

# Diversity Management and Trust: Systematic Literature Review

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The main aim of the paper is to identify and evaluate the state of the art in research on relationship between the concepts of diversity management and trust. The overarching question is what are the key contributions of the literature to deliver support to linkage between these two concepts. The literature analysis is also aimed at organising existing knowledge and identifying the key problems, trends and gaps in research output.

**Design/methodology/approach:** Based on a systematic review of the literature, a content analysis on 18 peer-reviewed journal articles has been carried out. The Scopus and Web of Science Core Collection databases are used as a source for the sampling process.

**Findings:** First of all, the results of the study allow to conclude that very few publications ranked as business and social sciences comprise together diversity management and trust. Thus, the analysed area seems to be an attractive field for further research. Among existing literature seven key research areas were identified, representing different approaches to the relationship between trust and diversity management.

**Research and practical limitations/implications:** The Scopus and Web of Science Core Collection databases, which were used to identify the publications analysed, do not contain all publications in the field of the study. Different languages of full text constituted an additional obstacle.

**Originality/value:** The paper contributes to the diversity management and trust literature in three ways. First, it discovers a research gap in the field of linkage between trust and diversity management. Secondly, it organises existing body of knowledge and finally it identifies the key problems and trends in research output.

**Paper type:** theoretical, literature review.

**Keywords:** trust, diversity management, systematic literature review.

## 1. Introduction

Diversity management and trust in organisations intuitively seem to be connected. Because diversity management means not only employing a diverse personnel but most of all ensuring them the feeling of inclusion in the organisation and fairness in the management's policies and procedure (Mor Barak, Cherin and Berkman, 1998, p. 82). When employees feel that they are an important part of the company and decision-making processes they demonstrate positive attitudes toward their workplace and they are more engaged (Downey, van der Werff, Thomas and Plaut, 2015, p. 35). However, it is very difficult to imagine such inclusive climate in an organisation without trust. It was observed that most of activities undertaken in the company, in order to implement the strategy of diversity management, at the same time support organisational trust (Józefowicz and Jedynak, 2016, p. 87). But it was very difficult to find a comprehensive study on the role that trust plays in the diversity management and *vice versa*.

When the author's research interests started to head towards relationships between these two concepts, the important task was to find out the support for this in the existing body of literature. Therefore, it was decided to use the evidence-based approach as a high quality method to collect and analyse the relevant research papers. Comparing to the traditional, narrative literature review, the systematic review is more reliable, transparent, and reproducible (Tranfield, Denyer and Smart, 2003, p. 210). For that reason this paper focuses on a systematic

literature review in order to identify and evaluate the state of the art in research on diversity management and trust in organisations simultaneously. This aim will be achieved by implementation the following detailed objectives:

- (1) identifying the key contributions of the literature to deliver support to linkage between diversity management and trust in organisations;
- (2) organising the existing evidence concerning diversity management and trust, in particular to summarise the empirical evidence of relationship between trust and diversity management;
- (3) identifying the key problems, trends and gaps in the analysed research output.

To investigate the aforementioned objectives the systematic literature review has been conducted using Scopus and Web of Science Core Collection databases.

## **2. The concepts of diversity management and trust**

The idea of diversity management is a relatively young concept and it expands worldwide as a result of globalisation. The traditional approach to diversity management emphasizes equality in employment, and “organisation’s ability to attract, retain, and motivate people from diverse cultural backgrounds” which can ensure the competitive advantage though better creativity, problem solving, and flexibility in adaptation to change (Cox and Blake, 1991, p. 54). According to Roberson (2006, p. 234) diversity management is connected with inclusion, and means much more than having diverse staff.

Nowadays, diversity management is one of the most important trends in human capital management for leading companies (Bourke, Garr, van Berkel and Wong, 2017, pp. 107–114). With the strong emphasis on inclusion, diversity management is crucial not only for strengthening the brand image, talent acquisition and increasing employee engagement, but it also impacts on all company’s goals and performance. In their study, Kupczyk, Szymańska, Kubicka and Oleszkiewicz (2015) define diversity management

[a]s a strategy of personnel management, based on the belief that the diversity of staff (all its possible aspect, in terms of which people are

different from each other and are alike) is one of the key resources of an organisation, which under certain conditions can become a source of business benefits (Kupczyk et al., 2015, p. 18).

