

EFFECT OF WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT ON EMPLOYEES' JOB PERFORMANCE

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Abstract: *The population of the Gulf countries is very diverse, with people belonging to various nationalities, age groups, genders, and so on, working together. Careful diversity management can help organisations achieve greater success. A clearer understanding of diversity and its effects is important. As of 2020, out of Oman's working population, nearly 22 lakhs (approx.) are expatriates, which constitutes 45% (approx.) of the population. This diversity can also be clearly seen in the workplace, where people from various cultures interact and work together. Extant literature reveals that there is a paucity of research on workforce diversity, organisational commitment, and employees' job performance in the context of Oman. The lack of research into this matter means the full potential of the diverse workforce is not being utilised. The study focuses on assessing the impact of workforce diversity and organisational commitment on employees' job performance. A quantitative field research is carried out by circulating a questionnaire among the target population. The study focuses on the input obtained from private sector companies in the Sultanate of Oman over a period spanning from January 2021 to October 2021. Data collected from 171 respondents revealed that both workforce diversity and organisational commitment positively impact job performance. Results also showed that the combined effect of workforce diversity and organisational commitment on job performance is greater than their individual impact on job performance. Results also revealed that there is no significant difference in workforce diversity and organisational commitment with respect to age group, gender, and experience. The outcome of the study provides important implications for practicing managers.*

Keywords: *Workforce Diversity, Organisational Commitment, Job Performance*

INTRODUCTION

Due to various reasons, including globalisation, socio-cultural differences, economic disparities, and so on, people are moving from their homes to different places in the hopes of having a better life (Roberson, 2006). This change in dynamics has forced organisations to restructure their organisational values, cultures, and modes of operations (Sung & Choi, 2019). Subsequently, the socio-economics of the workplace are evolving quickly. In this modern era, workplace diversity is turning into a must-have asset, instead of a pennant for the organisation to show their obligation to accepting differences. To effectively make, present and sell their items in this worldwide market, organisations need an enhanced labour force. Workplace diversity is not simply something that improves an organisation's position in the marketplace. Workplace diversity has some immediate, unmistakable advantages, as demonstrated in earlier works (Li et al., 2020). A wide range of viewpoints and opinions, increased innovativeness, improved critical thinking,

increased benefits, improved employee commitment, and reduced employee turnover are some of the numerous benefits of having a heterogeneous labour force. A diverse labour force is an impression of a changing world and commercial centre. According to Yadav et al. (2020), this will profit the workplace by providing a cutthroat edge and expanding work profitability. Diversity management benefits exist where there is a reasonable and safe climate for everybody to approach openings and difficulties. Managers should take it up as a priority to teach everybody about diversity and its issues, including the up-to-date laws and guidelines of their region.

People have a different view of the things around them, and this is often affected by their societies, races, or sex. This impacts the way they solve any problem, and this determines the success of their team, as well as the organisation. Contrasting views and ideas have demonstrated a much higher success rate, and this has encouraged organisations to turn towards a diverse workforce. Youngsters are given jobs in higher positions of associations, since their commitment to organisations are being recognised as invaluable.

Jehn et al. (1999) explored three specific types of workgroup diversity:

- Social category diversity
- Informational diversity
- Value diversity

It was further explained as easily detectable attributes, like age, gender, caste, and so on, were grouped under the social category diversity, while informational diversity is the different perspectives, knowledge levels, education qualifications, and so on (Jehn et al., 1999; Tsui et al., 1992). In a group, different views, values, and thought processes are bound to occur. This was classified as value diversity (Jehn et al., 1999). The effects of workforce diversity can be seen in various individual, as well as organisational aspects. Previous works have investigated the effects of the above-mentioned diversity variables on a firm's performance (Kirkman et al., 2004; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). When there are several dimensions of diversity that simultaneously occur in an organisation, utilising and practically implementing them is often a major challenge for the managers. Often, they must prioritise based on the situation. There is an increase in the interest among academia and industry with respect to the research in workforce diversity, owing to socio-cultural changes, globalisation, and migration of employees. Even though previous studies established the relationship between workforce diversity on various outcomes such as organisational performance, job performance, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment, there is a scarcity of literature on the impact of workforce diversity and organisational commitment on job performance in the Omani context.

