

## **The Impact of Diversity in the Perception of Performance: A Case Study in Lima and Barcelona**

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### **Abstract**

An exploratory and comparative study was developed in both Peru and in Spain with the intention of measuring the impact diversity has in the perception of performance. The variables used were tenure, gender, age, and diversity awareness. The study shows a relationship between the real degree of diversity within the company and the awareness of diversity. It seems that the greater the diversity, the greater the awareness of diversity. Moreover the research provides statistical evidence that the awareness of diversity can be better associated with the perception of performance in companies with high levels of diversity. However the chosen diverse variables, gender, age and tenure do not have a greater relationship with this perception of group performance. The research also suggests that the perception of the degree of diversity acts as a moderator in the performance of the group.

*Keywords:* Diversity, Perception of Performance and Diversity Awareness.

### **Introduction**

During the last 10 years, diversity has been increasing its influence worldwide in organizations and societies. This are corroborated by the growing discussion on the topic by multilateral organizations in terms of cultural diversity and its influence in terms of the political, social, and economic agenda around the world (Stockholm Action Plan (1998) and 30th Session of the general Conference – UNESCO (1998); World Bank (1995); World Commission of Culture and Development (1995);

G-7 Brussels Summit (1995); Inter-American Bank of Development (1999); OSCE (1999); Organisation for African Unity (2000); Board for the Cultural Cooperation of the European Council (2000); Board of Ministers of the European Union (1999); Cultural Exchange Program of the OAS (1998); Work Group on Cultural Diversity and Globalisation of the RIPC (2003); European Commission (1995, 2000, 2002, 2003, etc.). The degree of recognition and understanding of this construct is not uniform, and in some cases, the debates in this topic are not reflected by any specific actions.

In 2003, the European Commission published a report in which it suggested that companies, whose policies encourage an increase in levels of diversity, obtain better results. The first fundamental question which the report deals with is as follows: “Companies which apply policies of diversification of personnel identify important benefits which reinforce competitiveness in the long term and in some cases, improve results in the medium and short term.”

Interest in diversity in organizations is corroborated by the increasing empirical research on its effects on work teams. The research findings are varied, but they can clearly recognize two ways of thinking. In accordance with the existing theory, the influence of diversity can be both positive and negative. Diversity may increase the quality of decisions, encouraging creativity and a desire to change (Cox, Lobel, & McCleod, 1991; Watson, Kumar, & Michelsen, 1993). At the same time, in diverse groups, there may also be less social integration, commitment to the team, and a feeling of belonging to it. Equally, diversity may have negative effects on one’s job satisfaction and satisfaction with the group itself. (Riordan & Shore, 1997; Triandis, Kurowski, & Gelfand, 1994).

Some researchers agree with the fact that the benefits of diversity are only seen in certain conditions (Milliken, Bartel, & Kurtzberg, 2003). Therefore, studies have shown, for example, that diversity has a positive impact on creativity in collective cultures (Chatman, Polzer, Barsade, & Neale, 1998). It would seem that research results do not show agreement in the positive effects of diversity on performance but that they do coincide in that if there is one negative effect, it is on the psychological relationship between individuals and groups. (Triandis et al. 1994; Williams & O’Reilly, 1998).

In this context, diversity can either be a threat or an opportunity for organizations depending on whether they can manage it properly, which is possibly why it has become a central issue in research on organizational behavior.

One important limitation in research on diversity is that in many cases, work is done on data compiled in US companies and that the studies tend to include only the largest companies. This, linked to the fact that the quantity of research in the area of Latin America is less than that carried out in Europe, poses an interesting opportunity for researchers, which is to carry out comparative studies on two different areas whose differences can also be seen in the levels of diversity within their organizations.

Diversity alludes to the differences between individuals in any attribute, which may lead the perception that the other person is different from oneself (Jackson, 1992). Therefore diversity is understood to refer to almost any individual characteristic. However, in research, special emphasis has been made with regard to gender, age, race/ethnicity, mother tongue, religion, education, and seniority

in a company. In this paper, we will only be analyzing the impact of tenure, gender, and age in the perception of performance, basically because they are variables which can be compared between two organizational realities in which the research is made. The levels of diversity per country of origin, mother tongue, or religion are notably different in the organizations of Latin American and in Europe. In the case of a more in-depth analysis in Peru, it becomes clear that diversity – particularly racial diversity – exists and sets a standard for the type of relationships there are between Peruvians (for a comprehensive review of this phenomena see: Callirgos, 1993; Flores Galindo, 1986; Manrique, 1999; Kogan, 1999; Moscoso, 1998; Portocarrero, 1989; Sara-Lafosse, Cordano, & Gentges, 1994; Stein & Stein, 1970). However, the dynamics and characteristics of this internal diversity and its social repercussion is something which is sidestepping our main theme and therefore will not be analyzed in this research.

