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Organizational Diversity Learning Framework: Going Beyond Diversity Training Programs

Abstract

To overcome the shortcomings of diversity training programs, this paper conceptualizes an organizational diversity-learning framework, which features an organizational structural intervention for employees' joint decision-making process with other employees from different statuses and roles. By integrating diversity learning, deliberative democracy theories, and organizational diversity integration and learning perspectives, we make a theoretical and practical contribution to employees' behavioral, cognitive, and attitudinal diversity in learning to work more effectively with different employees. We conclude with directions for future research.

Key words:

Diversity learning, inclusive employee participation, deliberative democracy, diversity training

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The shortcomings of diversity training programs have been acknowledged by several scholars, calling for an alternative approach (e.g., Anard and Winters, 2008; Chavez and Weisinger, 2008). We respond to this call. This conceptual paper introduces an organizational diversity learning framework that facilitates experiential diversity learning by involving employees in the joint organizational decision-making process. By combining the diversity learning (Reiney & Kolb, 1995); organizational diversity integration and learning perspective (Ely and Tomas, 2001; Thomas and Ely, 1996) and deliberative democracy theories (Thompson, 2008) into our framework, we propose the following criteria for effective diversity learning in the workplace: (1) inclusion of minority group members in the organizational decision-making process; (2) organizational random and stratified sampling to establish multiple teams that reflect the heterogeneous composition of an organization; (3) equal opportunity and equal turn-taking to speak in each team; (4) enlarging and challenging participants' perspectives through interpersonal interaction with different employees; and (5) agreement on the final decision by everyone involved in the team (cf. Abelson et al., 2003; Cohen, 1996; Fishkin et al., 2006; Thompson, 2008).

Over the last three decades, diversity training has become a cornerstone of organizations' diversity initiatives to reduce employees' prejudices, stereotypes, and biases toward different employees (Bezrukova et al., 2012; King et al., 2010). In the U.S., an online survey conducted by Virtcom Consulting revealed that over 80% of 265 HR professionals and diversity specialists from organizations with 5,000 to 10,000 employees reported that they had either mandatory or voluntary training for all levels of employees, with average budgets of \$500,000 to \$750,000 per year (The New York Times, 2007). In total, U.S. businesses spend approximately \$200 million to \$300 million a year on diversity training programs (Vedantam, 2008). Although the

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importance of diversity training for changing employees' attitudes and improving working relationships has been acknowledged (Buzrukova et al., 2012), it has received criticism for its tendency to reinforce the differences between social groups and thus potentially promote prejudices in the workforce (e.g., Anard and Winters, 2008; Bregman, 2012; Chavez and Weisinger, 2008; Dobbin et al., 2007; Kalev et al., 2006; Kalinoski et al., 2012; Kulik and Roberson, 2008; Rynes and Rosen, 1995). Based on data gathered from 708 organizations over 31 years of diversity training programs in the U.S. (Kalev et al., 2006), the programs reduced minority representation in managerial positions, whereas the opposite effect was found for organizational interventions that held managers accountable for enhancing minority participation and providing minorities with a voice to prove their worth in high-profile roles. Another study in the U.K. found that most diversity managers gained their diversity expertise through work experience and external training rather than in-house training programs and formal diversity education (Tatli et al., 2007).

Despite diversity training initiatives over decades, pervasive employment discrimination continues worldwide based on employees' minority social status (International Labor Organization, 2011). In the U.S., total employment discrimination charges reported to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2013) rose from 80,680 to 93,727 from 1997 to 2013. Anglo-Americans still hold a much larger proportion of management and professional positions (83.6%) than do other racial minority group members, notably African-Americans (8.4%), Asian-Americans (6.1%), and Hispanics (7.5%) (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012). Therefore, we propose an alternative organizational approach to diversity training for more effective employee diversity learning that facilitates changes in employees' behaviors, thinking patterns, and attitudes toward different employees.

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The core objective of diversity learning is regarded as a heuristic, mutual, and continuous improvement of employees' behavioral, attitudinal, and cognitive learning through work-relevant processes rather than in classrooms (e.g., Anard and Winters, 2008; Chavez and Weisinger, 2008; Paluck, 2006; Rainey and Kolb, 1995). As diversity learning is said to be maximized "when learners have an equal opportunity to develop and utilize their talents and perspectives to the fullest" (Rainey and Kolb, 1995: 129), we propose that ongoing and joint minority and majority work-related decision-making processes will strengthen diversity learning greater than, for example, a series of one-off diversity training programs (cf. Ely, 2004; Kulik and Roberson, 2008). To overcome the exclusion of socioeconomically disadvantaged minority members in organizations (Hoffman, 1985; Ibarra, 1993; Oetzel, 1998), there is a need for organizations to move beyond "simplistic assertion of valuing diversity" (Tomlinson and Egan, 2002: 96) to a structural intervention for minority and majority employees to interact, coordinate, and make mutual adjustments to integrate different perspectives (Bell et al., 2008; Swan et al., 2009; Tomlinson and Egan, 2002).

In order to advance our trajectories for developing employees' diversity learning beyond diversity training programs, we present an organizational framework that holds senior management along with human resource managers responsible for encouraging employees to develop more inclusive behaviors, attitudes, and thinking patterns. Our framework joins with the emerging paradigm for diversity training, which suggests that diversity learning of employees should become more relational, interdependent, applicable, and on-going to integrate diverse employees' contributions for improving organizational performance (Anard and Winters, 2008; Chavez and Weisinger, 2008; Kalinoski et al., 2012; Kulik and Roberson, 2008; Paluck, 2008).

