

Handbook of Research on Race, Gender, and the Fight for Equality

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Chapter 16

New Trends in Leveraging Workforce Diversity through Human Resource Management Initiatives

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ABSTRACT

Tremendous forces are radically reshaping the world of work and workforce diversity is steadily growing. If effective diversity management can only be achieved by means of the use of appropriate human resources strategies, HRM need to change his role. This chapter intends to explore such new trends and new practices on HRM, analyze which of them can be employed and which are more appropriate for an optimal management of workforce diversity and to obtain a competitive advantage for companies in the global economy.

INTRODUCTION

According to Taggart (2013, p. 3), “the past years since the 2008 global financial meltdown, and what later became dubbed the Great Recession, have seen additional strains on all Western governments. (...) The need for organizations to be more *change adaptable* in response to global, national and local events calls for the development of a workplace that is capable of moulding itself to respond immediately to both threats and opportunities. Organizations must learn how to adapt as they change occurring.”

Tremendous forces are radically reshaping the world of work. Disruptive innovations, radical thinking, new business models and resource scarcity are impacting every sector (PWC, 2012). The massive changes that are underway in the global economy include (Taggart, 2013) more and more occupations are being virtualized, social networks are becoming the new operating systems of business, workers are

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expected to be lifelong learners and must take personal responsibility for their career development, the growing of knowledge work and globalization have spawned the emergence of personal self-reliance, social media tools will become the new way of doing business, the leaders must deal increasingly with ambiguities, the unknown and unpredictability, a massive demographic change (Ward, 2011), a workforce spanning five generations, and an ageing population.

Cultural diversity is steadily growing. A multicultural workforce is a common element not only to organizations of western societies but also to corporations at global scale. As a result, diversity is increasingly becoming a hot-button at political, legal, corporate and educational level (Shen, Chanda, D'Netto & Monga, 2009).

Researchers widely recognize that effective diversity management can only be achieved by means of the use of appropriate human resources strategies (Richard & Johnson, 2001; Litvin, 1997). Human Resource Management (HRM) will need to attend and overcome challenges related to virtuality, knowledge sharing across geographical contexts, managing time and attention, as well as challenges due to cultural differences of global team members (Gibbs & Boyraz, 2015). Business across the world are beginning to understand that they need a clear purpose and mandate for the decade ahead if they are to attract and retain employees, customers and partners (PWC, 2012).

HRM is changing his role. Perceived by many as a passive and service-oriented function, the demands of tomorrow's workplace will transform HRM with a proactive mindset, will become the driver of corporate social responsibility agenda within the organization, and the function will be seen as a transactional (PWC, 2012).

This chapter intends to explore such new trends and new practices on HRM, analyze which of them can be employed and which are more appropriate for an optimal management of workforce diversity and to obtain a competitive advantage for companies in the global economy.

The chapter is structured into four main sections. The first section is "The future of work and the workforce," the second section is "Diversity as a strategic value and the role of the HRM," the third section is entitled "The new role of Human Resources Management in a global economy" and the final main section is "New trends in Human Resources policies that leverage Diversity Management."

THE FUTURE OF WORK AND THE WORKFORCE

The world is going through a huge demographics transition that will reshape nations, economies and markets over the next 50 years. Forecasts by United Nations predict the world's population peaking and then stabilizing by 2050 (Taggart, 2013, p. 6). The HSBC Report (Ward, 2011) highlights a massive demographic change in 2050: the population of many African countries will double and, by contrast, in other countries (Japan, Russia, the Eurozone) working population looks set to contract.

The demographics of the population and the workplace in Europe, Australia, BRICS countries and other continents are changing drastically because of a number of factors, such as an increasing number of ethnic and religious minorities, women, older persons and single people with caring responsibilities in the workplace (Bisin, Patacchini, Verdier & Zenou, 2011)

We are on the cusp of a workforce spanning five generations as the oldest of Generation Z (began in 1996) move towards labor market entry in the next few years; a small portion of the Silent Generation (was born before 1948) is still in the labor market; Baby Boomers (1948-1966) will work longer; Genera-

tion X (1967 to the late 1970s) has struggled to create its own identity in the presence of the Boomer's looming shadow; and Generation Y (1979-80 to 1994-95) seems to have the best grasp that the world is changing and was hit hard by the great Recession (Taggart, 2013, p. 8).

Cultural diversity is steadily growing. Workforce diversity is changing and poses new challenges in the global environment. It is becoming an increasingly complex issue in the current world.

Although issues such as ethnicity and gender are still important, it is likely that more attention will have to be paid to issues related to the gay/lesbian/transgender workforce, especially taking into account that in a global environment these issues pose special challenges since there are countries where these practices are illegal and sometimes subject to the death penalty. Likewise, religious diversity is gaining relevance. For example, there are many negative stereotypes on Muslims and young Muslims are facing specific barriers in many parts of the world. Multinationals also face new diversity challenges related to third-country national, especially in countries like Germany where there is a large number of Turkish employees (Denisi, Wilson & Biteman, 2014).

