What is a Diversity Manager?

Developing a Study Framework from an Analysis of the Literature

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Abstract

This paper examines the existing literature into the diversity manager to understand who they are and what they do. Three main themes found in the literature are discussed; "locating the diversity manager" (where the diversity managers are in the company and what characterizes their post), "the journey of the diversity manager" (the paths the diversity managers took to end up in their position and the learning and professional experience they gained before becoming diversity managers) and "the competencies of the diversity manager" (the skills and attitudes the diversity managers have or need to have that enables them to be successful in their work). These three themes are drawn together in a dynamic model of the diversity manager as a guide for future studies in studying the diversity manager. The paper concludes with a discussion about how a study into the first diversity managers in Japan can bring a more universal understanding and new insights into the work and role of the diversity manager.

1. Introduction

Despite the spread of diversity management practices in companies throughout the world and the growing academic and business literature into the concept and dynamics of diversity management, there are very few studies into the person responsible for "doing the work of diversity", the diversity manager. Greene and Kirton (2009) argue this represents a gap in our understanding of diversity management as although we can learn from the literature about companies' diversity policies and programs, we do not

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know much about the actual person who has been made the specialist or responsible for developing the initiatives, planning and implementing them. Indeed, as Tatli and Ozbiligin (2009) point out, the diversity manager is the most "visible" person in the practice of diversity management due to their role as "agents" for organizational change that makes managing diversity possible. Recognizing this need to understand who and what the diversity manager does to gain better insight into diversity management, there have been a few studies that focus on what is generally termed the "diversity practitioner". Although the studies are limited, they do provide us with a start into forming a study framework into who and what the diversity manager does and how the experience of diversity managers in Japan can contribute further to a more universal understanding of the diversity manager that can lead to further development of the concept of diversity management itself.

In this paper, I examine the existing literature into the diversity manager to understand who they are and what they do. I begin by providing some context by briefly tracing the development of diversity management. I then draw out of the literature the main themes and issues and show the interplay with the themes in my development of a dynamic framework of the diversity manager. The themes cover three main areas; "locating the diversity manager" (where the diversity managers are in the company and what characterizes their post), "the journey of the diversity manager" (the paths the diversity managers took to end up in their position and the learning and professional experience they gained before becoming diversity managers) and "the competencies of the diversity manager" (the skills and attitudes the diversity managers have or need to have that enables them to be successful in their work). I then conclude the analysis with a brief discussion that draws upon some preliminary findings into my own research into the first diversity managers in Japan to consider the implications my study has for the framework.
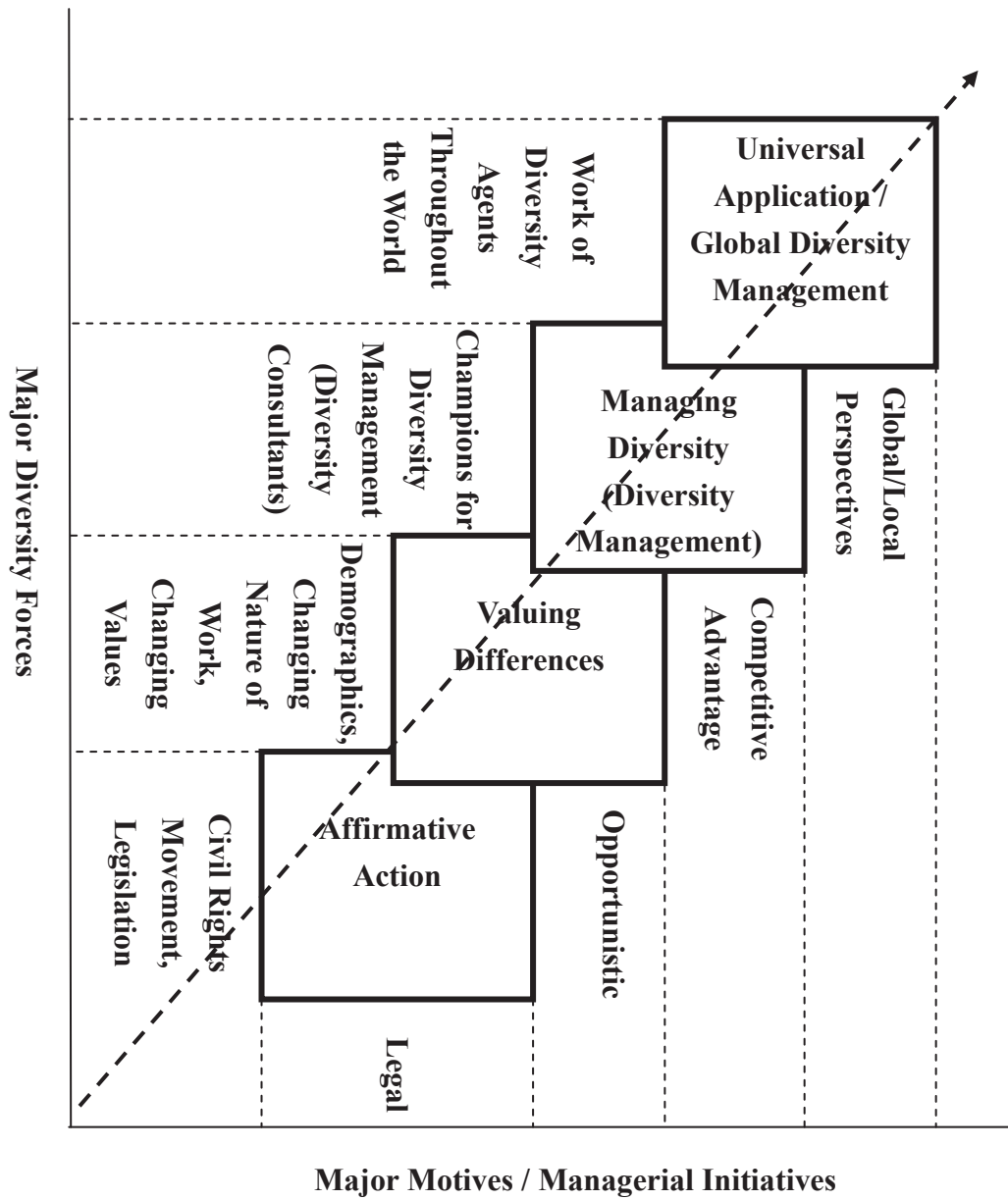
2. The Diversity Manager in Historical Context
In order to have a better understanding of the diversity manager, we need to place the diversity manager in their historical context by briefly looking at the evolution of diversity management.

