A Comprehensive Examination of Workforce Diversity

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KEYWORDS

Diversity

Inclusion

Multicultural communication

Organizational performance

Workplace culture

ABSTRACT

Workforce diversity has become a crucial topic in organizational management due to its significant effects on workplace dynamics, innovation, and performance. Although our understanding of diversity has grown, its comprehensive impact across various sectors and organizational settings is still not fully understood. This review aims to integrate current knowledge on the many sides of workforce diversity, assess its challenges, and explore opportunities for boosting organizational effectiveness. This study performed a thorough 32 literatures using Nepal Journals Online (NepJOL), an online publication of Nepalese journals, targeting publications from January 2019 to May 2024. Search terms included "workforce diversity," "diversity in organizations," and "cultural diversity," among others. The selection included studies that assessed the effects of diversity using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The review highlights mixed findings on the correlation between workforce diversity and organizational performance, emphasizing the complexity of diversity's impact. Key themes include the importance of inclusive workplace cultures, challenges in multicultural communication, gender representation issues, and knowledge gaps in diverse sectors. Analysis of publication trends reveals a growing recognition of diversity's significance, particularly in recent years. Workforce diversity is crucial for organizational success, yet its impact varies across contexts. Prioritizing inclusive workplace cultures and addressing diversity-related challenges are essential. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies, sector-specific investigations, and innovative approaches to promote diversity and inclusion. Embracing diversity as a strategic asset can drive innovation and sustainable growth in diverse global environments.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary business landscape, fostering diversity within a workforce has become crucial for organizations to excel and surpass competitors. Studies have yielded varied outcomes regarding the influence of diversity on performance. While certain researchers have observed a beneficial correlation between diversity aspects and performance, others have identified adverse relationships between diversity factors and performance (Pandey & Risal, 2023).

In the current era of intense competition in governance, diversity has emerged as a paramount concern for executives, particularly as local government workforces grow more diverse. Each individual possesses unique traits across various dimensions. Diversity encompasses acknowledging, embracing, and valuing these differences, recognizing their uniqueness. It entails fundamental principles of acknowledging and valuing the interconnectedness of humanity, cultures, and the environment (Saud, 2023).

Promoting employee inclusion plays a vital role in boosting loyalty and effort. Although diversity within the workforce might not have a direct effect on organizational performance, emphasizing inclusion can result in improved results. Businesses are encouraged to prioritize the establishment of inclusive atmospheres to bolster employee dedication and better meet the requirements of a diverse customer demographic (Rijal, 2023).

The significance of workforce diversity is growing steadily, becoming increasingly crucial for the success of any organization. It's identified as a key driver for enhancing organizational efficiency, productivity, and performance, chiefly through fostering multicultural innovation. This diversity enhances organizational performance and boosts the return on investment. Hence, successful organizations can leverage workforce diversity by cultivating a corporate culture that draws individuals with diverse skills, innovative ideas, and varied backgrounds. Diversity consistently fosters heightened creativity and facilitates superior problem-solving capabilities (Lamichhane, 2021).

In Nepal, Diversity Management (DM) hasn't garnered significant attention within the widely discussed topic of Human Resource Management (HRM), despite its origins in the USA and Canada in the 1980s. European Union countries, mainly developed ones, have been at the forefront of diversity management initiatives. Presently, only a few notable organizations either offer HRM services or integrate HRM practices comprehensively within their operations. However, college textbooks and events such as seminars and dialogues facilitated by development sectors underscore the relevance of concepts like Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in today's context (Sundas, 2023).

Diversity stands as a crucial element influencing organizational effectiveness, profitability, and employee performance. Research demonstrates that diverse workplace factors such as age and experience positively impact employee performance, underscoring the immense value of workforce diversity in any organization. Hence, it's imperative for organizations to recognize the importance of diversity to attain specific organizational objectives and success. Further research reveals that a diverse workforce enhances decision-making capabilities, fosters greater creativity and innovation, and provides better opportunities to understand and cater to diverse markets. Through individual talents and varied experiences, diverse teams offer adaptable ideas that align with evolving market and customer needs (Tamang & Tamang, 2024).

Research findings indicate that all independent variables—comprising age, gender, ethnicity, and educational attainment—demonstrate a statistically significant positive correlation with the dependent variable, which is organizational effectiveness. The likelihood of achieving organizational success increases as diversity within each group expands, and conversely, diminishes as diversity decreases. Just as each independent variable affects the

dependent variable of organizational effectiveness, including age diversity, gender diversity, ethnic diversity, and educational level, the efficacy of the organization is influenced by each of these independent variables (Pokhrel, 2023).

