*Effects of gender on team perception of
performance in Nigeria*
by Uzoma Francis Amaeshi, PhD
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and

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Abstract

Regarding gender and performance there is an extensive bibliography which explicitly accepts that gender diversity does and does not have an impact on team performance. The empirical evidence shows both differences and similarities between male and female performance in companies. However, there has been little research into the potential impact that gender may have on the perception of performance. This study seeks to analyze the differences between men and women in the perception of performance when performance is measured using teamwork variables. The research is a comparative study in multinational companies in South East and South West Nigeria which uses a questionnaire with thirteen teamwork items. The questionnaire presents different components in both samples, which suggest that the role that cultural differences have in the way that people perceive their work performance is significant. The main findings show no significant differences between men and women, which calls for an analysis of gender's real level of importance in implementing diversity awareness or diversity management programs in companies.

Key words: **Team perception, Organizational performance, gender perception.**

Introduction

In recent times, embracing and supporting gender diversity has been hailed by practitioners and academics alike as a core value that represents the right way to do business, implying that gender heterogeneity may lead to increased organizational effectiveness. According to Frink, et al. (2003) there is a positive relationship between gender diversity and firm performance, always if the gender bias is balanced. But results in gender research are not unanimous and there is still no further confirmation from different cultural settings. In general, a lot of research has been done in the field of gender and work, focusing especially on behavioral and emotional parameters, but so far there are no comparative studies that analyze the gender—performance relationship in different countries.

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This paper has a structure of five parts. First, a review of the literature on gender diversity and performance will be presented. Then, the methodology section goes on to outline the data collection procedure, the measurement instrument, sample information and the analytical techniques employed in the study. In the third section of the paper is a presentation of the main results, which aims to offer its own particular contribution by drawing comparisons between South East and South West samples, using teamwork variables to evaluate the perception of performance. The paper then ends with a discussion of the findings and conclusions.

Review of the Literature

Existing research suggests that it is women rather than men who are most strongly negatively affected by gender diversity. Tolbert, Graham and Andrews (1999) pointed out that the impact of group gender composition on employee attitudes may differ between men and women. A number of authors (Wharton & Baron 1987, 1991, Konrad, Winter & Gutek 1992, Williams & O'Reilly 1998, Tsui & Gutek 1999) analyzed this finding in further detail by examining four gender relevant behavioral factors. These factors were (a) similarity attraction, (b) self-categorization, (c) social contact, and (d) group competition.

The similarity attraction approach argues that an individual is attracted to and prefers to interact with people of similar characteristics (Byrne 1971, Berscheid & Walster 1978). The consequence is that the gender composition of a work setting can be expected to have a direct impact on an employee's job satisfaction. Tsui, Egan and O'Reilly (1992) found that men responded more negatively than women to being in a numerical minority in their work groups, by being absent more often, less committed, and more likely to leave the organization.

Also, Peccei and Lee (2005) believe that the effects of gender similarity on employee job satisfaction are asymmetric for both men and women. On the one hand, under ceteris paribus conditions, men who worked in male dominated settings tended to be more satisfied than men who worked in either gender balanced or female dominated settings. For women, on the other hand, no discernible relationship, either linear or nonlinear, was found between satisfaction and the degree of gender similarity of the work setting.

All other things being equal, therefore, men tend to put more store on the gender composition of their immediate work setting and to react more positively than women to higher levels of gender similarity at work (Peccei et al, 2005). The research by Peccei et al, (2005) has shown that the impact of gender similarity on employee job satisfaction is not particularly strong, often accounting for no more than one or two per cent of the overall variance in satisfaction. Only in the linear analysis for men did the gender similarity variable attain significance, and even then the actual magnitude was very small.

More specifically, their findings suggest that the effects of gender similarity are asymmetrical for men and women with similarity tending to have a greater positive impact on men than on women. It is important to recognize that the impact of gender similarity on satisfaction is likely to be affected not only by gender, but also by a number of other factors, including broader structural and contextual conditions.

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The self-categorization theory refers to the fact that individuals classify themselves and others into social categories on the basis of salient characteristics such as gender, age and race. Once the individual has identified his/her social category, he/she reduces group complexity by stereotyping, depersonalization and accentuates the positive features of the group with whom he/she identifies (Hogg & Abrams 1988). Konrad, et al. (1992) found that men in male dominated groups were more likely to engage in sexist stereotyping, while women maintained more egalitarian attitudes, regardless of their group's gender composition.

