

Measuring Diversity Perceptions: A Qualitative Research

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ABSTRACT: Having diversity inside the organization is getting more and more important. Because of the tough competition in the external world which is changing in dynamic way, companies need to find adaptation strategies. When a company's diversity capacity increases, its potential for survival and adaptation also increases. To gain the advantages of diversity, the most important thing is to understand people's diversity perceptions. Then it will be possible to make a decision, if that organization is suitable for diversity management or not. In this research the main aim is to understand the key words about diversity perceptions and how it differentiate. There were 25 participants and the data was collected by face to face. While analyzing the data, some key words were detected which is valid for the whole group and then also analyzed according to gender parameter.

1. INTRODUCTION

In a dynamic changing World, getting different and using diversity as a positive tool is helping companies to be sustainable. Organizations are full of people how have different education levels, different cultural backgrounds and different perceptions. In order to manage diversity in a company, firstly it is necessary to understand the people's perceptions about diversity. In this research, the main aim is to analyze and understand the participants' diversity perceptions [1].

In recent years, diversity is getting more important for the organizations. Since the affirmative action, companies have had different employees in their organizations. Firstly, it had started as giving the protected group (women, minorities and disabled

people) equal opportunity in work place, then it evolved into creating an atmosphere where diversity was respected. In today's World, while everything is changing in a rapid way, as a result, the organizations which have the ability to adapt can survive. In order to improve the adaptation capacity, the companies need to hire different employees to create an intellectual capital full of different knowledge [2], [3].

Knowledge is one of the key resources for survival in today's World and there is a big data pool which is including both correct and incorrect knowledge. In order to choose the correct knowledge and make the separation, first of all, a company should have had intellectual capital. After making investment on human capital and transforming it to intellectual capital, there will be a knowledge resource inside the company which will help to get the competitive advantage [4],[5],[6].

If the intellectual capital has diversity inside of it, which means that there will be different ideas, different opinions, different solutions which will be beneficial for the company. Because of the fact that, the significant knowledge type is tacit knowledge which is hidden in humans' minds, having different people in a company means having different tacit knowledge as a resource. If a company has that kind of strong intellectual capital, there will be also a strong social capital in the external World which will help them to get the tacit knowledge coming from the stakeholders inside the social network. As a result, the company's knowledge transformation will be helpful to gain profit [7-13]. Diversity Management is a term which is related to organizational culture in which diversity is seen as a positive tool. According to diversity management literature, every human being is different because of having different perceptions about different situations. That is why, diversity management is not just about managing different genders, ages, cultures or etc. It is more about managing different perceptions. In diversity management cultures, every person in the company both employees and the managers think that diversity is something beneficial that is why it should be used in the process of creating innovation. Furthermore, diversity management helps organizations to reduce costs of turnover and absenteeism, increasing problem solving capacity and adaptation to the changes in the external World [14-22].

2. METHODS

In this research, the data was collected from the participants by face to face. According to interview, they answered two open-ended questions. There were 25 participants including women and men together. The main aim is, analyze their perceptions about diversity. Their answers were coded according to relevance. Some key words were detected. By seeing the frequency of their answers, the diversity perceptions of the participants were examined. The main aim of the research is, to see how differentiate the diversity perception and according to that knowledge to analyze if the current group is suitable for diversity management culture or not.

3. RESULTS

In this research, first of all, all participants' answers were examined. Then the answers were categorized according to gender to see if there were any differences or not.

In Table 1, while the participants were trying to define what the diversity was, the half of the participants defined it as someone or something can be noticed because of the appearance and the ideas. Both women and men participants gave this answer.

It can also be seen from the table that, only women participants defined diversity as something differs according to situations and only men participants defined diversity as race,gender,religion,belief,age and personality differences.

Table 1 What is Diversity?

Participants	Gender	What is Diversity?	Frequency	
P1	Woman	Risk taking actions	8%	
P22	Man	Risk taking actions		
P2	Woman	Differs according to situations	8%	
P5	Woman	Differs according to situations		
P3	Woman	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)	48%	
P4	Woman	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)		
P6	Woman	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)		
P7	Woman	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)		
P10	Man	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)		
P11	Man	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)		
P13	Man	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)		
P14	Man	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)		
P15	Man	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)		
P16	Man	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)		
P23	Man	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)		
P24	Man	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)		
P8	Woman	Extraordinary		16%
P17	Man	Extraordinary		
P19	Man	Extraordinary		
P25	Man	Extraordinary	12%	
P9	Man	Race,gender,religion, belief, age, personality		
P18	Man	Race,gender,religion, belief, age, personality		
P21	Man	Race,gender,religion, belief, age, personality		
P12	Man	Separation	4%	
P20	Man	Every human being	4%	

Table 2 Who is the Different?

