

Diversity Management in Public Organizations and Its Effect on Employees' Affective Commitment: The Role of Transformational Leadership and the Inclusiveness of the Organizational Culture

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to explore the link between diversity management in public organizations and employees' affective commitment by testing hypotheses on the mediating roles of transformational leadership and inclusive organizational culture. By combining theories on human resource management and performance with theories on diversity and inclusiveness, a theoretical model is built explaining when and why diversity management should positively affect employees' affective commitment. Survey data from a representative sample of 10,976 Dutch public sector employees were used in testing our hypotheses using structural equation modeling techniques. Results show that the effect of diversity management on employees' affective commitment can partially be explained by its impact on the inclusiveness of the organizational culture. In addition, the impact is influenced through the transformational leadership shown by supervisors who can be considered as the implementers of diversity management and as agents in creating inclusiveness. The implications for future research and management practice are further discussed.

Keywords

diversity management, inclusive culture, affective commitment, transformational leadership, public sector, survey research

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Introduction

Public organizations have a long history of implementing diversity policies aimed at increasing the representation of minority groups in their workforce. Through these policies, they emphasize their exemplary role and aim to improve their legitimacy (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Groeneveld & Van de Walle, 2010; Selden & Selden, 2001). More recently, public organizations have been implementing diversity management to attract, retain, and manage a diverse workforce to enhance their performance. This line of reasoning differs from traditional affirmative action or equal employment opportunity policies (AA/EEO), which focus solely on recruitment and selection processes. Diversity management covers the policies and interventions that organizations develop and implement to bring about the so-called “added value of diversity” in terms of increased legitimacy, creativity, and innovation, and positive employee attitudes and behaviors, which in turn will boost organizational performance (Celik, Ashikali, & Groeneveld, 2011; Ely & Thomas, 2001; Groeneveld, 2011; Groeneveld & Van de Walle, 2010; Pitts, 2009). Diversity management is about changing organizational practices and climates to manage a diverse workforce effectively (Roosevelt Thomas, 1990) and, as such, is an aspect of strategic human resource management (SHRM).

However, empirical research on the effectiveness of diversity management is limited and the findings are mixed. Insight into how management can improve diversity outcomes is needed (Groeneveld & Van de Walle, 2010; Pitts & Wise, 2010). One explanation offered for the earlier inconclusive findings is that research has primarily examined direct effects, whereas the effectiveness of diversity management is probably influenced by several mediating and moderating variables (Celik et al., 2011; Choi & Rainey, 2014).

We build on the recent literature on human resource management (HRM) and performance that suggests that several variables mediate between HRM and performance, and assume a similar reasoning can be applied to diversity management outcomes. In this article, we focus on affective commitment as an outcome because this is considered an important predictor of productive employee attitudes and behavior and of performance (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005; Kim, 2005; Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002; Steijn & Leisink, 2006). Furthermore, affective commitment can be considered as an important aim in itself of diversity management given the increasing importance attached to the retention of diverse groups of employees.

In this article, a theoretical model is elaborated that builds on the assumptions that it is employees’ attitudes and behaviors that mediate the relationship between HRM and performance (Guest, 1997; Wright & Nishii, 2007) and that it is employees’ perceptions of how and why HRM is implemented in the organization that determine their attitudes and behaviors that influence HRM outcomes (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Nishii, Lepak, & Schneider, 2008; Wright & Nishii, 2007). Therefore, the role of the supervisor, and more specifically the supervisor’s leadership style, becomes important in successfully implementing HRM practices (e.g., Gilbert, De Winne, & Sels, 2011; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Wright & Nishii, 2007).

Furthermore, we assume there is a natural “fit” between diversity management and a transformational style of leadership. As will be explained further in the

theoretical section, diversity management is essentially targeted at fostering the positive cognitive effects of diversity and mitigating its negative affective effects (Milliken & Martins, 1996; Van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004; De Vries & Homan, 2008). It is hypothesized that these outcomes are supported by a transformational leadership style that balances attending to individual growth with inspiring the collective endeavors of the group. It is argued that both diversity management and a transformational leadership style will contribute to an inclusive organizational culture in which both similarities and differences are recognized and valued.

The purpose of this article is to explore how diversity management in public organizations is linked to employees' affective commitment by examining the mediating role of the manager's leadership style and the inclusiveness of the organizational culture. We build a theoretical model that is based on two literature streams that to date have largely been kept apart: HRM literature to distinguish different levels and phases in diversity management and its outcomes, and the diversity management literature to substantiate them. The generated hypotheses are tested by analyzing data from a survey among Dutch public sector employees.

The outline of the article is as follows. In the next section, the theoretical framework of the research is built, explaining how diversity management could affect employees' affective commitment and how this is influenced by a transformational leadership style and the perceived inclusiveness of the organizational culture. The third section describes the data and methods used, and the results are then presented in the fourth section. The fifth section discusses the findings and draws conclusions.