In the United States it seems that some groups long for past days and are reacting against immigrant for fear by some dominant groups of losing power, resources or of being doomed to social exclusion, encouraging the rejection of ideas such as affirmative action or support a multi-cultural approach (Nkomo & Hoobler, 2014).

Demographic changes and growing cultural diversity are not the only factors affecting work environments. According to the "Future Work Skills 2020" report for the University of Phoenix (Davies, Fidler & Gorbis, 2011), the main drivers of change in future work skills are, in addition to demographics and extreme longevity, the rise of machines and intelligent systems. They will enter our offices and homes at rates never seen before and will become part of our lives. It describes a computer-based world in which the widespread dissemination of sensors, communication and processing power in everyday environments and objects will unleash a stream of data without precedent, in which everything will be programmed and adjustable to required parameters., and in which new skills will be required to interact with data; a new media ecosystem in which new multimedia technologies are changing how we communicate. According to this prediction, new forms of group collaboration will be possible, providing new levels of transparency both for our work and for our personal life. The new social media platforms and technologies are driving an unprecedented reorganization of the way we produce and create value, with structures and methods far away from traditional ones. In a global and interdependent world in which developing countries grow and new consumer categories emerge, the key does not have to lie in employing local people and outsourcing everything, but in integrating local employees and local business processes effectively into the infrastructure of global organizations. New forms of organization that could turn companies more competitive, placing diversity and adaptability at the center of the organization's operations.

Technology and smart systems have become an integral part of organizations. For example, firms in sectors as diverse as construction materials, telecom equipment and pharmaceutical products have made heavy investments in modern mapping technology, using innovations such as clustering techniques, better measures to analyze networks and expanded data to visualize new definitions, new ways of understanding the world we live in (Mu, Kirsch & Butler, 2015). We are living in the era not just of change, but of accelerated change. With the growth of technology in companies, especially information technologies, a new employee profile is emerging: knowledge workers who especially in learning organizations will mark clear differences with 20th century companies.

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In this new context and according to the PWC Report (2012, 4-20) people's work expectations seem to diverge into three different worlds in which technologies, social media and data are used in different manners: blue, green and orange. In the blue world the large capitalist company is the supreme king. Consumer preferences and profit margins rule a model built on flexibility, efficiency and market speed. Unceasing pressure on performance does not stem just from competition among colleagues but also from aggressive new players aiming at leading innovation and weakening incumbent players. (...) Their contract with their employees is defined by the supply of data (for example, health, performance, potentially even private life) in exchange for security of employment. Younger people tend to be more open to this new world than older generations.

In the green world companies assume leadership in the development of a strong social awareness and environmental responsibility. They are open, confident, collaborative-learning organizations that see themselves as important players in the learning and development of the employees and local communities (...) Diversity and work and personal life balance are considered as sources of strength and competitive advantage (...) Rather than on basic performance, they focus on the use of data to promote broader goals, such as health, wellbeing, professional development, flexible work and volunteer work.

In the orange world organizations are fragmented into more flexible networks, operating in an autonomous and often specialized manner. Technology helps to keep this networks together, frequently on task-by-task basis, with social media strengthening the connectivity this world is based on (...) Many people realize that they can enjoy greater flexibility and different challenges working as freelance or as contractors for different organizations (...) These companies make an extensive use of technology to carry out their business, coordinating a large external workforce and supporting their links to third parties (...) This desire for more autonomy is greater in China, especially among young people, reflecting a generational change towards greater freedom, entrepreneurship and specialized skills in this rapidly changing economy.

Thus, we are faced with demographic, technological, organizational and social changes. The workforce and its expectations are changing, as it is the work environment and the way to do business. This greater workforce diversity has become consubstantial in our global and interconnected world.

As the study of the University of Phoenix (Davies *et al*, 2011) suggests, diversity and adaptability are at the center of the organization's operations. Companies from all over the world start to understand the need to have a clear purpose if they want to attract and retain employees, clients and partners. For example, the interest of the role of perceived fairness in the workplace has shown us that those employees that feel that they are treated "unfairly" may resign, file claims, reduce their effort, and in general terms, cause disruption in their workplace. The meaning of justice and fairness may be different for different people. We must understand what people of different cultures perceive as being just and fair (Denisi *et al*, 2014).

"There is a need to understand and effectively manage workforce diversity not only to enhance business outcomes but also to create an inclusive workplace in a socially responsible manner" (Syed & Kramar, 2009). There is also a need to create institutional and organizational structures and cultures to enable employee inclusion in the work group as involving the satisfaction of the needs of both belongingness and uniqueness (Brewer and Silver, 2000; Syed & Boje, 2011; cited in Syed & Ozbilgin, 2015).

