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An Investigation Of Performance And Participation In Employee Resource Groups At A Global Technology Company

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**AN INVESTIGATION OF PERFORMANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN
EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS AT A GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY COMPANY**

by

GLENDA WARD

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

2013

MAJOR: INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Approved by:

Advisor

Date

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DEDICATION

I am very thankful and appreciative for the love and support I received from my family as I was on this journey. I dedicate this work to my loving husband, Terry, who showed the utmost patience and offered such encouraging words to inspire me to continue. To my loving daughter, Lauren, you cannot begin to imagine how much I love you, and I see so much potential in you. I am and always will be very proud of you.

In memory of my grandmother, Odie Louis, whose loving hands guided me through childhood and into adulthood. In memory of my mother, Margaret Session, who I miss dearly but know you are always with me. In memory of my special cousin, Velma Lewis-McFadden, whose special words of encouragement helped me to continue on this journey. Your acts always demonstrated how much you supported me.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Job performance is defined as the expected organizational value of people's behavior over time (Motowidlo, 2003). Employee network groups have been defined as groups of employees who are voluntarily formed around a variety of issues, including age, ethnicity and sexual orientation (Medina, 2007). These self-organized groups promote career development, community outreach, networking, continuing education, and social activities for their members. Because volunteerism is at the core of the group's composition, one might wonder why employees join these groups. Randel & Ranft (2007) conducted a study of 219 professional employees in financial services firms and consumer product companies to explore motivations to keep social connections with co-workers. The study revealed two main motivations. The first motivation was identified as the need to have personal friendships in the workplace, and the second motivation was identified as a need to demonstrate success on the job by achieving a high level of performance. This same study revealed that increased job performance was positively correlated with participation in employee network groups when friendship links within the employee groups were created. Friendship links are present when both participants in the friendship agree that it exists (Krackhardt, 1990). In a study seeking to gather data on how employees acquire the knowledge and behaviors to demonstrate high performance in the workplace, Morrison (2002) conducted a survey of first-year accountants at a global accounting firm and found that gaining the organizational knowledge necessary to master the job tasks and demonstrate high performance were positively related to participation in and the size of the employee group. These studies show the relationship that groups can have on individual performance in the work place, and the links and ties within groups.

Employee network groups have developed from participative management techniques that were popular over three decades ago. Terms like *employee involvement* and *quality circles* became commonplace in American corporations in the 1980s, and were used as a way to involve employees using participative management techniques. Quality circles were promoted as productivity enhancement projects (Dewar, 1980). The main reason they were created was to establish a more effective organization (Lawler, 1986) and to support the idea of involving employees in planning and making suggestions on business initiatives as a better approach to managing the organization (Sashkin, 1984). The term quality circles is not as common in today's organizations, and very little current research exists on the topic. The use of the term quality circles began to decline in the early 1990s. More recent research uses the terms affinity groups, employee network groups, or employee resource groups which have been described as evolutions from the quality circle concepts with similar supporting methodologies (Van Aken, Monetta & Sink, 1994). Employee resource groups are described as an affinity of relationships that make up social systems in the informal organization and they can be an important determinant of performance (Van Aken, Monetta & Sink, 1994). Quality circles and employee resource groups are two management philosophies with similar elements of social interactions focused on creating a harmonious workplace environment (Lynch, 1997). However, not all employee resource groups provide the opportunities for making connections and networking that could lead to advancement or stronger social systems in the workplace. (Reed, 2011).

As defined by Rodriguez (2008), the most effective employee resource groups are the ones that align their goals and objectives with the business objectives of the organization. It is common for employee resource groups to be formed based on social identity such as race or gender, and they are usually formed by employees as a grassroots effort as opposed to being

prescribed and dictated by the employer (Friedman, 1999). However, clearly race and gender are not the only basis of similarity. In some cases employees might see others performing the same job as more similar as opposed to people of the same race or gender performing different jobs (Brass, 1985). In a longitudinal study on group involvement, it was found that perceived dissimilarity had a significant influence on an individual's level of involvement with the group and work assignments for the team, since individuals are less likely to have strong interaction if they are demographically different (Hobman, Bordia & Gallois, 2004).

Many organizations today use different forms of employee involvement programs to improve quality, productivity, employee motivation, morale, and to reduce costs and adapt to changes (Lawler, Mohrman, & Ledford, 1992; Henneman, 2004; Fineman, 2010). There can be different common bonds that form the makeup of different network groups, but there should be something identifiable among each employee group. Employee involvement efforts differ in their level of maturity and the commitment that they get from both the company and its employees (Belcher, 1987). Many employee groups have an objective of coming together with the intent of social support while achieving career and company goals. According to a Workplace Diversity Practices Survey, where the Society for Human Resource Management randomly selected employees in HR organizations from their membership data base to participate in a web-based questionnaire about the diversity activities in their organizations, companies reported that employee resource groups were critical in helping them reduce costs associated with employee turnover and low productivity, which helped to increase the company's competitiveness (Society for Human Resource Management, 2005). Although benefits were reported, the same study revealed that back in 2005 only 29 percent of surveyed companies supported employee resource groups. Based on the results it appears that employee resource

groups were underutilized in the organizations participating in this study. A field study conducted with 190 employees in 38 work groups found that participation in social groups at work is related to group performance (Sparrowe, Liden, Wayne and Kraimer, 2001). A similar study revealed that individuals progress further in their careers if they have a large network of informal relationships as a source for getting information and needed resources (Podolyn & Baron, 1997). In a study of college students who were also full-time working managers, it was determined that relationships are a key element for access to information (Anderson, 2008). Additional research found that managerial participation in groups positively affected the probability that high-performance work practices would be adopted (Erickson and Jacoby, 2003).

As indicated by the variety of studies, the configuration and the purpose of employee resource groups have changed over the years. However, in many companies these groups are becoming popular again, and are taking on a more strategic focus in supporting business goals (Leonard, 2011). Employers are requiring employee resource groups to have goals and objectives linked to business goals (Hastings, 2009). With dispersed research in the literature, there is not a firm understanding of the inherent qualities and impact of work relationships (Kahn, 2007). Since businesses are recognizing the importance of employee resource groups and have discovered ways to use them to help achieve company goals, this research also focuses on benefits perceived by the employees who are part of employee resource groups.

Statement of the Problem

Because of increasing pressure on companies in the United States to do more work with fewer resources (Powers & Ray, 2011), and in light of real or perceived value achieved from employee resource groups (Jackson, 2009), it is important to take another look at the role employee resource groups play within organizations from the viewpoints of employee resource

group members. Employee involvement in these groups is important because it can be a means by which companies can get employees' input, expertise and creativity in achieving business objectives (Jackson, 2009; Jimenez, 2011). However, Perry-Smith (2006) found only partial support for higher levels of creativity in employee resource groups. Many companies sponsor employee resource groups with the anticipation that they will lead to positive benefits for the company (Arnold, 2006). A relatively small amount of research has been done to determine if participation in employee resource groups has an impact on individual performance. Many businesses have objectives identifying the expectations and outcomes for their employee resource groups; and they hold these groups accountable for addressing real business issues (Corporate Leadership Council, 2010). There has been little research to assess how effectively an organization's employee resource groups accomplish their stated objectives. This study will evaluate the extent to which employee resource groups achieve the objectives they are expected to achieve. This study will also seek to determine if a relationship exists between an employee's participation in employee resource groups and an individual's job performance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the association of employee resource groups on self-report employee performance for employees at a global technology company. The study will extend previous empirical research on the relationship between an individual's membership in workplace group(s) and his or her job performance by examining employee resource group participation and performance in an actual work setting. The study will evaluate the extent to which employee resource group members perceive they are performing the established objectives at a global technology company. This study will examine data from one company that has many employee resource groups. By using the validated Propensity to

Connect (PCO) instrument, developed by Totterdell, Holman & Hukin (2008) the study will examine the participants' propensity to connect with others. The study will also examine the association of career stage with membership in employee resource groups. As a result of the outcome from this study more empirical evidence will be added to the literature on the relationship between an employee's participation in these social resource groups and an individual's self-report of job performance.

Research Questions

The study will address the following questions:

1. Is there a relationship between participation in an employee resource group and self-reported job performance?
2. Given an organization's objectives for employee resource groups, to what extent do employee resource group members perceive they are performing the objectives?
3. Are there differences in satisfaction with employee resource groups for participants in the various career stages?
4. Is there an association between participating in an employee resource group and turnover intentions?
5. Does the Propensity to Connect with Others (PCO) scale predict employee resource group membership?
6. How does propensity to connect with others scores relate to participating in an employee resource group?
7. Is there a relationship between career stages and propensity to connect with others?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided to offer clarity for the terms used in this study.

Employee Resource Groups

Groups of employees who are voluntarily formed around a variety of issues, including age, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Employees form groups to coach and support each other. These employees contribute to business success by attracting employees from diverse backgrounds, and helping the company deliver on its commitment to diversity (Medina, 2007).

Turnover Intentions

Thoughts of quitting and searching for alternative employment. A conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave an organization (Tett & Meyer, 1993).

Job Performance

Accomplishment of work-related tasks. The total expected value to the organization of discrete behaviors that an individual carries out over a period of time (Motowidlo, 2003).

Propensity to Connect

Individual differences in people's tendency to join with others. Components include making friends, making acquaintances and joining others (Totterdell, Holman, & Hukin, 2008).

Significance of the Study

Although there are several older studies from over three decades ago (Granovetter, 1973; Lischeron & Wall, 1975; Locke, 1986) that look at the structure of employee groups, factors that motivate employees to maintain social ties with coworkers, and the general impact that employee groups have on workplace activities such as training or innovation, there is little current research that focuses on employee resource groups and the potential impact on performance. There is little research that also evaluates the effectiveness of employee resource groups against their objectives or expected benefits. Findings from this study will contribute to the understanding of employee resource groups in the following ways:

- This information will provide an understanding of the perceptions of employee resource groups in a global technology corporation.
- Information obtained from this study will be used by the organization to address perceptions of the effectiveness of employee resource groups in a global technology corporation.
- The study will add to the literature on the association between self-perceived job performance and participation in an employee resource group.
- The study will inform the question of the relationship of employee resource groups on the propensity to connect with others and turnover intentions.
- The study will contribute to the understanding of the potential generalization of employee resource groups within organizations.

Summary

While the stated purpose of most employee resource groups is to provide social support, there is also the need to identify additional value that is achieved from employee resource groups. The research suggested that increased job performance can be positively correlated with participation in employee resource groups. The Propensity to Connect was introduced as a validated instrument that can be used to measure three components of propensity to connect with others: making friendships, making acquaintances and joining others. Research questions were described and potential limitations and the significance of the study were also described. The next section will present a review of the relevant literature on participation in employee resource groups and self-report job performance, the evaluation of the objectives of employee resource groups, and the association of employee resource groups and turnover intentions.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

Social networks are connections that link individuals (Nelson, 1989). These connections are the foundation on which we base an understanding of relations that make up the network (DeGenne & Forse, 1999). In an older, but still famous study on ties among social network group members, Granovetter (1973) created a base for the research into social networks and focused on the strength of interpersonal ties between individuals. Granovetter identified the presence of strong ties and weak ties in social networks. He further defined the strength of a tie as being a function of time invested, emotional intensity, mutual confiding and reciprocity. According to Granovetter (1973) it is important for individuals to learn how to increase the use of weak ties for many situations, including getting exposure to diverse information. Weak ties can play an important role in social unity. However, an extensive network of weak ties does not preclude the development of strong ties (Carroll & Teo, 1996). The quality of connections with others is powerful and can influence the contentment of individuals in organizations (Dutton, 2003). Shared demographic characteristics are critical because social connections and friendships can be based on social processes and personal preferences (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001).

A question may be “why do some people join social groups but not others?” Friedman & Craig (2004) found that employees who are strongly identified with the social group represented by a group will be more likely to join the group. Totterdell, Holman & Hukin (2008) used networks within a single organization, where individuals had a choice in connections they made, to investigate people’s desire and tendency to make connections with other people. Totterdell, et al (2008) created a measure of Propensity to Connect with Others (PCO) Scale. The scale

measures three components: making friends (referred to as strong ties), making acquaintances (referred to as weak ties) and joining others (referred to as bridging ties). The instrument was tested in two separate studies. The first study was in an academic setting, and the second study was in a business setting. In both studies, the components were significantly positively associated with the social network characteristics of the formation of strong ties, weak ties and bridging ties in a network. The study results concluded that the propensity to connect does not depend on experience or possession of -specific knowledge and skills. The Propensity to Connect with Others Scale will be used in the questionnaire for this study.

Many companies sponsor employee resource groups, and today's employee resource groups are different than they were a generation ago. Now it is more common to see employee resource groups focused on helping the business in activities such as selective recruiting and using them to help with the orientation and acclimation once employees are hired in the company (Corporate Leadership Council, 2006). It appears that Millennials entering the workforce are accustomed to doing things in groups. They are comfortable with technologies that allow them to participate and collaborate remotely, allowing employee resource groups to extend to locations without critical mass of a particular demographic (Fineman, 2010). It is now common for the responsibility for employee resource groups to be within the Diversity Group, and employee resource groups is a large part of corporate diversity initiatives (Bye, 2003). Many companies in the United States use employee resource groups in various ways. In the 1990s the technology industry, represented by companies like IBM and HP, was first to recognize the need for employee resource groups, and they established policies for a diverse workforce, recognizing that business success relies on the diversity of skills and background of the employees (Witeck & Combs, 2006). Employee resource groups at the company for this study report to the Global

Inclusion and Diversity organization. Companies now provide an electronic resource center for information sharing, and the employee resource groups can connect through virtual learning tools (Conklin, 2003). Ford Motor Company is one of only a few companies that have religious employee resource groups. Ford sponsors these groups so that employees can have an outlet for their religious beliefs when they come to work (Henneman, 2004). Xerox uses its employee resource groups to grow new business by adapting current products or creating new products to serve its diverse market segments, and track how its share of diversity markets grows (Knouse & Stewart, 2003). In the 1990s the focus for employee resource groups at AT&T was on career development and sometimes some political involvement (Brotherton, 1999). Today the focus at AT&T is on personal and professional growth and community involvement (Anonymous, 2012). McDonald's women's employee resource group had a major influence on menu items, including the introduction of salads and fresh-fruit smoothies (Anonymous, 2011). Members of one of the many employee resource groups at Microsoft Corporation participate in training and personal development activities, and they also provide scholarship and mentoring opportunities for high school seniors (Anonymous, 2011). In 2009 when American Airlines announced it would begin service to Beijing, China from its Chicago O'Hare airport, the company worked with its Asian Pacific-Islander employee resource group (APIERG), since they were familiar with the market being served, to help with menu creation, cultural relevance and sensitivity in promoting the establishment of the new route, and in positioning the new route for success in the market (Anonymous, 2010).

Employee Resource Groups and Job Performance

It is not uncommon for employees to consider ways to improve work to satisfy personal needs. It has long been recognized that a good quality of relationships in organizations can

provide for a more successful work environment (Dutton, 2003; Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Dutton & Ragins, 2007). High performers deliberately make relationship connections that boost their performance (Cross & Thomas, 2009). They also tend to build deep connections in the workplace that produce mutual benefits over time (Cross, Davenport & Cantrell, 2003). High performers who are part of a strong group relationship are more likely to be involved in more critical and open discussion of different perspectives and benefit from new thinking and different perspectives (Shah, Dirks & Chervany, 2006). Having employee resource groups at the workplace can support an individual's need for social contact and belonging. Human beings have a need to bond with people like themselves, whatever the common bonds may be (Digh, 1997). Connecting with others who share similar values and interests often helps overcome a feeling of isolation. In a study of 475 managers in a manufacturing industry, researchers tested the relationship between quality of work life and job performance. The results indicated a significant positive relationship between quality of work life and job performance (Beh & Rose 2007).

