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## **Integrative Literature Review: Diversity Management Interventions and Organizational Performance: A Synthesis of Current Literature**

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# Diversity Management Interventions and Organizational Performance: A Synthesis of Current Literature

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*Despite the growing body of literature focused on diversity management and its implications for career experiences and perceptions, team dynamics, customer service, and other dimensions of organizational performance, a significant gap remains. To address the gap, this article reviews the managing diversity literature published between January 2000 and December 2005 to identify the subset of the literature that examines the effectiveness of specific diversity interventions implemented in organizations. Only 38 such studies were identified. We conclude that the current evidence base provides limited guidance to human resource professionals as they design and implement diversity interventions. Each study identified in the review is categorized by research methodology and by type of intervention: diversity training and education; mentoring; and other organizational development interventions. Characteristics of effective interventions are identified. Gaps in the literature and areas for future research are described.*

**Keywords:** *diversity; employee development; interventions; organizational performance; human resource management*

## Purpose of the Study

Despite the fact that 71% of the companies responding to *Training's* 2005 Industry Report provided diversity and cultural awareness training for their employees (Dolezalek, 2005, p. 22), research to date has not documented conclusively that diversity management interventions, including training, yield measurable benefits at the employee, team, or organizational level (Dreachslin, Weech-Maldonado, & Dansky, 2004, p. 968; Roberson, Kulik, & Pepper, 2001, p. 872; Sanchez & Medkik, 2004, p. 517). As the philosophy that guides diversity management

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evolves to “embrace and leverage all employee differences to benefit the organization” (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004, p. 410), with a focus on recruiting and retaining a diverse, world-class workforce (see, for example, Koonce, 2006), “more work is needed to design and evaluate specific interventions or experiments aimed at creating a positive link between diversity and performance” (Kochan et al., 2003, p.18).

In planning this article, we aspired to lay the groundwork for a diversity/organizational performance link through a literature review that examined recent studies of specific diversity management interventions such as education, training, mentoring, and other organizational development activities (e.g., team building, survey feedback, process consultation, intergroup development, etc.) that were designed to improve organizational performance as it pertains to diversity. Our original objective was to identify and analyze evidence-based best practices that could be used to lay a preliminary foundation for defining critical success factors for diversity interventions. Unfortunately, we found that although the theoretical work that supports diversity management is well developed, the current empirical evidence base is lacking in breadth, depth, and specificity. Therefore, the focus of this article has necessarily changed from prescriptive to evaluative. In this literature review, we first synthesize findings from the recent managing diversity literature that examine the effectiveness of specific diversity interventions implemented in organizations, and second, assess the strength of these findings to identify areas for further study to help establish critical success factors for future diversity management interventions.

Recent literature reviews on diversity and organizational development (Collins & Holton, 2004; Jayne & Dipboye, 2004; Roberson et al., 2001), racial and ethnic diversity and organizational behavior (Dreachslin et al., 2004), and gender, race, ethnicity, and career advancement (Dreachslin & Curtis, 2004) confirm that the focus of research has been to document disparities, to build theoretical models, and to suggest changes in organizational behavior. In fact, Jayne and Dipboye (2004) identify the following four major gaps between diversity rhetoric and research findings and conclude that a demographically diverse workforce in and of itself does not necessarily have positive impact on organizational performance, making diversity interventions essential:

- Without effective training and development to support valid selection processes, increased diversity does not necessarily increase the talent pool;
- Increased diversity does not necessarily build commitment, improve motivation, or reduce conflict. In fact, there is significant research to show that working with dissimilar others is often associated with negative outcomes;
- Many researchers view diversity as a “double-edged sword” that improves some group processes and disrupts others. Increased group-level diversity in and of itself does not necessarily lead to higher group performance;
- Although there are a large number of studies of the effects of diversity on individual and group level performance, there are relatively few that document the relationship of diversity to organizational performance. The results of those studies have been mixed, leading the authors to assert that diversity does not necessarily improve organizational performance (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004, pp. 412-413).

In the following sections, we describe our search methods for identifying the included literature, discuss our methods of analyzing the included literature through categorization by research methodologies and purpose, intervention type (training, mentoring, other), and major findings, and finally, propose major areas for further research.

## Search Methods and Analysis of Literature

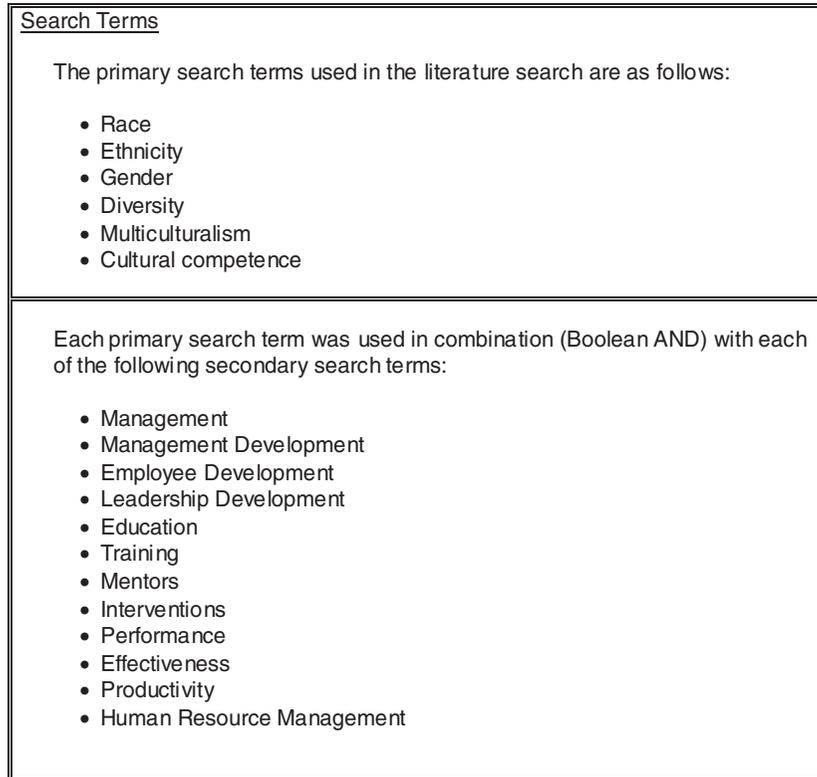
A 6-year time frame from January 2000 through December 2005 was identified to capture the most recent investigational literature; also, large literature studies that focus on the effectiveness of diversity initiatives and leadership development prior to 2000 have been undertaken (see, for example, Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 2000; and Collins & Holton, 2004). Literature that spanned a wide range of organizational settings, including corporations, public agencies, educational institutions, and health care facilities, was included in our review.