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In this article, we first present an overview of the key shortcomings of diversity training programs in relation to their content, design, group composition, and evaluation. Second, we borrow the key principles of diversity learning, diversity integration and learning perspective, and deliberative democracy theories to explicitly delineate the organizational diversity learning framework. Third, we present a table of our approach contrasted with the shortcomings of diversity training programs and discuss our practical and theoretical contributions, along with limitations and directions for future research.

Diversity training and its limitations

The multiple benefits of diversity training programs are identified in relation to affective, cognitive, and skill-based outcomes (Anard and Winters, 2008; Kalinoski et al, 2012; King et al., 2012; Kulik and Roberson, 2008). However, they receive considerable criticisms for their shortcomings, particularly in relation to not resulting in trainees' behavioral change at a workplace (Anard and Winters, 2008; Bezrukova et al., 2012; Bregman, 2012; Chavez and Weisinger, 2008; Kalinoski et al., 2012; Kulik and Roberson, 2008; Paluck, 2008). In this section, we underscore major shortcomings of current diversity training programs in relation to their (a) group composition, (b) design, (b) content, and (d) evaluation.

Group composition

Current training programs lack participants' specification to ensure that different social groups across hierarchies and functions are included (Paluck, 2006). Conventional training programs do not promote crosscutting participation by those in the different hierarchical statuses, roles, and

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social groups, therefore potentially attracting only certain employees who are already open and inclusive of different employees (cf. Roberson et al., 2001). Recent research confirmed that employees who do not have diversity skills tend to overestimate their skills and are therefore not likely to attend a voluntary diversity training, whereas those with the least need for diversity training are more likely to participate in the training (Kulik et al., 2007). We argue that diversity programs that do not deliberately attract or select diverse participants are unlikely to produce systemic organizational change, inhibiting organization-wide employees' attitudinal and behavioral change (Linnehan and Konrad, 1999; Schneider and Northcraft, 1999).

Design

Furthermore, organizations' diversity training programs are often based on one-off or regular seminars, periodic interventions over weeks or months, workshop interventions, and/or self-paced e-learning, not providing work-based, participatory learning to work with different employees (Anard and Winters, 2008; Carnevale and Stone, 1994; Hanover and Cellar, 1998; Kulik and Roberson, 2008; Paluck, 2006). By implementing short-lived training programs, organizations tend to neglect an organizational or strategic approach to integrating diversity learning and leveraging multiple perspectives of different employees for work purposes (Chavez and Weisinger, 2008). This design also reflects an organization's assumption that diverse employees who were trained will continue to learn about different perspectives during work activities (Roberson, 2006). Implying the importance of work-based diversity learning, a recent meta-analytic evaluation of diversity training outcomes found that best training outcomes were produced in active and interdependent task programs rather than passive (e.g., lecture or video);

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non-laboratory setting; and were face-to-face rather than computer-based trainings (Kalinowski et al., 2012).

Content

Current training programs include training on employees' cross-cultural knowledge, cultural competence, cultural awareness, multicultural skills, cross-cultural communication skills, and diversity-specific trainings (e.g., sexual orientation awareness, gender, disability, and religious tolerance), as well as knowledge of equal employment opportunity laws and other legislation (Kaufman, 1994; Paluck, 2006). By emphasizing the differences between social groups and how to bridge those differences, diversity training programs tend to reinforce social group categorizations and enhance prejudices (Bregman, 2012; Chavez and Weisinger, 2008; Kalev et al., 2006; Paluck, 2006). More positive effects were reported from diversity skills training than diversity awareness training in achieving training goals; however, most of those positive effects have been self-reported, making little connection as to the actualization of behavioral change for work activities (Anard and Winters, 2008; Kulik and Roberson, 2008). For some organizations, extensive coverage of differences in the training (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation, personality, and working styles) further reinforces differences amongst employees and dilutes the effectiveness of diversity training (Paluck, 2006).

Evaluation

Diversity training is often limited to short-term affective evaluation or self-reported behavioral change with little evidence of objective behavioral change that results in improving work relationships among different employees (e.g., Bezrukova et al., 2012; Curtis and Dreachslin,

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2008; Hite and McDonald, 2006; Kalinoski et al., 2012; Kulik and Roberson, 2008; Noe and Ford, 1992; Paluck and Green, 2009; Rynes and Rosen, 1995). Paluck (2008) proposed that training programs need to focus more on behavioral measurement by (1) establishing the causal effect of the program; (2) using a nonobstructive outcome measure that goes beyond self-reporting; and (3) conducting research in relevant populations and settings (e.g., work activities).

Overall, extant diversity training programs have shortcomings, particularly in relation to their group composition, design, content, and evaluation (Bezrukova et al., 2012). In order to overcome their current shortcomings, the organizational diversity learning framework is proposed to develop more diversity-inclusive work behaviors, attitudes, and thinking patterns (cf. Paluck, 2006).