Corporations use employee resource groups for things as simple as information sharing and for more complex and engaging activities such as developing solutions, including solutions that directly impact the corporation's bottom line. Today many companies, such as Coca-Cola, Bank of America, and Darden Restaurants, are using their employee resource groups to help the companies with many business needs, including recruitment, retention, and testing new products (Medina, 2007). In a study of completion times for 120 new product development projects in 41 business units of a multi-unit electronics company, Hansen (2002) reported that social network relations can have a positive impact on performance. This was shown in the study by shorter project completion times for the teams who were also part of a social group..

Employees who are part of an employee resource group can become involved in a structured way, and can engage in collective actions to cause organizational change. In their research on the impact of a diverse workforce on organizations, Richard, Kochan & McMillan-Capehart (2002) found that because of both the positive and negative effects of visible diversity on organizations, employee resource groups are good gatherings for employees to engage in collective actions to initiate organizational change. A team composed of people from different business units has faster access to a variety of information than a team from a single function (Burt, 2000). However, Page (2007) cautions that team diversity does not produce benefits every time. In a study of the relationship between social groups and conflict, Nelson (1989) compared organizations where conflict had reached a disruptive level, described as intense enough to adversely impact organizational performance, with organizations whose performance had not been adversely impacted by internal conflict. He found that the low-conflict organizations had strong internal and external ties; whereas, high-conflict organizations had weak internal and external ties. This supported the theory that strong ties between groups inhibit disruptive conflict, and can increase organizational performance. The study also found that when there was a leading group with strong ties and connections to other groups in the organization, there was also lower conflict. Employee resource groups can serve as a tie or connection to many other groups in the organization such as knowledge management groups or problem-solving teams.

Turban & Jones (1988) used hierarchical regression analysis to compare characteristics of similarity, including demographic, perceptual and congruence, and component scores to predict job satisfaction, performance ratings and pay recommendations. The study used 25 supervisors and 155 subordinates of those supervisors in a rehabilitation center. The results indicated that demographic similarity, measured in terms of race, educational level, department tenure and age,

was positively correlated with job performance. This correlation suggests that similarity leads to better performance. So if employee resource groups are composed of people with demographic similarities, then according to the findings of this study, membership may have a positive association with job performance. But too much similarity can have a negative influence on group performance since it could potentially limit the diversity of ideas and opinions, especially when it comes to problem solving.

Performance improvement interventions involving participative management, such as implementing employee resource groups, can have an impact on productivity, especially when the groups have input on the intervention. Katzell and Guzzo (1983) found that in over 200 experiments to improve productivity published between 1971 and 1981, over 85 percent found improvement in at least one area of productivity. On the other hand, despite many studies that positively link employee resource groups and employee participation to performance, as far back as the 1970s, there were some researchers who questioned this connection. Singer (1974) espoused that some employees desire individual freedom of expression, independence, and autonomy, and may not find participation in an employee group to be desirable. Miller and Monge (1986) found that contextual factors can influence the effect of employee group participation and productivity. They found that the setting or the research environment (field vs. laboratory) and the type of research participants (employees vs. students) could make a significant difference in the results. Both field and laboratory studies have their criticisms and their praise. Laboratory studies tend to use college students and field studies tend to use work or professional environments and also uses more self-report data (Locke, 1986).

Despite the increase in organizational effectiveness, there is a realization that employee involvement does not have a positive effect on all employees and all managers. And,

participation in employee resource groups does not always positively impact organizational factors. An experimental field study involving over three hundred blue-collar male employees and their supervisors was conducted to determine if participation in managerial decision-making is a determinant of satisfaction at work. The increased participation was not reflected in greater employee satisfaction (Lischeron & Wall, 1975).

Participation in employee resource groups can lead to an increased number of relationships among employees. When looking at the question of whether or not participative management or social groups designed to get employees input and suggestions on topics such as work design and administrative policies have an impact on productivity, Powell & Schlacter (1970) conducted a field experiment exposing groups of workers to different degrees of participation in the decision-making process. The findings revealed that the productivity of the work groups did not improve as participative management techniques were used, and expected productivity results for the organization were not achieved. The research was conducted in a government organization instead of business and industry. The study did not support the position that increased employee involvement results in higher productivity. Subsequently there have been several documented benefits of employee groups (Lawler, Mohrman & Ledford, 1992; Cross & Parker, 2004).

In a study of groups in the workplace, Friedman, Kane & Cornfield (1998) surveyed members of the National Black MBA Association to see if participating in employee groups had a positive impact on career optimism. The researchers expected that the social support from the employee groups and the feedback received from members of the group would improve work performance. However, the survey participants reported a lack of support and feedback on performance from members of the employee group. It was suggested that the social support

came from people farther in the organization and who were not in a position to provide direct feedback on work performance. A comparative study on companies' employee engagement strategies demonstrated that using employee resource groups to build communities can have an impact on the company's performance as measured by new business and publicity, but the study fell short of determining the impact on individual performance (Creary, 2010).

Cross, Laseter, Parker & Velasquez (2006) applied network analysis to 15 network groups and found that performance and career gains were more readily apparent for those with more social connections because these people received more information and were aware of opportunities before employees who were not part of the network groups. According to this study social network analysis can help target interventions and can assist in five areas:

- Better sharing of knowledge
- Discovery of innovation
- Bolster interactions
- Assist in community efforts
- Improve responsiveness

The use of employee resource groups is one popular method for increasing worker productivity and flexibility because an individual's network is larger and the potential for learning is greater (Liebowitz, 2007). Because of the increasing implementation of employee involvement programs, one might assume that employees are satisfied with their jobs and employers see higher levels of worker productivity and performance. However, the evidence for such an increase is mixed. Although some researchers have found significant relationships between employee resource groups and performance (Sparrowe, Liden, Wayne and Kraimer, 2001; Podolyn & Baron, 1997; Beh & Rose, 2007), others have found no difference in

performance for employees who were part of an employee resource group and those who were not (Singer, 1974; Miller and Monge, 1986). In fact some managers contend that employee resource groups are “gripe sessions” (Friedman, 1999). In survey data when asked to identify the ways that social network groups were helpful, participants indicated that social network groups were not effective as a way to change or influence company policy (Friedman, 1999).

Employee resource groups and participative management are frequently associated with business and the corporate workplace. And, overall larger companies adopt employee network practices more frequently and formalize these practices (Lawler, Mohrman & Ledford, 1992). In 2009 approximately 90 percent of Fortune 100 companies had established employee resource groups (Corporate Leadership Council 2009). However, some of the same principles of social groups in a business environment are present in other areas as well. In a study of leadership, social networks and performance of 17 elementary schools, the findings revealed that when the principal was involved in the network, there was an association between teacher’s network cohesion and school performance (Friedkin and Slater, 1994). And the same study found no relationship between school performance and the frequency with which teachers interact to solve instructional problems. This study demonstrated the positive impact a school principal can have when the principal is also part of the group. Perhaps participating in the same network group allows the participants, regardless of the power level outside of the group, to similarly view the environment. However, the same study failed to establish a connection between employee resource groups and school performance. Continuing to look at leadership in social networks, in a study on the social networks of managers, Carroll and Teo (1996) researched how organizational membership groups of managers differ from those of non-managers. Their findings revealed statistical differences between non-managers and managers. When compared

to non-managers, managers showed wider membership networks, larger discussion networks, and their networks consisted of people with whom the managers had close ties. One suggestion from the study was that managers must develop ties to co-workers to perform satisfactorily on the job, and non-managers do not. But, perhaps if non-managers also increased their engagement in social networks, the knowledge transfer, idea sharing and communications that may come from the connection with other employees would be beneficial.

Evaluating Goals of Employee Resource Groups

More and more organizations are supporting employee resource groups as part of the company. The employee resource groups within most organizations are accountable for the achievement of goals that demonstrate their impact on the business (Corporate Leadership Council, 2005). In a survey of 64 organizations with a median of 32,000 employees, findings revealed that employee resource group membership is increasing and the trend is for employee resource groups to have goals of contributing to business success. Companies are investing more time and money into the management and coordination of their employee resource groups (Anonymous, 2011).

Corporations with employee resource groups should continually monitor the value and achievement of expectations from employee resource groups. (Corporate Leadership Council, 2009). Employee resource groups must demonstrate their business contributions to show value as part of the company's diversity strategy (Santana, 2012). Evaluating the effectiveness of these groups should be a concern. Performance improvement should be the focus of the evaluation (Guerra-Lopez, 2007). One way to evaluate the effectiveness of employee resource groups is to use a goal-oriented evaluation approach. A goal-oriented evaluation approach evaluates the extent to which pre-defined goals are being achieved (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1997).

Through this approach I will use the already identified goals and expectations of the employee resource groups and then survey the employee resource group members to determine to what extent the goals and expectations are being achieved. As with other organizational activities, the effectiveness of employee resource groups can be captured if organizations create goals and expectations based on the business purpose for employee resource groups and then evaluate the extent that the groups' achieve the objectives (Bye, 2003). Shared group objectives can be used to identify a group's business contributions, and a group's success can be defined by the achievement or non-achievement of the group objectives (Adler, Hecksher & Prusak, 2011).

It is recognized as a best practice that employee resource groups within companies should work towards approved business objectives (Alston & Bird, 2007). Since the 1990s there has been a renewed interest in the role of co-worker relationships (Flap, Bulder & Volker, 1998). Typically employee resource groups are open to all employees of a company and the content of the relationships may be work related, social, or a combination of both. Employees play an active role in structuring their social groups to achieve certain goals (Ibarra, 1993). A meta-analysis of 37 studies of teams in their natural context revealed the structure of the social relationships within groups can affect team performance, and teams could be more effective if social networking concepts were incorporated in teams (Balkundi & Harrison, 2006).

Career Stages

Career has been defined as the pattern of work-related experiences that span the course of a person's life (Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalk, 2010). Career stage has been defined as the commonalities of job experiences of employees at the same point in their careers (Dalton, Thompson & Price, 1977; Levinson, 1986). The use of stages is a common way to view career progression. Although the labels are different, several researchers have identified four career

stages that start from the first job and go to the last job (Cron, 1984; Dalton, Thompson & Price, 1977; Greenhaus, Callanan, & Godshalk, 2010; Miao, Lund & Evans, 2009). Greenhaus, Callanan, & Godshalk (2010) labeled and identified the career stages as:

- Entry – first career assignment or new to the job
- Early Career – have worked for a few years – gaining and sustaining the technical and required skills of the job.
- Mid-Career – equally distant from early and late career
- Late Career – have worked for many years and focused on active retirement planning

Career stages can be short in duration and can occur in repeated cycles. It is recognized that the idea of sequential career stages is not as common as when career stage theories were defined in the early 1970s. Changes in circumstances such as a new job can cause one to go back to a previous stage.

Employee Resource Groups and Turnover Intentions

When people see value in workplace relationships they become more committed to the organization and less likely to have intentions to leave (Friedman & Holtom, 2002). On average companies invest more than a third of their revenues in employees (Nalbantian & Szostak, 2004). Employee turnover can represent a large monetary loss. In looking at twelve retention factors Hausknecht, Rodda & Howard (2008) identified the degree of constituent attachment (the attachment to individuals associated with the organization) as a reason that people are likely to stay with a company. In studying why people chose to stay with organizations even when other jobs are available, researchers have adopted the term *job embeddedness* to describe a process by which participation in social networks and relationships can influence actions (Sekiguchi, Burton

& Sablinski, 2008). One key element of *job embeddedness* is the extent to which people have connections to other people or activities in the organization. Within the workplace domain there can be the existence of a tie defined by a person's position. Employees become connected to their organizations through many different kinds of relationships and links.

Summary

A review of the relevant literature on employee resource groups outlined the need for organizations to assess the value achieved from employee resource groups. In reviewing research on the effectiveness of employee resource groups and their impact on job performance, some of the research provides evidence in support of the beneficial effects that employee resource groups have on job performance and careers of its members at various career stages. The methodology used in this study to determine the perceptions of employee resource group members in a global technology company will be presented in the next section.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methods

This section describes the methodology of the study through a description of the setting, participants, research design, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis.

Setting

The setting for this study is a global technology company. The company was founded over 50 years ago with a focus on electronic equipment. The company is a Fortune 100 company and has many different businesses and product lines focused on developing and manufacturing computer hardware, technology services and consulting, software, and related technology for business and consumer electronics. The company headquarters is in the United States.

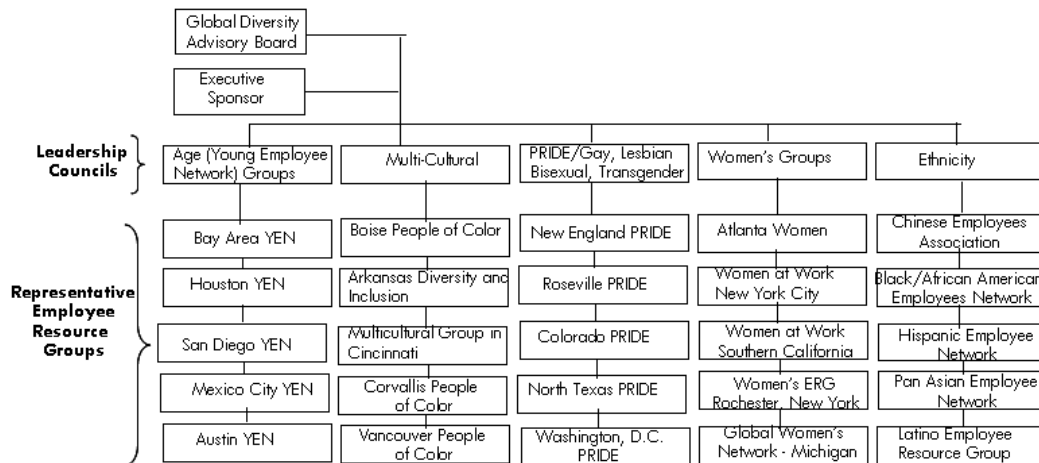
The company uses the term *employee resource groups* to refer to its many employee network groups. The company promotes employee resource groups as groups that are initiated by employees in support of the company's workplace diversity objectives. The mission of the employee resource groups is to foster the professional development of its participants and to enhance teamwork. Employee resource groups are open to all employees who support the group's mission regardless of their race, gender or other characteristics. The employee resource groups are formally organized and publicly recognized through the company's Intranet. They are viewed as community-building groups for employees. Although the groups are worldwide, and their existence is communicated during new employee orientation, most of the groups are based in the United States. Each group is an identifiable organization within the company. Employees can belong to one or more employee resource groups, although usually employees will only choose one group for active participation. Relative to the total number of employees in the company, less than 10 percent join employee resource groups.

The employee resource group structure has the following characteristics: members do not have to have the same job title or position, groups meet on a regular basis, group roles are formalized, and each group further develops its own mission. For some groups, there is an observed set of ties connecting the participants to the group (e.g., gender, race). Many of the individuals cannot be differentiated by their membership in these socially distinct groups. The employee resource groups are structured under Leadership Councils. This is a list of the employee resource group Leadership Councils:

- Age – Young Employee Network (YEN) Resource Groups
- Multi-Cultural Employee Resource Groups
- Pride/Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Groups
- Women’s Resource Groups
- Ethnicity Resource Groups

Figure 1 shows a sample of how the employee resource groups are aligned to the leadership councils.

