

# Diversity Management on Employees' Engagement

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The frequent world changes raised by globalization, new technology development, and the increase in migration movements have generated an immensely diversified workforce. To face these challenges, managers started to seek the best strategies to effectively run this mixed environment and implement the leading diversity management policies for human resource management sustainability, which is also considered as very constructive in boosting employees' performance, motivation, satisfaction, as well as their work engagement.

diversity management

employees' engagement

organizational trust

job insecurity

## 1. Introduction

Presently, with the world change, the rise of globalization, technology development, and migration movements, the work environment has become progressively diversified and mixed <sup>[1]</sup>. These facts were the main reasons for many changes within the business sector where women, disabled people, and individuals who have different demographic and socio-cultural characteristics were mostly affected <sup>[2]</sup>. At the beginning of the 1990s, several managers started to encounter the new tendency of diversity at the workplace, which was raised by the implementation of liberalization, privatization, and globalization policies <sup>[3]</sup>. At that time, the topic started to have a huge consideration from researchers' perspective, where some scholars have mentioned that sooner or later companies' structures might reach 90% of women and many of them would be migrants. Without forgetting the racial groups that will present the largest part of the companies' businesses <sup>[4][5]</sup>. According to them, the organizations that will appreciate these changes will be more competitive in the markets and will respond to a vast variety of approaches to managing their diversified workforce <sup>[3]</sup>.

It was also highly mentioned that diversity management is increasingly important in ensuring the human resource management sustainability, where <sup>[6]</sup> confirmed that organizations who guard their diversified workforce by planning a long term diversity management strategies and include them in the companies' human resource management activities such as recruitment, payroll, mobility, promotion etc., who ensure structured employees' evaluations and who have the right managers with international and multicultural experiences, flexible and global mindsets, and strong diversified technical and strategical skills are those who succeed in introducing supportive programs for sustainability and a skilled, powerful, and solid work environment. In addition, they reported that diversity implementation with its full requirements incarnated into the firms' everyday life can ensure the companies' sustainable prosperity in a very globalized world.

From the Hungarian outlook, researchers pointed out that some of the Hungarian employers started to deliver greater importance to promote diversity in the workplace, by considering the diversity management not only from recruiting diversified employees' but also from ensuring them the feeling of organizational involvement and equity in the management policies [7], other Hungarian employers still refuse to address this issue because of the lack of trust [8]. To conclude, one of the best ways to keep the highest competitiveness is then to admit that today's liveware is progressively mixed and diverse. That is why huge efforts in promoting policies and practices are needed to ensure individuals' inclusion from all backgrounds and push them to reach some positive outcomes such as profitability, creativity, flexibility, organizational growth, organizational trust, and employee engagement [9]. These positive outcomes also need some other fundamental measures and changes in the organizational structure such as human resource policies, operational procedures, style of leadership, and well-structured organizational culture [3].

Earlier, from a theoretical stance, the institutional theory was basically used to state that diversity management is about the rules and norms settled by the company to influence the employees' behaviors [10]. In the same line, some other studies have mentioned that corporate ethics enhancing peoples' sense of respect towards each other ensures organizational commitment [11][12]. In addition, social exchange theory shaped that exchange is the best way to show appropriate behaviors valuable to their organization [13]. Hence, current study will focus on exploring this effect in the Hungarian context, as in some of the local companies the concept of diversity acceptance is still frozen out. Researchers would like to see how the actual changes (migrants' movement, technology development, openness) impacted the diversified Hungarian work environment and how Hungarian managers in service companies started to deal with this issue to ensure their employees' engagement. According to Guadagno [14], the foreigner employees' segment was the most vulnerable and intensely affected during crisis time (COVID-19 pandemic for instance) due to different reasons, such as the difficult living circumstances, different working conditions, inadequate health services, limited local knowledge, and shortage of government foreigners' support, etc. These facts have pushed us to focus on this type of employees, in order to understand the effectiveness of diversity management policies implementation in boosting their engagement at work.

Correspondingly, Karatepe has mentioned in his study, that employees retain a lower work engagement, in an environment full of job loss fear and lack of great management. Contrarily, employees who are full of energetic and enthusiastic feelings towards their job are usually up to show greater attitudinal and behavioral outcomes [15]. Consequently, these studies have reported that job insecurity, which is considered as a sensation felt by employees when there is a risk of job loss [16], is the reason for lack of engagement and engenders detrimental outcomes such as nonattendance behaviors and counterproductive work behaviors [17]. Because of the lack of studies dealing with this issue, current study will try to investigate on reporting the mediation effect of job insecurity in the relationship between diversity management and employee engagement.

