Perspectives of the Implementation of Human Resource Diversity Management in Russian and Czech Organizations

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Abstract: The human resource (HR) diversity occurs as a factor that attracts growing attention in the recent three decades seen to increase the competitiveness and effectiveness of organizations. The tendency stands in the cultural transformation of society. For organizations in Russia, it becomes revolutionary thanks to its consequences because, unlike developed countries, this means a new direction of the management and HR diversity practices happen at the beginning of the development. However, long-term demographic trends on the Russian labor market and globalization determine that it becomes a priority for organizations' management. The paper aims at the approaches regarding HR diversity and the view of the specifics utilized by managers in Russian organizations. The methodology includes on-the-desk analysis, an online questionnaire survey in Russia in 2018, and two semi-structured interviews with top managers/co-owners of Czech companies in 2019 as a basis for sharing know-how. Perspectives can be a pragmatic approach to managing HR diversity. Recommendations covering HR practices include the new orientation of managerial activities on the targeted perception, use, and support of diverse labor force, mainly on training and development of line/operational managers in diversity value and interpersonal communication in diverse workgroups.

Keywords: diversity; diversity management; human resources; discrimination

JEL Classification: J80; L21; M14

1. Introduction

One standard scheme cannot describe the behavior of most people. For an organization to be more effective in managing and leading people, it is necessary to consider their individuality, exploit their strengths, and reduce the negative impact of their deficiencies. This approach gives opportunities for human resource management (HRM) to find practices for managing employee diversity. The term diversity originated in the US in the 1960s and referred to people diversity in terms of their standard and mutually differentiated features. The concept of diversity management has a basis on the recognition that the workforce of an organization consists of people who are different from each other, and employers should consider these differences as an integral element of their personnel/human resource strategy and business development.

The relevance of the research presented in the paper is that the topic is on the edge of research and business administration, both in Russia and the Czech Republic, but increasingly becomes essential for the sustainable development and represents one of the human resource (HR) priorities in some countries. This interest evokes current trends related to globalization, border enlargement, and development of international cooperation. However, Hennekam, Tahssain-Gay, and Syed (2017) point at significant discrepancies between diversity policies in Europe and the US and the complications of its implementation in other regions where the local context has a significant impact on the strategies adopted.

The paper aims at the identification of approaches to human resource diversity in organizations and analyzing the situations in managing diverse staff in Russian and Czech environments. Diversity approaches to people management must introduce into the personnel/HR management system, especially in the case of Russian organizations due to the demographic situation in Russia and the task of maintaining competitiveness concerning foreign companies, both on the external and domestic markets.

2. Theoretical Ground for Human Resource Diversity Management

2.1. Analysis of bibliographic data

We retrieved 8,658 bibliographic records that matched the query in database search in the period 1990-2019: records from the Web of Science databases count for 3,775 and Scopus 4,883. The structure of bibliographic records shows Table 1. The enormous amount of literature of various sciences does not allow conducting a complete analysis of all of them. In this paper, the analysis is limited by the most significant works, considering the citation index related to diversity management, human resource diversity, human resource diversity management, discrimination and fairness, gender discrimination, and age discrimination. The study outlines the development of promising directions in several areas, mostly in management, business, industrial relations, applied psychology, economics, and social sciences.

Table 1. Bibliographic records by the query in Web of Science and Scopus database 1990-2019.

Query	Web of Science[1]	Scopus[1]
Diversity management	981	1,403
Human resource diversity	15	21
Human resource diversity management	7	8
Discrimination and fairness	13	14
Gender discrimination	1,873	2,414
Age discrimination	886	1,023
Total	3,775	4,883

Diversity management belongs to the most studied topics in the period 1990-2019 in the USA (247 publications in the Web of Science), England (110), Germany (73), Australia (63), and France (50). In the CR, it covers 29 publications and in Russia 12 publications. Articles dealt with diversity management cover according to categories topics from management (394 publications), business (114), industrial relations and labor (81), applied psychology (76), public administration (74), education and educational research (58), and economics (47).

In the case of human resource diversity, the order of the number of publications characterizes the following: Australia (6), Peoples Republic of China (2), and other countries only one publication (Czech Republic, England, Norway, Kenya, Romania, Slovakia, US). Human resource diversity management is a topic in publications from Australia (6), Peoples Republic of China (2), and Slovakia (1).