### **An Overview of the Gender Diversity in Europe and Latin America**

In 2003, the GDP per capita in Europe (15 member countries) was nearly 65% of the GDP per capita of the United States (Genre, Gómez, & Lamo, 2005). There are various explanations for this, one of which is the ratio of women to men in the job market. 66% of the unemployed between 15 and 64 years old in Europe are now women and although the increase of women in the workplace between the mid 1970s and 2000 has varied from between 47% and 60%, there is still a gap of 12% with regard to the percentage of women at work in the United States (Genre et al., 2005). According to the report on *World Employment Trends* (OIT, 2004), the unemployment rate for women in industrialized economies (which includes the European Union with its 15 member countries) in 2001 was 6.4%, and in 2003 it was 7.0%. According to this source, the unemployment rate for women in Latin America has always been greater than that of men. In spite of the fact that by comparison with 2001, the unemployment rate for women has improved by 1.2%, “... in 2003 it was 10.1% compared to only 6.7% in the case of men.”

There are also differences between women’s participation in the workplace with regard to age range. In a study on diversity between men and women at the workplace in Europe, Genre, Gómez, and Lamo (2005) found that the ratios of working women between 25 and 54 years old in Spain, Ireland, and Italy was under 60%, while in Finland, Sweden and Denmark it was over 80%. In the same study it can be seen that within the European countries, women between 25 and 54 are more active, except for Holland where women between 15 and 24 years of age have similar ratios for work to those between 25 and 54 (Genre et al., 2005).

When diversity between men and women at the workplace is analyzed, apart from the existing difference between the number of employed men and women, two related phenomena need to be reviewed: the number of women in management positions and the salary differences between men and women. Worldwide, only Sweden and Norway have introduced regulations concerning the composition of the board of directors in private companies, in an attempt to enhance equal opportunities. In general, the proportion of women in management positions is still low in the majority of European Union countries (Smith, Smith, & Verner, 2005). In Latin America, probably the clearest measure geared at establishing parity in this area and access to power for women, has been that of the Quota System which in the last 20 years has been implemented in the political parties in a similar way in the region, although it is clear that this measure is not related to access of women to management positions in the workplace. On the other hand, the gender wage gaps continue to be a characteristic of the labor markets, in spite of having been reduced over the last 20 years (Altonji & Blank, 1999). Although some are explained by the differences in human capital, most of the salary differences between men and women can be attributed to the gender segregation in different types of work (Amunedo-Dorantes & de la Rica, 2005).

### **Peru: Relevant Information**

According to the National Institute of Statistics and Information Systems in Peru, in 2001 the population of a working age was 67.9% of the total population. Because of the similar proportion in the number of men and women in Peru (50.3% and 49.7%, respectively in 2005), there is also a similarity in the number of men and women of working age (67% of the total male population and 68.8% of the total female population, respectively). However, the composition of the economically active population with employment is not the same in this country. 57% are men and 43% are women. In Lima, in the July-September quarter of 2005, 66% of the economically inactive population were women and 33% were men. This information shows that there are fewer women than men in the workforce in Peru. The differences can also be seen in the level of visible underemployment (number of people of the economically active population who involuntarily work less than 35 hours a week). In Lima, for example, in 2004, 380,000 women and 295,000 men were underemployed.

### **Spain: Relevant information**

The notable ageing of the Spanish population, the entry of the woman into the workplace, migratory movements, and the increased number of multifunctional teams are the main factors which explain the increased diversity

within Spanish organizations. Of these factors, increased immigration and the massive entry of women into the job market are the two most relevant social phenomena which have led to the current diversity levels in Spanish organisations. (Cachón, 1999; INE, 2004; Martín & Pérez de Nanclares, 2002).

