involvement and Diversity training **GAO, 2005**[10]. A High-performance organization should provide insight to their employees about diversity and challenge to strengthen or develop their own diversity management initiatives. An effective management should understand the necessity of managing diversity. According to **Jackson & Alvarez** [11] many US employers now view managing diversity as a business necessity. Successful organizations recognize the need for immediate action and are ready and willing to spend resources on managing diversity in the workplace now **Greenberg** [2]. An effective management must think about diversity as diversity can creates a gap in communication. Diversity is not based on just race and gender, there are many other factors that affect diversity and manager should recognize those factors in order to gain high performance. A manager needs to recognize the diversity of each employee in order to achieve unity of common goals without demolishing the individuality of any person. Dissimilarity often promotes conflict **Jehn** [12]; **Knight et al.** [13]; **Pelled, Eisenhardt & Xin** [14]. It is estimated that organizations spend \$8 billion annually on diversity training **Hansen** [15]. A manager must be able to utilize the resources of organization to make efforts in effectively training awareness of diversity in organization and develop a atmosphere in which all employees can work together and strengthen helping relationships to accomplish a goal or objective and become a problem solver during negotiation. A study found that, Positive feelings such as attraction promote helping behavior and generosity, cooperation and a problem-solving orientation during negotiations **Isen & Baron** [16]. Pakistan is the country having large amount of industries in different major cities. Industries can break in to two sectors; manufacturing and services sector. Researches suggested the appropriate variable of industry type (services vs. manufacturing) as a moderator. Jackson and Schuler defined industry as 'a distinct group of productive or profit-making enterprises' (1995: 251). The most fundamental differences in the nature of business lie between firms in the services industry and firms in the manufacturing industry

**Jackson, Schuler, & Rivero** [17]& **Morris and Fuller** [18] stated that industrial services have more stable and practicable demand patterns, involve long term, ongoing relationships and a fairly formal buying process catered to meeting the customer's more precise service expectations. **Jackson and Cooper** [19] state industrial services are distinguished from consumer services by two characteristics, specialization and technology. In comparison to manufacturing firms, market insight is more important in services firms, because servicemarketing requires cultural knowledge of the target segment **Richard** [20]. Diversity can be a source of market insight, creativity and innovation, and improved problem-solving **Cox & Blake** [21]; **McMahan et al.** [22]. Effective HR diversity management practices in training and development including coaching, open communications, interactive listening and challenging assignments reduce the negative effects of racial diversity on constructive group processes **Kochan et al.** [23]. Diversity is often viewed as a "double edged sword" which can yield both negative and positive outcomes **Milliken & Martins** [24]. Demographic diversity unleashes creativity, innovation, and improved group problem solving, which in turn enhances the competitiveness of the organization. Persons working with dissimilar others are likely to show lower commitment to the organization, express less satisfaction, perceive more discrimination, and display a variety of other negative behavioral and attitudinal outcomes **Michele E. A. Jayne and Robert L. Dipboye (2004)** [25]. Another research shown those workings with dissimilars is often associated with negative outcomes **Riordan** [26]; **Williams & O'Reilly** [27]. Some research has identified benefits of demographic heterogeneity on workgroup outcomes such as creativity and innovation **Bantel & Jackson** [28]. Every person has a control on his behavior, resources, and skills necessary to perform a desired behavior. The **theory of reasoned action states** that "individual performance of a given behavior is primarily determined by a person's intention to perform that behavior." There are two major factors that shape the individual's attention. First, the individual's attitude towards the desired behavior must be positive for change to occur. Second, the influence of the person's social environment or subjective norm is another factor that shapes the individual's attention **Kritsonis** [8]. It is also important for managers and organizations to recognize that a team's ability to leverage and capitalize on its diversity may take time **Jayne & Dipboye** [29]. Pakistan can be called as a multicultural society. Pakistan is infested with a diverse culture and several ethnic groups in respect to dress, demography, food, language and religion. The presence of this diversity can also be traced to the presence of indigenous pre-Islamic customs which differ from Islamic practices and this diversity can also be seen in organizations. English is the official language in Pakistan but the national language Urdu is widely spoken and understood. The other languages such as Pashto, Sindhi, Balochi, Kashmiri and Saraiki are regional languages. Pakistani society is a "male-dominated patriarchal society" where males are given optimum importance and respect. The family is headed by a male member who happens to be the oldest member of the family. Elderly males are given positions of repute, honor and prestige. The need of the hour in Pakistani society is the increasing

of awareness among the common masses regarding embracing diversity which will allow them to accept diversity with grace. The organizational culture will be boosted resulting in positive outcomes and this will also enhance innovation in the organization if diversity is accepted. The purpose of this study is to identify the change agent of diversity and to increase awareness among people to accept diversity. "In the light of above literature, it was hypothesized that, diversity change agent would be present more in service industries as compared to manufacturing industries."

