

# Questions for Review

1. Describe forms of workforce diversity.

**Answer:** The two major forms of workforce diversity are Ethnicity and Individual Differences. These Demographic Characteristics define the factors comprising diversity in the U.S. workforce. Ethnicity refers to the racial and ethnic backgrounds of individuals. The Individual Differences are the biological differences that are age, gender, race, disability, and length of service. These differences have been studied to determine their association with job performance, job satisfaction, turnover, and other concerns of organizational management.

2. Identify the key biological characteristics and describe how they are relevant to OB.

**Answer:**

1. Age - Older workers bring experience, judgment, a strong work ethic, and commitment to quality.
2. Gender - Few differences between men and women that affect job performance.
3. Race - (the biological heritage used to identify oneself) Contentious issue: differences exist, but could be more culture-based.
4. Tenure - People with job tenure (seniority at a job) are more productive, absent less frequently, have lower turnover, and are more satisfied.
5. Religion - Islam is especially problematic in the workplace in this post-9/11 world.
6. Sexual Orientation - Federal law does not protect against discrimination (but state or local laws may). Domestic partner benefits are important considerations.
7. Gender Identity - Relatively new issue – transgendered employees

These characteristics are important to OB since corporations are always searching for variables that can impact employee productivity, turnover, deviance, citizenship and satisfaction. Data that is easily defined and available in an employee personnel file can contribute to success in an organization.

3. Define intellectual ability and demonstrate its relevance to OB.

**Answer:** Intellectual abilities are the abilities needed to perform mental abilities – thinking, reasoning, and problem solving. Understanding the concept is essential to managers as they plan, organize, direct, and control a firm's operations. Since different jobs require different application of abilities, the challenge of job design, recruiting and selecting workers, and evaluating performance are based in applying the needed intellectual abilities to ensure fairness and appropriateness of management activities.

4. Contrast the two types of ability.

**Answer:** The two types of abilities are intellectual abilities and physical abilities. Intellectual abilities lead to the mental abilities needed to perform jobs in the changing operational environments of today's business. Physical abilities have been a factor of job design and performance since Fredrick Taylor's Scientific Management. Studies have suggested nine different Physical Abilities performed in work. They are mutually exclusive. Therefore, they are important considerations in the management functions.

5. Describe how organizations manage diversity effectively.

**Answer:** Effective Diversity Management capitalizes on diversity for organizational success.

This includes recruiting and selection as well as training and development of employees to take advantage of diverse workforces. Effective programs have three components:

1. They teach managers about the legal framework for equal employment opportunity and encourage fair treatment of all people.
  2. They teach managers how a diverse workforce will be better able to serve a diverse market of customers and clients.
  3. They foster personal development practices that bring out the skills and abilities of all workers.
6. Show how culture affects our understanding of biographical characteristics and intellectual abilities.

**Answer:** There is some cross-cultural research that shows how culture affects our understanding of these topics, however inconclusive. The following contain information based on the available research:

- a. Intellectual Abilities – Structures and measures of intelligence generalized across cultures.
- b. Biographical Characteristics – Not much evidence on the global relevance of the relationships described in this chapter. Countries do vary dramatically on their biographical composition.