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WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE – A STUDY OF EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CLUBS

Diversity management is viewed as one of the sources of competitive advantage, but the relation between workforce diversity and organizational goals is not indisputable. In-depth analysis of literature in this field does not allow for a clear answer concerning the nature of this relation (there is not a lot of empirical research available, and more importantly, they have significant limitations). The paper presents the results of empirical research aimed at exploring the relation between workforce diversity and organizational performance, which seem to break through the major limitations of previous studies in this area, i.e. the association of organizational performance mainly with financial results and the domination of American authors (60% of studies were conducted in the USA, a country with a specific culture). The research subjects of this article are European football clubs, which can be treated as a model for the management of contemporary organizations (the study covers 166 clubs from 10 countries). The obtained results clearly indicate the lack of dependency between workforce diversity (considered using two dimensions of primary identity – nationality and age) and the achieved results (considered using their place in the final table of the 2016/17 season and the total number of points). It was concluded on this basis that, in organizations free from discriminatory prejudices (which is the case for most football clubs), diversity management is somewhat vacant.

Keywords: workforce diversity, performance, diversity management, transparency, unity of direction

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is assumed that diversity management is an approach to managing organizations that assume that they can benefit from existing differences between their members (Gross-Gołacka 2018). According to the typology most commonly cited in the literature, there are three dimensions of diversity of organization members (Koźmiński et al. 2014):

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- elements of primary identity, including race, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation;
- secondary elements of identity, including family status, education, place of residence, religion;
- organizational elements of identity, including characteristics of the position held, seniority, sector of activity, affiliation to trade unions, etc.

In the opinion of many authors, e.g. Charles (2003), Egan and Bendick (2003), Stokdale and Crosby (2004) or Kwon and Nicolaides (2017), there are two different aspects of diversity management, namely building awareness and acceptance of differences in all dimensions, and taking actions aimed at benefiting from occurrence of those differences. This article concerns the second aspect which is probably given less attention in literature reports, as illustrated by one of the issues of the *Harvard Business Review Poland* (November 2016). All of the articles concerned the issue of fostering the culture of diversity, free from prejudice.

As will be shown in the article, the results of the research focused on the relations between the diversity of organizational members and its performance are not unambiguous, hence the obvious question arises: do they exist at all, as is assumed in the denotations adopted from the approach to diversity management considered here? In addition, empirical studies most often concern organizations operating in the US, a country with a specific culture. Moreover, organizational performance was in most of them identified with only one aspect, i.e. financial efficiency.

Thus the main purpose of this article refers to the basic assumption of diversity management, i.e. the close relation between the organization members and organizational performance. This comes down to the analysis of the relation between the diversity of the organization's members and organizational performance, which remains questionable in light of previous literature reports.

The objects of the conducted research were European organizations – football clubs, which seem to be an appropriate model for the process of organizational improvement. Not only do they use efficiently owned resources, but they also constantly update and renew them, and in this way (especially the best of them) achieve their goals, maintaining their position in both European and global football. They are built on the basis of competence, supported by a sense of community, mutual trust and a highly flexible way of organizing, thanks to which they can use the weaknesses of their opponents, counter their strengths and adapt to an extremely turbulent environment in which, as stated by Guillaume et al. (2017), diversity is primarily intended to bring clear benefits for the organization.

2. WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

The growing diversity of workforce is a feature of contemporary organizations (McMahon 2010; Zajac 2012; Kopeć 2016; Choi et al. 2017; Skrzypek 2018). At the same time, there is a discussion about the benefits and challenges of workforce diversity and diversity management (Sabharwal 2014; Choi et al. 2017). Guillaume et al. (2017) underline the double-edged nature of diversity. However, the discussion on the nature of diversity management is dominated by the view that the diversity of organization members can bring a lot of benefits, many of which are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Benefits from workforce diversity management

