



DISCRIMINATION AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION



CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- After exploring this chapter, you will be able to:
 1. What is Discrimination
 2. Avoiding Discrimination
 3. What is Diversity
 4. What is Affirmative Action



DISCRIMINATION

- The courts have carefully construed legal precedent in the decades since Title VII of the United States Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964 and created the prohibited classes of discrimination.
- Law allows employers to make decisions on any basis other than those prohibited by the Constitution, precedent, and several statutes.
- Employers continue to advocate for their rights to manage the workplace and to be permitted to hire, retain, and terminate employees without external influence or control.
- Without diminishing the impact of overt acts of discrimination or their continuation in the workplace, covert forms of discrimination are also widely prevalent though they often go unnoticed.

3

MGT404



DISCRIMINATION

- Discrimination not only persists in the United States with regard to race, but also in connection with gender.
 - Women often face challenges that are distinct from those faced by men.
 - Women and men are both subject to gender stereotyping, but suffer from different expectations in that regard.
 - A woman who is aggressive in the workplace is considered a *bully*, while a man is deemed to be doing what he needs to do to get ahead.

4

MGT404



DIVERSITY

- It is the presence of differing cultures, languages, ethnicities, races, affinity orientations, genders, religious sects, abilities, social classes, ages, and national origins of the individuals in a firm.
- The management composition at firms with diversity programs is significantly more diverse than those at firms that do not have such programs, and 79 percent of senior managers at those firms say that cultivating a more diverse workforce is part of the organization's overall business strategy.

5

MGT404



BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF DIVERSITY FOR THE WORKPLACE

- When a firm brings together individuals with these (or other) differences—often exposing these individuals to these differences for the first time—there are likely to be areas of tension and anxiety.
- The organization is likely to ask that they work together toward common goals, on teams, in supervisory or subordinate roles, in power relationships, this might lead to conflicts or tension even without additional stressors such as cultural challenges.
- Diversity increase several areas of values tension.
- Integrating diverse viewpoints with a preexisting corporate culture.
- Diversity, which might be the source of positive gains for the organization, might also be the source of fundamental differences in values that must be balanced.

6

MGT404



BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF DIVERSITY FOR THE WORKPLACE

- Efforts at understanding **multiculturalism**, such as acknowledging and promoting diversity through celebration and appreciation of various cultures in the workplace, can serve both to educate and to encourage the benefits linked to diversity efforts.
- The cost of ignoring diversity is high, in terms of:
 - Losses of productivity, creativity, legal liability, and other performance-based measures.

7

MGT404



AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

- It is a policy or a program that tries to respond to instances of past discrimination by implementing proactive measures to ensure equal opportunity today.
- The question regarding affirmative action
*Does one person **deserve** a position more than another person?*
- Efforts to encourage greater diversity may also be seen as a form of “**reverse discrimination**” - discrimination against those individuals who are traditionally considered to be in power or the majority, such as white men.
- The use of affirmative action policies in both business and universities has been controversial for decades.
- It may take the form of intentional inclusion of previously excluded groups in employment, education or other environments.
- It arises in the workplace in three ways:
 - Legal
 - Judicial
 - Voluntary

8

MGT404



❖ **Review Questions**

1. Define diversity and briefly discuss the benefits and challenges of diversity for the workplace.
2. Briefly explain the issue of affirmative action in the workplace.