The following are the criteria for inclusion in this review:

- The article reported results from a study that was operationally defined in its method section as an evaluation of a specific diversity intervention, including education, training, mentoring, and other organizational development interventions (e.g. team building, survey feedback, process consultation, intergroup development, etc.);
- The study evaluated a diversity intervention designed using knowledge and practices based in behavior science to improve individual, team, unit, and/or organizational performance. Measures of performance improvement include, but are not limited to, assessment of career experiences and accomplishments, workplace perceptions, and employee satisfaction (individual level); evaluation of group task performance, intergroup conflict, and communication (group level); and measurement of recruitment and retention, absenteeism, employee satisfaction, productivity, and profitability (organizational level);
- The study involved one or more diversity dimensions, including race, ethnicity, gender, age, social class, disability, or sexual orientation;
- The study was published in the English language literature between January 1, 2000, and December 2005.

A case example of both an excluded and an included study may help illustrate how these criteria were applied. Mollica's (2003) study of the association between active diversity management practices in an organization and White male employees' perception of disproportional group harm in layoffs was excluded because it was a cross-organizational survey rather than an evaluation of a specific diversity intervention in a particular setting. On the other hand, Hood, Muller, and Seitz's (2001) study of pre-post intervention changes in tolerance was included because it assessed the impact of exposure to a specific diversity management course on participants.

The authors conducted an electronic search of the ProQuest Direct database, including Papers First and Proceedings First and the PubMed database, on 6 primary search terms (ethnicity, race, gender, diversity, multiculturalism, and cultural competence) each used in combination (Boolean AND) with 12



**FIGURE 1: Literature Search Terms**

secondary search terms (management, management development, employee development, leadership development, education, training, mentors, interventions, performance, effectiveness, productivity, human resource management), for a total of 72 combinations (see Figure 1). Primary search terms were selected based on the authors' previous experience with comprehensive literature reviews of the diversity management literature. Secondary search terms were adapted from those used by Collins and Holton (2004) for their meta-analysis of the effectiveness of managerial leadership development programs. Adaptations included adding terms that broadened the research subjects to include employees and eliminating terms that were specific to the Collins and Holton study, but not to our review (e.g., *360-degree feedback*).

ProQuest Direct indexes more than 5,000 magazines, journals, dissertations, and newspapers. It contains full text to more than 2,000 scholarly journals. ProQuest Direct includes the following databases:

- ABI Inform (business trade and research journals)
- Periodical Abstracts (general and research journals)
- National Newspapers and Research Library Newspapers
- ProQuest Education Complete
- ProQuest Nursing Journals
- ProQuest Psychology Journals

The preliminary search yielded a large number of “false positives” because of the broad definitions of some of the search terms (e.g., *diversity* identified articles on biodiversity.) Most of the irrelevant articles could be discarded based on their titles. Further refinement was achieved through a manual review of hundreds of article abstracts to determine their relevance. Sixty-six articles appeared to meet the criteria based on the abstract review. The authors read each of these 66 articles and then determined that in fact only 38 met all of the inclusion criteria. Articles that did not evaluate a specific diversity intervention, were not conducted in a laboratory, classroom, or in the field, that is, at an organization, are not analyzed in this article. To ensure that no potentially relevant articles went undiscovered, the authors also scanned the reference lists of articles meeting criteria for inclusion.

## **Review of Diversity Interventions and Identification of Areas for Further Research**

The 38 articles included in this analysis consist of 26 based on diversity training interventions and an additional 12 being evenly divided between mentoring interventions and all other types of diversity interventions. A review and synthesis of the main findings within each intervention type follows, along with our proposed questions for further research and analysis.

Both authors read each of the 38 articles and analyzed the following:

- The methodology identified by the study’s authors,
- The research questions posed by the study’s authors,
- The major findings of the study.

We assigned each article to a research methodology category as defined by Stephen (1995). Stephen identified nine basic methods according to the purpose or characteristics of a study’s research and rigor of the study design. In our analysis, we determined that six of the methods were used in the interventions we reviewed for this article: experimental, quasiexperimental, causal-comparative, descriptive, case study, and developmental. These basic research methods do not define per se how data are collected, although experimental and quasiexperimental designs tend to be associated with quantitative data collection. Table 1 lists the methodology categories, their purpose and characteristics, and indicates which methodologies were used in each article included in the literature review.

**TABLE 1: Diversity Intervention Study Methodologies**

<i>Method<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Purpose/Characteristics<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Examples in the Literature</i>
Experimental	<p>Researcher controls and manipulates relevant variables;</p> <p>Investigate possible cause-effect relationships;</p> <p>Designed as experiment with control group and experimental group receiving "treatment";</p> <p>Random assignment of participants to groups;</p> <p>Comparison of results across groups.</p>	<p>Avery, 2003</p> <p>Holladay &amp; Quinones, 2005</p> <p>Kulik et al., 2000</p> <p>Majumdar et al., 2004</p>
Quasiexperimental	<p>Researcher realizes and proceeds within limitations in the internal and external validity of design;</p> <p>Approximates conditions of true experiment;</p> <p>Setting does not allow control and/or manipulation of all relevant variables.</p>	<p>Armour et al., 2004</p> <p>Assemi et al., 2004</p> <p>Bush &amp; Ingram, 2000</p> <p>Crandall et al., 2003</p> <p>Crosson et al., 2004</p> <p>Finkel et al., 2003</p> <p>Holladay et al., 2003</p> <p>Hood et al., 2001</p> <p>Hope et al., 2005</p> <p>Kossek et al., 2003</p> <p>Rosen et al., 2004</p> <p>Rudman et al., 2001</p> <p>Sanchez &amp; Medkik, 2004</p> <p>Sargent et al., 2005</p> <p>Tomlinson-Clarke, 2000</p> <p>Tori &amp; Ducker, 2004</p> <p>Ward, et al., 2004</p>
Causal-comparative (ex post facto)	<p>Researcher observes an existing consequence and searches back through the data for plausible causal factors and cause-and-effect relationships</p>	<p>Aremu &amp; Adeyaju, 2003</p> <p>Beagan, 2003</p> <p>Ely, 2004</p> <p>Kochan et al., 2003</p>
Descriptive	<p>Researcher describes systematically a situation or area of interest factually and accurately</p>	<p>Ferguson et al., 2003</p> <p>Scisney-Matlock, 2000</p> <p>Solomon, 2000</p>
Case study	<p>Researcher studies intensively the background, current status, and environmental interactions of a given social unit</p>	<p>Anderson, 2004</p> <p>Broome et al., 2002</p> <p>Headlam-Wells, 2004</p> <p>O'Brien &amp; Janssen, 2005</p> <p>Pololi et al., 2002</p> <p>Ralston, 2003</p>

*(continued)*

**TABLE 1: (continued)**

<i>Method<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Purpose/Characteristics<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Examples in the Literature</i>
Developmental	Researcher investigates patterns and sequences of growth and/or change as a function of time	Bieschke, et al., 2003 Chevannes, 2002 Dogra, 2001 Harris, 2003

a. Adapted from Stephen (1995, p. 14).