The population of the Gulf countries is very diverse, and we can see people belonging to various nationalities, age groups, genders, and so on, working together. A well-planned diversity management technique can help organisations achieve greater success. Clearer understanding of diversity and its effects is important. Oman's working population stands at nearly 49.7 lakhs as of 2020. Out of this, nearly 22 lakhs are expatriates, which constitutes 45% (approx.) of the population. This diversity can also be clearly seen in the workplace, where people from various cultures interact and work together. The lack of research into this matter means the full potential of the diverse workforce is not utilised. This research aims to understand how workplace diversity and organisational commitment affect the employee's job performance. Since the study is being conducted in the Sultanate of Oman, it has a great potential to achieve the desired results, as almost 45% of its working population are expatriates. In terms of age as well, the population is distributed over a wide range, from people in their 20s to those in their 50s.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Diversity management is an important concept in the organisational set-up, and to understand proper diversity management techniques, it is important to understand the concept of workplace diversity. Diversity centres on positive values such as acceptance and respect for each other (Mügge, 1998; Mor Barak, 2000). The importance of diversity can also be seen in the works of Panicker, Agrawal and Khandelwal (2018) and Panicker and Agrawal (2020). If diversity becomes an organisational imperative, even though it emanates from humanitarian, social, or competitive reasons, firms should strive to build more receptive environments (Patrick & Kumar, 2012). Although we can find contradicting literatures regarding the effect of diversity, there is some evidence available to support that in some settings, diversity in groups can be used to achieve competitive advantage over others (Richard et al., 2001). This was primarily because of the variety of talent and different viewpoints available, without any restrictions to solve the problem at hand. It helps the firms understand their clients and their requirements. Existing literature has managed to establish that it helps firms achieve wider profit margins and success.

In the present scenario, more people are recognising the importance of diversity variables and its effects on group dynamics. Productivity is enhanced through competitive practices (Saks et al., 1997). According to the Shu-Mei (2014) study, ethnic diversity is also a major force to be considered. The staff of the private sector are also ethnically diverse and their sentiments need to be considered in the decision-making process. In their work, authors Krishnan, Wesley and Renjitha (2017) stated that if an organisation can successfully utilise their workforce diversity, it can help enhance performance by reducing conflicts and improving workforce performance. In the work of Li et al. (2020), the theory of job adjustment shows a link between job and skills required for job satisfaction and job performance and diversity. The theory explains that the constant and simultaneous interaction between a person and their environment is what constitutes work adjustment, and as a result, job satisfaction and better job performance (Lyons et al., 2005; Saks & Ashforth, 1997) Other studies also support this theory, that proper workforce management and employee engagement can result in improved performance and better results (Verheij et al., 2017; Kirton & Greene, 2015; Groeneveld & Verbeek, 2012; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). Based on this, we hypothesise the following:

H1: Workforce diversity positively impacts employees' job performance.

It was observed by Ainscow and Sandill (2010) that performance and diversity are no longer linear to each other. Employees, not considering other external factors, are well aware of the need for diversity initiatives, and as a result, give importance to diversity and diversity management practices (Kundu & Mor, 2017). Engaging employees in various activities of the organisation helps them understand how others think and work in a situation, and gives them a sense of identity. Organisational commitment can result in many favourable outcomes, like low absenteeism, low employee turnover, and improved job performance. Studies by Behery (2009) reinforced the previous empirical research of Wilk and Sackett (1996) and Werbel and Johnson (2001). They established that there was a significant positive correlation between the perceived fulfillment of the obligations and commitment. Sawitri et al. (2016) conducted studies that have shown that commitment has a direct effect on employee performance. So, enhancing commitment and performance is essential. A few other empirical studies also established a positive relationship between organisational commitment and job performance (Chong & Law, 2016; Subramaniam, McManus & Mia, 2002). Based on this, we set the following hypothesis:

H2: Organisational commitment positively impacts employees' job performance.

Even though both workforce diversity and organisational commitment are important concepts that influence various desirable organisational outcomes, their combined effect on the employees' job performance has not been adequately researched. There is a dearth of such a study in the Omani context; therefore, we intended to study the joint effect of workforce diversity and organisational commitment on employees' job performance. Thus, we set the following hypothesis:

H3: Workforce diversity and organisational commitment jointly impact employees' job performance.

An attempt was also made to examine whether there is any significant difference in workforce diversity and organisational commitment with respect to important demographic factors such as age, experience, and gender. Thus, the following hypotheses were framed.

