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Diversity management and organizational culture in sports organizations in the Sultanate of Oman

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the role of diversity management dimensions in shaping organizational culture within the directorates of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth in the Sultanate of Oman. A descriptive survey approach was employed, using a structured questionnaire administered to 84 employees from directorates across different Omani governorates. The findings revealed positive diversity management practices, particularly in accommodating employees with special needs, promoting non-discrimination, and assigning responsibilities in accordance with employees' academic qualifications. The results also highlighted managerial consideration of employees' interests and the prevalence of cooperative workplace relationships, reflecting positive aspects of the prevailing organizational culture. Multiple linear regression analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between diversity management dimensions and organizational culture ($p < .001$), with the model explaining 88.5% of the variance in organizational culture ($R^2 = .885$). Based on these findings, the study recommends strengthening employee participation in decision-making, providing targeted training programs to enhance diversity management practices, and conducting comparative studies across other government ministries.

KEYWORDS

Diversity Management; Organizational Culture; Ministry of Culture; Sports and Youth; Sultanate of Oman

1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, diversity and inclusion are central to organizational success. Beyond fairness and equality, they enhance performance and foster a creative and innovative work environment, shaping a culture of pluralism and mutual respect that strengthens employees' sense of belonging and job satisfaction. According to Sharma et al. (2024), the dimensions of diversity within organizations include demographic (race, gender, age), socioeconomic (economic status, education), cultural (language, cultural background), physical and mental (disabilities, mental health), and technological (access to technology, digital skills). Cultural diversity can positively influence management dynamics by fostering open and transparent communication that facilitates information exchange and reduces misunderstandings. Furthermore, leadership styles aligned with employees' cultural values contribute positively to organizational performance (Battistella et al., 2024).

Diversity management not only advances social inclusion but also strengthens organizational culture through open communication, participatory mechanisms, and fair policy implementation (Kilag et al., 2024). Cultures that encourage collaboration and transparent information flow support knowledge sharing, trust, and active participation, while strategic leadership directs these practices toward sustained innovation (Alateeg & Alhammadi, 2024; Raziq et al., 2024). By valuing experimentation and new ideas and by providing psychological and social support, diversity-oriented workplaces enhance employees' innovative capability, adaptability, and job satisfaction (AlSaied & Alkhoraif, 2024; Lui et al., 2024).

Recent sport studies indicate that diversity management contributes to shaping organizational culture when inclusive principles are integrated into everyday managerial practices rather than treated as symbolic objectives. This requires incorporating inclusion, equality, tolerance, and cross-cultural collaboration into human resource systems and daily organizational activities (Næss, 2023). In college sports, Keaton (2022) highlights the importance of culturally responsive communication, opportunities for staff voice, and accountable decision-making in fostering inclusive organizational climates. Similarly, a cultural intelligence-based management approach emphasizes the role of cross-cultural capabilities and inclusion-oriented practices in promoting inclusive and cooperative cultures within sport organizations (Doh et al., 2025). These perspectives also underscore the importance of explicit inclusion policies, protected channels for staff voice, and supportive organizational structures in establishing inclusive workplace climates (Eberman et al., 2024).

Beyond these organizational practices, diversity management also involves addressing inequalities in leadership, managerial opportunities, and participation within sport organizations. Evidence from Chilean sport organizations reveals persistent gender gaps in leadership, highlighting the need for equity-oriented policies and monitoring (Matus Castillo et al., 2024). Similar concerns emerge in the Community of Madrid, where Gallardo Pérez and León Quismondo (2025) identify gender-based differences in managerial roles, emphasizing the importance of fair access and transparent career progression. Moreover, the growing intersection between sport management and disability highlights managers' responsibilities to expand participation and inclusion (González García et al., 2025). These considerations extend to gender and sexual diversity, which remain important priorities in sports sociology and reinforce the need to translate diversity principles into everyday organizational practices (Sobarna et al., 2024).

