

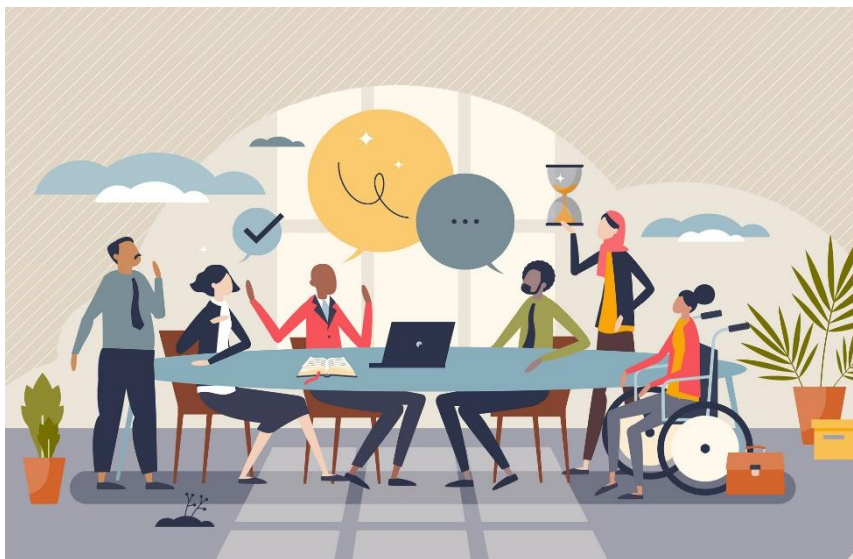


School of Social Sciences
Master's Degree Programme in Business Administration
(MBA)

Postgraduate Dissertation
Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace:
Challenges and Best Practices

Evangelia Rodanaki

Supervisor: Sofia Chatzi



Patras, Greece, June 2026

Copyright Page

Η παρούσα εργασία αποτελεί πνευματική ιδιοκτησία του φοιτητή («συγγραφέας/δημιουργός») που την εκπόνησε. Στο πλαίσιο της πολιτικής ανοικτής πρόσβασης ο συγγραφέας/δημιουργός εκχωρεί στο ΕΑΠ, μη αποκλειστική άδεια χρήσης του δικαιώματος αναπαραγωγής, προσαρμογής, δημόσιου δανεισμού, παρουσίασης στο κοινό και ψηφιακής διάχυσής τους διεθνώς, σε ηλεκτρονική μορφή και σε οποιοδήποτε μέσο, για διδακτικούς και ερευνητικούς σκοπούς, άνευ ανταλλάγματος και για όλο το χρόνο διάρκειας των δικαιωμάτων πνευματικής ιδιοκτησίας. Η ανοικτή πρόσβαση στο πλήρες κείμενο για μελέτη και ανάγνωση δεν σημαίνει καθ' οιονδήποτε τρόπο παραχώρηση δικαιωμάτων διανοητικής ιδιοκτησίας του συγγραφέα/δημιουργού ούτε επιτρέπει την αναπαραγωγή, αναδημοσίευση, αντιγραφή, αποθήκευση, πώληση, εμπορική χρήση, μετάδοση, διανομή, έκδοση, εκτέλεση, «μεταφόρτωση» (downloading), «ανάρτηση» (uploading), μετάφραση, τροποποίηση με οποιονδήποτε τρόπο, τμηματικά ή περιληπτικά της εργασίας, χωρίς τη ρητή προηγούμενη έγγραφη συναίνεση του συγγραφέα/δημιουργού. Ο συγγραφέας/δημιουργός διατηρεί το σύνολο των ηθικών και περιουσιακών του δικαιωμάτων.

Abstract

The present dissertation examines the role of diversity and inclusion in the modern workplace, as well as the way the organizational effectiveness is affected by the practices related to this issue. The study focuses on the relationship of diversity with the organizational behavior, inclusive leadership, organizational culture and the employee experience. At the same time, it examines the challenges that organizations face during the management of a diverse workforce.