We then identified the intervention type evaluated in each article, as summarized in Tables 2, 3, and 4. Additional articles from the literature on diversity, organizational development, and leadership or human resource development were read as background information and informed the analysis of the included literature. As our analysis continued, we found limited hands-on evidence concerning specific diversity interventions that consistently lead to improved organizational performance where diversity is concerned.

### **Studies on Training Interventions**

Diversity training programs in organizations have three fundamental goals (Holladay & Quinones, 2005), which roughly parallel Cox and Beale's (1997) characterization of the diversity management change process from awareness to understanding to action: The first goal is to create awareness of discrimination and bias in an organization and use this awareness to improve the work environment for employees. The second goal looks toward having employees acknowledge their biases and prejudices and then learn skills such as conflict management to address these biases to improve the organization's work relationships. The third goal focuses on recognizing and capitalizing on diversity as an asset that can improve individual and organizational performance.

Overall, the limited laboratory and field-tested evidence base indicates that training can accomplish all three of the goals, given proper attention to planning, framing, design, and workforce demographics. Critical design factors include setting specific measurable goals in advance of training, targeting training to organizational needs in the context of a comprehensive human resource strategy, and measuring the impact of training on behavior, not merely self-reported satisfaction or diversity awareness. In the context of organizational development, behavioral change is the most critical measure of training success, but our review of the literature reveals that it is seldom tracked or measured. This is especially important because the literature does indicate that the link between awareness and behavior is weak at best. As such, the empirically based literature on diversity training interventions offers little guidance to human resource professionals vis-à-vis training content and delivery that is most likely to produce the desired behavioral change at the individual, team, or organization level.

**TABLE 2: Training Interventions: Methods, Focus, and Participants**

<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Participants (Diversity Dimensions)</i>
Anderson, 2004	Case study	Awareness/knowledge; tools to measure changes in cultural awareness	Undergraduate students (multicultural)
Armour et al., 2004	Quasiexperimental	Awareness/knowledge; recognition of participants' own avoidance behaviors	Teacher field instructors (multicultural)
Assemi et al., 2004	Quasiexperimental	Awareness/knowledge; need for assessment tools	Pharmacy students (multicultural)
Beagan, 2003	Causal- Comparative, or ex post facto	Awareness/knowledge; difference in awareness from training alone	Medical students (multicultural)
Bieschke et al., 2003	Developmental	Awareness/knowledge; discomfort in multicultural training group	Graduate students (multicultural)
Bush & Ingram, 2000	Quasiexperimental	Awareness/knowledge; cross-cultural communication	Salespeople (multicultural)
Chevannes, 2002	Developmental	Behavior change/skill development; integration of cultural education in clinical training	Health professionals (multicultural)
Crandall et al., 2003	Quasiexperimental	Awareness/knowledge; staged model of valuing diversity	Medical students (multicultural)
Crosson et al., 2004	Quasiexperimental	Awareness/knowledge; importance of patient opinions and beliefs	Medical students (gender)
Dogra, 2001	Developmental	Awareness/knowledge; bias reduction	Medical students (multicultural)
Ely, 2004	Causal- Comparative or ex post facto	Awareness/knowledge; differential performance effects by race, gender, ethnicity	Bank employees (gender and ethnicity)
Ferguson et al., 2003	Descriptive	Behavior change/skill development; integration of cultural education into clinical training	Medical faculty (multicultural)

*(continued)*

**TABLE 2: (continued)**

<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Participants (Diversity Dimensions)</i>
Finkel et al., 2003	Quasiexperimental	Awareness/knowledge; increase sensitivity to GLBT issues	Graduate students (GLBT)
Harris, 2003	Developmental	Awareness/knowledge; student focus groups in interracial communications course	Undergraduate students (Multicultural)
Holladay et al., 2003	Quasiexperimental	Framing and training perceptions; importance of framing of training title and focus	Employees (gender and ethnicity)
Holladay & Quinones, 2005	Experimental	Framing and training perceptions; influence of trainer gender and culture on training effectiveness	Employees (gender and culture)
Hood et al., 2001	Quasiexperimental	Awareness/knowledge; sensitivity to differences	Undergraduate students (gender and ethnicity)
Hope et al., 2005	Quasiexperimental	Behavior change/skill development; individual versus team skills	Health profession students (multicultural)
Kulik et al., 2000	Experimental	Behavior change/skill development; effects of thought concentration on discriminatory behavior	Undergraduate students (gender, age)
Majumdar et al., 2004	Experimental	Awareness/knowledge; patient satisfaction and outcomes after provider training	Health care providers (multicultural)
Rosen et al., 2004	Quasiexperimental	Behavior change/skill development; cultural communication skills	Medical students (multicultural)
Rudman et al., 2001	Quasiexperimental	Behavior change/skill development; impact of willingness to change on implicit and explicit bias	Undergraduate students (ethnicity)
Sanchez & Medkik, 2004	Quasiexperimental	Framing and training perceptions; reaction to perceived remedial frame in diversity training	Employees (ethnicity)

*(continued)*

**TABLE 2: (continued)**

<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Participants (Diversity Dimensions)</i>
Sargent et al., 2005	Quasiexperimental	Behavior change/skill development; impact of curricular content on cultural competence	Undergraduate nursing students (multicultural)
Scisney-Matlock, 2000	Descriptive	Awareness/knowledge; knowledge gained in social issues course	Undergraduate nursing students (multicultural)
Tomlinson-Clarke, 2000	Quasiexperimental	Awareness/knowledge; use of multicultural checklist	Graduate psychology students (multicultural)

Looking at the research designs of the 26 articles that assessed the effectiveness of specific diversity training interventions, only 3 were randomized experiments. An additional 14 studies used quasiexperimental designs, whereas 2 studies employed causal-comparative or ex post facto designs. The remaining 7 studies employed less rigorous methods such as case study analysis, developmental research, or descriptive reporting, and relied on qualitative measures of impact on organizational performance. Our review of the research foci of these 26 articles resulted in the following categorization:

- Interventions aimed at increasing participants' cultural sensitivity, awareness, or knowledge (or reducing bias or prejudice);
- Interventions that examined how framing influenced the participants' perceptions of training effectiveness;
- Interventions that focused on changing participants' behavior or improving their skills or performance.

Table 2 summarizes the training literature included in this study by research method used, focus of the study, and participants (by dimension of diversity).