Building on these findings, diversity management emerges as an important consideration for organizational effectiveness in government institutions, including the directorates of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth across Oman. By strengthening organizational culture, diversity management practices can enhance employee performance and foster innovation and creativity, while employees' diverse cultural backgrounds may influence their personal, organizational, and career trajectories. In line with Oman Vision 2040, recent Omani evidence identifies management conditions that help sport organizations respond effectively to change, reinforcing the need for inclusive and collaborative practices across the Ministry's directorates (Alsandi et al., 2025). The vision also positions sport as integral to educational and social development, noting that advancing sport and education together can support national goals and improve public health (Al-Busafi, 2022). Within this policy framework, the Ministry seeks to build an integrated and diverse workplace where all employees can contribute effectively to organizational goals.

Despite growing international and local attention to diversity management, evidence regarding its relationship with organizational culture in Omani government sport institutions remains limited. To address this gap, the present study examines the relationship between the dimensions of diversity management and organizational culture across the directorates of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth in Oman, with implications for both academic scholarship and institutional policy. Accordingly, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the current status of diversity management dimensions in the directorates of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth in Oman?
2. What is the current state of organizational culture within these directorates?

3. How do diversity management dimensions contribute to achieving organizational culture within these directorates?

2. METHODS

2.1. Participants

The study relied on a descriptive survey approach, as it was appropriate for the study context. Using a random sample, 84 employees were selected from all directorates of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth in the Sultanate of Oman. The sample included diverse demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, and years of experience, representing a broad cross-section of the ministry's workforce. The researchers used a online questionnaire (Google Forms) distributed through the ministry’s official communication channels

2.2. Validity and Reliability of the Study Instrument

The researchers used a 34-item questionnaire with a three-point Likert scale as the primary instrument. To validate the questionnaire, it was reviewed by nine sports management experts. Its apparent value ranged from 88.89% to 100%, indicating its suitability for field application. Internal consistency was assessed using Spearman's correlation coefficient between each item and its corresponding dimension, with coefficients ranging from 0.414 to 0.958, all statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. To verify the reliability of the questionnaire, a test-retest method was applied to a sample (number of 15 individuals) with a two-week interval. The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.921, confirming its high level of reliability and suitability for field application.

2.3. Statistical Analyses

Demographic data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages). Relationships between categorical variables were assessed using chi-square tests. Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) was employed to examine the influence of diversity management dimensions on organizational culture. All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 26.

3. RESULTS

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the study sample, consisting of 84 participants. It shows the distribution of participants according to gender, age, and governorate or administrative affiliation. The sample consisted of 84 participants, with males representing 59.5% (n=50) and females 40.5% (n=34). Regarding age groups, the largest proportion of participants

(54.8%, n=46) were aged 41 years and above, followed by those aged 34–40 years (29.8%, n=25), while the smallest group consisted of participants aged 20–26 years (15.5%, n=13). Concerning governorates, the highest representation came from Dhofar Governorate (32.1%, n=27), whereas the lowest participation was from the Directorate General of Sports Care and Development (20.2%, n=17).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the study sample (N = 84)

Variable	**Repetition**	**Percentage**	**Grand Total**	
Gender			Sample number	percentage
Male	50	59.5	84	%100
Female	34	40.5		
Age			Sample number	percentage
20 – 26	13	15.5	84	%100
34 – 40	25	29.8		
41 and over	46	54.8		
Governorate			Sample number	percentage
Directorate General of Sports Activities	20	23.8	84	%100
Dhofar Governorate	27	32.1		
North Al Batinah Governorate	20	23.8		
Directorate General of Sports Care and Development	17	20.2		

This section outlines the findings derived from participants' responses. The first research question examined was: What is the current status of diversity management dimensions within the directorates of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth in the Sultanate of Oman? Table 2 presents the participants' responses to 25 statements measuring diversity management within the directorate, based on three response categories: disagree, somewhat agree, and agree. It also reports chi-square values and significance levels to assess whether the response distributions are statistically significant.

As shown in table 2, the calculated chi-square values for all items exceed the critical tabular value of 5.990, indicating statistically significant differences at the 0.05 significance level for all statements, except for items 2, 9, and 19. The chi-square values ranged from 1.190 to 54.857. Regarding participants' responses, the "Agree" option was predominantly selected across most items related to diversity management dimensions. However, the "Disagree" response was most frequent

for items 2, 10, 11, and 16, while the “Somewhat” response was most common for items 7, 15, 19, and 20.

