Influence of Diversity on Conflicts, Turnover, and Performance

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Introduction

Diversity issue has been treated as an important element in organizational management in many advanced countries (Barsade, Ward et al. 2000; Pitts 2009). As evidence, many papers on diversity were presented at 2012 American Society for Public Administration Conference held in Las Vegas, NV. Initially, diversity meant something to be related to demographic variables, affirmative action (AA), and equal employment opportunity (EEO). In other word, the term was considered as something equal to the participation of more colors and women. Therefore, the concept was more normative. It means that more colors and women in organization are meaningful.

Since 1980s, according as organizations have the diverse workforce, many practitioners and scholars have had interests in workforce diversity (Wentling and Palma-Rivas 1998; Mor-Barak 1999). The focus of diversity has been expanded from simple demographic characteristics to belief, background, and function (Thomas Jr 1990; Slack 1997; D’Netto and Sohal 1999; Gardenswartz and Rowe 2010). Unlikely in the past, they would like to reveal the relationship between
diversity and organizational performance (Pelled, Eisenhardt et al. 1999). It, however, is difficult to find empirical studies that examine the relationship between diversity and performance in the public sector, although there are some studies in the private sector (Pitts 2005; Pitts 2009).

In the past decades, empirical studies have focused on direct relationship between demographic characteristic variables and performance, but recently a group of scholars tries to suggest more sophisticated model to explain diversity and performance. For example, conflict variable – emotional or task conflict – can be used as a moderate variable between diversity and performance (Pelled, Eisenhardt et al. 1999).

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between diversity and conflicts, and performance. All three variables are classified into two dimensions. Diversity variable can be classified into indirectly work related and directly work related. Conflict variable is divided into two categories: emotional and task. Finally, performance is categorized into turnover and cognitive performance. This model is very similar to that of Pelled and her colleagues (1999).

**Theoretical Background and Hypotheses**

**Diversity, Emotional Conflict, and Task Conflict**

Organizations are consisted with employees who have various demographic