

A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF BYTEDANCE'S HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



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Executive Summary

This report undertakes a comprehensive analysis of the human resource management practices of ByteDance and Apple Inc., with a particular emphasis on the profound ramifications of employee diversity and discrimination issues for organisational performance and advancement. Notably, ByteDance confronts a persistent array of employee discrimination incidents, resulting in substantial repercussions on reputational and internal cohesion, whereas Apple demonstrates incremental progress in promoting employee diversity and tackling discrimination challenges.

In response to these complexities, the following recommendations are delineated: ByteDance must proactively adopt measures, including the establishment of an equitable grievance redressal mechanism, employee training initiatives and bolstered leadership commitment, to effectively address diversity and discrimination concerns. Furthermore, stringent enforcement of policies and procedures is imperative to safeguard equitable treatment and uphold the rights of all employees. Additionally, ByteDance can glean invaluable insights from the successful paradigms of industry leaders like Apple, by issuing lucid policies, intensifying training endeavors, and fostering an inclusive organisational culture, thereby refining its own management practices and augmenting employee satisfaction.

By embracing these proactive strategies, both ByteDance and Apple can optimize their human resource management frameworks, foster a culture of diversity and discrimination management, and propel sustained business growth and success.

1. Introduction

The report focuses on the examination of employee diversity and discrimination issues within ByteDance and Apple Inc., emphasizing their significant impact on employee well-being and performance. Furthermore, it conducts an analysis of these issues' implications for the companies' future development trajectory. In terms of human resource management, addressing employee diversity and discrimination stands as a critical part, given its potential to significantly influence workforce effectiveness and organisational development. Indeed, as integral constituents of organisations, individual performance largely determines a company's success. Presently, both ByteDance and Apple advocate for a vision of promoting diversity and inclusivity (Apple, 2024). However, these two companies exhibit noticeable disparities in the implementation of these principles. The forthcoming report will delineate the significant challenges faced by these companies and provide corresponding strategies to be adopted by their respective human resource departments.

2. An Overview of ByteDance and Apple

Founded in 2012, ByteDance is a global technology company headquartered in China. The company's operations involve a smorgasbord of sectors, including social media, news, and short video platforms (Ting, 2019). With a significant user base worldwide, ByteDance's products such as TikTok enjoy widespread popularity globally (Chen & Ma, 2022). The company is headquartered in Beijing and maintains branch offices and facilities in various countries and regions (Bytedance, 2024).

Apple Inc., founded in 1976 by Steve Jobs and others, is a multinational technology company headquartered in the United States (Brashares, 2001). Primarily focused on the design, manufacturing, and retailing of consumer electronics and software, Apple is renowned for its products including iPhone, iPad, Mac computers, and operating system, IOS (Wright, 2024). With a vast user base and substantial influence worldwide,

Apple is based in Cupertino, California, with offices and research centers established across the globe (Levy, 2024).

Both companies have dedicated human resource teams responsible for recruitment, training, and performance management. And in terms of human resource management, ByteDance emphasizes flexibility and innovation, whereas Apple places greater emphasis on product quality and brand value.

3. An Analysis of Employee Diversity and Discrimination

3.1 Human Resource Management

Human resource management revolves around the strategic employment and management of individuals within organisational contexts (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). Undoubtedly, individuals represent a pivotal component of any organisation, thus establishing a correlation between organisations boasting highly productive personnels and achieving greater success. Intensified adeptness of organisations in recruiting can motivate their employee productivity effectively (Beardwell and Claydon 2007). Moreover, the implementation of sound human resource strategies fosters employee satisfaction, thereby eliciting high dedication from employees towards meeting and exceeding customer expectations (Stewart & Brown, 2020).

3.2 Employee Diversity and Discrimination

During the 1990s, diversity and inclusion transformed from the conceptual endeavors have emerged as pivotal contents, underscored by their efficacy in enhancing efficiency and business performance, thereby establishing a connection between diversity and economic growth (Gillberg, 2024). Diversity, as defined by Dobbs (1996), refers to the different characteristics including age, color, gender and social backgrounds that distinguish one person from another. Inclusion, on the other hand, is defined as the feeling of employees who believe that they are accepted and have been viewed as a respected and welcomed member of the organisation (Shore et al., 2010).