*Awareness and knowledge studies.* By far the largest number (16 of 26) of interventions reviewed addressed increased cultural sensitivity and knowledge. Thirteen of those involved students. Six were courses in the students' academic programs. Among the key findings in this category were 4 studies that determined that training increases self-reported awareness and understanding (Anderson, 2004; Assemi, Cullander, & Hudmon, 2004; Finkel, Storaasli, Bandele, & Schaefer, 2003; Harris, 2003). Five additional studies found that training sometimes reduces bias or prejudice as measured by pre-assessment and postassessment tools (Crandall, George, Marion, & Davis, 2003; Crosson, Deng, Brazeau, Boyd, & Soto-Greene, 2004; Dogra, 2001;

Hood et al., 2001; Majumdar, Browne, Roberts, & Carpio, 2004). Two studies revealed that diversity training can have differential effects by gender, race, or ethnicity (Ely, 2004; Hood et al., 2001), and finally, 5 studies concluded that awareness may or may not result in changed behavior or increased engagement with diversity (Armour, Bain, & Rubio, 2004; Beagan, 2003; Bieschke, Gehlert, Wilson, Matthews, & Wade, 2003; Bush & Ingram, 2000; Tomlinson-Clarke, 2000). The key findings and implications of these studies are summarized below.

In one undergraduate class on cultural diversity, students completed pre-assessments and postassessments on two cultural and attitudinal questionnaires. The results indicated some qualitative evidence of increased awareness, but there was no change in cultural attitude questionnaire scores on the post-class assessment. The author identified the need for valid, reliable tools to measure change in cultural awareness (Anderson, 2004). A second analysis of undergraduate student narratives and focus groups in an interracial communications course by the instructor who taught the course showed a postclass decrease in prejudice and increased sensitivity and awareness (Harris, 2003).

Linked pre- and post- surveys were administered to pharmacy students enrolled in an 8-hr diversity course. The surveys measured the self-perceptions of the respondents rather than observable behavior with respect to their increased awareness of cultural competency and cross-cultural communication. The authors identified the need for assessment tools to measure the impact of training (Assemi et al., 2004). Finkel et al. (2003) studied a program designed to help psychologists and graduate students become more supportive of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) issues. The authors sought to determine whether the institutionalization of a training module developed to increase sensitivity and knowledge of GLBT issues in conjunction with the implementation of a "safe zone" within a school of professional psychology would create a more inclusive cohort of clinical advocates. Self-reported results indicated improvement in the attitude of trainees, with 40% reporting more positive attitudes at the end of training. The experiential activities included in the training were especially highly rated, but the authors concluded that additional empirical studies are needed to test the adaptability of institutions toward improving relations with the GLBT community.

The Health Beliefs Attitude Survey was used to do a pre-post training assessment of undergraduate medical student attitudes, which were shown to improve posttraining scores of medical students on two components (importance of patient opinions and beliefs in the health encounter). Women students scored higher than men (Crosson et al., 2004). In a diversity intervention focused on diversity competency used in an undergraduate organizational behavior course, Anglo women experienced more positive attitude changes from the training, whereas Anglo men were the least tolerant. Latina women were the most tolerant pretraining and posttraining (Hood et al., 2001).

Three other studies examined the design, implementation, and evaluation of cross-cultural training programs for medical students. In the first study, based on self-reported data through a pre-post training questionnaire, students' scores improved significantly on the Multicultural Assessment Questionnaire Instrument which measured growth against a staged model of valuing diversity (Crandall et al., 2003). In the second study, the objective was to enable students to gain information about other cultures and to examine their own attitudes. The pre-post training questionnaire showed more positive post-training attitudes (Dogra, 2001). The work done by Majumdar et al. (2004) tested the effectiveness of cultural sensitivity training on the knowledge and attitudes of health care providers, and then assessed the satisfaction and health outcomes of minority patients with health care providers who received the training. The study used the self-assessment of cultural awareness questionnaire and the Rokeach Dogmatism Scale. These measures were relatively more objective than just self-report opinion, but still subject to social desirability bias. However, the authors found that cultural awareness training increased understanding of multiculturalism and increased the ability to communicate with minorities.

In a study of the impact of four dimensions (tenure, age, race, gender) of diversity training on performance in retail banks, the author concluded that diversity education had a minimal impact on performance as measured by attitude surveys and an array of other criteria of individual branch performance. This finding held regardless of whether training was a direct or a moderating variable. Diversity training had a negative effect on attitude and performance when gender was balanced (Ely, 2004). This finding diverged from the ethnic differences noted among female and Hispanic students studied in Hood et al. (2001).

Armour et al. (2004) conducted a quasiexperimental analysis of training aimed at reducing the tendency for field instructors of student teachers to avoid discussing cultural differences with the students they supervised. The training successfully taught field instructors to recognize and intervene in their own feelings and thoughts to reduce avoidance behavior. Avoidance behavior decreased from Time 1 (pretraining) to Time 2 (6 months posttraining).

Similarly, a 2003 study found that a course on social and cultural issues in medicine had no effect on 3rd-year medical students' awareness of those issues. Students reported that learning about cultural issues made little or no difference when they did their clinical rotations. One conclusion of the study was that such a course must also address power relationships and self-management/knowledge, not just information about the cultural "other" (Beagan, 2003).

How are processes of training groups influenced by infusion of multicultural issues? This was the research question posed in a study of eleven 75-min group training sessions of master's level counseling students with doctoral students as group leaders. Students chose, prepared, and facilitated a structured group exercise. The study provided some information on how trainees

moved from awareness to discomfort in training groups infused with multicultural issues. The category of discomfort with multicultural issues increased in later sessions and was the most frequently occurring category of process events (Bieschke et al., 2003).

A simulation exercise (BafaBafa) conducted by Bush & Ingram (2000) increased salespersons' self-reported awareness of the importance of cultural differences in their sales encounters. In the postsimulation evaluation, self-reported confidence in predicting other culture's behavior decreased. In another posttraining qualitative study, a multicultural competency checklist indicated that graduate psychology students felt they needed more help to develop increased professional and personal cultural self-awareness and self-knowledge (Tomlinson-Clarke, 2000).

*Framing and training effectiveness studies.* A frame is defined as "a psychological device that offers a perspective and manipulates salience in order to influence a subsequent judgment" (Holladay, Knight, Paige, & Quinones, 2003, p. 246). According to Jayne and Dipboye (2004), diversity programs should be framed as challenges and opportunities rather than as threats to overcome. Three studies involved the concept of framing and the participants' perceptions of training effectiveness. These were conducted in corporate settings. Two of the studies concluded that men react more negatively to diversity training in general, particularly if they perceive it to be remedial (Holladay et al., 2003; Sanchez & Medkik, 2004). In another study, the authors found that trainer culture and gender interact to influence perceptions of training utility and trainer effectiveness (Holladay & Quinones, 2005).