In a separate paper, (McDonald 2010), I traced how the concept and practice of diversity management first evolved in the USA to then be taken up by companies around the world, particularly the West. This evolution involved an interplay with social changes that became major forces behind the increasing importance of diversity for society and business and the managerial motives and initiatives that led to companies from initially complying with the legal requirements of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity laws to embracing diversity as a corporate strategy to increase business competitiveness (refer to Figure 1). As diversity management continues to spread amongst companies throughout the world, the concept and practice has been problematized so as to both be relevant for a non-USA business and social context and to also reframe "the business case for diversity" (Litvin 2002) to ensure it includes diversity's roots in social justice (refer, for example, to the study by Greene and Kirton, 2009).

Within this evolution of the practice of diversity management has been the establishment of specialist positions in companies that pre-empt the current post or title of "diversity manager". In my study (McDonald, 2010) of the evolution the concept of diversity management in the USA, I describe beginning stages of Affirmative Action that grew out of the civil rights movement and Equal Employment Opportunity which both led to the passing of numerous laws that public and private institutions had to abide by. To ensure compliance with these laws, companies established the positions of "affirmative action officer" and then "equality officers" or "equal opportunity officers" (Lawrence, 2000). Greene and Kirton (2009) describe how equality officers often belonged to personnel departments and were responsible for "… equality work typically involv(ing) monitoring policies and practices, recommending policy changes and new policy initiatives and providing training on equality issues" (p.115). Just as I have argued (McDonald, 2010) that top management's implementation of affirmative action and equity policies were reactionary initiatives, I also argue that the formal position and role of affirmative action officers and equity officers were established by top management to mostly be legally compliant.

Figure 1

Major Forces and Motives Influencing the Evolution of Diversity Management

Major Diversity Forces

Work of Diversity Agents Throughout the World		Universal Application / Global Diversity Management	
Management (Diversity Consultants)	Champions for Diversity	Managing Diversity (Diversity Management)	Global/Local Perspectives
Demographics, Changing Nature of Work, Changing Values		Valuing Differences	Competitive Advantage
Civil Rights Movement, Legislation		Affirmative Action	Opportunistic
		Legal	

Major Motives / Managerial Initiatives

Further modification of McDonald (2010) and based on the work of Thomas, Roosevelt R. Jr. (1991) *Beyond Race and Gender: Unleashing the Power of Your Total Workforce by Managing Diversity*, New York: AMACOM, p. 28.