Publications about gender discrimination mainly print in the USA (714), England (150), Canada (116), Peoples Republic China (104), Spain (98), Australia (88), and in the same period in Germany 60 publications, in Russia 15 and the CR 11. They focus predominantly on economics (234 publications), women studies (198), management (137), public environmental and occupational health (121), education and educational research (114), and social psychology (112).

Age discrimination mostly becomes a subject of publications in the USA (367), England (102), Australia (51), Germany (46), Canada (39), Scotland (23), but in Russia 10 and the CR 7. They belong to gerontology (139), law (138), management (99), industrial relations and labor (93), applied psychology (73), and economics (68).

The number of literature deals with the most analyzed topics increases during almost the last 30 years, as shown in Table 2. It demonstrates that organizations see in diversity management and diverse human resources potential for development, sustainability, and competitiveness.

Table 2. Bibliographic records by the query in Web of Science database 1990-2019.

Query	Years[1]									
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Diversity management	1	4	10	11	42	74	100	121	82	122
Gender discrimination	4	21	30	39	63	116	157	182	179	200
Age discrimination	15	24	19	15	32	47	63	59	58	73

2.2. Literature overview

Diversity management focuses on differences among people accepting innovative potentials of these differences and lessening human shortages. The result is an atmosphere of openness and tolerance, where conditions aimed at talent identification, full self-realization, the achievement of objectives thanks to an effective synergy of competencies of different employees.

The individual's personality traits, working conditions, and team characteristics influence the individual's behavior in the organization of which the human being is a part, in the context of corporate culture and national mentality. Personality traits create under the influence of:

- natural factors such as the physiological state of the body, higher nerve activity, memory, emotions, feelings, and perception,
- social factors such as education, experience, habits, and social groups.

Each person has the own individual character and is a representative of different national and group cultures and subcultures.

Diversity management policy recognizes that employees are different. If properly managed, these differences will contribute to more qualified and efficient job performance. This policy focuses not only on discrimination issues; it is about understanding the differences between people as a basis for strategic HR diversity management. The concept of diversity management assumes that mastering HR diversity creates a productive environment in which everyone will perceive their value, employees' skills will fully utilize, and the organization will achieve its goals (Kandola and Fullerton 1994; Kandola et al. 1995).

Diversity management can define in two levels:

- in terms of gender, age, nationalities and ethnics, health fitness, sexual orientation, which used to be the subject of a personnel / HR audit,
- in terms of differences between individuals, where the diversity of individuals means differences in IQ, professional and personal characteristics of employees, and in their EQ, values, opinions, and beliefs, which is the subject of managing and leading people.

A theoretical ground dealt with diversity management distinguishes between primary and secondary differences among people. Primary differences, i.e., gender, race, nationality, age, cannot change and must master them. Secondary differences, i.e., marital status, education, belonging to a professional group, income level, and professional experience, may change over time (Armstrong and Taylor 2014). According to Toplis, quoted by Armstrong (2009), a human being contains everything related to his/her behavior and ways how he/she organizes and coordinates interactions with the environment. A leader must, therefore, be able to work with different types of employees, understand their characteristics, integrate different talents, and their competencies to use them for development and enrichment of group activities (Jetten, Spears, and Manstead 1996).

HR diversity management can see as the art of effective decision making, considering the similarities, differences, and complexities that people cause. Thomas and Ely (1996) describe the reality in managing HR diversity based on their analysis of three culturally different organizations and

identify three distinct perspectives on workforce diversity: the discrimination-and-fairness perspective, the access-and-legitimacy perspective, and the integration-and-learning perspective which are acceptable as three basic principles for managing diversity. However, diversity efforts in the workplace have undertaken considerable goodwill, and, ironically, they often end up fueling tensions (Ely and Thomas 2001). The discrimination-and-fairness paradigm accepts that discrimination is wrong, and HR monitoring mainly focuses on the achievement of a company´s recruitment and retention goals. This approach looks at assimilation as well as color- and gender-blind conformism through pink glasses. The access-and-legitimation paradigm, on the other hand, celebrates differences. Organizations try to get access to a more diverse clientele, matching their demographics to targeted consumers.