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- 1) Diversity favours innovation and generating original ideas. The variety of ideas, viewpoints as well as employees' experiences facilitates making groundbreaking discoveries that increase the chances of an organization surviving. The homogeneous community is exposed to the use of common patterns of thinking and actions limiting creativity, and consequently also to innovation.
 - 2) Diversity increases the organization's adaptive ability. The organization's members, diversified due to their different features, accept changes (less resistance) more easily and adapt to them faster.
 - 3) Diversity increases the organization's learning ability. Working in a diverse environment creates opportunities for exchanging experiences and learning from each other.
 - 4) Diversity management is conducive to building a positive image of the organization. It is used as part of a strategy to build the reputation and image of a trustworthy organization among employees, customers and business partners.
 - 5) Diversity management improves the atmosphere at work. If members of the organization are respected and valued, the work environment is better. Employees are more willing to get involved in what they do, and loyalty to the organization is also greater.
 - 6) Diversity management facilitates talent management. A better atmosphere at work attracts creative people who are convinced that it is here that they will be able to fulfil their goals.
 - 7) Diversity favours building a competitive advantage. Workforce diversity allows better response to the changing needs of diverse clients (they can be better recognized and, consequently, easier to meet).
 - 8) Compliance with anti-discrimination law avoids loss of reputation as well as possible legal costs. It also indicates positive effects in the form of reduced fluctuations and absenteeism of employees and their motivation for equal treatment in employment and combating all forms of discrimination (transparent and fair remuneration principles, availability of training, the possibility of raising professional qualifications, development, promotion in organization).
 - 9) Diversity favours the reconfiguration of human resources, thus improving management processes.
 - 10) Diversity favours rationalization of work division in the organization and mutual substitution of employees as a result of complementarity of competences.
 - 11) Diversity is conducive to improving decision-making in the organization due to different ways of perceiving problems.
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Source: based on Allen, Dawson, Wheatley, White (2007), Wu, Wei, Lau (2010), McMahon (2010), Walczak (2011), Wziątek-Staško (2012), Leks-Bujak (2014), Łukasiewicz (2014), Kopeć (2016), Gross-Gołącka (2018).

Although diversity management is becoming increasingly common and its new strengths are still being noted, there are also critical voices. It was pointed out in the early 1990s that diversity is associated with lower employee morale (Tsui et al. 1992), it can also encourage social divisions and interpersonal conflicts (Van der Vegt 2002). Other weaknesses include: very demanding attitude of employees, the need to meet high requirements concerning the utilization of human resources with diversified potential, and difficulties in communicating (Wziątek-Staško 2012). Łukasiewicz (2014) proposed a model approach of diversity management effects, where he indicated both the potential benefits and costs of such management.

Many other approaches can be distinguished in the research on the validity of diversity management. More and more researchers are suggesting the need to include mediating variables in the relations between diversity and organizational performance (McMahon 2010). Other authors, e.g. Guillaume et al. (2017) underline the situational conditions of the relation between diversity and organizational performance. According to the cited authors, diversity in the workplace can bring benefits to organizations operating in environments characterized by changes, instability, uncertainty, complexity and high demographic diversity of the clients. If, in turn, organizations are not oriented to growth or high innovation or implement a downsizing strategy, diversity will be negatively correlated with their performance. A coherent theory describing the relation between workforce diversity and organizational performance is still not yet formulated (Carstens and De Kock 2017).

A more interesting picture of the relations discussed in the article is revealed by the results of empirical research. First of all, many authors, e.g. Harrison, Price, Gavin and Florey (2002) and Wu, Wei and Lau (2010), use the mediating variable, which is the dimension connecting workforce diversity and organizational performance (Table 2).

In this kind of research, workforce diversity is most often analysed using the primary identity dimensions (age, race, gender), and other dimensions occur sporadically, such as the level of education or task diversity (Bell et al. 2011; Joshi and Roh 2009). As mediating variables, the authors most often indicate: organizational culture (Richard et al. 2004; Sabharwal 2014; Jehn et al. 1999), employees morale (Webber and Donahue 2001), innovation (Østergaard et al. 2011; Richard 2000), human resources (Jehn et al. 1999; Zannoni and Janssens 2004), knowledge concerning tasks, skills and competences (Webber and Donahue 2001), level of interactional justice (Buengeler and Den Hartog 2015) or strategy (Pieterse et al. 2013; Richard et al. 2013). In most of these studies, the relation between the mediating variable and the organizational performance is not verified empirically, it is only

Table 2
A summary of empirical studies on the relation between workforce diversity and organizational performance

Source	Mediating variable	Sample
Rynes and Rosen (1995)	diversity training – human resources – performance	785 US companies
Jehn, Northcraft and Neil (1999)	diversity – human resources, diversity of information, values – performance	545
Bunderson and Sutcliffe (2002)	functional diversity – information sharing – performance	45 from Fortune 100
Zanoni and Janssens (2004)	diversity – HR (many variables) – performance	25
Jehn and Bezrukova(2004)	diversity (remuneration) – team building strategy – performance	1528
Gonzalez and Denisi(2009)	diversity – positive organization image – performance	28 restaurants
Ali, Kulik and Metz (2011)	gender diversity – industry type – employee productivity	150 Australian organizations
Østergaard, Timmermans and Kristinsson(2011)	diversity – innovation – performance	1648 Danish firms
Richard (2000)	diversity – strategy – performance	574 banks
Pieterse, Van Knippenberg and Van Dierendonck (2013)	cultural diversity – goals, performance – performance	77 groups
Morrison, Lumby and Sood(2006)	diversity – employees skills – performance	-
Richard, Kirby and Chadwick (2013)	racial and gender diversity – participative strategy making – organization performance	168 banks
Sabharwal (2014)	diversity management – social exclusion – performance	198
Buengeler and Den Hartog (2015)	national diversity – pattern of interactional justice climate – team performance	45 teams in manufacturing company

