

POLI 457 Human Resource Development and Management

Session 8 – Diversity management in Organizations 2
and Teams in organizations

Lecturer: Dr. Bossman E. Asare

Contact Information: bossasare@gmail.com/beasare@ug.edu.gh



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

College of Education

School of Continuing and Distance Education

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Session Overview

This session continues from session 7. We will discuss the strategies organizations use to deal or manage the diversity in their workforce and also discuss multicultural organizations in the first part of the session. The final part will look at teams in organizations.

Session Outline

- Topic One: Organizations and Diversity and Multicultural Organizations
- Topic Two: Teams in Organizations

Reading Materials

- **John Schermerhorn, James Hunt, and Richard Osborn (2005)**, Organizational Behavior (9th Edition), Wiley.
- **Robert B. Denhardt and Janet V. Denhardt (2009)**, Public Administration: An Action Orientation (6th Edition), Thomson Wadsworth.
Richard L. Daft (2008), The Leadership Experience (fourth edition), Thomson Southwestern
- **David Whetten and Kim Cameron (2005)**, Developing Management Skills (Sixth Edition) Pearson Prentice Hall
Robert Kreitner and Angelo Kinicki (1998), Organizational Behavior (fourth Edition), Irwin-McGraw-Hill

Topic One: Organizations and Diversity and Multicultural Organizations

- Just as individuals have strategies to manage diversity, organizations also have certain measures they put in place to be able to address the differences among the workforce. These are the measures used by organizations to manage diversity.
- Organizational Policies- This is where organizations have policies that clearly state their positions on diversity. For example, if an organization embraces Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), then one can say that such an organization is committed to diversity. EEO is the practice whereby organizations open their doors to all persons irrespective of their gender, political affiliation, and all the dimensions of diversity listed in session 7. additionally, the mission statement must show the organization's commitment to diversity. How organizations address diversity related problems in a manner that does not disadvantage certain individuals and vice-versa is very important.

- Organizational practices- This is where organizations ensure that their activities reflect diversity. For instance, when setting up committees, organizations must ensure that the composition of the committees show diversity. Intentionally, outsiders and those who work in the organizations should be able to see that no one is discriminated against in the giving of opportunities.
- Diversity training- here, organizations organize training programs for their workers to enable them function effectively in a diverse environment. The training should help workers to value all persons who work in the organizations.

- Organizational culture: organizational culture has to do with the way of life of organizations. And organizations use their culture to send a signal to customers and workers that diversity is valued. Literally, when you go to such organizations, without being told by someone, one would realize that all persons are valued in the organization.

Multicultural Organizations

- According to DeNisi and Griffin (2008: 275), “multicultural organization is one that has achieved high levels of diversity, one that can capitalize fully on the advantages of the diversity, and one that has few diversity-related problems.”
- One central feature of multicultural organizations is pluralism. This means that the members of the organization strive to know one another better. Once the workers know themselves better they are able to work together seamlessly thereby avoiding situations where some would be discriminated against.
- Another feature is full structural integration. This means that there is complete diversity within the organization which is an accurate reflection of the organization’s external labor market.

- Also, there is full integration of its informal networks. This means that there are no barriers to entry and participation in any organizational activity. People can enter and exit groups without regard to age, gender, ethnicity or other dimension of diversity.
- Additionally, multicultural organization is characterized by an absence of prejudice and discrimination. There are no traces of bias and discrimination in any form. Instead, people are valued and rewarded purely on the basis of their skills and what they contribute to the organization.
- Multicultural organizations are also characterized by low levels of intergroup conflict. The various groups in the organizations such as women, men, blacks, Caucasians, Christians, Muslims, etc understand each other so you would not have instances where workers would engage in conflict.

Sample questions

- How do organizations deal with diversity in their workforce?
- What are multicultural organizations?