Organizational diversity learning framework

Diversity learning at a workplace can include utilizing, questioning, and integrating multiple perspectives for organizational development (cf. Anard and Winters, 2008; Bezrukova et al., 2012; Chavez and Weisinger, 2008;). Borrowing key principles from the diversity learning (Rainey and Kolb, 1995); integration and learning perspectives (Ely and Thomas, 2001; Thomas and Ely, 1996), and the key practices informed by deliberative democratic theories (Thompson, 2008), we develop a new organizational diversity learning framework for behavioral, attitudinal, and cognitive change. The framework is structured to create a “public sphere” for “public-spirited dialogue” among different social groups at the organizational level (cf., Abelson et al., 2003; Mor Barak and Cherin, 1998; Nicolini et al., 2003; Ragins, 1997, Thomas, 1996).

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Ely and Thomas' (2001) integration and learning perspective provides an organizational mindset in which diverse social groups are considered valuable resources for rethinking primary organizational activities, thus multiplying organizational insights, skills, and experiences for the main work of an organization (Thomas and Ely, 1996). In order to reap the benefit of diverse perspectives, some scholars suggest that organizations provide plenty of opportunities for employees to reflect, respect, value, and communicate different perspectives with each other during business activities (Ferdman and Davidson, 2002; Mor Barak and Cherin, 1998; Prasad, Pringle, and Konrad, 2006). Ely and Thomas' (2001) approach to diversity learning is important as it promotes organization-wide learning between minority group members (who often hold lower hierarchical status) and majority group members (who often hold higher hierarchical status) to exchange their perspectives for a common purpose at the organizational level. By inviting minority contributions to organizational development, an organization can "challenge normative assumptions about organizational strategies, functions, operations, practices, and procedures" (Lorbiecki, 2001: 353). Other scholars also support this approach to diversity learning, calling for more organizational intervention to invite minority group members into the core organizational socializing process (Dass and Parker, 1999; Swan et al., 2009). As one way to improve intergroup relations and learning between members from different statuses, the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) states that the intergroup contacts need authority support for equalizing their status and a common goal to facilitate cooperation between minority and majority group members via personal interactions.

With these perspectives as our foundational framework, we incorporate key deliberative democracy practices (Thompson, 2008) for minority and majority group members to jointly make organizational decisions. Deliberative democracy's practical implementations and

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empirical studies have proliferated in the political realm, providing a useful insight as to how minority group members can be integrated into an organizational decision-making process (Fishkin, 2011; Thompson, 2008). In particular, we emphasize the organization's practical interventions to enhance minority voices and coordinate constructive learning about multiple perspectives in a sensitive and non-threatening environment for the learners (cf. Lorbiecki, 2001).

The framework is organized into three phases: (1) before, (2) during, and (3) after participation, laying key conditions for participants' (a) behavioral, (b) cognitive, and (c) attitudinal learning about differences in each phase. We define the *behavioral learning of diversity* as different social groups learning the utility of an equal opportunity to develop and utilize multiple perspectives; the *cognitive learning of diversity* as different social groups learning to obtain multiple perspectives and rethinking their own perspectives; and the *attitudinal learning of diversity* as different social groups learning to enhance appreciation of different perspectives (Rainey and Kolb, 1995). Figure 1 indicates the overview of this framework.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The before-participation phase

This phase provides the pre-context for participants to acquire (a) behavioral, (b) cognitive, and (c) attitudinal diversity learning.

(a) Behavioral learning pre-context. The first context of behavioral learning is the random and stratified representative sampling of participants. It deliberately cuts across hierarchical, divisional, and demographic boundaries in an organization by assigning diverse participants to

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multiple decision-making teams (Fishkin, 2011). This deliberate mix of demographic diversity into each team allows managers and employees to interact with those who are not similar in their social identities or categories (Schneider and Northcraft, 1999; Tomlinson and Egan, 2002; Van Knippenberg and Schippers, 2007). This structural intervention, therefore, preconditions the participants to interact with and learn about different perspectives (Allport, 1954; Avery and Thomas, 2004; Linnehan and Konrad, 1999; Schneider and Northcraft, 1999). Furthermore, the diversified team composition reduces the likelihood of participants' in-group and out-group categorization in teams and reduces the domineering effects of conventional work teams that are influenced by majority voices (Avery and Thomas, 2004; Brewer, 1995; Earley and Mosakowski, 2000; Lau and Murnighan, 1999; Schneider and Northcraft, 1999; Thompson, 2008).

The second context is to ensure that each team is small (e.g., less than ten members) in order to facilitate information exchange in personal ways and reduce relational conflicts among diverse participants (Allport, 1954; Fisher and Ellis, 1990; Gutmann and Thompson, 1996; Rainey and Kolb, 1995; Ridgeway, 1983). To equalize the status within each team, the third context is to avoid grouping participants to be related in day-to-day political communication channels (Berger et al., 2002). In other words, within a workplace, the participants within each team are not to be related as immediate supervisors, subordinates, or colleagues in daily work activities (Berger et al., 1977; Humphreys and Berger, 1981; Kirton and Greene, 2000).

(b) Cognitive learning pre-context. Diversity learning experience becomes more positive for participants when clear goals and rules are laid down, as they encourage more self-directed learning within a given boundary (Rainey & Kolb, 1995). By emphasizing organizational goals, we propose that participants will deviate their focus from identity differences (e.g., race, age, or gender) to superordinate organizational identity, which results in better learning about different

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perspectives and problem solving for organizational growth (cf. Allport, 1954; Avery and Thomas, 2004; Brickson, 2000; Fishkin and Luskin, 2005; Gastil, 2006; Roelin, 1997). Adopting Ely and Thomas' (2001) integration and learning perspective, we propose that participants can be briefed about specific organizational goal(s) and be prompted to exchange perspectives and knowledge with one another to achieve those goal(s). Organizational goals may include (a) solving organizational problems, such as improving the quality and speed of service and product delivery; (b) evaluating and making suggestions regarding business goals, strategies, products, and services; (c) providing solutions to work discrimination or suggesting fair employment practices; and (d) improving employment matters, such as work-life balance and employee well-being (cf. He, 2003).