Theoretical Framework

Diversity Management

Research on the outcomes of work-group diversity, predominantly conducted by social psychologists and business management scholars, has yielded contradictory findings (Jehn & Bezrukova, 2004; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). Diversity has been found to have both positive and negative work-related or employee outcomes: positive, for example, by enhancing decision-making quality and the opportunity for creativity through providing a greater range of perspectives, and negative through a decreased group identification resulting in lower employee commitment, retention, and satisfaction. Milliken and Martins (1996) showed that work-group diversity affects individual, group, and organizational outcomes through various mediating processes. In their meta-analysis, they found evidence for four types of short-term consequences (affective, symbolic, cognitive, and communicative) of work-group diversity. These mediating variables can have divergent effects on diversity outcomes (Milliken & Martins, 1996).

Van Knippenberg et al. (2004) draw on this well-known work of Milliken and Martins, but—importantly—add a theoretical explanation for these divergent processes. Their Categorization-Elaboration-Model (CEM) integrates an “elaboration and decision-making” perspective and a “social categorization” perspective on diversity. Essentially, their model shows that the positive effects of information processing by

diverse groups are disrupted by the negative effects of intergroup biases that may result from social categorization processes in such groups.

The model is more refined than we can show here, with both the above processes being contingent upon several mediating and moderating factors. For our argument, the important aspect is that the model provides theoretical and empirical bases for managing diversity. In practice, diversity management should aim to foster the positive cognitive effects of diversity and to mitigate the negative affective effects that arise from intergroup biases. If this is achieved, diversity will lead to positive work-related and/or employee outcomes. Diversity management should therefore include policies, programs and management activities that address the diversity in the organizational workforce to bring about its potentially positive effects. It should aim to change organizational practices and climates to manage a diverse workforce effectively (Roosevelt Thomas, 1990). As such, diversity management is different to equal employment (EO) or affirmative action (AA) policies and programs. These are targeted at increasing the representation of minority groups in the organization, often by setting quantitative targets for the influx of minorities at different levels of an organization, but do not address the management of cultural differences in the daily practices of multicultural groups.

However, in organizational practice, EO/AA policies are frequently complemented by policies that address the management of this diversity (Groeneveld & Verbeek, 2012). Pitts (2009) argues that this interrelatedness of various kinds of policies is a result of the different functions that management engages in when managing diversity. We follow Pitts' line of argument in our conceptualization of diversity management and distinguish three components.

First, diversity management involves attracting and selecting talented employees from minority groups who would not have been found through the everyday recruitment and selection practices (Ng & Burke, 2005). Second, diversity management involves valuing the cultural differences of employees. Management should bridge cultural gaps (reduce intergroup biases) and expose the potential added value of having different backgrounds and viewpoints (foster elaboration; Benschop, 2001; Ely & Thomas, 2001; Pless & Maak, 2004). Third, policy and program instruments are needed for managing diversity in daily practice (Benschop, 2001; Pless & Maak, 2004).

Diversity Management and Outcomes

Based on our conceptualization of diversity management, the hypothesis can be derived that diversity management will positively affect employees' attitudes, behavior, and performance. Following the general HRM and performance line of reasoning, one could expect investments in human resources to pay off and result in higher employee performance. Furthermore, Gould-Williams and Davies (2005) indicate that the mechanism of social exchange also contributes to a positive relationship between HR practices and performance. Employees who positively value HR management practices will reciprocate through showing attitudes and behaviors that are valued by the organization (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Nishii et al., 2008; Wright & Nishii, 2007).

Previous studies on diversity management have used a range of indicators for its effectiveness. Some studies focus on the representation of ethnic minorities in organizations, either in general or on certain levels. For example, in a large-scale quantitative study on diversity policies in Dutch organizations, Groeneveld and Verbeek (2012) found that policies designed to improve the management of diversity boosted the representation of ethnic minorities in organizations, whereas EO/AA policies did not.

Other studies, most of which are U.S.-based, focus on employee or work-related outcomes such as job satisfaction (e.g., Pitts, 2009), commitment and turnover intention (e.g., Celik et al., 2011) and perceived performance (Choi & Rainey, 2010; Pitts, 2009) reflecting research on the link between general HR policies and performance (Benschop, 2001). Here, research has found evidence that diversity management positively affects work-related outcomes and perceived performance in U.S. public sector organizations (Choi & Rainey, 2010; Pitts, 2009). Furthermore, evidence has been found for a positive relationship between diversity policies and several work-related outcomes in the Dutch public sector (De Ruijter & Groeneveld, 2011), for a positive relationship between diversity training programs and affective commitment (Celik et al., 2011) and for a negative relationship between diversity management and turnover intentions of public sector employees (Groeneveld, 2011).

The focus of this article is on employees' affective commitment. Affective commitment refers to an emotional bond that an employee feels with the organization. Employees who identify themselves with the organization are more involved and more willing to work toward organizational goals (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005; Kim, 2005; Meyer et al., 2002; Meyer et al., 2004). Affective commitment is seen as an outcome of diversity management because diversity management focuses on successfully attracting, selecting, and retaining diverse employees, on effectively managing them and on recognizing and valuing their differences. This should enhance employees' sense of belonging in and identifying with the organization. An assumption is that commitment is not only a predictor of employee performance but also reduces employees' turnover intentions and hence ultimately boosts the representation of diverse groups. Meyer et al. (2002) also found correlations between affective commitment and both organization outcomes (such as performance and organizational citizenship behavior) and employee outcomes (such as stress).