Although the legitimacy of equality has traditionally been underpinned by calls for social justice and grounded in the equal opportunity movement, diversity and inclusion derive their legitimacy from the purported connection to boost profitability and economic growth because they have been considered as a vital resource to convert organisational capability into success through formulating a sound environment that fosters mutual respect for and among all employees and increases team building and bonding (Luu et al., 2019).

In an era increasingly characterized by neoliberalism, diversity and inclusion has emerged as the predominant prerequisite for job seekers as they seek to garner commitments from managers who uphold that diversity and inclusion benefit everyone, not solely as a matter of moral imperative, but of the positive impact they can have on organisational economic performance (Laroche & Rutherford, 2012). Thus, the adoption of a business approach to diversity and inclusion has become entrenched through the implementation of various initiatives, practices, policies, and programs aimed at addressing business challenges (Carrillo Arciniega, 2020). As the focus shifted from equal opportunity to diversity management, the primary stakeholders also transitioned from disadvantaged groups to the most privileged ones, including shareholders, management, and board members (Kirton & Greene, 2009).

As for discrimination, Peterson and Thea (2006) point out that discrimination exists in the workplace in various forms owing to the discriminatory and biased actions, including: unbalanced salary for workers with the same position, discrimination during recruitment, racial discrimination targeting colored people and gender inequality. And eliminating discrimination and ensuring employee equality during recruitment and in the workplace plays a pivotal role in enhancing the employee's satisfaction and working productivity and fostering a sound working environment (Qaisar & Abdul, 2010)

3.3 Problems of Employee Diversity and Discrimination in ByteDance

ByteDance functions as a worldwide catalyst for pioneering platforms across commerce, content, entertainment, and enterprise services, reaching out to an extensive amount of users that exceed 2.5 billion individuals, including those of its flagship product, TikTok.

Notably, with a workforce exceeding 110,000 employees distributed across more than 30 nations globally, the cultivation of employee diversity and inclusivity emerges as a cornerstone principle of its organisational culture (Bytedance, 2024). Recent reports have underscored a series of employee discrimination incidents faced by ByteDance, including allegations of racial discrimination and retaliatory dismissals lodged by two former employees as they were laid off because they have submitted an official complaint about discrimination and malicious slander from their manager. However, the company has suspended the investigation and dismissed the two employees (Sareen Habeshian, 2023). In addition, recent reports have shed light on a series of instances of employee inequality within the organisation. Drawing from employee complaints and social media discourse, it is noticed that numerous former staff members have leveled accusations of racial and gender bias against the company for verbal and psychological assaults that hampered their well-being and interests and right. Additionally, instances of unfairness directed at individuals based on age and gender have emerged. Of particular note is the claim put forth by former senior marketing executive Katie Puris, who has initiated legal proceedings against TikTok, alleging discrimination rooted in gender, age, and disability. She contends that her termination in 2022 stemmed from multiple occurrences where she reported bias and sexual harassment to supervisors and the human resources department, but none of them have made any responses and even its parent company, ByteDance, didn't respond to this incident. And the only result she received is a swift reprisal—dismissal (Hadero, 2024). And such instances are common worldwide. According to the 2022 Gender Equality in the Workplace report, two-thirds (67%) of women have encountered some form of gender discrimination in their workplace, and more than a quarter (27%) have faced discouragement in job opportunities because they appear to be considered as less competitive than younger candidates (Soutar, 2024).

As a result, these allegations have prompted a scrutiny of the company's management practices and organisational culture, resulting in significant reputational damage. The reported incidents not only tarnish the company's image but also potentially damage the organisational unity and internal cohesion and lead to decreased employee morale,

increased turnover rates, and legal implications. These accusations have elicited public scrutiny, prompting concerns over the company's managerial efficacy and organisational culture, ultimately resulting in significant reputational damage. And particular concerns are the potential ramifications on employee morale, attrition rates, and legal liabilities.