H4: There is a significant difference in diversity management practices with respect to employees belonging to different age groups.

H5: There is a significant difference in diversity management practices with respect to employees having different years of work experience.

H6: There is a significant difference in organisational commitment with respect to employees belonging to different age groups.

H7: There is a significant difference in organisational commitment with respect to employees having different years of work experience.

H8: There is a significant difference in diversity management practices with respect to gender.

H9: There is a significant difference in organisational commitment with respect to gender.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Procedure

A quantitative field research is conducted from January to October 2021. The research is carried out by circulating a questionnaire among the target population. The focus is on private sector companies in the Sultanate of Oman. Input is obtained from various sectors such as manufacturing/construction, mining and processing companies, the IT sector companies, private banks, educational institutions, and so on. Around 171 full time employees working in various private organisations in Oman were selected as the sample for the present study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. Respondents include 145 male and 26 female employees. People belonging to various nationalities responded to the survey – 63% of the respondents were from India, 12% from Oman, and the rest from various countries, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Iran, Egypt, Jordan, the USA, and so on. Respondents were categorised into three age groups – 20-30, 31-40, and >41. Around 36% of the respondents belong to the 20-30 age group, 33% to the 31-40 age group, and the remaining 31% fall in the >41 age group. Among the sample, 89% of the employees are in executive positions and the remaining 11% are in the non-executive positions. Religious diversity was also observed in the sample, with 37% Hindus, 34% Muslims, 22% Christians, and the remaining from other religious groups. A majority of the respondents are graduates, while the rest have diplomas and post-graduate degrees. It was observed that a majority of the respondents had between 11-20 years of experience (47%), followed by 0-10 years of experience (32%), with the remaining having over 21 years of experience.

Measures

Data is obtained directly from the participants by circulating a questionnaire among the target population in the form

of Google Forms. The present study was conducted by administering three structured questionnaires. The sections of the questionnaire are as follows:

Workplace Diversity: The variable workplace diversity was assessed using the questionnaire developed by Farmanesh, Vehbi, Zargar, Sousan, & Bhatti (2020), which consists of four dimensions of diversity, such as homogeneity, colour blindness, fairness, and trust issues. Sample items in the scale include 'My company is striving for a homogeneous workforce' and 'Through similarities we feel more connected as colleagues'. The items are analysed using a five-point Likert scale.

Job Performance: The variable job performance was measured using the scales developed by Ramos Villagrasa, Fernández del Río, Koopmans and Barrada (2019). A five-point Likert scale was used here. Typical items in the questionnaire include 'I (employee) consistently complete the duties specified in my job description', 'I (employee) consistently meet the performance requirements of the job, and so on.

Commitment: The variable organisational commitment was measured by administering "The measurement of organizational commitment" questionnaire developed by Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979). This self-administered survey, which consists of 15 items, is useful in understanding a person's commitment towards the organisation. The sample items in the scale include 'I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organisation', 'This organisation really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance', and so on.

All the scales were anchored by 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

Cronbach's alpha value was calculated to find the reliability of the three questionnaires. It was found that the Cronbach's alpha value of the three instruments is greater than 0.7 (Diversity: 0.77, Job performance: 0.82, Organisational commitment: 0.81). Thus, the reliability of the instrument was established.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To assess the relationship between workforce diversity and job performance, correlation was carried out; the results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlation between Workforce Diversity and Job Performance

	Workforce Diversity	Job Performance
Workforce Diversity	1	0.595 (**)
Job Performance	0.595 (**)	1

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

The results revealed a significant correlation between diversity and job performance (0.595) at 0.01 level, thus fully supporting H1. There is a positive correlation between the two variables, which indicates that diversity has a significant effect on the employee's job performance. Simple linear regression was also carried out to examine the positive impact of workforce diversity on the employees' job performance. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Linear Regression Analysis between Workforce Diversity and Job Performance

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients	Standard Error	Standardised Coefficients	T-Value	Sig	R ² Value	F Value	Df
	B		Beta					
Constant	0.727	0.378		1.925	0	0.354	92.508	1
Workforce diversity	0.893	0.093	0.595	9.618	0			

Dependent variable: Job performance, Source: Author's analysis.

