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Diversity in the Workplace: A Review, Synthesis, and Future Research Agenda

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Abstract

Fueled by socioeconomic trends that changed the composition of organizational workforces, the term workforce diversity was coined in the 1990s. Since then, both researchers and practitioners have strived (and struggled) to understand the concept, its effects in and on organizations, and strategies for managing such effects. In this article, I provide an overview and interpretation of the current literature to examine its purpose, progress, and direction. Highlighting key conceptualizations of the construct, theoretical foundations, and empirical findings on diversity and diversity management, I discuss the evolution and current state of the field and synthesize this information to propose a future research agenda. In doing so, I seek to identify theoretical, empirical, and practice areas of opportunity for advancing scientific knowledge about the meaning, substance, and outcomes of diversity as well as the implementation of diversity science in organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Fueled by socioeconomic trends that changed the number and types of people who compose organizational workforces, the term workforce diversity was coined in the 1990s. Used to describe the differences that exist between people at work, labor statistics and other data show that workforces have been, and continue to become, more heterogeneous (Mor Barak & Travis 2013). For example, advances in human, women's, and civil rights over several decades have spurred greater labor force participation by members of historically underrepresented groups, and the need to manage workforces characterized by a multitude of identities, backgrounds, and experiences has simultaneously increased. At the same time, developments in economic policy and technology have reduced trade barriers and increased the interconnectedness of global markets. As such, the free flow of goods and services, information, and resources—including human resources—across geographic boundaries has become commonplace, thereby enhancing the need for organizations to understand and contend with added complexities due to variability in cultural norms, values, and language. Other trends, such as inconsistencies in population growth through different regions of the world and the aging of the workforce, further compound the aforementioned challenges and heighten the need for organizations to effectively manage workforce diversity.

To address this need and keep pace with the changing business environment, researchers have given attention to the study of diversity in organizations, including its conceptualizations, measures, effects, and contexts. However, as such work has been conducted within numerous fields (e.g., psychological, sociology, law, economics, social work, public policy, education, marketing, nursing, industrial relations, etc.), the synthesis of research and findings across these literatures presents quite a challenge. The review primarily focuses on theory and research in fields of industrial and organizational psychology, human resource management, and organizational behavior, and offers a fairly comprehensive survey of the literature given that a considerable amount of the foundational work on diversity as well as conceptual and empirical progress has been made within these fields. Of course, because the integration of out-of-field research may inform the interpretation of the literature reviewed here, I make some references to complementary theory and findings from other disciplines. However, as you will see from this critical analysis of the present state of the diversity literature through an organizational psychology and organizational behavior lens, we have really only just begun to understand diversity and diversity management as a science.

The first step in studying a phenomenon is to understand what it is; this review first explores conceptualizations of diversity. I then discuss the varied (and somewhat conflicting) theoretical approaches to interpreting the effects of diversity in and on organizations, and for understanding the mechanisms through which differences among people influence their attitudes and behavior. This conceptual discussion also provides a foundation for reviewing the findings of research on the outcomes of diversity at the individual, group, and organizational levels of analysis as well as research examining the efficacy of practices for managing diversity. Using this review to decipher and critique the burgeoning literature on diversity in organizations, I offer a future research agenda that highlights theoretical, empirical, and practice areas of opportunity for advancing scientific knowledge about the meaning, import, and outcomes of diversity as well as the implementation of diversity science in organizations.

CONCEPTUALIZATIONS: WHAT IS DIVERSITY?

Diversity refers to any compositional differences among people within a work unit (Roberson et al. 2017a,b). As such difference may lead them to perceive that others are similar to, or

different from, themselves, several conceptualizations have emerged within psychology and organizational behavior. Factor or categorical approaches consider diversity to be a personal attribute of individuals (Mannix & Neale 2005, Tsui & Gutek 1999), which form the basis for identity distinctions within groups. However, given the immeasurable number of attributes on which people may differ, researchers utilizing this approach have offered bifurcated typologies of differences. For example, one typology differentiates between diversity attributes based on the degree to which they are observable or readily detected (Jackson et al. 1995). More observable characteristics, such as gender, race, and age, are included in one category, while less observable differences, such as education, organizational tenure, and functional background, are subsumed in another. In effect, the former category is assumed to be primarily composed of inborn or natural characteristics, whereas the latter consists of acquired or developed attributes. Although not exacting, this two-category classification of attributes is considered to be useful for capturing both the perceptibility of differences and subsequent categorization responses evoked from others (Milliken & Martins 1996). Another classification distinguishes between attributes based on their job-relatedness or degree to which they capture informational resources relevant to task performance (Pelled 1996). Consistent with the information processing perspective of diversity (Williams & O'Reilly 1998), differences that embody varied cognitive resources and experiences relevant to work tasks, such as education or functional background, are considered to be job-related and therefore influential to group performance (Simons et al. 1999). In contrast, differences not categorized as such, which are often demographic attributes, are seen as less relevant to the elaboration of knowledge and perspectives in groups and more relevant to the categorization processes that impact intergroup relations and attitudes (Pelled et al. 1999). Finally, in an integration and refinement of the aforementioned two-factor approaches, Harrison et al. (1998, 2002) distinguished between surface-level diversity—innate differences among people that are reflected in their physical features and/or easily assessed—and deep-level diversity—acquired attributes that are task-relevant and not simply measured. With a focus on group functioning, they speculated and found evidence of the influence of deep-level characteristics, which are more reflective of member beliefs and attitudes and thus subject to change, on social integration as compared to that of more immutable or surface-level characteristics (Harrison et al. 1998, 2002).