In this article, we combine the HRM and performance line of reasoning with the literature on diversity outcomes (Benschop, 2001). Diversity management will be effective in improving employee and organizational outcomes provided it positively affects the mediating processes of diversity. Put another way, diversity management should reduce the negative effects of social categorization within diverse work groups and create an environment in which being different is possible or even fostered (Hofhuis, Van der Zee, & Otten, 2012). These mediating processes are group-level processes in which a culture is created that should enable group members to maintain their "otherness" while simultaneously identifying with their organization or work group (Pless & Maak, 2004; Shore et al., 2011). Such an inclusive organizational culture can be characterized by its openness toward, and appreciation of, diversity (Hofhuis et al., 2012).

If diversity management successfully improves the inclusiveness of the organizational culture, this should be visible in employees identifying with the organization.

Review studies show that several organizational or work characteristics can influence employees' commitment, for instance, the role of the supervisor, HRM practices or policies, procedural justice and perceived organizational support, and organizational culture (Meyer et al., 2002; Wright & Kehoe, 2009). Meyer et al. (2002) found that perceived organizational support was highly correlated with affective commitment indicating an important mechanism through which affective commitment could be influenced. By providing a supportive work environment in which employees are treated fairly, organizations demonstrate their commitment to their employees, and this indirectly enhances their affective commitment. Furthermore, HR practices or policies that enforce a supportive organizational culture with shared norms, values, and expectations also correlate positively with employees' affective commitment (Wright & Kehoe, 2009).

Based on the above findings and arguments, we formulate the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Diversity management will positively affect employees' affective commitment.

Hypothesis 2: Diversity management will positively affect the inclusiveness of the organizational culture.

Hypothesis 3: Diversity management will have an indirect positive effect on employees' affective commitment through its influence on the inclusiveness of the organizational culture.

The Mediating Role of Transformational Leadership

In recent years, SHRM scholars have been analyzing the mediating processes between HRM and performance on various levels. Wright and Nishii (2007), for example, make a distinction between intended, actual and perceived HRM policies, a distinction that is adopted by many scholars to explain how HRM, employee and work-related outcomes, and performance are linked. Applying this distinction to diversity management assumes that diversity policy practices, as actually implemented by managers, can be different from those intended when formulated at the organizational level. Perceived practices result from the individual employees' interpretations of the actual policy. It is these perceptions that may affect employees' attitudes and behavior and, in turn, affect organizational performance (e.g., Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Gilbert et al., 2011; Guest, 1997; Nishii et al., 2008).

Managers fulfill a crucial role in implementing HRM and subsequently in how HRM is perceived by employees (Gilbert et al., 2011; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). Their leadership style will influence the extent to which, and how, they use specific HRM instruments. In other words, their leadership style affects the causal chain between HRM, employee and work-related outcomes, and performance. Recent studies on diversity management also suggest the importance of leadership style in influencing the relationship linking diversity, diversity management, and positive outcomes (Ashikali, 2011; Celik et al., 2011; Choi & Rainey, 2010; Kearney & Gebert, 2009; Nishii & Mayer, 2009).

Today, transformational leadership is by far the most popular leadership style studied. Transformational leadership is distinguished from transactional leadership by a relationship between leader and follower(s) that is based on more than social exchange. Transformational leadership is a charismatic inspirational style targeted at aligning the goals of the team and of its members, and with an ability to change the organizational culture (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Moynihan, Pandey, & Wright, 2012; Van Wart, 2013). It is transformational in the sense that it engages in changing the goals, values, and sense of belonging of followers in such a way that they are willing to perform beyond expectations (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999; Bass et al., 2003; Moynihan et al., 2012; Van Wart, 2013).

As conceptualized by Avolio et al. (1999) and by Bass et al. (2003), transformational leadership has four components, or dimensions, through which employee behavior is shaped: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Idealized influence refers to a leader who is trusted and respected by employees. Such a leader functions as a role model and builds employees' confidence and pride in the organization (Moynihan et al., 2012). Second, inspirational motivation refers to the leader creating a sense of collective vision, mission, and purpose among employees by providing meaning and challenge to their work (Bass et al., 2003; Moynihan et al., 2012). Third, leaders intellectually stimulate employee's efforts to be innovative and creative by questioning known approaches to resolving problems and perspectives on established work practices (Bass et al., 2003; Moynihan et al., 2012). Finally, individualized consideration refers to where individual needs for achievement and growth are recognized by the leader who then acts as a coach. The leader creates new learning opportunities and creates a supportive climate that fosters employee's growth (Bass et al., 2003).

Previous studies have found positive effects of transformational leadership on work-related outcomes and performance (Bass et al., 2003; Burke et al., 2006) although these effects are contingent on certain aspects such as the characteristics of followers, job characteristics, and work-group characteristics. Furthermore, previous studies also show transformational leadership as having an indirect effect on work-related outcomes and performance through its influence on organizational culture (Moynihan et al., 2012; Sarros, Cooper, & Santora, 2008).