Holladay et al. (2003) tested how important the framing of the title, content, and assignment (remedial or advanced) of a diversity training seminar is to how favorably the training would be received by potential participants. After reading a course description, respondents completed a questionnaire rating the quality of course content and the likelihood of learning transfer occurring as a result of the training. Generally, respondents preferred a broad focus and a traditional title. Men reacted more negatively, through lower ratings and lower perceived likelihood of learning transfer, than women to a diversity training course with a narrow focus and frame, and more negatively than women to diversity training in general, particularly if they perceived that the training was a remedial assignment. The authors postulated that the negative reaction from male participants was a result of their perception that diversity training initiatives stemmed from organizational backlash against them (Holladay et al., 2003, p. 258). Similar negative reactions occurred in a study by Sanchez & Medkik (2004). Trainees were identified by non-White coworkers as engaging in more negative differential treatment postdiversity training than they were prior to the training. Was this because of raised awareness of bias created by the training? According to the authors, the trainees may have thought they were selected for "remedial training," and therefore reacted in a negative way.

Holladay & Quinones (2005) examined reactions to a diversity training program conducted by a large multinational company in eight countries. According to their results, trainee culture (on Hofstede's individualistic-collectivistic continuum) influenced perceptions of effectiveness and usefulness of diversity training, whereas trainee job level and trainer culture moderated this relationship. Trainer culture and gender interacted to influence perceptions of training utility and trainer effectiveness, especially with trainees from collectivist cultures.

*Behavior change and skill development studies.* Seven interventions studied the impact of diversity training interventions on individual or organizational performance through changed behavior or increased skill development. Results of two of these studies indicate that diversity training can modify implicit and explicit bias in observed and self-reported behavior, if the intervention is appropriately designed (Kulik, Perry, & Bourhis, 2000; Rudman, Ashmore, & Gary, 2001). An additional two studies discovered that cultural competence can be increased if structured skills-based content is included in the intervention (Rosen et al., 2004; Sargent, Sedlak, & Martsof, 2005). Surprisingly, in the three studies that looked at transfer of learning and skills development, the evidence to support this type of finding proved to be weak (Chevannes, 2002; Ferguson, Keller, Haley, & Quirk, 2003; Hope, et al., 2005). More information on each study follows.

Kulik et al. (2000) conducted a laboratory experiment with undergraduate students reviewing job applicants. The treatment employed training videos under three different conditions prior to the applicant reviews. One group's video suggested that participants try to suppress age-related thoughts; the second that they should try to suppress all demography-related thoughts; and the third was the control video and did not suggest thought suppression at all. The main finding was that cognitively busy raters asked to suppress age-related thoughts rated older job applicants less favorably. Based on the results, the authors concluded that it may be a better strategy to teach thought concentration to reduce discrimination than thought suppression. In an experiment involving undergraduate students in a seminar taught by a Black professor, the authors established that diversity training can modify implicit (Black-White Implicit Association Test) as well as explicit bias when the trainees are volunteers indicating a willingness to change. Explicit bias was measured by the Modern Racism Scale and self-reported ratings of stereotypes (Rudman et al., 2001).

According to Rosen et al. (2004), 3rd-year medical students evaluated training positively based on a pre-post assessment of a workshop developed to improve cross-cultural communication skills in patient interviewing. Sargent et al. (2005) found that cultural competence can be increased by including structured cultural content in nursing curricula. They used Campinha-Bacote's Inventory for Assessing the Process of Cultural Competence (IAPCC) to measure and compare 1st- and 4th-year nursing students' self-reported scores.

Higher IAPCC scores were associated with an increased number of foreign countries visited.

After the author performed a training needs analysis of health professionals with a very small sample across professions, the participants participated in training targeted to the needs identified in the needs assessment. Only 25% of participants responded posttraining that they were now able to transfer learning to practice (based on self-report through questionnaires and focus groups; Chevannes, 2002). In their research, Ferguson et al. (2003) described a medical school faculty development program designed to develop the capacity to integrate culture and advocacy education into clinical training. The faculty development program resulted in increased reporting of training participants' intention to change behavior in the 2nd year of the program. A quasiexperimental analysis of team building training for health professions students, based on self-report data, showed improved individual multicultural skills, but of all the five team skills evaluated, multicultural skills started at the highest baseline and improved the least (Hope et al., 2005).

### **Areas for Further Research on Diversity Training**

*Identification and development of valid and reliable tools to measure increased cultural awareness and changes in participant behavior as the result of diversity training and development of processes to sustain behavioral training outcomes in job performance over time.* Evidence that properly designed diversity training can change attitudes is well established in the literature. Salespeople reported increased awareness of cultural differences after a simulation exercise (Bush & Ingram, 2000). After training, student scores improved significantly on the Multicultural Assessment Questionnaire, which measures growth against a staged model of valuing diversity (Crandall et al., 2003). Pretraining and posttraining assessment of student attitudes showed improved posttraining scores (Crosson et al., 2004; Dogra, 2001). Forty percent of the students who participated in GLBT-focused diversity training reported more positive attitudes after the training (Finkel et al., 2003). An analysis of student narratives and focus groups showed a postclass decrease in prejudice and increased sensitivity and awareness (Harris, 2003).

Our research has found that effectiveness of training is most often measured by self-reported satisfaction, change in awareness, or intent to change behavior, rather than objective measures. Evidence that training actually changes behavior in a significant way is lacking. For example, the authors of a survey of 108 diversity training managers found that, although 95% of the respondents identified changing workplace behavior of trainees as an important training goal, the content of their training courses demonstrated a relative lack of focus on behavior itself (Bendick, Egan, & Lofhjelm, 2001, p. 16). Only 25% of participants surveyed posttraining across several health professions responded that they were able to transfer learning to practice (Chevannes,

2002). Diversity education had a minimal effect on individual or organization performance in a large financial services industry (Ely, 2004). Two studies found that although respondents indicated a willingness to change (Rudman et al., 2001) or an intention to change behavior over the 2 years after the training took place (Ferguson et al., 2003), actual behavioral change was not documented.

Additional research that explores the impact of diversity training on workplace behavior is needed. As Cox and Beale (1997, pp. 3-4) clearly articulate, diversity management is best conceptualized as a three stage developmental process: awareness, understanding, and action. Without action, that is, behavioral change, the organization will not receive a return on its diversity training investment.