The Maastricht Treaty sets out regulations for the work of non-Community immigrants. However, in spite of the fact that many immigrants do not have a legal work situation, they play a vital role in the Spanish economy today and will continue to do so for the next 20 years. Spanish economic growth will be linked to this growth of immigration, among other things (Deutsche Bank, 2005), because of the fact that Spain has the lowest birth rate in Europe.

On the other hand, the massive entry of women in the workplace has meant an important change in the distribution of the working population. Although the rate of professionally active women is lower than that of men, (approximately 45%, compared to 68%), the number of women who have entered the workplace in recent years is higher than that of men. In 2004 alone, almost 285,000 women gained employment compared to 99,500 men (INE 2004). In spite of the fact that the male-female employment gap has decreased in recent years, partly because of the greater education level among women and the reduction in fertility ratios (Arellano & Bover, 1994), Spain has one of Europe's lowest indices with regard to women in the workplace.

One additional point worth bearing in mind with regard to the variables in this research is population distribution according to age. In 2005 in Peru, the distribution was as follows: 32.2% of people between 1 and 14 years of age; 62.6% between 15 and 64 years of age and 5.2% people over 65 years of age. However, the Spanish distribution (most recent official data is for 2001) is noticeably different with regard to the number of young and active people: Between 1 and 14 years of age, it is 13.5%; between 15 and 64 years of age, it is 69.4%; and over 65 years of age, it is 17.1% (INE, 2005).

Incorporating demographic information on gender and age in the labor market of the population for Peru and Spain is aimed exclusively at providing a reference framework for the reader given that these will be two of the variables to be analyzed in the research (see Table 1 and Table 2). This information is not specifically related to the analysis which has been carried out, nor to the conclusions which are drawn from this research work.

### **Methodology**

This research analyses the relationship between the perception of performance and gender, age, tenure, and diversity awareness in three Peruvian companies and one Spanish company. It is a field study which presents vertical data on four organizations. It has an exploratory

*The Impact of Diversity*

Table 1  
Correlation Matrix Among Variables - Spain

	1	2	3	4
Control variables				
Gender				
N				
Age	.022			
N	117			
Tenure	.059	.250**		
N	114	114		
Scales				
Perception of performance	.059	.107	.058	
N	118	117	114	
Awareness of diversity	.142	.008	.103	.298**
N	116	115	112	116

\*\* $p < .01$

character because of the lack of research in this area up to now in comparing Spanish and Peruvian companies.

The chosen organizations share the following characteristics: a minimum workforce of 100 people, the total proportion of the workforce between men / women or women / men is a minimum of 30% for the minority group, it has work teams already set up and each team has leaders or managers.

The company in Barcelona (which we will call B-1) is a subsidiary of a multinational in the finance sector. It is a services centre which operates in Barcelona, and from there it provides services to 15 countries in Europe. The language spoken by all employees is English but each employee needs to speak at least one other of the ten languages which the company considers to be working languages. At the time the data was compiled in B-1, there were employees of 41 different nationalities from all over the world. In this company, the presence of people from different countries is a key factor for the business, as it provides customer service in the customer's mother tongue. The company develops programs of diversity management.

In Peru, the participation of more than one company was sought in order to increase the level of diversity in the total of the sample for Peru. Three companies took part (which we will call P-1, P-2, and P-3). P-1 is a services company in the Customs sector, it is not a multinational and its entire workforce is national. It responded to 44% of the surveys in Peru. P-2 is a state company set up for defense of the free market (free competition); it belongs to the economic regulation sector, all of its employees are national, and it responded to 17% of the total of those surveyed. Finally, P-3 is a subsidiary of a multinational in the financial sector; it has 2% international employees

Table 2  
Correlation Matrix Among Variables - Peru

	1	2	3	4
Control variables				
Gender				
N				
Age	.125			
N	84			
Tenure	.073	.689**		
N	84	83		
Scales				
Perception of performance	.089	.035	.056	
N	87	84	84	
Awareness of diversity	.149	.179	-.075	.127
N	87	84	84	87

\*\* $p < .01$

in its workforce (54 people) and it replied to 38% of the survey. None of the three cases have developed or are developing diversity management programs.