Even though employee engagement was linked to many job outcomes as researchers mentioned before, there are few studies that point to the antecedents of engagement such as leadership and trust [18]. That is why understanding the role of trust is a key point to generate positive job attitudes. From this standpoint, Ugwu et al. [19] confirmed that trust is a key factor for any organization to ensure their employees' wellbeing because trust

maintains social exchange and ensures positive job attitudes such as being more engaged at work. Hence, the current study will try to explore the mediation role of organizational trust in the relationship between diversity management and employees' engagement. In addition, the researchers truly consider the current study as an important contribution, bringing an additional value to the literature, as no earlier studies were conducted in Hungary linking diversity management, organizational trust, job insecurity, and employee engagement variables all together.

For the results' examination, the researchers opted for a quantitative study using a questionnaire as a data collection tool sent to 580 respondents from Marketing, Management consulting, IT, and logistics at local Hungarian service companies. The findings show how important it is for Hungarian managers to ensure a well-structured diversity management strategy in promoting their employees' work engagement and avoiding sensations of job insecurity. It also shows how trust in the organization could be a significant factor to boost that engagement.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Diversity Management and Employee's Engagement**

Diversity management was largely considered as a general concept, originally taken as a replacement for and reframing of the earlier affirmative action programs and the equal employment opportunities act in the United States <sup>[19]</sup>. Many authors introduced this concept to help in promoting employment and career development and combating racial and gender discrimination <sup>[20]</sup>.

Previously, the diversity issue was thoroughly ignored in organizations. However, with the world changes due to globalization, diversity management started to gain a lot of consideration, and many authors started to examine it from different angles and different viewpoints <sup>[21]</sup>. Regarding its definition, investigators have mentioned that the concept is seen as a general and vast notion, hard to be defined in a single and concrete conceptualization <sup>[21]</sup>. In compliance with this fact, Jackson et al. <sup>[22]</sup> have mentioned that diversity is the existing dissimilarities in personal attributes between people who are working in the same groups, and these attributes usually include (age, gender, race, etc.). In addition, Yadav and Lenka <sup>[21]</sup> (p. 1), added that diversity management is a perspective to "enhance the performance of a heterogeneous workforce and inclusive development of people with differences in gender, ethnicity, nationality, cultural and educational backgrounds". Furthermore, Thomas <sup>[23]</sup> defined the concept as a practice that consists of implementing diversity through effective change within the organization, which has a positive effect on promoting the achievement of the planned objectives. This variation in the definitions gives an idea about the complexity of the diversity concept.

In this line, many theories were related to diversity management in order to explain its importance and necessity within organizations, such as, for example, the social identity theory <sup>[24]</sup>, explaining that individuals usually classify their perceptions according to the social groups and based on some common attributes; similarity-attraction theory <sup>[25]</sup>, highlighting that individuals are willing to be closer to those who share similar attributes and attitudes and put themselves in challenging situations with those who dispose different attitudes, values, and experiences; and

finally, the social exchange theory [26], reporting the importance of the mutual exchange that grants social stability. Therefore, a safe environment could be created when effective diversity management is implemented within the organizations where people are willing to engage and commit.

Literature on engagement states that employee engagement is considered as a very recent topic, where authors started to take it into consideration and talk about it widely in 2000 [27]. Several definitions were dedicated to conceptualizing the notion. Accordingly, Ref. [28] have mentioned that employee engagement is the degree of his/her attachment to the organization and how they identify themselves towards it. It has also been reported that employee engagement can occur when people are engaged in their work, and they are concerned and enthusiastic about their job and position and willing to put a lot of effort into it [27]. Furthermore, Kahn [29] (p. 694) who was the first one who introduced the concept, added that employee engagement can occur when “people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances”.

In this line, researchers can say that employee engagement aims to enhance the performance, autonomy, diversity respect, integrity, and personal development [27]. In their study, Schaufeli et al. [30] have mentioned that there are three factors of employee engagement, which are vigor, dedication, and absorption, where “Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one’s work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties and where dedication refers to being strongly involved in one’s work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge and finally, absorption which is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one’s work, whereby time passes quickly, and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work.” [31] (p. 702).

Previous studies, widely focused on the press, on social exchange theory to explain that higher employee engagement can be reached through providing the right resources and the right support by the organizations [32]. From this standpoint, many authors tried to indicate that diversity practices are the way to show the employees how the organization cares about their differences and try always to keep in mind that reaching their happiness is the most important objective [33]. In this line, anterior research confirmed this relationship by mostly focusing on the effect of fairness, development provision, and ethical climate presence on employee satisfaction and engagement [34][35]. In addition, Hapsari et al. [36] reported that employee engagement is highly linked to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, and feelings of empowerment, highlighting that thanks to those feelings, employees are willing to work harder and adapt themselves to the company’s values and goals. Furthermore, in a recent study, Alshaabani et al. [37] found that perceived organizational support positively impacts the employees’ engagement. These results, which was in line with SET, indicated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of management in providing support to the employees is significant for enhancing their engagement at work which in turn was positively affecting their organizational citizenship behaviors.