*Analysis of how individual trainee demographics (gender, race, tenure, age, etc.) and group composition affect the results achieved in diversity training interventions and impact whether true organizational change is achieved in domestic and multinational environments.* There is evidence that training can increase awareness, but it may also increase discomfort with cultural differences unless training also explores diversity in the context of power relationships and emphasizes self-management. Confidence and comfort with diversity may initially decrease with increased awareness. Differences in the goals of training make measuring its effectiveness with a common metric difficult. Women and people of color may be more receptive to training and more likely to be positively influenced by it than White men. For example, in one workforce diversity intervention given during an organizational behavior class, Anglo women experienced more positive attitude change than Anglo men or Latina women, although Latina women were the most tolerant of differences before and after the intervention (Hood et al., 2001). Diversity training had a negative effect on attitude and performance when gender was balanced. Ely (2004) speculates on the potential for male backlash against diversity training to result in a "social trap" situation in which the unintended consequences of attempts to address a problem serve instead to exacerbate it.

In a literature review examining training group composition preference, the authors found that trainees with previous diversity training experience preferred racially homogeneous groups, whereas those without previous experience were unaffected by group composition in their preference. The authors concluded that skill development is more likely facilitated by homogenous group composition and that heterogeneous groups lend themselves more effectively toward building diversity awareness (Roberson et al., 2001). How participants are selected for training also plays an important role. Mandatory participation at all employee levels will facilitate change in the corporate culture more effectively than voluntary participation or participation by only those employees at the executive and managerial levels (Bendick et al., 2001).

*Exploration of the potential transferability from college curricula, workshops, and student development activities to the workplace.* Given the large number of studies using interventions involving student participants (18 of the 26 studies on specific training or learning interventions), a portfolio approach to diversity training in organizations might be more likely to result in behavioral change, that is, move participants to the third (action) stage of Cox and Beale's (1997) developmental process. Activities such as service learning projects, cultural immersion, interventions of longer duration, and threading diversity and cultural issues through other training programs would contribute to a more holistic, sustained set of initiatives. A note of caution: When studies on teams are done with students, the results are more positive than in the workplace. Student results may be overly optimistic, particularly when there is a high reliance on self-reported results (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). More research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of longer term and phased approaches to diversity training. Does this approach positively impact organizational performance? Theorists in the diversity training field (Bendick et al., 2001; Swanson, 2002) contend that it does, but the current evidence base is weak.

*Exploration of the extent to which learning outcomes from cultural competence training in health care organizations transfer to customer service-focused diversity training in other organizational settings.* Cultural competence in the medical professions is a salient characteristic of a large proportion of the training interventions studied (12 of 26 studies, counting those involving students and health care professionals). Proficiency in culturally competent medical care is a key strategic objective for many health care organizations, and for medical schools it is a requirement for professional accreditation of programs. Judging from the literature, however, it is clear that clinicians are getting training and development in this area, but managers and administrators are not. From an organization development perspective, major gaps still exist for health care agencies and organizations. An overview of some of the philosophical and practical issues related to measuring cultural competency based on evaluation of a statewide culturally competent training program for behavioral health professionals illustrates the challenges of operationalizing cultural competence while balancing needs of program implementers and evaluators, and developing a robust and feasible evaluation design (Stanhope, Solomon, Pernell-Arnold, Sands, & Bourjolly, 2005).

The most significant gap in the empirically based literature is the paucity of studies that identify aspects of training design that both facilitate behavioral change and measure its impact on customer service outcomes. To close this gap, greater collaboration between researchers and human resource professionals is needed to establish the means in other organizations to replicate the apparent positive impact that cultural competence training has had in medical settings.

## Studies on Mentoring Interventions

A mentor is usually a senior, experienced employee who serves as a role model and provides support, direction, and feedback to a younger, less seasoned employee regarding career plans and interpersonal development, and increases the visibility of the protégé to decision makers in the organization who may influence career opportunities. The relationship is usually defined in developmental terms. Mentors may play as many as nine roles for a protégé, including five career development roles (sponsorship, coaching, protection, challenging assignments, and exposure) and four psychosocial roles (acceptance and confirmation, counseling, friendship, and role modeling; Lyon, Farrington, & Westbrook, 2004, p.18).

Despite widespread interest in mentoring as a tool to increase demographic diversity and improve the career trajectories of diverse employees, there is little empirical research on mentoring interventions. In fact, this literature is even more limited than that available on diversity training interventions. Consequently, there is very little guidance to human resource professionals who wish to create formal mentoring programs, grounded in empirical research, to improve their organization's diversity metrics. The six articles that assessed the impact of mentoring programs on diverse protégés were primarily case studies (Headlam-Wells, 2004; O'Brien & Janssen, 2005; Pololi, Knight, Dennis, & Frankel, 2002; Ralston, 2003; and Solomon, 2000). Aremu & Adeyoju's (2003) methodology was causal comparative, or *ex post facto*. As with the training studies, a large proportion of the mentoring studies (four out of six) were set in academic environments. The other two were conducted outside the United States. Results were mixed as to mentoring program effectiveness for women, based on four studies, all of which measured results solely by self-reported satisfaction (Aremu & Adeyoju, 2003; Headlam-Wells, 2004; O'Brien & Janssen, 2005; Pololi et al., 2002). Mentoring programs for racial/ethnic minorities were deemed effective, with results measured by self-report satisfaction as well as some objective metrics (Ralston, 2003; Solomon, 2000).

Table 3 summarizes the mentoring literature included in this study by research method used, focus of the study, and participants (by dimension of diversity).

Aremu & Adeyoju (2003) conducted a causal-comparative, or *ex post facto*, evaluation of informal mentoring relationships among Nigerian police officers and compared respondents who self-identified as having a mentor with those who did not. Mentoring had a greater impact on female than male officers as regards satisfaction. Mentoring increased job commitment for both male and female officers.

Headlam-Wells (2004) evaluated an e-mentoring pilot program for women aspiring to management positions in the United Kingdom. A questionnaire was administered at the halfway point and at the end to mentors and protégés. Mentoring pairs were formally assigned, not self-selected, but the program allowed for mentoring outside a designated pair. E-mentoring was perceived to be effective. The authors recommend for future programs that participation by

**TABLE 3: Mentoring Interventions: Methods, Focus, and Participants**

<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Participants (Diversity Dimensions)</i>
Aremu & Adeyoju, 2003	Causal comparative, or ex post facto	Gender and job satisfaction	Police officers (gender)
Headlam-Wells, 2004	Case study	Career advantages and quality of e-mentoring	Corporate managers (gender)
O'Brien & Janssen, 2005	Case study	Extent of career development and professional opportunities	Academic administrators (gender)
Pololi et al., 2002	Case study	Skill development in team building, career planning, scholarly writing	Junior med. school faculty (gender)
Ralston, 2003	Case study	Program completion, graduation rates, job placements	Undergraduate students (ethnicity)
Solomon, 2000	Case study	Ways in which race mediates process of learning to teach	Teachers (ethnicity)

both mentors and protégés should be voluntary, that there should be an initial face-to-face meeting between each mentor/protégé, and that an e-moderator (mentor to the mentors) should be assigned.