Participants	Gender	Who is the Different?	Frequency
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P3	Woman	Person against society's values	8%
P9	Man	Person against society's values	
P4	Woman	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	
P5	Woman	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	
P8	Woman	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	
P13	Man	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	
P15	Man	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	36%
P16	Man	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	
P18	Man	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	
P19	Man	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	
P23	Man	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	
P6	Woman	Extraordinary	
P7	Woman	Extraordinary	
P10	Man	Extraordinary	
P11	Man	Extraordinary	
P12	Man	Extraordinary	36%
P14	Man	Extraordinary	
P17	Man	Extraordinary	
P22	Man	Extraordinary	
P25	Man	Extraordinary	
P2	Woman	Everybody	
P20	Man	Everybody	12%
P21	Man	Everybody	
P1	Woman	Who can take risk	4%
P24	Man	Increase others' awareness	4%

In Table 2, while the participants were trying to identify who the different was, two key words were detected. Some of the participants mentioned that the different was the person who can be noticed according to the appearance, behavior and the ideas and some of the participants mentioned that the different was the person who was extraordinary.

Table 3: What is Diversity? (Only Women Participants)

Participants	Gender	What is Diversity?	Frequency
P1	Woman	Risk taking actions	12,50%

P2	Woman	Differs according to situations	25%
P5	Woman	Differs according to situations	
P3	Woman	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)	
P4	Woman	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)	50%
P6	Woman	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)	
P7	Woman	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)	
P8	Woman	Extraordinary	12,50%

In Table 3, it is possible to see women participants' answers and the half of them defined diversity as someone or something can be noticed because of the appearance and the ideas.

Table 4: Who is the Different? (Only Women Participants)

Participants	Gender	Who is the Different?	Frequency
P3	Woman	Person against society's values	12,50%
P4	Woman	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	
P5	Woman	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	37,50%
P8	Woman	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	
P6	Woman	Extraordinary	25%
P7	Woman	Extraordinary	
P2	Woman	Everybody	12,50%
P1	Woman	Who can take risk	12,50%

In Table 4, the women participants' definitions about who was the different can be seen. Most of the participants defined it as the person who can be noticed according to the appearance, behavior and the ideas.

Table 5: What is Diversity? (Only Men Participants)

Participants	Gender	What is Diversity?	Frequency
P22	Man	Risk taking actions	5,88%
P10	Man	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)	
P11	Man	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)	
P13	Man	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)	
P14	Man	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)	47,05%
P15	Man	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)	
P16	Man	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)	
P23	Man	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)	

P24	Man	Can be noticed (Appearance and Ideas)	
P17	Man	Extraordinary	
P19	Man	Extraordinary	17,64%
P25	Man	Extraordinary	
P9	Man	Race,gender,religion, belief, age, personality	
P18	Man	Race,gender,religion, belief, age, personality	17,64%
P21	Man	Race,gender,religion, belief, age, personality	
P12	Man	Separation	5,88%
P20	Man	Every human being	5,88%

In Table 5, the men participants' definitions about what the diversity was can be seen. Most of the participants defined it as something or someone can be noticed according to the appearance and the ideas.

Table 6: Who is the Different? (Only Men Participants)

Participants	Gender	Who is the Different?	Frequency
P9	Man	Person against society's values	5,88%
P13	Man	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	
P15	Man	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	
P16	Man	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	
P18	Man	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	35,20%
P19	Man	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	
P23	Man	who can be noticed (Appearance, Behavior, Idea)	
P10	Man	Extraordinary	
P11	Man	Extraordinary	
P12	Man	Extraordinary	
P14	Man	Extraordinary	41,17%
P17	Man	Extraordinary	
P22	Man	Extraordinary	
P25	Man	Extraordinary	
P20	Man	Everybody	11,76%
P21	Man	Everybody	
P24	Man	Increase others' awareness	5,88%

In Table 6, the men participants' definitions about who was the different can be seen. Most of the participants defined it as the person who was extraordinary and the

others defined as who can be noticed according to the appearance, behavior and the ideas.

4. CONCLUSION

From Table 1 and Table 2, when all participants's answers were examined, it is possible to say that the general definition about diversity is something or someone noticeable according to appearance or ideas and the general idea about who is different was, is the person who is extraordinary. By using this data, it is possible to say that the participants are making a separation about the word "diversity" and defining the differences out of usual and creating another side. Only the %12 of the participants thought that every human being was different, and this idea is suitable with diversity management's main mentality. The other thought created two different groups and not including themselves inside that group. Diversity Management Culture covers everybody inside the organization and takes all of the organization as a whole. According to Diversity Management, everybody is different. When it was examined according to genders, half of the women thought the different was the person who could be noticed by appearance, behavior and ideas. However, the most of the men participants defined different person as who was extraordinary. By using these results, it is possible to say that, to adapt the current group into diversity management culture, first of all that separation perception must be changed and there must be a transformation process. On the other hand, two of the participants defined the different person as someone who was against society's values. This definition includes a negative meaning and defines diversity as a harmful thing. It will be so hard for an organization to transform that kind of opinion. Some of the participants defined diversity, as race, gender, religion, belief, age and personality. These are the primary and secondary differences' categories. If a person defines diversity according to those categories, it is possible to say that there is a social categorization in that person's minds and it will be also hard to transform that kind of opinion. For this current data, there will be some extra tools which must be used in this process for transformation. There can be different suggestions. In order to get the positive result about being transformed, there must be a leader who should conduct the whole process and there can be a leader who has the ability to change and transform like a transformational leader. According to answers, the group has the potential to be transformed because only two of the participants have the negative thought. Most of the participants were not showing that kind reaction about diversity.

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