These differences in the way men and women react may emerge from society level status expectations for men and women at work (Berger, Rosenholtz & Zelditch 1980). The theory of status expectations stresses that status stimulates skill expectations, so that high status individuals are generally assumed to be more competent and intelligent than are low status individuals (Driskell & Mullen 1990, Carli & Eagly 1999). Studies by Dimitrovsky, Singer and Yinon (1989), and Eagly, Karau and Makhijani (1995) found that jobs and occupations dominated by women are perceived to have less power and influence and receive lower compensation. In contrast Ibarra (1992), based on the similarity attraction theory, found that women were more likely than men to differentiate their networks, choosing women as friends, but choosing men to gain access to instrumental rewards. The results of a study by Chatman and O'Reilly (2004) showed that gender composition affected men and women differently.

The social contact perspective includes arguments derived from Blau's (1977) social composition theory, and the tokenism arguments advanced by Kanter (1977). Both tokenism and composition theory focus primarily on the experiences and conditions of minority group members within a social setting. When applied to the gender composition of a work setting, Blau's (1977) theory suggests that when a minority group's presence increases, be they men or women, so does the amount of contact and interaction that takes place not only among members of the minority group itself, but also between them and members of the majority group. And this in turn, facilitates the development of stronger affective ties between individuals and helps to improve inter group relations, thereby leading to improved work experiences as well as the attitudes of the individuals involved.

In a similar vein, Kanter's (1977) tokenism arguments suggest that because of their relative uniqueness and higher visibility, members of minority groups in organizations are likely to experience more stereotyping, a greater sense of social isolation, and more intense performance pressures than individuals in the majority. This applies equally to men and women. So, minority group individuals working in opposite gender dominated settings can be expected to experience a more negative work environment, and hence, to exhibit lower levels of satisfaction than those working in more balanced or same gender dominated settings. And finally, the group competition perspective focuses specifically on minority majority group relations.

Blalock's (1967) group power theory offers predictions about the effects of gender diversity on employee attitudes at work. Blalock (1967) points out that conflict and competition between minority and majority groups over scarce resources increases as the relative size of the minority group increases. And as the perceived level of threat to the majority group increases so does the probability that members of this group will exhibit more negative attitudes and behaviors toward

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minority group members (Tolbert, et al. 1999). In terms of gender, therefore, individuals can be expected to enjoy more positive work relations, and hence, be more satisfied, when they are either in a clear majority or a clear minority, rather than when they are in more gender balanced settings (Wharton & Baron 1991). This applies equally to men and women, although a number of writers have suggested that group competition effects may, for a variety of reasons, differ between the sexes (Konrad, et al. 1992, Tolbert, et al. 1999).

Even though there is a lot of literature on the behavioral perspective of gender diversity, Lee and Farh (2004) suggest that there is still an increasing need to examine the consequences of mixing men and women together in work groups (Jackson, et al. 1991). Research is increasingly paying more attention to the influence that diversity of group composition and collective efficacy have on group effectiveness. Self-efficacy is a key concept in Bandura's (1986, 1997) social cognitive theory. Self-efficacy relates positively to personal goals and commitment to goals and task performance (Wood & Locke 1987, Lee & Bobko 1994, Locke, Durham, Poon & McLeod 1997, Bandura 2002).

Some studies have found that group cohesion, as a key condition for collective efficacy is lower in gender mixed groups and that conflicts are higher (Fox, Nahum & Yinon 1989, Jackson, et al. 1991, Korsgaard & Morris 1993, Kirchmeyer 1995). Fields and Blum (1997), and Williams and O'Reilly (1998) argue that work group heterogeneity increases rather than decreases social interaction between minority and majority members, and reduces the importance attached to differences between subgroups (i.e., males or females) while improving the relations among group members (Blau 1977, Blum 1984, Konrad, et al. 1992). Blau (1977) and Blum (1984) suggest that since there are more women in the workforce, the increased interaction between them may have led to greater acceptance and familiarity of their working relationships. Such acceptance may lead to more positive work-related outcomes.