In parallel, the importance of trust in organisations is highlighted by both scholars (Kramer and Tyler, 1996; Dirks and Ferrin, 2001; Krot and Lewicka, 2012) and business practitioners (Covey and Merrill, 2009; Reina and Reina, 2007). Trust creates a lot of beneficial effects such as increasing organisational flexibility, the speed of business operations, customer loyalty, employee loyalty, internal motivation and efficient management; but it also enables reorganisation, the transfer of knowledge and entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and lowering costs (Sprenger, 2007, pp. 29–61). Experiments conducted by Zak (2017) demonstrate that employees at high-trust companies, compared with those at low-trust organisations experience: 74% less stress, 106% more energy at work, 50% higher productivity, 13% fewer sick days, 76% more engagement, 29% more satisfaction with their lives, 40% less burnout. In addition, this research reveals that high-trust companies pay more and their employees earn 17% more than people at low-trust companies, which is explained by a higher level of productivity and innovativeness (Zak, 2017, p. 90). Elsewhere, Józefowicz received a similar results in survey investigating the impact of trust on company development (Józefowicz, 2013, pp. 175–178). The results showed stronger correlation of trust with innovativeness rather than productivity. It was empirically observed that trust in organisations is a critical factor in creating climate supporting pro-innovative thinking and behaviours, through ensuring emotional safety for employees' openness while sharing ideas and knowledge, which then influences of absorptive capacity development (Lis and Sudolska, 2015, p. 84).

But trust can be defined and interpreted in different ways, for instance, depending on the 'conceptual nature' of trust it can be seen as a reliance, a belief, a willingness, an expectation, a confidence, and an attitude (Castaldo, Premazzi and Zerbini, 2010, p. 663). Trust is a subject of interest for several scientific discipline, so it can describe social, economic, political, legal, and organisational relations (Kramer and Tyler, 1996, p. 3). A popular literature definition of trust is created by Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995). According to them trust is "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action

important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party” (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 712).

Trust in organisations is also differently viewed depending on the level of analysis (Kramer and Tyler, 1996, pp. 6–8):

- (1) macrolevel analysis – concentrated on an institutional or organisational level;
- (2) mesolevel analysis – focused on the context within which trust emerges, e.g. by cooperative relationships and interpersonal networks;
- (3) microlevel analysis – concerning the psychology of the individual.

All of these levels find their representatives in this study. Generally, “to say we trust you means we believe you have the right intentions toward us and that you are competent to do what we trust to do” (Hardin, 2006, p. 17).

### 3. Research methodology

To answer the research question about the linkage between diversity management and trust the evidence from existing research should be delivered. The methodological recommendation in such a case is to employ systematic literature review as a tool which enhances the quality of the review process and outcomes by increasing methodological rigour ensuring transparency and reproducibility (Tranfield et al., 2003, pp. 209–210; Czakon, 2015, p. 123). Moreover, using the systematic review enables to conduct quantitative analysis and evaluation of extensive amount of literature (Mulrow, 1994, p. 598; Czakon, 2015, p. 124). The source of inspiration for the investigation procedure came from works of Lis (2017) and Czerniachowicz, Lis and Wiczorek-Szymańska (2017), which were used as benchmarks. Following them the research process was divided into three phases. First phase, the systematic search, was the identification of keywords and search terms used to mapping the research field. In the next phase, the abstracts of the publications were analysed in order to point out the key research topics and trends in the field. Thirdly, the analysis of full texts was conducted to identify key contributions they made to the field, as well as, identify existing evidence concerning diversity management and trust.

