

IOP2607
WORKGROUP DYNAMICS AND DIVERSITY
ASSIGNMENT 1 SEMESTER 1 2021



QUESTION 1.1

Diversity

Diversity can be described as any combination of items characterised by differences and similarities between individuals and groups. These combinations add to distinct social identities. Diversity encompasses primary and secondary dimensions. Primary dimensions refer to core individual attributes, traits and aspects that are unchangeable and fixed, for example: gender, race, physical appearance, age or sexual orientation. Secondary dimensions are changeable, for example: education, communication style, relationships, work experience and income. Interaction between the above mentioned two dimensions shapes and forms an individual's values, priorities and perceptions. Successful human relationships can only work when the differences in diversity are acknowledged and valued. Diversity thus refers to unique and individual human differences, with primary and secondary dimensions, whether it be the individual's gender, physical abilities, socioeconomic class, education or differences in life experience, position in family or personality. These differences define each person and group as a unique entity. Furthermore, diversity is the way in which perceived differences and similarities are interpreted and acted upon.

Workforce diversity

Workforce Diversity is a workforce or labour force that is made up of individuals who contribute different experiences and perceptions to the workplace. These individuals have distinct needs, preferences, hopes and lifestyles. Workforce diversity signifies the relationships between people and with the organisation in the context of an on-going culture. Workforce diversity is considered an unquestionable fact and a catalyst for organisational change as well as a combination of multicultural human resources. Consequently, it develops into a human resource goal, a business aim and a learning opportunity.

Diversity Management

Diversity management is defined as the behavioural science research, theory and methods to manage and control organisational change and stability developments. It assists diversity in the organisation. It aims to abolish oppression based on race, gender, sexual orientation and

other unique individual differences. It represents a designed organisational approach to foster and develop workforce diversity, assist in organisational culture change and to empower the workforce. With the practice and aid of visionary leadership, organisations strive to motivate and gain access to the potential of their workforce. As a result, they create an environment of trust, respect and personal responsibility. The aim of diversity management is to improve health, productivity and the success of the organisation. The aforementioned aim can be achieved by supporting and respecting human differences, social justice, the community and by increase lifelong learning. Therefore, it moves away from the assumptions and actions identified by affirmative action, in the direction of a comprehensive management practice which considers workforce diversity and their potential. Diversity management has to deal with problems and challenges caused by a diverse workforce. They have to evaluate the nature and types of these challenges by applying diversity programs and initiatives based on individual, group and organisational diversity development modules. The relationships between employees are enhanced due to the fact that flawed and incorrect perceptions, attitudes and fears about others are addressed. The organisation benefits from diversity and workforce diversity, by incorporating the unique differences in skills, abilities and performances from each individual.

The manifestation work group dynamics and diversity in the organisation.

In the field of organisational behaviour, diversity represents every unique individual and group differences. These differences have an effect on and influences the tasks, products and services in the organisation. It also has an effect on the personal, interpersonal and organisational activities.

Work group dynamics and diversity have an effect on work performance (technical aspects). Individuals and groups contribute their own diversity in experience to the task at hand. Their experience comes from their own cognitive abilities, interest, motivation and skills. The organisation should allow them to use these competencies in order to change and enhance original, monotonous and fixed ways of doing things. For example, allowing Rose, a new employee with a degree, to make changes in the ways things have always been done. She can use her new ideas, latest information and “out of the box” thinking to improve production. This can be done by shortening long working hours and thus reducing cognitive overload. Better lighting and temperature control could improve working conditions. Consequently, improving work satisfactions that will result in increased production in the long run.

Work group dynamics and diversity has an effect on relationships (social aspects). Everybody is unique and differs from the next person in one way or another. All employees have to comprehend their own individual diversities. For example: “I am a female”, “I am old”. This indicates similarities with other females and other elderly people, as well as differences, such as men and young people. We therefore have to comprehend that each person represents a rich assortment of aspects of their self and therefore not look at that person in the broad scope of belonging to a different group. For example, to reduce or bring to an end to racism, sexism or classism, the organisation needs to create its own organisational culture. Make their own “in group” made up of different and unique people. This can be done by creating the company or organisation’s own “language”. This could be achieved by making up words, lingo or acronyms that mean something new to everyone. Another example could be creating a company song to increase energy and create the feeling of unity.

QUESTION 1.2

Sigmund Freud was a psychiatrist, who lived in the Victorian era. His personality theory is based on the view of humanity as being fundamentally influenced by unconscious processes, known as Psychoanalytical theories.

To better explain this, Freud used the analogy of an iceberg.

The conscious is represented by the tip of the iceberg, which is the portion above the surface of the water that everyone can see. It contains all the information, sensations and experiences that we are aware of. The conscious is also known as the *ego* and represents the reality principle. One can only be aware of or attentive to a small portion of one’s thoughts and memories at any given time, thus rendering the conscious small and limited. Just like the small tip of the iceberg.