With the move from "valuing differences" to "managing diversity" or "diversity management" as shown in Figure 1, the equality officers, as Kirton and Greene (2016) also describe, were "replaced" by diversity "practitioners" or managers. The move from affirmative action and equity to diversity management was enabled by a shift in top management philosophy that placed diversity as a source of competitive advantage (McDonald, 2010) which is commonly referred to now in the literature as "the business case for diversity" (Litvin, 2002). With diversity positioned as a corporate strategy, those who are appointed to the specialist post of "diversity manager" become formally responsible for designing and implementing diversity policies and programs in line with the "… management philosophy of recognizing heterogeneity with a view of improving organizational performance in the workplace" (Tatli and Özbilgin, 2009, p. 244).

The diversity manager that is the focus of this paper is therefore an outcome of both issues surrounding social equity and justice and as the person who enables in practice top management's philosophy of diversity as a corporate strategy. In recognizing the legacy of equity for the diversity manager position, as Kirton, Greene and Dean (2007) also note, there is a challenge for the diversity manager to incorporate equality in the pursuit of diversity as a business imperative.

3. Locating the Diversity Manager

Examining the literature to find where the diversity manager is in the organization, who they are and what it is they are formally responsible for enables us in "locating" the diversity manager. In a review of the literature, this insight is gained from studies that create categories for those who are involved in the work of diversity. In the process of categorizing, the researchers discuss what characterizes these people in terms of who the are, where they are positioned and the scope of their responsibility.

The generic term most scholars use to cover all those who do diversity work is "diversity practitioner" (see for example, Kirton and Greene 2016, Conlon 1993, Maltbia 2001 and Moses 2010). Other studies (Tatli 2008, Özbilgin and Tatli 2008, and Tatli and Özbilgin 2009) use the term "diversity manager".

Gregory and Ouellette's (1995) USA-based study is the first attempt in the mainstream

literature to articulate the work and role of the diversity practitioner in the business world. Since the authors focused on people whose work involved dealings with diversity, they use the term "diversity practitioner" as a broad category. Gregory and Ouellette (1995) state in practice, the term diversity practitioner can cover, for example, "… a trainer, a consultant, a line manager, or a company's full-time diversity director" (p. 48). In setting up their research framework, the authors divide diversity practitioners into two main types – external and internal diversity practitioners. The external diversity practitioner may have a contract with an organization, but not belong to it, whereas the internal practitioner is employed either part time or full time and thus belong to the organization where they do their diversity work. Since it is the "internal diversity practitioner" that is most similar to the "diversity manager" that is the focus of this paper, it is Gregory and Ouellette's findings about this practitioner that provides the greatest insight in locating the diversity manager.

Gregory and Ouellette (1995) found that internal diversity practitioners conducted their work within the human resources department but there was a distinction as to whether the work they did was positioned as a part of a broader human resource management strategy or as a "separate and specific function". They argue that underlying this distinction is an important dynamic that reflects the company's philosophy towards diversity and subsequent strategies for dealing with diversity issues. If diversity is positioned as a broad function in human resources, success of diversity efforts depends on the relations that members of human resources have with members of other divisions in the organization. Another outcome of this broader approach is that a member of human resources is "delegated" with the role to do diversity work which leads to success of the diversity initiatives dependent on the delegated member's perception of responsibility and level of proactive effort in their work. These findings came from a concern voiced by many of the internal diversity practitioners from a stance that saw diversity as a business imperative. The practitioners believed that diversity issues needed to be positioned within a specialized "diversity function" so that strategies specifically targeting diversity could be effectively developed.

Although Kirton and Greene (2016) also use the term "diversity practitioner" in their UK-based study, they provide a more detailed breakdown of where these practitioners

are positioned and the extent of their roles. Who they term (diversity) "consultants" and "campaigners" are located external to the organization. Those who are internal to the organization are "specialists" and "champions". Diversity champions are defined as "… managers who have the role of 'championing' diversity in their departments" (p. 202). Diversity specialists are those whose "…job title contains 'diversity'" (p.202) and whose "… job is largely dedicated to equality work" (p. 202). It these "diversity specialists" that are close to the sense that diversity manager is used in this paper.

Kirton and Greene (2016) found that most diversity specialists work in human resource departments but could also be found in areas of the organization that dealt with corporate social responsibility or "stand alone diversity units". The responsibility of the diversity specialist involved diversity management "… policy development, overseeing policy implementation, monitoring impact and effectiveness of policy initiatives and advising other departments on equality and diversity" (p. 202).

