

Meaningful Diversity: Harnessing its Potential to Aide in Globalizing Japanese University Classrooms

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Abstract

In an effort to enhance the globalization and diversity of Japanese universities, Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) stated that it wanted to have 300,000 international students by 2020 (Matsutani, 2018). However, many of the policies and methods undertaken have not resulted in meaningful diversity and exchange amongst students. The Japanese government also fails to recognize that diversity cannot be defined by racial, ethnic and cultural differences. This study examines the issue of diversity in Japanese universities. First, the problem will be stated along with some background information. Thereafter, its significance will be discussed. Next, a literature review of multiculturalism and its benefits will be given along with specific case studies that reflect diversity in the Japanese educational system. The next section will talk about how diversity can be measured, followed by several recommendations that institutions can adopt to enhance multiculturalism and diversity. Since there is scant information on the effects of diversity in Japanese university classrooms, much of the case studies and research submitted will focus on diversity in work settings as well as in classrooms in the U.S.

Key words: Diversity, higher education diversity, diversity in Japan, multiculturalism, multiculturalism in Japanese universities

Introduction

As the world becomes increasingly globalized and organizations increase their communication with people and organizations from different backgrounds, the necessity for a more diverse and multicultural workforce has also risen. International companies and organizations are having to deal with more global competitors from multiple countries, governments, cultures and languages. This creates a very high demand for coordination and control of international business activities (Lane, Maznevski, & Mendenhall, 2004). This need for a more globalized workforce has forced educational institutions to think about how diversity can be implemented into their curriculums and classrooms. Research has shown that educational institutions that embrace multiculturalism and its facets for innovation will surely have an advantage (Terenzini, et al., 2001). Thus, many researchers have begun to look at diversity in classrooms and its benefits along with its limitations. Cultural value diversity research has thus far revealed opposing and problematic results. They can be broadly categorized into four kinds based on their relationship with cultural diversity: social cognitive, affective consequences and conflicts. Furthermore, some theoretical scientists have put forth the idea that diversity can be categorized into three types: separation, variety and disparity (Harrison & Klein, 2007). Separation diversity is primarily comprised of opinions, beliefs, values and attitudes. Variety diversity refers to content, knowledge or industry expertise in a certain field. Finally, disparity diversity refers to pay, income, prestige or social status. However, with regard to the subject of classroom diversity in a university setting, much of the research relies on the numbers, ratios and percentages of ethnic/racial or gender/mix on a given

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campus (Chang, 1996; Sax, 1996). This fails to encompass the true picture of how diversity impacts learning outcomes. This short literature review seeks to examine some of the theoretical ideas that surround diversity and some of its benefits and consequences in university classrooms. A discussion of some recommendations on how to better incorporate diversity successfully into educational institutions will be made along with some directions for future research.

Statement of the Problem

Many universities and schools have made the pledge to increase diversity within their classrooms by admitting more students from various backgrounds. However, many institutions assume that by simply adding more students from different backgrounds, they will increase diversity and thereby increase the possibilities for positive learning outcomes. This is problematic because if meaningful policies are not implemented, students may feel isolated and the opposite of the desired effect may occur. In the business world, diversity in workgroups is often considered to be a double-edged sword because even though the workgroups may have a high degree of innovation, they may also be fraught with a decreased level of consensus. Adler (2002) mentions that in diversity-based workgroups, culturally imprinted perspectives, aspects and approaches may all differ amongst team members, making it difficult to cooperate or to reach a consensus. Argote and McGrath (1993) call this problem the “diversity/consensus dilemma” (p. 336). This dilemma emerges whenever workgroups are faced with a difficult task but have members who not only bring a variety of skills, perspectives and experiences but also try to integrate differing solutions, thereby making it difficult to reach an agreement. Thus, while diverse workgroups are often lauded for their high degree of innovation, they may still be plagued by the diversity/consensus dilemma. This is also true of the educational sector as assuming that students will automatically interact with one another positively will increase multiculturalism in the classroom. Students from different backgrounds have different ways of approaching learning subjects, which could result in miscommunication and avoidance. While diversity and multiculturalism are undoubtedly integral parts of the global classroom and should be used and encouraged, educational institutions must also think carefully about how to go about implementing policies related to these topics.