Thus, managers must take into consideration all these features and keep in mind that diversity plays extraordinary importance in business because it offers big benefits to both the employer and the employees, who will be satisfied and engage in their jobs [36]. Very few studies have linked diversity management to employee engagement such as Downey et al. [9], who, by adopting a survey dedicated to 4597 health sector employees, confirmed that having

clear diversity management practices and policies plays a significant role in boosting employees' engagement. Similarly, Alshaabani and Benedek [38], with sending an online questionnaire to 202 employees with Middle Eastern nationalities and working in Western countries, reported that some diversity management practices, such as training, performance appraisal, and recruitment, play an important role in increasing Egyptian workers' engagement levels. In addition, Skalsky and McCarthy [39] have also mentioned in their research, that diversity training was the most effective practice in enhancing employee engagement levels among Australian employees. From this perspective, researchers can conclude current first hypothesis:

### **Hypothesis 1 (H1).**

*"Diversity management has a significant positive effect on employees' engagement."*

## **2.2. Mediation Role of Organizational Trust**

According to the literature, researchers were able to notice that researchers mostly focused on either interpersonal trust or organizational trust [40]. In the current research, the focus will mainly be on organization trust, which was defined by Hon and Grunig [41] (p. 3) as "one party's level of confidence in and willingness to open oneself to the other party," and by Nyhan and Marlowe [42] as a global assessment of an organization's trustworthiness. Berraies et al. [40] have mentioned that organizational trust can be seen through employees' reliance and through how the organization will treat them fairly and will respect their different interests with different practices.

The literature review on organizational trust presented three dimensions defining the concept which are as follows: integrity, which consists of believing that the organization will perform justly and consider everyone's expectations; then dependability, highlighting that the organization should keep its promises to increase the level of trust within employees; and finally, competence, stating that the organization can fulfill its promises [43]. In addition to this, many researchers have recognized that there are many factors that can be put up to build and boost organizational trust within companies such as employee empowerment, cultural norms, organizational structure, organizational justice, and distributed leadership [40][44]. In that context, researchers will try to explore a non-documented area, which is how diversity management can promote organizational trust.

It is obvious to see that diversity management and trust in organizations can be highly connected, and this could be explained by the fact that diversity management consists of not only employing different people but also ensuring their inclusion within the organization [7][45]. It is very important that employees feel they are needed for the company's decision-making process so that they will automatically show positive attitudes and be more engaged; even so, this kind of environment cannot be settled without the concept of trust.

In this line, it has been widely mentioned that diversity management is the best practice to ensure fairness, respect, appreciation, and engagement, which can also contribute to increasing the level of organizational trust [10][12][46]. Alas and Mousa [47] reported that if the organization accepts people as they are with respect to fair treatment, positive consequences may occur leading to an increase in employee motivation and other positive outcomes such

as job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, loyalty, performance, and trust. From this perspective, researchers can suggest current second hypothesis:

### **Hypothesis 2 (H2).**

*"Diversity management has a significant positive effect on organizational trust."*

In their study, Ugwu et al. [18] explained that engagement was related to several variables at the organizational level such as leadership [48], need for achievement [49], organizational justice [44][50], and organizational tenure [51]. In addition to these variables, in some other studies, researchers stated the importance of organizational trust in increasing employee engagement. Thus, organizational trust is seen as a vital factor promoting employee performance, organizational commitment, and work engagement [52].

Accordingly, Wong et al. [53] have found that thanks to the organizational trust that helps in increasing knowledge exchange, employee engagement can be boosted thereafter. Thus, a direct positive effect was proven between organizational trust and employee engagement. In the same line, it turned out that trust helps employees in completing their jobs and respects their duty towards the company that they are working for [18]. From this point, most of the researchers explained this relationship by the social exchange theory, which states that if the employees trust that the organization treats them fairly, they tend to reciprocate the treatment. As conclusion then, trust is a necessary factor to make the employees concentrate on their work, feel concerned about the whole companies' issues, and feel motivated to be more engaged [18]. From this perspective, researchers can suggest current third hypothesis:

### **Hypothesis 3 (H3).**

*"Organizational trust has a significant positive effect on employee engagement."*

In recent studies, many researchers tried to investigate the mediating role of organizational trust between many variables such as between corporate social responsibility and employee engagement [54], confirmed by a survey made for 485 employees working in the Indian banking sector. In addition, organizational trust was studied as a mediator between corporate social responsibility and organizational commitment [55], based on a survey made through 289 Vietnamese pharmaceutical enterprises. Moreover, other studies studied organizational trust as a mediator between diversity management and other variables such as knowledge sharing [56], turnover intentions [57], and counterproductive behaviors [38]. However, the current study will investigate confirming the mediation role of organizational trust between diversity management and employee engagement. Therefore, as conclusion from Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3. researchers can suggest the Hypothesis 4 stating that:

