

Chapter 9

Increased Workforce Diversity by Race, Gender, and Age and Equal Employment Opportunity Laws: Implications for Human Resource Development

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ABSTRACT

This chapter reviews how the passage of United States federal Equal Employment Opportunity laws between 1960 and 2000 related to race, gender, age, and national origin led to increased diversity of the labor force in gender, race, and ethnicity, an increase which is ongoing. Data from the U.S. Departments of Labor and Census indicate these laws substantially increased the percentage of Black, Hispanic and Asian and female workers. Between 2003 and 2013, the percentage of the labor force that is women, Black, Hispanic and Asian continued to increase, with the largest gains being of Hispanic and Asian employees. The chapter demonstrates how utilizing diversity improves the research and practice of HRD. This increasing diversity requires practitioners to rethink the methods they use to deliver training and development programs. Further, researchers should examine how the increased diversity impacts all areas of HRD, such as training, mentoring, and work-life balance.

INTRODUCTION

The United States Presidential Primary season of 2008 made the issue of diversity more salient than ever because, for the first time, there was a viable group multicultural candidates, including members of several races, religions, and both genders. This diversity led to an unprecedented level of citizen participation and voting in the general election. In fact, the 2008 election helped reverse the long-term decline

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in the percentage of the voting age population's casting ballots in presidential elections (1960 = 62.8%; 1980= 52.6%; 2000=51.2%; 2008=58.23; 2012=54.9%); (Peters & Wooley, 2015).

The election demonstrated that diversity has an energizing effect on many people, such that in 2015, the 114th U.S. Congress is one of the most diverse ever, with 20% of members being women in each of the House and Senate, and in the House, 20.2% of members being diverse (10.1% being Black, 7.8% being Hispanic, and 2.3% being Asian), (Bump, 2015). The amount of diversity by race and gender of the U.S. Congress began to increase significantly and steadily with the 90th Congress (1967-1969).

The potential significant impact of increased gender and racial diversity should cause human resource development (HRD) scholars and practitioners to take a fresh look at diversity in the labor force and how this diversity can be harnessed to energize organizations. To this end, this chapter reviews the major federal laws covering diversity and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) in the workplace, and examines how these laws relate to the research and practice of HRD.

The chapter begins with a review of federal EEO laws related to race, gender, age, and national origin, in view of fleshing out their richness and comprehensiveness. This is followed by a discussion of how the federal laws have led to increased diversity of the labor force and how this diversity impacts the practice of HRD. Next, the chapter gives an overview of the current knowledge of the benefits of diversity for organizations in regard to HRD. The section discusses the potential impact of diversity on organizations as a whole and the impact of diversity on HRD programs, such as mentoring programs.

The chapter then reviews how diversity relates to research in HRD, with a discussion of the Kirkpatrick (2005) model of training evaluation under the assumption that HRD practices should adapt to the changing workforce. The chapter concludes with implications for research and practice and a discussion of issues organizations should consider for the future.

HRD, INCREASED DIVERSITY, AND EEO LEGISLATION

Overview of Relationship of EEO and HRD

During the last 40 years, there has been significant growth in the percentage of employees who are Black, Hispanic, Asian, and women. In addition there is a continued shift in the age composition of the labor force due to the aging of the large Baby Boomer generation. The labor force will continue to change significantly in the coming decades.

These demographic changes in the composition of the labor force will require organizations to tailor their HRD strategies to meet the needs of the diverse employees who will enter employment. It is critical that organizations manage diversity in a way that is deliberate and planned, and that the programs have CEO support to be successful (Ng, 2008). CEO's who use transformational or transactional leadership have been found to be successful in implementing diversity programs (Ng & Sears, 2012).

Historic Background of EEO Legislation

Following the end of Civil War in 1865, the United States federal government acted to ensure that all people would be treated equally by passing two pieces of legislation that are the basis of modern EEO laws. First, the states ratified the 14th amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1868, which guarantees

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