To obtain information, two instruments are used: Perception of Performance in work teams and Awareness of Diversity. In both cases, there are Likert-type scales with five alternative replies ranging from 1 (the least points possible) to 5 (maximum points possible). The criterion for validity for both scales was only carried out in Barcelona through a judgment criterion (content validity). The validation of instruments could not be carried out in Peru because of limited time. However, before the application in each Peruvian organization, the instruments were revised and approved by the human resources manager. Then the surveys aimed to adapt them to the characteristics of the company and particularly to the way in which performance of work teams is evaluated. For the application in B-1, content validity was sought through the criterion of judgment. Three members of the human resources department from the same company approved the final items of the two scales by consensus (100% agreement).

## Perception of Performance

The team members' perception of team performance was evaluated. 14 items were chosen on general areas of team functioning, following the review of various theoretical studies of working in a team. The items evaluated comprised the following: time management, decision making, continuous improvement objectives, efficiency, conflict management, task sharing, quality of results, learning, common commitment to targets, capacity to give and receive feedback, effectiveness, planning

processes, and team climate. In the reliability process of the scale, no item was eliminated for the total sample or for countries. For the entire sample, the statistics of the scale were as follows: Alpha = .852; Scale Mean = 47.844; Standard Deviation = 8.974. For the sample of Peru they were as follows: Alpha = .897; Scale Mean = 48.528; Standard Deviation = 10.071. Finally, for Spain, the statistics of the scale were the following: Alpha = .805; Scale Mean = 47.339; Standard Deviation = 8.078.

The factor structure of this instrument has three components in both countries. In Peru, the components explain 64.269% of variance and in Spain, 52.204% (see Table 3 and Table 4).

## Diversity Awareness

Information was compiled on the attitudes and opinions concerning the value given to diversity and to what extent people are aware of certain themes related to it in the workplace. This instrument also incorporated five items concerning the perception of the following: the degree of diversity within the team, the influence of diversity on achieving objectives, the influence of diversity of the team climate, the degree of personal contact necessary given the characteristics of the job, the degree of voluntary personal contact at work, and

the degree of voluntary personal contact outside work. These five items were not considered in the final marking of the scale or for the analysis of reliability, but they were considered for the analysis of regression and effect of moderation. The final scales of diversity awareness for Spain and Peru are different. In Spain, four items were eliminated in the reliability process and finally, diversity awareness was evaluated with a scale of 14 items ( $\alpha = .736$ ; Scale  $M = 51.672$ ;  $SD = 7.086$ ). In Peru, it was decided to eliminate nine items in the reliability process and the final scale was nine items ( $\alpha = .669$ ; Scale  $M = 31.988$ ;  $SD = 4.571$ ; see Table 5).

A total of 205 people responded to the two instruments; 87 were in Peru and 118 in Spain. Information was compiled in relation to age, gender, country of origin, time working in the company, area to which they belonged in the company structure, religious beliefs, and extent to which they identified with their religious beliefs. For the analysis only these variables were used: gender (Spain: women 58.5%, men 41.5%. Peru: women 27.6%, men 72.4%), country of origin (Spain: 13 countries. Peru: 1 country), age (Spain:  $M = 30.5$ ;  $SD = 6.034$ . Peru:  $M = 34.7$ ;  $SD = 9.360$ ) and time spent working in the company (Spain: 38.1% = up to 4 years; 21.2% = up to 3 years. Peru: 54.8% = over 4 years; 20.7% = up to one year).

Both instruments were replied to by team members and

Table 3  
Perception of Performance Scale - Spain

Reliability statistics			
Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha on standardized items		Nº of items
.805	.819		14
Scale statistics			
Mean	Variance	Std. deviation	Nº of items
47.339	65.252	8.078	14
Rotated component matrix			
Item	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
Task sharing	.711		
Contin. improvement objectives	.703		
Conflict management	.700		
Feedback	.658		
Quality of results	.624		
Learning	.541		
Team climate	.482		
Efficiency	.461		
Effectiveness		.810	
Decision making		.666	
Planning processes			.690
Time management 1			.670
Time management 2			.597
Common commitment to targets			.482

Note. Extraction Method = Principal Components, Rotation Method = Varimax with Kaiser normalization. Time Management 1 = In work meetings much time is invested in activities which do not add value to the task which needs to be developed. Time Management 2 = Work meetings begin and end at the agreed times.