Nevertheless, that approach can leave employees of different identity-group affiliations feeling marginalizes or exploited (Ibid.). We believe that the integration-and-learning perspective can use an HR practice for the achievement of benefits from diversity. Shen et al. (2009) see all three perspectives useful in motivating managers to diversify their staffs, but the inequality and discrimination still widely exist, and HRM mainly focuses on compliance with equal employment opportunity and affirmative action legislation.

As above-mentioned, the manifestations of discrimination persist and take the form of a prohibited unequal relationship whose purpose or effect is to put a person in a less favorable situation against another person who is otherwise comparable to that person but is based on a prohibited manifestation unequal relationships, including violations of a person's rights and instructions to discriminate a person (Roosevelt 1992). The management of the organization strives to combat discrimination in the workplace through the implementation of an equal employment opportunity (EEO) policy and declarations of tolerance towards people. Labor legislation provides legal means to combat discrimination, but none of these instruments can effectively counteract hidden forms of discrimination. The statement applies to the EEO, whose principles lay down in the charter of organizations and their implementation in order to prevent discrimination against employees (Sharma 2016). The main differences between diversity management and EEO policies are that the first one involves all employees, focuses on changing the culture of the organization and achieving the business goals of the employer, exposing people's potential and maximizing the contribution of employees to achieving the goals of the organization. EEO policy focuses on discrimination against women, representatives of national minorities, and people with disabilities, and has a weak link with the organizational culture and business objectives of the organization (Roosevelt 1992). Diversity management used to be primarily a fight against discrimination in the workplace, even though it positively and significantly relates to organizational commitment regardless of gender (Kim, Lee and Kim 2015).

Gilbert, Stead, and Ivancevich (1999) developed a useful diversity management model that shows that the introduction of the changes proposed in the diversity management concept has a positive impact on employees and, consequently, on the organization itself. The reasoning uses the fact that employees can generate many new ideas as they receive the opportunity to do something other than their usual routine and daily responsibilities. The combination of different skills and team experiments usually enable to achieve higher productivity than individual work, which is performed independently and stimulated by providing benefits (Nemeckova 2017). Besides, creative activity in groups significantly enhances in cases where a minority has the right to vote with the majority, or even a consensus needs to achieve. That legitimizes the role of the "devil's advocate," which seeks to find weak links in decision-making and criticize when minority views must include in the final decisions, and team members have different reasoning and views. The empowerment of representatives of minorities to express their views has a positive effect, even if these views are wrong (Nemeth et al. 2001). The best way to overcome the group's narrow focus is, according to Nemeth, Brown, and Rogers (2001):

- to establish competing groups working on the same problem,
- to build, with the participation of impartial experts, a professional position that critically evaluates various ideas and opinions,

- to generate groups of employees, each of whom has a different function.

The most productive groups characterize an uncertainty about the roles of their participants due to their active interaction and the absence of hierarchical structures (Janis 1972). The generated environment usually brings a significant effect - strengthening the spirit of innovation and creativity. The latest substantial research conducted in 165 corporations from 20 states also confirms the positive impact of diversity of nationalities on corporate entrepreneurship in the context of globalization of markets (Boone et al. 2019).

The innovation supports teamwork and the ability to escape, at least temporarily, the established pressure of organizational tasks. The most effective teams are those characterized by the influence of minorities, competition, heterogeneity, and interaction. In other words, people should divide (as experts in their field), and at the same time, they should connect (to build a team).

Dobbin, Kim, and Kalev (2011) believe that firms with workforce diversity intend to more extent than others to develop diversity programs. Kalev, Dobbin, and Kelly (2006) analyze three approaches applied by employers to encourage HR diversity. Their findings show that some programs aimed at the development of organizational responsibility for diversity, others at lessening managerial bias through training and feedback, and the last ones at minimizing the social isolation of women and minority workers. They provide arguments that initiatives focused on responsibility for diversity lead to the broadest increases in managerial diversity. Additionally, as D´Netto et al. (2014) discuss in the case of the Australian manufacturing sector, employers can utilize a potential covered by human resource diversity if they build trust among employees, monitoring the HR diversity, invest in diversity training,   networking, and mentoring.