Proportional approaches consider diversity to be a structural property of groups or other collectives. Rooted in sociological traditions, such work assumes that the numerical composition of different social groups has important consequences for individuals and groups (Blau 1977, Kanter 1977, Pfeffer 1983). Early research drawing from a more relational perspective on groups proposed that the proportional representation of certain characteristics, such as gender or race, will activate majority versus minority categorizations and, thus, the social experiences of individuals in each category (Blau 1977, Kanter 1977). Other research using a more compositional perspective argued that the distributional properties of groups influence social interactions between members of demographically dissimilar groups, and consequently group-level processes and outcomes (Pfeffer 1983). These perspectives have been represented in the organizational psychology and behavior literatures as demography research, which examines relative differences, or the distribution of differences within a work unit, and their effects on outcomes across levels of analysis (see Williams & O'Reilly 1998). More recently, however, researchers have offered a refinement to such proportional perspectives given inconsistencies in the cumulative findings of research on group diversity effects. Harrison & Klein (2007) reconcile the assumptions made by researchers when studying diversity and offer a typology of the distribution of differences within a group based on its meaning, underlying theoretical foundations, properties, and outcomes. Specifically, they propose the following fundamental diversity types: (*a*) separation diversity, which illustrates differences

in values, beliefs, and attitudes, and signals perceptual disagreement between unit members; (*b*) variety diversity, or differences in the knowledge, networks, and experiences of unit members, which are reflective of unique or distinctive sources of information within the unit; and (*c*) disparity, or differences in access to, or ownership of, valued resources such as privilege, status positions, and pay. Importantly, since its introduction, numerous studies have relied on, and found integrative effects using, this typology (see Roberson et al. 2017b).

Although categorical and proportional approaches to diversity have provided insight into effects of social divisions or relative differences in groups, such single-attribute approaches ignore opportunities for exploring interactions between attributes. Accordingly, researchers have proposed multidimensional conceptualizations of diversity that reconcile categorical and proportional approaches and consider the alignment of personal attributes. Lau & Murnighan (1998) developed a theory of demographic faultlines, which are presumed lines of demarcation based on group members' demographic attributes that divide a group into smaller identity subgroups. Faultline strength is determined by the extent to which the subgroups are homogeneous, or on the number of observable attributes and the relationship between these attributes (Lau & Murnighan 1998). Put differently, more and highly correlated attributes are expected to result in group members identifying more strongly with their subgroups, as they are likely to perceive greater similarity to those with whom they share demographic characteristics. Research has found demographic faultlines to affect group processes and outcomes beyond the influences of demographic diversity alone (Bezrukova et al. 2007, Lau & Murnighan 2005). However, even though the faultline concept was developed with a concentration on the alignment of social categories, some researchers have also begun exploring, and found effects of, faultlines derived from other characteristics, such as personality and job-related attributes, as well (see Thatcher 2013).

Although the complexities of cultural identity may be depicted by the concept of faultlines, researchers have proposed a gestalt conceptualization of culture that accounts for the global and localized cultural influence that shape behavior. Accounting for the embeddedness of values in social identity and value systems that differentiate groups of people, Chao & Moon (2005) suggest a model for examining multiple cultural identities at different levels of analysis. They propose a composite that incorporates geographic, demographic, and associative features of culture that represent natural features of a region, physical characteristics and or group affiliations, respectively, and influence shape interactions between individuals. Accordingly, this so-called cultural mosaic (Chao & Moon 2005) perspective offers another conceptualization of diversity to capture the complexity and dynamism of multiple cultural identities in different configurations, and the effects on individuals, groups, and organizations.

Advancements in the conceptualization of diversity has resulted in several typologies to describe the varied forms that difference between people may take. Representing social categories to which individuals may belong as well as potential interactions between such memberships, current conceptualizations of diversity provide some insight into antecedents to diversity-related processes. At the same time, however, a critical analysis of the literature highlights an overarching focus on a relatively small subset of differences considering all of the social categorizations that constitute individuals' identities, particularly those that might influence work processes. In addition, most studies (including those utilizing multi-attribute conceptualizations of diversity) primarily concentrate on the confluence of objective attributes that are used as proxies for more deep-level differences. Thus, broadening our conceptualizations of diversity may both enhance the explanatory power of the construct and increase its generalizability across contexts.

FOUNDATIONS: HOW DOES DIVERSITY OPERATE?

Diversity research has historically been grounded in social-psychological theories of intergroup relations, which articulate the formation and functionality of social stereotypes. Specifically, it derives from research on category prototypes for natural objects (Rosch 1977, 1978) and in person perception (Cantor & Mischel 1979), which describes how salient or uncommon characteristics become a heuristic for categorizing people into groups and developing attitudes about such groups (Rosch 1977, 1978). Drawing from this work, social identity theory (Tajfel 1978) and social categorization theories articulate similar cognitive processes through which people make sense of their social environments. Extending this work, however, these theories also formulate the processes through which individuals situate themselves within social environments and relate to others via their group memberships.

Social identity theory (Tajfel 1978) posits that because individuals' definitions of self are shaped by their group memberships, they are motivated to enhance their self-concept by seeking a positively valued distinctiveness for those groups. Accordingly, they engage in social comparisons to differentiate between the groups to which they belong (i.e., ingroups) and the groups to which they do not belong (i.e., outgroups), which effectively serves to emphasize similarities within group memberships as well as differences between groups. Self-categorization theory (Turner 1985, 1987) proposes that as these social categories become salient, there is a qualitative shift in individuals' cognitive structures such that they begin to depersonalize their identities and view themselves (and others) more as representatives of social categories than as unique persons. Accordingly, intergroup differentiation becomes more pronounced as convergence with ingroup members and divergence from outgroup members are amplified, which sustains individuals' own self-esteem (Turner 1987). Such differentiation also motivates people to develop higher levels of trust for, and affective reactions to, members of their ingroups, which become manifested as a differential regard, or even bias, for individuals with whom they share group membership as opposed to those in other social categories (Tajfel & Turner 1986, Turner et al. 1987). Accordingly, social identity and categorization theories together offer insight into some of the cognitive and motivational processes underlying intergroup relations.

The similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne 1971, Berscheid & Walster 1978) offers a related conceptual explanation for diversity processes, as it posits that people are attracted to, and have an inclination to seek interactions with, those they perceive as similar. Although such perceived similarity may be based on a range of factors, including demographic characteristics, values, and attitudes (Berscheid 1985), the resultant attraction is likely to engender distinctions between ingroups and outgroups and to influence social interactions between groups. Thus, the similarity-attraction paradigm provides further understanding of the continuance of social categorization in diverse settings and their ensuing effects on individual and group behavior.

In contrast to social-psychological theories of diversity that view differences as social distinctions that encumber intergroup relations, research has also approached the study of diversity through a more constructive lens. Termed the value-in-diversity hypothesis (Cox & Blake 1991), this perspective establishes that categorical dissimilarity also engenders differences in knowledge, skills, and experiences, which exposes the group to a broader range of viewpoints and opinions. With access to a larger and varied pool of informational resources, it is assumed that heterogeneous groups are more likely to generate better quality solutions to problems. Also referred to as the information processing perspective on diversity (Williams & O'Reilly 1998), research provides evidence of such performance advantages, or value, derived from more heterogeneous groups (see Milliken & Martins 1996, Williams & O'Reilly 1998).

Given divergent conclusions from what researchers have considered to be the pessimistic versus optimistic view of diversity (Mannix & Neale 2005), researchers have attempted to integrate and reconcile the influences of social identity and categorization with those of information processing in diverse groups. Specifically, the categorization-elaboration model (CEM; van Knippenberg et al. 2004) articulates how intergroup biases stemming from social categorization processes may disrupt the informational exchange processes that are critical to realizing the value in diversity. Although one may conclude that the prevention of such biases is therefore paramount to experiencing the performance advantages of diversity, the authors note that doing so is not sufficient for activating the elaboration of knowledge and perspectives derived from diversity. Instead, facilitating individual- and group-level processing of information and the exchange and integration of perspectives and cognitive resources within the group, or information elaboration, are vital for improving innovation, decision quality, and other positive effects of diversity on group performance.

Overall, researchers have drawn on a variety of theoretical perspectives to understand diversity and its effects in organizations. However, much of the research has largely taken place within disconnected research traditions. Although diversity as a topic is rooted within an amalgam of disciplines, particularly psychology and sociology, distinct studies tend to be situated within a specific area (which, I acknowledge, is also the case for this review). Considering the relatively slow development of diversity theory, especially as compared to the evolution of practice in organizations (discussed below, in the section titled Practices: How to Manage Diversity?), this confined conceptual perspective limits our understanding of the operation of diversity. Consequently, diversity as a field could benefit from more theoretical development, particularly interdisciplinary work, to better explain how differences between people relate to attitudes, behavior, performance, and other outcomes in organizations.

OUTCOMES: WHAT DOES DIVERSITY DO?

Studies of diversity effects in organizations have primarily focused on group-level outcomes, although some research has explored effects on individual consequences. Examining the influence of attributes reflective of both value and informational differences, the findings of such research show dissimilarity to be related to lower attachment to, and personal liking for, outgroup members (see Williams & O'Reilly 1998). Consistent with a relational perspective on diversity, these individual-level results suggest that attribute dissimilarity lowers attraction to, and perceived similarity with, those outside of one's ingroup, which subsequently impacts feelings of group identification (Tsui et al. 1992). This preference for ingroup over outgroup members has also been shown across several individual measures of bias, including trust, prosocial helping, resource allocations, and evaluations of performance (Ferguson & Porter 2013). Resultant intergroup biases stemming from diversity have also been found to affect outgroup members' self-esteem and well-being (Ferguson & Porter 2013, Hebl & King 2013) as well as their work attitudes and behavior (Williams & O'Reilly 1998).

Some diversity research on group-level outcomes has explored effects on group processes. Following the relational perspective of diversity, such research hypothesizes that the social categorization and comparison processes initiated by diversity impacts social integration. However, the results of research have been equivocal, depending on the type of diversity examined (see Jackson et al. 1995, Milliken & Martins 1996). Some research focused on more observable diversity characteristics has found negative influences on process variables, such as cohesion and communication (see O'Reilly et al. 1989, Zenger & Lawrence 1989), whereas research focused on less observable characteristics reveals positive effects on such processes (see Ancona & Caldwell 1992, Smith et al.

1994). To reconcile these outcomes, meta-analytic work has been done to distinguish between the effects of different categories of diversity. However, as the findings of such work fail to show statistically significant differences in group cohesion across diversity types categorized in terms of job-relatedness (Webber & Donahue 2001), researchers began exploring other moderators of the relationship between diversity and group social processes. For example, as demographic faultlines research has shown the convergence of gender and ethnicity within groups to negatively impact group communication (Lau & Murnighan 2005), one conclusion is that relational influences of diversity on social integration occur at the intersection of diversity categories. In other words, consistent with the CEM (van Knippenberg et al. 2004), capturing social categorization processes within groups may be critical for understanding member attachment and interactions. Furthermore, as research provides evidence of the changing impact of diversity on group social processes over time (see Harrison et al. 1998, Watson et al. 1993), a temporal perspective may be important for understanding the effects of diversity on relational, and subsequent elaboration, processes.

