DISCOVERING THE DEFIANCE: EXPLORING THE ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN CREATING GENDER DIVERSITY AT THE TEAM LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to explore the perceptual issues and challenges of a gender diversified team to work effectively. With the qualitative phenomenology approach, the lived experiences of the participants were recorded with interviews, and the responses were analyzed with the technique of initial and axial coding. Thematic analysis was performed to explore the issues and challenges. It was investigated that males and females have different issues in the diversified team. Males think that since women are emotional, lack professionalism so it's difficult to create effectiveness, however, females believe, that males have too much negative ego, and they are hot-tempered, therefore they create troubles. The challenges are lack of trust, frequent conflict, and adherence to fellowship. The study helps managers to train the diversified teams on these findings to make them more effective.

Keywords: Gender Diversity, Effectiveness, Organizational Psychology, Team Issues

1.   INTRODUCTION

Gender diversity was least preferred in the dark ages and widely discussed and implemented in modern ages, this progress and direction define the positivity of this phenomenon. However, the very same statement defines the controversy of the phenomena as well. Merits of gender diversity are profound in organizational setup, but there are several issues as well, and in this regard, the working of the team is no exception. In teams, usually, different diversity is preferred, most of which is gender diversity. Since diversity has benefits but issues as well, therefore, the team with gender diversity, with all its fruits, has problems as well. This research attempts to explore the issues faced by males and females in gender-diverse teams and subsequent challenges.

Diversity can be intellectualized as the distribution of differences among the team members with admiration for a common quality. (Kearney et al., 2009). The diversity of team members will regulate how the team will practice information (Kristina et al., 2005). Gender diversity is applicable from a strategy point of view. It is a law for organizations to have more females on top management and enable women to achieve top positions. The performance of women in different capacities is helping women to mitigate the gender gap in employment. The diversity at the team level has remained pivotal to understand because the team concept is widely getting efficient in every field of business.

The world witnessed growing support of women on corporate boards, political commissions, and different teams. Women as part of a team make the group more creative and innovative, and for more on top management to make high-level decisions, women in the team reduce the gender gap of achievements and in high responsibilities (Azmat, 2014). However, all the positive aspects of diversity apart, gender diversity may produce negative behavior such as decreased communication, stereotype-based role expectations a lack of cohesion and cooperation, and increased conflict among employees (Ali et al., 2011). Diversity and inclusion as fields of academic study are vast, spanning such disciplines as management, sociology, and psychology. Consistent with the call by commentators in the field, we aim to explore issues and challenges faced by employees working in gender diverse teams in Workplace. Among the hindrances in the progress of the organization and creating a work environment are the issue and challenges of gender diversification at the team level. There are multiple demands of work and family on men and women, and the role of flexible work practices for reducing the gap between men and women (Joshi et al., 2015) "This research aims to identify the issues and challenges of the diversified team working at the team level in organizations in Pakistan"

Gender plays a pivotal role in multiple dimensions. Research shows that the effects of different organizational treatments differ based on gender, for example, job satisfaction (Bellou, 2010), organizational commitment (Dappa et al., 2019), career adaptability (Coetzee & Harry, 2015), workplace bullying or harassment (Leigh et al., 2014) and

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psychological empowerment (Boudrias et al., 2004). With the same respect, it is believed that teams with less gender diversity and teams with more gender diversity work differently and in different productive manners. It is pertinent to explore the segregated issues in such teams since males and females face different issues and in gender diverse teams, and consequently, what challenges such team face, as a team, must be explored.

1.1 Research Questions

RQ_1 What are the issues faced by males in gender-diverse teams?
RQ_2 What are the issues faced by females in gender-diverse teams?
RQ_3 What are the challenges gender diverse teams face?

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Gender diversity

Diversity can be intellectualized as the circulation of contrast among colleagues with reflective respect to a mutual quality (Kearney et al., 2009). Followers of diversity keep that changed thoughts from the diverse group make for better-quality decisions, with opinions from diminished groups supposed to inspire reflection of non-obvious changes (Perryman et al., 2016). In divrsity of team members, the educational background will regulate how the team will practice information (Kristina et al., 2005), similarly, the existence of diverse perceptions may also rally the team's capability to reflect on other clarifications and produce an inspired solution that mix diverse perceptions (Jackson & Joshi, 2004). Gender diversity in management and a company development orientation impacts company performance through their collaboration effect (Dwyer et al., 2003).

2.2 Gender, Education, and Experience at group level

Groups with more noteworthy instructive assorted variety (training, knowledge) speak to their groups that they are complementary fit (Harrison & Klein, 2007; Seong et al., 2015). Board diversified team in every organization plays important functions like diversifying teams, which can make better decisions (Ali et al., 2013; Jhunjhunwala & Mishra, 2012). The contribution of women in teamwork may influence the lower level of female workers similarly the young employees may inspire the newcomers (Ali et al., 2013; Kurtulus & Tomaskovic-Devey, 2012). Working with highly educated & experienced people may influence the group and bring innovativeness (Curşeu et al., 2007).