### **Hypothesis 4 (H4).**

*"Organizational trust mediates the relationship between diversity management and employee engagement."*

## **2.3. Mediation Role of Job Insecurity**

Discussions around job insecurity commence having huge importance starting from the 1980s, when researchers argued that the concept is highly related to motivation theory [58]. To define the notion, Jung et al. [59] explained that job insecurity occurs when workers feel worried about losing their job and being obliged to face unemployment. In another word, job insecurity is when employees are threatened to lose their job features because of economic forces (recession, industry downturn) organizational restructuring, and interpersonal factors [60]. Many scholars insisted on the fact that job insecurity is considered a psychological factor affecting employees' physical and mental health [61] and is able to reduce workers' motivation and engagement [58]. Furthermore, previous studies have tried to probe more into the concept, such as Hellgren et al. [62], who have proposed qualitative and quantitative perspectives of job insecurity. They have mentioned that the qualitative perspective is about employees' concern towards their future job conditions and situation and that the quantitative perspective is about the sequels resulting from losing their job [63]. Additionally, Sverke and Hellgren [64] took different angles for job insecurity and stated the cognitive and affective aspects. They reported that cognitive insecurity is about employees' interpretation of the organization and effective insecurity is about their evaluation of the situation.

In fact, many studies have investigated several predictors and moderators of job insecurity, as well as the factors that are able of weakening that variable some of the predictors of job insecurity can contain labor market characteristics, organizational change, organizational communication, employment contract, uncertainty in the future of the company, perceived control and employability, role conflict and ambiguity, family control, and the need for security [64][65]. On the other hand, other researchers indicated the role of human resources management in reducing or preventing job insecurity and in building trust between the employees and the management [66][67]. Since diversity management has a set of practices of human resources management, therefore, the study will make a better understanding of diversity management's impact on job insecurity. Along with this idea, Lavaysse et al. [68] suggested, according to collected data from 449 employed individuals within the United States, that diversity management can be an effective method for reducing job insecurity, especially among minorities. In the same line, Shen et al. [69], with collected data from 530 Chinese employees working in different fields and industries, noted that the absence of diversity management could lead to higher levels of job insecurity, job injustice, and less fair payment, which in turn could negatively affect the employees' OCB. Hence, the following hypothesis can be suggested:

### **Hypothesis 5 (H5).**

*"Diversity management has a significant negative effect on Job insecurity."*

In addition to the predictors and moderators of job insecurity, the concept itself can have a negative impact on employees' performance, motivation, satisfaction, as well as engagement. Sharing these thoughts, Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt [70] have mentioned that if employees are facing a high level of job insecurity, they are more likely to feel less engaged toward their work and make little effort to follow and reach the organization's goals and objectives. In the same line, Presti and Nonnis [71] confirmed that employee's emotional commitment is hugely and negatively affected by job insecurity, which can also make their happiness and wellbeing inconsistent [72]. Likewise, Wang et al. [73] stated that employees' job performance can be declined and decreased due to job insecurity impact, and that is why workers may feel less engaged in their work. This idea was also shared by Getahun and



Chang [74]. The negative effect of job insecurity does not directly prevail only on the attitudes or behaviors of the employees, but it can be reflected negatively on the employees' physical, psychological, and mental energy, which can decrease their engagement consequently [17]. researchers can, then, suggest the Hypothesis 6:

**Hypothesis 6 (H6).**

*“Job insecurity has a significant negative on employee engagement.”*

Many studies have looked over the mediating role of job insecurity between many variables, such as the study of Park and Ono [75], who explained how job insecurity could be a mediator between workplace bullying and work engagement with confirmed data from employees in Korea using the latent factor approach, as well as the study of Hsieh and Huang [76], who also studied the mediating role of job insecurity in peoples' core self-evaluation and their job satisfaction, based on a survey made through 346 full-time employees in Taiwan. Furthermore, De Beer et al. [77] indicated that HR practices that aim to eliminate discrimination at the workplace and manage diversity can decrease the job insecurity between the black employees which, in turn, affects their job turnover, whereas it does not have any effects on their white fellows. From this perspective, researchers are interested in seeing the importance of diversity management in employees' engagement toward their jobs to make more effort and have more energy and motivation to follow their companies' goals and objectives. As a conclusion from the Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6, researchers can suggest the Hypothesis 7 as follows:

**Hypothesis 7 (H7).**

*“Job insecurity mediates the relationship between diversity management and employee engagement.”*

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