These incidents highlight deficiencies of ByteDance in managing employee equality, diversity and discrimination. Despite the company's assertion of having implemented diversity policies and training programs, evident gaps in execution have emerged, as evidenced by employee grievances. The absence of an effective grievance redressal mechanism has allowed issues to fester, intensifying employee discontent and distrust in management. Moreover, the leadership's apparent neglect of diversity and inclusion exacerbates the vulnerability of employees who may face discrimination and injustice for lacking adequate support and recourses.

3.4 Lessons of Employee Diversity and Discrimination in Apple

Apple stands as one of the premier U.S. technology titans on the global stage and becomes emblematic of the international technology landscape. The company has witnessed a significant expansion in its workforce over the past couple of years, increasing from approximately 154,000 employees in 2021 to around 164,000 individuals in 2022 (Gao, 2021). Despite this overall growth, subtle shifts have been observed in the gender composition. Specifically, there has been a slight raise in the proportion of female employees, growing from 34.8% to 35.3%, while the male counterpart experienced a marginal decline from 65.2% to 64.6%. This trend may reflect the company's endeavors towards fostering gender equality, yet underscores the persistent challenge therein. In technology departments, there has been a modest increase in the representation of female employees, ascending from 24.4% in 2021 to 24.9% in 2022. Although the magnitude of this increase is limited, it potentially signifies the company's concerted efforts towards gender diversity in the technological sector. On the executive front, males continue to hold predominant positions, albeit experiencing a slight reduction in their representation from 68.6% in 2021 to 67.7% in

2022 (all of these numbers have been shown in the Figure 1 and 2). This indicates the possibility of proactive measures being undertaken by the company to elevate the representation of women in executive echelons, further advancing the agenda of gender equality (Kumar, 2023).