DIVERSITY AS A STRATEGIC VALUE AND THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

There is a widespread recognition of the value provided by a diverse workforce. It is related, among others, to an improved quality in management decision making (Beeth, 1997), more innovative problem solving thanks to the contribution of new ideas (Cox, 1994; Elsass & Graves, 1997), the possibility of gaining access to new markets since it reflects the diversity of clients and suppliers (Ford, 1996; Cox, 1994; Cox & Blake, 1991), an improved corporate image (Kandola, 1995) and, as suggested by the resource-based view, the development of a sustainable competitive advantage due to the use of valuable, rare, inimitable and irreplaceable (human) resources (Barney, 1991).

Valuable because firms must have jobs requiring employees with different skills and employees that differ in the skills they have. Organizations that exclude certain people as potential employees based on irrelevant factors limit their ability to hire employees who may master some skills others in the company do not have (McMahan, Bell & Virick, 1998). Moreover, the availability of different skills is something valuable inasmuch as it has been proven that diverse groups are more effective in identifying problems and finding solutions than homogeneous groups (Watson, Kumar & Michaelsen, 1993).

Rare because candidates with a high potential are rare, and organizations that exclude potential employees base on irrelevant factors limit their ability to attract and hire candidates with a high potential; and also rare because it is relatively common that in organizations of all sizes the workforce is quite homogeneous, which determines that employees tend to be segregated within organizations (on grounds of gender, hierarchical levels, occupations,...). Having a workforce in which diverse individuals are present at different levels and occupations is something rare.

Inimitable because the policies supporting diversity in an organization may have been the outcome of changes in certain policies and measurement practices developed as a response to litigation on discrimination, or result from a type of leadership associated to the recruitment of diverse employees, or be the result of interconnecting different human resources functions to each other, or of interconnecting to other functional areas; all of which makes them inimitable.

And irreplaceable because a workforce is made up by individuals who are inherently different and who contribute different experiences, knowledge, skills and capacities to the organization. An organization employing such a workforce must necessarily have employees who have learned from each other and their assets may be used as required.

Therefore, diversity must be understood as a competition issue. It must be approached from a strategic perspective and not as an emotional one. Diversity initiatives must be part of the business' strategic objectives and be connected to the other business strategies and objectives. Successful diversity management should be a key element in corporate mission statements, business objectives and other corporate strategies.

However, the different versions agree in that the potential benefits of diversity do not occur just as a result of having a more diverse workforce. Diversity by itself does not need to have an impact, either negative or positive, on business results. The key lies in management, and more specifically in Human Resources Management.

The issue for organizations (Shen *et al.*, 2009) is not about just accepting that individuals are different, but rather about creating an inclusion atmosphere and achieving a compromise to value diversity. The key to managing diversity lies in strategic thinking and in policies focusing on people.

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Diversity Management and Human Resources Management (HRM) overlap each other. The former is an approach that focuses on employees; the latter is the custodian of the management processes of individuals. Both issues are related mainly to the contribution of the human resources function to the business strategy, and both are related to the individual differences, the development and wellbeing of each and every one of the individuals.

Researchers widely recognize that an effective diversity management can only be achieved by means of the use of appropriate human resources strategies (Richard and Johnson, 2001; Litvin, 1997). Effective human resources strategies focus on promoting organizational learning, flexibility, knowledge production and developing a working environment that facilitates diversity management.

HR diversity management has gained momentum due to the pressures experienced by companies to be competitive at international level, to the changing composition of their workforce, to the increasing awareness of the importance of human resources management and to the backlash generated by the perceptions of special treatment for women and minorities (Shen *et al.*, 2009).

THE NEW ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY

In recent decades HRM has experienced important changes, but there are new and important changes to come, which become true challenges.

According to Ulrich and Dulebohn (2015):

HR originally had an inside/outside approach and a primary purpose to add value to the organization. During the post WWII period HR drifted from that approach, and had an inside-only approach, became maintenance and administrative oriented, and non-value adding. Starting in the 1980s HR began to experience a transformation and a return to an inside/outside approach and a redirection and focus on adding value to organizations. (p.16)

HRM is a field in transition. Historically has been responsible and successful in hiring competent people, retaining valued people, and optimizing and aligning their performance with organizational success. Recent publications on HRM have made emphasis on the importance of HRM being strategic, *i.e.*, aligning HRM policies with the strategic needs and goals of organizations. As HRM has moved from its traditional focus on managing the present resources of an organization towards a strategic conception of HRM, there has been some concern about the tendency to lose sight of the “human” component of HRM (Cleveland, Byrne & Cavanagh, 2015).

Marchington (2015) maintains that HRM has adopted short term performance criteria, has ignored other stakeholders including employees, and has become obsessed with the strategic or business partner model. He argues that HRM should focus on a wider set of stakeholders, and should promote a more inclusive approach to employee engagement and progressive HR practices.