Nepal boasts a rich tapestry of diversity encompassing ideology, culture, religion, caste, geography, sexual orientation, ethnicity, class, and language. Diversity isn't merely a challenge; it presents an opportunity to harness the creativity of individuals with varied cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Against this backdrop, this study delved into the pivotal role of teachers in managing diversity within the classroom. Embracing multicultural education, ensuring equitable treatment, and fostering respect for differences are pivotal for navigating diversity. Addressing the unique differences among individuals is essential both within and outside the classroom. Diversity serves as a hallmark of the educational environment, enriching teachers and students alike with diverse perspectives, information, and knowledge from the varied student body within the school (Dawa, 2020).

The success of an organization hinges on the effective collaboration of its diverse workforce. Inclusive workforce diversity, encompassing gender, educational background, and ethnicity, plays a pivotal role in enhancing organizational performance. Analytically, it has been found that gender diversity, educational diversity, and ethnic diversity exert a positive influence, contributing to improved organizational performance. Those who recognize the value of diversity affirm that it enhances performance within the organization. For optimal organizational health, diversity among employees is indispensable (Thapa, 2023).

The study sought to assess the influence of cultural diversity on leadership within the hospitality industry, specifically focusing on managerial communication. Multicultural communication appears to pose a significant challenge to effective communication within this sector. In summary, managerial communication hurdles are prevalent in the hospitality industry. To address these challenges arising from cultural diversity, proactive steps should be taken by government agencies and the Hotel Association of Nepal. As beneficial outcomes, efforts such as learning various languages, gaining insights into multiple cultures, exploring diverse locations, and adopting ethno-relative perspectives can greatly reduce misunderstandings in managerial communication (Paudel et al., 2021).

In the present context, diversity is a global issue of social significance. However, it has not yet been fully integrated into the education system in Nepal. The education system of a country should ideally equip students to navigate and thrive in today's diverse society. Concerns have arisen regarding the effectiveness of diversity management and how to create a more inclusive classroom environment in Nepal. While teachers may have limited familiarity with diversity management skills, they endeavor to address such diversity by providing personal support to their students, often utilizing ICT tools (Bhattarai, 2024).

To gain a comprehensive understanding of this subject, researchers aim to address several important questions:

1. What are the trends in publications related to workforce diversity between January 2019 and May 2024?
2. Which articles are regarded as the most significant in the field of workforce diversity based on citation impact?
3. Which journals are the leading publishers of research on workforce diversity?
4. What is the distribution of authors' affiliations based on universities and countries in workforce diversity research?

1.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
- To assess trends in workforce diversity publications to

understand the evolving research landscape.
- To identify significant articles in workforce diversity research and analyze the key findings and contributions of these significant articles to workforce diversity literature.
- To assess leading publishers and authors' affiliations in workforce diversity literature.
- To synthesize current research and conduct a comprehensive review of workforce diversity literature.

1.2 LIMITATIONS
- The review primarily relied on NepJOL, potentially missing relevant studies available in other academic databases.
- The selection of studies was limited to those published between January 2019 and May 2024, as no relevant research was conducted prior to this period.
- Non-English language publications were excluded, potentially overlooking valuable research from diverse cultural contexts.
- There might be biases in the selection of studies and methodologies, impacting the comprehensiveness and generalizability of the review's findings.

1.3 RESEARCH GAP
Research concerning the impact of workforce diversity on organizational performance in Nepal is notably lacking, presenting a substantial gap in current literature. This absence of empirical data within Nepalese contexts necessitates further exploration to comprehend the details of diversity within the country's distinct cultural and socio-economic setting. Moreover, the novelty of this research lies in its focus on Nepal's unique organizational landscape, offering fresh insights into how diversity dynamics unfold in this context. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of studies examining effective inclusion strategies and diversity management approaches tailored to Nepal's diverse populace, underscoring the necessity for research in these areas to inform organizational strategies and boost performance in Nepal's varied work settings. Addressing these research deficiencies will furnish valuable insights for organizations in Nepal, facilitating the formulation of culturally attuned diversity management strategies and the fostering of inclusive workplaces.