The study was based on a literature review approach and was conducted through the analysis of secondary data, including academic journal articles, scientific publications, professional reports and already published empirical studies based on diversity and inclusion in organizations. Through the literature review issues like the stereotypes, the psychological dimensions of inclusion, unconscious bias, workplace inequalities and organizational practices implemented for the creation of more inclusive workplaces, were examined.

The findings showed that diversity and inclusion, when it is supported by the appropriate organizational culture, inclusive leadership and long-term organizational commitment, can contribute positively to the organizational performance, decision making, innovation and employee experience. At the same time, the study showed that the stereotypes, the biases, the symbolic diversity practices and the resistance to change can limit the effectiveness of inclusion initiatives. Moreover, the present study highlights the importance of the psychological dimensions of inclusion, like the psychological safety, the feeling of belonging and the opportunity for the employees' authentic expression within the workplace.

Finally, the study presents recommendations related to the improvement of diversity and inclusion practices in organizations, while it also suggests directions for future research, especially regarding the long-term effectiveness of the inclusive initiatives, the employee psychological experiences and the potential role of artificial intelligence in reducing bias in the workplace.

Keywords:

Diversity, Inclusion, Organizational Culture, Diversity Management, Inclusive Leadership, Unconscious Bias, Psychological Safety.

Περίληψη

Η παρούσα διπλωματική εργασία ερευνά τον ρόλο της διαφορετικότητας και της συμπερίληψης στο σύγχρονο περιβάλλον εργασίας, καθώς και τον τρόπο με τον οποίο η αποτελεσματικότητα των οργανισμών επηρεάζεται από τις πρακτικές του εν λόγω ζητήματος. Η μελέτη επικεντρώνεται στη σχέση της διαφορετικότητας με την οργανωσιακή απόδοση, την συμπεριληπτική ηγεσία, την οργανωσιακή κουλτούρα και τις εμπειρίες των εργαζομένων. Παράλληλα εξετάζει τις προκλήσεις που αντιμετωπίζουν οι οργανισμοί κατά την διαχείριση ενός πολυποίκιλου εργατικού δυναμικού.

Η μελέτη βασίστηκε σε ποιοτική μεθοδολογική προσέγγιση και πραγματοποιήθηκε μέσω της ανάλυσης δευτερογενών δεδομένων και της υπάρχουσας ακαδημαϊκής βιβλιογραφίας σχετικά με την διαφορετικότητα και τη συμπερίληψη στους οργανισμούς. Μέσα από την βιβλιογραφική ανασκόπηση εξετάστηκαν ζητήματα όπως τα στερεότυπα, οι ψυχολογικές distástσεις της συμπερίληψης, οι ασυνείδητες προκαταλήψεις, οι ανισότητες στον χώρο εργασίας και οι οργανωσιακές πρακτικές που ακολουθούνται προκειμένου να δημιουργηθούν πιο συμπεριληπτικά εργασιακά περιβάλλοντα.

Τα ευρήματα της μελέτης δείχνουν ότι η διαφορετικότητα και η συμπερίληψη, όταν υποστηρίζονται από την κατάλληλη οργανωσιακή κουλτούρα, συμπεριληπτική ηγεσία και μακροπρόθεσμη δέσμευση, μπορούν να συμβάλλουν θετικά στην οργανωσιακή απόδοση, στην λήψη αποφάσεων, στην καινοτομία και στις εμπειρίες των εργαζομένων. Παράλληλα, η μελέτη έδειξε ότι τα στερεότυπα, οι προκαταλήψεις, οι συμβολικές πρακτικές και η αντίσταση στην αλλαγή μπορούν να περιορίσουν την αποτελεσματικότητα των πρωτοβουλιών συμπερίληψης. Επιπλέον, η παρούσα μελέτη υπογραμμίζει την σημασία των ψυχολογικών distástσεων της συμπερίληψης, όπως την ψυχολογική ασφάλεια, το αίσθημα του ανήκειν και την δυνατότητα της αυθεντικής έκφρασης των εργαζομένων στον χώρο εργασίας.