3. Methodology and Findings

3.1. Methodology

The methodology insists on several methods that enable a triangular analysis. The research combines state-of-the-art knowledge identified by in-depth-analysis in secondary sources with data collected by online questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews. The online questionnaire method uses for collecting data in Russia and semi-structured interviews in the Czech Republic due to the possibilities to address respondents in the mentioned countries. Researchers utilize their observations as well as findings from their long-term research about toxic labor relations in both countries. The reasoning methods are first that ethical aspects of employment deal with social phenomena deeply rooted in history, culture, values, and behaviors, which influence a discrimination bias and prejudices. Secondly, based on bibliometric analysis, it is evident a need to formulate an umbrella view about approaches to diversity in Russian organizations and to identify main issues in managing HR diversity. HR practices in the Czech environment can be useful as a benchmark in the case if we find them as effective best practices applicable in another Slavonic culture. Therefore, research collects and analyses data by an interpretative group of methods that reveal the meaning-making practices of human subjects to get a basis for achieving results, emerging questions for the practice, and ideas for future research. Respondents are employees, HR professionals, senior and top managers, to understand their attitudes to HR diversity among both managers and employees. The questions asked in the questionnaire research and used in semi-structured interviews include Table 3.

Research questions reflect the state-of-the-art in secondary sources and gaps in knowledge about human resource diversity management in Russian organizations. The paper intends to find answers using HR best practices in the Czech environment to the following:

1. What approaches exist in human resource diversity management in Russian organizations?
2. Which approaches to human resource diversity management can develop in Russian organizations?
3. Which HR best practices can recommend for designing human resource diversity management in Russian organizations?

3.2. Findings of human resource diversity in Russian organizations

The online questionnaire research includes answers received from 29 respondents employed in different Russian organizations in different areas of economic activity in the period from September to October 2018. The most significant number of respondents work in production (28%), customer support (22%), services (13%), trade (8%), energy industry, construction, and healthcare (each of them roughly 5%). The survey involved respondents mainly from medium and large enterprises, namely 31% of respondents in enterprises with 50-249 employees, 42% of respondents in enterprises with 250 employees or more. In microenterprises, up to 9 employees were 8% of respondents and in small enterprises with 10-49 employees: 19 0 of respondents.

The sample of Russian respondents characterizes the following:

- 22 women (76%) and seven men (24%),
- Respondents are aged 21 to 34: nine (31%), 35 to 44: nine (31%), aged 45 to 54: seven (24%), aged 55 and more: four (14%),
- 15 respondents occupy senior positions (52%), three are top managers (10%), eleven respondents work as professionals (38%).

Respondents who work in the company for less than one year are five (17%), 1 to 2 years also five 17%), two to five years - eight (27%), five to ten years - five (1%), ten or more years - six (21%).

The results of the survey shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of the online survey of Russian employees in 2018 (% of respondents).

List of questions[1]	Yes	Rather yes than no	Rather no than yes	No	I don't know
1. Does your organization support employee diversity?	24.1	37.9	24.1	3.4	10.3
2. Does your organization's management show through its actions that employee diversity is important to the organization?	20.7	27.6	27.6	6.9	17.2
3. Does your organization commit to diversity?	20.7	24.1	31.0	17.2	6.9
4. Does your organization respect the individuality of its employees and value their uniqueness?	34.5	24.1	27.6	10.3	3.4
5. Is your organization trying to implement cadre diversity initiatives?	10.3	24.1	37.9	27.6	0
6. Can anyone apply for any job, regardless of nationality?	55.2	31.0	6.9	3.4	3.4
7. Does your organization ensure that employees are treated fairly, regardless of their unique characteristics?	44.8	24.1	20.7	6.9	3.4
8. Do employees of your organization respect their characteristics?	31.0	48.3	13.9	6.9	0
9. Have you ever witnessed or been the victim of discrimination in your organization?	24.1	0	0	62.1	13.9
10. Do all employees in your organization have equal opportunities for their career growth?	31.0	31.0	20.7	17.2	0
11. Did the experience gained by working in your organization contribute to a deeper understanding of the individual characteristics of people?	62.1	27.6	3.4	3.4	3.4
12. Do you efficiently deal with people who have values and characteristics different from yours?	58.6	27.6	13.9	0	0
13. Have you ever had to change your working style to suit different employee needs?	37.9	27.6	13.9	17.2	3.4
14. Do your organization policy and behavior discourage manifestations of discrimination?	27.6	34.5	13.9	10.3	13.9