Source: own work.

assumed to occur on the basis of the analysis of literature reports (Stahl et al. 2010; Joshi and Roh 2009).

Secondly, there are also studies on the direct relation between workforce diversity and organizational performance (Catalyst 2004; Adler and Gundersen 2007), however workforce diversity is identified in this case mainly with one dimension of primary identity, i.e. gender (Bell et al. 2011; Catalyst 2004),

and organizational performance is identified (similarly to studies using an mediating variable) primarily with the use of financial efficiency dimensions, such as: ROA (Cannella et al. 2008; Certo et al. 2006), ROE (Richard 2000; Richard et al. 2004; Richard et al. 2007; Miller and del Carmen Triana 2009), revenue (Richard et al. 2007; Kilduff et al. 2000; Joshi and Roh 2009), and Tobin's Q (Carter et al. 2010). There are also studies, however rare, in which measures unrelated to financial performance are applied, e.g. the KSAO measure proposed by Jayne and Dipboya (2004) measuring the increase of knowledge, skills and experience of team members – who are also members of the organization – as part of the performance assessment.

Therefore, what are the relations revealed by the conducted research? The answer to this question is based on the results of meta-analyses of the relation between workforce diversity and organizational performance, selected from articles published in the period 2000-2017, searched for based on the keywords 'diversity' and 'performance'. In general, according to most authors, this relation does not exist (Table 3).

However, it should be emphasized that there are also studies confirming (statistically) the relation between workforce diversity and organizational performance, not included in meta-analyses due to the lack of typical keywords, which mainly relate to gender diversity and organizational performance associated with the financial situation of the organization. These include a report by Catalyst (2004), containing the analysis of Fortune 500 companies, divided into groups according to the branch of industry. In each of them there is a statistically significant relation between the considered variables.

Adler and Gundersen (2007) described a study conducted on another research sample, which also confirms the existence of a statistically significant relation between workforce diversity (in gender dimension) and organizational performance (in terms of financial efficiency). Similar results were presented by Carter et al. (2010), who confirmed the statistically significant relation between gender diversity and the Tobin Q value for the organization (correlation 0.79). Moreover, Wegge et al. (2008) showed that there is a statistically significant relation between workforce diversity and organizational performance not only in the gender dimension (Spearman coefficient = 0.32), but also in the age dimension (Spearman coefficient = 0.44). Ali et al. (2011) provided contradictory results – for the same group of 150 organizations, the relation between gender diversification on organizational performance was statistically significant in certain groups, but not significant in others.

Finally, it should be noted that the issues related to diversity management are dominated by authors from English-speaking countries (Jonsen et al.

Table 3
Empirical research on the relation between workforce diversity
and organizational performance

Source	Number of articles studied	Diversity dimensions	Direct relation or using an mediating variable	Relation tested empirically or arbitrarily assumed?	Result
Stahl et al. (2010)	76	cultural diversity	with mediating variable	Assumed	there are no grounds to analyze the results
	42	cultural diversity	with mediating variable	Tested	the average correlation -0.02
Bell, Villado, Lukasik, Belau and Briggs (2011)	17	age, gender, race diversity	directly	Tested	The average correlation between diversity and performance: 0.03 (variance 0.09)
	116	age, gender, race, education, task diversity	with mediating variable	Assumed	there are no grounds to analyze the results
Joshi and Roh (2009)	117	age, gender, race, task diversity	with mediating variable	Tested and assumed – w/o specific information	in articles offering verification, the average correlation between diversity and performance: -0.01 (variance 0.02)
Schneid, Isidor, Li and Kabst (2015)	68	gender diversity	with mediating variable		the average correlation between diversity and performance statistically significant but small for one subgroup from the sample: $r = -0.07$

Source: own work.