## 2 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Sample

The study was conducted on 240 employees from two industries; Services industries and Manufacturing industries in order to make comparison between both industries. Stratified sampling techniques were used to collect required sample. Educational criteria was graduation to masters, aged 25-45. They all were married and had different backgrounds (races & ethnicity). Pakistan is a Muslim state so in this study found 90% Muslims and 10% minority. Males were slightly high (62%) in this study as females are less participated in workplace due to certain stereotypes. They had no physical and psychological disability. Approximately 650 employees were selected by using stratified sampling technique and received an invitation letter via e-mail. Approximately 500 employees who showed their interest to participate received survey questionnaire. A total of 265 participants finally served as voluntary participants. Through an appropriate data screening process, 25 incomplete cases were deleted. Consequently, 240 completed cases were collected from Services and Manufacturing Industries. Therefore, the response rate was approximately 36%.

### 2.2 Measures

Demographic sheet was used to collect demographic information in which included Industry type, Age, Marital status, Education, Race, Ethnic group, physical & psychological disability. Diversity Change Agent Questionnaire was used to identify diversity change agents, developed by Lee Gardenswartz and Anita Rowe (they did not remember the year in which they developed this Questionnaire, also see appendix). The questionnaire does not have any reliability or validity statistics as it was developed as a personal growth tool. This questionnaire assess oneself as a change agent and its used with those who see their role as change agents regarding diversity and is most effective when combined with information about long-term change processes and the role as facilitators in making change happen.

### 2.3 Procedures

For data collection, verbal consent was taken from all participants as per the ethical principles. Demographic sheet was used to collect personal information. After screening them on the basis of demographic information, they were asked to rate themselves on Online Diversity Change Agent Questionnaire (Gardenswartz and Rowe). After completing the research, as

the part of debriefing, the results were share with the participants.

## 2.4 Results

Results support the hypothesis ( $t=8.54$ ,  $df=238$ ). It was hypothesized that "In the light of above literature, it was hypothesized that, diversity change agent would be present more in service industries as compared to manufacturing industries. Results shows significant difference (see table 01 & 02). According to results diversity change agents are present more in services industries as their scores was higher than manufacturing industries.

## 3 DISCUSSION

Many researches and theories suggested some essential conditions necessary to handle diversity programmes effectively and obtain organizational profits. HR department is like a backbone for the organizations and HR managers can play an efficient role to manage diversity skillfully and increase the constructive outcomes. Diversity help organizations perform better **Jane & Dipboye** [25].

Services and manufacturing industries both facing diversity related issues. In services sector, employees are more engage with customers and have face to face communication with customers. They try to satisfy their customers according to their demands and needs. As they are working on services are and give their best services to their customers. In contrast, manufacturing sector's employees have more concern with their colleagues and co-workers and they are more focused on their targets and goals. They are emphasizing on team work in order to gain organizational goals and it shows that due to more communication with customers, services sector's employees learned how to deal with diverse population and unconsciously they got higher understanding to deal with diversity. They have to strong communication skills as they have continuously interaction with their customers.

Organizations spent a big amount on diversity management program, including enthusiastic diversity management staffs and workplace programs and benefits such as flexible work hours and flexible work arrangements, security and any other benefits. It is estimated that organizations spend \$8 billion annually on diversity training **Hansen** [15].

Diversity in the workplace means bringing together people of different ethnic backgrounds, religions and age groups into a unified workforce dedicated towards organization's benefit. The modern enhancement in the technology through discovery of internet and cellular phones has made the market a more universal phenomenon. In regard to achieving continuous success, an organization needs to transform its diverse workforce into a cohesive unit by managing it properly. Managing diversity should be instilled in the whole organization as a part of company policy. Organizations can manage diversity through the following steps:-

STEP 1- Assuring that all the policies related to the workforce from hiring to appraisals to salary increment keeping away



from allowing tenure, ethnic backgrounds or any other kind of category to the workforce of the organization. Diversity management starts with implementation of strong policies of equality from the company. If these measures are implemented at the base level then the company can start implementing other policies through the organization.