Table 2. Participants’ responses regarding diversity management dimensions (N = 84)

#		Disagree percentage	somewhat percentage	Agree percentage	Chi-square	*p* value
1	The directorate's management takes into account the compatibility of the nature of the work with age when appointing.	0	28.6	71.4	15.429	0.00
2	The directorate's management ensures that there is no discrimination between males and females when appointing to the directorate.	44	0	56	1.190	0.275
3	Gender (male, female) influences the distribution of tasks and responsibilities among employees in the directorate.	28.6	14.3	57.1	24.000	0.00
4	The directorate's management is committed to appointing a percentage of people with special needs that is consistent with the nature of the job.	0	14.3	85.7	42.857	0.00
5	The directorate provides the necessary support to facilitate the movement and work of employees with special needs.	14.3	0	85.7	42.857	0.00
6	The directorate's management ensures that there is no discrimination between employees in the treatment they receive based on their origin.	14.3	0	85.7	42.857	0.00
7	The directorate's management ensures that there is no discrimination between employees based on their geographical area.	0	84.5	15.5	40.048	0.00
8	The geographical area has an impact on the interactions between employees within the directorate.	28.6	14.3	57.1	24.000	0.00
9	The area of residence influences the behavior, values, and culture of the directorate's employees.	28.6	29.8	41.7	2.643	0.267
10	The directorate's management adopts an incentive and reward	58.3	41.6	0	2.333	0.00

	system that encourages innovation and excellence.					
11	You may leave your job at the directorate and move to another job just for the sake of a change.	56.0	15.5	28.6	21.500	0.00
12	You may feel resentful of some of your colleagues' personal habits.	0	0	100	26.643	0.00
13	I believe that if there were employees of different sects and religions, there would be no discrimination against them.	28.6	13.1	58.3	13.786	0.00
14	The nature of my work at the directorate is compatible with my educational qualifications.	14.3	41.7	44.0	54.857	0.00
15	The directorate's management pays attention to educational background and work experience when promoting employees.	14.3	71.4	14.3	13.762	0.00
16	The directorate's management provides sufficient facilities for employees to care for their children.	70.2	29.8	0	2.643	0.00
17	The directorate manages various scientific disciplines with high efficiency and effectiveness.	14.3	28.6	57.1	24.000	0.00
18	It avoids disagreement with members of other groups for fear of being labeled biased.	15.5	29.8	54.8	19.929	0.00
19	The directorate's management is focused on career progression through seniority in hiring.	28.6	41.7	29.8	2.643	0.267
20	The issue of diversity in human resources is an issue often overlooked within the directorate.	0	70.2	29.8	13.762	0.00
21	Membership and loyalty to specialized unions contribute to creating diversity in the directorate's workforce.	15.5	14.3	70.2	51.500	0.00
22	The directorate's management is committed to achieving diversity in the workforce and providing appropriate support and assistance.	14.3	0	85.7	42.857	0.00
23	The directorate's management can understand the characteristics and cultures of	0	29.8	70.2	13.762	0.00

	employees and deal with them efficiently.					
24	The directorate's management encourages all employees to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities.	0	29.8	70.2	13.762	0.00
25	The directorate's management welcomes the many differences that distinguish employees and leverages them to continuously improve performance.	14.3	15.5	70.2	51.500	0.00

Results related to the second research question: What is the current state of organizational culture within the directorates of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth in the Sultanate of Oman? To address this question, participants' responses were analyzed by calculating the percentage distributions, chi-square values, and significance levels for each item measuring organizational culture. The detailed results are presented in table 3.

Table 3. Chi-square values and significance levels related to the organizational culture domain (N = 84)

#		**Disagree percentage**	**somewhat percentage**	**Agree percentage**	**Chi-square**	***p* value**
1	The directorate's management identifies employee tendencies, desires, and tendencies to improve performance.	14.3	15.5	70.2	51.500	0.00
2	The directorate's management makes significant efforts to develop the capabilities of its employees to achieve the highest degree of efficiency and effectiveness.	30.0	63.3	6.7	13.786	0.00
3	Working relationships among employees in the directorate are based on the principle of cooperation and integration in accomplishing tasks.	14.3	15.5	70.2	51.500	0.00
4	There is a shared belief among employees in the directorate regarding the importance of participation in the decision-making process.	0	56.0	44.0	1.190	0.275
5	The directorate's management invests in the energies and capabilities of employees by involving them in the decision-	0	58.3	41.7	2.333	0.127