2011). As many as 60% of articles about workforce diversity indexed by Web of Science up to 2017 were written by Americans, and another 20% by Australians, British and Canadians (Table 4). Moreover, most of the available research concerns organizations operating in the USA and other developed English-speaking countries. Jonsen et al. (2011) emphasize that authors from Germany or France also carry out research in their countries, but publish them in local journals and in their native language, so their availability is reduced.

Table 4
Nationality of authors publishing on workforce diversity

Country	Record count	% of records
USA	1026	60.000 %
Australia	181	10.585 %
Great Britain	134	7.836 %
Canada	74	4.327 %
Germany	58	3.392 %
Netherlands	41	2.398 %
France	27	1.579 %
China	27	1.579 %
Switzerland	22	1.287 %
South Africa	21	1.228 %

Source: own study (Web of Science, 1710 records, October 2017).

Thus it can be concluded that the relation between workforce diversity and organizational performance is not without question. An in-depth analysis of literature in this area does not allow an unequivocal answer as to whether it is possible to consider such a relation and its nature. On the one hand, the benefits of workforce diversity are commonly known and referred to. On the other hand, its negative effects are also discussed. Finally, concepts of situational determinants (including mediating variables) of workforce diversity and various organizational results (including performance) are being developed, yet there is no coherent theory describing the discussed relation.

In the article, particular emphasis was placed on the analysis of studies, which empirically verify theoretical assumptions. However, the analysis of available empirical studies showed that they are very limited in their nature, the results obtained are difficult to compare, and the conclusions are difficult to generalize.

Studies regarding the direct relation between workforce diversity and organizational performance are very rare, in most cases only the relation between workforce diversity and the mediating variable is examined, and the relation with organizational performance is assumed arbitrarily. Moreover, the results of the conducted research are extremely difficult to compare, because they cover very different mediating variables and relate to selected, different dimensions of workforce diversity.

The analysis of the direct relation between the discussed phenomena do not allow to unambiguously determine its character as the majority of them

prove the lack of dependence between diversification and organizational performance, although there are also those that clearly indicate its occurrence. However, also in those cases, the research refers to different dimensions of diversification.

An important drawback of most of the research so far is the lack of uniform understanding and measurement of organizational performance, and most importantly, the use of measures related only to financial efficiency. The research of Schneid et al. (2015) proves that it is important to consider different types of performance.

Finally, most of the research was carried out in the USA (and other English-speaking countries), which situates them in specific cultural conditions, and as a result, hinders the formulation of generalized conclusions.

Due to the fact that the empirical studies conducted so far are dominated by those verifying the dependence between workforce diversity and organizational performance indirectly (through the mediating variable), and direct research does not give unambiguous results, the problem of the nature of this relation remains unresolved. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conduct empirical studies that would unequivocally verify the direct relation between workforce diversity and organizational performance, while taking into account different dimensions of diversity in relation to organizational performance measures, which should be related not only to the financial aspects of the operation but also to the organization's goals. The selection of research objects is of particular importance here. Yet it is necessary to include organizations characterized by a high degree of diversity, and which are also free from discriminating prejudices (to explicitly refer to the relation between diversity and performance). It is also important to include organizations from different countries. Finally, in reference to the aforementioned statement by Guillaume et al. (2017), it is important to include organizations operating under highly variable and complex conditions.

3. A STUDY OF EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CLUBS

3.1. Research method

The research objects are European football clubs. Their selection as research objects is justified by several factors:

- The unambiguous assessment of individual football clubs in a particular league, because their position in the final league table is a precise answer to the question concerning the performance of the club in a particular season (in comparison with others).

- The extensive diversity of players due to all the dimensions of diversity highlighted earlier. For example, in Bayern Munich – the German champions in the 2016/2017 season, the coach (from Italy) fielded a team with players from Germany, Austria, Spain, France, Poland, the Netherlands, Chile and Brazil. They differed from each other also by age, religion and the period of playing (experience) for Bayern Munich.
- The same range of problems associated with the management appears in football club management and in contemporary management of economic organizations (Bolchover and Brady 2006). The totality of football lies in the fact that players in one moment are defenders and in another, are becoming attackers which illustrates the dynamism of contemporary organizations. “Football truly is the management of independence, which is also the cornerstone of modest information-reach organizations” (Bolchover and Brady 2006, p. 13)¹.

