Role of Diversity-Focused HR Practices in Mitigating Deviant Workplace Behavior: A Review

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ABSTRACT

Organizations in today's scenario are faced with a large number of HRM challenges resulting from workforce diversity. Workforce diversity has become one of the most pertinent management issues in organizations from all sectors and changing workforce has required organizations to change how they think about HRM. It is quite evident that all organizations are impacted by diversity either directly or indirectly, which has made it significant for organizations to manage diversity for which HRM plays a very significant role. Thus, due to the diverse nature of workforce, it has become significant for organizations to make their HR practices diversity-oriented so that deviant workplace behaviors are reduced to minimal. It is believed that employees will not indulge in deviant workplace behaviors when they perceive their organizations to be adopting adequate and diversity-oriented HRM methods and practices. Given this contention, the purpose of this paper is to examine the role that diversity-focused HR practices play in mitigating the deviant workplace behaviors in organizations. An extensive literature review on the said constructs was conducted where both variables were studied independently and the relationship that both variables exhibit together was also studied. A systematic review of the literature was carried out with the keywords like diversity management, diversity-focused HR practices and deviant workplace behavior from several electronic databases like Google scholar, emerald insight, Springer, Taylor, and Francis.

Keywords-- Workforce Diversity, Diversity Management, Diversity-Focused HR Practices, Deviant Workplace Behaviors

I. INTRODUCTION

Diversity is an increasingly critical factor in organizational life as organizations worldwide become more and more diverse in terms of age, gender, race, ethnicity, and other personal characteristics of their members (Shaw and Barrett-power, 1998).Due to this dynamic nature of the workforce, organizations are faced with a challenging task of identifying effective ways to manage diversity so that organizational goals can be achieved effectively (Ghosh, 2016). Workforce diversity has both advantages and disadvantages and has significant implications for both employees and organizations (Kossek et al., 2005). It is only by way of effective diversity management that organizations are enabled to capitalize on diversity and minimize its negative consequences (Kossek et al., 2005). HRM plays an important role in diversity management, as HRM not only ensures equality but also values and leads to the effective utilization of diversity (Konrad and Linnehan 1995; Shen et al.,2009).However, workforce diversity if not managed and handled properly can act as an antecedent to deviant workplace behavior and thus harm organizational functioning (Shore et al., 2009). Employees get indulged in deviant workplace behaviors due to insecurities developed in them because of the diverse workforce and expanding size of organizations. This deviant behavior is also termed as corporate outrage behavior, which is the significant violation of organizational norms that threatens the well-being of an organization and its members (Robinson and Bennet, 1995). Thus, workforce diversity significantly affects employees' deviance behavior. This is where diversity management through HR practices comes into fore. It has been propounded that employees will develop negative attitudes and behaviors towards an organization relying upon the degree to which they perceive their organization to be adopting inadequate HRM methods and practices. Negative attitudes and emotions deprive employees of the motivation to work in favor of the organization. In fact, these factors may urge employees to act against the organization (Dailey and kirk, 1992). And, in such conditions employees are propelled to disregard organizational norms (Elsaid, 2012). The amount of research in deviant workplace behavior has expanded noticeably over the last decade and has become a subject of genuine concern for researchers and managers (Nasurdin, Ahmad, and Razalli, 2014).

It is of growing concern to manage the negative deviant behavior in the organizations since such behaviors can be detrimental to their overall well-being. Management of such behaviors in organizations is possible only when these organizations realize that each employee is different and unique and thus accordingly frame HR policies and practices so that no employee has the sense of being left out or discriminated against. Therefore, in this paper authors have attempted to bring to fore the relationship between diversity-focused HR practices and deviant workplace behavior based on an extensive literature review undertaken for the purpose of this study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Diversity-Focused HR Practices