STEP 2- Rating the qualification of an employee on the merit and quality of his experience not age, ethnicity or any other condition while hiring. When the company inducts a diverse but a qualified workforce, then the company is on the right track of achieving the desired results.

STEP 3- Encouraging diversity through creating teams and work groups of different personnel within the company.

STEP 4- Addressing the complaints of favoritism or discrimination seriously. Encourage employees to report all instances of discriminatory attitude and have a proper complaint addressable cell in dealing with instances of discrimination

STEP 5- Conduction of quarterly workshops of workers on the benefits of diversity in the workplace. Encouraging brainstorming sessions among employees to find out more solutions regarding management of diversity

The advantage of having a skilled workforce from different backgrounds and different ethnicities in terms of demographics and capabilities helps produce better results, create strong bonds between the business and the target consumers and helps companies penetrate new avenues in the market. Recruiting, retaining, promoting employees from different backgrounds is important achieving success in this constantly evolving market place.

One of the advantages of diversity in a workplace is increased productivity with the induction of new processes in the organization through the diversified workforce. New processes can result only workers from varied backgrounds are inducted in the organization resulting in birth of new ideas which are brought by multiple skill bought by the diversified workforce .A diversified workforce coming from myriad ethnic backgrounds results in cross-cultural thinking by adapting quickly to a new environment of the organization resulting in increased productivity

Productivity increases when the diversity of the organization is managed properly as workers from varied backgrounds are dedicated towards achieving a single point agenda. A more diverse personnel force, well-managed and skilled can eradicate disharmony, strengthen performance which in turn can enhance performance with result being increased productivity. This helps the organization achieve breakthrough in new customer markets which helps in more productivity. Managing diversity is beneficial to both the organization and the workforce as has been noted above as diversified workforce brings out of the box thinking leading to innovation which helps in entering new market segments increasing the productivity exponentially.

Every organization has a dominant part of diversity, e.g. evidence of the movement toward "inclusion" as a diversity strategy is revealed in a Human Resources Institute (2003) report of findings from a 2001 survey of Fortune 1000 companies: 96% of respondents said they provide diversity training

on race, 88% on gender, 85% on ethnicity, 65% on age, 64% on disability, 57% on sexual orientation, and 54% on religion **Jane & Dipboye**[25]. In this study, results shows no gender differences in diversity change agents (also see table no. 03). Both equally participated in diversity related issues but we cannot forget this point that males are slightly high in this study as Pakistan has patriarchal society. Males are more dominant as compare to females. People have many stereotypes for working women and usually they give up or do not get good jobs and designations. According to **Augustin**[29], many of the biggest workplace challenges facing women today still revolve around gender. Over the years, even though women have long yearned to be in the workplace, some of their choices have not come without disappointment.

Pakistan is an Islamic state with about 98% Muslims and 2% religious minorities including Christian, Hindu, Parsi **Naeem et al** [30] (Also see table no. 03). This study also found this difference; 90% were Muslims and 10% were Minorities were participated.

Now days, every organization is facing troubles related to diversity. An effective and strong management should recognize that employees are different from each other and if these differences are properly managed then organization will be able to done work more competently and effectively. Human beings are the most precious asset for organizations and managers have to recognize the differences between employees instead of focus on issues of discrimination. As a result, organization will get more productive environment in which all employees have an equal chance to grow their selves and feel valuable where they will freely utilize their talent in order to achieve organizational targets.

Organizations should make policies to manage diversity in which they accept individual, cultural and demographic differences in workplace. People come with different qualities and develop the sense of personal worth and importance. A productive organization should be free from biases in recruitment process, promotion, performance evaluation, wages and learning opportunities and focus on different ways of monitoring and identify objects that increase motivation in employees. Agency or principal agent theory indicates that principals (owners and managers) have to develop ways of monitoring and controlling the activities of their agents (staff). It is necessary to clear up ambiguities by setting objectives and monitoring performance to ensure that objectives are achieved **Armstrong** [31]. If organizations make effective and suitable policies to manage diversity then this organization will be able to satisfy their staff in order to gain high quality work. An organization should make policy to manage diversity in which they focus on some factors;

Age: Age is an unfortunate analyst of job performance. Organization should emphasize on one's skills and abilities to do the job rather than focus on age.

Promotion: it should identify that there will be a time when the organization's current and future needs can only be meet by recruitment from external.

Work-life Balance: Organizations permit employees greater flexibility in their working pattern so that they can develop

sense of balance of what they do at work with the responsibilities and interests they have. Organization should emphasize on how flexible working hours and environment can build up and implement.