*The Impact of Diversity*

Table 4  
*Perception of Performance Scale - Peru*

Reliability statistics			
Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha on standardized items	N° of items	
.897	.901	14	
Scale statistics			
Mean	Variance	Std. deviation	N° of items
48.528	101.440	10.071	14
Rotated component matrix			
Item	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
Team climate	.879		
Conflict management	.789		
Learning	.724		
Contin. improvement objectives	.629		
Feedback	.625		
Quality of results	.557		
Decision making	.543		
Common commitment to targets	.536		
Time management 2 (**)		.768	
Efficiency		.729	
Planning processes		.707	
Task sharing		.587	
Time management 1 (*)			.854
Effectiveness			.514

*Note.* Extraction Method = Principal Components. Rotation Method = Varimax with Kaiser normalization. Time Management 1 = In work meetings much time is invested in activities which do not add value to the task which needs to be developed. Time Management 2 = Work meetings begin and end at the agreed times.

middle managers, not by senior management members, and the level of analysis carried out in the research was individual.

## Results

All the analyses were carried out separately for the Peruvian and Spanish samples. Table 1(Spain) and Table 2 (Peru) show the correlations between the variables. Table 3 (Spain) and Table 4 (Peru) show the psychometric properties of the two instruments.

To analyze the relationship between the perception of performance with the chosen variables, regressions were made. The results in the companies in both countries are noticeably different. The awareness of diversity as a predictor of the perception of performance works differently for the companies studied in each country. (Peru:  $\beta = .127$ ; *ns*. Spain:  $\beta = .298$ ;  $p < .01$ ). For both cases, the model explains a reduced percentage of the variance of the perception of performance; however, in the case of Peru, the percentage is lower. (Peru:  $R^2 = .016$ . Spain:  $R^2 = .089$ ).

The same occurs with the control variables chosen as probable predicting variables of the perception of performance. There are differences in the strength of association between the variables on each side, but for

neither of the countries are the associations significant. (Peru: Gender:  $\beta = .089$ ; *ns*. Age:  $\beta = .035$ ; *ns*. Tenure:  $\beta = .056$ ; *ns*; Spain: Gender:  $\beta = .059$ ; *ns*. Age:  $\beta = .107$ ; *ns*. Tenure:  $\beta = .058$ ; *ns*).

An attempt was also made to analyze a possible moderating effect of the perception of degree of diversity on the awareness of diversity to predict the perception of performance. We found that for both countries, there is a moderating effect of perception of degree of diversity on the teams. (Peru:  $\beta = .273$ ;  $p < 0.1$ ;  $R^2 = .075$ . Spain:  $\beta = .304$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $R^2 = .092$ ; see Table 6). As we will analyze later, this result is along the same lines as previous findings

Table 5  
*Awareness of Diversity Scale*

<i>Awareness of Diversity Scale</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>Peru</i>
Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's alpha	.736	.669
Cronbach's alpha on standardized items	.732	.680
N° of items	14	9
Scale statistics		
Mean	51.672	31.988
Variance	50.205	20.895
Std. deviation	7.086	4.571
N° of items	14	9

Table 6  
Results of Regression Analysis

	Dependent variable: Perception of performance					
	Peru			Spain		
	$R^2$	$\beta$	$F$	$R^2$	B	$F$
Gender	.008	.089	.675	.003	.059	.406
Age	.001	.035	.100	.012	.107	1.339
Tenure	.003	.056	.261	.003	.058	.380
Awareness of diversity	.016	.127	1.390	.089	.298**	11.142**
Moderating effect (perception of diversity degree X awareness of diversity) on perception of performance	.075	.273*	6.863*	.092	.304**	11.603**

Note. N = 117.

+p < .1

\*p < .05

\*\*p < .01

\*\*\*p < .001

on the effect of beliefs on diversity in the replies of diverse groups (van Knippenberg, Haslam, & Platow, 2004).