~~Furthermore, participants need to be affirmed that their decision-making or participation phase will be a reasoning and problem-solving process, rather than a mere discussion or sum of opinions or interests (Abelson et al., 2003; Fishkin et al., 2004; Pellizzoni, 2001; Rosenberg, 2003; Squires, 2006; Thompson, 2008; Warren, 2006). We envisage that these cognitive parameters will foster participants to begin their discussions with more flexible and open mindsets than would be possible without these specified boundary conditions (Miller, 1992; Fearon, 1998; Pellizzoni, 2001).~~

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(c) Attitudinal learning pre-context. The context of psychological safety maximizes diversity learning, as it allows different members to openly share their perspectives, values, and feelings (Allport, 1954; Rainey and Kolb, 1995). In order to achieve this condition in the participation phase, we apply the anonymous voice principle of Rawls (1971) to deliberately disregard participants' differences in status, identities, and affiliations so as to allow open sharing for

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unbiased decisions to be reached. We propose giving all participants an opportunity to write down or transmit, through anonymous means, their ideas to the facilitator before the participation phase. Their ideas can then be presented by the facilitator at the beginning of participants' dialogue. We expect that the presentation of "anonymous voices" before the face-to-face visual contact will reduce participants' bias toward perspectives shared by certain members (cf. Pellizzoni, 2001; Ryfe, 2005).

The during-participation phase

In the following section, we identify the conditions that are necessary for participants' behavioral, cognitive, and attitudinal learning of diversity *during* the joint participation process.

(a) Behavioral learning conditions. ~~One of the trademarks of deliberative democracy is debate and discussion aimed at producing well-informed decisions where participants, as peers, are willing to revise their preferences in light of new perspectives that are shared by fellow decision-makers (Chambers, 2003).~~ In order to reduce tokenism in demographically diverse teams, facilitators' intervention is necessary to create equal communication power among participants (Pellizzoni, 2001; cf. Schneider and Northcraft, 1999). The deliberative democracy scholars suggest the following in order to produce well-informed decisions: (1) equal turn-taking in speaking and listening among participants during public reasoning, so that they can reach the goal of common agreement (Elster, 1997; Habermas, 1984; Rosenberg, 2003) and (2) facilitators' assertion that all individuals have the freedom to challenge other participants' norms and assumptions (Benhabib, 2002; Cohen, 1996). Notably, name-calling is also encouraged in diversity learning literature to facilitate demographically diverse members to interact in more

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personal ways (Rainey and Kolb, 1995). These facilitations will equip participants to speak and listen to different social group members as well as to provide a platform for the following cognitive and attitudinal diversity learning.

(b) Cognitive learning conditions. In diverse teams, there is a natural tendency for participants to eliminate unusual perspectives shared by different social groups (Schneider and Northcraft, 1999). However, unique information and diverse opinions are recognized as a crucial source of task conflicts, thus leading to a wider range of alternative solutions to make a quality decision (Jehn et al., 1999; Watson et al., 1993; Thompson, 2008). Therefore, the challenge is to attain a balance between convergence and divergence of meanings during discussion (Mohammed and Ringseis, 2001). To promote members' cognitive learning about diverse perspectives, a facilitator may systematically encourage participants to step back and learn from multiple/opposing perspectives and to seek similarities, differences, and cross-connections between members' contributions (Hewstone, 1996; Rainey and Kolb, 1995; Reykowski, 2006; Tomlinson and Egan, 2002). This process may enhance greater objectivity of members to reason varieties of perspective when confronted with differing perspectives, allowing them to avoid their common information bias and to engage in a reciprocal dialogue toward resolving the matter at hand (Avery and Thomas, 2004; Gaetner et al., 1993; Hewstone, 1996). The facilitator's objective presentation of multiple perspectives is crucial for participants' diversity learning, as their perspectives could remain contradictory, unchallenged, and narrow-minded without the external stimulus (Kim et al., 1999). This approach, therefore, takes a relational view of managing for diversity by empowering different social groups to leverage each other's unique perspectives, rather than magnifying identity differences in their thinking process (Chavez and Weisinger, 2008; Hewstone, 1996).

(c) Attitudinal learning conditions. Decision making in the midst of diverse identities, perspectives, and interpretations is often intersected by participants' emotions, values, beliefs, and experiences, where information is only a small part of the process that makes up their minds (Fishkin et al., 2004; Thompson and Hoggett, 2001). Thus, participants' affective appeals and personal testimony are expected to be an important aspect of candid and authentic discussions, especially for topics such as the elimination of work discrimination and suggestions for fairer employment practices (Rawls, 1971; Thompson, 2008). The facilitators' affirmation of freedom to openly share participants' personal stories or feelings becomes critical to foster candid diversity learning from different perspectives (Rainey and Kolb, 1995). In so doing, more opportunities are offered to deepen participants' attitudinal learning, not only in the sense of overcoming certain stereotypes and prejudices, but also in valuing and empathizing other perspectives on the discussion topic.

