



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

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The Latin American region is recognized as an attractive location for global competitive expansion. After years of recession in many of these countries, growth is expected to accelerate during the upcoming years as many of these countries move from a commodity market to learning the rules of global competitiveness. More companies today are contemplating countries in Latin America, Central America, and the Caribbean to set up manufacturing facilities, distribution centers or services operations, as a form to expand their global footprint, particularly in the automotive and pharmaceutical industries, and in the tobacco, health, and beauty aids markets.

Latin America is a paradoxical region in that it has unique situations that keep attracting businesses, and yet many of the countries in the region also face serious challenges that can undermine many of these prospects. This movement toward Latin America could remain active, but management practices need to contemplate the distinctiveness of the workplace's collective spirit. Some global corporations doing business in

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Latin America have already observed that although many management and workplace practices originating in North America have met some success, there is also evidence of rejection and disappointment. A challenge for companies seeking competitive advantages in Latin America consists of creating a workplace environment where locals can work together effectively, and this means recognizing and taking into consideration local idiosyncrasies when implementing modern practices.

One modern practice that has proven to enhance operational effectiveness, innovation, and global competitiveness is Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace. Yet the perceptions of Diversity and Inclusion foundational to the strategies prevalent in the United States are shaped by its history, traditions, and culture and are quite different even among the Latin American countries. The simplistic assumption that Hispanics are all defined by a few cultural factors—whether from Central America, South America, Mexico, or the Caribbean—is misguided. Although there are commonalities among the cultures and subcultures within the Latin American region, there are also significant differences. To that point, it should be added that half of South America's population is composed of Brazilians, whose origin is the Portuguese culture and traditions, and very different from the Hispanic Latin America. If perceptions are influenced by local national cultures and subcultures, then it follows that a variety of cultural differences between North America and Latin America also implies a variety of approaches to workplace values, and more specifically, to the understanding of Diversity and Inclusion.

This book follows a previous book published in 2018 by Palgrave MacMillan: *Diversity and Inclusion in the Global Workplace: Aligning Initiatives with Strategic Business Goals* (Aquino & Robertson, 2018). The first book created the foundation for a better understanding of Diversity and Inclusion, through the discussion of concepts and examples that could be applicable to the global workforce and workplace (Aquino & Robertson, 2018). This second book addresses specific topics that are relevant to Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), areas that have experienced a more traditional society and a faster economic growth in the past decades. By bringing those topics into a book, the authors intend not only to expand the discussion of Diversity and Inclusion to a regional perspective, but also create awareness of regional issues that can impact the successful operations of global/multinational corporations and organizations that have customers and suppliers in this part of the world.

As it is said above, the workplaces in the Latin America and Caribbean regions in many ways present a paradox in that it has unique conditions that keep attracting businesses and yet many of the countries in the region also face serious challenges that can undermine many of these prospects. This book addresses specific topics related to Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace that are relevant to LAC. By bringing those topics into a single textbook, the authors intend not only to address issues of Diversity and Inclusion from a regional perspective, but also foster awareness of regional outcomes that can impact the successful operations of global/multinational corporations and organizations that have customers and suppliers in this part of the world. This is a two-part book, where Part I addresses some of the emerging frameworks on Diversity and Inclusion in LAC workplace and Part II lunges into some of the country-specific actualities. The uniqueness of this effort resides in making available a single collection of workplace experiences, opportunities, and challenges that emerge from the nuances of Diversity and Inclusion dynamics in Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Part I presents a macro-perspective of Diversity and Inclusion in the Latin American and Caribbean workplace and includes Chapters 2 through 7.

Chapter 2 describes a proven framework that has successfully been used in the United States, and it is starting to be used in LAC in fostering and achieving Diversity and Inclusion scholarship. The focus of this chapter is to reinforce the educational component in preparing a diverse and inclusive workforce in Latin America and in the Caribbean. A thorough discussion of Scholarship and its relevance in the educational process is included. Its importance is highlighted and enforced by different accreditation bodies all over the world, as an effort to pursue quality and relevant content in higher education. Besides being a learning provider, educational institutions also need to become and remain learning organizations, and the myriad of faculty, alumni, and students related to them should believe and act toward lifelong learning. Diversity and Inclusion is one of the most challenging topics we live today in a globalized and multi-cultured workplace. Scholarship in Diversity and Inclusion must remain at the forefront of institutions that are expected to remain competitive within the educational sector and be recognized as role models to the society they serve.

