**INTRODUCTION**

Cultural diversity refers to the coexistence of a variety of beliefs, cultures, traditions, customs and languages in a society. It appreciates and recognizes the wide differences that are brought about by different human experiences and social interactions in a community. (Mazur, B. 2010) Cultural diversity in the workplace refers to the acknowledgment that employees in an organization or company come from different cultural background, ethnicities, races, genders, religion and possess different beliefs. (Raewf et al., 2021) Embracing cultural diversity promotes inclusivity, respect, mutual understanding and cooperation among employees thus increasing productivity and efficiency in the workplace. (Ayega et al., 2018)

Cultural diversity in the workplace has a number of benefits to include but not limited to the following;

Promotes inclusivity. (Martin, G. C. 2014)

It promotes a working environment where every employee from different backgrounds is respected and valued. Such an inclusive environment instigates a sense of belonging and importance amongst the employees thus boosting their morale and satisfaction in the work place, this reflects positively in work productivity and efficiency.

Promotes cultural awareness and sensitivity. (Martin, G. C. 2014)

Employees from different cultural backgrounds work together by exchanging different ideas and perspectives when it comes to tackling work related issues. In such collaborations, the employees get to learn from their counterparts with different cultures and norms thus enhancing effective communication and understanding.

Promotes creativity and innovation. (Greenberg, J. 2004).

Employees from different backgrounds have different ideas, therefore whenever they collaborate in a project, they bring different and unique ideas to the table. Such a mix of ideas and experiences advances creativity and innovation since new concepts and strategies are presented for adoption. The organization has easy access to a variety of skills and expertise that may be unavailable in a workforce that is homogenous.

Promotes an expanded market reach. (Armache, J. 2012).

Organizations with culturally diverse employees are better equipped to provide a wide variety of services since each employee has something unique to offer therefore, the organization is able to reach and satisfy a wide customer base. This in turn promotes international relationships with organizations from different regions all around the globe.

Improves decision making. (Foma, E. 2014).

Diverse teams bring a pool of ideas and suggestions; thus, such teams are able to make better decisions by considering different views and perspectives. This promotes better problem-solving skills and improve quality of solutions when it comes to problem-solving since diverse employees have different strategies in tackling problems, and when these strategies are laid out in the open, the best decision can be achieved.

While cultural diversity in the workplace offers quite a number of benefits, it can also present some challenges and drawbacks. These include but are not limited to the following;

Communication barriers. (Smith et al., 2000)

Difference in languages, communications styles and interpretation, cultural norms and cultures may cause misunderstandings among employees. A word or gesture from one culture can mean a positive thing however, the same word or gesture can mean the opposite in a different culture, such discrepancies can cause tension and conflict in the workplace which might lower productivity. These differences might also hinder freedom of speech in the workplace since employees have to be cautious when addressing employees from different cultures to avoid insulting them inadvertently or hurting their feelings. (Mazur, B. 2010).

Sub-groups and cliques. (Triandis et al., 1994)

Cultural diversity may encourage formation of cliques to include individuals from the same cultural background which may lead to exclusion thus hindering collaboration. This may also lead to unhealthy competition in the workplace as the different sub-groups strive to dominate among one another in order to get recognition.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, while there a few disadvantages of cultural diversity we can all agree that the positive impacts outweigh the negative impacts in a working environment. It is vital for companies to be aware of challenges that cultural diversity may pose and come up with solutions that address such drawbacks. (Green et al., 2002) Embracing diversity is not only beneficial to the employees but to the organization itself as it increases organization performance. Cultural diversity is a valuable asset in an organization and the organization management should strive to promote diversity by setting an example in inclusive decision making. (Ongori et al., 2007) They should also adopt policies that prevent discrimination and create an inclusive environment amongst all employees and conduct training and workshop programs that promote culture awareness and foster inclusivity in the workplace.

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