

AIRAANZ 2018 Stream Proposal: 'Researching Diversity'

Convenors:

Dr Susan Ressia, Lecturer, Griffith Business School, Griffith University
(s.ressia@griffith.edu.au)

Dr Shalene Werth, Senior lecturer, School of Management and Enterprise, USQ
(shalene.werth@usq.edu.au)

Description:

The stream proposes addressing the ongoing issues related to gender and other differences as they are experienced in the context of the workplace. Visible and invisible identities can provoke particular reactions from colleagues when they are disclosed. Individuals who exhibit difference, for example, in their health status, migrant or racial background, gender, age or sexuality, risk being stigmatised or stereotyped in the labour market. Goffman shows that individuals with stigmatising attributes are 'very careful to show that in spite of appearances they are very sane, very generous, very sober, very masculine [or feminine]... in short they are... nice persons like ourselves in spite of the reputation of their kind' (1986, p. 110). Socially advocated 'codes of conduct provide the stigmatised individual... with recipes for an appropriate attitude regarding the self' (Goffman 1986, p. 110). Where individuals have an invisible stigmatising identity they might have a choice about disclosure and attempt to appear 'normal'. Normality 'designates the state of affairs where everyone can get on with their business and the taken-for-granted world is not visibly shaken' (Pinder 1995, p. 210). In the work environment there is an expectation of 'normality' that may exclude diversity groups, resulting in their experiences of less desirable workforce outcomes. These outcomes can be experienced in different and complex ways, when multiple visible and/or invisible identities intersect. Thus, as Crenshaw (1989) describes, the intersection of various characteristics work in ways to produce inequalities and disadvantage for people who do not fit the dominant norm.

This stream invites papers that examine both the positive and negative experiences of diversity groups, which might include, but is not limited to, gender, culture, race, religion, migrant background, disability, health status, or sexual identity, and the intersections between them.

The aim of this stream is to expand into the broader field of diversity, and so reflects today's social and cultural environments where we are witnessing a rapid change and transformation in the diverse nature of the workforce, while the workforce issues pertaining to these groups are often unacknowledged, misunderstood, overlooked or ignored.

Crenshaw, K. 1989 'Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: a black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics', *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, pp. 138-167.

Goffman, E 1986, *Stigma: notes on the management of spoiled identity*, Simon & Schuster Inc, New York.

Pinder, R 1995, 'Bringing back the body without the blame? The experience of ill and disabled people at work', *Sociology of Health and Illness*, vol. 17, no. 5, pp. 605-31.