Figure 1. Employee Resource Group Structure



Each employee resource group is aligned to a Leadership Council, and each leadership council has several instances of employee resource group organizations with related ties. There

are over 50 different instances of employee resource groups throughout the company, mainly broken down by geography. This is helpful so that the employee resource group members can meet face-to-face and participate in group activities. The company has the following items listed as examples of employee resource groups activities:

- New employee orientation events
- Multi-generational workshops
- Skill-building programs
- Career development workshops

Research Design

A cross-sectional survey research design was used in this study. In survey research, information is obtained through asking questions of a sample of a population in order to describe attitudes, beliefs or perceptions. Answers to the questions become the data of the study. (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001). Survey research is non-experimental and often uses random sampling (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). There were two sample groups. The participants in group one were members of employee resource groups and the participants in group two were not members of employee resource groups.

This study used qualitative and quantitative research methods through the use of an online questionnaire. Quantitative and qualitative methods can complement each other and when used together it is commonly described as a mixed methodology (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). A mixed method is a research approach for collecting data in which qualitative knowledge is gathered based on assumptions about data collection and combined with quantitative data such as descriptive statistics to understand a broad range of issues that will deepen the understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2003). In quantitative research, reliability and validity must be

closely observed. Reliability refers to the consistency of scores on an instrument, and whether the instrument measures the same way each time it is used (Creswell, 2003). Validity refers to whether an instrument measures what it was designed to measure (Field, 2009). The SPSS software program was used for the statistical analysis. Two sections of the questionnaire were constructed from pre-existing instruments with documented measures of validity. Both pre-existing instruments have undergone validation in previous studies. The first section taken from a pre-existing instrument, “The Propensity to Connect with Others (PCO)”, consists of nine items designed to measure three components: making friendships, making acquaintances, and joining others. Each item has a five-point response scale ranging from 1 (does not describe me very well) to 5 (describes me very well). The instrument has undergone validation in another study (Totterdell, Holman & Hukin, 2008). The second section taken from a pre-existing instrument, “Turnover Intention and Social Inclusion”, consists of ten items designed to measure turnover intentions, social inclusion and network satisfaction. The instrument has undergone validation in another study (Friedman & Holtom, 2002). Permission for use in this study was granted by the authors of the instruments. Documentation of permissions is included in Appendix A.

Comparability across measures will be incorporated by using the same research instrument for all participants within the same group. Due to the privacy policy at this company, I did not have access to employee performance rating information. Therefore, work performance was a self-report variable. Many areas of research use self-report measures. However, self-report data must be used cautiously and always labeled as self-report (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Self-report of job performance was obtained by using the four items that the company uses to determine annual performance ratings. The four items are:

- Achievement of performance goals
- Demonstration of leadership standards
- Impact on team and business
- Overall quality of performance

To control for fear of reprisal the participants were told that their individual responses will not be shared with the company and participants will be directed to an Internet-based survey tool that is neither operated by the company nor accessible within the company's internal Intranet system. Studies have shown that Internet questionnaires have a lower response rate than mail surveys (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000; Borkan, 2010). However, researchers agree that the Internet can provide an organized data collection process and eliminates some of the errors that can occur in manual data analysis (Borkan, 2010). The company frequently administers surveys using online questionnaires so this population is accustomed to completing online questionnaires. The ability to quickly reach the participants and efficiently analyze the data are reasons an online questionnaire is the preferred approach.

Instrumentation

Surveys are the most common form of systematic data collection (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). The research instruments were, titled "Employee Resource Group Member Survey" and "Non-Employee Resource Group Survey". The questionnaires were used to collect quantifiable answers to closed-ended and forced choice or multiple choice questions which provided measures of the association of employee resource groups on work performance and the work environment.

A representative from Human Resources provided an email list of employee resource group members, and a list of randomly selected employees who were not members of employee

resource groups. An email invitation was sent to 2,413 employee resource group members and 2,413 non-employee resource group members inviting them to participate in an online questionnaire. The email invitations are in Appendix B.

Employee Resource Group Questionnaire

The Employee Resource Group questionnaire was made up of six sections (Appendix C). The first section collected demographic information. The demographic questions provided a profile of the personal characteristics of the participants. The participants were asked questions about their gender, years in the company, and their specific employee resource group. These demographic questions were chosen to more accurately classify the participants' responses when conducting analysis against the research questions.

The second section asked about participation in the selected employee resource group. The company's employee resource group objectives were presented on a Likert scale (e.g., strongly disagree to strongly agree), and the participants were asked the extent to which they disagree or agree that the objectives were being achieved. Content validity is present when the items on a questionnaire represent the relevant domain of content (Field, 2009). For content validity I used the company's objectives as the content for the items on this section of the questionnaire.

The third section used the turnover intentions, social inclusion and network satisfaction questions from a previous study (Friedman & Holtom, 2002). Appendix C contains the permission. On the prior study turnover intentions were measured with two items. Participants were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the items. The items were "I would be happy to spend the rest of my career at this company" and "To what extent have you seriously thought about changing companies". The coefficient alpha was .71. Social inclusion

was measured with three items. Participants were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the items. Example items were “I do not feel a strong sense of “belonging” to this company” and “I do not feel like “part of the family” at this company”. The coefficient alpha was .71. Network satisfaction was measured with five items. Participants were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the items. Example items were “This group has made a positive difference in my life at this company” and “This group helps with my career”. The coefficient alpha was .82.

The fourth section included questions I received permission to use from an existing questionnaire to assess the participants’ propensity to connect with others (Totterdell, Holman & Hukin, 2008). “The Propensity to Connect with Others (PCO)” questionnaire measures individual differences in people’s propensity to connect with others. On the prior study there were three items to measure the three components - making friendships, making acquaintances and joining others. The participants rated the extent to which the items described them. For making friendships example items were “I make friends easily” and “I like to have many friends”. The coefficient alpha was .85. For making acquaintances example items were “I have many acquaintances” and “I readily make connections with people I do not know”. The coefficient alpha was .65. For joining others example items were “I often put people in touch with the right person when they need something” and “I find it easy to bring individuals together”. The coefficient alpha was .75.

The fifth section included one question to assess participants’ perception about the stage of their career. In this section participants were given four career categories and asked to identify the category which best describes where they are in their career.

The sixth section allowed participants to self-report on the four items that the company uses to determine annual performance ratings. Self-report of job performance will be obtained by using Likert-type statements on a five-point scale with responses ranging from "Far Below Average" to "Far Above Average" relative to peers. The self-report job performance score was the sum of the four items. The four items were:

- Achievement of performance goals
- Demonstration of leadership standards
- Impact on team and business
- Overall quality of performance

Non-Employee Resource Group Questionnaire.

The Non-Employee Resource Group questionnaire was the same as the Employee Resource Group questionnaire, with the exception of the section on the employee resource group objectives. The Non-Employee Resource Group questionnaire was made up of five sections (Appendix D). The first section collected demographic information. The demographic questions provided a profile of the personal characteristics of the participants. The participants were asked questions about their gender and years in the company. These demographic questions were chosen to more accurately classify the participants' responses when conducting analysis against the research questions. As a check to make sure the non-employee resource group respondents did not belong to an employee resource group, they were asked "Are you a member of an employee resource group?" If the response was yes, the questionnaire logic skipped to the end of the questionnaire and no responses were collected. If the response was no, the questionnaire proceeded to the next section.

The second section used the turnover intentions, social inclusion and network satisfaction questions from a previous study (Friedman & Holtom, 2002). Appendix A contains the permission. On the prior study turnover intentions were measured with two items. Participants were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the items. The items were “I would be happy to spend the rest of my career at this company” and “To what extent have you seriously thought about changing companies”. The coefficient alpha was .71. Social inclusion was measured with three items. Participants were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the items. Example items were “I do not feel a strong sense of “belonging” to this company” and “I do not feel like “part of the family” at this company”. The coefficient alpha was .71. Network satisfaction was measured with five items. Participants were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the items. Example items were “This group has made a positive difference in my life at this company” and “This group helps with my career”. The coefficient alpha was .82.

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- Achievement of performance goals
- Demonstration of leadership standards
- Impact on team and business
- Overall quality of performance

Data Collection

Before data collection, the study was reviewed and approved by the Human Investigation Committee at Wayne State University. The Human Investigation Committee ensures that studies are conducted with ethical principles. Each employee on the email list received an electronic mail message (Appendix B) explaining the purpose of the study, and it contained a hyperlink to a web-based questionnaire. The questionnaire was hosted by an independent provider of web-based questionnaires. This independent company is not affiliated with the company in which the study was conducted. I could not link the online questionnaire to a particular subject, and I was the only person with access to the survey responses.

The factors of target audience, purpose of questionnaire, and data quality are important factors to consider when creating an online survey (Couper, 2008). The target audience is familiar and has experience with using online surveys through the Internet since this company administers an annual employee survey with a similar design. Using a web-based survey for electronic collection of data was convenient for me because the participants are not in the same location. Using electronic data collection and storage can eliminate transcription errors and reduce other errors which can help to minimize measurement error that can occur when data are manually handled (Schonlau, Fricker & Elliott, 1998). All participants have electronic access.

Data Analysis

The SPSS Software was used to chart the quantitative responses. Correlation was one of the statistical methods used to analyze the survey data. Correlation measures the strength of the linear relationship between two variables (Stephens, 2004). Correlation was used to determine the strength of the relationship between performance and participation in an employee resource group. Secondary variables including turnover intentions, career stage and propensity to connect with others were also studied. The following table identifies the study research questions and the analysis methods.

Table 1. Research Questions and Analysis Methods

Research Question	Question Number on Questionnaire	Variables	Analysis
1. Is there a relationship between participation in an employee resource group and self-reported job performance?	38-41	Employee resource group membership Perceived job performance	Correlation of variables and levels of statistical significance
2. Given an	5-24	Objectives	One-sample t test

Research Question	Question Number on Questionnaire	Variables	Analysis
organization's objectives for employee resource groups, to what extent do employee resource group members perceive they are performing the objectives?			
3. Are there differences in satisfaction with employee resource groups for participants in the various career stages?	18 37	Satisfaction with employee resource groups Career stages	Univariate ANOVA.
4. Is there an association between participating in an employee resource group and turnover intentions?	26-27	Turnover intention Participation in employee resource groups	Linear regression
5. Does the Propensity to Connect with Others (PCO) scale predict employee resource group membership?	28-36	Membership in employee resource group PCO Score	Logistic regression
6. How does propensity to connect with others scores impact participating in an employee resource group?	28-36	Membership in employee resource group PCO score	Correlation
7. Is there a relationship between career stages and propensity to connect with others?	37 28-36	Propensity to connect with others Career stages	Correlation Linear regression

Summary

This section identified the setting for the study and described the procedures that were used to define the study population, the research design, the research instrumentation, data collection, and the methods used for data analysis. Correlation, regression and one-sample t-test methods were performed on the data set to examine the research questions that guided this study. The next chapter presents the results obtained from this research.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

This study was conducted to explore the association of participation and non-participation in employee resource groups on self-report job performance for employees at a global technology company. Secondly given an organization's expectations of employee resource groups, the study examined to what extent employees perceived they were achieving the objectives. Also, the study compared the propensity to connect scores between employee resource group members and non-employee resource group members. The results of the statistical analysis of the tested associations are presented here. The statistics used included multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), regression, and one-sample t-test. The following research questions guided the study:

1. Is there a relationship between participation in an employee resource group and self-reported job performance?
2. Given an organization's objectives for employee resource groups, to what extent do employee resource group members perceive they are performing the objectives?
3. Are there differences in satisfaction with employee resource groups for participants in the various career stages?
4. Is there an association between participating in an employee resource group and turnover intentions?
5. Does the Propensity to Connect with Others (PCO) scale predict employee resource group membership?

6. How does propensity to connect with others scores impact participating in an employee resource group?

7. Is there a relationship between career stages and propensity to connect with others?

Description of Study Participants

All participants for this study were employees at a global technology company. An HR representative from the company provided an email list of study participants. The emails to solicit participation are in Appendix B. This study used a convenience sample. A convenience sample is a group that is readily accessible to the researcher and possesses characteristics relevant to the study (Patton, 1990). There were two sets of participants for this study. The first set of employees was members of an employee resource group, and the second set of employees was not members of an employee resource group.

Employee Resource Group Members.

There were 2,413 employees who were members of an employee resource group. At this company there is no cost to join an employee resource group. All employee resource group members were contacted via the organization's email system, and 315 employee resource group members responded to the questionnaire, for a response rate of 13%.

Non-Employee Resource Group Members.

The HR representative provided emails for 2,413 randomly selected employees who were not members of an employee resource group. All non-employee resource group members were contacted via the organization's email system. In order to have the same number of non-employee resource group members, the non-employee resource group survey was closed after receiving 315 responses, which also represented a 13% response rate.

Participant Demographic Data

Demographic information on the study participants was collected in Section one of the survey instruments. This information included years worked for the company and gender.

Years with the Company. The majority of the employee resource group participants (56.9%, n=178) had more than 10 years seniority with the company, while the largest number of non-employee resource group members (34.3%, n=108) had six to eight years seniority. The seniority data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Years with the Company (Seniority)

Years	Employee Resource Group (n=313)		Non-Employee Resource Group (n=315)	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
0-2	29	9.3	14	4.4
3-5	44	14.1	36	11.4
6-8	32	10.2	108	34.3
9-10	30	9.6	75	23.8
>10	178	56.9	82	26.0

Gender. In this study the majority of the employee resource group respondents was female (70.5%, n=220). However, the non-employee resource group members had a slightly higher male response (54.9%, n=173) than female response (45.1%, n=142). These data are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Gender

Gender	Employee Resource Group (n=312)		Non-Employee Resource Group (n=315)	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Female	220	70.5	142	45.1
Male	92	29.5	173	54.9

Type of Employee Resource Group. In a survey of companies with employee resource groups, women's groups are the most common and popular type of employee resource group (Diversity Best Practices, 2011). Several employee resource groups exist at this company.

When asked to choose the one group you are most involved with, the Women's Network had the highest response rate (36.1%, n=113). There was participation from all employee resource groups, except the Veteran's Network. There was no participation from the Veterans Network. Possible reasons are because this group was just recently formed as the newest employee resource group at this company, this group has the least amount of members, and there is only one instance of this group based in the Washington D.C. area. The employee resource groups that participated in this study are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Employee Resource Groups

Employee Resource Group	<i>f</i>	P
Black Employee Network	46	14.7
Disability Network	2	0.6
Hispanic American Network	27	8.6
Multi-Cultural Network	3	1.0
Pan-Asian Network	9	2.9
Pride/Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual or Trans-gender	45	14.4
Veterans Network	0	0
Women's Network	113	36.1
Young Employee Network	51	16.3
Other	17	5.4

Following is the list of other groups the respondents included. Upon further analysis, I discovered that as the employee resource groups expand, some employee resource groups have started to create sub groups. This list represents the employee resource groups identified through the questionnaire as 'other', and their corresponding employee resource group. The responses and main employee resource groups are represented in Table 5.