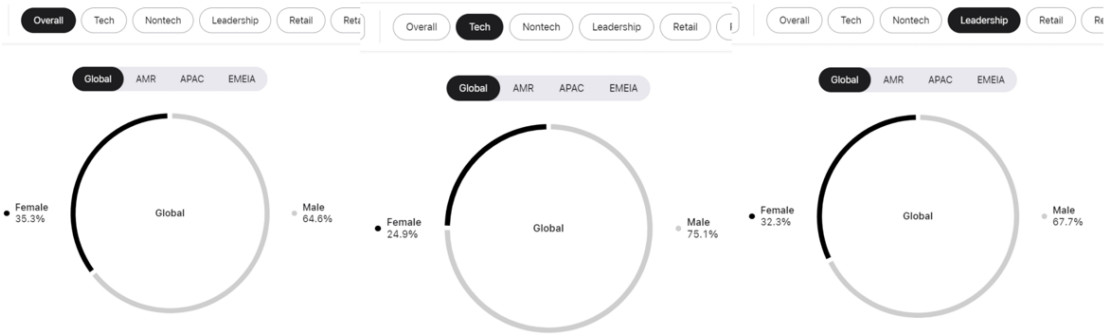


Figure 1 the Gender Proportion of Apple in Different Sectors in 2022

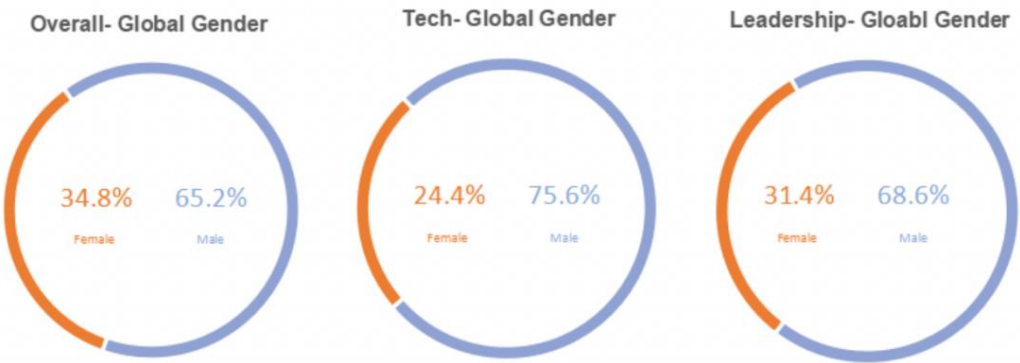


Figure 2 the Gender Proportion of Apple in Different Sectors in 2021

The company exhibits a notable degree of racial diversity within its workforce. Predominantly, individuals of Caucasian descent constitute the largest ethnic group, representing 42.1% of the workforce in US (as shown in the Figure 3), possibly reflecting regional demographics or recruitment strategies. Moreover, individuals of Asian and Latino people hold substantial proportions, accounting for 29.8% and 14.9% respectively, indicative of either focused recruitment efforts or industry-wide representation. However, the representation of African-Americans stands relatively lower at 9.2%, suggesting potential opportunities for improvement in attracting and retaining this demographic.

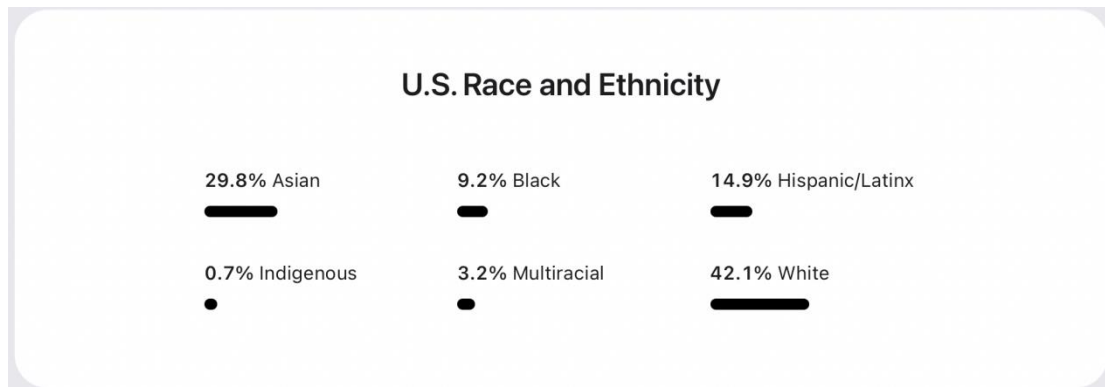


Figure 3 U.S. Race and Ethnicity in 2022

In light of inclusive leadership, Apple has made notable progress in the past year. Particularly noteworthy one is the company's increased appointment of women to global leadership positions, as well as the inclusion of Black candidates in leadership roles within the United States. These actions underscore Apple's steadfast dedication to enhancing leadership representation across a broad spectrum of demographics. To be more specific, 44% of vacant global leadership positions were filled by women, indicating a concerted effort to advance gender diversity in leadership roles on a global scale. Furthermore, Apple achieved a significant milestone within the United States, with 55% of open leadership roles being occupied by individuals from Underrepresented Racial and Cultural (URC) backgrounds. Additionally, the company has exhibited its commitment to bolstering racial diversity in its leadership ranks by appointing Black candidates to 10% of open U.S. leadership roles and Hispanic/Latinx candidates to 12% (as shown in the Figure 4). These metrics underline Apple's proactive stance in cultivating an inclusive leadership culture, empowering individuals from diverse backgrounds to contribute to the company's success. By prioritizing diversity and inclusion in its leadership recruitment and advancement endeavors, Apple not only enhances its organisational culture but also fosters innovation and better serves its diverse customer base.