The post-participation phase

The post-participation phase requires an organizational intervention in consolidating all the decisions, which were made across multiple teams, to generate organizational decision(s). It may be beneficial for senior managers holding key decision-making responsibility to conduct discussions with team representatives and seek common decision(s) across teams so as to ensure that unbiased organizational decisions as depicted in Figure 1 can be reached (Abelson et al., 2003; Fishkin, 2011). Managerial accountability is embedded in this process, thus requiring top management to collate all decisions and openly communicate how the final decisions are reached to all participants (cf. Abelson et al., 2003; Kalev et al., 2006). While organizational decisions lie

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with the top management, the organizational decision-making process is largely attributed to employees' dialogues (Habermas, 1996). Key principles of deliberative democracy scholars regarding the decision criteria imply the following for managers: (1) participation included the minority group members within the organizational context (e.g., women or racial minorities from lower organizational status); (2) the participation process ensured equal opportunity and equal turns in speaking among different social groups within teams; (3) participation enabled minority and majority group members to widen their perspectives, knowledge, and understanding about a given organizational inquiry; (4) participation influenced the members to question their own assumptions and perspectives rather than just reaching conformity; and (5) the final decision was agreed upon by everyone involved in each team (Abelson et al., 2003; Cohen, 1996; Fishkin et al., 2004; Thompson, 2008). Furthermore, the third-party reports created by facilitators may also provide objective assessment of whether or not the participation fulfilled these criteria (Hewstone, 1996). The third party reports also present the objective evaluation of participants' behavioral and cognitive learning.

Our main goal for the organizational diversity learning framework is, first and foremost, diversity learning (i.e., equal opportunity to acquire, integrate, and appreciate multiple perspectives and a shared sense of belonging to each other), followed by high-quality organizational decisions (Pellizzoni, 2001; Ryfe, 2005). Therefore, even if the final organizational decision is not implemented for organizational, contextual reasons, we consider that participants' behavioral, attitudinal, and cognitive diversity learning itself achieves the most important goal of this organizational intervention. In the following, we outline evaluation options.

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(a) Behavioral post-learning evaluation. Our framework combines both objective and subjective evaluations of diversity learning. The behavioral learning of participants may be assessed, for example, by anonymous self-reported and third party questionnaires that indicate the extent to which different perspectives were shared and the joint decision-making processes took place in each team (Reykowski, 2006; Oakley et al., 2006; Wright and Obasi, 2002). For example, items may include *I shared my perspectives about the given inquiry to other members* and *Each member in this team took an equal turn in listening and speaking and jointly made a group decision*. An open-ended question such as *What aspects of this participation facilitated or hindered your sharing?* may also reveal positive and negative aspects of behavioral learning of diversity for continuous improvement of this framework.

(b) Cognitive post-learning evaluation. Evaluation of cognitive change may also be included in the anonymous self-reported questionnaire (cf. Linnehan and Konrad, 1999). Relevant questions may include participants' understanding of multiple perspectives presented in the team and change(s) in their perspectives on issues (Reykowski, 2006; Oakley et al., 2006; Wright and Obasi, 2002). For example, items might include *I gained more knowledge and information about the given issue from other members* and *I learned a new way of thinking from other members*. An open-ended question such as *How did your participation facilitate or hinder your learning about different perspectives from other members?* may also reveal positive and negative aspects of cognitive learning of diversity from this framework.

(c) Attitudinal post-learning evaluation. Some deliberative democracy scholars suggest that pre- and post-participation attitudinal surveys (e.g., regarding working with employees from different

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social backgrounds) may strengthen the validity of evaluation (e.g., Ryfe, 2005). Attitudinal questions may focus on subjective evaluations of diverse perspectives, attitudes toward working in a diverse team, and feelings of inclusion. For example, items might include *I feel more connected with employees from different hierarchies and social groups* and *I feel personally empowered by being able to contribute to organizational decision-making processes*. An open-ended question such as *How did you feel about your participation in this program?* or *Is there anything that could have been done better to make you feel more included during the participation?* may also reveal positive and negative aspects of affective learning about diversity from this framework. The evaluations proposed in this phase also overcome the shortcomings of diversity training evaluations, which tend to focus on attitudinal learning and subjective rating of participants (cf. Kulik and Roberson, 2008).

Discussion

The organizational diversity learning framework developed in this article provides an inclusive diversity learning paradigm in which diversity learning “rests in the experience of the learner” (Kolb, 1984; Rainey and Kolb, 1995: 131). As stated by experiential learning theory, this framework encourages workers to heuristically learn about diverse perspectives in a psychologically safe environment, to reflect on different perspectives, and to create a new awareness about learning from others (cf. Kolb and Kolb, 1995). As the participants learn to apply new repertoires for interacting with others in their daily work interactions (e.g., listening to different perspectives shared by unfamiliar social group members), we propose that their behaviors may create a ripple effect, changing other colleagues’ attitudes, behaviors, and thinking patterns on working with diverse coworkers. We propose that, over time, organization-

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wide implementation of the proposed framework can foster “organizational environmental virtuousness” or “collective ethical disposition that habitually motivates, guides, and corrects moral behavior” that reduces discriminatory attitudes and behaviors in a workplace (Sadler-Smith, 2013: 124).

Table I summarizes the major differences between a diversity training program and an organizational diversity learning approach in relation to main focus, approach to diversity learning, design, participant demographics, and evaluation. Our intention here is not to devalue the contribution that diversity training makes. We acknowledge that diversity training plays an essential role in educating employees about the importance of creating inclusive workplaces (Roberson et al., 2003). Our aim is to convey the benefits of taking an integrative approach, which may be complementary to other diversity learning initiatives (e.g., diversity training, mentoring, and networking) in developing a more inclusive organization (cf. Bezrukova et al., 2012).