Conflict is considered to be a key explanatory variable in the relationship between diversity and group performance (Jehn et al. 2008). Accordingly, researchers have examined the effects of diversity in group members' perceptions of conflict as well as intragroup conflict as an outcome. Distinguishing between types of conflict, including task conflict derived from ideas and perspectives related to the group's work, process conflict derived from logistical concerns in completing the work, and relationship conflict derived from interpersonal and other nonwork issues, such research reveals relationships between diversity, conflict, and group effectiveness (De Dreu & Weingart 2003; Jehn 1995, 1997). For example, differences in member perceptions of the type and amount of conflict in the group, or asymmetric conflict perceptions, have been shown to negatively impact the effectiveness of both individual and group functioning (see Jehn et al. 2010). These findings are similar to those of research examining the effects of social category diversity, which has found that demographic heterogeneity increases all three types of conflict in groups (see Jehn & Greer 2013). Consistent with the relational view of diversity, social identity and categorization processes are expected to reduce attraction to group members, thereby resulting in relationship conflict. However, social category diversity is also presumed to generate diversity of thought, which may influence process and task conflict in groups. The findings of research on functional background diversity and conflict are consistent with this presumption, as such work-related diversity has been shown to increase all three types of conflict as well (see Jehn & Greer 2013). Thus, although an assumption in the literature is that observable diversity is linked to relationship conflict and deeper-level diversity relates to process and task conflict, the combinative results of research in this area suggest that the association is more nuanced. Furthermore, as work on the effects of faultlines has shown both positive and negative effects on group conflict, we can conclude that additional work is needed to understand the complexities of diversity's effects on conflict dynamics in groups.

A collection of reviews provides a comprehensive summary of the literature on diversity and performance (see Jackson et al. 2003, Milliken & Martins 1996, Williams & O'Reilly 1998), although mixed findings highlight the challenges to studying and understanding the true performance effects of diversity. For example, Milliken & Martins (1996) reviewed research on diversity in various organizational groups, such as project teams and top management teams, and theorized the importance of considering diversity effects on short-term, process outcomes for comprehending effects on group performance outcomes. Williams & O'Reilly (1998) reviewed more than 80 organizational demography studies primarily focused on work teams to conclude that the diversity-performance relationship can be generally explained by indirect effects of group process variables, such as communication and conflict. Specifically, they suggest that although diversity may affect performance, that influence may be through a diminished capacity for the group to meet

member needs and function effectively over time. In a more recent review, Jackson et al. (2003) reviewed 63 studies examining outcomes of different types of diversity in management and non-management teams, and highlighted difficulties in identifying distinct patterns of results related to diversity and team effectiveness. As a result, they call for more diversity research employing an input-process-output (I-P-O) approach to understand its performance effects.

Several meta-analytic studies of the diversity-performance relationship also demonstrate the explanatory value of intervening variables. For example, in a test of the direction and form of this relationship, Horwitz & Horwitz (2007) found task-related diversity to be associated with both the quantity and quality of team performance, but no statistically significant effects of demographic attributes. Accordingly, they suggest that the categorization of diversity characteristics is essential to understanding synergistic performance stemming from heterogeneity in teams. Other meta-analytic research integrating effects sizes from studies across diversity types also failed to find statistically significant results based on diversity type and, thus, concluded that results supportive of the performance benefits of heterogeneous teams can likely be attributed to contextual factors, such as task characteristics or time (Bowers et al. 2000, Webber & Donahue 2001). To reconcile these findings, Joshi & Roh (2009) specifically examined the role of contextual factors on the diversity-performance relationship across levels of analysis. Although the results showed performance effects to vary across types—specifically positive versus negative relationships with demographic versus task-related attributes, respectively—the direct effects revealed were small prior to accounting for industry, occupation, and team-level factors. Accordingly, the findings of this study along with those from the previously discussed meta-analyses highlight a need for additional research to incorporate situational influences that facilitate or hinder functional relationships between diversity and performance outcomes.

Although much of the research on the effects of diversity has focused on team-level outcomes, some researchers have explored its influence on organizational performance. However, reviews of the diversity-performance relationship at the firm level demonstrate substantive variability across studies in terms of the focal level of analysis, conceptualization, and operationalization of diversity, indicators of performance, and intervening variables (Joshi et al. 2011, McMahon 2010, Reis et al. 2007). Consequently, similar to the findings of team-level diversity research, scholars highlight difficulties in drawing strong conclusions about the diversity-performance relationships at the firm level and, hence, the need for work that examines the roles of underlying process variables as well as contextual contingencies that may shape this relationship. In answering this call, more recent work has drawn attention to firm capabilities and other mediating processes that may explain how diversity is translated into firm performance as well as environmental, structural, and cultural factors that may offer insight into the circumstances in which diversity will influence firm performance (see Richard & Miller 2013, Roberson et al. 2017b). However, more empirical work is needed to test such propositions and advance an understanding of the net value of diversity on organizations.

PRACTICES: HOW TO MANAGE DIVERSITY?