The study covered 10 leagues with 166 football clubs in them. The selection was based on the ratio of the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), which is a statistic that compares the clubs of various European countries over a five-year period. The result is given by the points earned by the clubs in European cup competitions. The classification from five seasons (from 2013/14 to 2017/18) was used (as given on 27/09/2017). Points earned by individual countries were divided into three equal parts (two quantiles were determined: $Q_{1/3} = 7430.33$ and $Q_{2/3} = 20683.33$) identifying three groups of countries with the best, average and weakest leagues. The focus was on two groups – the best and the average, five leagues with the highest points were selected within each group. The best leagues according to the UEFA ranking are: LaLiga (Spain), Premier League (England), Bundesliga (Germany), Serie A (Italy), Ligue 1 (France). The average leagues according to the UEFA ranking are: Cypriot First Division (Cyprus), Ekstraklasa (Poland), Liga I Bergenbier (Romania), PremyerLiquasi (Azerbaijan), Allsvenskan (Sweden).

Two dimensions of workforce diversity were examined, i.e. diversity of nationality and age (these are dimensions of primary identity).

The results of the clubs were examined according to: points obtained by the club in the league in the 2016/17 season and the club’s position in the table in the 2016/17 season in the league.

¹ Contemporary organizations have to face the same issues as football clubs. These issues include discussion on dividing responsibilities between the president and the direct subordinates, the so-called war for talents, developing a long-term strategy, creating tactical plans, continuity and succession of the managerial staff (Bolchover, Brady, 2006).

3.2. Study results

The results regarding the relation between workforce diversity and organizational performance will be discussed in the following order: first, the relation between nationality diversity and organizational performance, then age diversity and organizational performance.

Nationality diversity and organizational performance

To measure national diversity, the following indicator of nationality diversity was constructed:

$$\forall z \quad WZN = \frac{n_z}{N_z},$$

where: z – each club, n_z – number of players in a club of nationality other than the league's nationality, N_z – number of all players in the club.

The indicator assumes values from 0 to 1. Table 5 contains descriptive statistics of the variable: nationality diversity.

Table 5
Descriptive statistics for nationality diversity

League	Number of clubs	Min	Max	Avg.	SD
LaLiga (Spain)	20	0.04	0.83	0.40	0.20
Premier League (England)	20	0.33	0.78	0.62	0.12
Bundesliga (Germany)	18	0.33	0.61	0.47	0.08
Serie A (Italy)	20	0.17	0.71	0.44	0.14
Ligue 1 (France)	20	0.27	1.00	0.47	0.15
Cypriot First Division (Cyprus)	14	0.45	0.67	0.55	0.06
Ekstraklasa (Poland)	16	0.09	0.48	0.30	0.10
Liga I Bergenbier (Romania)	14	0.09	0.44	0.23	0.12
PremyerLiquasi (Azerbaijan)	8	0.15	0.37	0.27	0.09
Allsvenskan (Sweden)	16	0.14	0.52	0.30	0.11

Source: own work.

Table 6
Correlation between national diversity and club performance and club market value
(Spearman correlation test)

National diversity		Club points	Club position
LaLiga (Spain)	Correlation coefficient	0.163	-0.163
	Significance	0.492	0.494
	N	20	20
Premier League (England)	Correlation coefficient	0.292	-0.266
	Significance	0.211	0.257
	N	20	20
Bundesliga (Germany)	Correlation coefficient	-0.182	0.165
	Significance	0.471	0.512
	N	18	18
Serie A (Italy)	Correlation coefficient	0.368	-0.368
	Significance	0.110	0.110
	N	20	20
Ligue 1 (France)	Correlation coefficient	0.138	-0.144
	Significance	0.562	0.546
	N	20	20
First Division (Cyprus)	Correlation coefficient	0.279	-0.279
	Significance	0.334	0.334
	N	14	14
Ekstraklasa (Poland)	Correlation coefficient	0.481	-0.462
	Significance	0.059	0.071
	N	16	16
Liga I Bergenbier (Romania)	Correlation coefficient	0.383	-0.380
	Significance	0.177	0.180
	N	14	14
PremyerLiquasi (Azerbaijan)	Correlation coefficient	0.143	-0.143
	Significance	0.736	0.736
	N	8	8
Allsvenskan (Sweden)	Correlation coefficient	0.300	-0.312
	Significance	0.259	0.239
	N	16	16

Note: The interpretation of the Spearman's factor r : 0–0.3 means that the correlation is weak or non-existent, 0.3–0.5 moderate, 0.5–0.7 strong, 0.7–1.0 very strong; ** significant correlation on the level of 0.01 (two-tailed); * significant correlation on the level of 0.05 (two-tailed).

Source: own work.

The hypothesis about the normality of variable distributions for the diversity of nationality for each of the leagues cannot be rejected (the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used).

The relation between nationality diversity and the results of the clubs for each league.