Tatli and Özbilgin (2009) use the term "diversity manager" in their study that focuses on what other researchers have termed "specialist diversity practitioners". With the focus on diversity managers as "agents", Tatli and Özbilgin (2009) focus on "… diversity managers who assume the leading role in the strategy making, design, delivery, implementation, and monitoring of initiatives, which affect organizational change" (p. 245). Depending on the gradation of the role of the diversity manager from merely adhering to legal requirements towards a more "sophisticated" approach to diversity management, they could be found amongst line managers, as part of a "centralized unit" or "a single person". Tatli and Özbilgin (2009) provide a rigorous conceptual model to determine the scope and effectiveness of the diversity manager's role. This comes from a view that the "boundaries" between the roles of equality and diversity specialists can become blurred in practice. Drawing on the philosophy of Pierre Bourdieu, Tatli and Özbilgin (2009) present a model of the diversity manager's agency that consists of "… a combined attention to individual, structural and relational dynamics" (p. 248). As such, it is a sophisticated model that provides a richer sense of how the diversity manager is located in practice under a wide spectrum of conditions, situations and circumstances.

In understanding who the diversity manager is and what they do, the limited literature

provides a number of important insights and issues to consider. There are a wide range of people involved in diversity work, but it is the manager who is responsible for planning and implementation of diversity programs and initiatives that locates them as the diversity manager. Where the diversity manager is positioned in the company reflects the particular philosophy top management holds towards diversity itself – whether it be merely to abide to legal requirements or, at the other end of the spectrum, crafting diversity as an important corporate strategy to enhance corporate competitiveness or what is commonly referred to as the business case for diversity. However, as the study by Kirton and Greene (2016) points out, the business case for diversity needs to be qualified in terms of whether it includes proper attention to and effectiveness in dealing with equity issues as part of strategy for obtaining corporate competitiveness. This qualification determines both the work the diversity manager is involved in and the type of person who conducts this work. Also, even when the diversity manager is positioned as specialist to pursue diversity work, as Tatli and Özbilgin (2009) point out, a much more complex attention needs to be paid to the interaction and dynamics between individual, structural and relational spheres. The nature of the interaction between these spheres determines the extent to which the diversity manager can be an agent for change and it is within this dynamic that the diversity manager is ultimately located. Finally, an important new insight that I draw from the overview of the literature is that diversity managers themselves play a role in locating themselves within the organization and work they do. This relates to how the diversity manager came to be one (their journey) and the ability to perform diversity work (competency) which are covered in the following sections.

4. The Journey of the Diversity Manager

The paths the diversity manager took to eventually become the person responsible for the development of diversity management programs and their implementation in their company is another major theme found in the literature. Some researchers have termed this process as a "journey" (for example, Maltbia, 2001) and others have the used "background" (for example, Gregory and Ouellette (1995). In this paper, I use the term "journey" to represent the dynamic interplay between the broad array of individual personal life experiences and the learning gained from these experiences, and the educational and professional background that the literature positions as an important as

this enabled the diversity manager gain their position and to be able to carry out their work, and the personal "drive" to commit to work in the specialization of diversity.

Gregory and Ouellette's (1995) study provides the most comprehensive investigation of the journey or what they have termed the "background" of diversity managers as their study looked at the "… education, backgrounds, occupations, and career paths of individuals practicing in the (diversity management) in the field" (p.47). In terms of formal education, the study found that most of the diversity practitioners they interviewed had pursued learning in the area of psychology and sociology with a number having studied business and finance, others liberal arts and humanities. At the time the diversity practitioners undertook their education, there were no specialist subjects on diversity, especially in terms of diversity as a business issue. However, Gregory and Ouellette (1995) assert that since the respondents believed they had been doing diversity work one way or another up until formally taking up the position of diversity practitioner, that inherent in the studies, especially in organizational behavior, psychology and sociology, there was an implicit "body of of knowledge" which now is "attached to the concept of workplace diversity". Gregory and Ouellette (1995) note some of the respondents had not set out to become diversity practitioners and, in general, the formal education people have does not often correspond with the occupation they pursue. Over their lifetime, people take on a number of different types of jobs.

Beyond formal higher education, the study revealed that the diversity practitioners pursued on their own accord training in areas that the practitioner saw as beneficial in working with diversity, in the way the practitioner perceived "diversity" to be and the expertise they therefore thought they required. The period that the practitioners started this specialist training was usually when they had decided that they wanted to pursue a career related to diversity.

Gregory and Ouellette (1995) position the professional (or career path) of the diversity practitioners as what these researchers termed the "points of entry" that lead to being involved in diversity practice in the workplace. Since the respondents, in reflection, felt that they had been involved in diversity work before taking up the official role, the researchers wanted to know what work they were involved in and how the practitioner's

believed it was diversity work. Each of the practitioners had pursued very different specialist careers, however Gregory and Ouellette (1995) found common threads in the nature of the work that resounded with what is important when working with diversity. One common thread was empathy which was found especially amongst practitioners who had been involved in work in the capacity of counselor as this involved understanding and working with many different types of people. The other thread was the use of skills in teaching and training people, what I would term as "nurturing". The third thread was the strong "… personal dedication, interest or commitment to a cause" (p. 52). This translated into the drive to pursue work connected to what was historically relevant for the practitioners at the time, the civil right's movement. Involvement in the movement involved work covering areas of community development and job training.