Chapter 3 discusses cultural influences on Latin American perceptions of inclusion and diversity. In that context, the literature tendencies on global organizational development are showing a shift in emphasis from

diversity as a mandate toward inclusion as a workplace value, and therefore, to approaches that are more in step with interpersonal and relational frameworks. Consequently, this shift has also prompted research beyond the traditional American-European view of inclusion, where now more consideration is being given to the moderating effects of other national cultures. Along with these trends, this chapter argues that perceptions from national cultures within Latin American countries play a significant role in formulating Diversity and Inclusion strategies. In Chapter 3, the author argues that values typical of most Latin American and Caribbean countries as portrayed in Hofstede's cultural dimensions reinforce the notion that native cultures have a moderating effect on inclusion and diversity views and suggest these constructs are perceived differently than interpreted in most North American strategies and training programs. This chapter highlights the relevance and implications of Latin American and Caribbean cultural values upon Diversity and Inclusion perceptions.

Chapter 4 discusses the role of women entrepreneurs in LAC. Despite the obstacles they face, women entrepreneurs in LAC countries are achieving greater gender parity than in other parts of the world. The LAC region has the strongest entrepreneurial culture in the world, with greater gender parity than most other regions in terms of startup and total early entrepreneurial activity. The chapter focuses primarily on the drivers of entrepreneurial success for women in LAC countries, analyzing how culture, catalysts, supports, and governmental and private sector initiatives and partnerships are fostering women's entrepreneurship in this region. It also includes examples of model initiatives and women entrepreneurs in the LAC region.

Chapter 5 covers the topic of workforce diversity in ports, comparing the global reality, and examples from Canada, with the Latin American and Caribbean perspectives. Cargo handling in seaports throughout the globe has traditionally been a male-dominated occupation, particularly when muscle-power was an essential occupational requirement for physical lifting and hauling heavy commodities. In recent decades, however, the need for "brawn" has been replaced with "brain and aptitude" required to operate sophisticated cargo-handling equipment. In today's ports, women are increasingly being recruited into this traditional male environment as "work within ports has become less physical, even in port operations that require more physical jobs, women can perform equally

well as men.” This chapter examines the challenges women face in working in traditionally male workplaces and suggests steps for ports, particularly throughout LAC, to attract women port workers. In the scope of this chapter, the term “port workers” encompasses dockworkers, longshoremen, stevedores, checkers, linesmen, and forepersons.

Toxic leadership, as discussed in Chapter 6, is seen as an extreme negative behavior highly damaging to the workplace and employees. Exceptional considerations may influence the rationale for individual tolerance of toxic leaders. The chapter presents two case studies with different perspectives of leadership within a diverse and inclusive workplace, one drawn from a multinational workplace perspective and the other from a military management view with Latin American and Caribbean experiences. Although the narrative inquiry approach into the stories may not be generalized, the insights derived from the exploration may benefit organizational leaders, scholars, and practitioners in ascertaining patterns within organizational members with diverse characteristics and the effects on the workplace culture and objectives. Most importantly, the identification of the rationale for individual tolerance may assist organizations to mitigate the influence of toxic leader behavior in the Latin American and Caribbean workplaces.

Chapter 7 focuses on the harsh reality and challenges faced by transgender and gender diverse workforce in LAC. Transgender, also known as “trans,” is an umbrella term that discusses a person whose gender identity varies from the antiquated gender binary system and one’s sex assigned at birth (Hyde, Bigler, Joel, Tate, & van Anders, 2019). Gender is on a continuum, and nowhere on that continuum should it be considered pathological. Transgender and gender diverse individuals, also referred to as gender minorities, are often marginalized and invisible, even among their lesbian, gay, and bisexual community members. As a result, they often live in the margins with consistent societal pressure to conform to the heteronormative and cisgender way of life. This conformity leads to shame, invalidation of the trans person’s lived experiences, and stigma. Contemporary sexual and gender minority (SGM) research continues to explore the devastating impact of stigma, social exclusion, and systemic oppression on overall mental and physical well-being.