Table 2 reveals that workforce diversity was found to be statistically significant in predicting employees' job performance ($\beta = 0.595$, $\text{sig} < 0.01$). Results also reveal that 35.4% of the job performance can be predicted by workforce diversity. This finding supports earlier research conducted by Verheij et al. (2017); Kirton and Greene (2015);

Groeneveld and Verbeek (2012); Van Knippenberg et al. (2004).

The second objective of the study was to examine the impact of organisational commitment on employees' job performance. For this, correlation and simple linear regression were used, and the results are presented in Table 3 and 4.

Table 3: Correlation between Organisational Commitment and Job Performance

	Organisational Commitment	Job Performance
Organisational commitment	1	0.706 (**)
Job performance	0.706 (**)	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. Source: Author's analysis.

Table 4: Linear Regression Analysis between Organisational Commitment and Job Performance

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients	Standard Error	Standardised Coefficients	T-Value	Sig	R ² Value	F Value	Df
	B		Beta					
Constant	1.487	0.222		6.692	0	0.499	168.275	1
Organisational commitment	0.678	0.052	0.706	12.972	0			

Dependent variable: Job performance, Source: Author's analysis.

The results revealed a significant correlation between organisational commitment and job performance (0.706) at 0.01 level, thus fully supporting H2. There is a positive correlation between the two variables, which indicates that organisational commitment has a significant effect on the employee's job performance. Table 4 reveals that organisational commitment was found to be statistically significant in predicting employees' job performance ($\beta = 0.706$, sig < 0.01). Results also reveal that 49.9% of the job performance can be predicted by organisational commitment. This finding supports earlier research conducted by Chong

and Law (2016); Sawitri et al. (2016); Subramaniam, McManus and Mia (2002). Thus, it can be concluded that employees who are having high organisational commitment would put in maximum effort in their job, which results in an improved job performance.

Another major objective of the study was to examine the combined effect of workforce diversity and organisational commitment on the employees' job performance. For this, multiple linear regression was carried out, and the results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis between Workforce Diversity, Organisational Commitment, and Job Performance

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients	Standard Error	Standardised Coefficients	T-Value	Sig	R ² Value	F Value	Df
	B		Beta					
Constant	0.593	0.321		1.846	0	0.537	97.586	2
Workforce diversity	0.527	0.065	0.549	8.167	0			
Organisational commitment	0.377	0.101	0.251	3.739	0			

Dependent variable: Job performance, Source: Author's analysis.

Table 5 reveals that workforce diversity and organisational commitment jointly predict 53.7% of variance in employees' job performance. This impact is higher than the individual impacts of workforce diversity and organisational commitment on employees' job performance (workforce diversity = 35.4% and organisational commitment = 49.9%). This renders full support to H3. Thus, it can be concluded that if there is workforce diversity in the organisation and if employees are committed, there will be enhanced job performance.

An attempt was also made to investigate the difference in workforce diversity and organisational commitment with respect to various demographic factors such as age, experience, and gender. The results are as follows:

For assessing the difference in workforce diversity with respect to different age groups of the employees, one-way Anova was carried out, and the results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Difference in Workforce Diversity with respect to Age Groups

Diversity	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	36.501	2	18.251	.707	.495
Within Groups	4339.183	168	25.828		
Total	4375.684	170			

From the results shown in Table 6, we see that there is no significant difference of opinion on diversity management practices with respect to employees from different age groups, since p value is 0.495, which is greater than 0.05. Thus, H4 is not supported and employees belonging to different age groups have the same perception about workforce diversity practices in the organisation.

For assessing the difference in workforce diversity with respect to employees having different years of experience, one-way Anova was carried out, and the results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Difference in Workforce Diversity with respect to Work Experience

Diversity	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	74.791	2	37.396	1.461	.235
Within Groups	4300.893	168	25.601		
Total	4375.684	170			

From the results shown in Table 7, we see that there is no significant difference of opinion on diversity management practices with respect to employees having different years of experience, since p value is 0.235, which is greater than 0.05. Thus, H5 is not supported and employees having different years of experience have the same perception about workforce diversity practices in the organisation.

Table 8: Difference in Organisational Commitment with respect to Age Groups

Commitment	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	61.145	2	30.573	2.090	.127
Within Groups	2457.276	168	14.627		
Total	2518.421	170			

For assessing the difference in organisational commitment with respect to different age groups of employees, one-way Anova was carried out, and the results are shown in Table 8.