Table 5. Other Employee Resource Groups

Names of Employee Resource Groups Identified as Other	Subgroup From
BEN – Black Employee Network	Black Employee Network
Mothers at Work	Women's Network

Names of Employee Resource Groups Identified as Other	Subgroup From
New York City Women's Group	Women's Network
Central Indian Association	Multi-Cultural Network
Mixed Personal	Pride/Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual and Trans-gender
IA (Indian Association)	Multi-Cultural Network
Team Cincinnati	Young Employee Network

Reasons for joining employee resource groups. Employees join employee resource groups for various reasons (Baxley, 2012; Lieber, 2012). Of the 293 respondents to this question, the most popular reason why employees joined an employee resource group was to expand their network within the targeted demographic 49.1% (n=144). The least popular reason why employees joined an employee resource group was to support the marketing activities for products at this company. These data are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Reasons for Joining (n=293)

Reasons	f	P
Expand my network within the targeted demographic of this employee resource group	144	49.1
Participate in career development activities	86	29.4
Participate in social activities	32	10.9
Support the marketing activities for products at this company	1	0.3
Help educate non-employee resource group members on this group	10	3.4
Act as or be a mentor to others	20	6.8

In addition to the choices given, several respondents identified additional reasons for joining employee resource groups. Those other reasons for joining employee resource groups at this company have been categorized and are listed in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Other Reasons for Joining Employee Resource Groups

Other Reasons For Joining an Employee Resource Group (ERG) Respondents Comments
<p><u>Networking</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A combination of Networking, Career Development and Mentoring. One of these would not sufficiently address my reason. • Networking within the company and get to know people from my location. <p><u>Career Development/Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I joined an ERG for a few reasons noted above. I am very interested in developing leadership skills and obtaining access to training often available through ERG affiliations. Also, I meet a lot of employees, of all levels, at the company, because of participating in an ERG, which I really enjoy. Also, I am glad to participate in community events or identify local events that the company can sponsor. • Provide leadership to help develop careers and networking of me and my fellow employees. • Haven't been active for a few years, but originally started for development and networking, as well as educating others outside the network. <p><u>Show Support in Targeted Demographic</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share values with the Latino community. • Show my support for this demographic. • Improve the situation for the members of my EGR at the company. • Mutual support (I learn, I share what I know) with other employees who also care for disabled or elderly relatives. • Because it is important to educate people about the environment. • Keep up to date on issues related to this group • Follow the passions and concerns of like-minded co-workers. • Be in the information flow for issues important to this group. • To support my coworkers who happen to be LBGT. • Stay in touch with topics of interest. • Help increase the awareness and needs of LGBT persons in the workplace. This includes

Other Reasons For Joining an Employee Resource Group (ERG) Respondents Comments	
	<p>educating the company's management & employees on how to foster an inclusive environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support diversity at this company.
<u>Other</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received credit for a Women's Study certificate from a local university involved with the local Women's Network • Was asked to join • Increase employee engagement • Improve my language skills • Unfortunately, I am not active in these networks. • Use it as a vehicle for equal benefits and right within this company and in the community • Assure equality • Outreach activities in the region • My involvement covers all areas stated above • All of the above

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Research Question 1

Is there a relationship between participation in an employee resource group and self-reported job performance?

Correlation was conducted to determine whether there is a positive relationship between participation in an employee resource group and self-reported job performance. The company uses four dimensions to determine performance. Therefore, job performance was analyzed in each dimension. Then, the sum of the four dimensions was calculated. There was a positive and significant correlation between self-reported job performance and employee resource group membership. The analysis found $r=.33$, $p<.01$. In this study employee resource group members

self-reported a higher performance level than non-employee resource group members. The results do not indicate causation. Each dimension of self-reported job performance was analyzed. Table 7 shows the results of the correlation analysis.

Table 7. Self-Reported Job Performance and Group Membership

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Employee Resource Group Membership	-	.18** (n=624)	.35** (n=618)	.34** (n=620)	.28** (n=624)	.33** (n=611)
2. Achievement of Performance Goals		-	.59** (n=617)	.62** (n=619)	.69** (n=623)	.84** (n=611)
3. Demonstration of Leadership Standards			-	.73** (n=613)	.64** (n=617)	.86** (n=611)
4. Impact on Team and Business				-	.70** (n=619)	.88** (n=611)
5. Overall Quality of Performance					-	.88** (n=611)
6. Self-reported Job Performance ^a						-

* p < .05 and ** p < .01

^a Sum of variables 2-5.

Research Question 2

Given an organization's objectives for employee resource groups, to what extent do employee resource group members perceive they are performing the objectives?

A one-sample t-test was conducted for this research question. The first test was run for the overall total score of the 19 questions that represented the employee resource group objectives that the company provided. The second test was run on each question. The critical value of three was used for each question because using the Likert-type scale three represented the neutral point of "neither disagree nor agree", and 57 (19 x 3) was used for the overall total. Table 8 illustrates the descriptive values and the overall total.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics for Each Objective and the Overall Total

Questions	N	M	SD
1. This employee resource group enhances my company's ability to attract talent.	313	3.72	.81
2. This employee resource group enhances my company's ability to retain talent.	313	3.63	.93
3. Being a part of an employee resource group has allowed me to participate in acclimating/orienting new employees.	311	3.09	1.03
4. Employee resource groups strengthen my company's image externally.	313	3.83	.77
5. Employee resource groups strengthen my company's image internally.	313	3.86	.81
6. Being a part of an employee resource group allows me to participate in community outreach events.	310	4.04	.85
7. Being a part of an employee resource group allows me to represent this company at local diverse recruiting events.	308	3.07	1.01
8. My employee resource group has been called upon to participate in the development and/or marketing of products or services.	309	2.77	.98
9. My work performance has increased as a result of participating in an employee resource group.	313	3.31	.88
10. Being a part of this employee resource group has provided opportunities to connect with leaders at this company.	310	3.75	.96
11. Employee resource groups promote multi-cultural awareness.	310	4.08	.69
12. Participating in an employee resource group has provided opportunities to find or serve as a mentor.	311	3.37	1.03
13. Being a part of an employee resource group has provided access to useful company information that I would not have received outside of the employee resource group.	313	3.53	.92
14. Overall, I am satisfied with this employee resource group.	311	4.01	.75
15. This employee resource group has made a positive difference in my life at this company.	307	3.92	.77
16. This employee resource group helps with my career.	309	3.50	.82
17. This employee resource group is relevant to my life at this company.	313	3.83	.77
18. This employee resource group has benefited only a few people.	312	2.51	1.04
19. Participating in an employee resource group has allowed me to make new friends.	312	3.93	.76
Overall Total Score of 19 Objectives	273	67.45	9.22

The results of the one-sample t-test are in Table 9. The test results for the overall total of all 19 objectives was significant. This result showed that employee resource group members were achieving the expectations that the company set for them. However, there was one objective represented by question number eight, being called upon to participate in the development and/or marketing of products or services, where the members did not positively respond that they were accomplishing the objectives. Also, objective number 18 received a relatively low rating. However, it represents a reverse question. Therefore, the members indicated that the employee resource group which they were currently members of was beneficial to many people instead of just a few.

Table 9. One-Sample T-test Results

Questions	t	df	Mean Difference
1. This employee resource group enhances my company's ability to attract talent.	15.766**	312	.72
2. This employee resource group enhances my company's ability to retain talent.	12.059**	312	.63
3. Being a part of an employee resource group has allowed me to participate in acclimating/orienting new employees.	1.482	310	.09
4. Employee resource groups strengthen my company's image externally.	19.132**	312	.83
5. Employee resource groups strengthen my company's image internally.	18.619**	312	.86
6. Being a part of an employee resource group allows me to participate in community outreach events.	21.599**	309	1.04
7. Being a part of an employee resource group allows me to represent this company at local diverse recruiting events.	1.243	307	.07
8. My employee resource group has been called upon to participate in the development and/or marketing of products or services.	-4.115**	308	-.23
9. My work performance has increased as a result of participating in an employee resource group.	6.180**	312	.31
10. Being a part of this employee resource group has provided opportunities to connect with leaders at this company.	13.664**	309	.75

Questions	t	df	Mean Difference
11. Employee resource groups promote multi-cultural awareness.	27.219**	309	1.08
12. Participating in an employee resource group has provided opportunities to find or serve as a mentor.	6.335**	310	.37
13. Being a part of an employee resource group has provided access to useful company information that I would not have received outside of the employee resource group.	10.264**	312	.53
14. Overall, I am satisfied with this employee resource group.	23.837**	310	1.01
15. This employee resource group has made a positive difference in my life at this company.	20.936**	306	.92
16. This employee resource group helps with my career.	10.819**	308	.50
17. This employee resource group is relevant to my life at this company.	19.132**	312	.83
18. This employee resource group has benefited only a few people.	-8.388**	311	-.49
19. Participating in an employee resource group has allowed me to make new friends.	21.686**	311	.94
Overall Total Score of 19 Objectives	18.735**	272	10.45

Research Question 3

Are there differences in satisfaction with employee resource groups for participants in the various career stages?

The satisfaction with employee resource groups was analyzed to determine whether there were significant differences among the various career stages. However, the analysis did not yield any significant differences, $F(3,304) = .472, p = .702$. The satisfaction with employee resource groups did not differ based on the employees' career stages. Table 10 shows the results of the analysis among the career stages.

Table 10. Satisfaction Based on Career Stages

Career Stages	N	M	SD	Std. Error
Entry: First career assignment, or new to the job	21	4.10	.62	.14

Career Stages	N	M	SD	Std. Error
Early Career: Have worked for a few years - gaining and sustaining the technical and required skills of the job. Aligning my interest, values and talents with the job.	47	4.11	.73	.11
Mid-Career: Equally distant from early and late career.	174	4.01	.76	.06
Late Career: Focused on active retirement planning - but remaining valued in the organization	66	3.95	.73	.09
Total	308	4.02	.74	.04

Research Question 4

Is there an association between participating in an employee resource group and turnover intentions?

The association between turnover intentions and membership in employee resource groups was analyzed using regression analysis. The correlation between these two variables was $-.83$, $p < .05$. The result of the regression analysis demonstrated that there was a significant decreasing impact of employee resource group membership on turnover intention, $F(1,621) = 4.265$, $p < .05$. When employees were members of one of the employee resource groups, their intention to leave the company decreased $.220$. Table 11 shows the results of the analysis.

Table 11. Employee Resource Groups and Turnover Intentions

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized
	B	Std. Error	β
Constant	6.692**	.075	
Employee Resource Group Membership	-.220*	.106	-.083

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Note. $R = .83$, $R^2 = 0.7$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.5$, $N = 623$

Research Question 5

Does the Propensity to Connect with Others (PCO) scale predict employee resource group membership?

The “Propensity to Connect with Others” instrument (Totterdell, Holman & Hukin, 2008) has three components. The three components are propensity to make friends, propensity to make acquaintances and propensity to join others. All three components were analyzed. For each component a logistic regression model in which PCO was an independent variable and membership in an employee resource group was a dependent variable. Following are the results of the component.

Propensity to Make Friends. In the area of propensity to make friends the analysis showed a significant impact on employee resource group members. There was a 52.8% classification. Table 12 shows the results of the propensity to make friends component.

Table 12. Classification Table for PCO to Make Friends

Observed		Predicted		% Correct
		Membership of an Employee Resource Group		
		No	Yes	
Membership of an Employee Resource Group	No	112	187	37.5
	Yes	100	209	67.6
Overall Percentage				52.8

Note. The cut values is .500

Coefficients for PCO to Make Friends

	B	S.E.	Wald	Exp(B)
Constant	-.819*	.277	8.774	.441
PCO to make friends	.166*	.052	10.376	1.181

Note. R2 = 0.013 (Hosmer & Lemeshow), .017 (Cox & Snell), .023 (Nagelkerke), Model $\chi^2(1) = 10.605$, $p < .01$

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

There was a positive impact of PCO for the component of propensity to make friends, on predicting membership of an employee resource group. As PCO to make friends increases, employees were more willing to be a member of an employee resource group.

Propensity to Make Acquaintances. In the area of propensity to make acquaintances the results of the logistic regression analysis did not yield a significant model for PCO to make acquaintances, $\chi^2(1) = .727$, $p = .394$. These results show that PCO to make acquaintances did not have any impact on predicting membership in an employee resource group.

Propensity to Join Others. In the area of propensity to join others there was a significant impact of PCO to join others on membership in an employee resource group. The classification percent was 62.2%. PCO to join others appeared to be a better predictor compared to PCO to make friends; however, it was negative. This means that when PCO was low people are inclined to be a member of an employee resource group. Table 13 shows the results of the propensity to join others component.

Table 13. Propensity to Join Others

Observed	Predicted			% Correct
	Membership of an Employee Resource Group			
	No	Yes		
Membership of an Employee Resource Group	No	209	92	69.4
	Yes	137	168	55.1
Overall Percentage				62.2

Note. The cut values is .500

Coefficients for PCO to Join Others

	B	S.E.	Wald	Exp(B)
Constant	1.234**	.279	19.571	3.435
PCO3	-.251**	.055	20.975	.778

Note. $R^2 = 0.026$ (Hosmer & Lemeshow), .035 (Cox & Snell), .047 (Nagelkerke), Model $\chi^2(1) = 21.758$, $p < .01$

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Research Question 6

How does propensity to connect with others scores relate to participating in an employee resource group?

As with research question five, the relation between PCO and membership in an employee resource group was analyzed considering the three components. Table 14 illustrates the results of the correlation analysis.

Table 14. Correlations of PCO Components and Employee Resource Groups

	1	2	3	4
1. Membership of an Employee Resource Group	1	.132** (n = 608)	.034 (n = 612)	-.188** (n = 606)
2. PCO to Make Friends		1	.720** (n = 594)	.542** (n = 587)
3. PCO to Make Acquaintances			1	.628** (n = 592)
4. PCO to Join Others				1
* p < .05, ** p < .01				

PCO to make friends and PCO to join others had a significant medium level relation with membership in an employee resource group. PCO to make friends had a positive relation, whereas PCO to join others had a negative relationship. When PCO to make friends was high, employees were more inclined to join employee resource groups. However, as PCO to join others was high, they were less inclined to be a member of an employee resource group.

Research Question 7

Is there a relationship between career stages and propensity to connect with others?

A correlation analysis was performed to investigate the relationship between career stages and PCO. There was a significant positive medium-level relationship between these two

variables, $r = .114$, $p < .01$, although not a causal relationship. When employees are in the late career stages, they are more willing to connect with other employees.

Responses to additional survey questions

Employee resource groups at many companies participate in activities such as community services, personal development and social activities (Forsythe, 2004). When asked to identify the employee resource group activities at this company the most popular activity for employee resource groups was personal or career development events (81.3%, $n=248$). The least popular activities were product marketing and assisting in the recruiting/hiring process (11%, $n=34$). The responses to this question are in Table 15.

Table 15. Employee Resource Group Activities

Activity	<i>f</i>	P
Personal or career development activities	248	81.3
Social activities	216	70.8
Community service activities	208	68.2
Mentoring and support activities	143	46.9
Awareness/education for non-employee resource group members	114	37.4
Product marketing	34	11.1
Recruiting/hiring	34	11.1

Reasons Why The Company Supports Employee Resource Groups. When asked to rank order the reasons, from least important (1) to most important (5), why the company has employee resource groups, most respondents selected the choice “To support a more inclusive and demographically diverse work environment”. The data are presented in Table 16.

Table 16. Reasons for Having Employee Resource Groups

Reason	1	2	3	4	5	n
To support a more inclusive and demographically diverse work environment.	5.6% (15)	10.4% (28)	15.2% (41)	26.0% (70)	42.8% (115)	269
To develop or strengthen the	12.4%	21.3%	34.1%	19.1%	13.1%	267

company's connections to different market segments, thereby improving business outcomes (e.g. market share, profitability).	(33)	(57)	(91)	(51)	(35)	
Because my company's competitors have them	43.0% (116)	17.0% (46)	14.4% (39)	14.4% (39)	11.1% (30)	270
For public relations purposes (e.g. to enhance our reputation in the industry or society)	18.3% (52)	34.5% (98)	22.2% (63)	12.7% (36)	12.3% (35)	284
To contribute to employees' career development (e.g. by improving internal communications, networking, leadership opportunities)	14.5% (43)	13.9% (41)	15.5% (46)	33.1% (98)	23.0 (68)	296

Turnover Intentions. Tables 17 and 18 shows the responses for questions on turnover intentions. Both groups showed the highest frequency and percentage of responses in the neither agree nor disagree category when asked questions focused on their intentions to leave the company. Table 17 shows the responses to the question, "I would be happy to spend the rest of my career at this company".