A study done by Stahl, Maznevsku, Voigt, and Jonsen (2010) perfectly illustrates how increased diversity may lead to a breakdown in communication and task performance in workgroups. The researchers sought to demonstrate that cultural diversity affects teams through increased divergence and decreased convergence. Examining whether aspects of surface-level vs. deep-level and cross-national vs. intranationality affects how workgroups process tasks. Examining 108 empirical studies in 10,632 teams, the researchers used a meta-analytic study to determine whether cultural diversity leads to process losses through task conflict and decreased social integration. The results showed that in larger teams, cultural diversity was associated with decreased communication processes. However, dispersed multicultural teams had less conflict and social integration. Teams that had leadership and management practices that encouraged meaningful diversity showed greater acceptance and increased communication processes. By looking at this study, one may be able to draw the conclusion that the diversity–consensus dilemma does in fact hold true for larger groups, where having too many diverse members may make it harder to reach a consensus (Argote & McGrath, 1993). In an educational setting where ideas are raised, one could also argue that if not thoughtfully implemented, policies that are aimed at increasing diversity in the classroom may lead to a high probability of negative learning outcomes.

Weick (1987) offers another name for the phenomenon of a “double-edged sword” and calls it the “accuracy cohesion-trade off” (p. 23). One could argue that this better fits the definition of a multicultural diverse workgroups because it sees the increased chance of conflict as not necessarily a dilemma but rather a tradeoff in which solutions from those from differing backgrounds may work together to extract the better parts of

their solutions to reach a compromise. The effects of diversity on group work are also problematic to analyze, as it depends on a large number of variables. For example, diversity dimensions, how the group is led and to what extent members in the group live up to stereotypes held by certain groups are just a few of the many variables that may skew analytical results. One must also recognize the social categories, personal characteristics and experiences held by each member, which further increases the ambiguity of analyzing how diversity affects workgroup problems. Thus, this literature review will look at how managers and leaderships in organizations and universities can help integrate diversity while also decreasing the trade-offs or dilemmas due to the wide variety of perspectives and experiences. It will also examine the unique circumstances of implementing diversity and multicultural policies in the Japanese educational system.

Significance of the Problem

The ultimate goal of a workgroup is to accomplish some kind of task set forth by an organization. Team performance is a multidimensional construct that comprises several ways to measure success, such as quantitative production, team outcomes and cohesion. As there has been a trend in organizations and businesses to prefer group work and increase diversity in the workplace, there have been many more management problems and an expanded note of complexity (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000). As these trends continue to increase and the world becomes more globalized through technology, the need for organizations and businesses to better innovate for a wider consumer audience increasingly becomes the deciding factor in success. Furthermore, Thomas and Ely (1996) found that business leaders who create a workplace culture in which diversity is viewed as an opportunity to learn rather than a legal requirement usually have better organizational results. Gilbert and Ivancevich (2000) also report that there are five main reasons for engaging in managing diversity: “better utilization of talent, increased marketplace understanding, enhanced breadth of understanding in leadership positions, enhanced creativity, and increased quality of team problem-solving” (p. 99). As more and more organizations seek to solve more complex and global problems, there is no doubt that benefits for engaging in more diverse workgroups exist. Therefore, one could argue that the significance of this problem is great and warrants research and further discussion.

In the case of the university system, specifically in Japan, there is a gap in the expectations between the multicultural policies implemented by universities and the results seen in classrooms. According to an article in the Japan Times, in 2017, there were approximately 267,042 international students at Japanese universities and the Japanese government aimed to attract 300,000 foreign students by 2020 (Matsutani, 2018). The Japanese Ministry of Education also developed the Top Global University Project in 2014, which had provisions such as offering degree programs in English, allowing enrollment in both Spring and Fall and relaxing the credit-transfer process for students who study abroad. Of such universities, 37 were deemed Top Global Learning Institutions in Japan and received additional funding. However, there have also been reports of universities losing track of their students and failing to help them integrate into Japanese classrooms. Many Japanese universities assume that by simply increasing the proportion of international students, students will automatically become more globalized. This is flawed as diversity can also lead to even further polarization. Furthermore, diversity is not simply measured by ethnic, racial or cultural aspects. One could thus argue that many institutions for higher learning in Japan lack meaningful diversity policies. There is no doubt that Japan will have to globalize and become more sensitive to minorities if it wishes to enhance its problem-solving skills and better equip students to deal with real-world situations.

Multiculturalism in Work Groups and in a University Setting

Before looking at how diversity affects workgroups, it is imperative that we also discuss culture, as it is the

major medium through which it is contextualized. Culture is defined as a pattern of deep personal values and assumptions concerning certain functions in society that are shared by a group of interacting people (Adler, 2002). Along the same lines, the conceptions of cultural value systems share the assumptions that differing cultures will propose distinct different answers to the same questions. Thus, due to the personal experiences, contexts and cultures of an individual, two people from differing cultures may present completely different solutions to the same problem.