2.3 Diversification and Innovation

Firm innovation is the mediating variable between gender diversification and firm performance, gender diversity at a team level provides the broader search space and new knowledge and there is a positive relationship between diversity (age, education) and firm's innovativeness (Torchia et al., 2018). Communication and interaction, with employees, bring innovativeness in firms, and the use of technology increases the firm's performance (Østergaard et al., 2011). Usually, the young employees, familiar with technology, can be a good source for bringing innovation (Ali et al., 2013; Jhunjhunwala & Mishra, 2012), but the extreme level of diversity may cause a negative impact and decreases the innovation (Østergaard et al., 2011).

2.4 Variety, separation, and disparity impacts on Diversity

Employee diversity is defined as the perspective of the individual (Østergaard et al., 2011), this gets us to the impact of variety (knowledge and experience individuals have) separation (opinions, attitudes), and disparity (having assets and resources) on diversity. Generally, diverse groups have high cognitive complexity because of variety, and it has a positive impact as well because usually, groups have a different pool of knowledge to handle the problem. Variety usually influences the effectiveness of the group. The people who have much knowledge and others haven't so they persuade the people. Similarly, the disparity hurts group diversity (Curşeu et al., 2007).

2.5 Diversification and culture

Cultural diversity influences teams in the way that people enjoy working with similar beliefs and values second people socially categorize themselves in specific groups and others as outsiders and do favoritism, the high the cultural diversity the more creative team gets. Personal conflicts may decrease the performance of firm especially cultural conflicts are more difficult to resolve, and cultural diversity does create conflicts. A team with members of similar separation (beliefs, values) has communicated more with each other and satisfied, and smoother in work and this will result in less outcome/ performance (Stahl et al., 2010).

2.6 Performance

Checking the performance of gender diversified teams is an important dimension. While the research shows a positive impact on the productivity of gender diversified teams due to the difference of thoughts and creative ideas from gender diversified members (Brewer & Kramer, 1985; Schneid et al., 2015). Research shows gender diversified teams produce more productive work than same-gender teams. Gender diversified teams make more quality decisions by considering more unique alternatives and judge views differently (McLeod & Lobel, 1992; Perryman et al., 2016). For ten years the research also identifies the impact of gender diversified teams on productivity, positive as well as negative too (Wright et al., 1995). However, an organization with an adhocracy culture setting hurts gender diversified

teams because they have individuality, a competitive environment, and employee empowerment (Marinova et al., 2016).

2.7   Gender diversity at team level issues and challenges

In various groups, When the circumstance primes negative generalizations against statistic gatherings, these classification-based procedures are probably going to impact associations. In workplaces, where generalizations are less noticeable, individuating data concerning demographically unique people is probably going to be subjectively satisfactory and result in additional positive collaborations (Joshi & Roh, 2009). Gender diversity may deliver negative conduct, for example, diminished correspondence, generalization-based job desires an absence of attachment and collaboration, and expanded clash among representatives (Ali et al., 2011). One of a kind problem looked at by ladies particularly, the difficulties of pregnancy for business-related results (Joshi et al., 2015). There are various requests for work and family on men and women, and the job of adaptable work enhances in closing the gap among men and women (Joshi et al., 2015).

Research is replete with studies that strengthen the notion that diversified teams are more productive, and gender diversity plays a positive role. However, it is also researched fact that gender diversity creates conflicts and sometimes hinders the performance of teams. Previous research has conclusively found out the positive aspects of gender diversity, and negative effects as well. This research strives to explore the segregated issues faced by men and women and their comparison. This study also finds out the combined challenges of gender diversified teams that result from the issues.

**3.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

3.1   Research Design

Since the study aimed to explore the issues and challenges from multiple perspectives, it needed a subjectivity approach and therefore it adopted a qualitative research technique. The issues and challenges were understood from the lived experiences of participants, and therefore phenomenology approach has been used. 17 Interviews have been taken from women at the higher cadre to identify the issues faced by them. Then 11 interviews have been conducted from diversified teams to discover the challenges that defy the diversity in the teams. The data was properly recorded and transcribed after interviews, and with initial and axial coding, the categories were formed to narrow down the analysis. Thematic analysis was performed to find out themes and their relations.

4.   FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After the interviews, and coding, and thematic analysis, the following findings were combined with discussion to understand the answers to the research questions of this study, the findings have been summarized in figure 1.