Stemming from US antidiscrimination initiatives, organizational practices to realize the benefits of diversity, diminish its challenges, and use the talents of all workers in organizations were developed (Dobbin & Kalev 2013). Specifically, practices for creating more diverse workforces, facilitating productive relations between members of diverse groups, and building inclusive work environments have been created. Accordingly, researchers have examined the efficacy of such practices to understand their design and implications, and the conditions under which they are most effective. For example, research on approaches to diversity staffing, or practices to attract and select applicants from underrepresented groups, provides insight into the effects of recruiter

characteristics, recruitment source and messaging, and selection procedures on applicant pools (see Avery et al. 2013). Consistent with the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne 1971, Berscheid & Walster 1978), diversity staffing studies have shown demographic similarities between recruiters and applicants to positively influence applicant attraction and selection decisions (Goldberg 2005). Specifically, minorities were found to be more attracted to organizations with minority representatives, whereas those representatives were found to be more likely to recruit minority applicants. Similarly, research has shown that minority job seekers respond more positively to recruitment messages about diversity, including descriptions of diversity philosophies or diversity management policies, and often seek out such information when making job choice decisions (Avery & McKay 2006, Ng & Burke 2005). Interestingly, however, the findings of such research also reveal nonminority job seekers to be more attracted to organizations that express a value for diversity (Williamson et al. 2008), thus suggesting the effectiveness of this recruitment practice across demographic groups. Although much of this work has focused on gender and race/ethnicity, research exploring the places where organizations employ their recruitment effects provides insight into attraction effects on various minority groups, including older workers, people with disabilities, and/or economically disadvantaged workers. Specifically, research draws attention to the decreased access to applicant populations through the use of certain recruitment sources, such as personal contacts or the internet (Avery et al. 2013). Thus, the usefulness of diversity staffing practices may vary across social categories. Considering that selection research also points to a potential trade-off between selection system validity and employee diversity (see Ployhart & Holtz 2008), more research is needed to explore effects of diversity staffing on job search and choice across applicant groups as well as the concurrent impact on organizational outcomes.

A considerable body of literature has examined diversity training as an intervention for addressing bias, improving diversity attitudes, and facilitating positive intergroup relations in the workplace (Wentling & Palma-Rivas 2000). Focused on training goals, design, and effectiveness, the findings of such work reveal several disconnects between what is prescribed by diversity training research and what is implemented in organizations. For example, although instructional design research highlights the importance of understanding the type of training needed by an organization, its focal trainee audience, and factors that will enhance training effectiveness in that context, research on such needs assessment relative to diversity training has been scant (Roberson et al. 2003). In addition, many organizations tend to introduce diversity training without such organizational, operational, or personal analysis (Hite & McDonald 2006). Furthermore, although training content may focus on cognitive, affective, and/or behavioral outcomes, much of the focus in research and practice has been on diversity awareness training (Hite & McDonald 2006, Kulik & Roberson 2008). Although some practitioners and trainers support the use of tools that raise awareness of personal biases, such as the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald et al. 1998), such self-assessments were not developed for training purposes and, therefore, should be utilized in combination with behavioral learning methods (Pendry et al. 2007). As these and other delivery and design characteristics, such as training context or framing, influence training effectiveness (Roberson et al. 2013), more attention to their direct and indirect influences on training success is needed. Finally, although research has investigated various outcomes and consequences of diversity training, individual studies have primarily relied on a unidimensional measure of effectiveness, which is also often operationalized via trainee attitudes (Kulik & Roberson 2008). Thus, as conclusions that can be drawn about intervention efficacy are limited, there remains a need for more and more comprehensive evaluations of diversity training from both scholarly and practitioner perspectives (see Roberson et al. 2013).

To facilitate integration into organizational networks and equal opportunity for advancement, formal mentoring programs for women and minority employees have become a common form

of career development (Creary & Roberts 2017). Traditionally considered to be a developmental relationship through which a more knowledgeable or experienced individual shares such resources to help with another person's growth and advancement (Kram 1988), research has shown improved attitudes, such as organizational commitment and career satisfaction, and higher outcomes, compensation, and promotion rates, for those who receive such resources from a mentor (Allen et al. 2004). However, the findings for research on mentoring for women and minorities highlight several challenges that reduce the likelihood of such outcomes. For example, following the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne 1971), research shows mentors, who are more likely to be white males given their occupation of both formal and information positions of power in organizations, to be more likely to select other white males rather than females and/or minority employees as protégés (Dreher & Cox 1996). Studies have also highlighted barriers to effective cross-gender and cross-race mentoring, which may limit the career and psychosocial support received by protégés (Blake-Beard et al. 2007). However, as less attention has been given to the associated benefits to mentors as well as to mentor-protégé similarities beyond gender and race, additional research is needed to more fully understand the career and organizational outcomes of mentoring as a diversity practice.

Given employees' roles and responsibilities both inside and outside of work, research has explored processes and practices related to successfully managing such obligations (see Konrad 2013). Focused on the set of activities and experiences occurring at the intersection of one's work role and other life domains (Frone et al. 1992), work-life interface research provides insight into the reciprocal effects across domains. For example, research examining the degree to which work interferes with one's family life (and vice versa), or work-family conflict, has shown effects on individual attitudes, such as job and life satisfaction (Kossek & Ozeki 1998) and health and well-being (Allen et al. 2000). In contrast, studies investigating the enriching transfer of resources and skills from life domains to work roles, or work-life facilitation, have shown positive spillover effects that are manifested as increased attitudes and performance (McNall et al. 2010). Given these outcomes, practitioners have put into place work-life practices to help employees to manage and reduce the potential impact of work-family conflict, and aid work-life facilitation. Research on work-life flexibility practices provides evidence of the positive effects of such practices and managerial support for their usage on employee attitudes, behavior, and health outcomes (see Konrad 2013). Still, as the work and life roles that individuals fulfill are interrelated and dynamic, researchers have highlighted a need for a more systemic perspective to identify and develop organizational structures and cultures to help workers effectively manage the work-life interface.