Τέλος, η εργασία παρουσιάζει προτάσεις σχετικές με την βελτίωση των πρακτικών διαφορετικότητας και συμπερίληψης στους οργανισμούς ενώ παράλληλα προτείνει κατευθύνσεις για μελλοντική έρευνα, ειδικά σε θέματα που σχετίζονται με την μακροπρόθεσμη αποτελεσματικότητα των πρωτοβουλιών συμπερίληψης, τις ψυχολογικές εμπειρίες των εργαζομένων και τον πιθανό ρόλο της τεχνητής νοημοσύνης στην μείωση των προκαταλήψεων στον χώρο εργασίας.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά:

Διαφορετικότητα, Συμπερίληψη, Οργανωσιακή Κουλτούρα, Διαχείριση Διαφορετικότητας, Συμπεριληπτική Ηγεσία, Ασυνείδητη Μεροληψία, Ψυχολογική Ασφάλεια.

Πρόλογος

Η διαφορετικότητα και η συμπερίληψη αποτελούν τα τελευταία χρόνια ένα από τα πιο σημαντικά ζητήματα που απασχολούν τόσο την κοινωνία όσο και τους σύγχρονους οργανισμούς. Καθώς η παγκοσμιοποίηση μεγαλώνει και οι κοινωνίες γίνονται ολοένα και πιο πολυπολιτισμικές, οι σύγχρονες επιχειρήσεις αντιμετωπίζουν σημαντικές προκλήσεις στην προσπάθειά τους να διαχειριστούν εργαζόμενους με διαφορετικές εμπειρίες, αντιλήψεις και χαρακτηριστικά, ενώ παράλληλα προσπαθούν να δημιουργήσουν ένα εργασιακό περιβάλλον μέσα στο οποίο όλοι οι εργαζόμενοι να αισθάνονται αποδεκτοί, σεβαστοί και ικανοί να συμμετέχουν ουσιαστικά.

Η επιλογή του συγκεκριμένου θέματος προέκυψε από το ιδιαίτερο ενδιαφέρον μου για τα κοινωνικά και οργανωσιακά ζητήματα που σχετίζονται με την ισότητα, καθώς και για την προοπτική των επιχειρήσεων να επιτύχουν πιο ομαλή λειτουργία και καλύτερα αποτελέσματα μέσω της ενίσχυσης της ανθρώπινης συνύπαρξης και συνεργασίας. Παρά τη σημαντική πρόοδο που έχει σημειωθεί τις τελευταίες δεκαετίες, εξακολουθούν να υπάρχουν φαινόμενα όπως τα στερεότυπα, οι προκαταλήψεις και οι ανισότητες, τα οποία επηρεάζουν την ομαλή λειτουργία πολλών οργανισμών καθώς και τις επαγγελματικές εμπειρίες των εργαζομένων.

Παράλληλα, η μελέτη της διαφορετικότητας και της συμπερίληψης παρουσιάζει ιδιαίτερο ενδιαφέρον, καθώς πρόκειται για ένα πολυδιάστατο ζήτημα που εμπλέκει δυο πολύπλοκα συστήματα, αυτό της κοινωνίας και αυτό του εργασιακού περιβάλλοντος. Για τον λόγο αυτό, οι οργανωσιακές πρακτικές και στρατηγικές συχνά δεν είναι αρκετές από μόνες τους για την αποτελεσματική διαχείρισή του, καθώς το ζήτημα συνδέεται άμεσα με την ανθρώπινη συμπεριφορά, την ψυχολογία και τις κοινωνικές αντιλήψεις. Η παρούσα εργασία επιχειρεί να προσεγγίσει το θέμα τόσο από επιχειρησιακή όσο και από κοινωνική σκοπιά, εξετάζοντας τα οφέλη, τις προκλήσεις και τις πρακτικές που σχετίζονται με την δημιουργία πιο συμπεριληπτικών εργασιακών περιβαλλόντων.

Τέλος, θα ήθελα να εκφράσω τις ευχαριστίες μου στην επιβλέπουσα καθηγήτριά μου, Σοφία Χατζή για την καθοδήγησή και στήριξή της κατά τη διάρκεια της εκπόνησης της παρούσας διπλωματικής εργασίας, καθώς και στους γονείς μου Μαρία και Κώστα, στα αδέρφια μου Μανώλη και Ιωάννα, καθώς και στους φίλους μου που με στήριξαν καθ' όλη τη διάρκεια των σπουδών μου.

