

## **Tentative Topic: Finding the Right Blend – Team Diversity in Hypercompetition**

### **Previous Research:**

Current as well as past research on the influence of team diversity on performance has delivered inconsistent and contradicting results (Bell et al. 2011, p.710; Timmerman 2000, p.594; van Knippenberg et al. 2004, p.1008). Team diversity is defined as the “distribution of personal attributes among interdependent members of a work group” (Jackson et al. 2003, p.2003) and marks a context-dependent construct relating to a broad variety of attributes (Joshi and Roh 2009, p.599). Yet, oversimplification and generalization of the term *diversity* have caused past research to deliver disputing conclusions on its effects on performance as the contextual setting as well as the regarded criteria have not been considered separately (Bell et al. 2011, p.710).

### **Research Gap:**

Many of the pioneering researchers focused on the overall influence of diversity. Yet, statements generalizing whether diversity always has a positive or negative influence on team outcomes, need to be treated with caution (Zenger and Lawrence 1989, p.354). Before drawing a conclusion, it is crucial to identify the context as well as criteria under investigation. However, in current research “contextual considerations” are often ignored (Joshi and Roh 2009, p.599). Already at the end of the last century Pelled pointed out that the dependency between diversity and the nature of a task is often neglected (1996, p.615). Despite over 50 years of studying team diversity, there still seems to be unexplored terrain and a need for clarification, i.e. studies that focus on well-defined criteria in a specific environment. The following paper enters this gap of research and tackles the problems of context-dependency and oversimplification by defining a clear situational setting and looking at different diversity variables separately.

### **Approach:**

This paper will solely focus on team diversity in an environment characterized by high pressure, internationalization, volatility, and a high relevance of performance. This environment is characteristic for today’s fast changing, globalized and very competitive business world (Ilinitich et al. 1996, p.211). Following Pelled, each of the diversity variables under investigation will be chosen according to “its level of job-relatedness” (1996, p.615) and its influence on performance. In line with expert opinions and contextual relevance, the analyzed criteria will be of demographic nature, i.e. cultural background and age. To account for extreme situations of today’s business world, the moderating effect of additional pressure on the relationship between team diversity and performance will also be investigated. The effect of team diversity in this specific context is empirically tested using a unique dataset based on Soccer matches in the five biggest European Soccer leagues.

### **Contribution:**

This paper will contribute to literature on team diversity in highly competitive environments. While the previous attempts to find broadly generalizable results have proven to lead to biased results, this research focuses on a clearly marked area. A moderating effect of pressure, that so far has not found much attention in team literature, will be introduced to reinforce extreme characteristics of the specific context. Additionally, the results are intended to help practitioners to compose success-promising teams in hypercompetitive environments.

### **Reference list (please include)**