From an organizational culture perspective, Reichers and Schneider (1990) has created a definition that states that the workgroup culture as a common set of shared meanings or understandings about a group. Triandis and Suh (2002) take this a step further and state that the elements of group cultures are shared standard operating procedures, strongly held personal values and trends about patterns of group member behaviors. Researchers have argued that group culture can tone down the impact of diversity in workgroups by reinforcing positive views of diversity and its presence. Thus, people generally tend to feel better when they know that they are being inclusive and cooperating and succeeding with a diverse group of members. In one study by O'Reilly, Williams, and Barsade (1997), organizational culture supporting ethnic diversity was reported to have positive effects on performance.

In a study conducted by Terenzini et al. (2001), the researchers looked at how racial and ethnic diversity promoted student learning, especially with regard to problem solving and ability to work in groups. Using the conceptual framework set forth by Schmidt (1998) – where racially homogeneous classrooms result in impoverished learning outcomes – and the structural diversity theory analyzed by Chang (1996), the researchers examine both the direct effect of classroom diversity on academic/intellectual outcomes. They also tested to see whether there were any effects of classroom diversity that may be controlled depending on whether active or collaborative instructional approaches were utilized. Using data collected from 1258 students in two different groups, one with a higher degree of diversity as measured through racial and ethnic numbers and one without, the researchers conducted a survey to gain insights on their personal backgrounds, learning experiences and classroom climates. Using a diversity index, the data was then cross-analyzed. There were limited findings to show that diversity had a positive effect on problem-solving skills and group work abilities. The relatively consistent and positive salience of medium levels of classroom diversity is the most supportive evidence for arguments that classroom diversity has positive, educational effects on student learning.

It is also important to note that diversity and culture come in various forms and cannot simply be limited to nationality. In a study conducted by Gibson and McDaniel (2010), the importance of a cross-cultural approach to organizational behavior is discussed. In much of the research that has been conducted on organizational behavior, much of the focus has been on nationalities and national cultures. However, it is important to note that a meaningful group can comprise of a plethora of different social constructs (Leung, Bhagatm, Buchan, Erez, & Gibson, 2005). In another empirical study conducted by Steward and Garcia (2008), a sample of 211 undergraduate students, of which 113 were white and 98 were black, was examined to examine racial identification and racial dissimilarity in member communication behavior. The sample groups were working in 43 temporary workgroups. The study had three hypotheses: 1) racial identification would moderate the influence of racial dissimilarity among member communication behavior; 2) member communication behaviors would mediate the effect of racial dissimilarity on workgroup identification and 3) these effects would be affected non-symmetrically by racial group membership. The results showed that the extent to which members engaged in communication behavior was a result of their perceptions of racial dissimilarity. Some white undergraduates who showed a weaker racial identification had a stronger perception of communication behavior. This study shows that how we perceive ourselves via the social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982) may or may not have a magnifying effect on how we perceive membership in a certain group. A white person from America may view him/herself as more “white” and therefore have a higher degree of separation from other ethnicities, which may affect communicative behavior. One could argue that diversity and culture and their

effects on workgroups is not simply limited to one social construct or context but rather a plethora of them, which are constantly ebbing and flowing.

Japanese multicultural policies fail in that they only measure racial or ethnic diversity. This fails to take into consideration a plethora of other factors that may contribute to diversity in the classroom; especially the important factor of social-economic background. In an article by Okubo (2013), the researcher specifically examines the practices of multiculturalism in the Japanese educational setting. Tabunka Kyosei or multiculturalism policies that have been implemented in the Japanese educational system have been largely ineffective, as evidenced by the Japanese belief that there is a boundary between Japanese and the nation's ethnic, racial, and cultural "others." In the article, Okubo (2013) performed a qualitative study of ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese in students in Japanese primary schools. Okubo (2013) further argues that there needs to be a frank discussion about a range of incorporation between the Japanese state and the dominant group in Japanese society. This should be done by using a "localized" multiculturalism, which has a better chance of enhancing multiculturalism in Japanese society.