To reach the research goals an appropriate literature to the study was selected. Research sample was retrieved from the two most

comprehensive databases of peer-reviewed journals in social sciences i.e. Scopus (Sco) and Web of Science Core Collection (WoS). Data were retrieved on 3 December 2017. For the initial search, the terms ‘diversity management’ and ‘trust’ were searched in titles, abstracts and keywords of publications indexed in Scopus and Web of Sciences. The publication time of searched papers was not limited. Table 1 presents the results of the following steps within the sampling process aimed at identifying the articles to be included in this review.

**Table 1.** Results of the article selection process

No.	Step in selection process	N
1.	Records identified through searching in Scopus	20
2.	Records identified through searching in Web of Science Core Collection	16
3.	Records identified through searching in both databases	36
4.	Records after removing duplicates	27
5.	Records rejected as not sufficiently relevant after analysing abstracts	9
6.	Articles included in qualitative synthesis	18

Source: Own study.

Among 36 records identified initially, 9 publications were registered in both databases, so 27 have left after duplicates removal. But not all of articles were relevant to the aim of the analysis. The following inclusion criteria was established. The sample has been limited to Business, Management and Accounting and Social Sciences subject areas, excluding publications in IT, biology, and medicine. In order to be included in this review, papers should be published in peer-reviewed journals and contain debate on trust and diversity management simultaneously. Of course, both terms should be interpreted in a relevant way.

During the abstract analysis it occurred that there were several publications which did not match the criteria. For instance, in one of them the term ‘trust’ is used in a different meaning and describes the trust as an organisation managing the property and finances in hospitals (Dawson, 2004). Another one discusses neither diversity management nor trust, but studies impact of ethical environment on organisational performance and searched constructs are used only in abstract (Hijal-Moghrabi, Sabharwal and Berman, 2017). For these reasons the mentioned items have been excluded from the research sample, too. Thus, 18 publications left as a final research sample.

#### 4. Toward the relationship between diversity management and trust

Regarding aforementioned processes, further efforts toward identifying relationship between diversity management and trust were made. The results of literature selection to the topic analysis are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Diversity management and trust systematic literature review sample

No.	Author(s)	Year	Article Title	Journal Title	Sco	WoS
1.	Pelled and Xin	2000	Relational demography and relationship quality in two cultures	Organization Studies	X	X
2.	Pless and Maak	2004	Building an inclusive diversity culture: Principles, processes and practice	Journal of Business Ethics	X	X
3.	O'Brien, Alexander Haslam, Jetten, Humphrey, O'Sullivan, Postmes, Eggins and Reynolds	2004	Cynicism and disengagement among devalued employee groups: The need to ASPIRe	Career Development International	X	-
4.	Schubert	2006	Integration, ethnicity, education. The definition of ethnic identity of students with Turkish heritage [Integration, ethnizität und bildung die definition ethnischer identität studierender türkischer herkunft]	Berliner Journal fur Soziologie	X	X
5.	Choi	2007	Governance structure and administrative corruption in Japan: An organizational network approach	Public Administration Review	X	X
6.	Amiri and Kavousy	2010	Ethnic diversity management based on social capital theories	European Journal of Social Sciences	X	-

**Table 2.**  
continued

No.	Author(s)	Year	Article Title	Journal Title	Sco	WoS
7.	Choi	2011	Organizational justice and employee work attitudes: The federal case	American Review of Public Administration		X
8.	Ben-Porat, Yuval and Mizrahi	2012	The challenge of diversity management: Police reform and the Arab minority in Israel	Policy Sciences	X	X
9.	Polat	2012	Organizational values needed for diversity management	Kuram ve Uygulamada Egitim Bilimleri	-	X
10.	Ling, Dulaimi and Chua	2013	Strategies for managing migrant construction workers from China, India, and the Philippines	Journal of Professional Issues in Engineering Education and Practice	X	X
11.	Schweer, Petermann and Egger	2013	To the importance of multidimensional categorisation processes for the trust development-an up to now widely neglected field of research	Gruppendedynamik Und Organisationsberatung	-	X
12.	Shen, Tang and D'Netto	2014	A multilevel analysis of the effects of HR diversity management on employee knowledge sharing: The case of Chinese employees	International Journal of Human Resource Management	X	-
13.	Cantón-Delgado and Royo	2014	Leadership, power and ethnicity in Iglesia Filadelfia (Philadelphia Church) in Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz): God wants us to move to that temple [Liderazgo, poder y etnicidad en la Iglesia Filadelfia de Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz): Dios quiere que nos mudemos a ese templo]	Revista de Dialectología y Tradiciones Populares	X	-