2. MATERIALS & METHODS
2.1 DATABASES AND SEARCH TERMS
A comprehensive literature review was conducted to gather relevant studies on workforce diversity. The primary databases utilized for this review were Nepal Journals Online (NepJOL), an online publication of Nepalese journals. The search was limited to publications between January 2019 and May 2024 to ensure the inclusion of recent research. Key search terms included "workforce diversity," "diversity in organizations," and "cultural diversity," among others, to capture a broad range of literature on the topic. The search strategy focused on identifying studies that empirically assessed the effects of diversity using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

2.2 INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA
Studies were included if they empirically assessed the effects of diversity on workplace dynamics, innovation, and performance. Both qualitative and quantitative studies were considered. The selection criteria aimed to ensure the inclusion of a diverse range of perspectives and methodologies to provide a comprehensive understanding of workforce diversity.
Studies were excluded if they did not specifically address the effects of workforce diversity or if they were not published within the specified timeframe January 2019 to May 2024. Additionally, non-English

language publications were excluded due to limitations in translation resources.

2.3 DATA EXTRACTION AND SYNTHESIS

Data extraction involved systematically reviewing each selected study to identify key findings, and conclusions. The extracted data were synthesized to identify common themes related to workforce diversity. The synthesis process aimed to integrate current knowledge on the many facets of workforce diversity and provide insights into its

2.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Ethical considerations were considered throughout the review process to ensure the appropriate use of published research and respect for intellectual property rights. Proper citation and referencing were employed to acknowledge the contributions of previous studies to the current review.

comprehensive impact across various sectors and organizational settings.

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION
3.1 PUBLICATIONS PER YEARS

Table 1: *Previous study in Workforce Diversity*

S. N	Publication (Year-wise)	Number of Publications	Percentage
1	2019	2	6.25 %
2	2020	4	12.5 %
3	2021	4	12.5 %
4	2022	4	12.5 %
5	2023	12	37.5 %
6	2024	6	18.75 %
Total	6 Years	32	100 %

Source: *Database (NepJol)*

Table 1 presents an overview of previous studies in workforce diversity, detailing the distribution of publications across different years. A total of 33 articles were initially reviewed, but one article written in Nepali language was excluded from the analysis, resulting in a final sample of 32 articles. The table categorizes the publications by publication year, ranging from 2019 to 2024. It provides the number of publications for each year and calculates the percentage of publications relative to the total number of articles reviewed (100%). The data revealed variations in the number of publications over the six-year period, with the highest percentage of publications occurring in 2023 (37.5%), followed by 2020, 2021, and 2022, each accounting for 12.5% of the total

publications. The years 2019 and 2024 had the lowest percentages of publications, accounting for 6.25% and 18.75%, respectively. This trend reflects a growing recognition of the significance of workforce diversity in contemporary work environments, evidenced by the discernible increase in research attention over the years, particularly in recent times. The substantial rise in research output, particularly in 2023, underscores the evolving dynamics of workforce diversity and its perceived importance in organizational management. Overall, this trend highlights academia's acknowledgment of the multifaceted implications of workforce diversity, emphasizing its relevance for fostering inclusive and effective workplaces.

3.2 TOP RANK ARTICLE

Table 1: *Rank of Article title in workforce diversity based on Citation*

Rank	Article Name	Citations
1	Employee Engagement and Organizational Performance of Public Enterprises in Nepal (Shrestha, 2019).	27
2	Measuring Cultural Diversity Impact in Hospitality Industry Leadership: Managerial Communication Perspective from Five Star Hotels in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal (Paudel, Puri, Parajuli, Devkota, & Bhandari, 2021).	11
2	Value Chain Analysis of Honey Sub-sector in Nepal (Bhandari & Kattel, 2020).	11
3	Women's Representation in Bureaucracy: Reservation Policy in Nepali Civil Service (Wagle, 2019).	5
3	Diversity Management in Classroom: Exploration of Teacher's Role (Dawa, 2020).	5
4	Workforce Diversity and Its Impact on Organizational Success (Pokhrel, 2023).	3
5	Representative Bureaucracy: The Nepalese Perspective (Bhul, 2021).	2
5	Managing Work force Diversity: Key Successful factors (Lamichhane, 2021).	2
6	A Study on Determinants of Managerial Communication in Hospitality Industry in Kathmandu Valley: A Structural Equation Modelling Analysis (Puri, Devkota, Mahato, & Paudel, 2022).	1