O'Brien & Janssen (2005) used a case study to evaluate an internship program for women in higher education who aspired to administration. Results were mixed as to effectiveness, and recommendations for improvement to the program were given by the authors, based on qualitative research results. Findings confirm the need for mentoring relationships for women in administrative positions.

Pololi et al. (2002) evaluated the effectiveness of a facilitated peer group mentoring program for junior medical school faculty. The program was judged to be useful as well as cost-effective, based on participant ratings of satisfaction with specific components and the program overall. Key outcomes included participant identification of their own core values, a structured process of career planning based on those values, the development of close collaborative relationships among peers, and further development in negotiation and conflict management skills. Participants expressed improved satisfaction with the decision to remain in academic medicine.

Ralston (2003) evaluated a formal mentoring program, in place since 1993, designed to increase the representation of undergraduate students of color in

food and nutritional sciences. One success measure of the program was that the graduation rate of program participants was 88% compared with an overall rate of 65% for the university.

Solomon (2000) undertook a 3-year study of cross-race protégé dyads in field-based teaching practice. Qualitative research indicated that racial barriers were broken down and awareness increased for the partners in the dyad, but the person of color in the dyad often felt disempowered by the administrators of the teaching program. The study uncovered an institutional culture that interpreted racial difference as a deficit and generated anxiety for candidates of color, marginalizing them in the communication process. Dominant group partners gained insight into how racism operates in institutional structures, whereas candidates of color ended up as disempowered apprentices with seriously compromised professional expectations.

### **Areas for Further Research on Mentoring Interventions**

Today's body of published literature is too limited for meaningful evidence-based practice recommendations. Theoretical articles, grounded in case studies of best practice organizations, identify key characteristics of successful mentoring programs, but the research literature lacks empirical longitudinal studies of the impact of mentor/protégé relationships on career outcomes for diverse individuals. The literature reviewed for this study uncovered only a few articles that describe the impact of same-identity-group versus other-identity-group mentor/protégé relationships.

*Examination of the role that institutional culture plays in the potential marginalization of people of color in racially diverse peer-mentor dyads.* The preliminary results of Solomon's (2000) study hint at this marginalization and should be probed further. Although the study involved public school teachers, corporate organizations may find that despite their best intentions, operational racism may compromise the professional expectations of employees of color, while also having detrimental effects on dominant group employees who observe the disenfranchisement of their colleagues.

Three studies (Lyon et al., 2004; Emmerik, 2004; Thomas, 2001) did not meet our study's inclusion criteria but hint at important themes in mentoring diverse protégés that merit further detailed study and suggest the following issues for further research:

*Determination of the relationship between the gender concordance of mentors and protégés and mentoring program effectiveness.* Lyon et al. (2004) surveyed 202 high technology protégés in 22 organizations working in four countries. Their results showed an increase in mentoring program effectiveness when there was gender concordance between mentors and protégés. Both male and female protégés felt that the most important role of a mentor was to assign responsibilities that would increase their contact with people in the organization that could affect their future advancement (Lyon et al., 2004,

p. 23). Social contacts outside of work were deemed to be the mentors' least important function.

*Investigation of the linkages between diverse developmental networks and career development.* Emmerik's (2004) work on informal mentoring addresses the concept of diverse developmental networks or "constellations." In general, the larger the constellation, the higher level of job and career satisfaction a protégé experienced. Two ways of measuring network diversity are the range, or number, of different social systems encompassed in the network, and the size, or number, of people in the network. The author recommends that human resource managers should consider providing training in learning personal skills development to help employees create better working relationships, increase knowledge of their organization, and increase exposure to other people to enable them to establish better networks (Emmerik, 2004).

*Pursuit of empirical evidence that ethnically diverse managers need to be mentored differently from White managers.* A 3-year project to follow the career trajectory of minority and White professionals at three major U.S. corporations with good diversity track records revealed that minority protégés should be mentored very differently from White counterparts because the observed patterns of movement up the corporate ladder are different for Whites and people of color (Thomas, 2001). As a result of the findings, the author suggests that mentors of African American managers need to focus on assisting their protégés in the development of multifaceted, multifunctional, multilevel mentoring networks.

### **Studies on Other Organizational Development Diversity Interventions**

As was the case with mentoring interventions, the literature on other organizational development diversity interventions is so limited as to provide little or no guidance to human resource professionals. Although advocates of diversity management contend that interventions work and cite best practices in the field (see, for example, [www.diversityinc.com](http://www.diversityinc.com)), empirical research to validate these contentions is lacking.

Only six articles assessed the impact of other diversity interventions, such as recruitment of a more diverse management team or work-life balance initiatives. Despite the small number of studies, there was a wide range of organizations and subjects, as well as methodologies. One was a laboratory experiment on recruitment ads with student participants (Avery, 2003). Three were quasiexperimental (Kossek, Markel, & McHugh, 2003; Tori & Ducker, 2004; and Ward, de Chazal, & Mayberry, 2004), one with university faculty, one with graduate students, and one with junior doctors in Great Britain. The other two took place in large corporate settings and used either case study (Broome, DeTurk, Kristjansdottir, Kanata, & Ganesan, 2002) or causal-comparative, or ex post facto, analysis (Kochan et al., 2003). Table 4 summarizes the other organizational development

**TABLE 4: Other Organizational Development Interventions: Methods, Focus, and Participants**

<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Participants (Diversity Dimensions)</i>
Avery, 2003	Experimental	Impact of job ad diversity on attraction to hiring organization	Undergraduate students (ethnicity)
Broome et al., 2002	Case study	Effectiveness of interactive management process to identify racial barriers to communication	Employees of a large company (multicultural)
Kochan et al., 2003	Causal-comparative, or ex post facto	Relationship between race, gender, diversity and business performance	4 Fortune 500 corporations (gender, ethnicity, multicultural)
Kossek et al., 2003	Causal-comparative, or ex post facto	Department-level consensus regarding human resources change strategy to increase diversity	University faculty (gender, ethnicity)
Tori & Ducker, 2004	Quasiexperimental	Attitudes toward multicultural change initiative	Graduate Students (multicultural)
Ward et al., 2004	Quasiexperimental	Increased awareness of ethnic background and health beliefs	Junior doctors (ethnicity)

intervention literature included in this study by research method used, focus of the study, and subjects (by diversity dimension).

Avery (2003) conducted a laboratory experiment using undergraduate students as participants. Recruitment advertisement diversity (as evidenced by photos or images of people) had no impact on Whites' attraction to an organization, but it increased Black university students' attraction when the diversity extended to supervisory positions. Blacks with higher "other group" orientations were attracted to organizations with no diversity as well as to those with unrestricted diversity. "Other group" orientation was not a moderator of organizational attractiveness and ad diversity for Whites.