Table 17. Spending the rest of my career at this company

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree Nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Employee resource group (n=312)	43	13.8	96	30.8	123	39.4	40	12.8	10	3.2
Non-employee resource group (n=312)	3	1.0	89	28.5	207	66.3	13	4.2	0	0.0

Table 18 shows the responses to the question, "To what extent have you seriously thought about changing companies".

Table 18. Seriously thought about changing companies

	Always		Frequently		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Employee resource group (n=313)	8	2.6	59	18.8	154	49.2	82	26.2	10	3.2

	Always		Frequently		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Non-employee resource group (n=312)	0	0.0	17	5.4	147	47.1	145	46.5	3	1.0

Table 19 through Table 27 compares employee resource group responses to non-employee resource group responses on the propensity to connect with others questions.

Table 19. I have many friends

	Describes Me Very Well		Somewhat Describes Me		Does Not Describe Me Very Well	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Employee resource group (n=313)	103	32.9	171	54.6	39	12.5
Non-employee resource group (n=303)	126	41.6	165	54.5	12	4.0

Table 20. I make friends easily

	Describes Me Very Well		Somewhat Describes Me		Does Not Describe Me Very Well	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Employee resource group (n=314)	133	42.4	150	47.8	31	9.9
Non-employee resource group (n=310)	137	44.2	159	51.3	14	4.5

Table 21. I like to have many friends

	Describes Me Very Well		Somewhat Describes Me		Does Not Describe Me Very Well	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Employee resource group (n=312)	94	30.1	164	52.6	54	17.3
Non-employee resource group (n=310)	105	33.9	196	63.2	9	2.9

Table 22. I have many acquaintances

	Describes	Somewhat Describes Me	Does Not Describe
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	Me Very Well		Describes Me		Me Very Well	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Employee resource group (n=314)	203	64.6	101	32.2	10	3.2
Non-employee resource group (n=308)	210	68.2	98	31.8	0	0.0

Table 23. I readily make connections with people I do not know

	Describes Me Very Well		Somewhat Describes Me Describes Me		Does Not Describe Me Very Well	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Employee resource group (n=313)	107	34.2	153	48.9	53	16.9
Non-employee resource group (n=308)	69	22.4	194	63.0	45	14.6

Table 24. I like to know a lot of people

	Describes Me Very Well		Somewhat Describes Me Describes Me		Does Not Describe Me Very Well	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Employee resource group (n=312)	114	36.5	142	45.5	56	17.9
Non-employee resource group (n=310)	105	33.9	196	63.2	9	2.9

Table 25. I put people in touch with each other

	Describes Me Very Well		Somewhat Describes Me Describes Me		Does Not Describe Me Very Well	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Employee resource group (n=314)	188	59.9	108	34.4	18	5.7
Non-employee resource group (n=310)	112	36.1	192	61.9	6	1.9

Table 26. I find it easy to bring individuals together

	Describes	Somewhat Describes Me	Does Not Describe
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	Me Very Well		Describes Me		Me Very Well	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Employee resource group (n=309)	139	45.0	143	46.3	27	8.7
Non-employee resource group (n=304)	88	28.9	194	63.8	22	7.2

Table 27. I like being able to connect people

	Describes Me Very Well		Somewhat Describes Me		Does Not Describe Me Very Well	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Employee resource group (n=312)	174	55.8	122	39.1	16	5.1
Non-employee resource group (n=310)	99	31.9	205	66.1	6	1.9

Table 28 displays the responses for career category choices.

Table 28. Career categories

	Entry Career		Early Career		Mid-Career		Late Career	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Employee resource group (n=312)	21	6.7	47	15.1	176	56.4	68	21.8
Non-employee resource group (n=310)	13	4.2	74	23.9	188	60.6	35	11.3

Respondents were asked to indicate their performance level compared to their peers at this company. This company looks at four dimensions when evaluating employee performance, and these dimensions are used in the annual performance management system. The four dimensions are achievement of performance goals, demonstration of leadership standards, performance impact on the team and the business, and overall quality of performance. The responses to the four dimensions are presented in Tables 29 through 32. Table 29 shows the responses for achievement of performance goals.

Table 29. Performance goals

	Far Above		Somewhat Above				Somewhat Below		Far Below	
	Average		Average		Average		Average		Average	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Employee resource group (n=312)	64	20.5	144	46.2	100	32.1	3	1.0	1	0.3
Non-employee resource group (n=312)	12	3.8	168	53.8	132	42.3	0	0.0	0	0.0

Respondents were asked to indicate the demonstration of leadership standards compared to their peers at this company. Table 30 shows the responses for demonstration of leadership standards.

Table 30. Demonstration of leadership standards.

	Far Above		Somewhat Above				Somewhat Below		Far Below	
	Average		Average		Average		Average		Average	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Employee resource group (n=309)	61	19.7	117	37.9	127	41.1	4	1.3	0	0.0
Non-employee resource group (n=309)	6	1.9	75	24.3	228	73.8	0	0.0	0	0.0

Respondents were asked to indicate the impact that their performance has on their team and the business compared to their peers at this company. Table 31 shows the responses for performance impact on team and business.

Table 31. Team and business impact

	Far Above		Somewhat Above				Somewhat Below		Far Below	
	Average		Average		Average		Average		Average	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Employee resource group (n=310)	54	17.4	121	39.0	129	41.6	6	1.9	0	0.0

	Far Above		Somewhat Above		Average		Somewhat Below		Far Below	
	Average		Average		Average		Average		Average	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Non-employee resource group (n=310)	4	1.3	74	23.9	232	74.8	0	0.0	0	0.0

Respondents were asked to indicate the overall quality of their performance compared to their peers at this company. Table 32 shows the responses for overall quality of performance.

Table 32. Performance Quality

	Far Above		Somewhat Above		Average		Somewhat Below		Far Below	
	Average		Average		Average		Average		Average	
	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P	<i>f</i>	P
Employee resource group (n=312)	73	23.4	148	47.4	89	28.5	2	0.6	0	0.0
Non-employee resource group (n=312)	15	4.8	140	44.9	157	50.3	0	0.0	0	0.0

Participants were offered an opportunity to provide open-ended comments about employee resource groups. The comments were grouped into four categories. Figure 3 shows the open-ended comments.

Figure 3. Comments on Employee Resource Groups

Other Comments about Employee Resource Groups at This Company	
<u>Networking</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being a part of the ERG has in addition to all of these things allowed me to network with people in different business units I normally wouldn't. During tough times it's also given me an avenue to vent outside of my immediate organization without fear of alienating people in my organization. This has helped accelerate my performance. 	

Other Comments about Employee Resource Groups at This Company

Career Development/Training

- I enjoy the career/professional development webinars.
- I have learned from the special workshops and presenters but I don't think it changed my overall performance.

Show Support in Targeted Demographic

- The company needs to focus more on the LGBT groups and have training for managers to be more accepting.
- There should be more recognition of LGBT groups and funding for activities.
- My group is still not totally accepted in the company.
- The PRIDE group is practically non-existent in the Bay Area, specifically at headquarters.
- I don't think the PRIDE ERG has as much impact internal to the company as other ERGs.
- The company doesn't view LGBT as a valid diversity constituent group for marketing & recruiting purposes.
- Pride used to be a great group. Lately it has gone virtual, like only online. I don't do online stuff. I think it's basically dead.

Company Support/Non-Support

- With all the changes at the company I think about leaving more than I used to.
- The company does not strongly support ERGs.
- ERGs are not being utilized to the extent they are in other companies. The company should include us more in marketing and promoting as a great place to work for women. We have no strong women presence.
- My executive sponsor is a great sponsor.
- We need more \$ to support the ERG mission.
- There needs to be more education and awareness about these ERGs.
- Our ERG still does not get the appropriate response from the organization. We are not in the closet.
- We need more funds for local activities. If we are really going to have ERGs we should put our \$ where our mouths are.
- I appreciate the company's support of them.
- I don't think that senior leadership at the unit level provides enough support for those who are participating in ERGs. It does not seem to be a focus at the unit VP/Director level which gives employees a mixed signal on whether or not to participate.
- Trust and support.
- Keep supporting them
- These are truly employee driven - we don't get much support from the company to make them happen.
- I believe there is more opportunity for cross-leverage and coordination across different ERG groups. And the process to manage the budget is too cumbersome for such small \$. There is inconsistent management support for ERG involvement across the company.
- The importance of executive sponsors is key. He/she must be active, committed and

Other Comments about Employee Resource Groups at This Company

passionate to diversity and inclusion. How to keep members engaged in the resource group, actively participating can be a challenge.

- Have seen less management support for time spent on ERG activities over the past 6 or 7 years.
- The group I have participated in is small and not very active at my site (a smaller site), and I feel the attitude towards us is that we are tolerated as long as we don't draw too much attention to ourselves, but it is my understanding that at other sites it is larger/more active/better supported.
- My company is very large and therefore management in different groups view ERGs differently. Unfortunately for me, leading my ERG globally has led my management to punish me and it has not reflected well on my performance reviews. The time I spend outside of work on ERG initiatives is seen as "free time" I should have used for technical work directly benefiting my team. That said, ERGs can be viewed very favorably by other management chains in the company - my example is not necessarily the norm (thank goodness).
- The company doesn't always promote ERGs and their value to employees; making it difficult for members to join and be active within the ERG
- Employee resource groups need attention/sponsorship from leaders. Without sponsors--the more virtual our teams get the more disconnected employees become. There has been a huge decline in engaging employees in ERGs for activities in the career development arena or life area, but a big resonance for volunteer work. We have to find a way to revive the culture with the ERG's and employees yet again.

Other

- My responses represent current performance rating.
- More people should join
- I missed some of this ERG activity because of workload.
- With all of the workforce reductions at this company I'm beginning to think I should look elsewhere.
- I don't think my group has participated but I have participated in looking at advances in new products.
- They are a great way for people to stay connected, learn new skills, networking and mentoring
- I don't often get to attend the meetings/events due to tight meeting schedules and location across campus. Appreciate online access to meetings, even though that is not as social.
- I am pleased to work with a company that think enough of me to have an ERG I can identify with. It is tough to work with other employees who can benefit from an ERG for career development; and learning more about the company, but because they do not get the support of their manager to participate in the ERG, they lose out. I see my participation to ERG as example of work-life-balance.
- I am very active in the Bay Area Hispanic Employee Network ERG. I am very thankful that the company sponsors ERG's. I appreciate the resources provided to conduct ERG activities. I strongly wish the Hispanic ERG had an Executive Sponsor, which would really propel the energy and satisfaction to a higher level. Our previous, Executive

Other Comments about Employee Resource Groups at This Company

Sponsor, who left the company, was very committed and energetic about his participation. As a result, the membership was more active. Also, I realize some of the energy lacks on behalf of the membership. I am constantly identifying activities and topics to spur energy and response from the membership. I would be a lot more satisfied with the ERG if we had a committed Executive Sponsor and more members active.

- Wish we were more active.
- Rather than have so many with almost no funding, we should make decision to have fewer with funding, stronger outreach and publicity.
- This is a VERY WELL kept secret at this company. I see other companies getting publicity.
- Diversity focus in this company has declined over the past 10 years significantly. ERG's are one of the only things that still exist. The people of this company keep it alive.
- They are an important item to remind us we matter, we belong and our voices are important
- I believe that this ERG on this account helps build morale within the ERG and the entire account.
- Think they are valuable and hope the company continues to support them, especially the Women's group.
- It seems to me, the company doesn't utilize the power and potential of ERGs.
- It's been difficult to attend my resource group events since becoming a full time teleworker in 2007. For future events, I suggest webcasting or recording them so all in the company can take part. I also suggest having local get togethers at local sites.
- These groups are important to allow employees to contribute to the company as both consumers within the target groups and as employees. The company has these groups as harnessed resources with the ability to utilize them on special projects, marketing, and cultural competency areas. This is extremely valuable and worthwhile from a business standpoint. In addition, these employees are really ambassadors of diversity and inclusion. It does not matter what ERG the employee belongs to or whether it is one or several. The importance of the role and being a member is the mindset of diversity and inclusion to all employees. The information from the C-level Diversity Council would flow to these groups and the groups would support the Corporate Culture at their different levels. The ERGs also offer other employees who may not be members the opportunity to join and learn more about a target group.
- Make it easy for people to start them...have a large scale awareness page.
- Keep them going!
- ERGs are critical to the company, especially in this environment of low touch and teleworkers.
- It is the absolute reason I have decided to stay here at this company.
- I like to get involved with the community and volunteer.
- I'm not very active in either ERG.
- They present opportunities that employees would not otherwise have. I had the ability to be mentored by a Senior Leader within this company.
- Keep the structure of ERGs simple and informal. The more structure and rules you put

Other Comments about Employee Resource Groups at This Company

behind them, the less participation you will get. We all have busy jobs and the potential to get laid off at any moment (regardless of ERG participation), so any complicated ERG structure will deter people from participating and engaging in these groups.

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis were presented for seven research questions to determine the association of several factors on the membership and non-membership in employee resource groups. The next chapter will present a discussion of the findings of this research and their implications for practice. A discussion of the study limitations and recommendations for future research will also be addressed.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the association of participation in employee resource groups and self-reported job performance. Secondly given an organization's expectations of employee resource groups, the study examined to what extent employees perceived they were achieving the objectives. Also, the study looked at other elements of employee resource group members and non-employee resource group members. In previous chapters a review of related literature, research methods and research data were presented. In this chapter a discussion of the research findings, study limitations, and recommendations for further research are presented.

In a survey of companies with employee resource groups, women's groups were recognized as the most common and popular type of employee resource group (Diversity Best Practices, 2011). In this study the Women's Network represented the employee resource group with the highest response rate. This group represented 36.1% of all respondents.

The Veterans Network is the newest employee resource group at this company, and the group showed the least participation in this study, with a 0% response rate. A reasonable explanation for the response rate from this group is that the group was just formed earlier this year. All of the other groups have been in existence for more than 10 years. Therefore, the group is in its early formation stage and is just getting established. The membership is not as high as the other groups, but I anticipate this will soon change. There is only one instance of this group based in the Washington D.C. area. The company has been awarded several federal government contracts and the employees who service these contracts are based in the Washington D.C. area. Earlier this year the company committed to filling many open positions

in the Washington D.C. area with veterans. As more veterans join the company membership of this recently formed employee resource group should grow. The company recently focused recruiting and advertising efforts on hiring veterans. As a result of these focused efforts on hiring veterans this company was just named to the “G.I. Jobs 2013 Top 100 Military Friendly Employers” list (Military Friendly, 2012). Employee resource groups for veterans and employees who have interest in supporting veteran causes, including helping in the recruitment transition and retention of new veteran hires to the company have been growing and many companies now offer employee resource groups for military veterans (Diversity Best Practices, 2011). Recently more information is being provided to employers on attracting, hiring and retaining military hires. It is acknowledged that transitioning from a military to a civilian work environment calls for different hiring and onboarding activities (King, 2012). I would expect the company will see more visible participation from the Veterans Network in many areas as more veterans are hired and this employee resource group expands membership.

