

Qualitative Analyses of Perceived Conflict between Organizational Diversity and Performance Goals

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Introduction

Employees’ job performance and diversity are two frequently mentioned goals in organizations.

To help organizations make decisions related to these two goals, existing research has focused on the “diversity-performance tradeoff” in personnel selection. However, little research has explored this topic from a lay-theory perspective that lends crucial insight into employees’ support for organizational diversity policies.

To address this gap, we proposed that people can perceive the nature of the conflict between diversity and performance goals differently: holding resource conflict or inherent conflict beliefs (Riediger & Freund, 2004).

Research Questions

RQ1: Do people differ on their beliefs about diversity-performance goal conflict in organizations (i.e., resource vs inherent conflict)?

RQ2: Do the two beliefs predict people’s support toward organization’s diversity management (i.e., conflict management strategies; diversity policies)?

Methodology

In a correlational study (n = 157), we measured:

- Bi-directional Goal Relation
- Inherent Conflict
- Resource Conflict
- Goal Conflict Management Strategies
- Attitudinal and Behavioral Intent

In an open-ended question, we asked "What do you think organizations can do with regard to managing diversity and performance goals?", the responses of which were later coded into 15 categories.

Results

Quantitative Analyses

- Inherent and resource conflict beliefs are related ($r = .456$), but can be meaningfully differentiated, and individuals differ on these two beliefs.
- Inherent, compared with resource, conflict belief supported less integrating strategy in managing performance and diversity goals, and more negative attitudes toward diversity policies.

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Holding inherent (versus resource) conflict belief uniquely predicts negative outcomes toward organizational diversity efforts.

Inherent Conflict Belief

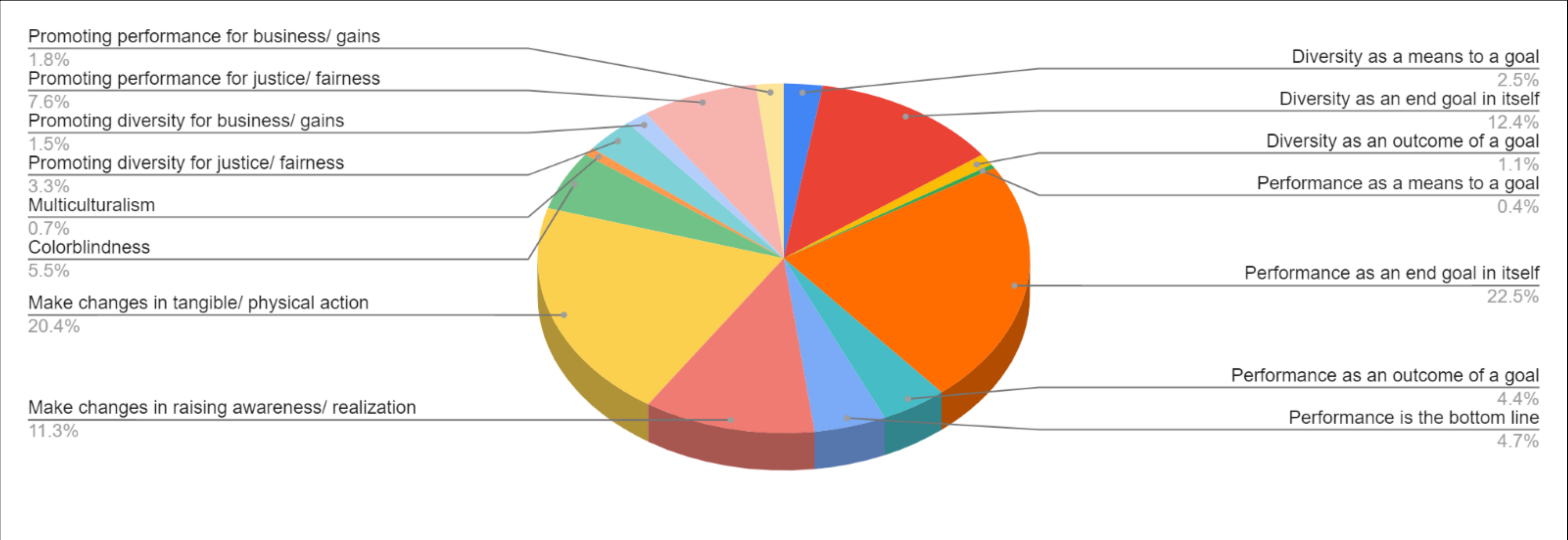


The belief that diversity and performance goals conflict with each other because these two goals are incompatible as they represent different values or meanings.

Resource Conflict Belief



The belief that both diversity and performance goals can be attained, but require the same resources. Depending on the flow of resources this can be viewed as a conflict.



Correlation Matrix				
	Resource	Inherent	Re-In	Diversity_end-goal
Resource	—			
Inherent	0.456 ***	—		
Re-In	0.441 ***	-0.598 ***	—	
Diversity_end-goal	-0.018	-0.044	0.029	—
Performance_end-goal	-0.018	-0.023	0.006	0.399 ***
Performance_outcome-of-a-goal	-0.173 *	-0.074	-0.081	0.158 *
Performance_bottom-line	0.052	0.093	-0.047	-0.143
Change_awareness-realization	-0.033	0.030	-0.060	-0.200 *
Change_tangible-action	-0.004	-0.027	0.023	-0.040
Colorblindness	0.091	0.018	0.064	-0.099
Performance_justice-fairness	-0.117	0.074	-0.180 *	-0.086

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Qualitative Analyses

- Holding resource, but not inherent, conflict belief is significantly and negatively correlated with seeing “performance as an outcome of a goal”.

Correlation Matrix				
	Attitude1	Attitude2	Diversity_end-goal	Performance_end-goal
Attitude1	—			
Attitude2	0.561 ***	—		
Diversity_end-goal	-0.057	-0.212 **	—	
Performance_end-goal	0.119	0.094	0.399 ***	—
Performance_outcome-of-a-goal	-0.190 *	-0.017	0.158 *	-0.014
Performance_bottom-line	0.140	0.245 **	-0.143	0.186 *
Change_awareness-realization	-0.119	-0.065	-0.200 *	-0.301 ***
Change_tangible-action	0.056	-0.013	-0.040	-0.201 *
Colorblindness	0.178 *	0.116	-0.099	-0.093
Performance_justice-fairness	0.143	0.203 *	-0.086	0.091

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

•“Diversity as the end goal in itself” is negatively correlated with anti-diversity beliefs

•“Performance as the outcome of a goal” is negatively correlated with anti-diversity beliefs

•“Performance as the bottom line” is positively correlated with anti-diversity beliefs

•Colorblindness is positively correlated with anti-diversity beliefs

•“Pursuing performance for justice and fairness” is positively correlated with anti-diversity beliefs

Implications & Future Directions

Organizations should consider employees' perception of diversity and performance goal conflict to potentially increase support for diversity policies in organizational processes (i.e., selection/ recruitment, training, and other contexts).

References

Riediger, M., & Freund, A. M. (2004). Interference and facilitation among personal goals: differential associations with subjective well-being and persistent goal pursuit. *Personality & social psychology bulletin*, 30(12), 1511–1523.