Insert Table I about here

There are some shortcomings to this approach. Even after a careful intervention, participants may not possess the cognitive and attitudinal conditions (e.g., ability to seek cognitive consensus and openness to diverse perspectives) that are necessary to produce a quality decision (Jackman and Sniderman, 2006; Thompson, 2008). Some empirical findings from deliberative democracy studies, for example, found mixed and inconclusive results, which are attributed to the contexts and types of conversations that influenced their deliberation effects (Thompson, 2008). Thus, we acknowledge that the proposed framework needs to be empirically tested in diverse organizations.

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Future empirical studies within the context of workforce diversity will need to acknowledge the contexts of organizations and types of organizational goals that may or may not leverage the diverse perspectives of different social groups within this framework.

Theoretical and practical contributions

Reaching beyond the business case of managing diversity, this framework supports the relational case of managing for diversity, where different social group members are given more opportunities to learn from each other's perspectives and to find new solutions to organizational problems (Chavez and Weisinger, 2008). In the era of continuing social stratification between privileged and less privileged groups within workplaces, this framework proposes an organizational intervention that allows minority group members to speak up within a psychologically safe and non-threatening context. By borrowing key principles from organizational integration and learning paradigms, diversity learning and deliberative democracy theories, we provide a normative organizational framework that allows diverse employees to learn from each other's identities, perspectives, values, attitudes, and interpretations. As demographic minority members are often excluded from mainstream informal and formal networks and meaningful ties (Ibarra, 1993), we suggest that deliberative organizational intervention is beneficial for workers, regardless of group memberships, to internalize the benefits of workforce diversity (Schneider and Northcraft, 1999). In essence, this framework advances theory and practice in the area of diversity learning and the organizational development studies (Cunliffe and Sadler-Smith, 2013).

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The framework extends diversity learning literature in the following ways. Different social groups are given more opportunities to (a) participate in learning and integration of diverse knowledge, perspectives, and ideas for making organizational decisions; (b) learn about inclusive behaviors, attitudes, and thinking patterns by interacting with those from different statuses, divisions, and social groups in more personal ways; (c) acquire diversity skills, such as diversity-sensitive communication, diverse teamwork abilities, and conflict resolution skills, by engaging in the minority and majority joint decision-making process; and (d) enhance cognitive ability to comprehend and reflect on diverse perspectives, attitudes, and emotions to rethink their own perspectives.

Furthermore, this article provides detailed instructions for practitioners to facilitate diversity learning. We highlight a few key practical implications. First, the framework provides a method of organization-wide diversity learning through intersecting networks within the workplace, which is designed to reduce the elitist organizational decision making that mainly occurs at the upper echelon (Brewer and Miller, 1996). In particular, the framework offers deliberative managerial intervention to overcome employees' natural dynamics of homogeneous participation (e.g., women, racial minorities) toward heterogeneous participation (cf. Thomas, 2012). Second, unlike other stand-alone diversity initiatives (e.g., diversity training programs, mentoring programs, and diversity committees), the framework is embedded in the organizational decision-making process, which makes employees' learning applicable to core organizational activities, contributing to both employees' diversity learning and organizational growth. We propose that making organizational decisions by cutting across social identity groups will promote diverse employees' superordinate identity, thereby encouraging closer relationships between diverse social groups, and produce a quality decision (cf. Brickson, 2000). Third, the framework

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provides a preliminary model for transferring employees' diversity learning in daily work operations, nurturing their behavioral learning to interact with different social groups more frequently at work and to be more attentive and inclusive of their colleagues' perspectives, feelings, and attitudes. The principles that are provided in the framework can also be applied to making the respective workgroup's (e.g. department or division) decision-making process inclusive of minority contributions in reaching its goals. Managerial accountability in applying the decision criteria at the departmental level can also be applied to ensure equality in departmental decision-making processes.

Holistically, individual employees who participate in this framework may become more attuned to the perspectives of others and exhibit more cooperative behaviors in their everyday work (Cohen, 1996; Warren, 2006; Bohman, 1996 cited in Pellizzoni, 2001: 66). We expect that the participants' diversity learning will contribute to creating an inclusive climate of workgroups, thereby spilling over to nurturing inclusive attitudes, behaviors, and thinking pattern. Over time, an ongoing organizational learning framework may gradually reverse employees' assumptions of incompatible or conflicting perspectives with other social groups, helping the employees to jointly produce novel ideas and better work decisions at the group and organizational levels (Schneider and Northcraft, 1999).

Directions for empirical studies

We suggest future research using a variety of quantitative and qualitative techniques to examine the effect of an organizational diversity learning framework. For example, a quasi-experimental design may be suitable for conducting a comparative study of participants' responses to the reference team without the organizational intervention (control group); the pre-participation-only

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teams (condition 1) and the pre-, during-, and post-participation teams (condition 2). By comparing these conditions, the effectiveness of the organizational diversity learning framework can be examined. Qualitative techniques, such as observations and interviews, would also be useful to explore the effectiveness of interventions in conjunction with pre- and post-participation surveys.