Research by Lee and Farh (2004) examines the joint effects of gender composition (surface level diversity), and group efficacy (deep level diversity) on group performance. Furthermore, the relationships between group efficacy and group outcomes are not direct. More specifically, the findings presented by Lee et al, (2004) suggest that group gender diversity promotes a positive relationship between group efficacy and outcomes, task performance and group cohesion. However, group efficacy decreased the performance of same gender groups. It is possible, as argued by Harrison, Price and Bell (1998), that the passage of time afforded group members the opportunity to engage in meaningful interactions. Such interactions allow people to acquire more information about each other's performance. Lee et al, (2004) demonstrated that past performance is positively related to group efficacy. Nevertheless, group efficacy is unrelated to future performance. The relationship between gender diversity and effectiveness is an indirect one, and is responsible for group performance, but not for cohesion.

Regarding gender specific particularities at the workplace, one would expect to find differences concerning the expression of emotions, considering that women are labeled as `more emotional'. A prominent research stream in this field analyzed the expression of anger at work as a response to other action (Averill 1982, Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Gault & Benton 1992, Frijda 1993). Even if the expression of anger in the workplace is likely to be constrained by socially prescribed

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expectations, understanding workplace anger is important for several reasons. In a general sense, there are personal and organizational ramifications associated with the experience and expression of anger. Organizational effects include counterproductive work behavior (Spector, Fox & Domagalski 2006), a decline in work productivity (Fitness 2000), and extreme case workplace violence (Greenberg & Barling 1999, Dupre & Barling 2003). Others have found gender effects associated with anger (i.e., that the direct expression of anger by females, in contrast to men, is associated with less positive organizational outcomes) (Gibson, Schweitzer, Callister & Gray 2004).

The literature on gender socialization and gender stereotypes is unequivocal in its description of different emotion rules for males and females, particularly for anger (Brody 1997, Maccoby 1998, Brody 2000, Brody & Hall 2000). Females are socialized to approach and express their anger indirectly and passively. Males, conversely, are taught to keep a stiff upper lip and remain emotionally inexpressive, yet they are permitted, and perhaps expected, to display their anger directly, if not aggressively. Domagalski and Steelman (2007) hypothesized that higher status males are more likely to invoke gender stereotyped norms and use an outward, direct form of anger expression against subordinates more frequently than would higher status females.

The differences observed between males and females in the outward expression of anger were not significant, although males reported outwardly expressing their anger more frequently than did females. Lower status males, however, reported expressing their anger outwardly toward higher status superiors significantly more frequently than did their female counterparts. Thus, according to the findings of these research studies, relative status in the organization has no direct association with the expression of anger (Fitness 2000, Sloan 2004). Although males did report the use of outward anger expression more frequently than females, these results were only significant for those at the lowest levels of the organization. In the context of the workplace, organizational norms that prescribe emotional control are more influential in guiding employee behavior than societal norms that address gender differences in emotional expressivity (Brody 2000, Brody & Hall 2000).

Apart from behavioral and emotional gender issues, a third stream of research analyses the role of women in corporate governance. Bilimoria (2006) has studied the impact of women directors on the gender composition of top management teams. Female top managers may help to keep the issues of recruitment, retention, development, and advancement of top women high on the executive team's agenda (Schwartz 1980, Nation's Business 1990, Mattis 1993, Bilimoria & Wheeler 2000). Their presence in positions of visible power and legitimacy breaks down the barriers that constrain top corporate women from effective representation and recognition. Bilimoria (2006) argues that the mere presence of female corporate board directors signals to employees the value placed on, and the recognition for success achieved by women in the corporation.

This enhances the corporation's reputation of having a leadership culture that is friendly to women's careers and lives, one that facilitates their performance and advancement. Companies face mimetic, normative, and coercive institutional pressures (DiMaggio & Powell 1991) to encourage gender diversity in their management ranks (Blum & Fields 1994). Chief executives

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often say that having women on their board makes female employees at the company generally feel more positive about their own career prospects (Burke 2000). Firms with women directors gain institutional approval that increases their likelihood of attracting and retaining women in their executive ranks support a hypothesis that women corporate board directors and top management sensitivity towards gender diversity are positively related.