Researchers have suggested that effective diversity management has the potential to solve various diversity-related issues and also leads to the realization of benefits arising through workforce diversity (Ely 2004). According to previous researches, diversity management plays a significant role in maximizing the advantages e.g. better remedies and improved creativity and innovation (Cox and Blake 1991; Kundu et al., 2015) and minimizing the disadvantages (e.g., communication breakdown, low cohesion, and high turnover (D'Netto and Sohal, 1999) of workforce diversity. However, effective diversity management requires close integration with HR practices, as both HRM and diversity management are concerned with individual differences, the development and well-being of each individual in an organization (Truss et al.1997). It has been concluded by the past studies that using HRM policies and practices in addressing inequality in recruitment, performance appraisal practices, training and development, and compensation &rewards can lead to enhanced EEO, improved inclusiveness, and increased creativity in a diverse workforce (Konrad and Linnehan 1995). According to (Fleury 1999), it becomes a challenge for an organization to attach HRM with diversity management. Research shows that support of HRM towards an organization's diversity objective is important and thus results in effective diversity management practices (Jabbouret al., 2011). While organizations are continuously facing challenges pertaining to the development of effective HRDM practices (Shen et al., 2010), many organizations still rely on EEO and AA to evade discriminatory charges and have been unsuccessful in valuing diversity through HR practices (Kossek et al., 2005). However, HRDM practices are definitely different and have a broader scope beyond EEO and AA (Kossek et al., 2005).

Diversity-Focused Recruitment and Selection

In the field of HRM, Recruitment and Selection are two important activities. Shen et al. (2010), suggested that organizations must be just and fair in the process of recruitment and selection and the process of recruitment and selection should be free from discrimination and stereotyping. Also, an organization should adopt a positive approach to diversity that enables an organization to select the best talent for the job irrespective of age, gender, disability, etc. Furthermore, firms following an effective diversity management approach in the process of recruitment and selection are considered more attractive by applicants especially by women and minority groups (Avery and Mckay, 2006). Researchers also suggested that providing equal opportunities in selection processes reduces the feeling of discrimination and favoritism (Heilman et al., 1996), enhances the justice perception and results in a positive diversity climate (Roberge et al., 2011).Commonly used HRDM practices in recruitment and selection include attracting diversity applicants by advertising vacancies in ethnic newspapers and including diverse employees in recruitment and selection panels (D'Netto and Sohal, 1999).

Diversity-Focused Training and Development

Employee training and development programs include strategies and procedures to enhance the capabilities of organizational employees (Delery and Doty, 1996). Besides, training and development activities are believed to have a significant impact on employees' attitudes (Amirtharaj, et al., 2011). Diversity training and development involves providing equal training and development opportunities and also creating diversity awareness through diversity training and meeting the needs of diverse employees (D'Netto and Sohal 1999). Such training will help to enhance the understanding of diversity value, social cohesion, and organizational performance (Rynes and Rosen, 1995). Diversity training and development helps an organization to improve its employees' morale and job satisfaction and also helps an organization to retain qualified employees (Davis 2000; Roberson et al., 2003). Besides, diversity-focused training programs help in developing a sense of respect for individual differences in terms of attitudes, values, and behavior (D'Netto and Sohal 1999).

Diversity-Focused Performance Appraisal

Researchers propound that an organization will fail to develop the productivity and performance of the employees if it fails to use diversity-oriented HR practices in the process of appraisal D'Netto et al. (2008). Therefore, to improve employees' performance, there should prevail a fair and unbiased performance appraisal process (D'Netto & Sohal, 1999). (Schuler et al., 1993) opined that for diversity performance management to be effective, appraisal practices ought to be transparent, objective, unbiased, job related, and based on merit. Women and employees from minorities often believe that they are being given lower ratings by their supervisors when it comes to their job performance and promotability (Greenhaus et al., 1990). This discrimination can be reduced by being fair in performance evaluations. Thus, individuals should be strictly appraised based on their performance rather than personal characteristics. (D'Netto & Sohal, 1999). Besides, the increased representation of women, minority, and multicultural employees on promotion panels (Noor et al 2013) can increase the efficiency of performance appraisal practices (D'Netto and Sohal, 1999). Also, an organization should implement neutral performance appraisal techniques across all genders and cultures (Fulkerson and Schuler, 1992).

Diversity-Focused Compensation

The term compensation has been defined as remuneration, pay, and/or reward system used for employee motivation (Milkovich and Newman, 2008).The major cause behind employee demotivation and job dissatisfaction in an organization is compensation

inequality (Shen et al., 2010). D'Netto and Sohal (1999) propounded that instead of working cooperatively people in organizations start to work competitively when they perceive an unequal distribution of rewards. Although the implementation of equal pay has significantly reduced differences in earnings between men and women, however, gender income inequality continues to remain a global problem (Blau and Kahn 1994). Thus, to overcome these problems, the compensation structure, wage determinants, and benefit schemes should be framed only after considering each individual in terms of their ability, skill, and knowledge (Brickson 2000). It is also suggested that effective diversity management can be attained when an organization adopts a compensation system based on individual performance rather than individual backgrounds (Friedman and Holtem 2002). Past research indicated that equality in pay results in effective diversity management and organizational performance (D'Netto et al., 2008).

