Management Diversity Practices for people with disabilities: The case of the Municipality of Póvoa de Varzim

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Managing diversity in the workplace has been recognized as a critical element of organizational success, namely the inclusion of people with disabilities (PwD's) that constitute an unexplored labour opportunity for the organizations (Araten-Bergman, 2016). In recent years the social and work inclusion of PwD's has become a priority, with the definition of positive actions by the European Commission for the acceptance, integration and social inclusion of PwD's (Araten-Bergman, 2016; Lengnick-Hall, Gaunt, & Kulkarni, 2008; Nelissen, Hülsheger, van Ruitenbeek, & Zijlstra, 2016; Scior, 2011). In response to the challenges of inclusion, the literature (e.g. Vornholt, Uitdewilligen, & Nijhuis, 2013) suggests that it is necessary to improve the sustainability of employment for PwD's as a form of active participation both in the labour market and in society.

The work developed focused on the case of the Municipality of Póvoa de Varzim as employer of more than 19 PwD's. The results presented are based on the collection of information from 16 participants, divided into three categories: i) management; ii) the peers at the workplace, iii) the PwD's themselves.

The main results point to a conditioning resulting from legal issues that seem to restrain the creativity of Human Resources Management Practices.

The acceptance of the differences as opportunities, the promotion of the heterogeneity of the people, the training, the evaluation of performance and the development of careers, recommended by Kossek et al (2006) and Shore et al (2011), within the legal limits imposed to the Public Administration, seem to have a decisive impact on PwD's and, consequently, on their inclusion.

The final part of this paper discusses the main contributions of PGRH in the inclusion of PwD's and presented suggestions for future studies that involve the contribution of Human Resources Management Practices in the inclusion of PwD's in Portuguese organizations.

Keywords

Diversity Management, Human Resources, Disabilities

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