For each league a correlation test was performed between nationality diversity and the club's position in the table and obtained points (Spearman's rank correlation was used). Due to the determination of the existence of a general non-directional correlation, significance (two-tailed) was used for Spearman's rho (see Table 6).

The analysis showed no correlation between the diversity of nationality and the points in the table nor the place in the table.

Differences between nationality diversity in the best and average leagues

The differences between nationality diversity of the best leagues (Spain, England, Germany, Italy, and France) and the average leagues (Cyprus, Poland, Romania, Azerbaijan, and Sweden) were checked. The one-way analysis of variance for independent groups was carried out. The effect was statistically significant ($F(1;164)=34,205; p<0.001$). The best leagues are significantly more diversified in the case of nationality than the average leagues.

Table 7

Descriptive statistics for diversity of nationality divided into the best and average leagues

	Number of clubs	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Best leagues according to UEFA	98	0.037	1.000	0.479	0.160
Average leagues according to UEFA	68	0.086	0.667	0.335	0.150

Source: own work.

Age diversity and organizational performance

For the measurement of age diversity, kurtosis was used, which is a measure of the concentration of results around the average. If there is a significant concentration of results around the average, kurtosis takes a value above 0 and it can be said that a significant part of the observation is similar (there are only a few observations significantly different from the average). If there is a poor concentration of results around the average, kurtosis takes the value below 0

and it can be said that there is a large part of results far from the average. Table 8 contains descriptive statistics of the variable age diversity.

Table 8
Descriptive statistics for age diversity

League	Number of clubs	Min	Max	Mean	SD
LaLiga (Spain)	20	-1.383	-0.119	-0.831	0.340
Premier League (England)	20	-1.388	1.828	-0.248	0.736
Bundesliga (Germany)	18	-1.288	2.436	-0.499	0.828
Serie A (Italy)	20	-1.541	0.823	-0.655	0.608
Ligue 1 (France)	20	-1.265	0.742	-0.477	0.573
Cypriot First Division (Cyprus)	14	-1.561	0.357	-0.793	0.542
Ekstraklasa (Poland)	16	-1.525	2.680	-0.220	0.953
Liga I Bergenbier (Romania)	14	-1.309	1.485	-0.554	0.719
Premyer Liquasi (Azerbaijan)	8	-1.027	7.444	0.563	2.818
Allsvenskan (Sweden)	16	-1.126	1.230	-0.393	0.762

Source: own work.

For the majority of leagues, the hypothesis about the normality of variable distributions cannot be rejected (the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used). This variable has no normal distribution for the German, Polish and Azerbaijani leagues.

The relation between age diversity and club results for each league

For each league, a correlation between the degree of age diversity and the club's position in the table and the obtained points was performed (Spearman's rank correlation was used). Due to the determination of the existence of a general non-directional correlation, significance (two-tailed) was applied to Spearman's rho (see Table 9).

For most of the leagues, the analysis showed no correlation between age diversity and club results. Only for the French league, the position in the table positively correlates with age diversity and for the Cypriot league – negatively.

At the same time, it should be emphasized that there are no significant differences between age diversity in individual clubs for all leagues (the Kruskal-Wallis test for independent trials was used).

Table 9

Correlation between age diversity and club performance (Spearman's correlation test)

Age diversity		Club points	Club position
LaLiga (Spain)	Correlation coefficient	0.190	-0.205
	Significance	0.421	0.387
	N	20	20
Premier League (England)	Correlation coefficient	0.028	-0.033
	Significance	0.907	0.890
	N	20	20
Bundesliga (Germany)	Correlation coefficient	0.264	-0.286
	Significance	0.290	0.250
	N	18	18
Serie A (Italy)	Correlation coefficient	0.035	-0.035
	Significance	0.885	0.885
	N	20	20
Ligue 1 (France)	Correlation coefficient	0.452*	-0.462*
	Significance	0.045	0.040
	N	20	20
First Division (Cyprus)	Correlation coefficient	-0.574*	0.574*
	Significance	0.032	0.032
	N	14	14
Ekstraklasa (Poland)	Correlation coefficient	0.071	-0.176
	Significance	0.794	0.513
	N	16	16
Liga I Bergenbier (Romania)	Correlation coefficient	0.262	-0.253
	Significance	0.366	0.383
	N	14	14
PremyerLiquasi (Azerbaijan)	Correlation coefficient	-0.524	0.524
	Significance	0.183	0.183
	N	8	8
Allsvenskan (Sweden)	Correlation coefficient	-0.296	0.303
	Significance	0.266	0.254
	N	16	16

Note: The interpretation of the Spearman's factor r : 0-0,3 means that the correlation is weak or non-existent, 0,3 – 0,5 moderate, 0,5-0,7 strong, 0,7-1,0 very strong; ** significant correlation on the level of 0.01 (two-tailed); * significant correlation on the level of 0.05 (two-tailed).