In the Peruvian companies, the final average of the scale of awareness of diversity is higher than that of the scale of perception of performance ( $M = 3.554$ ;  $SD = .507$  and  $M = 3.466$ ;  $SD = .719$ , respectively). The differences are not statistically significant. In the Spanish company, the final average of the scale of awareness of diversity is also higher ( $M = 3.690$ ;  $SD = .506$ ) to that of the scale of perception of performance ( $M = 3.377$ ;  $SD = .581$ ). In this case there are statistically significant differences. ( $t = -.220$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

When analyzing separately according to gender, the final averages of the scales awareness of diversity and perception of performance do not show any significant differences in the case of Peru. For women in the Peruvian companies, the final result of the scale of performance is higher than that of men ( $M = 3.569$ ;  $SD = .840$  and  $M = 3.427$ ;  $SD = .671$  respectively). The same occurs with the scale of diversity, the women have higher qualifications than the men ( $M = 3.675$ ;  $SD = .424$  and  $M = 3.507$ ;  $SD = .531$  respectively).

In the Spanish company, the women also have higher final averages than those of men on the two scales (Performance women:  $M = 3.409$ ;  $SD = .588$  and Performance men:  $M = 3.341$ ;  $SD = .563$ ; Diversity women:  $M = 3.751$ ;  $SD = .449$  and Diversity men:  $M = 3.605$ ;  $SD = .570$ ). In neither of the cases, do the comparisons show statistically significant differences (see Table 7, Table 8 and Table 9).

The perception of diversity degree in work-teams is different in both countries. However, the four companies perceive themselves as diverse companies. In Peru, 43,7% of the sample think that the diversity degree in their team is medium, and 31,0% that it is high. In the Spanish company, 30,5% perceive that the degree of diversity is medium and 42,4% think that it is high (see Table 10).

In the Peruvian companies, the perception of influence of diversity on the achievement of operational objectives in the team is greater than the perception of its influence on the team climate ( $M = 3.436$ ;  $SD = .623$  and  $M = 3.367$ ;  $SD = .700$  respectively), although there are no statistically significant differences. The opposite happens in company B-1, where the workers perceive

Table 7  
Final Means by Scale

	Perception of performance			Awareness of diversity		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<b>Peru</b>						
Mean	3.427	3.569	3.466	3.507	3.675	3.554
Std. deviation	.671	.840	.719	.531	.424	.507
N	63	24	87	63	24	87
<b>Spain</b>						
Mean	3.341	3.409	3.377	3.605	3.751	3.690
Std. deviation	.563	.588	.581	.570	.449	.506
N	49	69	118	48	68	116

*The Impact of Diversity*

Table 8  
*Comparison of Means - Peru*

Comparison of Means	T
Perception of performance–awareness of diversity	
Total sample	- .990
Perception of performance	
Men–Women	- .822
Awareness of diversity	
Men–Women	-1.387

Note. N = 87

Table 10  
*Perception Degree of Diversity in Work Teams*

	Peru (%)	Spain (%)
Very low	4.6	4.2
Low	17.2	12.7
Medium	43.7	30.5
High	31.0	42.4
Very high	3.4	10.2

that diversity has a greater influence on the climate than on the achievement of objectives ( $M = 3.805$ ;  $SD = .630$  and  $M = 3.364$ ;  $SD = .687$ ; respectively). In this case the results show significant differences ( $t = 5.976$ ;  $p < .001$ ; see Table 11).

In a notably diverse environment, (B-1 company), diversity has a greater influence on the climate than on the achievement of team objectives; at least, that is the way its influence is perceived. The reason for this finding would need to be researched more thoroughly. Taking into consideration that the diversity (mainly gender, country of origin, and mother tongue) in this company is an indispensable factor for the existence and success of the business, it seems paradoxical that it is not perceived as being more influential on the achievement of objectives than on maintaining a good team climate. The reason is probably that diversity in B-1 is a phenomenon which is totally incorporated into the strategy and culture of the organization, and it is experienced as something natural which would not need to have a greater relation with other variables than with achievement of objectives. On the contrary, it is something which facilitates and enriches relationships between team members. On the other hand, in a less diverse environment (P-1, P-2, and P-3) the influence of diversity is perceived as greater for the achievement of objectives than for maintaining a good team climate, an aspect which also needs to be explored in greater depth. Probably the reason for the differences can be found in that, in this case, diversity is reflected mainly on the variables of gender and age, and it is not explicitly incorporated into the company's strategy nor

Table 9  
*Comparison of Means - Spain*

Comparison of Means	T
Perception of performance–awareness of diversity	
Total sample	-5.220***
Perception of performance	
Men–Women	- .637
Awareness of diversity	
Men–Women	-1.533

Note. N = 116

\*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 11  
*Perception of Influence of Diversity*

	Influence on achieving objectives	Influence on team climate
Peru		
Mean	3.436	3.367
Std. deviation	.623	.700
Spain		
Mean	3.364***	3.805***
Std. Deviation	.687	.630

\*\*\* $p < .001$  (comparison of means Influence on achieving objectives and Influence on team climate)

training programs (none of the three Peruvian companies had developed a program of diversity management) and specially, diversity is not crucial for the existence of the business model.