The following propositions are offered to inform future studies:

Proposition 1: The fulfillment of a *before-participation* context will enhance the participants' appreciation of multiple perspectives, enlargement of their own perspectives, and acknowledgment of better decision-making outcomes than the non-fulfillment of pre-participation-phase principles in a work team decision-making process.

Proposition 2: The fulfillment of all principles in the *before-, during-, and after-participation phases* will enhance the participants' appreciation of multiple perspectives, enlargement of their own perspectives, and acknowledgment of better decision-making outcomes than the non-fulfillment of the principles in an organizational decision-making process.

Conclusion

The question of how organizations can integrate minority contributions has remained only nascent in the workforce diversity literature (Bell et al., 2011; DiTomaso et al., 2007; Prasad et al., 2006). Workforces across nations are becoming increasingly diverse, and, simultaneously, the gap and tension between demographic representation in the upper and lower echelons is widening (Bell et al., 2008; Pearce et al., 2005). By joining with other scholars who have advocated for the need to move beyond diversity training programs, we developed the organizational diversity learning framework for meaningful coparticipation of employees with different statuses, functions, and

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identities (e.g., Anard and Winters, 2008; Chavez and Weisinger, 2008; Kallinoski et al., 2012). By inviting minority perspectives into the organizational decision-making process, top managers can explicitly send a message to minority groups that their perspectives matter and that their contributions are highly valued by the organization (cf. Ragins et al., 2012).

We established the organizational diversity learning framework based on the organizational diversity integration and learning perspectives, the contact hypothesis, and deliberative democracy practices. The framework guides organizations in structural interventions to educate employees on how to learn from multiple perspectives for better organizational decision making. We hope that the organizational diversity learning framework proposed in this article will encourage top managers, HR managers, trainers, and educators to facilitate more inclusive diversity learning, in which all workers, regardless of their status or background, can speak up on organizational matters, and their perspectives are respected and leveraged. Organizational diversity learning efforts within workplaces can represent a crucial channel for lessening intergroup discriminations and for promoting minority groups with an equal opportunity to prove what they can offer for making better organizational decisions. The diversity learning research will need to continue making trajectories to maximize employees' learning about others' perspectives in ways that are free from social categorizations, prejudices, and stereotypes.

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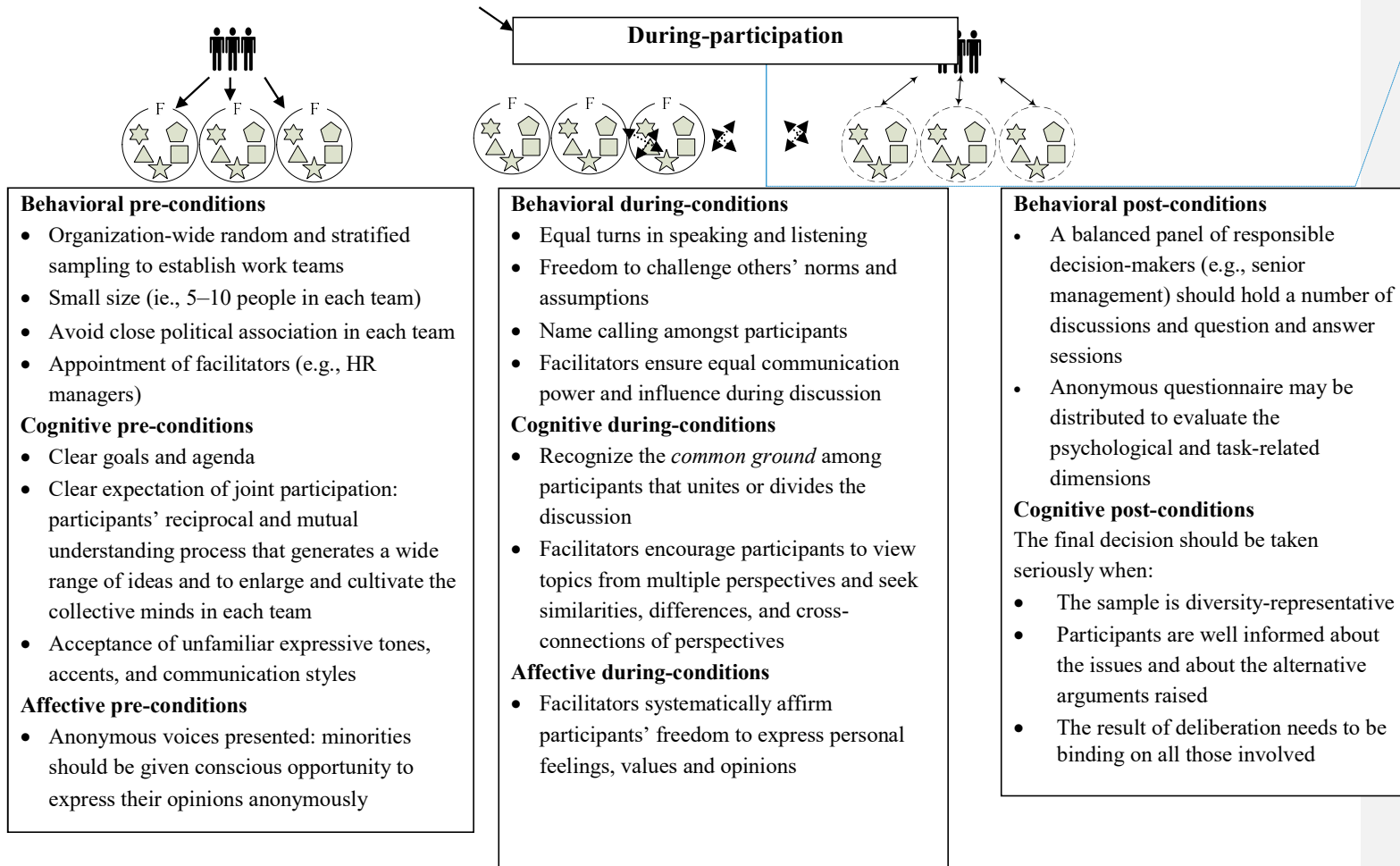
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Figure 1. Organizational diversity learning framework