Although much of the diversity practice research has explored their impact in and on organizations, sociological studies of corporate diversity programs have considered the efficacy of such programs for explaining workforce composition over time and labor market outcomes. Focusing on some of the diversity practices discussed above, the findings of such research tell a different, yet complementary story. For example, a study of diversity training found weak effects on diversity among frontline employees and managers across 830 organizations (Dobbin et al. 2007). Similarly, the results also revealed little aggregate effect on the representation of women and minorities in management for affinity network groups, although mentoring programs demonstrated strong positive effects on the career outcomes of historically advantaged groups. Although some research has explored the subsequent effects of work-family programs and formal human resource management systems on the remediation of workforce inequality in an effort to add to the body of work on diversity management, the associated findings are relatively inconclusive given methodological inconsistencies and the use of cross-sectional data, which make establishing causality difficult (Dobbin & Kalev 2013). Still, as sociological studies reveal the positive impact of initiatives that enhance manager involvement in diversity efforts, such as task forces or programs

that assign responsibility for diversity to managers, researchers have concluded that programs to address managerial bias are largely ineffective, whereas those that increase managerial oversight of, and accountability for, an organization's diversity efforts improve the operation of such efforts (Kalev et al. 2006). However, there is still a need for future inquiry into the compositional effects of a broader range of diversity programs and the enabling role of leader accountability systems.

Beyond programmatic approaches to diversity management, organizational practice and research have more recently begun focusing on the creation and maintenance of social environments that support and leverage diversity, or on building inclusion. Rooted in socio-psychological theories of intergroup relations (Tajfel 1978, Turner 1985), foundational work within the diversity literature theorized inclusion to evolve as individuals make sense of, and locate themselves within, their social environments. For example, in one of its early conceptualizations, Mor Barak & Cherin (1998) proposed that inclusion existed on a continuum based on the degree to which individuals feel involved in critical organizational processes. Mor Barak (2000) refined this idea, describing inclusion as the interchange between an individual's personal characteristics and the workplace environment, which influences the extent to which employees feel welcomed and valued. This refinement is similar to a more recent conceptualization by Shore et al. (2011), who consider inclusion to be the degree to which employees are treated as insiders with unique characteristics and value to the group or organization. Whereas the conceptualization of inclusion is relatively coherent within this growing body of literature, the operationalization of the construct or, more appropriately, the identification of practices to facilitate inclusion in organizations, is more indistinct. For example, Mor Barak & Cherin (1998) highlighted access to information, connectedness to supervisors and coworkers, and an ability to influence decision-making processes as key factors by which employees evaluate their standing in organizations and subsequently generate a sense of belonging. Roberson (2006) similarly identified access and influence as important dimensions of inclusive organizations, although fair treatment and a focus on incorporating diversity into organizational outcomes were also acknowledged as organizational features that may impact employees' feelings of inclusion. Still, more recent work by Nishii (2013) identified employee involvement in decision making and fairly implemented employment practices as key components of climates for inclusion, although interpersonal learning from diverse perspectives was also emphasized. Thus, continued research is needed in this area to understand the compilation of practices that contribute to inclusive work environments. As there is also limited research on the effects of inclusion on individuals and groups, studies to inform the impact of such practices on the experience of inclusion are paramount.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS: WHERE SHOULD DIVERSITY RESEARCH GO?

This review interprets the purpose, progress, and direction of current research in the topic of diversity across the field of industrial and organizational psychology. It also allows some overarching conclusions regarding what we know about the meaning, operation, and outcomes of diversity in the workplace to be drawn. However, as several conceptual and empirical questions remain, this review also identifies important theoretical and empirical areas of opportunity for advancing the field. **Table 1** summarizes these issues and topic areas, and they are discussed in detail below.

Tapping Into the Complexity of Diversity

As illustrated earlier, diversity is more than just a way to classify and study groups of people; it reflects employees' unique experiences within historical, political, and other environmental

Table 1   Future directions for diversity research

Topic area	Examples
Tapping into the complexity of diversity	Expanding the conceptualization of diversity to capture contextual aspects of sociocultural identity (e.g., power, status, membership in hidden social categories, etc.) Developing constructs that capture the multifaceted and/or multilayered nature of intraindividual identity Utilizing temporal or dynamic approaches to account for demographic and/or identity shifts over time
Broader exploration of diversity effects	Examining physiological and psychological reactions to diversity Investigating the effects of diversity on interactional behaviors and patterns within work units Consideration of organizational outcomes beyond the "business case," such as social justice, environmental responsibility, and community development
Understanding the "P" in diversity I-P-O models	Testing multilevel models of diversity Assessing the design, implementation, and outcomes of diversity practices as stand-alone programs or practice bundles Understanding the psychology of diversity through a range of research approaches, such as qualitative methods, induction, or structural analysis
Diversity models that are generalizable across contexts	Conducting international or comparative studies of diversity Researching sociocultural influences on diversity effects and/or culture as a process Studying diversity and performance in nonbusiness contexts Accounting for structural, normative, and relational features of context in diversity research

contexts. Because people categorize themselves and others based on the social environments in which they are located, cues about, and experiences from, such group memberships may change as people move throughout different environments. Accordingly, it is important for researchers to move beyond traditional views of diversity to fully capture the nuances of cultural identity and its subsequent effects. For example, as differences in socially valued resources, such as power and status, may exist within groups and give rise to intragroup competition, future research that accounts for social stratification from identity would be beneficial. Similarly, although invisible or hidden differences are often studied as stigmas in diversity research (see Hebl & King 2013), research to understand how workgroup composition based on such differences influences intergroup relations and functioning would provide a more inclusive perspective on diversity and diversity management as well as insight into the applicability of underlying diversity processes to such social categories. In general, expanding the conceptualization of diversity to absorb both externally and self-imposed identities may enhance measurement and analysis of the construct, thus leading to a richer understanding of the meaning and significance of diversity in organizations.