The UK-based study by Kirton and Greene (2016), as a more recent study, lists among the category of internal diversity practitioners the specialist in diversity and describes the people who usually take up this post are driven by the motivation to pursue a career in diversity. As mentioned in the previous section, Kirton, Greene and Dean (2007) found that with the corporate philosophy towards diversity as a strategic business imperative, the previous post of "equality officer" has been replaced with the "diversity professional".

This shift to a "business case for diversity" has, as Kirton and Greene (2016) argue, opened up the position to a broader range of people than those who were equality officers. In an initial study, Greene and Kirton (2009) described how the equality officer had come "… from leftist community/political activist backgrounds and were often feminist women and/or black and minority ethnic (BME) people" (p. 115). These people had experienced discrimination and harassment which characterized their approach in their work. On the other hand, Kirton and Greene (2016) found that with the establishment of the formal diversity specialist position those who were in that position held jobs as operational managers or were involved in human resource operations with very few holding experience as "diversity/equality" specialists. Kirton and Greene (2016) found that BME people were very hard to find in these new specialist positions. They also suggest in terms of diversity management that policy making was handled by white men with minorities given the role of implementing this policy, a situation they

have problematized with their call for the business case for diversity to include dealing with equality as part of the concept.

Maltbia's (2001) study of the diversity practitioner begins with a focus on the present-held competencies of the practitioner and draws a linkage between experience and learning. This experience and learning is considered within the current position of the diversity practitioner, however, Maltbia's (2001) study provides an in-depth analysis of existing studies into how diversity practice evolved and the people who took up these positions becoming part of his own research framework. What is most important to note in Maltbia's (2001) study is how he terms this dynamic of interplay between experience and learning that develop competencies as the diversity practitioner's "journey".

The "journey" of the diversity manager as discussed and framed in the literature draws out a number of dynamics that are important to consider. One is there are no set career paths that lead to becoming a diversity manager. Rather it is the nature of the previous work that involve aspects of empathy, nurturing and the driving force of dedication to a cause that have generally steered individuals to become diversity specialists. Recognizing this in conjunction with how diversity specialists pursued on their own initiative training they believed would better equip them with the skills to do diversity work, the journey is characterized as being a self-led one. Another dynamic that is important in enabling those who want to become diversity specialists is the philosophical stance and approach top management hold in the "business case for diversity". If the approach is void of dealing with equality, this can lead to a dissonance with the beliefs of diversity practitioners who have pursued a career in diversity with a cause related to equality, or even lowering their opportunity to gain the diversity specialist position in the company in the first place. And finally, is the notion of the diversity manager's journey as an interplay between learning and experience that forms the competencies needed to conduct their work.

5. The Competencies of the Diversity Manager

Competencies required to do diversity work is another major theme in the literature that focuses on diversity managers. This theme can be viewed as contentious in the literature because of the dynamic of who decides what these competencies are or should be. This

contention exists within a larger dynamic about how competency has become a "catch phrase" without any critical assessment of broader implications that a competency-based approach to management development may have (Antonacopoulou and FitzGerald, 1996). Many of the major studies that have focused on the diversity manager covered in this paper so far (for example, Greene and Kirton, 2009) have not used the term "competency", instead focusing on the skills, relationships and attitudes necessary for organizational change that makes diversity management possible – in essence examining what the diversity manager does. At the other end of the spectrum is literature produced by management interests such as The Conference Board (Lahiri, 2008) that set out a model of competencies required of diversity practitioners which are presented as a guide in "… hir(ing) and manag(ing) D(iversity) &I(nclusion) executives" (p. 4). However, my use of "competency" in this paper reflects the dynamic between experience, learning and competence that is the focus of the study by Maltbia (2001), where I frame competency in practice recognizing the agency of the diversity manager and other members in the organization.

Turning again to the first mainstream academic study on diversity practitioners by Gregory and Ouellette (1995), what the diversity practitioner "does" is brought together and translated into competencies used in diversity work. The study found that the main tasks in the practice of doing diversity work are planning, implementation and evaluation and is done so as a "change agent". These same tasks and role of change agent are mentioned in all the literature about what the diversity manager does.

The study found from the interviews with their respondents that in order for diversity practitioners to do this work successfully they require knowledge and skills within personal, professional and practitioner-specific domains. The personal domain consists of abilities that are generic ("what you need to be") and reflect the findings of the journey of the diversity practitioner in gaining abilities such as empathy and initiative during their time in other occupations. The professional skills are situated within the organization – for example, communication, networking and strategic thinking and planning. Practitioner-specific skills cover areas required as a change agent and include group dynamics, organization development and organizational change and transformation.