The unconscious is represented by the bottom of the iceberg, which is the bulk of the iceberg and the unknown portion below the surface of the water that no-one can see. Those experiences are not easily accessible or available to awareness. It contains memories and emotions that are so threatening to the conscious mind that it has been pushed into the unconscious. Thus, the unconscious is filled with anxieties. These anxieties are the major driving force behind our behaviour and the foundation for explaining conscious behaviour.

The unconscious is also known as the *id* and represents the pleasure principle. It occupies nine tenths of the mind, in other words, a great part of the mind. Just like the very big part of the iceberg.

The preconscious is the bridge between the conscious and the unconscious mind. This is the area where you will find information that is accessible, but not always available. This information can still easily be recovered into awareness.

QUESTION 1.3

In individual and group psychodynamics, the main notion is that the individual and the individual group members are motivated by anxiety. Freud explains anxiety as the ego's response to the reality of danger. This anxiety is a result of the conflict between the id's forbidden and pleasurable drives and the superego's moral codes and laws. When this anxiety becomes too much for the individual or the individual members to handle, they will make use of defence mechanisms. Splitting, projection, introjections, projective identification and introjective identification are all examples of immature defence mechanisms. Defence mechanisms are used to dispose of the feeling of anxiety in order to reach equilibrium.

Splitting

Splitting is the method or process of dividing (or splitting) feelings in order to cope with internal conflicts and anxieties. In psychoanalytic theory, splitting is a primitive defence mechanism, in which objects or persons are perceived as "all good" or "all bad" instead of as a combination, due to one's intolerance of ambiguity. The fact that it is a "primitive" defence mechanism illustrates that it begins to function in very early infancy. Splitting thus involves the inability to incorporate conflicting behaviours or characteristics of the same object into a coherent picture. For example, the infant observes that their mother has good qualities and bad, sometimes mother is kind and caring and sometimes she is upset and cold. The infant is incapable of understanding the complexities of her personality. As an alternative, the infant creates two constructs or entities, namely the "Good Mother" and the "Bad Mother". Through splitting, we divide or split our intra-psychic reality (one's unconscious) and external reality (daily context) into good and bad. The inherent need to split into good or bad provides an

opportunity to get rid of the bad, by dumping into another person or group, with the purpose of maintaining the good within oneself.

Projection

Projection is a Freudian defence mechanism. It involves ascribing your own negative aspects onto others, in a mind-set of prejudice, rejection and the externalisation of a negative aspect of one-self. We all have an image or idea of how we "should be". However, sometimes we feel emotions, experience desires or have personal qualities which do not fit with this flawless concept. Projection is when we assign to others these unacceptable, unsettling, and ill-fitting feelings and traits that we have. This way we reject these conflicting feelings and secure the right to criticise and punish others for having or displaying them. Unacceptable feeling(s) can be dumped onto others or groups, thus enhances a person's attitudes, beliefs and values about a different person or group, and therefore enhancing stereotypes. Introjection and projection are used simultaneously across the process of splitting. To illustrate, take Sarah and Jane and how they compare body types and weight. If Jane feels unhappy about her body image and simply sees Sarah, she might think to herself, "It looks like Sarah has gained a lot of weight." If Sarah has not in fact gained weight, we can assume that Jane is projecting her own sense of unattractiveness onto Sarah. This is the process of projection.

Projective identification

Projective identification follows the concept of projection and has an effect on the behaviour of the person you have just applied projection to. It describes an unconscious interaction between people wherein the individual splits off and places (projects) part of his/her unacceptable feelings, thoughts or desires into another person or group, the receiver. It is a psychological tool that allows us to get power over these undesirable and unbearable impulses and aspects. The recipient is influenced by the projection in such a way that he/she begins to behave as though he/she is in fact really described by the projected thoughts or beliefs. The projector disposes of the anxiety-causing feeling into the recipient, while also attempting to control the recipient to the extent that the recipient responds and behaves in agreement with the projection. To illustrate this, refer back to Sarah and Jane. The identification part occurs whilst Jane and Sarah interacts. The interaction takes place when Jane walks up to Sarah and greets her and then says to her "You look like you've put on weight." This remark could make Sarah feel hurt, angry and/or embarrassed. Sarah has thus become identified with Jane's

projection of her uncomfortable feelings about her own body. Sarah's upset feelings occurred due to the interaction with Jane, even though Sarah has nothing to feel unhappy about in the first place. Once at home again, Sarah will stare in the mirror, worrying about the way she looks and might even be anxious to start exercising again. This shows that the way Jane saw herself affected the way she saw Sarah and also changed Sarah's behaviour.