Positives of Diversity in Workgroups and Universities

The argument for why diversity may be viewed in a positive light can be traced to the cognitive diversity hypothesis, which states that the accumulation of diverse knowledge is critical to knowledge creation efforts and that it is more likely to result new knowledge development (Miller, Burke, & Glick, 1998). Using this theoretical argument, one could state that team diversity has a positive influence on workgroup performance and results due to the unique cognitive attributes of each member. A study done by Horwitz and Horwitz (2007) illustrates that diversity facilitates team performance. In their study, they used a meta-analytic technique to examine articles on team diversity. A total of 78 correlations from 35 peer-reviewed articles from 1985 to 2006 were studied. The results showed that task-related diversity was positively related to both quality and quantity of team performance.

In a study by Bowman (2010), the researcher examined how college diversity experiences are significantly and positively related to cognitive development. The researcher gathered studies surrounding diversity in the classroom based on four criteria: (a) participants in the study were undergraduate students or reporting on their undergraduate experiences, (b) at least one independent variable measured a college diversity experience, (c) the DV measured cognitive skills and (d) statistics or data regarding the magnitude of the effect were provided. Overall, 23 samples were analyzed using meta-analytic techniques, such as hierarchical linear modeling (HLM). The results showed that there was limited evidence to suggest that college diversity experiences correlate with positive cognitive development. Specifically, Bowman (2010) found that some types of diversity experiences were more effective for promoting cognitive growth. Interpersonal interactions with racial diversity was the most strongly related to cognitive growth. However, diversity coursework, workshops and interactions with nonracial diversity were all positively related with cognitive development, the measured growth was significantly less. Thus, one could argue that there is evidence to show that increased diversity not only contributes to student learning but also is positively associated with cognitive growth.

Another longitudinal study that shows the benefits of diversity in organizational communication was done by Jehn and Bezrukova (2004). The authors looked at how the context of an organizational workgroup affects the relationship between group diversity and performance outcomes. Looking at data from 1528 workgroups from a Fortune 500 information-processing firm, the researchers examined the moderating effects of three categories of workgroup context variables: cultures, strategies and human resource practices. The results showed that members who came from more diverse backgrounds performed better on tasks and therefore were awarded with composite bonuses. It is also important to note that members of groups who were diverse with regard to levels of education also performed better. While this study has many limitations, what we may

surmise from its results is that at big international companies, such as those found on the Fortune 500 list, diversity leads to greater success rates. As for the classroom, as mentioned earlier, more diverse interactions with a multitude of people from different backgrounds helps not only teach empathy but also raise cognitive growth

In yet another meta-analytic study done by Joshi and Roh (2009), the researchers examined the role of contextual factors in team diversity. They aimed to show that a context-based approach to workplace diversity may provide useful insights into effective diversity management behaviors. The researchers analyzed data from 8,757 teams in 39 studies conducted in organizational settings. They measured contextual factors on multiple levels, including industry, occupation and team, to determine whether they would have a positive impact on performance outcomes or relations-oriented tasks. The results of the analyses proved that by targeting behaviors that promote stereotypes and by raising bias awareness, there may be a higher chance of implementing positive diversity changes. Furthermore, from an organizational communicative aspect, the researchers also found that by cooperating with educational institutions to increase gender- and race-based diversity in an applicant pool, organizations may be more poised to increase positive communicative efforts within itself. As we can see from the abovementioned three studies, one can say that diversity can lead to positive outcomes and better organizational communication. In terms of the university setting, as the world becomes more globalized, the need for more multicultural sensitivity and diversity will no doubt increase. While many Japanese universities have made the issue of diversity a keyword in their school culture, the policies and implementation have largely failed.

Measuring Diversity

Even though diversity can lead to success in outcomes, it is useful for scholar practitioners to define how success is being measured. When examining the effectiveness of workgroups, Hackman (1987) gives us three useful criteria. The first is that the outcomes of group efforts must meet or exceed the standards for quality and quantity that the organization has set. This is known as the economical dimension. The second is that the social processes used in performing the work should maintain or enhance the capability of group members to work together. This is also known as the social dimension. The third criteria is that the experience of being in a workgroup should satisfy rather than frustrate the personal needs of each group member. This is known as the individual dimension. Using the three economic, social and individual dimensions, scholar practitioners may be able to use this basic theoretical framework to analyze diversity in group-work settings. This criteria could also be applied to the university setting. The learning outcomes of classes must exceed the expectations that teachers and schools have set. Students should come out of university feeling that they have had more experiences with a diverse range of people, perhaps from different countries or backgrounds. Finally, students should also feel that they have developed more emotional awareness or empathy for those around them.