Maltbia's (2001) in-depth study of the competencies of the diversity manager enabled the development of a theoretical model for "on-going competency development" and covers three "facilitators" for this – learning and change, critical thinking and, commitment and courage. These facilitators contained three domains- content, context and conduct. Content refers to the what it is contained in the concept of diversity management work such as diversity values/philosophy, knowledge base and the role of human resources. Context is more focused on the state of the diversity manager in terms as self-work/self awareness, learning from others and, interest and motivation. Conduct concerns the interplay of the diversity manager and the organization in areas such as support and commitment, ability to integrate diversity and a productive culture and climate. This model's positioning of the diversity practitioner's competencies as integrated highlights competencies as a dynamic process.

Kirton and Greene (2016) and Tatli and Özbilgin (2009) describe the "responsibilities" of the diversity manager as planning, implementing and assessing diversity programs and initiatives. In their research frameworks, the manager is required to have the necessary agency to bring about change in the organization so as to obtain the goals of these responsibilities. In recognizing the social situation and political environment the diversity manager faces in bringing about change as visible agents, especially Tatli and Özbilgin (2009) reframe the concept of organizational change that includes possible resources available to the manager and constraints embedded in the organization that pertain to bringing change through diversity management.

Although the term "competency" is not used, the supportive stance towards the diversity manager these studies present can bring about a more sophisticated reinterpretation of what "diversity manager competency" is and counter the uncritical take by top management.

An example of the top-management orientated business literature produced by a management institute is the research report by Lahiri (2008). This report covers seven competencies – 1. change management, 2. diversity, inclusion, and global perspective, 3. business acumen, 4. strategic external relations, 5. integrity, 6. visionary and strategic leadership and, 7. HR competence. These competencies cover what the academic

research has touched upon, however the rhetoric of the report is very much "colored" by a top management perspective. As such, the diversity practitioner's competencies are framed similar to a specialist director with the ultimate purpose of meeting corporate goals. For example, within "business acumen" is the competency of "…determines and communicates how D&I (Diversity & Inclusion) contributes to core business strategy and results" (p. 6) and "… designs and develops D&I metrics that exhibit the ROI impact" (p. 6). The existence of such reports are important as they articulate what company top management seek in diversity managers making diversity managers aware of what they have to deal with in their "agency". However, the competencies as presented are in practice "benchmarks" for a supposed "best practice" which by nature are not crafted to the particular situation and circumstances of each company which vary.

Reviewing the literature about the competencies of the diversity manager to do diversity work, there is first one overarching point to note. This is that competencies represent a dynamic interplay with the specific ability of the person made the diversity specialist and the role of agency in organizational change which is enabled or constrained by a complex mix of social and political circumstances in the company. Further the degree to which the diversity manager is able to act as a change agent is in part an outcome of generic and diversity-specific skills they obtained in both related and non-related diversity occupations. When in the position of specialist, the diversity manager takes the initiative to gain further training and knowledge that enables them to be better in their work. Thus, as a final point, though top management are provided with models or templates of benchmark diversity competencies the diversity manager needs to posses, ultimately, the competencies are diversity manager-side driven and as such diversity managers need to take on another competency – the ability to "educate" and negotiate with top management an approach that enhances corporate competitiveness and involves doing what is good for the employees.

6. An Overview of the Dynamic Framework of the Diversity Manager
Figure 2 provides an overview of the themes and the issues presented in the literature that I have constructed as a dynamic framework of the diversity manager. The three themes of the diversity manager's location, journey and competency interplay with each

other and are contained within two larger contexts of the individual and organization. The main driving force of this dynamic is the diversity manager as a change agent and is self assertive in their work and mission.

The location of the diversity manager is arrived at by the diversity manager's own commitment to a cause that leads the diversity manager's own journey. The nature of the diversity manager's position and role or work is an ongoing negotiation by the diversity manager and top management. This negotiation is influenced by factors such as the company's philosophy and approach to diversity management and enabled in practice through networking with both other members of the organization and other diversity practitioners within the political environment specific to the company.