We argue that the transformational style of leadership fits very well with managing diversity. Indeed, diversity scholars have theorized about the role of transformational leadership in managing diverse work groups. They expect a dual effect in that this style should foster the positive effects and reduce the negative effects of diversity on work-group outcomes (Kearney & Gebert, 2009; De Vries & Homan, 2008). First, transformational leadership will foster the elaboration of task-relevant information by providing intellectual stimulation and individual consideration. Both these components positively affect task motivation, and this, according to the CEM model, enhances elaboration (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004; De Vries & Homan, 2008). Second, by fostering collective team identification, transformational leadership also overcomes the negative effects of categorization (Kearney & Gebert, 2009).

Since both diversity management and transformational leadership engage in changing the mediating processes between diversity and outcomes, we would expect

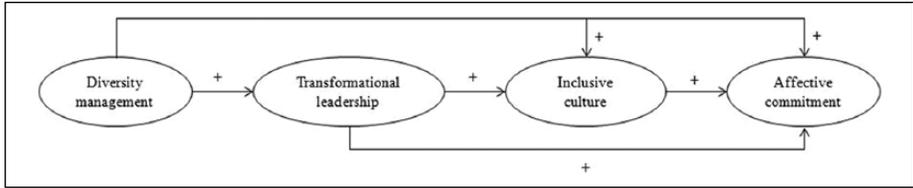


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

diversity management to be supported and more successfully implemented by a transformational leader. Furthermore, transformational leaders are expected to foster an inclusive culture in which diverse employees feel respected and valued, so enhancing their affective commitment to the organization. We therefore formulate the following hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 4:** Transformational leadership will partially mediate the relationship between diversity management and the inclusiveness of the organizational culture.
- Hypothesis 5:** An inclusive culture will partially mediate the effect of transformational leadership on employees’ affective commitment.
- Hypothesis 6:** Transformational leadership and an inclusive culture will partially mediate the link between diversity management and affective commitment.

Figure 1 depicts the proposed relationships between diversity management, transformational leadership, inclusive organizational culture, and affective commitment.

Data and Method

Data Sample and Source

The data used in this research are from an online panel survey among a representative sample of Dutch public sector employees that had been commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. This panel consisted of approximately 30,000 Dutch public-sector employees who had been invited to join the panel. Members were recruited based on a probability sample from the administrative records of the Dutch public sector pension fund (ABP). The survey was conducted in spring 2011. At that time, 27,167 panel members were available to participate in this research, and an email with an invitation to the online survey was sent to them. There were 11,557 respondents, a response rate of 42.5%. After removing cases where there were missing values, the remaining sample contains 10,976 public sector employees, a response rate of 40.4%.

Of these respondents, 41.1% were female, whereas 52% of public sector workers in 2011 were female. The mean age of the respondents was 49.6 years compared with a mean public sector age of 44 years in 2011. Eight percent of the respondents

had nonnative Dutch origins whereas, in 2011, 15% of public sector employees had nonnative Dutch origins. In terms of sector, 39% of the respondents worked for the governmental sectors (primarily central government, the provinces, local government, and water boards), 50% in the Education and Science sector and 11% in police and defense. The percentages of public sector employees working in these different sectors in 2011 were 33%, 54%, and 13%, respectively. Although the selection of panel members was representative for Dutch public sector employees, female and nonnative Dutch employees were underrepresented in the final sample and the mean age of the respondents was higher. Therefore, we added gender, age and ethnic origin as control variables in the structural equation models.

Method

Structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data and test the conceptual model. The advantage of this statistical technique is the ability to simultaneously conduct both regression and confirmatory factor analyses. The AMOS 20 statistical package was used to test the model presented in the theoretical section. In addition, SPSS 20 was used to determine the descriptive statistics of the research variables.

Measurements

Diversity management. Diversity management was measured using a three-item scale developed by Pitts (2009). The items are listed in Table 1 (Items DM1-DM3). All items were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (5) *strongly agree*. A high score indicates the presence of diversity management.

Transformational leadership. In measuring transformational leadership, we followed the conceptualization of Bass et al. (2003) of there being four dimensions to transformational leadership. The survey questionnaire contained 12 items (3 items per dimension) to measure transformational leadership: idealized influence (TL1-TL3); inspirational motivation (TL4-TL6); intellectual stimulation (TL7-TL9); and individualized consideration (TL10-TL12). All the items were again measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (5) *strongly agree*. The higher the score, the more employees perceive a transformational leadership style.

Inclusive organizational culture. The inclusiveness of the organizational culture is measured by six items (see Table 1: Items IC1-IC6). These items had previously been used by the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations in a research on inclusiveness among Dutch civil servants. All the items were measured using the same Likert-type scale as before and, again, the higher the score, the more employees perceive the organizational culture to be inclusive.

Affective commitment. To measure the affective commitment of employees, we used Kim's (2005) validated three-item scale (Table 1: AC1-AC3). The same Likert-type

Table 1. List of Items.