Analysis of Research Findings

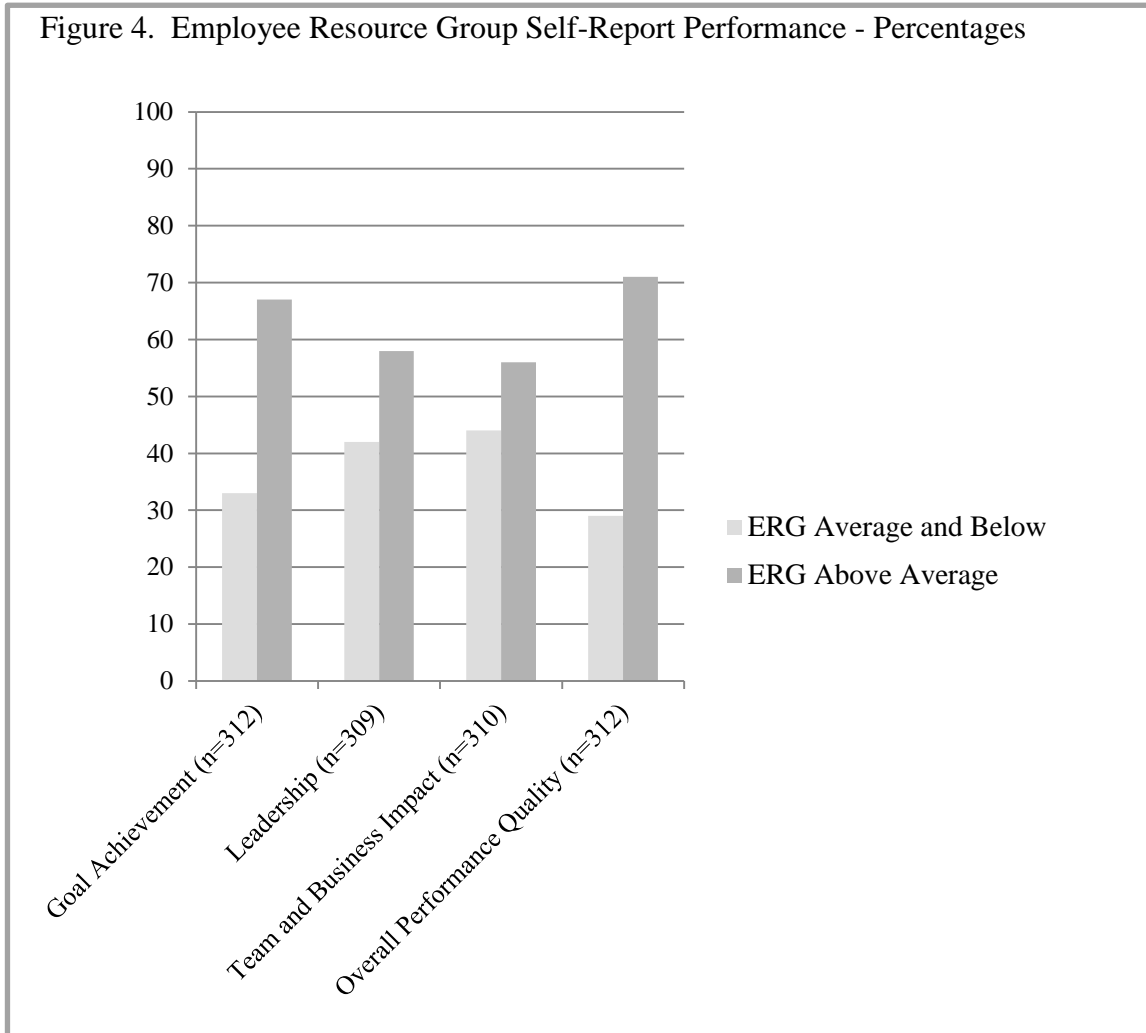
Research Question 1

Employee Resource Group Members

Research question one examined whether a positive relationship exists between membership in an employee resource group and self-report job performance. Self-report of job performance was obtained by using the company’s four-item scale that is used for their annual performance review process. The company uses four dimensions to determine performance. Respondents were asked to rate themselves relative to their peers along the four dimensions: achievement of performance goals, demonstration of leadership standards, impact on team and business, and overall quality of performance. Likert-type statements on a five-point scale were

used with responses ranging from far below others to far above others. When using correlation analysis, the sum of the four dimensions for performance showed a positive association with membership in employee resource groups. Then each dimension of performance was analyzed and the results showed a positive association. It might be expected when asking someone to self-report job performance relative to peers, the responses will be inflated and over-reported on positive performance (Fox, Spector, Goh & Bruuresma, 2007). In McDaniel & Timm's study (as cited in Vasilopoulos, Reilly & Leaman, 2000), when responding on self-report measures people tend to choose a response that they perceive as positive, even if the positive response is not the honest response. However, in this study on two of the performance dimensions, demonstration of leadership standards and team and business impact, slightly more than 40% of the employee resource group respondents indicated that their performance was average, and a small percentage indicated their performance was below average on these dimensions. In today's reality of high unemployment where employees are trying to outperform each other to maintain a job, it is puzzling as to why so many respondents reveal that their performance is average or even below average when compared to their peers. Clearly employee job performance affects business performance, and employees' perception of their own performance can be a window into how hard they work and how long they remain in a position as a result of that commitment. For the other two performance dimensions, achievement of performance goals and performance quality, the highest frequency and percentage of responses was in the "somewhat above average" category when compared to peers, with 46.2% and 47.4% respectively. Figure 4 summarizes the self-report job performance for the employee resource group members.

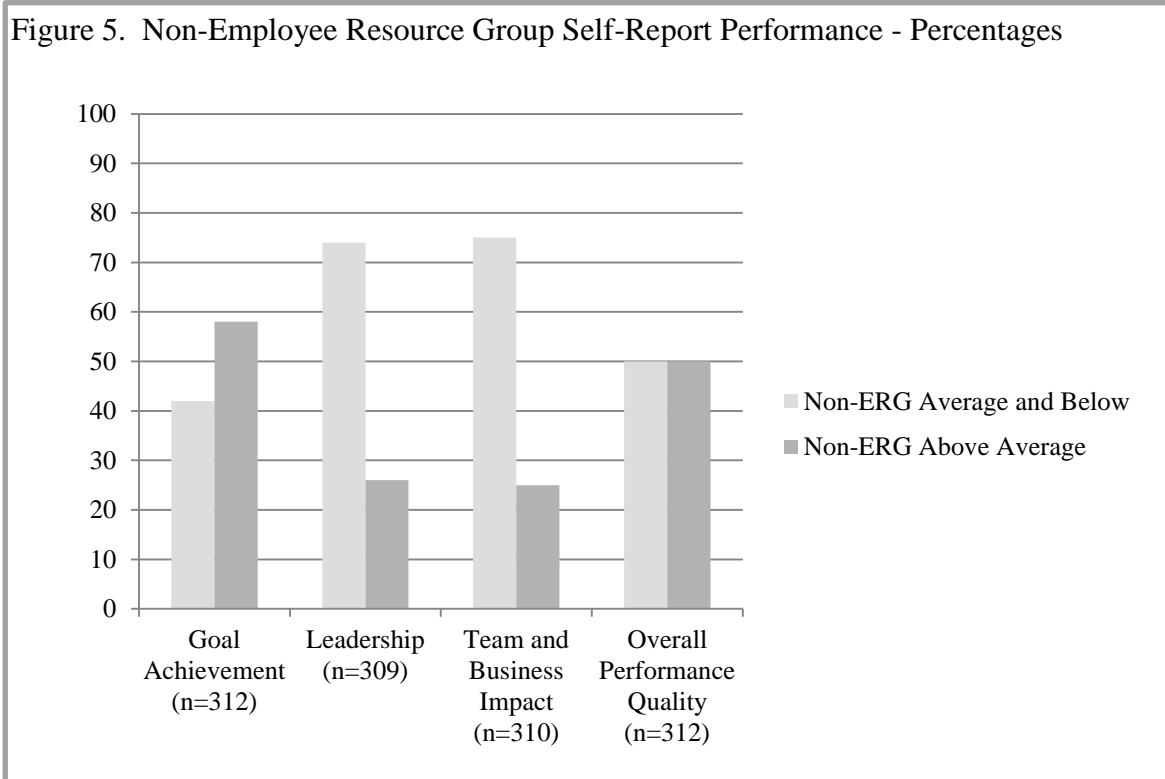
Figure 4. Employee Resource Group Self-Report Performance - Percentages



Non-Employee Resource Group Members

Self-report job performance for non-employee resource group members was analyzed using the same process as employee resource group members. Overall, looking at the four performance dimensions, the non-employee resource group members reported their performance as lower than the employee resource group members. In this group goal achievement was the only performance dimension where the respondents indicated above average performance relative to peers. On the remaining two dimensions of leadership and team and business impact, there were more respondents who self-reported their performance as average than there were

respondents who reported their performance was above average. The performance quality dimension showed an almost equal percentage of respondents who indicated their performance was above average as respondents who indicated their performance was average. Figure 5 shows a summary of the results in percentages.



For this to be self-report information, without the added dimension of reviewing official employee rating information, I would have expected the self-report performance ratings in both groups to be higher. Social desirability response bias occurs when respondents answer questions in the way they think represents them best to others (Marsden & Wright, 2010). Job performance is an area where self-reporting is susceptible to social desirability response bias. However, overall these results indicate that while employee resource group members self-

reported a higher level of performance than non-employee resource group members, neither group consistently reported high performance on all of the dimensions.

Research Question 2

Research question two examined whether employee resource group members perceived they were performing the objectives of the employee resource group. As businesses respond to the increasingly diverse worker and consumer demands, the population represented by employee resource groups can have an enormous impact on product development and sales (Brown, 2010). An important factor in the success of employee resource groups is achieving the business purpose and objectives of the groups (Bye, 2008). In many companies employee resource groups are an important part of the retention and recruitment strategies. Companies find the most success with employee resource groups when it is clear how the employee resource groups contribute to the business (Syedain, 2012). In this study, business-related goals and expectations were already established for the employee resource groups, specifically identifying areas where the company was expecting to have impact, such as attracting and retaining talent, strengthening the company's image and acclimating new employees. On these expectations, the employee resource group members provided positive responses (Table 8).

The results of this study show that overall the employee resource group members perceive they are achieving the objectives that the company set for the groups, and they are satisfied with employee resource groups at this company. The three questions with a mean score of 4.0 or higher on the five-point Likert scale were:

Questions	N	M	SD
Being a part of an employee resource group allows me to participate in community outreach events.	310	4.04	.85
Employee resource groups promote multi-cultural awareness.	310	4.08	.69
Overall, I am satisfied with this employee resource group.	311	4.01	.75

It appears that the employee resource groups are actively representing the company in the community and participating in volunteer activities. There is agreement that the employee resource groups are helping to promote multi-cultural awareness, and the employee resource group members are satisfied participating with their chosen group. However, in one of the key areas for employee resource groups, participating in the development and/or marketing of products or services, these employee resource group members indicated that this company is not using the employee resource groups as strongly for this objective as they are for the other objectives.

Question	N	M	SD
My employee resource group has been called upon to participate in the development and/or marketing of products or services.	309	2.77	.98

This is in contrast with the growing research from companies that list marketing as one of the main ways they would like to utilize employee resource groups (Ali, 2011). On the five-point Likert scale, the response to the question, “My employee resource group has been called upon to participate in the development and/or marketing of products or services” was the second lowest scored objective (n=309, M=2.77). This company has an opportunity to use their employee resource groups to potentially provide input for their marketing activities, especially as they target diverse demographics. While employee resource groups cannot be held accountable for the success or failure of products or services targeted at the group’s demographics, this seems a prime area of opportunity for this company, since the company has a large consumer presence in the market, and it has already identified participation in marketing activities as an objective of the employee resource groups. Employee resource groups can serve as a source of input for marketing and ready-access to customer knowledge of the employee resource group

demographic (Anderson & Billings-Harris, 2010). Other companies are using their employee resource groups to support product marketing and recruiting (Forsythe, 2004; Harper, Lawson & Rodriguez, 2011). This is not to imply that businesses should establish employee resource groups just to understand the targeted demographic. This could be just one of the purposes of the employee resource groups.

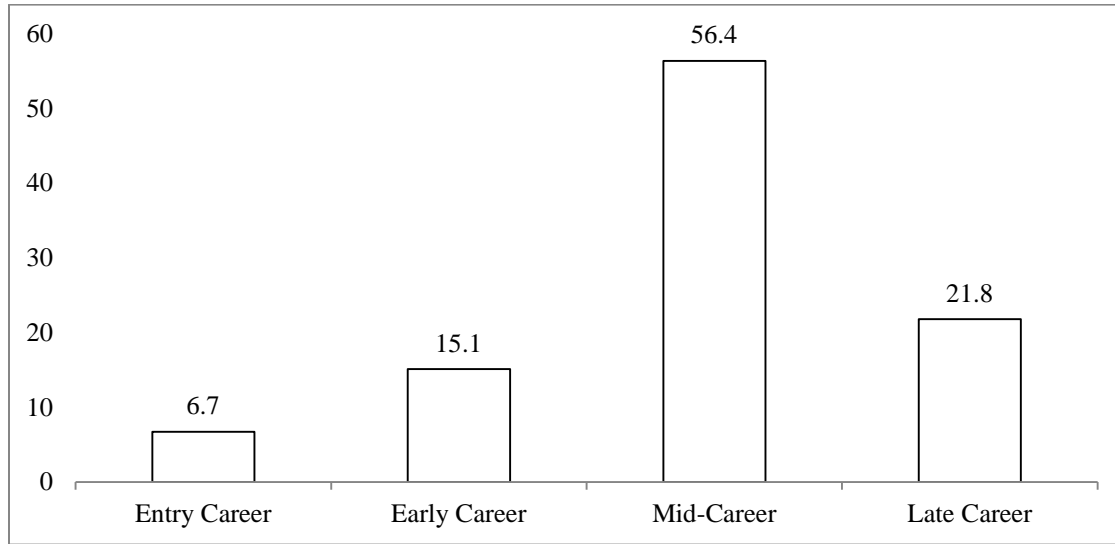
The overall response to the question, “This employee resource group has benefited only a few people” was the lowest scored objective (n=312, M=2.51). While this score seems low, the reverse wording of the question makes this a positive response. Companies are starting to expand employee resource group participation and composition. In a 2011 study of employee resource groups, it was revealed that participation in employee resource groups has increased year over year since 2005. It was also noted that some companies have created membership policies to include hourly workers and allow them, with supervisor permission, to receive overtime payment if they attend employee resource group activities after hours (Frankel, 2012).

Overall these results indicate that employee resource group members at this company are achieving the objectives that have been established for the employee resource groups. Mean scores were significant and employee resource group members indicated that the groups were beneficial to many people in the company.

Research Question 3

Research question three examined the differences in satisfaction with employee resource groups for participants in the various career stages. The career distribution for the study participants is slightly skewed towards mid and late career. The career distribution percentages are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Career Stage Categories



Changes in group affiliations should occur over the course of a career. Making changes to your network should occur over time or as one's career objectives change (Milway, Gregory, Davis-Peccoud & Yazbak, 2011). For example, in the entry career stage one might be more likely to join a group where the membership is also in the same career stage and focused on similar perspectives. However, many people do not stay in contact with colleagues to share experiences and foster relationships, and employee resource groups can be a great way to intentionally build networks with colleagues and other employees in the organization.

In this study there was no significant difference in satisfaction with employee resource groups based on the various career stages. Mentoring is an important part of the goals of many companies. People tend to search for mentors who look like themselves, and employee resource groups can be a prime source for mentoring since they focus on targeted demographics. (Tyler, 2007). Studies show that informal and formal mentoring in the early career stages is critical for successful careers (Kay, Hagan & Parker, 2009). In this study the majority of the employee resource group participants (56.4%) indicated they are in the mid-career stage, defined as being

half way through the life of their career. This company has mentoring as an expectation for employee resource groups, and the respondents indicated their membership in an employee resource group has provided opportunities to find or serve as a mentor. As a potential improvement with their employee resource groups, this company could encourage employees in the early stages of their career to join the employee resource groups and take advantage of potential mentoring opportunities from employees in the mid and late career stages.