15. Do you think that the organization must take appropriate measures in response to cases of discrimination?	72.4	27.6	0	0	0
16. Does the management consider as essential to meet the needs of employees with disabilities?	31.0	27.6	17.2	6.9	17.2
17. Are employees of different age groups equally evaluated by your organization?	37.9	24.1	24.1	13.9	0
18. Does your organization have jokes about racial, ethnic, and gender issues?	10.3	10.3	31.0	14	0
19. Does the organization provide an environment for free and open expression of ideas, opinions, and beliefs?	31.0	31.0	20.7	13.9	3.4
20. Does your manager support the idea of cadre diversity?	31.0	31.0	10.3	13.9	13.9
21. Does your manager address the diversity questions of cadres satisfactorily?	31.0	31.0	13.9	10.3	13.9
22. Does your organization work to increase the value of cadre diversity and the development of multiculturalism?	24.1	20.7	20.7	31.0	3.4

The sample of respondents represents a small insight into the Russian reality and gives information for assessing the situation in HR diversity management:

- 86.2% of respondents agree or somewhat agree that everyone can apply for any job, regardless of nationality.
- 89.7% of respondents gained or slightly gained a deeper understanding of people's characteristics through working in their organization.
- 86.2% of respondents say that they treat or rather effectively treat people who have different values and characteristics than they do.
- Everyone thinks, or instead thinks, that their organization must take appropriate measures against discrimination.
- 62.1% of respondents have not yet witnessed or been victims of discrimination in their organization.

3.3. Cases about HR diversity management in the Czech environment

Case studies as a qualitative research method enable to illustrate best practices in managing and leading people with the focus on their diversity. Based on data from two semi-structured interviews, they become a source for explaining the situation in the Czech conditions. It provides an insight in understanding and utilizing HR diversity in a small and the export-oriented economy and its two sectors: in the information and communication technology, and consultancy. The interviewees are two top managers – co-owners in November and December 2019. They partly demonstrate Czech culture in a highly competitive business and partly managerial approaches to HR practices in the context of a company´s strategy. The questions of the semi-structured interviews consist of the same as in the Russian online questionnaire survey, but a critical benefit gives the unstructured part as it generates ideas for concepts applicable to Russian organizations. Their opinions help formulate recommendations when answering research questions.

Case study 1. Radek is a co-owner of an IT firm that serves as an Internet of Things (IoT) provider and supports its clients on a global scale. The firm is a small independent company of a worldwide network of independent local entities. The top local manager – a partner, makes decisions about essential HR processes, like recruitment and selection, compensation, promotions, and performance appraisal. IoT business depends on knowledge workers, so the co-owner is open to recruit and select job applicants regardless of their background. The only criterion of a perspective team happens if their members have multi-skills, an ideal member should have a combination of knowledge from IT, business or law, willingness to work hard, enjoy the fun at work, and continuously develop competencies (both professional and personal). The salaries are high above the average paid on the

local labor market as the company fights for talents, operates under intense competitive pressure, and builds a new portfolio of local customers. The owners accept the work-life balance practices and flexible working schemes as the main criterion of the employee characterizes at least standard performance and enthusiasm for development. Any team member can work on the more challenging projects if he or she performs excellent and has values matching with business ethics, i.e., regardless of gender, age, and nationalities.

Case study 2. Pavel is a managing partner of a multinational consultancy firm whose local subsidiaries are in several European countries, and five branches outside Europe. The company specializes in corporate training and development, coaching, and compensation. The Czech branch belongs to the micro-enterprise category and cooperates in the frame of an extensive network of freelance consultants. He prefers in recruiting and selecting people with abilities to be highly professional, with digital literacy and speaking fluently English. The team is multinational, and some of them train clients outside the CR in interpersonal communication skills; therefore, they must match the demographic characteristics of their clients. No written HR strategy or policies in the area of EEO exists. The company gives opportunities to develop a career from a junior assistant to a consultant or even a partner. The perspective of any employee depends on personal motivation and engagement as the company operates on a highly competitive consultancy market with a focus on soft training skills. No discrimination is acceptable as the core team members must cooperate, share their know-how, and participate in large projects that are usually for local subsidiaries of multinational enterprises. Flexible working time allows women to balance their work and family tasks. This practice serves as a useful tool on how to attract new employees regardless of their age, gender, and nationalities. Wages are comparable with similar businesses on the local market, but employees get no benefits, like meal tickets, supplementary pension insurance, and life insurance. Retention of staff is stable during the last decade and uses as a reference when the company applies for new projects.