Statistics show that increasingly more companies are incorporating female executives in their top management teams (TMT). According to a study by Welbourne, Cycyota and Ferrante (2007), the number of public listed companies with female top executives increased from four per cent to 41 per cent from 1988 to 1996. Academic scholars discovered positive relationships between women managers and more effective organizations (Eagly, et al. 1995). In the popular press, a study reported in USA Today, showed that when women and men were rated on leadership skills, women took top honors in 28 of the 31 categories studied (Neuborne 1996). Those categories included ability to meet deadlines, ability to generate ideas, and productivity. In addition, many investors today are women, and it is quite possible that women are a bit biased toward firms with TMTs that employ women. The results from the long-term study by Welbourne, et al. (2007) indicate that having women on the TMT results in higher earnings and greater shareholder wealth. Investors learn by experience, and it is quite possible that they know something about the dynamics of women in the TMT that leads them to value their presence. Therefore, it is not women per se that make the difference; it is the increase in the number of women on the TMT that results in greater long term firm performance.

The revision of the relevant literature has shown that research results vary and that many of these studies have been done in the United States and in Europe. The present study examines the relationship between gender and performance in two ways. On the one hand by comparing cases of companies that operate in South East with companies that operate in South West, which has been done very little, and on the other hand, to investigate whether there are any significant differences between men and women in the way performance is perceived in work teams.

Methodology

This research study analyses whether there are significant differences in the perception of performance between males and females in three South West companies and one South East company. The field study presents vertical data on four organizations. It is exploratory in character due to the lack of research in this area that compares South East and South West companies.

Site and Respondents

The chosen organizations shared the following characteristics: a minimum workforce of 100 people, the minority group comprises a minimum of 30 per cent of the workforce between men/women or women/men. All the companies had work teams set up in advance, and each team has leaders or managers, and all of them evaluated their team performance in very similar ways. The respondents were from companies in South East. The company in South East (SE-1) is a subsidiary of a multinational in the financial sector. It is a services centre which operates in South East and from there provides services to other four (4) geo-political zones in Nigeria. The language

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spoken by all employees is English, but each employee needs to speak at South East another of the ten languages which the company considers to be working languages.

In South West, the participation of more than one company was sought in order to increase the level of gender diversity in the total sample for South West. Three companies took part (SW-1, SW-2 and SW-3). SW-1 is a services company in the customs sector; it is not a multinational and it responded to 44 per cent of the surveys in South West. SW-2 is a public company set up for defense of the free market (free competition). It belongs to the economic regulation sector and the total of those surveyed who responded was 17 per cent. Finally, SW-3 is a subsidiary of a multinational in the financial sector, and it replied to 38 per cent of the survey.

A total of 205 people replied to a questionnaire. This instrument was answered by team members and middle managers (not by senior management members). Therefore, the unit of analysis was at the individual level. There were 87 respondents in South West and 118 in South East. Information was compiled in relation to age (South East, mean = 30.5, deviation = 6.03; South West, mean = 34.7, deviation = 9.36), and gender (South East, female 58.5 per cent, male 41.5 per cent; South West, female 27.6 per cent, male 72.4 per cent).

Procedure

The study was carried out in four companies with which the researchers had personal contacts, which means that the company sample was drawn up based on convenience. In each company all the personnel who met the characteristics of the unit of study completed the questionnaire voluntarily and anonymously. The participation rate in the South East company was 21 per cent, and the average for the three South West companies was 41 per cent.

Before application in each organization, the instruments were revised and approved by the Human Resources managers. Then the surveys were adapted to the characteristics of the company and particularly to the way in which work team performance is evaluated in these organizations. The instrument was applied in South East and South West in the company in Nigeria after carrying out a back translation process. In the South West companies the instrument was applied in South East only.

Measures

One questionnaire has been developed to obtain information regarding the perception of performance in work teams. This is a Likert type scale with five alternative replies ranging from 1 (the South East points possible) to 5 (maximum points possible). The scale evaluated the team members' perception of team performance. A total of 13 items were chosen on general areas of team functioning. The items evaluate: 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. A brief definition was provided next to each team item on the questionnaire. This was done in order to ensure that all respondents clearly understood all the items.

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The questionnaire has been developed based on the information provided by the companies which participated in the study. Concerning the way they evaluate team performance, these companies include three different aspects: Results-related activities, planning activities and Working environment. Consequently, the construct perception of performance must have three different subscales: Perception of result-related activities, perception of planning activities and perception of the working environment. Following this reasoning, the questionnaire was developed taking into consideration three different groups of items. For the Results-related subscale, five items: continuous improvement objectives, quality of results, effectiveness, efficiency and common commitment to targets. For the Planning activities subscale, two items: time management and planning processes, and for the Working environment subscale, six items: conflict management, task sharing, team climate, learning, feedback and decision-making processes.