Multifaceted conceptualizations of diversity may also be useful for capturing the complexity of cultural identity, which is composed of group memberships that have qualitatively different meanings and ascriptions. Drawing from an intersectionality perspective, which acknowledges that people belong to multiple social categories that have associated advantages and disadvantages based on their salience in a particular context (Cole 2009), identity is considered to represent the compilation of attributions and experiences embedded in such memberships. For this reason, aggregating people into social categories for the purposes of research limits the sensitivity of measurement by ignoring intraindividual identity structures. Although faultline theory is useful for extending categorical approaches to diversity to focus on attribute alignment, its focus is on workgroups as the unit of analysis rather than on individuals. Therefore, the development of constructs to capture the multifaceted and layered nature of intraindividual identity is needed. For example, a composite that incorporates socially and self-defined attributes, their salience in

any given context, and interactions between them may be useful for further understanding the influence of identity on intergroup relationships. Likewise, the creation or adaptation of measures to assess differences in value structures (rather than attributes) across individuals may enhance the explanatory power of diversity as a construct.

The field could also benefit from a more temporal or dynamic approach to the study of diversity. Much of the research-to-date is based on a fundamental assumption that the composition of identity and groups is immutable, although changes occur across time and contexts; for example, throughout employees' work life, changes in job classification and compensation, physical location, marital and/or parental status, and other characteristics can affect their resources and work experiences. Similarly, leadership approaches, features of the work, and organizational culture may change the salience of individual attributes or social categories within a group, thereby influencing member interactions and group functioning. Accordingly, research to assess and account for such identity and demography shifts may enhance our understanding of the intersection between diversity and the environment in which it resides and allow us to better establish diversity cause-and-effect relationships.

Broader Exploration of Diversity Effects

Although the current diversity literature highlights outcomes of diversity at the individual, group, and organizational levels of analysis, the focus has been on a relatively limited set of outcomes. Research-to-date has primarily sought to explain variability in work attitudes and behaviors; however, the findings suggest that diversity may influence a range of other outcomes, particularly at the individual level. For example, as studies have shown diversity-related interactions to influence identity construction and maintenance processes, additional exploration of the effects of diversity on elements of these processes, such as self-esteem and identity expression, may provide insights into the ways and circumstances under which people will be more or less willing to engage in interactions with others. In effect, the findings of such research may also shed light on the types of diversity programs that help employees to develop and maintain constructive and productive work relationships. As research in other areas infers diversity's effects on emotional regulation, health, and well-being, and other factors that influence social relationships, the diversity field would benefit from future work that tells us more about physiological and psychological reactions to diversity that may help us to not only better understand intergroup relations, but to also develop interventions for positively impacting such interactions.

In seeking to understand and facilitate effective intergroup relations, researchers should also explore the effects of diversity on interactional behaviors and patterns. Although the theoretical foundations described earlier help to explain why diversity both detracts from and contributes to group functioning, and findings reviewed serve as evidence of such impacts on group functioning, we have little insight into the associated behavioral manifestations. For example, based on the findings of stigmatization research, which suggest such behavior is often demonstrated as negative behavior toward targets, including ambivalence, avoidance, and aggression (see Hebl & King 2013), research to explore the role of such manifestations in the relationships between diversity and group processes may enhance our ability to predict group process outcomes. Similarly, as diversity ideologies and mindsets, such as egalitarianism or political conservatism, have been shown to influence the way people interact with ingroup/outgroup members, incorporating them into research as outcomes of diversity may be helpful for accounting for their role in intergroup relations as well as for understanding their impacts on employee and organizational outcomes.

The diversity field may also benefit from research that moves beyond the "business case" for diversity to explore other types of organizational-level outcomes. Although the business case

provides insight into how diversity might be managed to improve organizational functioning and financial performance, some scholars argue that such a perspective is incomplete as it only speaks to a profit motive (see Ozbilgin et al. 2013). However, stakeholders' interests may be rooted in other motivations, including social justice, social responsibility, and community development. Thus, to truly understand the effects of diversity in and on organizations, researchers need to consider the social systems in which such organizations operate. For example, consistent with sociological studies of diversity, examining diversity at different levels of organizations as an outcome (rather than an antecedent) may offer insight into the effectiveness of practices to internally promote equality and inclusion. Similarly, investigating the movement of different social categories throughout organizations may shed light on organizational networks and differentials in employee access and opportunity. Future research may also rely on a host of other stakeholder metrics, such as service ratings, governance ratings, reputation indices, and environmental performance, to ascertain the effects of diversity on other aspects of organizational functioning.

Understanding the "P" in Diversity I-P-O Models

Much of the research examining diversity outcomes implicitly proposes an I-P-O model, although the mediating mechanisms through which diversity effects occur have not been well-explicated (Jackson et al. 2003). Although research to understand cognitive, behavioral, or operational processes that drive diversity outcomes would be beneficial, there are other "P's" that may provide insight into the ways in which diversity influences individual, group, and organizational functioning. For example, multilevel models may offer perspective on the relationships between outcomes of diversity as well as the generalizability of outcomes to a wider population. As diversity data are typically nested (i.e., individuals within groups, groups within organizations, organizations within industries or communities, etc.), such models may be useful for capturing the experience of working within a shared environment. For that reason, research that disentangles individual and group effects on outcomes of interest, such as how employees from different social categories navigate their identity in workgroups or the effectiveness of diversity training across training groups with differing demographic compositions, may create more sensitive models that are more reflective of diversity phenomena in and across organizations.

