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Authentiek verbinden

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SUMMARY

Promoting and managing diversity in organisations is a current and challenging issue. The labour force is becoming more diverse (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998) and this evokes a focus on effective ways to promote and manage diversity within organisations. Paying attention to diversity management seems crucial since several studies show that diversity is associated with positive and negative consequences (Mannix & Neale, 2005; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Stockdale & Crosby, 2004; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). The most important aim of this dissertation is to provide insight, strategies and interventions for effective diversity management by examining specific psychological factors and processes which are related to the promotion and management of diversity.

Essential in a diverse work force seems to find common ground. Research reveals the importance of identification with the team in this regard. Team identification means that employees derive a part of their identity and self-image from their workgroup (Hogg, 2000). Team identification enlarges the chance that team members will share the same goals, values and norms and encourages their willingness to cooperate (zie Haslam, 2001). However, the positive contribution of a strong team identity does not seem to be obvious. Departing from Brewer's optimal distinctiveness theory (1991) I argued that a strong team identity may limit the sense of space for uniqueness and can lead team members to feel insufficiently valued by their working environment. This may reinforce the salience of subgroup identities in an attempt to restore their sense of distinctiveness. Team members may start focusing on their subgroup identities. Salient subgroup identities tend to increase the risk that differences between team members are emphasised in communication and cooperation. In this dissertation I therefore assumed that a strong team identity is related to positive work outcomes in a diverse work force, provided that there's a balance between communality and uniqueness. I decided to study the role of a diversity-enhancing work climate and multicultural personality traits as factors that may stimulate such a balance and in that way enhance positive effects of team identification on work outcomes. In order to test these assumptions or central theoretical model five cross-sectional empirical studies were conducted among employees in several governmental organisations.

Hence, chapters two and three describe three cross-sectional empirical studies that have been conducted to test the assumptions posed in this dissertation for satisfaction and task related and person related conflicts. The results show consistently that team identification is related to more satisfaction and less task related and person related conflicts. These findings underscore that a common work identity contributes to work outcomes and work processes in a diverse working context.

Chapter two describes a diversity-enhancing work climate that is based on research of Harquail & Cox (1993) and refers to the degree in which ethnic differences are valued in the work place. The expectation that a high level of appreciation of ethnic diversity strengthens the relation between team identification and satisfaction was not confirmed in the first study. Reflecting on the restrictions of this study it was concluded that the operationalisation of the work climate may have been too abstract and too general to grasp the underlying psychological processes that seem to be relevant to a diversity-enhancing work climate.

For this reason in chapter three the work climate was operationalised in a more elaborate way in terms of psychological processes which stipulate the recognition and acceptance of diversity. Relying on Huy's approach (1999) a new questionnaire was developed. Psychometric analysis on a first dataset resulted in three reliable climate factors, namely: (1) *Stimulating Development*, (2) *Creating Active Involvement* and (3) *Facilitating Authenticity*³⁴. *Encourage Development* is defined as the experience of trust, encouragement and stimulus from the organisation. *Create Support* refers to the actual involvement of employees in change processes and the communication concerning these changes. *Facilitate Authenticity* refers to the experienced space to be authentic and to feel accepted for who they are. These three climate factors are also referred to as a *psychological climate for change* or PCC (in Dutch: de PKV)

Again, the central theoretical model was tested, now with psychological climate for change as the moderating variable. The results confirmed the theoretical model, revealing that the relation between team identification and satisfaction was strengthened at *high* levels of the climate factor *Authenticity*. Interestingly the moderating role of *Authenticity* appeared to be more salient for employees with a non-Dutch ethnicity. This result implies

34 From this point in this summary these climate factors will be referred to as Development, Support and Authenticity.

that specifically for this group in order to benefit from a strong team identity, it is important that the perceived climate supports' and acknowledges expression of individuality.

In addition to the role of a diversity-enhancing work climate I also expected that five specific personality traits strengthen the positive impact of a strong team identity. These are Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness, Flexibility, Emotional Stability and Social Initiative (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001). The reasoning was that high scorers on the mentioned personality traits experience less hindrance to identify with team members that are different, because of their broader definition of communality.

They seem to be able to discover communality more easily among differences and seem to experience a sense of belonging as well as a sense of uniqueness. As a result, it may take them less effort to find the right balance between belonging and distinctiveness. This assumption was tested in two studies (chapter 2; chapter 3, study 2). Contradictory to the expectations it appeared that only at *low* levels of the personality traits Emotional Stability and Open-mindedness, team identification appeared to be related to more satisfaction and less person related conflicts.