In the reliability process of the scale, no item was eliminated from the total sample or from the sample of each country. For the entire sample, the statistics of the scale were: Alpha = .863; Scale Mean = 45.13; Standard Deviation = 8.73; for the sample from South West: Alpha = .913; Scale Mean = 45.96; Standard Deviation = 10; and for South East: Alpha = .803; Scale Mean = 44.51; Standard Deviation = 7.66.

Analysis

A rotated factor analysis incorporating the varimax rotation option was also carried out to find out the factorial structure of the questionnaire in both samples. Independent samples T-tests were used to evaluate significant differences in means of males and females in each sample. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was used to assess the reliability of the questionnaire and its factors.

Results

Table 1 shows the factorial structure of the instrument in the South West and South East samples. This was made up of three components in Nigeria. In the South East sample the components explain 54.05 per cent of the total variance, while in South West the components were found to explain 68.04 per cent of the total variance. Even though some similarities were found, the factorial structures were different in each sample. This clearly means that the questionnaire is not stable in different contexts. This suggests that the role of cultural differences have in the way that people perceived their work performance is paramount.

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Table 1
Rotated component matrix - South West and South East

	South West Component			South East Component		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Eigenvalues	6.626	1.178	1.040	4.419	1.363	1.245
Percentage of explained variance	27.071	26.511	14.458	24.736	16.933	12.384
Cumulative percentage of explained variance	27.071	53.582	68.04	24.736	41.669	54.053
Cronbrach's Alpha coefficient	.878	.860	.562	.676	.785	.306
Results-related						
Common commitment to targets	**.850**	.270	.103	**.406**	.134	.552
Quality of results	**.801**	.305	-.030	**.639**	.065	.186
Effectiveness	**.773**	.241	.207	**-.192**	.776	.198
Efficiency	**.681**	.225	.445	**.442**	.454	.375
Continuous improvement Objectives	**.537**	.524	.209	**.744**	-.042	.323
Working environment						
Team climate	.215	**.835**	-.156	.412	**.513**	-.130
Conflict management	.193	**.811**	.196	.673	**.279**	-.001
Learning	.292	**.726**	.311	.465	**.596**	-.087
Feedback	.280	**.609**	.180	.613	**.456**	.052
Decision making	.329	**.535**	.332	.241	**.657**	.258
Task sharing	.476	**.504**	.424	.695	**.153**	-.060
Planning processes						
Time management	.044	.077	**.872**	-.220	.075	**.606**
Planning processes	.469	.312	**.585**	.229	.062	**.722**

Notes: a. Extraction method: Principal component analysis.
b. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

In the case of South East the three components extracted show a somewhat diffuse pattern. In the result related component (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.676), the item effectiveness has a poor and negative correlation, which suggest that effectiveness is not perceived as part of result-related activities in this company. Curiously, this item has a higher correlation in the working environment component. Somehow, effectiveness is perceived more as a social task which depends more on the quality of the working environment, rather than strictly as a personal work result activity. This could be explained by the type of work that employees have to do in this company and the high importance teamwork has for them. The same reasoning can be applied to the efficiency item, which has a higher loading in the working environment subscale than in the result related one. The second component, working environment, (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.785)

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shows three items which were initially included in the first subscale. These three items, conflict management, feedback and task sharing, have higher correlations in the first component than in the second, where they supposedly belong. In fact, in this second component the effectiveness variable shows the highest loading of any variable in any of the three factors (0.776). As has been stated, efficiency, in this second component, may be seen as a complement for the effectiveness variable. It could be argued that the ways decision making processes and efficiency are assessed by the team are related to how this particular team assesses effectiveness, and thus, that these variables are seen as ways of becoming more effective.

Examining the configuration of these first two components, it could be argued that assessment of results and workplace atmosphere are somehow seen as part of the same dimension in the South East sample. The first two components interpreted in the South East sample suggest that result related activities and the working environment are close. In some cases (i.e., effectiveness, efficacy, conflict management, feedback, task sharing) employees have very similar perceptions on these variables and they do not separate them into two clearly different groups.

The third component, planning processes (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.306), extracted in the case of the South East sample, is the clearest of the three. In it, the two original variables included previously within the subscale, have high loadings. The item common commitment to targets, nevertheless, has a high load in this component as well.