Research Question 4

Research question four examined an association between participating in an employee resource group and turnover intentions. Some research has shown that participation in employee resource groups can have a positive association with employee retention (Lieber, 2012). Many models can predict intentions, but not specific movements. For this study turnover intention was the combined results of two questions from the validated “Turnover Intentions” instrument. The two questions were, “I would be happy to spend the rest of my career at this company”, and “To what extent have you seriously thought about changing companies”. The first question was a reverse-scored item. The association between turnover intention and employee resource group membership was investigated using regression analysis.

The analysis supported the research that members of employee resource groups showed lower intentions to leave their current employer than non-members of employee resource groups. While this study focused on turnover intentions to leave the company, it is recognized that another part of turnover intention is the intention to leave the job for another job in the same company.

When asked about the remainder of their career, 45% (n=312) of the employee resource group respondents indicated that they would be happy to spend the rest of their career at this

company, and 30% (n=312) of the non-employee resource group members indicated they would be happy to spend the rest of their career at this company. More employee resource group members indicated they would be happy to stay with the company for the rest of their career. It is important to note that the majority of the respondents in both groups – 78% of employee resource group members and 72% of non-employee resource group members are in the mid to late-career stages. Since more respondents were in the mid-career stage, perhaps they are looking at their career life-cycle trajectory and are intending to stay with their current employer throughout their career rather than leaving for another company. Even though they may frequently think about leaving, another possibility is that because of the downturn in the economy employees are trying to keep their current jobs until the job market improves, since the economy may have negatively changed career plans.

Research Question 5

Research question five examined whether the propensity to connect with others scores would predict employee resource group membership. There are three components to the Propensity to Connect scale. Evaluating the three components of propensity to make friends, propensity to make acquaintances and propensity to join others independently, the stronger the propensity to make friends score, the more willing employees were to be a part of an employee resource group. For the propensity to make friends score, there was a positive impact on predicting membership in an employee resource group. For the propensity to make acquaintances score, it was found that it had no impact on predicting membership in an employee resource group. The component which showed the most impact was the propensity to join others. It showed a significant negative impact and the results showed that as the propensity to join others increases, employees are less willing to be a member of an employee resource group.

One explanation for the results could be that since the respondents already have a tendency to make friends and acquaintances, they may not feel the need to join in other groups to build networks and friends.

Research Question 6

Research question six examined an association between propensity to connect scores and participating in an employee resource group. Again using the three components of the “Propensity to Connect” instrument, the propensity to make friends had a positive relationship, and the propensity to join others had a negative relationship. The propensity to make acquaintances had no impact.

These results were similar to the results and discussion on research question number five. Employees with high propensity to connect scores in the area of making friends were more inclined to join employee resource groups. However, employees with high propensity to connect scores in the area of joining others were less inclined to be a member of employee resource groups.

Research Question 7

Research question seven examined an association between career stages and propensity to connect with others. Results showed that when employees are in the mid to late career stages they are more willing to connect with others employees as part of the employee resource groups. The results do not show a causal relation. The majority of both respondent groups, employee resource groups and non-employee resource groups, 78% and 58% respectively, identified in the mid to late career stages.

Summary of Research Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the association of participation in employee resource groups and self-reported job performance. The study found a positive and significant correlation between self-reported job performance and employee resource group membership. Secondly given an organization's expectations of employee resource groups, the study examined to what extent employees perceived they were achieving the objectives. The study found that employee resource groups were achieving the expectations that the company set for them. Using the validated "Propensity to Connect" instrument, the study compared the propensity to connect scores between employee resource group members and non-employee resource group members on predicting employee resource group membership and participating in employee resource groups. The results showed that two of the three components of the "Propensity to Connect" instrument showed impact. The study also looked at the differences in satisfaction with employee resource groups based on various stages and did not find significant differences in satisfaction with employee resource groups based on the different career stages. The study also used the "Turnover Intentions" instrument to analyze the association between participation in an employee resource group and turnover intentions. The results showed when employees were members of an employee resource group; their intentions to leave the company were decreased.

Implications for Practice

Implications for Performance Improvement

Performance technology has been defined as the systematic process of connecting business goals with the people who will accomplish the goals (Van Tiem, Moseley, & Dessinger, 2004). In many performance technology models, the output is an intervention or initiative that

the organization will implement to improve performance. The implementation of employee resource groups can be a selected intervention and a viable way for organizations to implement an employee involvement technique. And, if employee resource groups already exist, they can be used when there is a need to get a cross section of diverse employees from throughout an organization to work on a business problem or generate new ideas on a given topic. Employee resource groups should be implemented so that there are obvious and defined benefits for both the employees and the organization. They can be used as a naturally occurring way to incorporate employee participation in performance and business improvement.

This study looked at the existing objectives for employee resource groups at a global technology company and examined to what degree the employee resource group members perceived they were completing the objectives. By using the established objectives as the source of evaluation it provided a systematic approach to analyzing the perceived accomplishment of the objectives at this company. While the workplace has changed over the years since the beginning of employee resource groups, it is still more important than ever to show interventions or initiatives that either solves problems, avoids problems, or achieves the established objectives or goals (Van Tiem, Moseley & Dessinger, 2001).

Implications for Organizations

Because employee resource groups can be comprised of employees who are independent in their organizational functioning and usually do not have the same manager, employee resource groups can be viewed as an employee involvement technique that can bring together employees who would not routinely interact on a regular basis. However, it is important for organizations to be aware of compartmentalizing employees for all employee resource group activities. In this study there were nine official employee resource groups, and several other subset groups. I

suggest that organizations occasionally have some of the employee resource groups share information amongst each other and harness the expertise of the collective groups to solve a problem or challenge presented by the company. For example, an employee could be a young, Hispanic woman and could easily identify with three employee resource groups, although typically would be active with one. If the organization occasionally combined the young employee network with the Hispanic and women's network groups there could be more opportunity for collaboration. One element of cultural agility is being able to create a new culture from various cultures (Caligiuri, Lepak & Bonache, 2010). This could also support the cultural integration element of cultural agility. By doing this the company would have the benefit of the collective group ideas, allow employees to demonstrate elements of cultural agility, and the employees will have an opportunity to expand their networks even further across the company

Many employees today seek work that is aligned to their values, passion and desires (Erickson, 2012). Representing the company at community service activities is a key component of employee resource groups (Forsythe, 2004). Establishing employee resource groups can be a way for organizations to attract top talent, get the work accomplished, and provide opportunities for employees to do volunteer work with community and societal outreach programs. In this study 68% of the respondents indicated that they participate in community service activities. Since this is volunteer time, this large participation rate shows that employees are willing to spend their time on volunteer activities outside of the work environment. Organizations can use one of their biggest assets, people, via employee resource groups as a collective representation in the community. The company can benefit by visibly showing their support for causes beyond their direct products and services and provide opportunities for employees to learn and work with

different people in the company. Since employees have varied interests and they bring a diverse set of experiences and backgrounds into the work environment, employees can benefit by having an opportunity to fulfill other interests beyond work. This company, as well as others, wants to attract the best talent to the organization, therefore, besides the work, itself, organizations have to consider what it is that employees will seek when they are determining where they want to work.

Organizations can utilize employee resource groups as champions for cultural awareness as employee resource groups create social opportunities for employees of like demographics to celebrate their culture or ethnicity. In this study this was the most popular reason why employees joined an employee resource group, and has been identified as the first stage in the evolution of social groups (Benitez & Gonzalez, 2011).

Although employee resource groups are grass-roots efforts, since organizations are going to support and acknowledge the employee resource groups, it is important to provide consistent executive sponsorship and support. This could include awareness training for employee resource group members on what it means to be a part of the employee resource groups representing the company, and the company expectations of the groups. In this study there were several comments about the inconsistent management support for employee resource groups. In some locations employee resource groups were well supported and in other locations they were not well supported. Grass roots activities for employee resource groups are growing, and many companies are encouraging this. I would suggest that organizations have consistent, visible executive sponsorship supporting the activities of these groups.

Implications for Employee Resource Groups

In large corporations employee resource groups have become an integral part of the company. Employee resource groups can build camaraderie and help the company to meet its

strategic objective and achieve its mission. Recognizing this important role, employee resource groups can be an opportunity for members to acknowledge and celebrate their diversity while supporting the company's goals.

New networking opportunities with technology continue to spring up that allow today's employee resource groups to stay more connected. Employee resource group members should network with members of other groups outside of their own. At the company where this study was conducted they have now created employee resource group websites for blogs, community collaboration and chat rooms. Employee resource group members can take advantage of technology, and have faster access to each other and better communications than they have had in the past.

Employee resource groups must create opportunities to demonstrate their value to senior managers (Santana, 2012). Much of the research presented here shows that companies that have employee resource groups sponsor career development activities for the groups. Employee resource group members should take advantage of the development opportunities to update or improve their skills. In this study personal or career development events were the most popular activity among the employee resource group members.

Employee resource group members must demonstrate that they are a business resource, meaning that their activities can positively impact the organizational capabilities such as strengthening the company's image, supporting community volunteer programs or supporting recruitment. This will show leaders that employee resource groups can be a way to connect with under-represented groups. Employee resource groups should constantly look for ways to demonstrate their value to other employees, the business and the community. Sometimes there is power in large numbers. Perhaps these groups can connect on a regional basis and share ideas,

best practices and get to know each other better. This can help extend the networks. For example many of the employee resource groups participate in local community and volunteer events. Rather than doing this as individual groups, perhaps several groups within close proximity can come together and participate in the same event.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this study is the self-report of performance data. Self-report data was used because this company has a privacy policy that prohibits the sharing of actual employee performance rating information. No causation is made in this study. Another limitation is that the study used what the company has currently established as the objectives and expectations for the employee resource groups. Another limitation is that this study involved employees located in a single company, although various organizations within the company. Another limitation is the study focused on employees in the United States only, although this is a global company. No attempts are made to generalize these findings outside of this study.

Future Research Opportunities and Challenges

Additional studies could be conducted to include employees outside of the United States. There may be different sets of socially distinct attributes to define employee resource groups outside of the United States. A study could be done using a larger population and in a different industry. A larger population may allow for more responses from the various employee resource groups. A study could be done to validate the employee resource group objectives and expectations. Perhaps the objectives and expectations should vary among the different employee resource groups. In this study the employee resource groups were analyzed as a whole. Another opportunity for additional research could be to collect data on turnover intentions on the first day employees join employee resource groups, and then again after employees have been in the

group for a while. Then compare the results to see if membership could be a factor in differences in turnover intentions. Additionally, the study could be extended to look at specific responses within each employee resource group and analyze the results specifically by group to see if there is a group whose responses could be dominating the overall results. There are also opportunities to continue further research on these topics and write journal articles to continue to contribute to the literature.

CONCLUSIONS

This study added to the increased understanding of employee resource groups in organizations. Specifically this study examined the association of performance and membership in employee resource groups, and examined employee resource group members' perceptions of achieving their objectives. The findings from this study reflect the ways employee resource groups have evolved in organizations. Employees who were members of an employee resource group showed an association with higher performance. No causation was established. Given an organization's objectives for employee resource groups, the employee resource group members perceived they had opportunity and they were achieving their individual and organizational objectives.

APPENDIX A - PERMISSIONS

Company Permission

Organization name and address omitted for confidentiality reasons
<p>April 2, 2012</p> <p>To Whom It May Concern:</p> <p>Please accept this as a Letter of Support for the dissertation research that will be conducted by Glenda Ward. Support is provided to Glenda Ward's research by allowing her to contact a sample population of employees who are part of Employee Resource Groups for the purpose of inviting the sample to respond to a web-based survey to be hosted by an independent provider of web-based surveys.</p> <p>Best regards,</p> <p>Name omitted to preserve confidentiality of organization</p> <p>Director, Global Diversity & Inclusion</p>

Permission to Use Scale for Propensity to Connect with Others (PCO) Instrument

From Peter Totterdell (p.totterdell@sheffield.ac.uk)
:
Sent: Sun 1/10/10 1:45 PM
To: wardtg@msn.com (wardtg@msn.com)
Cc: d.holman@sheffield.ac.uk
Glenda

> I am writing to you to ask your permission to use the nine-item scale
for
> propensity to connect with others. I would like to use it in my survey.

Yes that's absolutely fine. The items are in the paper. Do let us know if
you
find some interesting results with it.

Regards .. Peter

Professor Peter Totterdell
Department of Psychology
Institute of Work Psychology
University of Sheffield
Sheffield S102TN

Permission to Use Questions on Turnover Intentions

>>> "wardtg@msn.com" <wardtg@msn.com> 9/29/2010 2:44 PM >>>

Hello Dr. Holtom,

I am a graduate student at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. In my research I came across a study that you co-authored and a published article, "The Effects of Network Groups on Minority Employee Turnover Intentions", published in Human Resource Management in 2002.

I would like to do a similar study and would like your permission to use the questions that are listed in Appendix I on turnover intentions, social inclusion, and network satisfaction.

Please respond to this email to let me know.

Thank you,

Glenda Ward

ak5850@wayne.edu

Turnover intentions

1. I would be happy to spend the rest of my career at this company.
2. To what extent have you seriously thought about changing companies?

Social inclusion

1. I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to this company.
2. When I have problems at this company, there is no one I can turn to.
3. I do not feel like "part of the family" at this company.

Network satisfaction

1. Overall, I am satisfied with this group.
2. This group has made a positive difference in my life at this company.
3. This group helps with my career.
4. This group is not really relevant to my life at this company.
5. This group has benefited only a few people.

Date: Wed, 29 Sep 2010 14:44:50 -0400

From: BCH6@msb.edu

To: wardtg@msn.com

Subject: Re: May I Use Your Questions in My Study?

sure...good luck!

b

>>> "wardtg@msn.com" <wardtg@msn.com> 9/29/2010 2:44 PM >>>

APPENDIX B – EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

Purpose

You are being asked to participate in an academic research study of members and non-members of Employee Resource Groups at (company name omitted) because you are an employee at (company name omitted). The purpose of the study is to learn about perceptions of Employee Resource Groups. This survey has been approved by (name and company name omitted).

Study Procedures

If you take part in the study, you will be asked to complete a web-based questionnaire. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The questionnaire contains questions on a likert-type scale seeking the extent of agreement and satisfaction with statements regarding membership or non-membership in an Employee Resource Group at (company name omitted).

Benefits

As a participant in this research study, there will be no direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may benefit other people (society) now or in the future.

Risks

There are no known risks for participation in this study.

Costs

There are no costs to you for participation, and you will not be paid for taking part in the study.

Confidentiality

All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept without any identifiers.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal

Participation in this study is voluntary. I encourage you to answer all of the questions, but you are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time. Participation will not affect your employment.

Questions

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, please email Glenda Ward at wardtg@msn.com. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Human Investigation Committee can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call (313) 577-1628 to ask questions or voice concerns or complaints.

By completing the questionnaire you are agreeing to participate in the study. Please complete the online survey by July 9, 2012.

Click the link below to access the survey.

[Begin Survey](#)

APPENDIX C – EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1: Demographic Data (Used for classification purposes only)

Instructions: Please provide the following demographic information. “My company” or “your company” refers to your current place of employment.