1 Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	1
1.1	Historical Development of Diversity and Inclusion	1
1.1.1	Early Forms of Exclusion and Inequality	1
1.1.2	The Civil Rights Movement and Equal Employment Opportunities	2
1.1.3	Diversity as a Legal and Ethical and Business Issue	2
1.2	Definition of Diversity	3
1.3	Definition of Inclusion	3
1.4	Research Aim and Objectives	4
1.5	Research Questions	4
1.6	Structure of the Dissertation	5
2	Literature Review	6
2.1	Importance of Diversity and Inclusion in Organizations	6
2.1.1	Diversity as a Driver of Innovation	6
2.1.2	Diversity and Employee Satisfaction and Retention	9
2.1.3	Diversity and Competitive Advantage	9
2.1.4	Challenges in Managing Diversity	10
2.2	Diversity and Organizational Performance	14
2.3	Gender Inequality and Patriarchal Structures in the Workplace	15
2.4	Best Practices for Inclusive Workplaces	16
2.5	Challenges in Implementing Diversity and Inclusion	18
3	Research Methodology	20
3.1	Research Approach	20
3.2	Data Collection Method	20
3.3	Data Analysis	21
3.4	Ethical Considerations	22
4	Findings/Analysis	23
4.1	Overview of Findings	23
4.2	Key Themes Identified	23
4.2.1	Diversity and Organizational Performance	23
4.2.2	Diversity and Innovation	24
4.2.3	Inclusion and Employee Experience	24
4.2.4	Inclusive Leadership and Organizational Culture	25
4.3	Interpretation of Results	26
5	Discussion	27
5.1	Discussion of Findings	27

5.2	Implications for Organizations and Management	28
5.3	Recommendations.....	30
5.4	Limitations of the Study.....	33
5.5	Suggestions for Future Research	33
5.6	Conclusion	34

1. Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical background of diversity and inclusion in the workplace and explains why these concepts have nowadays become important for modern organizations. Initially, the historical development of diversity and inclusion is examined as well as the main factors that contributed in their emergence as an important business issue. At the same time the main forms of diversity found in contemporary organizations are presented, together with the most important social and economic developments that increased the interest in this topic. Overall, the aim of this chapter is to offer the necessary background for understanding diversity and inclusion in the modern workplace.

1.1 Historical Development of Diversity and Inclusion

1.1.1 Early Forms of Exclusion and Inequality

Before diversity and inclusion became important in the management of human resources and the operation of organizations, many working places were characterized by exclusion and inequalities. For many decades, employees were not treated equally, given the fact that hiring, wages, promotions and the access to leadership positions were greatly affected by factors like gender, race, age, religion or class.

Women were one of the groups that was mostly impacted by discrimination in the work place. In many cases they were perceived most suitable for administrative, supporting or lower status positions, while they rarely had access in leading roles and positions of responsibility. At the same time, there were great wage differences between men and women even when they had the same qualities and experience. Moreover, the social perception about women's role within the family was affecting negatively her professional development, since many women were considered less committed to work due to their maternal role or their family obligations.

Meanwhile racial or ethnical minorities were facing similar difficulties. In many cases the employees from minority groups were excluded from particular job positions or were receiving lower wages and fewer opportunities for development. Especially in the United States of America, the racial segregation deeply affected the labor market, since there were limitations on African-Americans in accessing many job positions or professions. These discriminations were not limited only in hiring, but also affected their education, evaluation, promotion opportunities and their overall professional development, often intensifying the feeling of being undervalued and neglected.

The increasing social pressure for equal rights all over the world, led gradually in the creation of regulatory legislation for the protection of employees against discrimination. In the USA, the Equal Pay Act was passed in 1963, aiming to reduce the differences in wages between men and women performing the same job. A little later, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination in the workplace due to sex, race, religion or ethnic origin. In the United Kingdom the Equal Pay Act was introduced in 1970, while in Europe the principle of equal pay had already been established in 1957 through the Treaty of Rome. Similarly, in Australia, the right was officially recognized in 1969.