In the case of the South West sample a somewhat clearer pattern can be distinguished in the factorial structure. The three components coincide with the three subscales postulated previously. The first component extracted in the South West sample (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.878) shows a significant accountability for variables that have to do with the assessment of results. The second component in the South West sample (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.860) shows a significant accountability for variables that have to do with overall workplace atmosphere. And the third component (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.562) observed in the South West sample is related to the planning processes.

Table 2 shows the t-tests that were conducted on the three factors in each sample. The purpose was to assess differences between males and females in their perception of team performance. Non significant differences were deleted at the lowest acceptable statistical level of $p < 0.05$.

Table 2
T-Test comparing female and male mean difference - South West and South East

	South West				South East			
	Mean of men	Mean women	of Mean difference	t	Mean of men	Mean women	of Mean difference	t
Results-related	3.619	3.675	-.259	-.259	3.457	3.463	-.006	-.058
Working environment	3.557	3.876	-1.453	-1.453	3.442	3.502	-.060	-.421

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Table   2
T-Test comparing female and male mean difference - South West and South East

	South West				South East			
	Mean of men	Mean of women	Mean of difference	t	Mean of men	Mean of women	Mean of difference	t
Planning processes	2.912	3.083	.641	-.641	2.969	3.318	-.349	-1.940*

Note: a. * = p < 0.1.

Discussion

This paper presents two main findings: First, the instability of the questionnaire between two countries suggests that there are some cultural differences which can explain the different ways people perceive their work performance. Second, gender as an independent variable does not have any influence on the perceived performance.

The different factorial configurations found in the companies in the two samples could be accounted for by cultural differences. These involve different ways of perceiving and evaluating work, for example, the way effectiveness and conflict management are perceived in each country. In spite of the fact that language and religion are the same for the majority of South West and South East people, there are other significant aspects which could explain cultural differences in the two countries. Economic development, for example, and social phenomena related to this economic development (values, importance of supporting social networks, level of post materialism, the role religion has in society, the degree of traditionalism) could help explain the ways people understand and interpret the role work has in their lives. Cultural differences are found in organizational cultures as well. Finally, the different perceptions of work performance both in South West and South East samples are embedded in different organizational cultures. One of them perceives results as closely related to the workplace atmosphere and the other one sees these variables as two clearly different work-related aspects. All in all, this finding provides grounds for further research, particularly taking into consideration the absence of previous academic research in this area comparing European and South American contexts.

One important conclusion to emerge from this study is that even though the perception of performance evaluated using team variables may reveal different dimensions, no significant differences exist between men and women in any of the samples. This suggests two points: Firstly, that cultural values could account for the differing dimensions of the teamwork variables (diverse factorial configurations), but do not explain why the evaluation of their performance is the same for men and women, given that no significant differences were found in the perception of performance in either the South West or the South East sample. Secondly, the results of this study suggest that gender does not have a predictive capacity in the perception of team performance. Although this study analyses the perception of performance, and not the performance itself, this finding is along the same line as previous findings which point to gender does influence performance.

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The results of this research are inconclusive, as the study has limitations (the sampling process, lack of control of variables such as degree of task difficulty, competitive conditions in the working environments, population differences or education level). The study could be repeated in different kinds of organizations with the aim of carrying out an in-depth study of performance predictors in diverse organizations.

Conclusion

The notion of performance varies across countries. Taken overall, the three performance dimensions used in this paper were also found in the South West sample, but not in the South East one. Thus, planning, results themselves, and workplace atmosphere seem to be distinct components when evaluating performance, even if they were found more clearly in some samples than in others, and even if some of them were combined into one dimension in some cases. This implies two aspects. First, those subjective measures of performance dimensions such as social related variables and workplace atmosphere should not be disregarded when evaluating performance in any organization. Second, the implementation of diversity management programs oriented at improving performance must be created only for the particular company in question. General and standardized formulae do not appear to work. This is particularly relevant in multinational companies which apply international diversity management programs to all of their branches as they would be the same.

The study findings have some implications for human resources management policies. The fact that there are no significant differences between gender and the perception of performance in the two samples calls for an analysis of gender's real level of importance in implementing diversity awareness or diversity management programs. Taking into account that the main idea behind the concept of diversity is to get the most out of the human resources provided by heterogeneous groups, the interpretation of what diversity (in this case, gender diversity) can bring to a team will ultimately depend on what the team or the company wishes to achieve. In other words, when introducing diversity management programs at both a strategic level and at the human resources department management level, these programs need to be customized to the area, to the company and to the country in which the company operates.

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