1. How many years have you worked for this company?

- 0-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-8 years
- 9-10 years
- More than 10 years

2. Are you Female or Male?

- Female
- Male

3. Some employees belong to more than one employee resource group. Please choose one group you are most involved with from the list below and use your experience in this group to answer the following questions.

- Black Employee Network
- Disability Network
- Hispanic American Network
- Multi-Cultural Network
- Pan-Asian Network
- Pride LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual or Trans-Gender) Network
- Veterans Network
- Women’s Network
- Young Employee Network
- Other (please specify)_____

4. Please choose the statement that best describes your reason for joining an employee resource group. I joined to...

- Expand my network within the targeted demographic of this employee resource group.
- Participate in career development activities.
- Participate in social activities.
- Support the marketing activities for products at this company.
- Help educate non-employee resource group members on this group.

- Act as or be a mentor to others.

Section 2: Employee Resource Group Participation

Instructions: For statements 5 through 25, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by selecting a response to the statement.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. This employee resource group enhances my company's ability to attract talent					
6. This employee resource group enhances my company's ability to retain talent.					
7. Being a part of an employee resource group has allowed me to participate in acclimating and orienting new employees.					
8. Employee resource groups strengthen my company's image externally.					
9. Employee resource groups strengthen my company's image internally.					
10. Being a part of an employee resource group allows me to participate in community outreach events.					
11. Being a part of an employee resource group allows me to represent the company at local diverse recruiting events.					
12. My employee resource group has been called upon to participate in the development and/or marketing of products and					

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
services					
13. My work performance has increased as a result of participating in an employee resource group.					
14. Being a part of this employee resource group has provided opportunities to connect with company leaders.					
15. Employee resource groups promote multi-cultural awareness.					
16. Participating in an employee resource group has provided opportunities to find or serve as a mentor.					
17. Being a part of an employee resource group has provided access to useful company information that I would not have received outside of the employee resource group.					
18. Overall, I am satisfied with this employee resource group.					
19. This employee resource group has made a positive difference in my life at this company.					
20. This employee resource group helps with my career.					
21. This employee resource group is relevant to my life at this company.					
22. This employee resource group has benefited only a few people.					
23. Participating in an employee resource group has allowed					

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
me to make new friends.					

24. My employee resource group sponsors/participates in the following activities (check all that apply):

- Social activities
- Personal or career development activities
- Awareness/education for non-employee resource group members
- Product marketing
- Mentoring and support activities
- Recruiting/hiring
- Community service activities

25. Please rank the reasons why you believe your company has employee resource groups (1= most important reason to 5 = least important reason)

- _____ To support a more inclusive and demographically diverse work environment
- _____ To develop or strengthen our connections to different market segments, thereby improving business outcomes (e.g., market share, profitability)
- _____ Because our competitors have them
- _____ For public relations purposes (e.g. to enhance our reputation in the industry or society)
- _____ To contribute to employees' career development (e.g., by improving internal communications, networking, leadership opportunities)

Section 3: Turnover Intention and Social Inclusion

Instructions: For statements 26 and 27, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by selecting a response to the statement.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
26. I would be happy to spend the rest of my career at this company.					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
27. To what extent					

have you seriously thought about changing companies?					
--	--	--	--	--	--

Section 4: Propensity to Connect With Others

Instructions: For statements 28 through 36, please indicate the extent to which each statement describes you by selecting a response to the statement.

Statement	Describes me very well		Somewhat describes me		Does not describe me very well
28. I have many friends.					
29. I make friends easily.					
30. I like to have many friends.					
31. I have many acquaintances.					
32. I readily make connections with people I do not know.					
33. I like to know a lot of people.					
34. I often put people in touch with the right person when they need something.					
35. I find it easy to bring individuals together.					
36. I like being able to connect people.					

Section 5: Career Stage

37. Thinking over your career, please select the category which best describes where you are in your career. (Choose one)

- Entry: First career assignment, or new to the job.
- Early Career: Have worked for a few years - Gaining and sustaining the technical and required skills of the job. Aligning my interest, values and talents with the job.
- Mid-Career: Equally distant from early and late career.
- Late Career: Focused on active retirement planning – but remaining valued in the organization

Section 6: Performance

Instructions: For each of the following statements, please indicate (by placing a check mark in the appropriate box) your performance level compared to your peers at this company.

	Far Below Average	Somewhat Below Average	About Average	Somewhat Above Average	Far Above Average
38. Achievement of performance goals					
39. Demonstration of leadership standards					
40. Impact on team and business					
41. Overall quality of performance					

42. Is there anything else you would like to add about employee resource groups?

↑

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey

APPENDIX D – NON-EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1: Demographic Data (Used for classification purposes only)

Instructions: Please provide the following demographic information. “My company” or “your company” refers to your current place of employment.

1. How many years have you worked for this company?

- 0-2 years
 3-5 years
 6-8 years
 9-10 years
 More than 10 years

2. Are you Female or Male?

- Female
 Male

3. Are you a member of an Employee Resource Group (ERG)?

- Yes (skip to end of questionnaire)
 No (proceed)

Section 3: Turnover Intention and Social Inclusion

Instructions: For statements 4 and 5 please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by selecting a response to the statement.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
4. I would be happy to spend the rest of my career at this company.					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
5. To what extent have you seriously thought about changing companies?					

Section 4: Propensity to Connect With Others

Instructions: For statements 6 through 14, please indicate the extent to which each statement describes you by selecting a response to the statement.

Statement	Describes me very well		Somewhat describes me		Does not describe me very well
6. I have many friends.					
7. I make friends easily.					
8. I like to have many friends.					
9. I have many acquaintances.					
10. I readily make connections with people I do not know.					
11. I like to know a lot of people.					
12. I often put people in touch with the right person when they need something.					
13. I find it easy to bring individuals together.					
14. I like being able to connect people.					

Section 5: Career Stage

15. Thinking over your career, please select the category which best describes where you are in your career. (Choose one)

- Entry: First career assignment, or new to the job.
- Early Career: Have worked for a few years - Gaining and sustaining the technical and required skills of the job. Aligning my interest, values and talents with the job.
- Mid-Career: Equally distant from early and late career.

- Late Career: Focused on active retirement planning – but remaining valued in the organization

Section 6: Performance

Instructions: For each of the following statements, please indicate (by placing a check mark in the appropriate box) your performance level compared to your peers at this company.

	Far Below Average	Somewhat Below Average	About Average	Somewhat Above Average	Far Above Average
16. Achievement of performance goals					
17. Demonstration of leadership standards					
18. Impact on team and business					
19. Overall quality of performance					

APPENDIX E – HIC RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET

Research Information Sheet	
Title of Study: An Investigation of Performance and Participation in Employee Resource Groups at a Global Technology Company	
Principal Investigator (PI):	Glenda Ward College of Education – Division of Administrative and Organizational Studies Instructional Technology Program (248) 682-9426
Purpose: You are being asked to participate in a research study of members and non-members of Employee Resource Groups at [REDACTED] because you are an employee at [REDACTED]. The purpose of the study is to learn about perceptions of Employee Resource Groups.	
Study Procedures: If you take part in the study, you will be asked to complete a web-based questionnaire. The questionnaire will take approximately 40 minutes to complete. The questionnaire contains questions on a likert-type scale seeking the extent of agreement and satisfaction with statements regarding membership or non-membership in an Employee Resource Group at [REDACTED].	
Benefits As a participant in this research study, there will be no direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may benefit other people (society) now or in the future.	
Risks There are no known risks at this time to participation in this study.	
Costs There will be no costs to you for participation in this research study.	
Compensation You will not be paid for taking part in this study.	
Confidentiality: All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept without any identifiers.	
Submission/Revision Date: <u>May 1, 2012</u>	Page 1 of 2
Protocol Version #: <u>033912B3E</u>	
HIC Date: 5/08	

An Investigation of Performance and Participation in Employee Resource Groups at a Global Technology Company

Voluntary Participation /Withdrawal:

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time.

Questions:

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Glenda Ward at the following phone number (248) 682-9426. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Human Investigation Committee can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call (313) 577-1628 to ask questions or voice concerns or complaints.

Participation:

By completing the questionnaire you are agreeing to participate in this study.

APPROVAL PERIOD
MAY 03 '12 MAY 02 '13
WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Submission/Revision Date: May 1, 2012
Protocol Version #: 033912B3E

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HIC Date: 5/8

APPENDIX F – IRB APPROVAL

**WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY**

IRB Administration Office
87 East Canfield, Second Floor
Detroit, Michigan 48201
Phone: (313) 577-1628
FAX: (313) 993-7122
<http://irb.wayne.edu>

NOTICE OF EXPEDITED APPROVAL

FILE

To: Glenda Ward
Administration & Organization Stud

From: Dr. Scott Millis *B. Campbell-Veytal*
Chairperson, Behavioral Institutional Review Board (B3)

Date: May 03, 2012

RE: IRB #: 033912B3E

Protocol Title: An Investigation of Performance and Participation in Employee Resource Groups at a Global Technology CompanyX

Funding Source:

Protocol #: 1203010712

Expiration Date: May 02, 2013

Risk Level / Category: Research not involving greater than minimal risk

The above-referenced protocol and items listed below (if applicable) were **APPROVED** following *Expedited Review* Category (#7)* by the Chairperson/designee for the Wayne State University Institutional Review Board (B3) for the period of 05/03/2012 through 05/02/2013. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals that may be required.

- Protocol Summary Form (received in the IRB Office 03/01/2012)
- Protocol (received in the IRB Office 03/01/2012)
- Receipt of letter of support from [redacted] Company (dated 04/02/2012)
- The request for a waiver of the requirement for written documentation of informed consent has been granted according to 45 CFR 46.117(1)(2). Justification for this request has been provided by the PI in the Protocol Summary Form. The waiver satisfies the following criteria: (i) the research involves no more than minimal risk to participants, (ii) the research involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context, (iii) the consent process is appropriate, and (iv) an information sheet disclosing the required and appropriate additional elements of consent disclosure will be provided to participants.
- Research Information Sheet (dated 05/01/2012)
- Data collection tools: Internet Questionnaire

- Federal regulations require that all research be reviewed at least annually. You may receive a "Continuation Renewal Reminder" approximately two months prior to the expiration date; however, it is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval **before** the expiration date. Data collected during a period of lapsed approval is unapproved research and can never be reported or published as research data.
- All changes or amendments to the above-referenced protocol require review and approval by the IRB **BEFORE** implementation.
- Adverse Reactions/Unexpected Events (AR/AE) must be submitted on the appropriate form within the timeframe specified in the IRB Administration Office Policy (<http://www.irb.wayne.edu/policies-human-research.php>).

NOTE:

1. Upon notification of an impending regulatory site visit, hold notification, and/or external audit the IRB Administration Office must be contacted immediately.

APPENDIX G – COMPANY INTRANET SCREEN CAPTURES

Employee Resource Groups

[Accessible content](#)

Employee Resource Groups

Together we make it happen!

DO YOU WANT to connect with other like minds? Are you interested in new experiences or looking for a different way to develop your skills? If the answer is yes, think about joining an Employee Resource Group. There are already Employee Resource Groups ... and there's nothing to stop you from creating a new one with your own flavor! Explore this website to find out more about Employee Resource Groups and how you can get involved.

What Are Employee Resource Groups?



How Do I Get Involved?



Employee Resource Groups

WHAT WE DO

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are driving change in hundreds of different places. Read about some of our ERG activities.

Finding and attracting new talent

- >> We use our networks to refer talented people
- >> We represent at recruiting events
- >> We help you make connections with new hires and interns

Building reputation; making us more visible

- >> We represent at key internal and external events
- >> We help improve their products and market to diverse customer groups

Developing Your Career

- >> We help you navigate your career and expand your career opportunities at
- >> Find or serve as a mentor
- >> Engage with leaders

Engaging People

- >> We foster community involvement
- >> We promote multi-cultural awareness

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ABSTRACT**AN INVESTIGATION OF PERFORMANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN
EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS AT A GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY COMPANY**

by

GLENDA WARD

May 2013

Advisor: Dr. James L. Moseley**Major:** Instructional Technology**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy

Much literature presents employee resource groups as beneficial to both the organizations and the employees who join these groups. Many large corporations have employee resource groups, and their presence is expanding. As companies continue to invest in employee resource groups, it is important to establish and review the business goals and expectations for the groups. An environment where objectives and expectations are established and well understood creates less ambiguity for employees and allows them to focus on achieving the objectives. It is important to evaluate the objectives and expectations to see if the groups are achieving the expectations. Assessing the performance against the expectations also exposes any potential areas for modifying the objectives as the organizational needs and requirements of employee resource group changes. This will ensure the groups are aligned with the company's diversity strategy.

The purpose of the study was to look at differences and variables between members of employee resource groups and non-members of employee resource groups at a global technology company. Specifically, the study analyzed the association of employee resource

group membership on self-report employee job performance. A group of 315 employee resource group members and 315 non-employee resource group members responded to an online questionnaire. The company uses four dimensions to evaluate job performance, and job performance was analyzed in each dimension. Then, the sum of the four dimensions was calculated. These dimensions were used in a correlation analysis to determine whether there was a positive relationship between participation in an employee resource group and self-reported job performance. The study found that there was a positive and significant correlation between self-reported job performance and employee resource group membership.

The study evaluated the extent to which employee resource group members perceived they were performing the objectives that were established for employee resource groups at a global technology company. Overall the study found that employee resource group members were achieving the objectives that the company set for them. Much research points to companies using employee resource groups to support the marketing of products or services to a targeted demographic. However, in this study that was the one area where the respondents indicated they did not have an opportunity to demonstrate this objective and the members did not positively respond that they were accomplishing this objective.

This study used the validated “Propensity to Connect (PCO)” instrument (Totterdell, Holman & Hukin, 2008), to examine the survey participants’ tendency to connect with others. In two prior studies the three components of PCO, which are making friends, making acquaintances, and joining others were positively associated with social groups in two prior studies. For this study a logistic regression model was used to predict employee

resource group membership. Only two components, making friends and joining others, showed a significant impact on predicting group membership. .

Continuing to look at variables associated with employee resource groups, the study used the validated questions on a “Turnover Intentions” instrument (Friedman & Holtom, 2002), for both employee resource group members and non-employee resource group members; to explore differences in intentions to leave the company. The results showed that members of the employee resource groups had lower their intentions to leave the company. The study showed no differences in satisfaction with employee resource groups based on various career stages. However, employees in the late career stages were more willing to connect with other employees.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Glenda started her career as an administrative assistant. As she continued to pursue her educational goals in computer science, she obtained a position as a Systems Engineer. While advancing as a Systems Engineer, Glenda was promoted to manager, where she oversaw the implementation of several large-scale computer system and software installations. Finding an interest and passion in solving workplace problems and human performance technology, rather than information technology, Glenda changed to a career in Human Resources. In the role of a Performance Consultant, Glenda has led performance improvement and training initiatives in several Fortune 500 companies. Some accomplishments include:

- Designed and delivered a global diversity initiative made up of several activities to increase the representation of women at the higher job levels in technology and engineering.
- Reviewed business, technology and human resource plans and recommended approaches for a workforce strategy
- Recommended, designed and facilitated business process and organizational changes to support a major automotive company's implementation of a global purchasing system.
- Developed and conducted a performance management workshop for the implementation of new competency models at a health care company.
- Conducted a needs assessment for a major automotive supplier to determine the training requirements for new system deployment.
- Conducted a workflow analysis and organizational assessment of the bill processing and payment operation at a consumers energy company.
- Developed an organizational strategy that combined three business facilities into one unit responsible for employee benefits administration.
- Coached organizations through change management strategies for large-scale technology, organizational and business changes.
- Designed, developed and delivered a variety of leadership training programs.

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