Diversity management	
DM1	“Supervisors/team leaders in my work unit are committed to a workforce that is representative of all segments of society”
DM2	“Managers/supervisors/team leaders work well with employees of different backgrounds”
DM3	“Policies and programs promote diversity in the workplace (e.g., recruiting minorities and women, training in awareness of diversity issues, mentoring)”
Inclusive culture	
IC1	“Where I work I am treated with respect”
IC2	“I can openly discuss my opinion without fear of negative consequences”
IC3	“My organization has a work environment where different ideas and perspectives are valued”
IC4	“My organization is free of discrimination”
IC5	“My organization is free of intimidation”
IC6	“The decisions made by managers about employees are fair”
Transformational leadership	
Idealized influence	
TL1	“My leader considers my needs over his or her own needs”
TL2	“I trust my leader”
TL3	“My leader is consistent in conduct with underlying ethics, principles and values”
Inspirational motivation	
TL4	“My leader emphasizes the importance of having a collective sense of mission”
TL5	“My leader behaves in ways that arouses individual and team spirit”
TL6	“My leader behaves in ways that motivate, by providing meaning and challenge to employees’ work”
Intellectual stimulation	
TL7	“My leader stimulates to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problems and approaching old situations in new ways”
TL8	“My leader seeks different points of view when solving problems”
TL9	“My leader suggests new ways of working and different perspectives”
Individualized consideration	
TL10	“My leader recognizes individual differences in terms of needs and desires”
TL11	“My leader helps employees to develop their strengths”
TL12	“My leader pays attention to each individual’s need for achievement and growth by acting as a coach or mentor”
Affective commitment	
AC1	“I feel like part of the family in my organization”
AC2	“My organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me”
AC3	“I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization”

scale was again used and a high score indicates that an employee feels committed to the organization.

Since the wording of the items under the different concepts is sometimes rather close and the “inclusiveness of culture” scale had not been previously validated, we

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations (*n* = 10,976).

	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Diversity management	1	5	3.04	.80	($\alpha = .663$)					
2. Inclusive culture	1	5	3.59	.91	.454**	($\alpha = .892$)				
3. Transformational leadership	1	5	3.42	.95	.486**	.626**	($\alpha = .954$)			
4. Affective commitment	1	5	3.99	.97	.333**	.484**	.471**	($\alpha = .902$)		
5. Age	20	70	49.7	9.5	.020*	-.026**	-.036**	.029**		
6. Gender (0 = male, 1 = female)	0	1	0.41	.49	-.036**	.004	.001	.003	-.193**	
7. Ethnic origin (0 = Dutch, 1 = Ethnic minority)	0	1	0.08	.27	.004	-.032**	-.017	-.020*	-.012	.025**

Note. Measurement reliability: Cronbach's alphas are shown on the diagonal.

*Correlations are significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

**Correlations are significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

first conducted a Harman's one-factor test. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) on diversity management, inclusive culture, transformational leadership, and affective commitment items resulted in the expected four-factor solution but with a modestly dominant first factor. On this basis, we concluded that it is acceptable to proceed with the SEM analysis. Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics of the central concepts and the Cronbach's alphas of the measurement scales. Diversity management, transformational leadership, inclusiveness of the organizational culture, and affective commitment are all positively correlated.

It should be noted that all the concepts are measured on the employee level. Thus, the degree of diversity management, the extent of transformational leadership and the inclusiveness of the organizational culture all refer to the perceptions of employees. As we will discuss later, the analysis would have benefitted from multilevel and multi-source data.

Results

To test the mediating role of inclusive culture, as distinct from transformational leadership, we tested two models. The first structural equation model was built to test the relationships linking diversity management, inclusive culture and affective commitment. In the second model, transformational leadership was added. The first model, with diversity management, inclusive culture and affective commitment, had the following goodness of fit statistics: chi-square (CMIN) $\chi^2 = 7,845.82$, $df = 84$, $p < .000$, $\chi^2/df = 93.403$, comparative fit index (CFI) = .896, and root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) = .092. The model's outputs suggest that the model would be improved by adding correlational links among the disturbance variances of items IC4 and IC5 (inclusive culture) and items DM1 and DM3 (diversity management). This is because the correlations indicate that items IC4 and IC5, and DM1 and DM3

have a common unexplained variance. These correlations may be due to inadequately worded survey questions, or respondents' inability to answer questions, or provide the correct answer to questions (Byrne, 2010). The adjusted model, following this modification, improved the fit of the data to a satisfactory level. The revised goodness of fit statistics were as follows: (CMIN) $\chi^2 = 3,281.01$, $p < .001$; $df = 82$; $\chi^2/df = 40.01$, CFI = .957, and RMSEA = .060. The large sample size results in a large and statistically significant value for χ^2 , but the CFI (>.95) and RMSEA (<.06) values indicate that the model fits the data well (Byrne, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

The results of the SEM analysis are displayed in Table 3. The first observation is that the estimates of the factor loadings of the measurement paths are all statistically significant ($p < .001$), except for the fixed parameters. Nevertheless, some estimates of the factor loadings are lower than expected, which indicates that the measurement model is not optimal, probably, as already mentioned, due to the closeness of some items belonging to different concepts.

Second, all the structural effects are statistically significant (see Table 3). Diversity management has a positive effect on the affective commitment of Dutch public sector employees ($\beta = .165$). The more that employees perceive diversity management being implemented in the organization, the more the employees will feel committed to their organization. Hypothesis 1 is therefore accepted. Diversity management, as perceived by employees, thus increases their identification with and sense of belonging to the public sector organization.