Introjection

Introjection is a Freudian defence mechanism. It involves assigning positive aspects to oneself, while refusing to deal with negative aspects or traits within oneself and thus getting rid of the negative aspects of oneself. Introjection thus involves absorbing into oneself preferred standards, characteristics and values of another person. This results in feelings of competence and self-admiration, while the other person becomes degraded and vessel for the incompetent, negative or rejected characteristics. Introjection leads to an increasing bias about oneself. According to Freud, we adopt the values and beliefs of our parents and culture, therefore making it a part of our own psyche and self-identity. Introjection and projection are used simultaneously across the process of splitting.

Introjective identification

Introjective identification follows the concept of introjection and has an effect on your own behaviour. It describes an unconscious interaction between people wherein the individual seems to associate with a feeling that was placed (projected) onto him- or herself, the receiver. The recipient of the projection can then decide to absorb or introject the projection. The introjection part is where the recipient or 'host-personality' incorporates attractive characteristics or aspects of a person they admire into one's own personality. The identification phase is where the individual unconsciously identifies with the introjected feelings and takes these new or "alien" aspects as his or her own and act accordingly. Therefore the individual's conduct is not entirely the individual's own, but from the introjected characteristic of the projection. An example is where Freud describes the Christian Communion as introjective identification. Christians symbolically takes Christ's flesh and blood, the breaking and eating of bread and drinking of wine during Holy communion, in order to introject and approximating Christ.

Question 2:

- 1) (a) About 95% for hard work. I had to do a lot of research on additional information and spend a large amount of time reading: on the internet, research articles and other textbooks on Freudian defence mechanism, psychodynamic and other psychology related articles. About 75% for writing, as I think I can still improve on my academic writing.
(b) Difficult to tell, but I would say I found Question 1.2 was the easiest.
(c) I would have to say my writing abilities (written assignments), as English is not my first language, but I am also not a good writer.
- 2) Yes and no. The Study guide is short and to the point, a very good summary. I did however find some of the writing very difficult to follow or understand the exact concept, especially the defence mechanisms. I would not mind a prescribed book with more background information on some of the work.
- 3) Yes, Google (<http://www.flashcardmachine.com/defense-mechanisms.html>;
<http://samvak.tripod.com/personalitydisorders21.html>;
<http://www.coldbacon.com/defenses.html>; <http://guiltedgirls.tripod.com/id9.html>) , Unisa Library and other psychological related textbooks from previous IOP modules (Psychology in the work context, Ziel, C Berg, 4th edition)
- 4) About 3 full days, mainly gathering and reading additional information and struggling with my writing.
- 5) I would say some more than others. It gives a solid background yes, but I am not yet familiar enough with Industrial and Organisational Psychology to give a more precise answer.
- 6) The study guide, additional resources (mentioned in question 3) and my English writing skills.
- 7) With completion of this assignment, I received more insight on the topic of workforce diversity. Although I am not yet a practicing HR practitioner or manager, it definitely opened my eyes to treating each person as a unique individual.
- 8) Yes, to add to question 7 (above), I now know why each person differs in their actions, perceptions and the way they do things.
- 9) Difficult to say, at this stage my main focus for this subject was unit 3 to complete assignment. This question one can answer more in detail at the end of the semester.
- 10) The study guides info is very compressed and I would like a prescribed book that elaborates more about the theory or give a good background.

11) Yes.

12) I was unable to ask for the lectures for help, as our Tutorial letter 101 does not contain any contact details on our lectures and according to the discussion forum on My Unisa, we will not be able to contact our lectures that way either.

Self-assessment: Critical cross-field outcomes (CCFOs)

Study the critical outcomes below and then rate yourself (in your role as an aspiring Industrial Psychologist or Human Resource practitioner), in terms of your ability to demonstrate these behaviours. Use the scale provided below:

Score	Performance level
1.	Outstanding performance
2.	Standard performance
3.	Unacceptable performance

*** Grey blocks indicate my, Annemie Wessels, answers.**

Identify and solve problems in which responses display that responsible decisions using critical and creative thinking have been made (e.g. insight, problem-solving)	1	2	3
Work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation (e.g. liaising with staff members to get info)	1	2	3
Organize and manage oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively (e.g. punctuality, working independently, planning)	1	2	3
Collect, analyse and critically evaluate information (e.g. obtaining the relevant information needed, displaying the ability to analyse info and be critical to suggest improvement)	1	2	3
Communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in oral and written persuasion (e.g. writing skills, communicating verbally, doing presentations)	1	2	3
Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility toward the environment and health of others (e.g. adopting a professional and scientific approach to industrial psychological practices, safety awareness, use of technology such as computers or technical equipment)	1	2	3
Explore various learning and development strategies, apply the most appropriate one and evaluate the effectiveness of the learning and development strategy applied (e.g. continued professional development strategies)	1	2	3
Demonstrate acceptable employment seeking skills for entry in the field of Industrial Psychology/human resources, using all of the theoretical principles and reflecting on the effectiveness of such applications	1	2	3
Apply your occupational expertise/competence along with world class practices in the area of Workgroup dynamics and diversity within the organisation and local community, showing understanding and sensitivity for diversity	1	2	3