Deviant Workplace Behavior

The workplace is a forum where a range of discrete behaviors is expressed, each with a different end result to the people within the organization as well as the entire organization. These behaviors normally fall within the constructs of the standards and norms of the organization. In any case, when ordinary work behavior goes outside the standards of the organization, its outcomes are far-reaching and influence all levels of the organization including its decision-making processes, efficiency, and budgetary expenses (Coccia, 1998). Researchers have given these behaviors a wide range of names including workplace deviance (Bennett and Robinson, 2003), Counterproductive behavior (Mangione and Quinn, 1975), and antisocial behavior (Giacalone and Greenberg, 1997). Basically, the behavior is considered deviant when an "organization's traditions, approaches, or inward guidelines and regulations are disregarded by an individual or a group that may compromise the prosperity of the organization or its citizens". (Robinson and Bennett, 1995). Workplace deviance and misbehavior has become a significant concern for organizations and a subject of expanding research attention (Bennett and Robinson, 2003).

Robinson and Bennett (1995) built up a generally accepted typology of Destructive workplace deviance, which categorizes two basic types of deviance; organizational and interpersonal. Organizational deviance is deviance centered towards the organization (e.g., shirking hours, purposefully extending overtime), and interpersonal deviance is deviance directed toward individuals (e.g., verbal abuse, sexual harassment). However, these two basic types of deviance can be further classified in terms of target and severity (Robinson and Bennet 1995) as under:

- *Production Deviance:* This is a minor form of deviance directed towards an organization such as slowing down of work intentionally and working for personal matters.
- *Property Deviance*: This is a serious form of deviance directed towards an organization such as stealing and sabotage.
- *Political Deviance*: This is a minor form of deviance directed at members of the organization such as favoritism, gossiping, and blaming co-workers.
- *Personal Aggression*: This is a serious form of deviance directed at members of organization such as sexual harassment and physical intimidation.

Figure 1: Typology of destructive or negative deviant behavior based on target and severity

|	Minor	Severe
Organizational deviance	Production de`viance	Property deviance
Interpersonal deviance	Political deviance	Personal aggression

Source: Robinson et al. (1995)

Employee deviance also may be functional and constructive. Also, known as positive deviant behaviors, it is important to investigate how positive deviance may be classified. The types of positive deviant behaviors that are examined are: organizational citizenship behaviors, whistle-blowing, CSR, and creativity/innovation (Spreitzer and Sonenshein 2004). All of these behaviors may however be classified as positive deviant behaviors only if the behavior deviates from organizational norms, the behavior is voluntary, and

its intent is an honorable one (Spreitzer and Sonenshein, 2004). Despite the expanding significance of constructive deviance in the workplace, scarcely any exact investigations have examined the precursors and corresponds of both destructive and constructive deviant behavior. Most workplace deviance studies have focused on specific destructive deviant acts such as theft (Greenberg, 1993) and unethical decision making in the workplace. There is a more prominent need to comprehend both the destructive and constructive forms of deviance.

Figure 2: Typology of constructive or positive deviant behavior (honorable, voluntary, and deviated from norms).
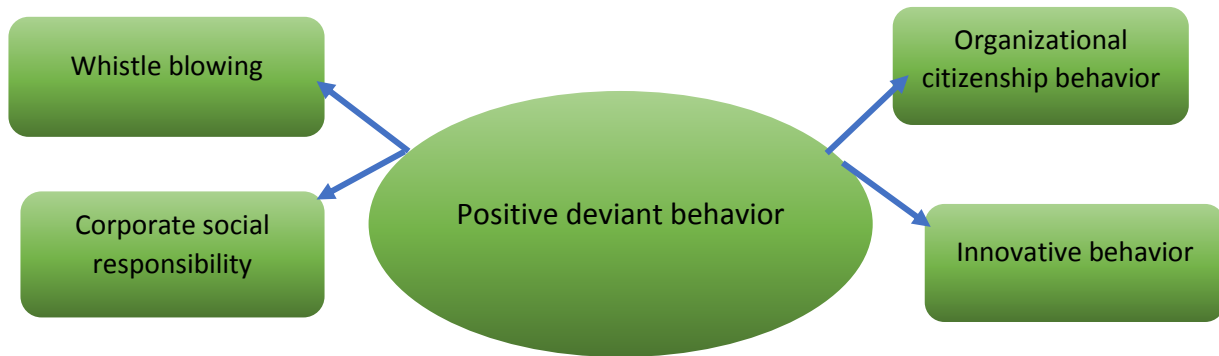
Source: Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2004)