The traditional HR only developed the policies of the organization. The role of the HR has become very challenging (...) They have to play a role in talent management, talent enhancement and talent retention. (Yadav & Singh, 2014, p. 59)

The future of HRM must include the traditional HRM disciplines of industrial and organizational psychology and labor economics, but also span and creatively work together with the disciplines and among the multiple levels of the organization and the larger environment (Boudreau & Ziskin, 2011)

Future HR needs to have an outside/inside approach and this is central to its ability to continue adding value to organizations. Under this approach, HR no longer creates value by just serving employees, re-designing HR practices or making them more efficient. HR creates value by making sure that services HR offers inside the company align to expectations outside the company. Every HR practices can be further transformed by seeing the value that it creates for those outside the company. This approach moves HR from the inside/outside approach with a focus on HR reacting to organizational challenges to more fully participating in strategy development and adding value (Ulrich & Dulebohn, 2015).

HRM functions fall within organizations and are directly influenced by the proximal context; HRM functions quite directly influence the society; and HRM and organizations are embedded within the dynamic environment, which includes issues such as globalization, technology, climate change, and economic, political, and social policy. In order to be effective HRM must develop a broader perspective, be responsible to multiple layers of the environment, and be active in shaping or initiating change in those environmental layers (Cleveland *et al.*, 2015)

An outside/inside approach connects HR to the broader business context, in which business operates, and to external stakeholders. This approach allows HR to go beyond prior efforts to add value inside the organization, through serving employees and line managers, to creating value by aligning HR services and activities to meet expectations of external stakeholders including customers, investors, and community. (Ulrich & Dulebohn, 2015, p. 16).

We have seen that presently challenges come from very different areas: social, technological, economic, political, environmental and demographical. However, these challenges end up determining the general trend business policies must follow to ensure success, and human resources become a main player in managing change (Ulrich & Dulebohn, 2015). We can draw from the above the following trends:

1. *Individualized employee management*, which favors personal and work life balance, as well as a true management of multiple diversities, improving flexibility and retention of valuable employees.
2. *Increase valuation of knowledge*. Better use of employees' skills and abilities, resulting in greater employability.
3. *Extended workforce* (in-house and external staff) with a more limited role of direct employment. This will lead company managers to draft HR strategies carefully since they will face with the "Commitment" vs. "Outsourcing" dilemma.
4. *Irruption of digital technologies*. Telework, flexible schedule, profile management, global access to candidates from all over the world, individualized career and performance assessment.
5. *Role of social media in recruitment processes*. The emergence of new on-line recruiting platforms, such as Elance, oDesk y TopCoder, has allowed companies to access "talent in the cloud". Therefore, companies will be able to access tailored profiles of qualified candidates. Companies will be able to pay the employees they need for the time they need them.
6. *Design and implementation of global talent strategies*. International management of resources and carefully-designed policies on expatriates, their return and their families.

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7. *HR as stabilizer of the course of companies.* The ups and downs of the current world faces organizations with new challenges forcing them to reinvent themselves all the time. These circumstances lead companies to reinvent themselves and reconfigure their strategies accordingly; it is easy to understand that many companies lose their bearing and that both managers and employees feel bewildered. Here is where HR managers must work to channel and stabilize the situation. They will have to define/redefine business objectives and reassign roles to employees in order to stabilize the situation.
8. *Corporate social responsibility management* and the social nature of companies pose a challenge to companies towards their employees and society as a whole. It affects brand image and among other effects, it enhances retention of the best employees.

Despite the important challenges faced by and the new trends emerging in HR management, there are quite a few authors that denounce some degree of divorce or divergence between the forces operating on HR researchers and managers (Denisi *et al.*, 2014) as opposed to the traditionally strong links among them. Notwithstanding, both sides have exchanged accusations. Denisi *et al.* (2014) in their work on the nature of such differences conclude that although the responsibility is shared by scholars and experts, the publication of new developments in HRM should be made in general books and not in academic or professional journals. In any case, an exercise of empathy by both sides could lead to enhanced cooperation, and therefore, to a more fruitful relations. This seems to be a further challenge.

NEW TRENDS IN HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES THAT LEVERAGE DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

According to Richard and Johnson (2001) and Litvin (1997) an effective diversity management can only be achieved by means of the use of appropriate human resources strategies. Effective human resources strategies focus on promoting organizational learning, flexibility, knowledge production and developing a working environment that facilitates diversity management.

There are many human resources practices that leverage diversity management (Sánchez-Apellániz & Triguero-Sánchez, 2012). Cultural auditing, examining our motivations before starting to think about Diversity Management and its meaning for us, and revealing what is what hinders or supports an inclusive environment and our “institutional prejudice”; practices which try to avoid the systematic discrimination in recruitment and selection processes, like expanding recruitment grounds, reviewing employment pre-requirements, expanding the pipeline or training the organization’s recruitment team; training practices which are avoiding to reinforce the rules, values and perspectives of the dominant organizational culture, and are seeking awareness on diversity or at developing multicultural skills, like introduction to diversity and its impacts on business programs, skill-development seminars, seminars for specific groups or integrated diversity training; communication processes which properly transmit to managers and employees the mentality of the organization or its objectives in terms of diversity, in order to they will feel committed to the project; the establishment of employee groups which tend to focus on the problems of a particular community, like support networks and groups, consultative work groups, discussion groups or international teams; practices for career development which reflect properly diversity issues, like improving performance assessment systems, career plan appraisal and control, job

redesign, mentoring programs or reward systems; and practices which try to reach a balance between personal and professional lives, like working flexibility in terms of time, working flexibility in terms of space, professional support policies, counseling policies, family services, and additional social benefits.