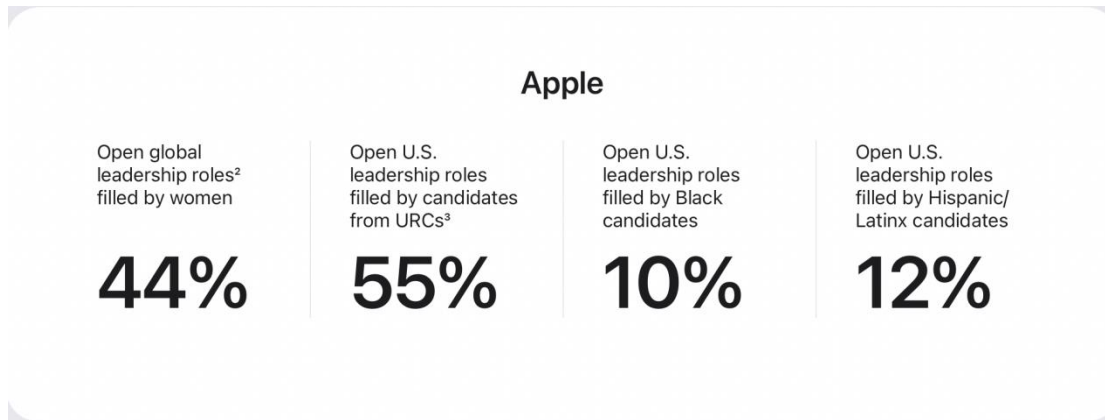


Figure 4 Proportion of Leadership Roles in U.S.

Therefore, ByteDance can draw lessons from the strategies adopted by Apple to address its existed issues including racial discrimination, age bias, sexual harassment and ineffective response from leaders. For instance, it can emulate the women-friendly policies of Apple to gradually increase the share of female in its workforce in every sector and initiate classes for all employees including leaders to emphasize the importance of gender equality so as to prevent sexual harassment and gender bias on women (Li & Qiao, 2023). And it also can issue open-minded policies of recruitment similar to Apple so as to give more opportunities to colored people and establish a corporate culture that sets store by racial equality. In addition, while laying emphasis on diversity, inclusion and equality as Apple does, it should create a strict mechanism for selecting qualified leaders who attach great importance to tackling complaints from employees, meeting their demands and making timely responses (Mollah, 2015).

4. Conclusion

The present report undertakes a thorough examination of the intricacies of employee diversity and discrimination within both ByteDance and Apple. Through a meticulous scrutiny of their respective human resource management practices and the firsthand experiences of their employees, a myriad of pertinent challenges and key issues have been unearthed. But corresponding lessons learnt from Apple have also been elaborated for ByteDance to address its current problems.

A cascade of discriminatory incidents among the workforce of ByteDance has been

discerned, precipitating significant repercussions on the company's corporate standing and internal solidarity. Despite the purported implementation of diversity policies and training initiatives, palpable disparities in execution have come to light, glaringly exposed to the public through employee grievances. In contrast, Apple has witnessed incremental strides in ensuring employee diversity and reducing discrimination, particularly in the domains of gender and ethnicity.

In summation, the imperative of fostering robust employee diversity and discrimination management emerges as a linchpin for the prospective development of ByteDance. By cultivating an ethos of inclusion within their organisational fabric and bolstering leadership's commitment to diversity, the company can further fortify employee contentment and efficacy, thus paving the way for sustained business expansion and triumph.

5. Recommendation

To address the above analyzed challenges, a myriad of suggestions have been listed for ByteDance. Firstly, the company must proactively implement measures to enhance the management of employee diversity and discrimination and pursue employee equality. This requires a thorough consideration of employee complaints and properly address the issues if existed, supported by the establishment of an impartial grievance redressal mechanism to ensure timely resolution of complaints.

Second, bolstering employee training to raise their awareness and sensitivity to diversity issues, and reinforcing leadership commitment to grappling with these concerns is imperative since the declining trust on team leaders will only hamper team chemistry and make employees lose confidence in the organisation.

Additionally, fostering transparent communication and an inclusive work environment are vital to promote mutual understanding and strengthen solidarity among employees. And it is also of paramount importance to ensure the implementation and enforcement of stringent policies and procedures to uphold equitable treatments of all employees, safeguarding their interests and right and maintaining company's core values,

reputation and image.

Conversely, ByteDance fails to do the above measures, resulting in the relentless complaints and accusation from its former employees. However, it can draw valuable insights from the successful diversity and discrimination management practices of other corporations, such as Apple. By adopting clear policies, enhancing training, and cultivating an inclusive workplace culture, Apple has established a positive diversity image and nurtured a work environment that is conducive to promoting mutual trusts and solidarity among workers. Thus, ByteDance can emulate these strategies to elevate its own management practices and enhance employee satisfaction.

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