

Chapter 16

Exploring Diversity and Inclusion Leadership in Complex Organizations

Stephanie J. Barrett
University of Phoenix, USA

ABSTRACT

Even with affirmative action legislation and diversity programs, organizations struggle to create a diverse and inclusive 21st-century workplace. The purpose of this qualitative, classical Delphi study was to gain consensus among diversity leaders in the federal contractor community about best practices for the successful employment of diversity and inclusion in the workforce, both to meet affirmative action regulations and to incorporate 21st-century social categories, such as veterans, males, females, age, sexual orientation, minorities, disabilities, and LGBTQs. Incorporating a diverse workforce above and beyond the requirements of affirmative action gives companies a competitive advantage over companies that fail to do so.

INTRODUCTION

Affirmative action planning began in 1965 to help companies to realize deficiencies in areas where there was underrepresentation of minorities and women (Renner & Moore, 2004). Over the decades American culture has changed. Affirmative action planning regulations, however, have remained the same. These regulations have excluded the need for a diverse and inclusive workplace. Companies that recognize the need for maximum diversity stand to gain a competitive advantage over companies that fail to see the benefit of a diverse workforce. This dissertation reviews the categories that formed affirmative action, defines the needs of the modern workplace, and explores best practices to creating a diverse and inclusive 21st-century workplace.

The United States has struggled with the term *equality* ever since its inception. In 1865, the 13th Amendment came into force, eliminating slavery (Carter, 2016). In 1896, with *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court established the separate but equal principle, which led to segregation in schools and

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-3811-1.ch016

public places such as restaurants (Hutchison, 2015). In 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education* determined that separate but equal was unconstitutional (Ford & King, 2014). However, in 1964, only 25% of Blacks above the age of 25 had graduated with a high-school diploma (Wolf, 2014). After World War II ended, only 10% of married women with children under the age of six had jobs or were looking for jobs (Guilder, 1986).

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law Executive Order 11246, which prohibited federal contractors from discriminating based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin (Thompson & Morris, 2013). Additionally, Executive Order 11246 mandated that all government contractors with \$50,000 or more in business with the government and 50 or more employees must complete a written affirmative action plan (Department of Labor, 2011). Based on the findings of the affirmative action plan, employers then make goals based on the areas where they have deficiencies of minorities and women (Fugère, Cathey, Beetham, Haynes, & Schaedler, 2016). Although representation of minorities and women is important, the culture has evolved, with social labels other than race and gender defining who employees are.

Table 1 outlines the 1997, 2007, and 2017 numbers of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission discrimination claims (EEOC, 2018). Table 1 shows the social segregation categories and the number of discrimination claims for each listed year. Despite laws preventing discrimination, people in most categories are still experiencing hardships due to exclusion from the workplace. The culture has evolved, and organizations need diversity and inclusion in the workplace to go beyond race and gender.

Table 1. EEOC Discrimination Claims

Category	1997	2007	2017
Age Discrimination	15,785	19,103	18,376
Disability	18,108	17,734	26,838
Color	762	1,735	3,240
National Origin	6,712	9,396	8,299
Race	29,299	30,510	28,528
Religion	1,709	2,880	3,436
Sex	24,728	24,826	25,605
Title VII	58,615	61,159	59,466

Additionally, lawsuits have shown that federal contractors need advice on best practices for inclusive and diverse employers in all social segregation categories (Rosignano, Williams, & Byron, 2012). In May 2018, chain restaurant Darden reportedly had to pay \$2.85 million in a 2017 EEOC age discrimination lawsuit for inappropriate interviewing comments (Maurer, 2018). The EEOC is suing supermarket chain Albertsons for not allowing Hispanic employees to speak Spanish while they are on duty or on breaks (Wootson, 2018). Macy's, Inc. fired an asthmatic employee after she missed 1 day of work due to an asthma-related emergency. Macy's settled with the EEOC for \$75,000 (Jones, 2018).

In 2015, research showed that employees did not feel that diversity initiatives are making a difference. In a 2015 *Publisher's Weekly* survey, 89% of workers felt no genuine change in the racial organization of the workforce since a year ago, regardless of any expanded consideration given to adding diversity

32 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/exploring-diversity-and-inclusion-leadership-in-complex-organizations/270818

Related Content

Seduction in Works of Art

Laura González (2017). *Seduction in Popular Culture, Psychology, and Philosophy* (pp. 165-187).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/seduction-in-works-of-art/162990

A Living Case Study: A Journey Not a Destination

Janine M. Pierce, Donna M. Velliaris and Jane Edwards (2017). *Exploring the Benefits of Creativity in Education, Media, and the Arts* (pp. 158-178).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/a-living-case-study/157855

Inside/Out: Looking Back into the Future

Maria Manuela Lopes (2017). *Projective Processes and Neuroscience in Art and Design* (pp. 15-39).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/insideout/159404

Modernization as Lifeline for Quality of Education: Evidence About E-Governance, M-Governance, and Distance Education in Asia

Kittisak Jermisittiparsert, Jamaluddin Ahmad, Ahmad Mustanir and Muhammad Rais Rahmat Razak (2023). *Modern Perspectives and Current Trends in Asian Education, Psychology, and Sociology* (pp. 157-173).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/modernization-as-lifeline-for-quality-of-education/332942

The Coexistence of Violence and Aesthetics in Performance Art: The Forms of Catharsis

İknur Gümü (2023). *Research Anthology on Modern Violence and Its Impact on Society* (pp. 83-96).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-coexistence-of-violence-and-aesthetics-in-performance-art/311259