Figure 1: Findings
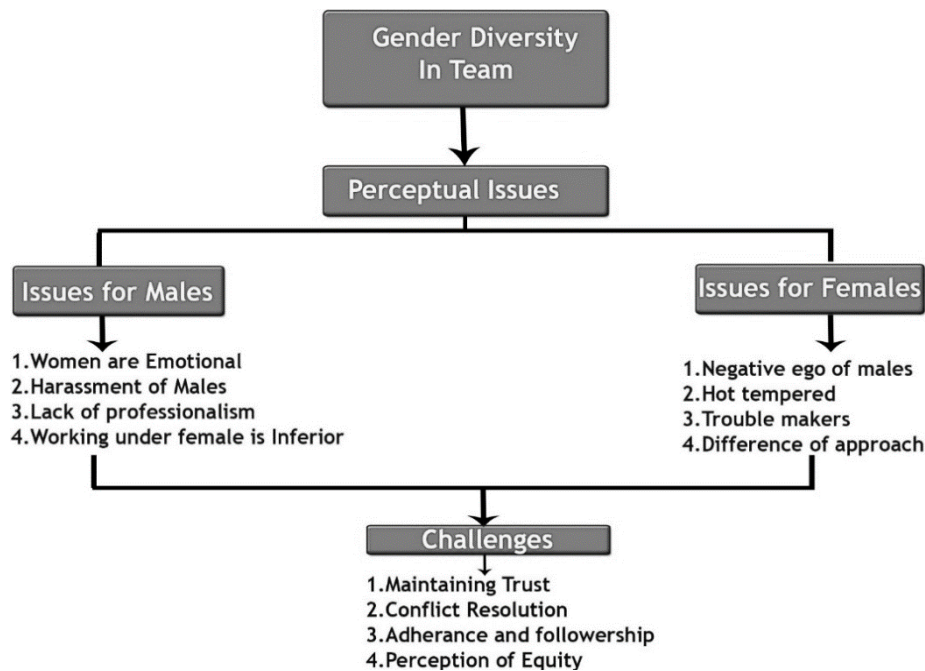
4.1   Issues for Male
a. Women are emotional
There are some reasons women became more emotional at workplaces. And they act suddenly for any response sometimes women lose their temper. Our findings suggest that male team members sometimes think that women are angry and soft-spoken at the same time. Our male participants said that women take things emotionally. When women experience workplace bullying, however the interest in work decreases. Workplace bullying is a term for unwanted behavior, physical or psychological abuse, unsafe, verbal abuse, or sexual behaviors or harassment that abuse power or control in the workplace. The ratio of Women who bullied are more often than men (Macintosh, 2012; Macintosh & Msca, 2005) Because of their unequal power and because the whole workplace is affected (K, 2007) found that women had only two choices to cope up with the workplace after experiencing bullying either stay or leave (Macintosh, 2012)
As our participant said
"It's a fact that everyone gets bullied in the offices, we have to manage it, but, our female colleagues cannot handle that, they become more emotional and then they become rude to not only the one who bullied her but with everyone in the team."
The more the woman experienced harassment the more she report the symptoms of depression, stress, and anxiety and giving them more pressure of work so she will become emotional (Cortina & Leskinen, 2013).
b. Harassment of males
one of the issues that males face in gender diverse teams is harassment, as they believe that women make up their alliance with a certain female or male and then others who are left face harassment.
One of the severe problems employees face at the workplace is harassment. The workplace is where people face aggression, interpersonal problems, coercion, threats, and harassment (Raknes, 1997). Not only women are subjected but males are also victims of harassment. Harassment in sense of teasing, gossips, abuses of words, the pressure of work. 7% of the males reported being subjected to their workplaces like insulting teasing, verbal abuse, rumors, and backbiting heard about themselves by their supervisors and subordinates (Raknes, 1997). Those workers who are subjected to or harassed by superiors or colleagues show the symptoms about great levels of depression, anxiety, and aggression than others (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994; Raknes, 1997). It is revealed that joking and rumors are reflections of people's inferiority. The findings are that males are mostly found the continuous teasing from their subordinates (David, 2015; Raknes, 1997).
As our participant said**;**
"If I am unable to make my belonging or alliance quickly with one or two mates of the team, I usually face many such situations where I am insulted or belittled, especially because of female members"
c. Lack of professionalism
Another issue faced by males in the gender diversified teams is that they think women create problems for them because of their nonprofessional attitude. This may be the stereotypical belief of males, as research shows that employees believe stereotypically that women are less professional (Samo et al., 2018).
As our participant said;
''In Pakistan female staff normally... do not see working as a long-term carrier that you are done with your education you might think about starting to work as you think of start working for 2, 3, 4, 5 years but ultimately they stop working because of marriage and after having baby. And I think this is the main reason they are not that serious in the teamwork, and this creates problem professionally".
d. Working under females is Inferior:
This perceptual problem was replete in the answers of the males, especially when the team leader is a female. They sometimes believe that it is hard for them to get orders with inspiration from their female team leaders.
One of the male participants said;
"I do not believe in gender issues however, we witness that females are made team leaders despite available males who can perform better, in such conditions it is hard to follow instructions from the female team leader."
In all organizations norms and rules are compulsory and it generates gender differences and it is historically described that male in organizations plays a role for breadwinner (Mclaughlin & Uggen, 2012; West & Zimmerman, 1987)
4.2   Issue for Females
a. Negative ego of men
Female team members believe that males take on matters with their ego unnecessarily, probably because of their ego, and that is negative ego. The negative ego of men creates an issue in the diversified team and most especially this issue arises when the team is more diverse.
"… Ok if you do not like anything, but why take petty things on your ego? This is what sometimes males do in the teamwork, and then things start getting worse."