	making process.					
6	Employees in the directorate believe that the organization's culture helps in accomplishing tasks and duties with the required quality and efficiency.	0	56.0	44.0	1.190	0.275
7	The prevailing norms among employees in the directorate are characterized by adapting to all new developments in the work environment.	14.3	15.5	70.2	51.500	0.00
8	The prevailing norms among employees in the directorate help create a climate that encourages creativity, innovation, and excellence.	0	15.5	84.5	40.048	0.00
9	The directorate's management is keen to provide employees with the information and data necessary to develop their use of modern methods.	0	44.0	56.0	1.190	0.275

The results presented in the previous table reveal that the calculated chi-square values exceed the critical value of 5.990 for all items related to the organizational culture dimension. This indicates the existence of statistically significant differences at the 0.05 significance level across most statements, with the exception of items (2, 9, and 19). The chi-square values ranged from 1.190 to 51.500. Notably, the "Agree" response was the most frequently selected for the majority of statements concerning organizational culture dimensions, while the "To some extent" option was predominant for items (2, 4, 5, and 6).

Results related to the third research question: What is the role of diversity management dimensions in achieving organizational culture within the directorates of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth in the Sultanate of Oman? To address this question, multiple regression analysis (MRA) was conducted to examine the influence of diversity management dimensions on organizational culture. The results are presented in table 4. The statistical results from the multiple linear regression analysis indicate a statistically significant effect at the 0.01 significance level for the impact of diversity management dimensions on achieving organizational culture within the directorates of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth in the Sultanate of Oman. This is evidenced by a high F-value of 206.153 and a p-value less than 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). Additionally, the

coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.885, indicating that diversity management dimensions explain 88.5% of the variance in achieving organizational culture among employees in these directorates.

Table 4. Multiple regression analysis of diversity management dimensions and organizational culture

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	f	Beta Coefficient (B)	t	*p*
Regression	18.19	3	6.06	0.94	0.88	0.88	206.15	1.84	19.04	0.000
Residual	2.35	80	0.02							
Total	20.54	83								

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study provide several insights into the role of diversity management in shaping organizational culture within the directorates of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth in the Sultanate of Oman. The results indicate that the directorates demonstrate a strong commitment to diversity management through recruitment practices that consider academic qualifications and professional experience. These practices also include accommodating employees with special needs in accordance with job requirements and promoting non-discriminatory treatment regardless of ethnic or cultural background. These findings are consistent with Samara (2017), who emphasized the importance of managing diversity by developing employee competencies, recognizing the benefits of workforce diversity, and fostering an inclusive organizational culture that supports productivity, creativity, and organizational performance.

However, the findings also reveal areas of employee dissatisfaction, particularly with incentive and reward systems perceived as insufficient to encourage creativity and high performance. In addition, inadequate childcare facilities emerged as a concern affecting employee well-being. These findings are consistent with Deb (2020), who reported that incentive systems within school sports directorates did not adequately meet employees' expectations, potentially undermining organizational commitment and performance.

The study further indicates that external factors, particularly global social and cultural shifts, influence the internal dynamics of the Ministry's directorates. These influences are reflected in organizational culture and workplace practices within the Omani context, highlighting the importance of considering the broader social and cultural environment in diversity management. Employees' perceptions also suggest an awareness of the need to adapt to changing social and cultural conditions and to adopt workplace practices that are responsive to cultural differences. These findings

underscore the importance of organizational adaptability and cultural awareness in managing diversity and maintaining a work environment that accommodates employees from different backgrounds.

These findings are broadly consistent with Sowaid & Al-Salawi (2026), who highlighted the influence of social and cultural factors within the sporting environment, particularly the role of cultural diversity and social interaction in shaping individuals' experiences and perceptions. In relation to organizational practices, Næss (2023) emphasized the importance of integrating inclusion, equity, tolerance, and cross-cultural collaboration into human resource systems and everyday activities. Similarly, Keaton (2022) highlighted the contribution of culturally responsive communication, employee participation, and accountable decision-making to inclusive organizational environments. Lesch et al. (2025) further demonstrated the importance of gender equity policies and their consistent implementation in strengthening organizational performance. Collectively, these studies reinforce the relevance of culturally responsive management practices and institutional policies in supporting diversity within sport organizations.