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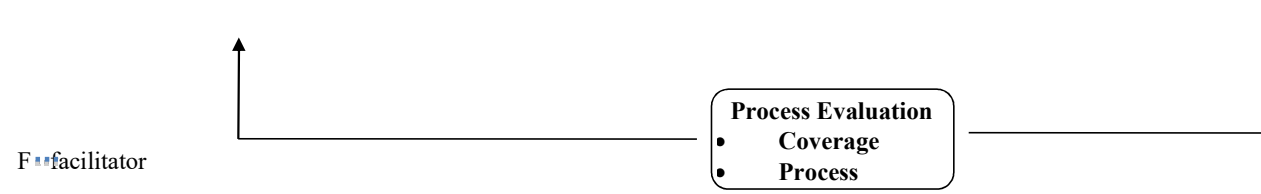


Table I. Major differences between diversity training and organizational diversity learning approach

Key Features	Diversity Training	Limitations	Key Features	Organizational diversity learning	Strengths
Content (e.g., Bregman, 2012; Kaufman, 1994; Kalev et al., 2006; Paluck, 2006)	Cross-cultural knowledge, cultural competence, cultural awareness, multicultural skills; cross-cultural communication skills, other diversity type coverage (e.g., sexual orientation awareness; gender, disability, religious tolerance) attitude test, equal employment opportunity laws, and other legislation	Minimum transfer of behavioral change; too much emphasis on attitude and knowledge toward social groups and highlighting social identities which potentially reinforce social group categorization and prejudices	Content (e.g., Allport, 1954; Avery and Thomas, 2008; Paluck and Green, 2009)	Organizational work-related topics such as pivotal business topics (e.g., strategies, product and service development); diversity topics (e.g., workforce discrimination); employment matters (e.g., work-life balance; employee health)	Inherent learning of different perspectives and attitudes amongst diverse employees from different hierarchical statuses and divisions, who engage in organizational problem solving that seeks to improve organizational processes and activities that matter to all employees
Design (eg., Anard and Winters, 2008; Carnevale and Stone, 1994)	Training and education programs based on one-off or regular seminars, workshop interventions and/or self-paced e-learning (e.g., lectures, videos, role-plays, group discussion)	Short-lived intervention and absence of work-based participative learning	Design (e.g., Habermas, 1984; Thompson, 2008)	On-going, organization-wide participation program; purposefully integrates minority and majority group members to provide organizational solutions	On-going, work-based participatory learning that integrates minority knowledge and perspectives into organizational decision-making process
Group composition (e.g., Roberson et al., 2001)	Potentially homogeneous group since conventional trainings do not promote crosscutting task assignments and hierarchical status/roles	Lack of specification to ensure that all social groups across hierarchies and roles are included to interact and learn from each other	Group composition (e.g., Allport, 1954; Avery and Thomas, 2008; Fishkin, 2011)	Heterogeneous group from crosscutting group memberships from different hierarchical status/roles	All social groups across hierarchies and roles are randomly included to interact and learn from each other; by reducing concentration of few social groups in the discussion, it reduces social categorization and intergroup discriminations within the work team

<p>Approach (e.g., Kulik and Roberson, 2008; Hanover and Cellar, 1998)</p>	<p>Within classroom learning and/or online learning; instruction, discussion or non-work related experiential methods</p>	<p>Does not provide employees with bottom-up learning, and organizations exert control over employees' attendance. It does not develop a common identity among diverse employees</p>	<p>Approach (e.g., Bregman, 2012; Paluck and Green, 2009)</p>	<p>Work-based cooperative learning through employees from various roles and hierarchies to engage in problem solving and brainstorming for organizational solutions</p>	<p>Inclusive, team-based decision-making process that empowers minority and majority group members to co-create new ideas and solutions. It enhances diverse employees' superordinate organizational identity in solving organizational problems together. It takes a relational approach to managing <i>for</i> diversity, in which different social group members are given opportunities to jointly make work decisions</p>
<p>Evaluation (e.g., Kulik and Roberson, 2008; Paluck and Green, 2009; Foster and Dreachslin, 2008; Rynes and Rosen, 1995; Ellis and Sonnenfeld, 1994; Noe and Ford, 1992; Carnevale and Stone, 1994)</p>	<p>Non-systematic evaluation; often limited to affective evaluation and minimum objective behavioral evaluation; self-reported behavioral change.</p>	<p>Lack of evidence for work-related behavioral change</p>	<p>Evaluation (e.g., Cohen, 1997; Harbermas, 1996)</p>	<p>Systematic evaluation based on the decision-making process; objective behavioral evaluation of whether or not there was equal participation of majority and minority participants; their group decision is taken up by top management</p>	<p>Work-related behavioral change is the focal evaluation (i.e., whether or not employees developed diversity-sensitive communication, diverse teamwork abilities, and conflict resolution skills)</p>