b. Males are hot-tempered
Like the issue of negative issues, women think that their male partners in a team setting are hot-tempered, and they get easily annoyed in different situations, whereas odd things happen in the work. One of the participants said;
"It is not like only males are hot-tempered, women are also hot-tempered, but if you just compare both, especially in teamwork, males are more hot-tempered, and this becomes an issue for females like me, who can work in a toxic environment where people get annoyed all the time"
Hot-tempered male as a manager or a leader of the team creates issues when male get a red face and start yelling at females, it scares women and maybe because of that productivity increased at work but not every time it's not good to lose temper as a good manager or a leader he should know how to control emotions because females are too soft of nature, they cannot bear males hanger and to be successful it is important to use emotions intelligently.
c. Troublemakers
It becomes an issue for women in teams when males create problems, are unnecessarily develop situations that distract the team from the main objectives. They believe that males usually instigate team members to indulge in unnecessary debates and other such things where time is wasted, and problems occur. One of the female participants said.
"When we have clear objectives, there is no need to drag to the issues which are the least concern to the team, but since male members of the team usually get pleasure in diverse discussions, and unnecessary distractions, they instigate all to do it, this creates the problem, and males are troublemakers"
d. *Difference of approach*
Gender diversified teams are productive because of multiple thoughts and approaches, however, female team members think that too much difference in the approach to handle situations creates issues for them. They believe that usually, males have approaches that are not an only idea but not feasible and that are not realistic, so when males are countered with simple approaches, it's hard for them to shift the approach from ideal to realistic (Perryman et al., 2016).

4.3 Challenges for Male and Female in Gender diverse team

a. *Maintaining Trust*
Because of several issues that arise in gender diversified teams, the first challenge for members is to maintain the trust among the group members. Lack of trust procrastinates matters and lessens the passion in work. One male participant said;
"Obviously when we think that female team leader is short of merit or competence, it is hard to trust her decisions"
And female participants said;
"It becomes hard to fully discuss the matters because male members get it to their ego and therefore it is hard to trust their mood or sense of understanding"
b. *Conflict Resolution*
Since conflicts are very normal in any team, but when the team members have gender-related issues, and amidst that, if a conflict occurs, it is very difficult to resolve the conflict and move on. Both males and females believe that they avoid indulging in conflict because they know that conflicts would get the matters to the worst situation because of no timely resolution.
c. *Gender Equity Perception*
Gender Equity perception is a big challenge among both the genders, females ask for their rights in the organization that few of the organizations pay low to females as compared to males, and males complain that females are getting higher pay, as compared to males, both ask for the equality, such discussions hamper the progress of the work in the teams. One of the participants said;
"We recommend that team members should start discussing gender-related issues, or gender equality debate since such ideological differences ultimately hinders the team to progress for the main objectives"
d. *Adherence of Followership*
Followership is one of the biggest challenges of gender diversified teams. Females face issues when the males are leading who are annoyed very easily, or females are leading who are biased towards females. Whereas males face issues when the females are leading who were selected because of their merit. So, amidst all these different situations, it is problematic for team members to follow their team leaders. Therefore, it's a challenge for them to adhere.

5. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was conducted to explore the issues faced by males and females and their challenges in gender-diverse teams. The data was collected with interviews and analyzed with qualitative coding techniques and results were made with thematic analyses. It was found that males and females face different issues, for example, males think that women are less professional, emotional, and females think that males have a negative ego, and they are hot-tempered. The gender-diverse teams face challenges of lack of trust, adherence of followership, gender equity perception, and conflicts.

There are several limitations of this study that pave the way for future research. First, this study only conducted interviews with middle managers, and therefore future research should be conducted from to management gender diverse teams to compare the results. Second, focused group discussions are needed where both, males and females sit together and discuss these views in front of each other to get more rich analyses. Third, quantity research is needed to test the issues with several other impacts in an organizational setup.

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