Regarding the current state of organizational culture, the findings indicate that employees within the directorates demonstrate positive attitudes and motivations toward improving performance. Workplace relationships are also characterized by cooperation, mutual respect, and collaboration, contributing to an organizational environment that encourages innovation and excellence. These findings highlight the importance of positive employee attitudes and constructive workplace relationships in strengthening organizational culture and supporting institutional performance. They also suggest that fostering cooperation and mutual understanding among employees can contribute to a more supportive and cohesive work environment. In this regard, Sowaid et al. (2025) highlighted the importance of individual attitudes and motivations in shaping preferences and engagement within the sporting environment. Similarly, Sowaid (2024) emphasized the efforts of Omani sport federations to promote sport culture through accessible services, supportive facilities, and initiatives aimed at encouraging community participation and achieving organizational objectives. These findings are also consistent with Al-Sabai (2020), who emphasized the role of organizational culture in enhancing job performance within sport institutions and highlighted the importance of leadership approaches that respond to societal changes and support institutional development through contemporary management practices.

Further support for these findings can be found in recent studies examining the relationship between organizational culture and performance in sport organizations. McKenzie et al. (2023)

emphasized the role of everyday relationships and organizational practices in shaping workplace culture, supporting the present study's findings regarding cooperation and mutual respect among employees. Similarly, Bjørnstad et al. (2024) highlighted the influence of relationships among internal and external stakeholders on the development of organizational culture, reinforcing the importance of collaboration in the workplace. Within the Omani sport sector, Al Balushi et al. (2024) identified organizational culture as a significant predictor of organizational performance. Taken together, these findings suggest that the positive workplace relationships identified in the present study may provide an important foundation for strengthening organizational culture and supporting performance within the Ministry's directorates.

The statistical findings revealed a significant positive effect of diversity management on organizational culture ($p < .01$) within the Ministry's directorates. This result highlights the importance of diversity management in shaping organizational culture and suggests that greater attention to inclusive management practices may contribute to a more cooperative and supportive work environment. These findings are consistent with Kufan et al. (2023), who emphasized the importance of clear and inclusive policies for effective diversity management in Omani institutions. Similarly, Hashish and Abdullah (2020) and Al-Hadhiri et al. (2020) highlighted the role of fair and inclusive management practices in strengthening organizational culture and fostering an environment conducive to innovation and continuous improvement.

The findings also underscore the importance of human resources in the administrative processes of the directorates. Employees' knowledge of contemporary management practices and their ability to address organizational challenges through innovative approaches are important considerations for achieving institutional objectives. In this context, Doh et al. (2025) emphasized the role of cultural intelligence and inclusive human resource practices in developing cooperative organizational cultures within sport organizations. Likewise, Eberman et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of explicit inclusion policies, opportunities for employee participation, and supportive organizational structures in fostering inclusive workplace environments. Taken together, these findings suggest that strengthening diversity management, developing employee competencies, and promoting inclusive administrative practices may contribute to a more adaptable organizational culture capable of responding to current and future challenges.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study highlight the significant role of diversity management in shaping organizational culture within the directorates of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth in the Sultanate of Oman. The results indicate that inclusive management practices, particularly non-discrimination, consideration of employees' qualifications and needs, and the promotion of cooperative workplace relationships, are important aspects of the organizational environment. Furthermore, the significant relationship between diversity management dimensions and organizational culture underscores the importance of integrating diversity management into institutional policies and administrative practices.

In light of these findings, strengthening diversity management requires clear and inclusive policies, greater employee participation in decision-making, and continuous professional development. Encouraging employees to share their experiences, perspectives, and ideas may also contribute to a more collaborative and innovative workplace. Such practices can help the directorates respond more effectively to organizational challenges while fostering mutual respect and cooperation among employees.

Overall, the study highlights the relevance of diversity management to organizational culture in the Omani public sector. Based on these findings, the study recommends strengthening employee participation in decision-making, implementing targeted training programs to enhance diversity management practices, and conducting comparative studies across other government ministries to further examine the relationship between diversity management and organizational culture.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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