Kossek et al. (2003) studied reactions to a university's human resource change strategy to increase the representation of women and people of color on its faculty over an 8-year period. Although race and gender diversity increased significantly during that time, the work units with the greatest change did not necessarily hold positive perceptions regarding the changes. The results showed that unless such structural change initiatives include efforts

to develop supportive group norms and positive climate in the organizations, the change will not be embraced by the organization. Race and gender assume greater importance when associated with differences in status. Incremental change is not sufficient to improve climate.

Tori & Ducker (2004) assessed student attitudes toward a multicultural change initiative over a 3-year period in a graduate psychology program. Over time, students saw the diversity intervention as more effective. Success rates became more similar among White students and students of color, but the reported incidence of prejudice was unchanged. In a study of the impact of providing an information booklet on Gujaranti/Hindu culture to junior doctors working in a community with a strong representation of this ethnic group, the authors found that the booklet significantly increased awareness of this ethnic background and its health beliefs. The knowledge was maintained by the doctors 1 month after distribution. The effect on attitudes was not measured (Ward et al., 2004).

The authors taught and evaluated interactive management (IM; a problem solving and design process, to assist groups in dealing with complex issues) in a large company. In this case, IM was used to identify racial problems in an organization. Based on this case study, the authors recommend IM (Broome et al., 2002).

The most thorough study on the effects of diversity on business performance is the report of the Diversity Research Network (Kochan et al., 2003). The research team postulated that the impact of diversity, positive or negative, may depend on various aspects of organizational strategy, culture, and human resource practices. These effects are likely to operate through group or team processes. They also posited that diversity, if unattended, would be likely to have adverse effects on an organization's group processes.

Perhaps the major challenge to the study was in collecting relevant data from the subject companies. Field research was fraught with difficulties because of the emotionally charged issues and legal concerns raised by the subject. Despite support from the Sloan Foundation, The Society for Human Resource Management, and the Business Opportunities for Leadership Diversity Initiative, all but four Fortune 500 companies declined to participate. This 5-year study of the relationships between race and gender diversity and business performance was therefore carried out as four case studies and causal-comparative analysis. The companies varied across industries (two in information processing, one in financial services, and one large retail firm), but all had taken steps to ensure that their formal policies supported and reinforced their diversity objectives. The quantitative results were strikingly similar, despite the variability in contexts, practices, and performance measures.

Some of the major findings were as follows:

- Racial and gender diversity had neither a positive or negative impact on performance per se. When racial diversity had a negative impact on team processes, it was mitigated by training and development initiatives. Gender had no effects on team processes;

- There were few direct effects at all of diversity on performance because context is crucial to determining the nature of diversity's impact. A highly competitive team context exacerbated negative effects of racial diversity, whereas racial diversity enhanced team performance when organizations fostered an environment that promotes learning from diversity. In general, gender diversity was less problematic than racial diversity;
- It is extremely difficult to conduct field research on diversity within organizations. Few companies are equipped to assess the impact of their diversity efforts on performance and they pay surprisingly little analytical attention to some of the organizational issues raised by these efforts. Without improved tracking and evaluation, it is unlikely that organizations will be able to analyze the effectiveness of the many diversity initiatives in which they have invested and continue to invest substantial resources;
- Different aspects of organizational context and some group processes moderated diversity–performance relationships. The authors suggest taking a more nuanced view of the business case for diversity (Kochan et al., 2003, pp. 16-17).

### **Areas for Further Research on Other Organizational Development Diversity Interventions**

*Creation of objective measures for the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of diversity organizational development interventions that effectively foster positive cultural change and improved organizational performance.* There is consensus in the literature that the effects of demographic diversity are dependent on leadership, culture and climate, and organizational strategy, with external strategy and an innovative culture being associated with success in leveraging diversity for financial advantage (Gilbert & Ivancevich, 2000). Providing a supportive organizational context is essential to success. Merely changing workforce demographics without properly designed organizational development interventions will likely produce more harm than good (Kossek et al., 2003). In addition, organizations need effective team processes to make diversity policies and practices successful (Ely, 2004). The manner in which gender diversity is managed determines its impact on firm performance. The presence of an effective human resource management system can increase firm performance in the presence of gender diversity (Richard & Johnson, 2001). However, none of the current literature cites the use of return on investment measures or other empirical means to establish measurable benchmarks for improvements in organizational performance or desired cultural change.

### **Conclusion**

The measurable effectiveness, per se, of specific diversity interventions that are undertaken to improve organizational performance has not been well researched in the laboratory, classroom, or field. As is demonstrated by the results of this literature review, the limited published literature that does exist

lacks rigor, as evidenced by the fact that it is dominated by ex post facto or quasiexperimental designs, survey or qualitative methods, and self-reported data to measure outcomes. The studies analyzed above display a wide range of research questions, methods, sample sizes, participant populations, and organization types. A major concern raised by the aggregation of the literature is the lack of deliberate gathering and analysis of data to evaluate the outcomes of diversity interventions. To date, scholars have relied heavily on case study analysis, literature review, and self-reported results on attitudinal questionnaires. Samples of convenience are often used instead of random samples, and heavy reliance on student populations pervades the experimental studies. Because of social desirability bias, self-reported impact may be overly optimistic (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986).

The “business case” for diversity needs modification, with a clear link yet to be established between diversity interventions and organizational performance. As Kochan et al. (2003, p. 17) explain, we lack evidence to support the simple assertion that demographic diversity is good or bad for business. Consequently, there needs to be a more nuanced view focused on the conditions that can leverage the benefits or mitigate the negative effects from diversity, and then shift organizational thinking beyond the “business case” to diversity as a “labor market imperative and a societal expectation and value” (Kochan et al., 2003, p. 18).

The impact of diversity interventions on organizational performance must be more consistently tracked and objectively measured. Because of the evidentiary limitations of the current literature, specific characteristics of effective diversity interventions remain largely untested. The opportunities continue for human resource and organizational development professionals and their organizations, in collaboration with academic researchers, to build a more rigorous and extensive body of published research that directly addresses the impacts of diversity interventions. Academic settings may provide the context for more rigorous experimental designs, and increased collaboration between academicians and practitioners can test the results in the real world by providing access to more diverse field research. The addition of an independent evaluation component in the design of diversity interventions, with advocacy by human resource and organizational development professionals within their organizations to facilitate publication of the findings, would substantially improve the body of knowledge. Coupled with sufficiently long lead times prior to initiatives’ implementation to allow for research design, organizational approvals, and where necessary, funding, such collaboration would help ensure that diversity interventions are evidence-based.

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