These unexpected findings can be explained by means of the Conservation of Resources Theory (Höbfol, 1989, 1998). This theory assumes that individuals are constantly directed towards the protection and establishment of resources in order to deal effectively with challenges and stress. The threat or the actual loss of these resources, such as personality traits, make individuals vulnerable and causes stress (Höbfol, 1989). On the basis of Höbfol's theory it was argued that low scorers on these personality traits are more vulnerable and experience more stress compared to high scorers in a diverse work context, because they lack an important coping resource to deal with the uncertainty and stress of a diverse work context. The findings suggest that low scorers need a strong team identity in order to deal with a diverse work context as an alternative resource to reduce uncertainty and stress. High scorers can rely on their personality to get confirmation and feel secure and connected in a diverse team, which appears to contribute to more satisfaction and less conflict.

An important notion in this dissertation is that promoting diversity requires organisations to initiate change. Therefore in chapters four and five the theoretical model was reviewed for attitudes and choices with respect to diversity, of which was expected that they have implications for the promotion of diversity or the initiation of a change process.

In chapters four and five it was assumed that initiating organisational change requires attitudes and choices that promote and support this change process. I described in these two chapters that among majority members the promotion of diversity in the organisation is often perceived as a threat. Then I reasoned that a strong team identity may help to relief this threat, because it provides team members with a sense of belonging. During change processes a strong team identity can reduce insecurity (Hogg & Terry, 2000, 2001). On the contrary, a strong team identity may also hinder the openness to change, because a strong group identity may strengthen the connection with the status-quo. For the change process it seems desirable that a strong team identity goes together with a climate which stimulates employees towards change. For this reason in both chapters it was expected that a positive effect of a strong team identity on attitudes and choices with respect to diversity will only be found if the work climate is characterised by the climate factors of a psychological climate for change.

In chapter four and five the theoretical model was reviewed for attitudes and choices with respect to diversity. On the basis of literature (Barry & Bateman, 1996; Schneider & Northcraft, 1999) choices with respect to diversity were operationalised in terms of choices in social dilemma. To this end, critical diversity dilemmas were collected during interviews with managers and staff employees. These dilemmas were translated to a diversity dilemma questionnaire. Psychometric analysis supported a conceptual distinction in this questionnaire between two dilemma factors: Strategic choices and Operational choices. Strategic choices refer to policy choices which are made in organisations at macro level where the vision on diversity management in organisations is important and the impact of these choices is large-scale. Operational choices refer to choices at meso- and micro level in organisations.

The results of chapter four and five confirmed that only under high conditions of the climate factor *Authenticity* a strong team identity goes together with attitudes and choices which promote diversity. Interestingly, in both studies this result was solely found for the dominant group in the organisation, men with a Dutch ethnicity. Particularly for this group it seems important that the work climate subscribes authentic behaviour as a behavioural standard. Recognition of authentic emotions is not part of the usual 'white men standard' (see Spelman, 1993), that emphasizes achievements and goal orientedness as well as the importance of formal positions and authority (Rosener, 1990). In case of

a work climate that is aimed at authenticity, it seems to be less risky to recognise and acknowledge diversity. Then promoting attitudes and choices with respect to diversity does not seem to contradict complying to organisational standards.

These findings increase the insight in the conditions under which a strong team identity can contribute to the change in the direction of more diversity. In this way these studies contribute to the knowledge about how organisations can develop strategies and interventions which facilitate this change process. In this light my findings suggest that in this change process specific attention to the majority group is important.

Finally, chapter six gives a summary of the most important findings and discusses the implications of these findings for the promotion and management of diversity. The following practical implications were discussed. First it seems sensible for organisations to stimulate a common identity in teams. This common identity does not arise in a social vacuum, but rather in a process of interaction and debate in and between groups (zie Tafjel, 1972). A team identity is thus no static term, but a result of a dynamic and ongoing interaction process between team members (an inductive identity, see Postmes, Spears, Lee & Novak, 2005). The current findings suggest that a work climate that recognises the emotions of employees may facilitate this inductive process.

Secondly creating space for authenticity requires that managers themselves are authentic in what they do. Authentic management is a dynamic process in which self-insight and self-knowledge are important. This requires that managers know themselves in order to deal effectively with 'being different'. That matches closely with the quotation at the beginning of this dissertation: *"Managing diversity is not about managing them, out there; it is all about managing me, in here"* (Human, 1996a, p.5).

Thirdly it seems important the current of coordinating management profiles on the demands which effective diversity management makes to the current managers. On the basis of the studies it seems plausible that managers preferably possess: a) knowledge and insight of diversity management as an organisational change process; b) knowledge and insight of group dynamic processes such as social identification and categorisation and c) self-knowledge and self-insight. To anchor diversity management in the organisation it seems important to incorporate these management profiles in the recruitment, selection, development and appraisal of managers.