Although all these practices are still valid to leverage diversity management, the social, demographic, economic and technological changes described above have some changes in how these human resources practices are presently implemented. Individualized employee management will become one of these trends, for example when we tackle changes in organizational demographics. Companies looking forward to competing in the near future must recognize new attitudes among its employees, be aware of the fact that new relationships between employees and organizations will exist, and rethink the ways in which they recruit, motivate and retain employees (McNulty, 2006).

Demographic Changes

Organizations will be staffed by members of multiple generations; as a result, they will have to modify their HR practices in order to attract and retain skilled members of all these groups (Stone & Deadrick, 2015). Baby boomers place a strong emphasis on hard work and achievement, valued intrinsic rewards and stressed loyalty to the organization. Generation X values, more than baby boomers, extrinsic rewards, leisure time, steady employment, work family balance and promotion opportunities. Generation Y have similar values than Generation X but they emphasize freedom more than generation X or baby boomers, stressing extrinsic rewards less than generation X.

Kooij, Jansen, Dijkers and De Lange (2010) suggest that human resources practices should be adapted to reflect employee age. For example, HR practitioners should consider enhancing teamwork, rewards – though greater recognition -, or flexible working hours with older employees, since these practices have a positive impact on the work attitudes. Internal promotion also enhances satisfaction in this age group, as opposed to the stereotype vision that they do not want to or cannot learn new skills (Kooij *et al.*, 2008).

Flexible working arrangements are a clear retention factor with excellent outcomes. Ernst & Young, for example, has implemented aggressive flexibility programs. It has an internal website in which participants can share their experiences, and the company's efforts are published in internal newsletters of external media (ILO, 2015).

In age diversity environments, HR managers achieve better results when they implement financial rewarding systems based on performance and not on employee age. In such environments both assessment and compensation of employees based on their contribution would motivate them, since the message it conveys is that their contribution is valuable (Boehm, Kunze & Brunch, 2014; Han & Liao, 2010).

The work of Pinto, Da Silva and Nunes (2014) suggests that HRM practices related to “training, rewards, recognition and engagement”, as well as those related to “performance assessment” are the best valued practices by employees of all ages. The “flexible work practices” dimension seems to be less important for younger employees, who tend to place a greater value on security of employment. It seems that an effective management of age diversity should be based on commitment rather than on control practices (Triguero-Sánchez, Peña-Vinces, González-Rendon & Sánchez-Apellaniz, 2012), and this is has an impact on business results and not only on individual wellbeing.

Likewise, and according to Clutiené & Railaité (2014) in order to adapt to an increasingly diverse workforce companies must focus on workplace characteristics, especially on workplace design and ergonomics.

Technological Changes

Irruption of digital technologies is another trend affecting directly HR practices in general, and those focusing on leveraging diversity in particular. The last decade has brought with it changes in employee recruitment, new forms of social interaction, and networking. Employers have been faced with changes in the way the recruit and select employees. Networks at different collaboration levels are formed, from large networks to small work niches, from the creation of discussion lists to LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Ecademy, so that recruitment methods keep changing and reinventing themselves all the time. Moreover, if we consider the rate of technological development of communications it is easy to deduce that we are only scratching the surface of the new challenges human resources managers will have to face soon.

We can currently see that companies are using different forms of technology to attract the optimal candidates for their goals (*e-recruitment*) (Stone, Dadrick, Lukaszewki & Johnson, 2015), as well as to retain a talented workforce, ranging from passive, one-way technologies (e.g., web-based job ads, job boards) to more interactive techniques (such as virtual job fairs). Some estimates indicate that approximately 90% of large organizations use one or more forms of technology to advertise jobs and enable applicants to submit online applications (Mackelden, 2013). In view of these challenges, present systems have important shortcomings, among them the fact that they (a) use one-way communication systems; (b) are impersonal; (c) are passive; and (d) may prevent individuals with poor computer skills from accessing to jobs.

In terms of diversity, studies do not clearly indicate if e-recruiting helps organizations enhance the goal of attracting a large pool of talented and diverse job applicants. Some studies found that older applicants, ethnic minorities and women are less likely to use e-recruiting than Anglo-Americans, because some ethnic minorities (e.g. African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans) still have less Internet access at home, or because others (e.g. older individuals and women) often have higher computer anxiety and lower computer self-efficacy than their counterparts. However, new opportunities may arise too. In contrast to one way technology, the use of some interactive technologies and the two-way communication processes available with interactive e-recruiting should attract a more diverse pool of applicants, since some minorities (e.g. Hispanic-Americans, women...) are very relationship-oriented and prefer interacting with individuals rather than information technology (Stone *et al.*, 2015b).