4. Discussion

Three research questions focus on the human resource diversity management in Russian organizations and findings used for answering them are the following:

1. What approaches exist in human resource diversity management in Russian organizations?
2. Which approaches to human resource diversity management can develop in Russian organizations?
3. Which HR best practices can recommend for designing human resource diversity management in Russian organizations?

The results about the Russian reality in organizations show that they are trying to combat discrimination and the phenomenon not welcomed by both the top managers of the organizations and their teams. People are different, and this does not have only primary concern differences such as nationality but also secondary ones: marital status, education, place of residence, belief, level of income, and professional experience. The attitude towards individual characteristics of staff, both top managers and the teams, is tolerant, and everyone treats the diversity with understanding. However, full awareness of the need to formulate a diversity policy in working groups and the use of individual differences as a practice to improve outcomes of the organization has not accepted yet.

Respondents see a potential to develop human resource diversity management because Russia represents a multinational country with people of different races, cultures, and religions living in it; the globalization also plays a role in the need to deal with diversity management because many organizations are trying to enter into international cooperation. HR diversity management is thus becoming a priority, and organizations' management has already taken some steps towards developing diversity management.

HRM aims at the implementation of fairness and the reduction of discrimination. Employers may start with the mission statement declared their will to integrate diverse people in the corporate culture and to utilize sanctions against them who discriminate against anybody with different characteristics. In the long-term period, we expect pragmatic approaches to HR diversity management in business because the decisive factor determining any behavioral changes exists in personal values of

line/operational managers, i.e., how they motivate and use HR practices in day-to-day matters. A positive trend occurs among companies in the energy, high-tech, banking, and consultancy sectors as they monitor and audit the effectiveness of HRM, which covers indicators of people diversity, as well.

A starting point for the improvement in the area of HR diversity management involves a company`s compliance program. HR departments must be responsible for its design, implementation, and control. Managers responsible for diverse workgroups must receive information and training about the compliance program, value diversity, and culture diversity. However, the crucial role in this process plays top managers who usually initiate activities in favor of diversity and give an umbrella for the development of any HR strategy. Line managers should feel their support and rely on systematic assistance from HR departments, effective internal communication from top-down, and on knowing that feedbacks from bottom-up regarding diversity workgroups accept. So far, well-known HR practices in managing people diversity deal with recruitment and selection; minimum attention focuses on onboarding, training and development, compensation and benefits, communication, and interpersonal relations in diverse workgroups.

5. Conclusions

The results of the study show that employers in Russian organizations strive to eliminate discrimination and try to facilitate the integration of new employees into the organization, while employees in teams also understand each other and respect their characteristics. It seems that no need exists to speak of the ultimate elimination of discriminatory practices established here for centuries. A small number of Russian respondents confirm HR diversity management or their practices in the organization aimed at utilizing the potential of human resources diversity. The reason is that the topic has not studied much yet and faces skepticism from both business and science. However, multinationalism and the pressure to achieve sustainable competitiveness not only on the domestic market but also on the external market lead to the gradual realization of a business strategy to establish a system for managing human resources diversity in Russian organizations.

Arguments in favor of HR diversity management cover their positive as well as negative aspects for employers and businesses. Prospective benefits seem to be an increased work motivation, an employee engagement to innovate and find unusual problem solutions, to modify personal attitudes to people with different backgrounds, develop networking, and make easier information exchange. However, obstacles for practical mastering diverse human resources stem from prejudices, management bias, language barriers, shortening time for onboarding, and integration into the enterprise culture. The most perspective HR practice occurs the training and development of line management in diversity values and mentoring and coaching in diversity management as it can decrease turnover and absenteeism on jobs occupied by people different than the majority staff.

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