Consequently, the initial forms of exclusion and inequality in the work place created significant obstacles for many social groups. Over time, the social pressure and the demands for equal rights gradually led to the introduction of legislative changes that supported the equal employment opportunities. (Triana et al., 2021)

1.1.2 The Civil Rights Movement and Equal Employment Opportunities

The Civil Rights Movement played a very important role in the development of equal employment opportunities in the work place. Although it initially focused mainly on protecting the rights of African-Americans in the United States, it gradually influenced broader discussions about equality, discrimination and fair treatment in employment. During the 1950s and 1960s, the social pressure for equal rights were increased significantly, leading governments and organizations to reexamine practices that were limiting the access to jobs, promotions and fair pay (Bailey et al., 2024; Triana et al., 2021).

A very important turning point was the introduction of Equal Pay Act in 1963, which was aimed to reduce wage differences between men and women that were performing the same work. A little later, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination in the work place based on race, sex, religion or national origin. Specifically, the Title VII of the Act made discrimination illegal in hiring, in promotion, dismissal and compensation. These legislative developments basically established the principle that equal treatment in the work place is not only a social expectation but also a legal obligation (Bailey et al., 2024; Goldman et al., 2006).

The influence of these changes gradually expanded beyond the USA. In Europe, the principle of equal pay was already established through the Treaty of Rome in 1957, but the international attention that created the Civil Rights Movement reinforced even more the discussion about equality in the workplace. The next decades, countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom introduced their own laws for equal pay and prohibited discrimination. As a result, the creation of Civil Rights Movement was a very important historical turning point that contributed in the development of equal employment opportunities and anti-discrimination measures in many countries around the world (Fauzi et al., 2024; Triana et al., 2021).

1.1.3 Diversity as a Legal and Ethical and Business Issue

With the passing of time, diversity and inclusion stopped being treated exclusively as a social issue and evolved into important legal, ethical and business issues. Initially the introduction of laws against discrimination and in favor of equal opportunities created a legal frame that obliged organizations to secure equal treatment of employees regardless of sex, race age, religion or other characteristics. Therefore, the compliance with the relevant legislations not only was a legal obligation but also a fundamental requirement for the effective operation of businesses (Goldman et al., 2006; Fauzi et al., 2024).

At the same time, diversity also started to be viewed as an ethical matter because it was linked with the principals of justice, respect, equality and human dignity. The organizations recognized that the creation of an environment without exclusion is not only about avoiding legal consequences, but also about the reinforcement of trust, commitment and well-being of the employees (Fauzi et al., 2024; Triana et al., 2021).

At the same time, many businesses started viewing diversity as a strategic tool. The existence of employees with different experiences, skills and cultural characteristics was linked with

higher levels of creativity, innovation and better decision making. Moreover, the organizations that invest in diversity are often more attractive for employees, customers and business partners, while they can acquire competitive advantage and better financial performance (Patrick & Kumar, 2012; Cletus et al., 2018; Roberson, 2018).

It is for this reason, that diversity and inclusion are now considered not only a matter of social justice but also an important element of the modern business strategy (Triana et al., 2021).

1.2 Definition of Diversity

The definition of diversity refers to the variety of differences that exist between individuals within an organization. These differences can be related to demographic characteristics, like gender, ethnicity, educational level and socioeconomic background but they also extend to other factors, like sexual orientation, geographical origin, religious or political beliefs and the personal experiences of employees. From this point of view, diversity includes both obvious and less obvious characteristics that differentiate people in the workplace and affect not only the way they perceive themselves but also the way they are perceived by others within the workplace.

Apart from demographic characteristics, diversity also includes differences in perception, experiences, values and the employees' ways of thinking. These differences affect the ways people interact with each other within the organization, as well as communication, cooperation and decision-making processes. For this reason, diversity in the workplace is not restricted only to the presence of different social groups, but it is also related to the recognition, acceptance and management of personal differences, aiming to create a working environment in which every employee can utilize their abilities and contribute effectively to the organization's goals (Patrick & Kumar, 2012; Cletus, et al., 2018).