Figure 2

Dynamic Framework of the Diversity Manager
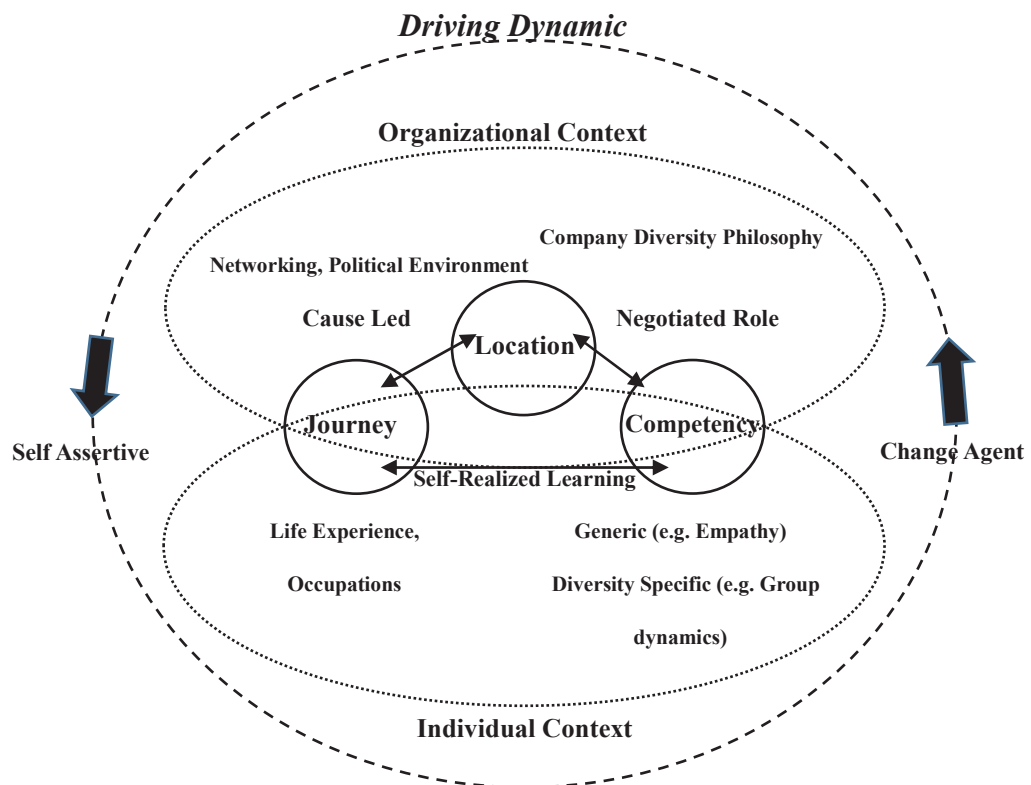
The journey of the diversity manager is characterized by such traits as the individual diversity manager's life and other experiences, occupations and learning they underwent before becoming a diversity manager. The diversity manager's personal interest and commitment to diversity as "life work" enabled the manager to both create their own path towards gaining the position of a diversity specialist as well pursue on their own initiative training and learning to do diversity work prior to and whilst in the formal position of diversity manager.

The competencies of the diversity manager cover a spectrum from generic personal traits such as empathy and diversity-specific skills such as group dynamics. These competencies have been developed throughout the diversity manager's journey and are self-realized, meaning that they are not easily "learnt" in formal education. Underlying the use of these competencies is a contention between the diversity manager being an effective change agent and how top management envision what diversity management should mean for the company, especially in the terms of outcomes.

While top management may have a commitment to diversity, whatever the philosophy they hold, the overall driving dynamic of the success of diversity planning and implementation is the diversity manager as an agent for change to make diversity management possible. And since diversity managers work in an environment of constant change characterized by ambiguity and constant negotiation, the manager's degree of self assertiveness is a critical driver in moving diversity forward in the manner they perceive as most effective.

7. Japan's First Diversity Managers' Contribution to Further Understanding
The literature about the diversity manager has come initially from the US followed by mainly by the U.K. and thus reflect particular issues in diversity management in these regions. Companies in Japan started to take on diversity management practices much later with with the establishment of a Diversity Development Office in Nissan Automobile Company in 2004. From some preliminary findings in my own study of the first diversity managers in Japan, there are a number of areas that these managers' experiences and insights can contribute to enrich the understanding of the existing Western studies as well as provide new insights. I will briefly describe, as examples,

four possible contributions.

As I have discussed previously (McDonald, 2008 and 2009) the first diversity managers in Japan could only partially relate to the literature from the USA which they saw defined diversity as too simplistic or even stereotypical. "Narrow" definitions of race, religion and even gender took attention away from the diversity within such dimensions. One manager equated the take of "gender" as too binary, with only two axes, "male" and "female". In her work she was dealing with a wider variety of "women" and "men" and thus worked with a notion of individuals on a static gradation that constantly shifted throughout life depending on personal experiences, values and the work environment. Through Japan's first manager's problematizing at the very core the "object" of diversity management, their work and insights can bring a much richer and robust approach to dealing with diversity.

