FoL 3:

In an era of equality, diversity and inclusion, what type of leader will I try to become (bearing in mind likely organisational constraints), why and how?

As a heterosexual growing up in a Middle Eastern country, with an eastern mindset when Barack Obama won the presidency, I didn’t think of anything else other than ‘America’ got a new leader and hopefully, he will not bomb Iraq anymore. However, when I got older and started to watch English news and read English content, I realized that he was not only an American president, but he was an African American president. Therefore, the problem of race wasn’t a huge deal to me until I started studying in the UK where the criteria and quota for diversity became a huge deal. I do come from a manhood country growing up, but it has changed dramatically for the better where the positions in most cases would be for whoever is the more qualified man or woman because the ideology of the Middle East still doesn’t acknowledge other sexualities. In this essay I would discuss equality, diversity and inclusion as a leader and what are the choices I would choose to be fair and just. In addition, explain how corruption can occur due to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Equality, diversity and inclusion ‘ED&I’ has made many people get a chance to achieve goals in life and positions they could never think of a few decades and centuries ago (Rogers, 2021). Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. All the previous criteria are a criterion of discrimination, where it used to be normal in many cases back in time to reject someone whom one of these criteria can be applied (ACAS, 2022). The world is changing rapidly and leaders need to look for the new demand of leaders, be more open-minded and look forward to changes. However, a study took place in the UK and EMEA region for over 2000 HR professionals and business leaders. 31 percent of the UK responses were negative where no changes have been applied (Brown, 2021). In addition, 15 percent said that it was trivialised, and almost half have recognised the diversity approach and felt it. The 31 percent of businesses don’t have to implement the ED&I approach and use it if the business was doing well. However, for future employment plans, they can use it for their best interest where ED&I doesn’t affect the business negatively but help. ED&I could be seen as a negative thing and is a must to happen but what if the mentality is changed forever and ED&I became a reality of day-to-day business and employment. Moreover, where businesses just hire the best of whom have applied for the position.

HSBC in many of their advertisements try to show to their customers and the potential customers they are pro LGBTQ+ and a huge supporter of ED&I which is true, and they are one of the biggest financial support to these cases. However, the CEO of the bank is a white heterosexual man and most of the board is white coloured skin (HSBC, 2022). In addition, the total number of the board of directors is 13 and only 2 are not white, where it's 7 white men and 4 white women, yet they won a prize for one of the top ethnic employers in the UK 2021 (HSBC, 2021). HSBC is doing well in general compared to the other businesses and they market themselves for what the world is moving towards. The issues with ED&I are that the new generation can grow up fulfilling these ideas to create a well-diverse workforce for the future. However, one of the main concepts of adapting the ED&I ideas is that ‘our power is in our differences’ how would be any major differences if the new generation growing up watching these advertisements, they would grow up having almost the same mentality about world. On other countries around the world that were not been targeted by these advertainments they would have a true difference in culture. Therefore, HSBC advertisements might have a huge impact but not soon, it could take a long time to see the tree where they put the seeds. For example, in the United States of America where it’s the land of freedom and was built by the idea of you being a free person with rights in the Constitution, it took them a very long time to have the first black president, and the black population to have full rights which in some cases they still don’t (Murray and Loyd, 2021).

Management is a term that could be referred as a masculinity in most cases and power and it has been like this for centuries now. In addition, some countries around the globe are acknowledging the idea that women could be managers and leaders. For example, one of the most anti-women countries in the world has made a phenomenal call Malala in the middle of all the family restrictions and social extremist restrictions in Pakistan, she appeared, and now she is one of the most influential in this century. Malala was the youngest in history to receive a Nobel prize. In her own words, she said her father would give her every opportunity as a baby girl for a boy, because normally in Pakistan in the 90s people wouldn’t be happy when they get gifted by a baby girl (Yousafzai, 2022). According to Salt (2022), Malala asked in Hollywood to show more people from her ethnic group in the media, claiming that only 4% of actors are Asians. In other words, she would change the already privileged people and the most common race in Hollywood to her people to become more privileged. Replacing the common race couldn’t be the solution or the problem where until now it's a race war instead of giving the chance and the opportunity to the most qualified is not widely spread in the public mentality. However, if her idea was to make a quota for actors then all the other races would have an outstanding actor, but the chance is not available due to an actor less talented that the others but got the job just to fill the quota.

