

Chapter 17

Demographic Changes and Equal Employment Opportunity Legislation: Implications for Leveraging Workforce Diversity in the Field of Human Resource Development

Shani D. Carter
Rhode Island College, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter reviews the relationship between a selection of United States federal laws and Human Resource Development (HRD). The chapter specifically reviews United States federal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws related to race, gender, age, and national origin, discusses how the passage of these laws led to an increased diversity of the labor force, and demonstrates how utilizing this legislation can improve the research and practice of HRD. A comprehensive group of employment laws were passed between 1960 and 2000, and data from the U.S. Departments of Labor and Census indicate that these laws have served to substantially increase the percentage of minorities and women in the labor force. This increasing diversity requires practitioners to rethink the methods they use to deliver training and development programs to employees. In addition, researchers should examine how the increase in 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. During the season, for the first time, we witnessed the participation of a viable of group

multicultural candidates, including members of several races, religions, and both genders. This diversity was accompanied by an unprecedented level of citizen participation in the Primary election process in donations and voting. We have seen, then, that diversity has an energizing effect on many people. Given this effect, Human Resource Development (HRD) scholars and practitioners

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-1812-1.ch017

should 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, DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES, AND EEO LEGISLATION

Overview and Relationship of EEO to HRD

There have been significant changes in the composition of the workforce in the last 30 years. Specifically, there has been increased growth in the percentage of employees who are Black, Hispanic, and Asian. In addition, there has been an increase in the labor force participation rate of women, and a continued shift in the age composition of

the labor force. The labor force will continue to change significantly in the coming decades.

Due to these demographic changes in the composition of the labor force, organizations should plan to tailor their HRD strategies to 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).

Historic Foundations of Current Legislation

Following the end of Civil War in 1865, the United States federal government wanted to ensure that all people would be treated equally. To this end, the federal government enacted 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. This amendment guaranteed equal benefits under the law for all citizens, such that all people could own property and make contracts. Employment is considered a contract, so the amendment makes fair employment possible.

Second, the federal government passed the Civil Rights Act of 1871. This act gave everyone the right to sue in federal court. This right enabled people to sue for enforcement of the 14th Amendment, which includes the right to sue for fair employment practices. The following sections review some of the major EEO laws that grew out of the 14th amendment and their relationship to HRD.

Gender

Overview of the Laws and Relationship to HRD

There are three major laws that ensure that women and men will be treated equally in the workplace. These laws offer important safeguards for women, which are especially important given that women

16 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/demographic-changes-equal-employment-opportunity/67064

Related Content

Organizational Well-Being: A New Theoretical Model and Recommendations for Future Research

Kalpana Sahoo (2018). *Statistical Tools and Analysis in Human Resources Management* (pp. 220-241).
www.irma-international.org/chapter/organizational-well-being/196117

Organizational Change and Development Through Quality Management in Higher Education Institutions: Theory, Practice, and Recommendations for Change Agents

Theodor Leiber (2019). *Evidence-Based Initiatives for Organizational Change and Development* (pp. 316-341).
www.irma-international.org/chapter/organizational-change-and-development-through-quality-management-in-higher-education-institutions/225161

Retaining IT Professionals

Gina Pipoliand Rosa María Fuchs (2011). *Managing IT Human Resources: Considerations for Organizations and Personnel* (pp. 130-149).
www.irma-international.org/chapter/retaining-professionals/53110

Delivering Organizational Change in Partnership With Trade Unions: Interest-Based Negotiation (IBN) Strategies

Gaye A. Greenwoodand Carolyn Ward (2019). *Evidence-Based Initiatives for Organizational Change and Development* (pp. 387-397).
www.irma-international.org/chapter/delivering-organizational-change-in-partnership-with-trade-unions/225165

Kaleidoscope Careers and Evolving HRM Issues

Sherry E. Sullivan, Lisa A. Mainieroand Siri Terjesen (2009). *Encyclopedia of Human Resources Information Systems: Challenges in e-HRM* (pp. 584-591).
www.irma-international.org/chapter/kaleidoscope-careers-evolving-hrm-issues/13285