In Part II, consisting of Chapters 8 through 12, the focus turns onto individual countries and issues related to Diversity and Inclusion within the boundaries of those nations.

Chapter 8 is devoted to gender diversity in the Bahamas, and the vocational skills gap that hinder the workforce in that country. The chapter explores the current situation concerning diversity and workforce skills as essential components of the competitiveness of the Bahamian economy at a time of significantly increased global competition and economic insecurity in many markets. Specifically, the chapter provides an overview of the perceived skills gap in the Bahamas and identifies ways that this gap can be closed, including enhancing the use of a diverse workforce and the use of technology such as online learning. A case study on the challenges faced by a community college in the country that is a main player in improving workforce skills is also included in Chapter 8.

Chapter 9 focuses on a comparison of gender diversity in seven countries in the Hispanic South America: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay. Gender Diversity in organizations has been attracting a significant degree of attention from multiple sectors, such as the educational, business, governments, and from civil society in general. One of the reasons for its relevance has been the lack of consensus about its true impact on these sectors. At best, there are conflicting and inconclusive results. Some studies have shown that gender diversity in organizations is related to the organization's growth, innovations, increased performance, and development. Other studies show that if there is an adequate mix of gender diversity, financial performance also tends to improve. Further studies show there is a significant positive relationship between the percentage of women (both on the boards of the organizations and in management positions) and reduced vulnerability to a financial crisis. In contrast, studies conducted by other researchers have shown there is no statistically significant relationship between gender diversity in organizations and factors such as financial, innovation, and increased performance. This chapter presents a comparative study, using secondary data, to show the relationship between gender diversity and organizational development and innovation in the seven countries included in the study.

Chapter 10 presents a discussion on the topic of Striving for Equity in Higher Education in Brazil. An attempt to address the lack of racial diversity in the Brazilian educational system was met with the affirmative action quotas for students entering the university level, public paid institutions. Despite the government-driven initiatives, the gap in filling the spaces reserved for non-White students evidences the reality that for non-White students to successfully compete for those scholarships, quality education and support from government and educators must begin

for students in elementary school. This chapter will examine the current policies and scholarship practices in place to leverage racial equity in education in Brazil. Further, suggestions to what could be done to lessen the gap of diversity and racial equality in educational arenas in public and private sectors will be examined.

Chapter 11 highlights the relevance of initiatives aimed at intensifying Diversity and Inclusion endeavors within the workplace for the disabled as well as for other vulnerable populations in Colombia. In doing so, these efforts intend to achieve reductions in poverty, inequality, violence, and mitigate social exclusion. Formulating effective workplace Diversity and Inclusion strategies also represents a calling for a wide range of professionals to collaborate in generating realistic strategies, therefore attaining the insertion, permanency, and promotion of disabled persons, leading to improved business performance. Accordingly, the Columbian Rehabilitation School recognizes the urgency to establish multiple partnerships and propose strategies with the business sector that allow the effective operationalization of the Diversity and Inclusion policies favorable to Colombia's development and in line with the objectives stated by the International Labour Organization, the UNESCO, and Colombia's National Development Plan-Pledge for Equity.

In Chapter 12, the focus is to compare workplace diversity perceptions between American (USA) and Hispanic populations, using samples of business students located in the continental USA and Hispanic students, using the Reaction to Diversity Inventory (RDI). The study outcomes suggest that Hispanic perceptions of diversity are quite different than may be intuitively perceived or portrayed in the literature. The results of this research can lead to a conclusion, reinforcing what is found in the current literature, that collecting and analyzing perceptions can help determine if an organization's workplace is viable to support diversity initiatives. This chapter illustrates how cultural values of majority-minority populations can potentially impact the design and implementation of diversity initiatives, especially within a global workforce environment.

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