Technology has also had a strong impact on the selection process (*e-selection*) of the most talented applicants from among those who apply for the job, and ensures that they represent the diversity of applicants in the labor pool. More than 70% of large organizations in the United States uses currently e-selection to facilitate their recruitment process (CedarCrestone, 2010).

It is not clear if e-selection system enables organizations to hire the most talented applicants or increase the diversity of their workforces. If the applicants lack computer skills and/or have high levels of computer anxiety (e.g. older applicants, women, ethnic minorities and those with low socioeconomic status), and if the electronic interview is less effective and viewed less positively by applicants than face to face interviews, possibly e-selection may not be a good tool to enhance workforce diversity. However, here there are opportunities too. The organization could make sure that all applicants have computer skills before administering online tests, could provide training on basic computer skills prior to testing, and could want to use new cloud-based videoconferencing (e.g. OmniJoin, Zoom) because it offers high quality HD video and audio, can be accessed by mobile device and is typically much more flexible than previous technologies. If these current shortcomings are overcome, e-selection systems can help organizations to achieve their objective of recruiting the most qualified and diverse employees (Stone *et al.*, 2015b).

New technologies have also gained ground in the practices related to employee training and learning. These initiatives called “e-learning” or “e-training” range from the mere online supply of materials to the full control of the entire learning process (for example, videoconference, virtual simulation, management of teaching-learning processes, training record...). Recent research studies (Miller, 2012) state that more than 25% of all training is delivered online. In the field of diversity its use not only reduces its management costs but also levels in terms of possibilities many differing employees.

One of the most successful technological applications in HRM (CedarCrestone, 2014) is used in managing employee performance, including electronic performance monitoring (*e-PM*). Indeed, 93% of the United States organizations surveyed by CedarCrestone (2014) had used some electronic performance management system. Its functions comprise performance assessment and providing feedback on it (Cardy & Miller, 2005). The results of some studies revealed that employees prefer computerized feedback to that provided by a supervisor; computerized feedback also resulted in lower levels of motivation loss and higher levels of performance than feedback conveyed by a supervisor; and computerized feedback was directly related to employees’ attention to the task, whereas supervisory feedback directed attention to the evaluation intentions of the supervisor (Stone *et al.*, 2015b)

Since informal performance assessment systems frequently carry unfair career opportunities, and that effective performance assessment practices in the field of Diversity Management should be objective and not subjective, relevant for the position and the company and fair to all employees without offering a special treatment (Schuler, Dowling & DeCieri, 1993), *e-PM* systems are an initiative that can be implemented to stop the trend towards informal or subjective appraisals. The objective should be to make assessments as culturally neutral as possible.

To motivate and retain the most talented employees who come from diverse backgrounds, organizations have started using technology to facilitate the compensation and benefits process (CedarCrestone, 2014). *E-compensation* systems decrease costs, errors and the time it takes to implement compensation planning (Dulebohn & Marler, 2005).

Employees with diverse cultural values have different reward references. Research on generational differences reveals that the work values have changed over time (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman & Lance, 2010). Extrinsic values (*e.g.* status, money) peaked with Generation X, but were higher among generation Y than Baby Boomers; social values (*e.g.* altruism) were rated lower among Generation Y than baby Boomers; Generation Y were more likely to value job security, a relaxed work environment, and personal growth than other generations. Research of ethnic minorities (Stone, Johnson, Stone-Romero & Hartman, 2006) found that Hispanics were more likely to value flexible hours, organizational reputation and diversity than Anglos; Hispanics, with high power distance were more likely to accept lower pay in order to work for a high status organization than Anglos; African-American were more likely to value lifestyle, work environments and supervisors than Anglos.

Without questioning the administrative advantages *e-compensation* systems may have, if organizations want to motivate and retain an increasingly diverse workforce, they may need to expand beyond merely pay and benefits, and incorporate the more general notion of “e-rewards”. The use of new interactive technologies (*e.g.* internal social media, virtual conferences, crowdsourcing) may be especially effective, and may help organizations gather and analyze data about employees’ reward preferences, and develop more flexible and effective reward systems (Stone *et al.*, 2015).

Technological changes also offer the possibility of individualizing employment relations, allowing new opportunities for the design of “tailored jobs”. Telework, considered a privilege in the 1990s, has become an important incentive for many employees and employers. As an example we can mention

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many software and publishing companies in the United States in which it is achieving a substantial share (Heathfield, 2015). This labor flexibility keeps growing not only due telework but also to the recent implementation of “flexible hours”. We can see an increase of free hours for meetings and the trend to use time as a form of compensation or exchange when employees request it (Heathfield, 2015). In sum, employers need to devote less and less time to control their employee’ time. It is rather about designing jobs and more transparent communication systems resulting in higher employee commitment (Triguero-Sánchez *et al.*, 2012). The direct consequence is that there will be lower stress levels among employees due both to their work and their family leading to an improvement of their work and family life balance.

