

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
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Leadership for equality, diversity and inclusion at work

Stream title

Diversity-related Knowledge and Competences for Leadership

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Stream Outline:

Due to internationalization processes, demographic changes and value shifts dealing with issues of workforce diversity has become a major challenge for successful leadership. Although diversity management is mainly a top-down strategy and therefore dependent on the commitment of the top and middle executives, leaders still lack of diversity-related awareness, which has to be considered as vital for organizational change towards inclusiveness (see e.g. European Commission 2005, Buttner et al. 2006; Dreachslin et al 2000, Dreachslin 2007). Therefore, diversity awareness of leaders and line managers is an essential precondition for developing leadership practices that respond to diversity and foster capacity building in diversity management.

Thus, the development of diversity-related knowledge and competences on every level of an organization depend on the awareness and commitment of the top and line managers. They have to take their responsibilities for learning opportunities, circumstances and resources (see Hofmann 2006) into consideration in order to identify the context specific relevance of diversity dimensions, which inform organizational objectives, practices and structures and to handle the complex tasks that are linked with workforce diversity (Aguirre 2008) such as overlooked competences, discrimination, resistance or conflicts.

Furthermore, considering leadership not only as a role but as a process, we see knowledge on organizational theories, structures and processes, on diversity dimensions and phenomena of intersectionality, on social competence, on methodological competence and on reflexive competence as particularly relevant for leaders who are prepared to initiate organizational change towards a more trustful and inclusive organization (see McCuiston et al 2004, Danowitz, Hanappi-Egger, Hofmann forthcoming).

For this stream we are looking for papers dealing with the role of diversity awareness of leaders for managing diversity. Furthermore, we aim at highlighting the context specific types of leaders' competences and knowledge necessary in order to ensure inclusive and strategic diversity strategies and practices. We welcome conceptual as well empirical submissions.

Stream questions:

- How can leaders' diversity-related awareness be initiated and fostered?
- To what extent have diversity-related knowledge and competences become relevant in leadership and how are these concepts defined in discourses on diversity management?
- In which ways may concepts of "knowing" be fruitful for leadership in diversity management?
- Which knowledge and competences are needed for boundary-spanning-leadership in diversity management?
- In which way can different actors (e.g. trade unions, educational institutions and universities, consultants, or trainers) contribute to enhance leadership in diversity management?

Stream keywords:

Diversity awareness, Diversity-related knowledge and competence, leadership, organizational change

Literature:

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