This particular take on diversity relates to what is perceived as more critical to Japan and cuts across all "traditional" dimensions of diversity – differing ideas and values. Ideas and values are implicit and thus diversity managers in Japan are tasked with working with "invisible diversity". Dealing with implicit traits of diversity was seen as important as these traits lead to workways, communication styles, the relationship with other employees and other behavior. One manager worked towards creating an organizational environment that led to accommodation between individuals holding different values in place of striving consensus. In this approach, the focus is less on working relationships based on partial agreement (consensus) to a different paradigm where people can be engaged in working together as "whole people" in the same way that individual family members play their different roles based on their own worldviews when living together in the same home (accommodation). It is such ways that the experience and work of diversity managers in Japan can provide new approaches to "managing" diversity.

In examining the way in which diversity managers went about planning, implementing and evaluating their diversity initiatives I found that the traditional business cycle of "plan-so-see" was not being used in practice. Often, to develop diversity strategies, diversity managers would start with "doing" having no clear vision of the outcome. The

diversity managers went about their work as "reflective practitioners" (Schon, 1991) where they conducted their work while constantly reflecting on what they were doing and what unfolded which later fed into planning. Approaches such as this provide new ways in which the diversity manager can be effective change agents for diversity management.

Finally, none of the studies in the existing literature have looked at the continued journey of the diversity manager. Since many of the first diversity managers I studied no longer hold these positions due to retirement or management policy that only allowed people to hold these posts for a certain number of years, my follow-up with the same and additional people who were the first to be in this position revealed many commonalities. What these people mainly held in common was their continued commitment to diversity. Many of these people had gone on to lead non-profit organizations where they continued to use their networks to influence the direction of diversity management in a wider range of companies in Japan. The remainder continued to provide support to their successors in many companies besides their own. The first diversity managers perceived these successors as a new generation of diversity managers. As such, not only does the study of what diversity managers do in retirement or continuing in posts that are not diversity specific give insight in the fuller breath of the "journey" of the diversity manager, but also presents new insights in how "successor" mentoring of diversity managers can take place.

8. Conclusion

In this paper I examined the limited literature the into diversity manager to uncover three main themes - locating the diversity manager, the journey of the diversity manager and the competencies of the diversity manager.

In locating the diversity manager, most of the studies described them as the internal specialist practitioner that was in charge of planning, implementing and accessing diversity programs. These managers worked in human resource divisions or in special centers and the degree to which they were empowered to do their work depended on top management's philosophical stance towards diversity.

In studies on the journey of the diversity manager, earlier studies showed that before the position of diversity manager existed in companies, those who had taken this position had a background of being involved in diversity issues in other occupations. More recent studies revealed how the existing post of diversity manager has become part of a business case for diversity opening the position to a wider range of people at the loss of those who had worked on equality issues drawing from their own experiences of discrimination and harassment.

The competency of the diversity manager was presented as a contentious theme due to managerial institutes in pushing for benchmarking, best-practice competencies that the diversity manager needed to possess. However, the academic studies into the diversity manager positioned these managers as the most effective change agent and that the diversity manager should be in the position to best determine how to bring about this recognizing the social and political environment of their company.

I brought these three themes together in a dynamic framework of the diversity manager for the purpose of providing a guiding framework for studies into the diversity manager. The framework showed the dynamic between the three themes contained within two contexts – the individual and the organization. The overall driving dynamic was on the part of the diversity manager as being the change agent with the continuation of the change being possible by the diversity manager being self-assertive. It is in this way that the framework brings out the pivotal role that the diversity manager plays in making diversity management happen and matter in companies.

Since I have commenced my own study into the first diversity managers in Japan, I drew from some preliminary findings to present, as example, four ways in which the experience and work of these managers can contribute to the study of the diversity manager universally. One contribution was how notions of what constitutes traits of diversity can be problematized so as to bring richness to the understanding of diversity itself. The second recognized how the focus on invisible traits of diversity such as ideas and values lead to new ways of "managing" diversity. The third contribution comes from how diversity managers in Japan went about planning by "doing" before planning, thus making having to reflect in action. This has implications for expanding the way

diversity managers can go about their work as agents for change. The final contribution comes from following what the diversity managers did after they had left their post. They continued on in diversity work acting as mentors for newer generations of diversity managers.

In drawing together themes in existing literature as a guiding framework and for studies in other contexts outside of the USA and the UK it is possible to build a more universal and rich understanding of the diversity manager. And more importantly, as more studies on the diversity manager are conducted, this brings more visibility to their work and hopefully towards wider recognition of the need for top management and other members inside and outside of the company to empower diversity managers to do their work - to bring about the change in companies for diversity to be a more dynamic and positive force for companies and the people who work in them and beyond.

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