Source: own work.

Differences between age diversity in the clubs of the best and average leagues

The difference between the degree of age diversity in the best and average leagues was checked. The Mann-Whitney test was used for two independent tests. There are no significant differences between the group of the best and average leagues due to age diversity.

CONCLUSION

The completed research is unique due to the fact that it covered organizations from ten different European countries. The study of football clubs also allowed to refer the diversity of nationality and age to performance, measured directly and comprehensively. The research clearly shows the lack of dependence between the diversity of nationality and the performance. First of all, the correlation between the degree of nationality diversity and clubs' results is statistically insignificant. Although the best leagues are significantly (statistically) more ethnically diverse than the average ones, the conclusion that the degree of diversity of nationality has an impact on performance is unproven in the absence of relations within the league. It should also be acknowledged that the relation between age diversity and performance was proven to be non-existent (the correlation was not significant for eight leagues, and for the two of them, although significant, was different - once positive, once negative).

DISCUSSION

Undoubtedly, very talented players are members of the clubs of the best European leagues, but it should be underlined that their results depend also on the mutual relations between them. The ex-Manchester United manager, Sir Alex Ferguson, shares this view: "In my industry, the sense of community is not just a nice-sounding concept that can be taken into account or not, depending on preferences. Without this, nothing will be achieved. Selfishness, factions, and cliques mean death for the football team. As a football manager, I've never been interested in sending a team of great players to the field. Nothing can replace talent, but on the field talent without a sense of unity of purpose is a grossly overvalued currency" (Bolchover and Brady 2006).

At the same time, it is necessary to distinguish the sense of community from friendship. If several dozen players are employed in the club, it is not possible for everyone to like each other and feel good in their company.

However, it does not matter if everyone can rely on each other, when everyone is united by the common goal on the field (Bolchover and Brady 2006).

Shaping the sense of purpose unity is neither simple nor easy. However, two factors seem to play a major role in this process. First of all, the collective goal, which every football player wants to achieve, must be formulated in a legible and accessible manner. Second of all, the player must be convinced that his/her interest is the same as the interest of the whole club. Moreover, the external opponent (real or imaginary) is needed as an affirmation of the sense of unity, which allows to forget about possible frictions and concentrate on fighting it. Many prominent coaches successfully built the mentality of the fortress under siege to create and maintain a sense of community (Bolchover and Brady 2006).

As has already been pointed out, management of a football club covers probably all the problems related to the management of a modern organization. However, they are more visible due to the huge interest of the media. A CEOs of Manchester City once said that in every football season there are at least 40 general shareholders' meetings involving 40,000 people in each one of them. In fact, everything is clearly visible, and what is hidden will be quickly revealed by inquisitive media (Bolchover and Brady 2006). This also applies to behaviour marked by prejudice, whether racial, ethnic, religious or resulting from the age diversity of players. Such behaviour is very quickly exposed and, more importantly, stigmatized (similarly to e.g. the racist behaviour of football fans, for which the Disciplinary Regulations of the UEFA impose severe penalties). Therefore, it is not surprising that they are rare².

According to the authors of this article, the sense of community and the far-reaching transparency of the activities of football clubs result in the fact that they are, to a large extent, free of prejudice. In this situation, based on literature in the field of diversity management, one would think that the players' diversity could explain the differences between the results of football clubs, yet the research presented in this article contradicts that. The obtained results prove that there is no significant correlation between nationality diversity and achieved results. The lack of correlation between the age diversity of the players and the results achieved by the clubs should be assumed as well, since it was a significant relation only for two of the ten leagues, and what is more, the correlation was opposite - once positive, and once negative.

² Fraser Foster (goalkeeper of Celtic FC) said: "It's for us to be role models, there are millions of people watching football worldwide, and it's important that we get that point across as a team, and as footballers all across the globe" (UEFA, 2012). This postulate was implemented, which is confirmed by the conclusions from Respect Diversity Conference, where it was indicated that all racist behaviour among players have been largely eliminated (UEFA, 2014).

However, the best leagues are significantly more ethnically diverse than the average leagues. This does not prove that the degree of nationality diversity has an impact on the performance (it is not related to the results in the leagues), but it can be assumed that a significant increase in diversity in the better leagues is a manifestation of the possibility of engaging the best players (regardless of nationality). The level of competence is key in the case of performance, rather than high or low diversity.