However, as mentioned in the statement of the problem, culture and diversity may be one way to increase innovation but it may also be a source of conflict and dilemma. Some theoretical scientists have put forth the idea that diversity can be categorized into three types: separation, variety and disparity (Harrison & Klein, 2007). Separation diversity refers to opinions, beliefs, values and attitudes. It is composed of differences in positions or opinions among members. Variety diversity is usually content expertise, functional backgrounds, non-redundant work ties and industry expertise. It is usually composed of differences in kinds of relevant knowledge or expertise. Finally, disparity diversity is usually pay, income, prestige, social status, power and decision-making authority. It is usually composed of differences in proportion of social power and resources. These categories for diversity are useful for scholar practitioners and researchers to examine how diversity may help workgroups. In the case of universities, this data can help create curriculum or a school culture that will enhance diversity and multiculturalism.

In a study, Daniel, Agarwal, and Stewart (2013) looked at archival data from 357 projects hosted on SourceForge through the separation, variety and disparity diversity lens. SourceForge is a virtual work group that used open source software (OSS). They hypothesized that the three types of diversity would influence two critical outcomes for OSS projects: community engagement and market success. They found that the impact of separation diversity, conceptualized as culture and measured as diversity in spoken language and country of participants, had a negative impact on community engagement. However, they also found that it had an unexpected positive effect on market success. Also, variety diversity reflected in project participant roles and positively influenced community engagement as well as market success. The key takeaway from this is that evidence suggests that diversity has strong implications for outcomes such as performance, member engagement, and withdrawal behavior. However, by further examining the types of diversity, one may be better able to harness the positive effects that diversity has to offer the manager of an organization.

Recommendations I – Not All Forms of Diversity are Created Equal

Many Japanese multicultural and diversity policies assume that increasing minority students will automatically increase multicultural awareness (Okubo, 2013). While increased episodes of including students from different backgrounds, does help foster understanding, it would be naive to state that it is enough. As mentioned in the introduction, diversity can be a double-edged sword and many organizations make the mistake of assuming that diversity will simply occur if individuals from different backgrounds are put together in a workgroup. In a study done by Garcia-Cabrera and Garcia-Soto (2010), the researchers looked at the importance of national values in relation to performance in workgroups. Using an exploratory study, the researchers sent out questionnaires to Spanish and non-Spanish speaking members of a company to measure their workplace communication perceptions and ideas. The results showed that the Spanish-speaking members and non-Spanish speaking members often felt that they were not being understood by each other. Moreover, within the Spanish-speaking groups, those from different countries also reported decreased levels of communication. What we may ascertain from this study is that creating multicultural teams while looking at the background cultural profiles of those involved must be taken into consideration. By simply assuming that teams made up of diverse members will result in more innovation, we would be making a grave mistake. It is also a mistake to assume that all types of diversity are equal and that only one aspect of diversity leads to better workgroup performance.

Another study that illustrates how simply responding to legislative mandates regarding increased diversity in organizations was done by Gilbert and Ivancevich (2000). This qualitative analysis of two organizations at different stages and their policies on diversity showed that greater acceptance of diversity is achieved by using multiple efforts, constant reinforcement and broad-scale change initiatives that are profound and purposeful. The researchers conducted interviews with human resource professionals and used reviews of company archives to examine two companies. One company had a superficial diversity commitment while the other showed deeper and more purposeful change actions. This reinforces the idea put forth by Garcia-Cabrera and Garcia-Soto (2010) that diversity for the sake of diversity with no planning or resolute commitments may not result in positive diversity outcomes.

One study that demonstrates how purposeful diversity policies may result in successful multicultural workgroups was done by Bachmann (2006). The researcher seeks to show that the theoretical perspective of coupling can be used to solve some of the consensus-related problems associated with increased diversity in workgroups. Bachman (2006) suggested that in order to achieve tight structural coupling, group leaders play an imperative role. Workgroup tasks must be subdivided into further subtasks and that ample opportunities for uninterrupted information exchange should be given. Each member of a group should also be given subtasks to create an interdependent environment. The stating of clear rules and structures also helps facilitate

a positive workgroup outcome. Bachmann (2006) mentions that what is vital is that group leaders should be aware of each group members' cultural background, skills, occupational and personal identities while assigning roles and tasks. While many of these suggestions may also be useful in a heterogeneous workgroup, one could also argue that these behaviors may be more critical in a diverse workgroup. By simply assuming that separative diversity policy recommendations would result in positive outcomes, managers and officials at institutions of higher education run the risk of failing to utilize the potential of diversity within their organizations.