**Employee Development:** organization should develop the hidden skills and abilities of employees through training and workshops in order to enhance their skills and potentials and to gain maximum benefits and multiple works from employees.

**Rewards & Benefits:** organization should focus on paying on excellent performance contribution and also give flexible benefits and rewards to develop competition and also share organization's success with employees.

**Involvement and Participation:** it should define the system for employees' voice, such as joint discussion and suggestion plan.

with all these factors, an organization must be emphasize on introduction of new technology, provide healthy and safe places for work, discipline and principles of natural justice, respect for the accused, bullying and workplace aggression complain centers, respect for the rights of both the complainant and accused, smoking and other substance abuse will not be tolerated by the organization.

Employees' perception about their organization also plays an important role in workplace. The more similar perception employees hold lead to strong organizational culture. The prime-donna of process theory is based on highlighting the psychological processes or forces that affect motivation and basic needs. It can also be termed as cognitive theory as it is focused on individual's assumption of the ambience of their working arena along with the interpretation and understanding of that work ambience. PROCESS or cognitive theory can certainly be more useful to managers because it provides more realistic guidance on motivation techniques. The processes are; Expectations, Goal achievement and Feeling about equity **Armstrong, 2006**[36]. There is a need in workplace that organizations develop supportive and strong relationships with their employees to feel them they also have a high degree of control over setting organizational decisions and goals and defining the ways to get these goals.

An organization should recognize the need to eliminate biases in performance evaluation and on the basis of performance evaluation, organization will give promotion to employees so they get motivated by promotion and can fulfill their needs. Abraham Maslow developed his theory as a hierarchy of needs in which he discussed five needs; Physiological needs Safety need, Social need, Esteem need and Self Actualization need. When a lower need is satisfied, the next highest becomes dominant and the individual's attention is turned to satisfying his higher need. Maslow's theory stated that the higher order needs for esteem and self-actualization provide the greatest impetus to motivation; they grow in strength when they are satisfied, while the lower needs decline in strength on satisfaction. But the jobs people do will not necessary satisfy their needs, especially when they are routine or deskilled **Armstrong** [31].

## 4 CONCLUSION

Diversity change agents are present more in services industries as compare to manufacturing industries and results showed no gender differences in diversity change agents in both industries but we should not ignore the a factor that Pakistan has a patriarchal society in which males are more dominant and independent as compare to females that's why females does not seen on large level in workplace. This research also discussed the factors that can contribute to diversity management policies and very helpful for organizations and manager as they should know these factors and make policies with the help of these factors.

## 5 SUGESSTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The present study has certain limitations which will verify valuable if trounce in future research. Only two industries were selected for this study but future researchers can also select government sector. The sample size was small as it could not represent the whole Karachi. Therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalized to overall both industries. The study focused on limited age criteria but it can be extended for future. The current study relies on a questionnaire that has no reliability and validity. It was prepared for organizational purpose to identify their applicants whether they are diversity change agent or not. More research in this are can select reliable and valid questionnaire. More researches are needed to create awareness of this variable; Diversity.

## 6 TABLES

TABLE NO. 1

TABLE SHOWS THE MEAN VALUES OF BOTH INDUSTRIES

TYPE OF INDUSTRIES	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
Manufacturing Industries	120	33.29	5.257
Services Industries	120	27.25	5.690

TABLE NO. 2

TABLE SHOWS THE SIGNIFICANT T-VALUE OF DIVERSITY CHANGE AGENTS AT CORPORATE LEVEL

	T-VALUE	DF	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
Diversity Scale Score	8.54	238	0.01

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First of all I would like to thank Almighty ALLAH for giving me the strength to carry on this project. Next, I would like to express my gratefulness to those Pakistani local industries who gave their voluntary participation in my research article. I am deeply thankful to my supervisor Dr. Khalida Rauf from the Abdul Haq Campus, Federal Urdu University for Arts, Science & Technology, Karachi, Pakistan whose help, motivating suggestions and encouragement helped me in all the time of research.

I have furthermore to thank my family for all their support, help, concern and priceless hints. I am also obliged to my Indian friend Ramanuj Gosh who looked closely at the final version of the research article and helped for English style and grammar, correcting both and offering suggestions for perfection.

Especially, I would like to give my special thanks to my father Akhter Hussain and mother Hameeda Akhter whose uncomplaining love and financial support facilitated me to complete this work encouraged me to go ahead with my thesis.

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