The research proposes a wide range of reasons why employees engage in deviant behavior, (Robinson & Bennett, 1997), ranging from reactions to perceived injustice, dissatisfaction, role modeling, and thrill-seeking. Bolin and Heatherly (2001) contend that there are four significant roots of deviant-workplace behavior. It is believed that theft approval, intent to quit, dissatisfaction with the organization as well as company contempt are altogether indicative of workplace deviance. The management of negative deviant behavior in the workplace is of growing concern in organizations globally since such behaviors can be inconvenient to their budgetary prosperity. Regardless of whether the negative deviance is express or subliminal, whether it includes sexual harassment, vandalism, rumor spreading, and corporate harm or something else, unauthorized organizational behavior has negative consequences for the entity (Galperin, 2002).

Diversity-Focused HR Practices and Deviant Workplace Behavior

Based on the available literature, it can be affirmed that diversity-focused HR practices have a significant impact on reducing deviant workplace behavior. According to a study conducted by Nur Ain (2015) in the Malaysian context, one of the major causes that significantly results in workplace deviant behavior are differences in gender, generations, values, cultures, and beliefs. Thus, it is of great significance that HR practitioners develop important measures to reduce destructive deviance and at the same time enhance constructive behavior among employees (Chirasha and Mahapa, 2018). Researchers evidenced that adoption of various HRDM practices (D'Netto and Sohal, 1999; Shen et al., 2010) develops positive work attitudes among employees (Kundu, 2003) that helps in harvesting true benefits of diversity. Several other HRM theorists noted that a person's behavior and experience in an organization are shaped by the communicative nature of HRM practices such as recruiting, appraising performance, training, and benefits of administration (Guzzo et al 1994, Rousseau and Greller, 1994). Shen et al (2010) study conducted in a Chinese context, focused on four HRDM practices, that is recruitment and selection diversity management, training and development diversity management, performance appraisal diversity management, and compensation diversity management. They indicated that HRDM practices are fair and just and are designed to utilize diversity which will in turn help to enhance level of cooperation among the diverse workforce in an organization and thereby reduce the scope of deviant workplace behavior. Besides, the relationship between HRM practices and deviant workplace behavior is possible as social exchange theories argue that employees will reciprocate their behavior to the organization depending upon how they perceive HRM practices that is whether they perceive HR practices to be fair or unfair (Allen, Shore, and Griffeth, 2003). Therefore, it can be inferred that when an organization provides desirable HRM practices keeping diversity in view, and when these are perceived as fair and effective by employees, employees will reciprocate positive behaviors instead of negative deviant behavior to the organization. On the other hand, when hrm practices are not executed desirably, employees will respond to such a favor by engaging in deviant workplace behavior (Arthur, 2011; Yang, 2012). Kirton (2003), argued that HRM plays a significant role in diversity management by creating an environment of equality and retaining a diverse workforce. Thus, when an organization supports equality and fairness, its employees tend to become more

committed to their job. In addition, Colquitt et al, (2001) also reported that perceived fairness strongly affects employees' behaviors and attitudes (e.g, job satisfaction, turnover intention, and commitment). (Kundu and Mor, 2017) also found that when employees view diversity practices positively, they are more likely to participate in such activities to generate positive organizational outcomes.

III. CONCLUSION

The current study provides a review of literature on the role that diversity-focused HR practices play in reducing deviant workplace behavior. Various studies undertaken for this review indicated that diversity-focused HR practices play an important role in reducing such behaviors in an organization either directly or indirectly. However, the review also indicated that there exists a dearth of literature associating the above constructs. Therefore, it is imperative that in future more research in this area needs to be carried out to provide better insights on the said relationship. Moreover, considering the harm that deviant behavior could cause to an organization, an organization must participate in such a strategy that helps in discouraging deviant behaviors. It is of significant importance to remodel an organization's HR practices for the survival of that organization in the face of deviant employees. Further research should be carried out to further investigate the classifications of destructive deviant behaviors notably, property deviance, production deviance, political deviance as well as personal aggression and how organizations can mitigate their effects and origins. It can also be suggested that future researchers should also consider various mediating or moderating variables in the existing relationship.

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