From the results shown in Table 8, we see that there is no significant difference of opinion on organisational commitment with respect to employees from different age groups, since p value is 0.127, which is greater than 0.05. Thus, H6 is not supported and employees belonging to different age groups have the same perception about organisational commitment.

For assessing the difference in organisational commitment with respect to employees having different years of experience, one-way Anova was carried out, and the results are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Difference in Organisational Commitment with respect to Work Experience

Commitment	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	64.195	2	32.097	2.197	.114
Within Groups	2454.226	168	14.608		
Total	2518.421	170			

From the results shown in Table 9, we see that there is no significant difference of opinion on organisational commitment with respect to employees having different years of experience, since p value is 0.114, which is greater than 0.05. Thus, H7 is not supported and employees having different years of experience have the same perception about organisational commitment.

For assessing the difference in workforce diversity with respect to male and female employees, independent t-test was conducted, and the results are shown in Table 10 and 11.

Table 10: Difference in Diversity with respect to Gender

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Diversity	Male	110	64.8727	5.57042	.53112
	Female	61	64.9836	4.06814	.52087

Table 11: Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-Tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Diversity	Equal variances assumed	.543	.462	-.137	169	.892	-.11088	.81226	-1.71435	1.49259
	Equal variances not assumed			-.149	156.501	.882	-.11088	.74390	-1.58027	1.35851

The result of the t-test conducted for H8 revealed a considerably high significance of 0.892 (sig > 0.05). This means there was no significant difference observed in workforce diversity with respect to gender. Thus, H8 is not supported, and it can be concluded that male and female employees have the same perception

about diversity management practices in the organisation.

For assessing the difference in organisational commitment with respect to male and female employees, independent t-test was conducted, and the results are shown in Table 12 and 13.

Table 12: Difference in Organisational Commitment with respect to Gender**Group Statistics**

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Commitment	Male	110	56.7273	4.34923	.41468
	Female	61	55.2787	2.49754	.31978

Table 13: Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Commitment	Equal variances assumed	10.360	.002	2.390	169	.018	1.44858	.60609	.25210	2.64507
	Equal variances not assumed			2.766	168.765	.006	1.44858	.52366	.41482	2.48235

The results of the t-test conducted to analyse the difference in organisational commitment with respect to gender revealed a low significance of 0.018 (sig < 0.05). This means there is a significant difference observed in commitment towards the organisation with respect to gender. Thus, H9 is fully supported.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The present study offers some important implications for practicing managers. Our study found that both workforce diversity and organisational commitment individually and jointly impact employees' job performance. Managers

must ensure that they are following diversity management practices in the organisation. This is absolutely important considering the growing diverse workforce in the world. Sincere efforts shall be adopted by the managers to include employees from different backgrounds in the organisation. This calls for important structural and procedural changes in the organisation. Progressive HR policies need to be implemented. Managers must also ensure that their workforce is committed towards the organisation. Progressive HR policies will help improve employees' commitment towards the organisation. If both workforce diversity and organisational commitment are present in the organisation, it would lead to enhanced job performance of the workforce, which would culminate in organisational performance.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The study has some limitations, which future researchers should overcome. The first is concerning the purposive sampling technique adopted for the present study, which limits the generalisability of the findings. The second is the cross-sectional design of the study. Future research shall be conducted by adopting a longitudinal design, with a larger sample selected using probability sampling methods.

CONCLUSION

Now, there are plenty of new aspects to diversity among the workforce than ever before, and this trend is expected to continue, especially with the markets expanding across the globe. From our analysis, we can see that diversity and commitment clearly influence employees' job performance. Now that we have established a relation, the next essential step is to improve and adopt advanced techniques of diversity management. This study only gives a quantitative perspective on diversity. For successful implementation, a deeper study must be conducted on this aspect of diversity management. The results obtained signify that there is high homogeneity of workforce in the current situation and people prefer to work with others from a similar background. However, this is not beneficial for the organisation as the full potential of a diverse workforce cannot be utilised. Employees feel uninspired and unmotivated, and as a result, creative thinking is lacking in such situations. With plenty of scope for diversity management, it is important that companies adopt practices that promote diversity. It is the task of the management to ensure that every employee feels a sense of belonging, a sense that their voice is heard and understood by the management. It benefits both parties, as management can get a sense of what is going on in the lower

levels of the organisation. It helps with problem-solving and conflict resolution.

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