Additional research on the design, implementation, and outcomes of diversity practices is also needed. In particular, studies that compare the impact of different types of practices on specific diversity-related outcomes would allow for a more critical evaluation of such practices and guidance on how organizations can more effectively manage diversity in organizations. For example, contrasting participation rates in onboarding, mentoring, and sponsorship programs with retention rates across employee groups may offer a comparative appraisal of the efficacy of such programs as well as suggest ways in which organizations can receive a bigger return on their retention initiatives. Similarly, examining the effects of diversity programs and interventions on employee and group behavior, such as team training on conflict resolution or work-life flexibility on extrarole behavior, may deliver scholarly and practical insight into strategies for positively impacting work climates and organizational functioning. Future research that investigates diversity programs as part of a larger system is also needed. As diversity practices are typically implemented in combination, researchers need to consider how the interplay between different practices influences attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. For example, examining the cumulative impact of different diversity training programs (e.g., awareness, self-knowledge, behavioral competency) on transfer to the work environment may help researchers and practitioners better understand the relative value of specific programmatic initiatives. Alternatively, assessing the combinative impact

of different diversity programs (e.g., culture audits, task forces, employee resource groups) on organizational outcomes may provide insight into the "bundled" value of diversity programs.

To understand how employees perceive and react to diversity, research-to-date has primarily relied on researcher-derived measures. However, such measures may not adequately capture their experiences with diversity or reflect how employees do sensemaking about such experiences. Therefore, future research that taps into the psychology of diversity is needed. For example, qualitative methodologies may offer unique insight into latent aspects of diversity experiences, such as details about human cognition, emotion, and behavior, whereas real-time assessments may reveal immediate and/or contextual reactions to differences that would be overlooked using more traditional measurement approaches. Similarly, analysis techniques employed in other literatures, such as social network or cluster analysis, may be useful for exploring the structural characteristics of intergroup relations and reveal complexities in group experiences that have not yet been uncovered.

Diversity Models That Are Generalizable Across Contexts

As much of the research in the diversity literature has been conducted within a single national context (in particular, the United States), the global generalizability of its assumptions, findings and prescriptions is limited. Accordingly, research that accounts for cultural influences on such factors is necessary. At a basic level, more research that examines cultural differences, such as values, norms, and language, as dimensions of diversity or that is conducted in multicultural contexts would help to broaden our conceptualization of diversity as well as our understanding of the effects of culture on group interactions. Research that accounts for sociocultural influences, such as historical or political factors, is also needed to understand how context affects perceptions of, and reactions to, diversity. Similarly, international or comparative studies of diversity management may provide insight into the conditions under which certain practices are effective and for devising strategies for managing diversity that are universally applicable. Still, researchers are encouraged to move beyond the examination of culture as a moderating influence and to consider the effects of culture as process, which may help to explain intergroup relations and/or how multicultural teams or organizations achieve certain outcomes.

As diversity research has also primarily been conducted within business organizations, the field would be advanced by the study of diversity processes and outcomes in other settings, such as utilities, education, and natural resources. First, considering differences in workforce characteristics and employment relationships across industries, expanding diversity research outside of business organizations may provide unique insight into people's diversity-related experiences at work. Second, as regulations, norms, and other contextual factors that give rise to operational differences across industries, exploring diversity management in other settings may allow tests of the effectiveness of practices in certain sectors. Finally, as an organization's key performance indicators are dependent on the industry in which it operates, examining the diversity-performance relationship in nonbusiness settings may shed new light on the effects of diversity in organizations.

The field would also benefit from research that incorporates other features of context. As highlighted by Joshi & Roh (2009), contextualized diversity research is essential to understanding where, when, and how diversity dynamics evolve in organizations. Thus, taking into account structural, normative, and relational features of context is critical to enhancing the theoretical rigor and practical relevance of diversity research. For example, assessing the learning orientation of diverse work teams along with their social categorization and information elaboration processes may help researchers and practitioners to discern how organizational culture influences diversity

processes and outcomes. Similarly, as an organization's diversity practices are embedded within a larger human resource system, research to examine the interplay between diversity and human resources practices may also provide scholarly and practical guidance on how to manage people more systemically. Other contextual studies, such as variability in climates for inclusion based on managerial involvement in, or accountabilities for, diversity initiatives or differences in organizational attraction based on leader commitment to diversity, may offer insight into the role of leadership in diversity management. Although innumerable studies of context could be proposed, there is a need within the diversity field for greater attention to the influence of context.

CONCLUSION

As shown by this review, the diversity literature across the fields of industrial and organizational psychology, human resource management, and organizational behavior has experienced great strides in terms of understanding the meaning, operation, and effects of diversity in the workplace. However, as shown by this review, there is still much opportunity for further progress. And although the future research agenda put forth here identifies some fruitful areas of development, greater range in the ways we study diversity may be useful for driving such progress. Specifically, development in the ways we conceptualize diversity, methodologies used for exploring its properties, theoretical approaches for explaining its effects, outcomes of interest for understanding its impact in and on organizations, and contexts for clarifying such impacts may help us to better understand, predict, and manage the complexities of diversity. Therefore, the way for diversity researchers to advance the field may be for us to just practice what we preach, as the way to advance the science of diversity may be to advance diversity in our science.

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