Although the research carried out is not free from limitations (among others, the analysis of organizations of limited size, prejudicial behaviour was not identified and analysed in the examined objects), it can be the basis for a following hypothesis: football clubs do not benefit from the diversity of players due to their nationality and age, although they seem to be, to a large extent, free from prejudice because of the sense of community and the transparency of their activities. However, this would mean that if the above conditions are not met, clubs may perform worse (see Figure 1).

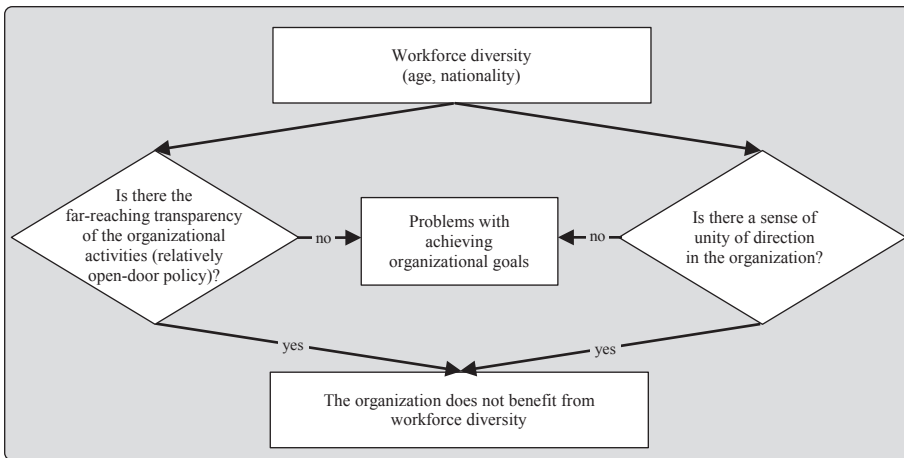


Fig. 1. Determinants of the relation between workforce diversity and organizational performance – a conclusion of empirical research

Source: own work.

Drucker once suggested that the best model of a new type of organization is the orchestra, in which the musicians harmoniously cooperate with each other, as if they were one organism. However, the metaphor of the orchestra has the main disadvantage that the musicians repeatedly play with the same notes, often written many years ago. Moreover, other orchestras do not

interfere with the game. Meanwhile, conditions are changing and it is crucial to respond quickly and effectively to changes in the environment. It is possible when cooperation between the organization members is arranged in the most flexible way. This is what happens in contemporary, total football, which is like a war, as Michels said, underlining that it means that the winner takes everything. In football, as in modern organizations, it is very important to constantly change roles, but within a certain structural programming, which in business may be associated with competition, talent or organizational culture. When the environment creates some limitations, the organization can follow the footsteps of the players, who in a creative way use the opportunities on the field with the help of trained game patterns.

Assuming that business should imitate football, then the hypothesis of not benefiting from the diversity of organization members should be verified by extensive empirical research focused on contemporary organizations of various industries. The research should be oriented on:

- Identifying conditions limiting the occurrence of prejudiced behaviour. In particular those promoting the sense of community of purpose and transparency in the organization operations, the lack of which blocks creativity, quick action and the potential of talented people (Welch and Welch 2005).
- Defining the principles of constructing a sense of community and increasing transparency in the organization operations. This construction is more difficult in relation to business, mainly due to the large size of many economic organizations, and the restrictions on systematically dissecting the behaviour of topmanagers. However, a good lesson in this area can undoubtedly be given by football managers.
- Verification of the next hypothesis: the more prejudiced the behaviour, the worse the organization's performance.

Moreover, in light of the results of the conducted analysis, a new, inclusive model of diversity management emerges. Its features are:

- Talent-based. Both in football and increasingly in business, success largely depends on the availability of talent and the management of their activities.
- Organizational culture, based on passion, sense of unity and the desire for success.
- Concentration on results, guiding the thinking and actions of people to what is the most important for the organization, because it was created for this purpose.
- Contribution to the whole. In an effective human team, the pursuit of individual accomplishments is accomplished only by achieving collective goals.

- An atmosphere of openness, introducing order into the organization. Although its shaping is very difficult and it will never be fully achieved, the work is more efficient.
- Simplicity. To paraphrase the words of Albert Einstein (“everything should be done as simply as possible, but not simpler”), it can be said that if the diversity of the organization members is a value, it is not at all cost because moderation and the golden mean are the most important.

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