The results also show a notably strong positive effect of diversity management on the inclusiveness of the organizational culture ($\beta = .704$). The more employees experience diversity management in the organization, the more they feel valued and recognized. In other words, a more inclusive culture can be achieved by implementing diversity management. Hence, we can accept Hypothesis 2.

The inclusiveness of the organizational culture in turn positively affects the affective commitment of public sector employees ($\beta = .410$). That is, when employees experience an inclusive culture, they are more committed to their organization. Furthermore, the inclusiveness of the organizational culture partially mediates the effect of diversity management on employees' affective commitment ($\beta = .289$, $p = .001$). Here, diversity management fosters the inclusiveness of the organizational culture, which in turn enhances employees' affective commitment. Hypothesis 3 is therefore accepted. Combining the direct effects and the indirect effect in this model, diversity management has a total effect of $\beta = .453$ ($p = .001$) on affective commitment.

The second model, in which transformational leadership was added, had the following goodness of fit statistics: (CMIN) $\chi^2 = 14,173.38$, $df = 313$, $p < .000$, $\chi^2/df = 45.28$, CFI = .929, and RMSEA = .064. As with the first model, these findings suggest that an improvement in the model is possible. This time by adding correlations among the disturbance variances of items of the transformational leadership scale: namely, TL2 and TL3 of the *idealized influence* dimension, TL7 and TL8 of the *intellectual stimulation* dimension, and TL11 and TL12 of the *individualized consideration* dimension. These correlations indicate that TL2 and TL3, TL7 and TL8, and TL11 and TL12 have unexplained variance in common. These correlations were added based on

Table 3. Results SEM Analysis Alternative Model Diversity Management, Inclusive Culture, and Affective Commitment ($n = 10,976$).

Standardized estimates			
Measurement paths			
DM_1	←	Diversity management	.468 ^{NA}
DM_2	←	Diversity management	.777*
DM_3	←	Diversity management	.394*
IC_1	←	Inclusive culture	.797 ^{NA}
IC_2	←	Inclusive culture	.841*
IC_3	←	Inclusive culture	.837*
IC_4	←	Inclusive culture	.530*
IC_5	←	Inclusive culture	.705*
IC_6	←	Inclusive culture	.7864*
AC_1	←	Affective commitment	.797 ^{NA}
AC_2	←	Affective commitment	.885*
AC_3	←	Affective commitment	.935*
Structural paths			
Inclusive culture	←	Diversity management	.704*
Affective commitment	←	Inclusive culture	.410*
Affective commitment	←	Diversity management	.165*
Affective commitment	←	Gender (0 = male, 1 = female)	.011
Affective commitment	←	Ethnic origin (0 = Dutch, 1 = ethnic minority)	-.005
Affective commitment	←	Age	.053*
Indirect effects			
Affective commitment	←	Inclusive culture ← Diversity management	.289*
R^2		Inclusive culture	.496
		Affective commitment	.292

Note. $\chi^2 = 3,281.01$, $p < .001$; $df = 82$; $\chi^2/df = 40.01$; CFI = .96; RMSEA = .06. NA = not applicable (fixed parameter).

* $p < .001$.

theoretical reasoning, since the correlated items belong to the same transformational leadership dimension. Having made the adjustments, the revised model fitted the data satisfactorily with the goodness of fit statistics now: (CMIN) $\chi^2 = 9,511.06$, $p < .001$; $df = 310$; $\chi^2/df = 30.68$, CFI = .953, and RMSEA = .052.

The results of the second SEM analysis are displayed in Table 4. As with the previous model, the estimates of the factor loadings of the measurement paths are all statistically significant ($p < .001$) except for the fixed parameters.

Figure 2 provides an overview of the standardized direct estimates of the structural path analysis of diversity management, transformational leadership, inclusive culture and affective commitment. The complete SEM model is presented in the appendix with the added correlations among the disturbance variances.

The results presented in Table 4 show that transformational leadership has a positive effect on the inclusiveness of the organizational culture ($\beta = .395$). That is, the

more a supervisor displays a transformational style of leadership, the more employees will experience an inclusive organizational culture. Moreover, diversity management has a strong positive effect on the perceived transformational leadership of the supervisor ($\beta = .698$). In other words, the more the employees perceive their organization to be implementing diversity management, the more they perceive their supervisor to be applying a transformational style of leadership. In addition, diversity management has an indirect effect on the perceived inclusiveness of the organizational culture through transformational leadership ($\beta = .129, p = .001$). These findings support Hypothesis 4.

Transformational leadership also has a positive direct effect on employees' affective commitment ($\beta = .183$). The more that supervisors display a transformational leadership style, the more employees feel a sense of belonging to and identification with the organization. Hypothesis 5 suggests that the inclusiveness of the organizational culture partially mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employees' affective commitment. The results indeed show that transformational leadership has an indirect effect, through the inclusiveness of the organizational culture, on employees' affective commitment ($\beta = .129, p = .001$) and, therefore, Hypothesis 5 is accepted: A transformational leadership style enhances employees' affective commitment by fostering an inclusive organizational culture.