International Changes

Design and implementation of global strategies and international management of resources are also in the spotlight got HR management in general and diversity management in particular. Multinational corporations (MNCs) are large companies operating in several countries that are confronted with new questions, including how to create consistent HR practices in different locations, how to develop a coherent corporate culture, and how to prepare managers to work in a diverse cultural environment (Sparrow, 2007).

HR research at international level has focused on three approaches to understand the issues arising in the global environment (Stone & Deadrick, 2015): international, comparative and cross-cultural.

International approaches focus on HR strategies, systems, and practices in different socio-cultural contexts and different geographic territories; most agree that contextual, firm-specific and situational variables influence these systems. Comparative HR explores the context, systems, and national patterns of HR in different countries; most indicate that HR practices differ across nations and are aligned with national cultures, relating Hofstede’s national culture dimensions with the design of HR practices. Cross-cultural HR examines the degree to which individual’s cultural values influence the acceptance and effectiveness of HR practices. Most of the theories in HR, developed in western nations, assume that the cultural values of individuals in organizations are homogeneous; however, employees’ cultural values differ in global contexts, and organizations need to align their HR processes with these cultural values.

The world economy is made up by many overlapping geographical layers, from local to global. Therefore, it has been suggested that it is necessary to focus not on one single layer, but on some of them together. This drives flexibility inasmuch as it helps organizations to adapt their regional strategies to multiple and different levels (layers) of analysis (Ghemawat, 2005). Therefore, companies should redefine the concept of “distance” according to dimensions that are not only geographical, but also cultural, economic, administrative and political. It is anticipated that the numbers of MNCs will continue to expand over time, and HR practices will need to be congruent with these new multicultural and complex contexts (Stone & Deadrick, 2015). This forecasts become especially relevant in view of the lack of response provided by HR policies in many MNCs. For example, the rate of expatriate failure is under ongoing debate. It has estimated that about half of all expatriates are ineffective. Many expatriates request early transfers back to their home country because they were not satisfied with their relationship in the host country (Gibbs & Boyraz, 2015). Cross culture is vital issue in international business, as the success of international trade depends upon the smooth interaction of employees from different cultures and regions. Cross cultural training plays a vital role in enabling an expatriate to overcome cultural shock and to adjust to the diversities in the host country (Sukanya, 2015).

HR professionals will play a key role: transfer, guidance and translation services, employee selection, training and development for sensitivity and cultural experiences to minimize cultural clash, balance the pros and cons of different countries and/or cultures, legal comparative analysis between countries and a long list of tasks that assign to human resources professional a key role in business success.

Dissatisfaction may also arise when team members are assigned to work virtually with others in different locations and from different national of functional cultures (Gibbs & Boyraz, 2015). Due to increasing cosmopolitanism of the business world, it may be easy to assume that remote collaboration will act and communicate similarly to local employees, when in fact they do not.

Several mechanisms have been proposed for managing cultural diversity: Cultural intelligence (CQ), a system of knowledge and skills linked by cultural meta-cognition, which allows people to adapt to, select, and shape the cultural aspects of their environment (Thomas *et al.*, 2008); cultural agility, is a meta-competency that enables professionals to be more flexible and perform successfully in cross-cultural situations involving unfamiliar cultural norms (Caligiuri, 2012); and global mindset, a broader concept, is a meta-capability that permits an individual to function in new and unknown situation and to integrate this new understanding with other existing skills and knowledge (Boyacigiller, Beechler, Taylor & Levy, 2004).

HRM managers interested in improving global team effectiveness will need to attend to and overcome challenges related to virtuality such as faulty attributions, knowledge sharing across geographical contexts, managing time and attention, as well as challenges due to cultural differences of team members. Attracting global team leaders and team members with the important skills needed to manage cultural diversity –cultural agility, global mindset and CQ- is an issue with significant implications for HRM, not only for training and development but also for selection of team members (Gibbs & Boyraz, 2015).

Cultural diversity management will be the focus of attention not just in the selection of local team members, but also when it comes to setting up a Joint Venture (JV). The problems presented in JV management teams also justify the need to plan diversity management HR practices before they are formed. Adobor (2004) suggests that correct planning of HR practices before the establishment of a JV would prevent power struggles among parent companies from prevailing over manager competence profiles in the appointment of managers, ensuring an objective and independent process in the recruitment and selection of JV general managers. Likewise, a job analysis must be carried out to determine the competences required for management positions in JVs and accordingly, the most appropriate manager selection criteria (Cascio & Serapio, 1991; Petrovic, Kakabadse, A & Kakadabase, N.K., 2003).