No.	Author(s)	Year	Article Title	Journal Title	Sco	WoS
14.	Salampasis, Mention and Torkkeli	2015	Trust embeddedness within an open innovation mindset	International Journal of Business and Globalisation	X	-
15.	Kupczyk, Szymańska, Kubicka and Oleszkiewicz	2015	Implementation of diversity management in Poland and its relationship with organizational trust	International Journal of Organizational Diversity	X	-
16.	Capell, Tzafrir and Dolan	2016	The disclosure of concealable stigmas: Analysis anchored in trust	Cogent Psychology	-	X
17.	Howarth and Andreouli	2016	Nobody wants to be an outsider: From diversity management to diversity engagement	Political Psychology	-	X
18.	McCallaghan and Heyns	2016	Investigating the relationship between trust and the diversity climate of a South African tertiary institution	Tydskrif Vir Geesteswetenskappe	-	X

**Table 2.**  
continued

Source: Own study.

The research sample consisted of 18 papers published between 2000 and 2016. Hence, the interests in connecting diversity management and trust in the scientific research is a new idea. The majority of papers in research sample is written in English (14), but three works are in German and one in Spanish language. Interestingly, while studying this quite small research sample according to category ‘countries/territories’ of publications a big variety can be noticed, without the domination of any of them. There are papers from 14 different countries: Australia, the United Kingdom, China, Germany, Finland, Hong Kong, Iran, Israel, Luxembourg, Poland, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, the United States. Thus, collected publications discuss problems of different societies in different environments.

The content analysis of the 18 publications included to the research sample reveals that only two articles concern the analysed topic directly. Both refer to the relationship between diversity management and

trust, which is exactly expressed in their titles. First one is “Implementation of diversity management in Poland and its relationship with organizational trust” (Kupczyk et al., 2015). Second one, is “Investigating the relationship between trust and the diversity climate of a South African tertiary institution” (McCallaghan and Heyns, 2016). Whereas the majority of papers refers to these concepts in a less direct way.

The full text analysis allowed to cluster all surveyed studies according to their research area. The identified key areas of research, along with the brief description of their contribution to the research field, are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** The key areas of research on the diversity management and trust

No.	Key research area	Publication	Key contribution to the linkage between diversity management and trust
1.	The role of trust in diversity management – organisational context	Pless and Maak (2004)	Authors propose a normative approach to diversity management and recommend to create inclusive diversity culture in an organization. Trust and integrity are the important values in the process of developing such a culture. The article contains description of principles and the four stages conceptual model fostering the inclusion toward the successful diversity management.
		O’Brien et al. (2004)	The analysis of trust in organisations as the antecedent of successful exploitation of the social capital of devalued employee groups. Research conducted among hospital staff revealed that previously experienced lack of trust is one of the barriers to engagement in programs connected with diversity management.
		Polat (2012)	In this paper trust is considered as a significant value in organisational culture to managing diversity successfully. Interviews conducted among school managers confirm that existing differences between staff require common values to connect organisations members and help diversity management.