## Discussion

The relationship of performance with the proposed variables as potential predictors, takes on a different pattern in the companies studied. The results show a relationship between the real degree of diversity within the company and awareness of diversity. It appears to be that the greater the diversity, the greater the awareness of diversity. However, this is only a supposition because the development of awareness of diversity could be related not only to more exposure towards a greater degree of diversity, but also to other variables, such as the result of training programs or diversity management. The fact that the final versions of the awareness of diversity scale have been different for each country shows not only a different degree of diversity in each business environment, but also varying approximations, evaluations, and sensitivity towards diversity as they exist in each company (people have responded to this scale of agreement by looking at



their own real business environment in relation to diversity, which is understood in this case to be gender, tenure, and age). This could also lead one to believe that just how diverse the company really is, is less important than how much awareness of diversity there is in it. However, the only thing that the study provides statistical evidence for is that with regard to awareness of diversity, it can be better associated with the perception of performance in companies with high levels of diversity.

A significant finding in this study is just how the perception of the degree of diversity acts as a moderator in the group responses. This conclusion is related to the conclusions of van Knippenberg, Haslam, and Platow (2004) concerning the role of beliefs about diversity. The authors propose that people find value in diversity and as a consequence of this, they respond favorably to the diverse group precisely because it is seen as a diverse group (van Knippenberg, Haslam & Platow, 2004). In this study, the degree of diversity perceived moderates the replies concerning team performance. Even when the intensity of the relationship between perception of performance and value of moderation referred to is not high, it is still higher than the existing relationship between performance and awareness of diversity. This is one of the most important similarities to be seen in companies from both countries. It is important to underline this because it stands completely apart from the real degree of diversity within the teams. It is this perception which indeed affects the responses of people in the companies studied in Peru and Spain (see Table 11).

Another significant similarity is that gender, nor age, nor tenure has a greater relationship with the perception of team performance. Unlike awareness of diversity, these are three variables of fact which have nothing to do with personal criteria or valuations. The fact that in none of the cases is there an association between them and performance, prompts an analysis of its real degree of importance in implementing programs of awareness of diversity or diversity management. Considering that the main idea behind this concept of diversity is to get the most out of the human resources provided by heterogeneous groups, which means that they are diverse in terms of gender, age, race, ethnic background, nationality, etc. (Barberá, 2003), the interpretation of what diversity can bring to a team is made relative in terms of what the team or the company wish to achieve.

This is an exploratory study, its main aim being to propose a line of investigation for diversity so as to widen the existing theory which has been restricted mainly to US and European companies and samples and to propose the reality of Latin American *business diversity* as an object of study in organizational behavior. Along these lines, in this research, we have tried out instruments which have been used in Spanish companies to analyze how they work and how valid they are in some Peruvian companies. In an attempt to increase the variety of

replies and diversity in the sample, we worked with three Peruvian companies even when this affected the reliability of one of the scales. However, given the objectives of the study, analyzing the final results has been important as we have seen that regardless of the different contexts, there are common basic trends which we can keep researching and generating applications for, which are also useful in companies in Latin America.

The results, of course, are not conclusive, as the study has limitations (it is only valid in companies which have work teams, the instruments need to be validated with a large number of judges or other validation criteria, and it needs an adequate previous sample method). This could be repeated in organizations of similar or dissimilar characteristics with the aim of carrying out an in-depth search of efficiency predictors in diverse organizations. Other research scenarios may be considered, being related directly to the diversity data with indicators of satisfaction, efficiency, measurements of achievement of objectives, figures of evaluation of performance, or with some indicator of financial results (EBIT, for example), and we can see just what an impact a specific diversity management policy would have on them. This type of research could also be useful more specifically from an operational and applicative point of view in human resources management.

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## Footnotes

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