As a leader implementing equality, diversity and inclusion all at once could be difficult, and it might affect many current employees. Leaders cannot be the ones to blame all the time, where the ED&I policies in some cases are forced by the government and lobbies in the country, and doing such a radical change would be a danger for me as a leader and for my position (Grint, 2000, pp.413–417). On one hand, equality, diversity and inclusion implantation in the organisation could be tough where many people would be happy to have an opportunity to finally be qualified for positions discrimination didn’t allow them to achieve. On the other hand, the unhappy current employees would be many because their positions are in danger now because the organisation will use a quota based on criteria to choose the employees from. However, many nations are trying their best to subscribe to a creed of equal opportunity and so far the achievement is not what they expected in diversity, whereas achieving the complete and absolute ED&I could be impossible (Köllen, Kakkuri-Knuuttila and Bendl, 2018). Human nature is to appreciate beauty, and many businesses hire good-looking employees to be having face-to-face interaction with customers (Spector, 2015). The great man theory in this case is not for the leader but many of the concepts of the theory have been used in these businesses where they used someone who was born beautiful and almost perfect for certain standers for a job to achieve some financial goals. Moreover, adopting the great man theory could work for me. Seeking power is my priority since day one of my life. However, being just and fair is more than a priority, thus respect is earned and not gained, in most cases of getting respected in force it could be just because of fear and the followers would count the days for the leader to be removed from the position.

The world is moving towards a digital business where companies can make deals without even seeing each other face-to-face since the pandemic started. Being a manager for a company where much of the work is digitalised could make a great opportunity for ED&I to be applied, where as a manager I could never see the employees but knowing their position and their value for the enterprise. In this case, e-leadership comes in one of the most modern leadership principles that have been around since the early 2000s (DasGupta, 2011). After the pandemic, the term e-leadership became more known and companies started to depend heavily on it, where major decisions of the company can be decided online while everyone is at home comfortably. E-leadership forced many leaders to choose the perfect people for the positions since much of the work is done online, and it is time to do better instead of choosing someone unreliable. Therefore, equality, diversity and inclusion would be applied easier and the people who earn the position would get more chances to be hired in many countries. The leader is one of the most important elements for achieving the goal of ED&I and making the workplace a good competitive place. Therefore, equality, diversity and inclusion have plenty of barriers but one of the main ones as a leader is the leadership skill gap for ED&I and the lack of good communications skills and fitting in the other mindsets and backgrounds (Parakala, 2021). The leader has a huge impact, and as the person became a leader the understanding of the employees and the emotional intelligence would be high. In most cases, it would be expected from the leader to be similarly understanding of the ED&I. Therefore, do not be too nice, which can affect your leading strategies and the effectiveness of other employees. The ED&I implementation can lead in some cases to empathy which in many cultures could be considered a weakness (Battilana and Casciaro, 2021). Leadership in reality and e-leadership is an art where to achieve the goal the need for the two skills could be as important as water, otherwise disobeying could occur.

In conclusion, discrimination is when choosing the discriminated people and by choosing the discriminated people, the people who used to be chosen are getting discriminated. In other words, raising awareness of just and fairness for whoever fits in the position the most is the most likely to be qualified, race, age, gender and disability are not a barrier to success. I addition, as a leader I would tell the HR department to not ask the any question regarding any discrimination criteria, instead I would move forward and end the problem from its roots. Therefore, a new policy would be applied for interviews and only two question would be asking which are; what you can do to improve the performance of the company and what are the things where you with perfection. In addition, having quota might increase the chances and percentage of corruption, where people were hired not because of how unique they are but just to fill the quota, so that the government and the bosses and the repletion of the company gets shiny. As a leader I will have no discrimination for whatsoever and no quota policy, who earn the position will have it whether if it was a man or a woman disabled white brown black, family wealth or history is my last concern. My actual concern is who would make the value of the company higher or who would help more people and be an actual affective member in the organisation.

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