**Table 3.**  
continued

No.	Key research area	Publication	Key contribution to the linkage between diversity management and trust
1.		Ling, Dulaimi and Chua (2013)	Based on the survey conducted among project managers in Singapore the cultural similarities and differences between migrant workers from China, India, and Thailand were identified. Research results enabled to form recommendations for managers who want to overcome communication and productivity problems, because cultural diversity among migrant employees requires specific efforts of management. In addition, the need of building trust and positive relationships in teams is highlighted.
2.	Diversity management impact on trust in organisations	Shen, Tang and D'Netto (2014)	Based on the quantitative survey conducted among Chinese employees, the relationship between human resource diversity management and employee knowledge sharing with a mediating role of trust was confirmed. Moreover, findings demonstrate that the impact of trust in the organisation on knowledge sharing was moderated by cooperative norms.
		Capell, Tzafirir and Dolan (2016)	The theoretical study illustrates the impact of employees' trust in their direct supervisors and trust in the organisation on the disclosure decision. Authors deliver recommendations for diversity management efforts focused on inclusive HRM policies which provide employees with trust and allow to disclosure of concealable stigmas without negative consequences of coming out (sharing sensitive personal information). The role of legal protection against discrimination is also underlined.
		Howarth and Andreouli (2016)	The critical analysis of literature on diversity management from social and political psychology perspective. Authors connect constructs of diversity, community, and multiculturalism and explain the psychological approach to diversity management recommending engaging with diversity – to increase dialogue, reduce prejudice, and promote constructive social relations – rather than traditional diversity management, which can lead to distrust, prejudice, and conflict. Empirical examples of diversity experienced in schools across England deliver important implication for diversity management policies.

**Table 3.**  
continued

No.	Key research area	Publication	Key contribution to the linkage between diversity management and trust
3.	Correlation between diversity management and trust	Kupczyk, Szymańska, Kubicka and Oleszkiewicz (2015)	The exploration of the state of implementation of diversity management and the relationship between diversity management and trust based on qualitative and quantitative studies conducted in Poland. Findings demonstrate significant positive correlations between diversity management and three types of trust: trust in a company, managers, and between co-workers.
		McCallaghan and Heyns (2016)	The research illustrating the relationship between trust in a supervisor and the diversity climate within the business unit in a South African university. The results of the quantitative study confirm that the perceived level of trust in a manager is correlated with perceived diversity management effectiveness. Moreover, findings demonstrate there are no significant differences in perception of diversity climate among employees with diverse individual characteristics, such as gender, education, ethnic, employment status etc.
4.	Impact of diversity on trust	Choi (2011)	This paper concerns the relationships between perceived organisational justice and trust toward their supervisors and management (among other employees' work-related attitudes e.g. job satisfaction). The study results demonstrate that higher levels of three types of organisational justice are positively related to trust in supervisor and management. Gender is the dimension which makes a difference in this relations that, a higher level of trust in management occurs among women when they perceive procedural justice, whereas distributive and interpersonal justice is related with a higher level of trust for men.
		Pelled and Xin (2010)	Research demonstrates that age and gender similarity between supervisors and subordinates influence on their relationships quality in different manners, depending on nationality. Trust is one of the relationships quality dimension empirically tested in the United States and Mexico in the same company. The results show that gender similarity has a stronger positive impact on trust in Mexico compared with the US, but age similarity has negative effects on supervisor-subordinate relationship quality in Mexico, in contrast to US.

No.	Key research area	Publication	Key contribution to the linkage between diversity management and trust
		Schweer, Petermann and Egger (2013)	Authors emphasize the importance of trust in effective diversity management. Theoretical analysis focuses on influence of perceived category of individuals characteristics on the quality of social relations and therefore also the process of trust building. The recommendations for practice and for further interdisciplinary research are formulated.
5.	Public trust, and ethnic and religious diversity in societies – socio-political context	Schubert (2006)	The article presents the problem of cultural integration of students with Turkish immigrant heritage in Germany alongside with unaccepting their ethnical characteristics by themselves. All in the face of new career opportunities generated by diversity management in international companies. Author analyses different types of social integration and discusses the process of creating new type of personal identities, post-traditional communities, and active trust.
		Amiri and Kavousy (2010)	The investigation of the role of governments and citizens in creating social capital in Iran and analysis of significance of public trust, and ethnic diversity. Based on social capital theories authors recommend the assimilation and pluralism models for shaping global ethnic policy and ethnic model of “Unity in Plurality” to implement in Iran for building social capital.
		Cantón-Delgado and Royo (2014)	The results of ethnographic research examining the role of ethnic and religious differences in making decision to maintain the autonomy of evangelical gypsy congregation in spite of the economic and political benefits from connection with Federation of Cultural Christian Associations of Andalusia. One of the identified reason determining adverse decision is lack of institutional trust, while interpersonal trust between churches’ leaders existed. The paper is also the review of the mechanisms of religious diversity management designed by the Spanish public administration.