Hypothesis 6 suggests that the link between diversity management and affective commitment is partially mediated by a transformational leadership style and by the inclusiveness of the organizational culture. The indirect effect of diversity management, through transformational leadership and organizational culture, on affective commitment ($\beta = .361, p = .001$) indicates that the relationship between diversity management and commitment is indeed partially mediated by transformational leadership and the inclusiveness of the organizational culture, and thus Hypothesis 6 is supported.

Overall, the results show that the effect on employees' affective commitment of perceived diversity management can be explained by its impact on the inclusiveness of the organizational culture. Furthermore, we have shown that this impact comes about through the transformational leadership of supervisors who can be considered to be the implementers of diversity management and the agents for creating inclusiveness.

Discussion and Conclusion

Our research has addressed the link between diversity management in Dutch public sector organizations and their employees' affective commitment by examining the mediating role of the managers' leadership style and the inclusiveness of the organizational culture. First, we hypothesized that diversity management would positively and partially influence the affective commitment of employees through the inclusiveness of the organizational culture. The results indeed indicated a positive effect of diversity management on the inclusiveness of the organizational culture and on employees' affective commitment. Moreover, organizational culture partially mediates the effect of diversity management on affective commitment. This finding supports the idea that diversity management

Table 4. Results SEM Analysis Alternative Model Diversity Management, Transformational Leadership, Inclusive Culture and Affective Commitment ($n = 10,976$).

Standardized estimates			
Measurement paths			
DM_1	←	Diversity management	.484 ^{NA}
DM_2	←	Diversity management	.757*
DM_3	←	Diversity management	.395*
TL_1	←	Transformational leadership	.662 ^{NA}
TL_2	←	Transformational leadership	.859*
TL_3	←	Transformational leadership	.818*
TL_4	←	Transformational leadership	.703*
TL_5	←	Transformational leadership	.870*
TL_6	←	Transformational leadership	.820*
TL_7	←	Transformational leadership	.791*
TL_8	←	Transformational leadership	.815*
TL_9	←	Transformational leadership	.714*
TL_10	←	Transformational leadership	.824*
TL_11	←	Transformational leadership	.806*
TL_12	←	Transformational leadership	.822*
IC_1	←	Inclusive culture	.800 ^{NA}
IC_2	←	Inclusive culture	.838*
IC_3	←	Inclusive culture	.832*
IC_4	←	Inclusive culture	.525*
IC_5	←	Inclusive culture	.703*
IC_6	←	Inclusive culture	.794*
AC_1	←	Affective commitment	.799 ^{NA}
AC_2	←	Affective commitment	.885*
AC_3	←	Affective commitment	.932*
Structural paths			
Transformational leadership	←	Diversity management	.698*
Inclusive culture	←	Transformational leadership	.395*
Inclusive culture	←	Diversity management	.440*
Affective commitment	←	Transformational leadership	.183*
Affective commitment	←	Inclusive culture	.326*
Affective commitment	←	Diversity management	.101*
Affective commitment	←	Gender (0 = male, 1 = female)	.011
Affective commitment	←	Ethnic origin (0 = Dutch, 1 = ethnic minority)	-.005
Affective commitment	←	Age	.057*
Indirect effects			
Inclusive culture	←	Transformational leadership ← Diversity management	.276*
Affective commitment	←	Inclusive culture ← Transformational leadership	.129*

(continue)

Table 4. (continued)

Standardized estimates			
Affective commitment	←	Inclusive culture ← Transformational leadership ← Diversity Management	.367*
R ²		Inclusive culture	.592
		Affective commitment	.309
		Transformational leadership	.487

Note. $\chi^2 = 9,511.06, p < .001; df = 310; \chi^2/df = 30.68; CFI = .95; RMSEA = .05$. NA = not applicable (fixed parameter).
 * $p < .001$.

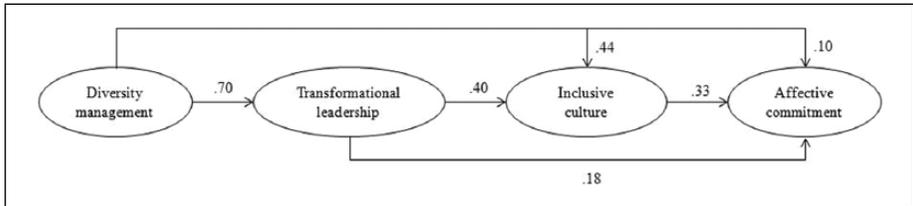


Figure 2. Path model (standardized direct estimates).

initiatives that are successful in affecting the openness and appreciation of diversity in the organization will improve employees’ affective commitment.

It was further hypothesized that managers demonstrating a transformational leadership style would support diversity management initiatives and would improve their anticipated outcomes. The results showed that transformational leadership is indeed an important mediator between diversity management and its outcomes. Transformational leadership contributes to the inclusiveness of the organizational culture, and this in turn enhances employees’ affective commitment. Managing diversity in the public sector could thus benefit from supervisors adopting a transformational style of leadership. This is in line with previous SHRM research that emphasizes the role of the supervisor in the HRM-performance link (Gilbert et al., 2011; Paauwe, Guest, & Wright, 2013; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Wright & Nishii, 2007) and the influence of transformational leadership on organizational culture (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Moynihan et al., 2012; Sarros et al., 2008).