Source: *Database (NepJol)*

According to table 2, the article **"Employee Engagement and Organizational Performance of Public Enterprises in Nepal"** stands out as the most influential work with 27 citations. Other articles such as **"Measuring Cultural Diversity Impact in Hospitality Industry Leadership"** and **"Value Chain Analysis of Honey Sub-sector in Nepal"** also show significant impact with 11 citations each. Articles focusing on women's representation, classroom diversity management, and workforce diversity's
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impact on organizational success had moderate influence, while those on representative bureaucracy and key factors for managing workforce diversity had limited impact. The least cited article examines determinants of managerial communication in the hospitality industry, with only 1 citation. This analysis indicates key areas of influence and suggests where researchers might focus to achieve higher visibility and impact on workforce diversity research

3.3 AUTHORS' AFFILIATION BASED ON UNIVERSITY AND COUNTRY

Table 2: *Authors' affiliation based on university and country*

Rank	University	Country	Number of Publications
1	Tribhuvan University	Nepal	22
2	Pokhara University	Nepal	3
3	Kathmandu University	Nepal	1
4	Mid-Western University	Nepal	1
5	Nepal Open University	Nepal	1
6	Singhania University	India	1
7	Dr. K. Modi University	India	1
8	South Asian University,	India	1
9	University of Sri Jayewardenepura	Sri Lanka	1

Source: *Database (NepJol)*

The data in Table 3 outlines the distribution of authors' affiliations based on their respective universities and countries. It presents a breakdown of universities ranked by the number of publications associated with each institution, alongside their corresponding countries. Tribhuvan University, located in Nepal, emerges as the leading institution with 22 publications, indicating a substantial research output. Following closely were Pokhara University and Kathmandu University, also based in Nepal, with 3 and 1 publication(s) respectively. Other universities from Nepal, such as Mid-Western University and Nepal Open University, each contributed to the research landscape with 1 publication. Additionally, universities from India, including Singhania University and Dr. K. Modi University, as well as University of Sri Jayewardenepura from Sri Lanka, and South Asian University from India, had one publication each. This comprehensive overview underscores the varied academic contributions across different universities and countries, highlighting the collaborative efforts shaping the scholarly discourse in the field.

3.4 TOP PUBLISHER

Table 3: *Top Journal Publisher*

Rank	Top Publisher	Articles	Total Citations
1	Journal of Tourism & Adventure,	2	12
2	Patan Pragya	2	5
3	Journal of Education and Research	2	5
4	Nepalese Journal of Management Research	2	2
5	NCC Journal	2	0

Source: *Database (NepJol)*

The review of the data in table 4: highlights "Journal of Tourism & Adventure" as the leading journal in this field based on citation impact, with a total of 12 citations, suggesting its articles are more frequently referenced and potentially more influential. "Patan Pragya" and "Journal of Education and Research" also contribute significantly with 5 citations each but have a moderate impact. "Nepalese Journal of Management Research" has 2 citations, and "NCC Journal" has no citations, indicating lower to no impact in terms of citations and less influence in the academic community. This analysis can guide researchers to target journals with higher visibility and impact for their future publications.

3.5 FINDINGS

Table 4: *Major Findings of the Research based on top highly cited documents*

S.N	Major Findings
1	There exists a notable correlation between organizational performance and employee engagement. Engaged employees possess the ability to perceive social cues among their colleagues, enabling them to enhance their social skills to contribute towards achieving organizational objectives. Additionally, this study acknowledges that the connection between employee engagement and performance varies depending on the workforce dynamics within the workplace (Shrestha, 2019).
2	Managerial communication skills play a crucial role in driving growth and maximizing potential within the hospitality business. Furthermore, multicultural communication can pose a barrier to effective communication in this industry (Paudel, Puri, Parajuli, Devkota, & Bhandari, 2021).
3	In the honey sector, numerous constraints exist. Farmers often lack the necessary knowledge about proper beekeeping practices, highlighting the importance of raising awareness among them. Addressing this knowledge gap requires significant involvement from both the government and private companies (Bhandari & Kattel, 2020).
4	Government reservation policies in bureaucracy have led to an increase in women representation in civil service. However, it's notable that a significant portion of women entering the service have relied on reserved quotas. Despite the rising participation of women, their underrepresentation in higher-ranking positions paints a concerning picture (Wagle, 2019).
5	Multicultural education, fair treatment, and respect for differences are essential for embracing diversity. In the classroom, it's crucial to honor all students' ideas, perspectives, and primary and secondary differences. This includes recognizing variations in students' skills, abilities, cultural backgrounds, intelligence levels, and interests, both within and outside the classroom setting (Dawa, 2020).
6	The research findings indicate that all independent variables, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and educational attainment, demonstrate a statistically significant positive correlation with the dependent variable, which is organization effectiveness (Pokhrel, 2023).
7	Traditionally, the civil service has been predominantly male-dominated across all levels. However, in recent years, this trend has shifted due to the increasing number of female graduates and consequently, female applicants for government positions. The rising trend of women, along with individuals from other social classes and ethnic backgrounds, joining the civil service is expected to positively contribute to achieving a more representative bureaucracy that reflects the diversity of the nation (Bhul, 2021).
8	A successful organization can leverage workforce diversity by fostering a corporate culture that appeals to individuals with diverse skills, innovative ideas, and varied backgrounds. Diversity inherently fosters increased creativity and facilitates better problem-solving. Therefore, managing diversity through talent acquisition is essential for harnessing its full potential (Lamichhane, 2021).
9	The findings suggest that uncertainty avoidance, institutional collectivism, future orientation, performance orientation, participative, charismatic/value-based, and autonomous variables are interconnected, indicating a significant relationship among them. This relationship further suggests that all these variables exert a significant influence on cultural diversity in managerial communication (Puri, Devkota, Mahato, & Paudel, 2022).