The meaning of diversity has evolved greatly in the literature of the organizational behavior and even though there are many definitions, there is not only one that is universally accepted. According to the relevant theoretical approaches, diversity is not limited only in observable demographic characteristics but also includes a wide range of individual differences such as cognitive abilities, experiences, and the employees' values and ways of thinking. Furthermore, the recent literature approaches diversity as a multidimensional concept, which is formed through the interaction of individuals in the work place and affects the function of organizations. Consequently, diversity is not only a characteristic of the workforce composition but also a dynamic process that is connected with the utilization of differences for the improvement of the organizational performance and innovation (Roberson, 2018).

1.3 Definition of Inclusion

The concept of inclusion refers to the level at which the individuals feel that they are a part of the workplace, while at the same time their uniqueness is recognized and valued. According to the relevant literature, inclusion is connected with the satisfaction of two basic employee needs: the need to be integrated and accepted within the team (belongingness) and the need to preserve their personal identity and differentiation (uniqueness). In this context, a working environment is considered inclusive when the individuals don't simply participate, but also have an active role, voice and the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the operation and development of the organization (Shore, et al., 2011).

Even though the concept of inclusion has been described in the literature through specific characteristics, like the feeling of belonging and the recognition of employees' uniqueness, there is not a universally accepted definition of it. On the contrary, inclusion is approached as a complex concept, which varies depending on the theoretical perspective and the research context (Hodkinson, 2011). However, a common element of most approaches is the emphasis on the quality of the individuals' participation in the workplace as well as their ability to express themselves and maintain their personal identity (Shore, et al., 2011). As a result, inclusion should not be treated as a static condition, but rather as a dynamic process that evolves through social interactions and influences the function of organizations.

1.4 Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the role of diversity and inclusion in the modern workplace and to analyze the way in which these concepts affect the operation and the effectiveness of organizations. More specifically, this study seeks to examine the main benefits of diversity and inclusion for businesses, as well as the most important challenges that appear during the management of a diverse workforce. At the same time, the aim is to examine the role of the organizational culture, leadership and inclusive practices in the creation of a working environment where employees feel respected, accepted and able to participate meaningfully.

The basic objectives of the study are the following:

- To examine the basic concepts and dimensions of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- To analyze the relationship between diversity, innovation, employee satisfaction, retention and competitive advantage.
- To examine the main challenges associated with the management of diversity, like the unconscious bias, stereotypes and social inequalities in the workplace.
- To examine the role of organizational culture and leadership supporting diversity and inclusion.
- To identify the most effective practices and strategies that organizations can apply in order to create a more inclusive working environment.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the aim of this study, some basic research questions arise. Questions that will guide the analysis of the topic. These questions focus on the benefits, the challenges and the practices that relate with diversity and inclusion in organizations and are the following:

- Which are the basic concepts and dimensions of diversity and inclusion in the working place?
- What is the relationship between diversity and inclusion with innovation, employee satisfaction, employee retention, competitive advantage and organizational performance?
- What are the main challenges related to the management of diversity in organizations?
- How do bias, stereotypes and inequalities affect employees' inclusion and performance in the workplace?

- What is the role of the organizational culture and leadership in supporting diversity and inclusion?
- Which practices and strategies are considered more effective for the creation of inclusive work environments?
- Which situations related to diversity and inclusion need more research in the future?

1.6 Structure of the Dissertation

The first chapter presents the introduction of the dissertation. More specifically, it introduces the topic of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, by making a historical overview of the past and how social struggles and movements led to fundamental changes that are still relevant today. It explains the meaning of the topic and presents the aim, objectives and research questions of the study.

The second chapter presents the literature review of the study and examines the meaning and importance of diversity and inclusion in modern organizations. More specifically, it analyses the relationship between diversity and the organizational performance, innovation, employee satisfaction and inclusive leadership. At the same time, issues related to stereotypes, unconscious bias and discrimination in the workplace are examined, as well as the role of the organizational culture and the inclusion practices in the effective management of diversity.

The third chapter presents the research methodology in this dissertation. More specifically, it discusses the use of secondary data and the existing academic literature for purposes of the study. Furthermore, the methods of data collection and analysis are described, along with the ethical considerations of the research process.