Topic Two: Teams in Organizations

- The team is a unit of two or more people who interact and coordinate their work to accomplish a shared goal or purpose. At times teams are important for organizations; at times too you just need some individuals to take care of business.
- If you are the leader of a team it is important you do the following:
- Recognize the importance of shared purpose and values-literally all of you are in it together. All team members must be part of what the team does
- provide support and coaching to team members-leaders should be able to support members of the team in such a way they can also contribute to the work of the team.

Stages of team development

- Teams do not just come about in organizations; rather there must be a deliberate effort to put teams in place. These are the stages of team development:
- forming- This is where the members of the team are getting started. There is orientation and members get to know one another through the introductions that will take place. People will show their true personalities here.
- storming- here, people begin to show their different personalities and their conflict-prone features such as how they disagree on issues that normally you would expect people not to disagree. Misunderstanding abounds in this stage because people are showing their real personalities.

- norming- in this stage members of the team have gotten to know one other and they generally understand themselves. Literally conflicts have been resolved and there is unity in the team for business to take off.
- Performing-here, it is mainly about accomplishing the goals of the team. In essence, the reasons why the team has been formed must be achieved. So it is all about addressing the problems that necessitated the formation of the team.
- Terminating- some teams are set up for specific purposes while others are permanent teams in organizations. Those that are for specific agendas are called adhoc teams. Once the objectives are achieved the team is terminated.

Characteristics of effective teams

- size –small sizes tend to be better when accomplishing goals than bigger sizes. The experts normally say the size of the team should be between 5 and 12. However, large sizes can bring some diversity which is important for organizations. The goal is to ensure that some do not hide under the cover of others so that they would not do any work.
- diversity-it is widely accepted that more diverse teams are considered better than homogenous ones. The notes on diversity should help you understand this better.
- Interdependence-members of the team must be ready to depend on one another. Not all the members must be very smart.
- Team interest must take precedence-Here, members of the team must know the interests of the team take precedence over their personal concerns. It is all about the team.

Types of teams

- There are different types of teams in many organizations. We just want to discuss some of the popular teams in contemporary organizations.
- Functional teams – the kind of team made up of supervisor and subordinates in the formal chain of command. Because it is made up of both subordinates and supervisors, subordinates are not able to express themselves in a way that will enhance the productivity of the team.
- Cross-functional teams- here, members come from different departments within the organization. Leaders of this kind of team give up some power to get the job done because different people are coming up with ideas to help address the objectives of the team.

- self-directed teams-these are teams that operate with minimum supervision. The members are usually highly talented or skilled so when they come together, they do not need to be coached or trained before they will get things done.
- Global teams- members of the team are scattered in different parts of the world. They meet face-to-face once in a while. Most of their teams are held via technology, such as teleconferencing or videoconferencing.
- Virtual teams- Virtual teams do not meet face-to-face. Everything is done via technology. Members of the team would not meet face-to-face for the purpose of the team.

The Dysfunctions of teams

These are the factors that work against teams-

- absence of trust- when members of the team do not trust one another. Some may not be comfortable being vulnerable with one another, they cannot freely share their fears, hopes, etc.
- fear of conflict – when members are afraid of conflict they would not be able to give their best to advance the cause of the team
- lack of commitment- some members may not be committed to the cause of the team, and this would undermine what the team would be able to achieve.
- avoidance of accountability- at times, some members would run away from accountability, and this would seriously affect the team
- inattention to results-when some members do not pay attention to the results that must be achieved by the team, the team may not be able to achieve a lot.

Conclusion

- The session has highlighted how organizations address diversity-related challenges and the characteristics of multicultural organizations. We also looked at teams in organizations where we specifically discussed the meaning, types, the dysfunctions, and the stages of team development.

Sample questions

- Describe the stages of team development in organizations.
- What factors undermine teams in organizations?
- Discuss any three types of teams in organizations.

Additional Readings

- **John Schermerhorn, James Hunt, and Richard Osborn (2005)**, Organizational Behavior (9th Edition), Wiley.
- **Robert B. Denhardt and Janet V. Denhardt (2009)**, Public Administration: An Action Orientation (6th Edition), Thomson Wadsworth.
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