**Table 3.**  
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**Table 3.**  
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No.	Key research area	Publication	Key contribution to the linkage between diversity management and trust
6.	Diversity management as a vehicle for building trust in public administration institutions	Choi (2007)	Author suggests that implementation of the diversity management in Japanese public administration could reduce corruption and rebuild public trust.
		Ben-Porat, Yuval and Mizrahi (2012)	A study of the Arab minority in Israel to identify citizen's perception of the Police in order to examine potential reforms toward diversity management and consequently to increase trust and Police – minority cooperation.
7.	Trust and diversity management as common antecedents of another variable	Salampasis, Mentation and Torkkeli (2015)	The proposal of conceptual model presenting a new approach to open innovation within organisations. Trust is embedded in this model because of impacts on collaboration and knowledge sharing. The vital importance of trust and diversity management as antecedents of open innovation is highlighted. The relationship between trust and diversity management was not clearly analysed.

Source: Own study.

The analysis of complete texts of publications enabled to identify key research areas and trends in the literature combining diversity management and trust. Moreover, this step allowed to organise the existing evidence concerning diversity management and trust, in particular to summarise the empirical evidence of relationship between trust and diversity management.

Seven key research areas in the discussed field were identified: (1) the role of trust in diversity management within the organisational context, (2) diversity management impact on trust in organisations, (3) correlation between diversity management and trust, (4) impact of diversity on trust, (5) public trust, and ethnic and religious diversity in societies from socio-political perspectives, (6) diversity management as a vehicle for building trust in public administration institutions, (7) trust and diversity management as common antecedents of another variable. The first three, together with the last two identified clusters of key areas of research on the diversity management and trust, refer to organisational context. They demonstrate different directions of mutual influence of these two concepts. In the first cluster trust is mentioned only as one of the antecedents of diversity management, in the second trust is

a desired effect of diversity management, but the third one delivers the evidence of correlation between diversity management and trust without inferences about the direction of this relationship. The sixth group sheds light on problems in public administration. Whereas, the last research area considers trust and diversity management only as common antecedents of open innovation. Furthermore, the articles included in the fourth cluster concern some diversity dimensions and investigate their impact on different types of trust. But the fifth key research area contributes to the research field by introducing socio-political approach discussing public trust, as well as ethnic and religious diversity. What is worth adding, almost all reviewed papers contain remarks referring to insufficient evidence on the relationship between trust and diversity management in the existing literature.

## 5. Conclusions

Summing up, the aim of the paper was reached by analysing the literature contributions to the body of knowledge on relationships between the concepts of diversity management and trust in organisations. The results show that the study of connections between diversity management and trust is not very popular in scientific research. Using systematic literature review methodology entitles to conclude that a research gap was identified. The relationship between diversity management and trust is not empirically proved in an unambiguous and comprehensive way. In particular, the following questions seem to be interesting to be investigated: (1) what is trust impact on diversity management process and inversely?, (2) how do diversity management practices affect trust in organisations? The analysed research field remains unexplored, so there is a promising space for further research.

However, some limitations of the research process are important to be mentioned. One is related to the methodology which is limited to the systematic literature survey without recommended triangulation of research methods. Secondly, Scopus and Web of Sciences databases used for the articles selection process do not include all publications in the field of the study. Moreover, one fourth of analysed full texts of publications are written in different than English languages, which constitutes an additional obstacle for their analysis. For these reasons further in-depth studies within the field should be conducted.

First of all, the correlation between diversity management and trust should be confirmed in broader investigations. Next, the identification of the antecedents of trust in managing diverse groups could extend the knowledge and provide practical recommendations to managers. Moreover, new research directions could be developed. For instance, a very interesting research development in this field would be measuring of the strength of mutual impact of diversity management and trust in organisations. And, because of the important role of inclusion in diversity management, this concept should be added to the future analysis of the linkage between diversity management and trust.

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