The results of this study show that the effectiveness of diversity management is partially explained by the transformational leadership of supervisors and by the inclusiveness of the organizational culture. It is therefore important that public sector managers recognize their leadership style and how this shapes the organizational culture. Such an awareness can help public organizations effectively manage a diverse workforce.

Our study has several limitations, both conceptually and methodologically, which have implications for future research. Our conceptualization of diversity management, following Pitts (2009), combines both management practices and policies. A close look at the concepts linked to diversity management and to transformational leadership reveals that the conceptualization of diversity management used is close to some of the dimensions attached to transformational leadership. Since diversity management and transformational leadership are both assumed to affect the mediating processes between diversity and employee outcomes, and probably both through affecting the inclusiveness of the organizational culture, transformational leadership could be seen as a way to manage diversity. In practice, it is employees' perceptions of how diversity management is implemented by their managers that affects their attitudes and behavior. These perceptions are influenced by the leadership style of their line manager or supervisor, and how they implement diversity management. Therefore, employees' perceptions will be influenced by their supervisor's leadership style (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Nishii et al., 2009; Wright & Nishii, 2007).

An initial implication of the interrelatedness of managing diversity and transformational leadership for future research is the need to develop clear conceptualizations and measurements of diversity management in which intended policies and interventions are clearly distinguished from their actual implementation by managers and from managers' leadership behaviors. Diversity policies may be useful instruments in the hands of transformational leaders when managing a diverse workforce, whereas diversity policies may not be adequately implemented by managers with a more transactional or laissez-faire leadership style. Here, previous research has found inconsistent results depending on the types of policy and employee outcomes considered (Celik et al., 2011). Furthermore, to deepen understanding of the interrelatedness of diversity management and transformational leadership, and their joint effects, more attention needs to be devoted to the impact of the various dimensions of transformational leadership on the inclusiveness of the organizational culture and employee outcomes.

This line of research could be further developed by examining the distinctions among intended, actual and perceived diversity policies (Wright & Nishii, 2007). Diversity policies as actually implemented by managers can be different from those formulated at the organizational level. Perceived practices result from the interpretation by individual employees of the actual policies. Here, the diversity perspectives and attitudes present in the organization and the motivations for pursuing diversity policies could be taken into account. The diversity perspectives present in an organization and the motivations that underlie diversity policies will affect how diversity policies are perceived by employees. These perceptions may affect employee outcomes that, in turn, will affect organizational performance (Benschop, 2001; Ely & Thomas, 2001; Groeneveld & Verbeek, 2012; Nishii et al., 2008).

Diversity management is aimed at changing values and behaviors of work groups or organizations, and is claimed to affect equally the individual outcomes of minority and majority groups. However, how diversity management and related policies are

perceived is probably influenced by whether one is a member of a majority or a minority group. Although we have not examined differences in diversity management effects between minority and majority groups, previous research has found evidence for stronger associations between diversity management and outcomes for minority groups than for majority groups (Pitts, 2009). A relevant line of research would be to analyze further these differences from a social exchange theory perspective.

Finally, we assumed that if diversity management affected employee outcomes positively, it would also contribute to organizational performance. In future research, one could investigate how and under what conditions diversity and diversity management do lead to improved public sector performance.

These lines for future research should adopt a multilevel design in which the leadership style of the manager can be linked to the diversity of work groups and its outcomes. Testing multilevel theories on diversity, diversity management, leadership, and outcomes requires multilevel designs and analyses, which were not possible with our data. For multilevel analysis, it is necessary that data on individual employees are linked to data on their team and/or organization. With the data we used, however, the individual employees were not surveyed within their team or organization. Therefore, identifying the different levels within organizations was not possible. Another advantage of a multilevel design, with data collection on different levels and among managers and employees separately, is the assurance offered by separate measurement of independent and dependent variables. The analysis in this study runs the risk of common method bias (Meier & O'Toole, 2013; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff., 2003) since diversity management, transformational leadership and organizational culture were measured, together with the dependent variable affective commitment, in a single questionnaire based on employee perceptions. Moreover, the wording of some of the indicators of diversity management, transformational leadership, and inclusiveness of the organizational culture was rather close. As such, the observed variances will partly be a result of having a common respondent and a common item context. To avoid this, future research should use multiple sources to reduce common method bias and so boost the construct validity of the diversity management, leadership, and organizational culture constructs. Another limitation of our cross-sectional data being all collected at one time is that this makes it impossible to test for causal relationships between the concepts. Reversed causality cannot be ruled out, placing a question mark over the internal validity of the research. A longitudinal multisource research design could be used to confirm causality.

Despite its limitations, we believe that this study does contribute to the diversity management literature by combining theoretical insights from HRM literature with studies on diversity outcomes. Our model *explained* diversity management outcomes by showing that transformational leadership and the inclusiveness of the organizational culture mediate the relationship between diversity management and employees' affective commitment. In so doing, it also provides managers with possible intervention points for effectively managing a diverse workforce.

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