Source: *Database (NepJol)*

In Table 5, based on the major findings extracted from highly cited documents on workforce diversity, it's evident that workforce diversity encompassed various dimensions and impacted across different sectors. The research highlights the interconnectedness between organizational performance and employee engagement, emphasizing the importance of creating an inclusive workplace culture that valued diverse perspectives and skills. Moreover, the hospitality industry faced challenges in multicultural communication, indicating the need for strategies to overcome barriers and leverage diversity for business growth. In the agricultural sector, particularly in the honey sub-sector, constraints exist due to lack of knowledge among farmers, necessitating collaborative efforts between government and private sectors to address knowledge gaps and promote sustainable practices. Furthermore, gender representation in civil service and the broader workforce underscored the ongoing challenges of achieving gender equality and promoting diversity in leadership roles. Multicultural education emerges as a key factor in fostering diversity and inclusivity in educational settings, emphasizing the importance of respecting students' cultural backgrounds and perspectives. Additionally, demographic variables had a significant influence on organizational effectiveness, highlighting the need for diversity initiatives that consider age, gender, ethnicity, and educational attainment. Successful organizations recognize the benefits of workforce diversity in enhancing creativity and problem-solving, emphasizing the importance of talent acquisition strategies that embrace diversity. Finally, understanding cultural dimensions was essential for effective managerial communication, emphasizing the need for cultural competence in diverse workplace environments. Overall, this review underscores the multifaceted nature of workforce diversity and the importance of inclusive practices in promoting organizational success and societal development.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Finally, the complete assessment of workforce diversity literature demonstrated a sophisticated knowledge of its diverse implications across industries and organizational contexts. The findings emphasized the link between worker diversity and organizational success, underlining the need to foster inclusive workplace environments that embraced different viewpoints and talents. Challenges such as intercultural communication obstacles in the hotel industry and knowledge gaps in agriculture highlighted the importance of tailoring strategies to capitalize on diversity's potential for corporate success and sustainability. Furthermore, gender representation difficulties in the public service and the larger workforce highlighted continued hurdles to attaining gender equality and encouraging diversity in leadership posts. Multicultural education emerged as a critical factor in fostering diversity and inclusivity in educational settings, emphasizing the importance of respecting cultural diversity for effective learning environments. Overall, the review underscored the imperative for organizations to prioritize diversity management practices and cultivate inclusive environments to unlock the full potential of diverse workforces.

Organizations were recommended to implement targeted diversity management strategies that addressed specific challenges identified in the review, such as improving multicultural communication, promoting gender equality in leadership, and addressing knowledge gaps in diverse sectors. Investing in training programs and educational initiatives that promote cultural competence and inclusive practices can enhance organizational effectiveness and foster innovation. Additionally, fostering collaboration between government, private sectors, and academic institutions are essential for addressing systemic barriers to diversity and promoting sustainable practices. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of

diversity initiatives, as well as sector-specific and contextual studies to tailor strategies to diverse organizational settings. By embracing diversity as a strategic imperative, organizations can drive innovation, enhance employee engagement, and achieve sustainable competitive advantage in today's global marketplace.

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