Recommendations II – Personal Wellbeing and Diversity

Another recommendation for successful integration of diversity into workgroups relates to ensuring that the wellbeing of team members or students is constantly being monitored. Van Knippenberg and Schnippers (2007) performed an analysis of 29 project teams with 173 members for two weeks as a part of a project on management. The purpose of the study was to examine how team members' affective well-being influenced creativity. They also sought to examine the impact of diversity in gender, age and education had on wellbeing and creativity. The conclusion of the study stated that diversity had a significant impact on not only wellbeing but also creativity. Team member enthusiasm and personal relationships amongst members were the biggest determining factors in positive outcomes. This illustrates that managers should definitely take into consideration the feelings as well as the interactions between members when working with diverse workgroups. When looking at these results with an educational lens, one can argue that students must be carefully monitored to ensure that they do not feel threatened, especially those from disenfranchised minority groups. While many universities may claim that they are looking out for students' wellbeing, many are not proactive in approaching students who may be struggling. Thus, teachers, professors and school faculty must always be on the lookout for students who they may see as troubled.

Polzer, Milton, and Swann (2002) also performed an empirical study that looked at the interpersonal congruence of group members and how they see themselves as part of a group as related to diversity and effectiveness. Interpersonal congruence was measured based on what level participants viewed themselves and others as part of the workgroup. Participants in the study were 423 first semester Master of Business Administration Students at the University of Texas at Austin. 74% were male and the mean age was 27 years old. The authors measured the self-views of the participants at the beginning, middle and end of the semester using questionnaires. The results of the questionnaires led the authors to believe that interpersonal congruence moderates the impact of diversity on group processes and performance. Groups that achieved high interpersonal congruence and demographic diversity showed enhanced task performance and outcomes. What we may conclude from this study demonstrates that Van Knippenberg and Schnippers' (2007) idea that interpersonal relationships play a vital role in helping diversity in workgroups succeed is indeed true.

Conclusion

The international trend towards immigration and increased globalization are bringing together more people from differing backgrounds (Yaprak, 2002). This also includes women and minorities in the workplace. Given these demographics and organizational trends, managers and officials at institutions of higher education will be better off if they implement diverse workgroups and university policies that embrace multiculturalism while also recognizing its limitations (Gorski, 2002). Many authors, however, also warn against a "one-size-fits-all" approach to diversity in organizational behavior recommendations (Gibson & McDaniel, 2010). This is due to the highly contextualized countless variables that can be examined within diversity. In the university setting, the argument for increased meaningful diversity cannot be understated, as it leads

to increased cognitive growth and positive learning outcomes (Terenzini et al., 2001). However, as more and more schools jump on the bandwagon and try to implement multicultural or diversity policies in their school charters, they may also risk alienating the very students they would like to help empower. In the same manner, workgroups that are comprised of people from differing cultural backgrounds contain an increased potential for more innovative and higher quality solutions to a variety of organizational problems. However, it is the same cultural diversity that makes it a challenge for many to reach a consensus. By looking at further categorizing diversity into three types: separation, variety and disparity, organizations and managers will be better equipped to implement meaningful and purposeful diversity (Harrison & Klein, 2007). In the case of Japan, there needs to be more communication between the dominant group and the Ministry of Education to think of and implement more meaningful methods to increase diversity.

Directions for Future Research

Directions for future research include looking at how different contexts of diversity affect team performance in workgroups. As we have seen in this literature review, gender diversity may have a significant impact on diversity in team performance (Van Kippenberg & Schippers, 2007). However, the same study demonstrated that age and education level may not necessarily have an influence. Yet, in another study done by Jehn and Bezrukova (2004), they found that education level diversity may have an impact on performance. What could explain the stark differences in research results? Researchers in the past have noted that measuring and looking at diversity from one perspective is highly problematic because diversity relies on so many social, personal and cultural factors that it makes looking at each variable in and of itself extremely difficult. However, many team members and organizations report higher satisfaction and better results in culturally diverse teams (Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010). Future researchers must take these two points into consideration when performing studies. In the case of the Japanese system, examining how international universities, which have a very high proportion of students from different backgrounds, implement bonding and policies geared towards increasing meaningful diversity would be interesting. As Japan struggles with a dwindling population and more and more universities are looking to neighboring Asian countries to fulfill enrollment quotes, the need for more multicultural sensitive policies will continue to grow. Research on the lived experiences of these students and others will be of great benefit to helping Japan succeed in an ever globalized world.

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