

WEEK 2 NOTES

Chapter 2: Diversity in Organisations

OB model: how does the ever-changing demographics of the Australian workforce (X) affect an organisation's performance (Y)?

Individual: X = biographical characteristics, ability

the changing demographics of our world — multiculturalism

melting pot: a metaphor for a heterogeneous society becoming more homogenous, the different elements "melting together" into a harmonious whole with a common culture

pot of stew theory: proposes that people of various backgrounds add unique contributions that create a diverse cultural stew — now called the **multiculturalism movement**, the official policy of Australia

multiculturalism: the acceptance or promotion of multiple ethnic culture, applied to the demographic make-up of a specific place

3 dimensions of multicultural policy:

- 1) cultural identity — right to express and share heritage (within limits)
- 2) social justice — right to equality of treatment and opportunity and removal of barriers
- 3) economic efficiency — the need to maintain, develop and utilise all skills effectively

NOTE: multiculturalism still misunderstood by many Australians — some misinterpretations reflect a monocultural mindset — giving minorities special treatment

diversity in the workplace

- means having employees from wide range of backgrounds — incl. religious beliefs, ethnicity, age, physical ability, sexual orientation, etc
- **multicultural organisation:** where employees of varied backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities and experiences can contribute freely, and achieve their individual potentials for their own and the organisation's benefit
- DOESN'T necessarily mean an org with a diverse workforce
- **workforce diversity:** many different definitions and concepts, a plural term with different perceptions in different organisations, societies and cultures without any unitary meaning

DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY

primary dimensions: race, age, gender, social background, sexual orientation, mental/physical abilities, family

- core elements that shape our self image and world view

secondary dimensions: education, religious beliefs, physical location, income, type of employment

- acquired, some can be changed throughout lifetime

surface level diversity: incl. those differences that are easily noticeable such as age, gender, ethnicity, culture, language, disability

- easy to be measured and managers can fall into the wrong practise of discrimination based on these factors
- surface level diversity difficult to change, e.g, racial differences cannot be scaled down to zero

deep level diversity: not easily noticeable and measurable since they are communicated through verbal and non-verbal behaviours e.g, personal differences in attitudes, values, beliefs, personality

- usual starts with identifying surface level differences and when people get to know each other, start noticing deep level personal differences and tend to accept/dislike it
- e.g, person belonging to minority ethnic ground may be treated differently by others, but as everyone interacts with him more, seem to forget surface level differences and begin to notice differing values and beliefs and personality differences