Establishment of a reward system must also be managed in light of the international resource diversity if we want to attract and retain the best talent. Cross-cultural research indicates that individual's cultural values shape their reward preferences, and their reactions to negative feedback. Individuals who valued individualism preferred reward allocation systems based on equity or proportionality, but those who valued collectivism preferred equality-based allocation systems. As a result, pay-for-performance systems may motivate employees who are individualistic, but group-based or profit-sharing systems may be more effective with those value collectivism (Stone & Deadrick, 2015). Likewise, reactions to negative feedbacks are different depending upon whether individuals support collectivism or support individualism, and they are more likely to be accepted by the former than by the latter (Stone-Romero & Stone, 2002).

Reviewing Concepts

In this global scenario, and in order to attract and retain the best talent we will probably have to reconsider and understand what people in different cultures understand as being just and fair (Denisi *et al.*, 2014; Ryan & Wessel, 2015).

A desire for fair outcomes, processes, and treatment may be universal (Greenberg, 2001); however, research has shown us that individuals can vary in their fairness-related assessments of the same organization, event and/or individual depending on factors, such as affect (Barsky & Kaplan, 2007), personality (Truxillo, Bauer, Campion & Paronto, 2006) and personal values (Schminke, Ambrose & Noel, 1997). In organizations with diverse workforces, understanding social identity-based differences in fairness construal is important to organizational functioning and HR management, as attracting and maintaining the best talent include projecting an image that the organization values diverse individuals (Avery & McKay, 2006).

Ryan & Wessel (2015) highlight the novel approach to “justice” in 21st century organizations. They suggest that the changes resulting from globalization and diversity, relations through new technologies, individual psychological contracts and service-related jobs can significantly change social comparison processes as well as the type of comparisons employees make among themselves.

New technologies can affect this process. Regarding distributive justice in the virtual workplace, if we cannot see how colleagues are treated we cannot make equity judgments in the same way as they are done when there is physical presence; but on the other hand, employees can access larger amounts of information and be better informed of their own situation and that of their colleagues. Technology allows also for automatic verification of assessment outcomes, reducing human bias notably an appreciation and transcription errors, but on the other hand, it may hinder the reception of adequate feedback so that individuals feel that they can challenge negative information when it is provided.

Form all the above we can infer that human resources teams will have to review our understanding of distributive, procedural or interactive justice at work. When employees perceive that they are not treated fairly in the workplace they may leave, file claims, reduce their effort, and in general terms, cause disruption in the workplace. What he have traditionally understood as justice and fairness may be different in the future.

FINAL REMARKS

Cultural diversity is steadily growing. Workforce diversity is changing and poses new challenges in the global environment. It is becoming a more complex issue in our current world. Traditional variables such as ethnicity and gender are still in place, but there is a growing concern for other aspects related to diversity such as sexual orientation, religious affiliation, intergenerational conflicts and/or population ageing.

Not only workforce composition is changing, work environments are changing too. Globalization, smart machines, social media platforms and intensive data processing are reconfiguring how we work and the environment where we work, the skills required from employees and their aspirations in the labor market.

In the present world of rapid and highly interconnected changes cultural diversity has become a consubstantial fact. Attracting and retaining the best employees is a need and forces organizations to develop inclusive environments and cultures allowing them to address new challenges. HRM changes its role from reactive in-house approach and must become proactive and oriented to the outer world, to the different stakeholders.

The basic human resources objectives are still valid; for example, the purpose of selection is recruiting talented and diverse employees, and the goal of training is to improve workforce knowledge and training. However, circumstances have changed.

The HRM practices that have been traditionally used to manage workforce diversity still apply, but have to adapt to cope with new challenges. The spectacular changes in workforce composition we are experiencing, intensive use of technologies for the implementation of HR management processes, internationalization of resources, virtual environments and the very same concept of what is understood as being just and fair are now the best tools we must work with if we want to attract and retain the best talent.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Changes in Workforce Composition: Demographic changes, intensive use of technologies, internationalization of resources, virtual environments and the same concept of what is understood as being just and fair, are now the best tools we must work with if we want to attract and retain the best talent.

Cultural Agility: A meta-competency that enables professionals to be more flexible and perform successfully in cross-cultural situations involving unfamiliar cultural norms.

Cultural Intelligence (CQ): A system of knowledge and skills linked by cultural meta-cognition, which allows people to adapt to, select, and shape the cultural aspects of their environment.

Extended Workforce: A growing number of people who temporarily lend companies their skills and knowledge in an ever-expanding network of freelancers, consultants, outsourcing partners, vendors and other types of nontraditional talent. This will lead company managers to draft HR strategies carefully since they will face with the “Commitment” vs. “Outsourcing” dilemma.

Global Mindset: A meta-capability that permits an individual to function in new and unknown situation and to integrate this new understanding with other existing skills and knowledge.

HR Outside/Inside Approach: HR creates value by making sure that services HR offers inside the company align to expectations outside the company.

Institutional Prejudice: The unfair, indirect methods or treatment of individuals that are embedded in the operating procedures, policies, laws or objectives of the organizations.

Talent Management: Process that develops and incorporates new members into the workforce, and also develops and retains an existing human resource.