

WORK GROUP DYNAMICS AND DIVERSITY



STUDY UNIT 4

Diversity and the Dynamics of Diversity in the Organisation

Diversity Concepts

- **Diversity:**
 - Refers to individual human differences
 - Includes both primary (race, gender, age) and secondary (education, life experience etc) dimensions
 - Include individual and group differences that contribute to distinct social identities
- **Multiculturalism:**
 - Refers primarily to culture, ethnicity and race
- **Work force diversity:**
 - Represents relationships between people and with an organisation in the context of ongoing culture

Diversity Concepts

- **Diversity Management:**
 - A strategic organisational approach to work force diversity development, organisational culture change and empowerment of the work force
- **Empowerment:**
 - Refers to a sense of personal power, confidence and positive self-esteem
- **Organisational culture change:**
 - A diversity management goal that is pursued through strategic diversity initiatives
- **Diversity initiative:**
 - A formal process to promote organisational culture change

The Psychodynamics of Diversity

- Prejudiced attitudes:
 - Prejudice means to prejudge based on primary & secondary dimensions of diversity
 - Prejudiced people think in terms of stereotypes
 - Stereotypes are generalisations made about all members of a particular group
 - For example:
 - All blondes are dumb
 - All women are emotional
 - All lawyers are conniving

The Psychodynamics of Diversity

- How prejudiced attitudes are formed:

- Contamination

- The ego states of parent, adult & child overlap to contaminate one another
 - A child learns from family at a young age how other groups should be viewed & treated
 - The child grows up with these attitudes & beliefs without testing their validity

The Psychodynamics of Diversity

- How prejudiced attitudes are formed:

- Ethnocentrism

- The tendency to regard our own culture as better than others
 - We use our own culture as yardstick to measure the worth of other cultures
 - Ethnocentrism is often perpetuated by cultural conditioning
 - Tensions can result when cultural expectations clash in the workplace

The Psychodynamics of Diversity

- How prejudiced attitudes are formed:
 - Economic factors
 - Economic factors influence our prejudiced attitudes when the economy goes through a recession
 - Example: SA citizens have negative attitudes towards workers from Mozambique who are “stealing” jobs from SA workers
 - Prejudice based on economic factors has its roots in people’s basic need for survival

The Psychodynamics of Diversity

- Discrimination
 - Behaviour based on prejudiced attitudes
 - Most common forms of discrimination include:
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Race
 - Disability
 - Sexual orientation

The Psychodynamics of Diversity

- Discrimination

- Subtle forms of discrimination is usually based on secondary dimensions of diversity:

- Sexual orientation
 - religious beliefs
 - marital status
 - Personal appearance etc.

- Subtle forms of discrimination is hard to prove as employers themselves are often unaware of their prejudices