The fourth chapter presents the findings and analysis of the research. More specifically, the main themes that emerged through the analysis of the literature are identified, including the organizational performance, innovation, employee experience, inclusive leadership and the challenges associated with the management of diversity. At the same time, a critical interpretation of the findings is conducted, while the psychological, social and organizational factors that affect diversity and inclusion in the modern workplace, are also examined.

The fifth chapter presents the discussion of the findings and examines the implications of diversity and inclusion for organizations and management. More specifically, the chapter analyzes the organizational and managerial implications that appear through the literature review and the findings of the study focusing on issues like leadership, communication, inclusion practices, organizational performance and the effective management of diverse workforces. At the same time, the chapter presents a summary of the main findings, recommendations for organizations, the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief section that summarizes the overall contribution of the study and highlights the importance of diversity and inclusion in the modern organizations.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Importance of Diversity and Inclusion in Organizations

2.1.1 Diversity as a Driver of Innovation

Diversity and Inclusion can significantly reinforce creativity and innovation within organizations. When employees come from different cultural, social and professional backgrounds they bring with them different experiences, skills and ways of thinking. This allows teams to examine a problem from multiple points of view and suggest more alternative solutions (Triana et al., 2021; Cletus et al., 2018).

The homogeneous teams tend to often think in a similar way and may be more easily led to limited or repetitive ideas. On the contrary, the diverse teams have greater chances of producing new ideas, to identify opportunities that others don't see and to respond more effectively in complex problems. For this reason, diversity is considered an important factor when it comes to enhancing creativity, critical thinking and decision making (Triana et al., 2021).

At the same time, inclusion plays an equally important role. The existence of different people in an organization is not enough on its own, if the employees don't feel able to express their opinions freely. An environment of inclusion allows the employees to feel accepted, respected and safe enough to share their ideas without the fear of negative criticism or exclusion. Therefore, organizations can value fully the benefits of diversity (Shore, et al., 2011; Hodkinson, 2011).

Moreover, businesses that invest in diversity and inclusion can respond better to the needs of different customers and markets. Employees with different backgrounds can understand better the preferences, values and needs of different social groups, which helps the organizations in developing innovative products and services. This is why diversity and inclusion are now considered important elements for innovation and the long-term success of organizations (Patrick & Kumar, 2012).

However, the relationship between diversity and innovation is not always positive. Some researchers suggest that diversity can also create challenges, like difficulty in communication, misunderstandings and conflicts between employees with different backgrounds and with different opinions. In some cases, groups with significant differences may need more time in order to develop trust and cooperation. For this reason, diversity on its own is not enough to enhance innovation. Organizations also need inclusive leadership, effective communication and supportive organizational culture so they can fully benefit from diversity (Triana et al., 2021; Shore, et al., 2011).

A significant advantage of diversity is that it improves problem solving. Employees with different experiences can detect dangers, opportunities and alternative solutions that others may not notice. As a result, organizations are able to make more effective decisions and to respond faster to unexpected situations. Diverse teams are also more likely to produce creative ideas, because they combine different ways of thinking and different kinds of expertise (Triana, et al., 2021; Cletus, et al. 2018; Patrick & Kumar, 2012).

Moreover, diverse organizations are often more capable of adapting in the always changing conditions of the market, because they are exposed in a larger variety of ideas and opinions. This flexibility is particularly important in sectors where organizations must respond rapidly to customer needs, the technological developments and the international competition. Employees with different cultural and professional backgrounds may also have a better understanding of global markets and international customers, which can help organizations identify new business opportunities (Lorenzo, et al., 2017).

The relationship between diversity and innovation is also supported by empirical evidence. According to a Boston Consulting Group study conducted in 2017, some forms of diversity appear to have a stronger relationship with innovation than others. Specifically, diversity in industry background, country of origin, career path and gender were found to have a positive relation with innovation, while the academic background didn't show a significant relationship and age diversity was negatively associated with innovation. These findings are presented in Figure 1 (Exhibit 2) (Lorenzo, et al., 2017).

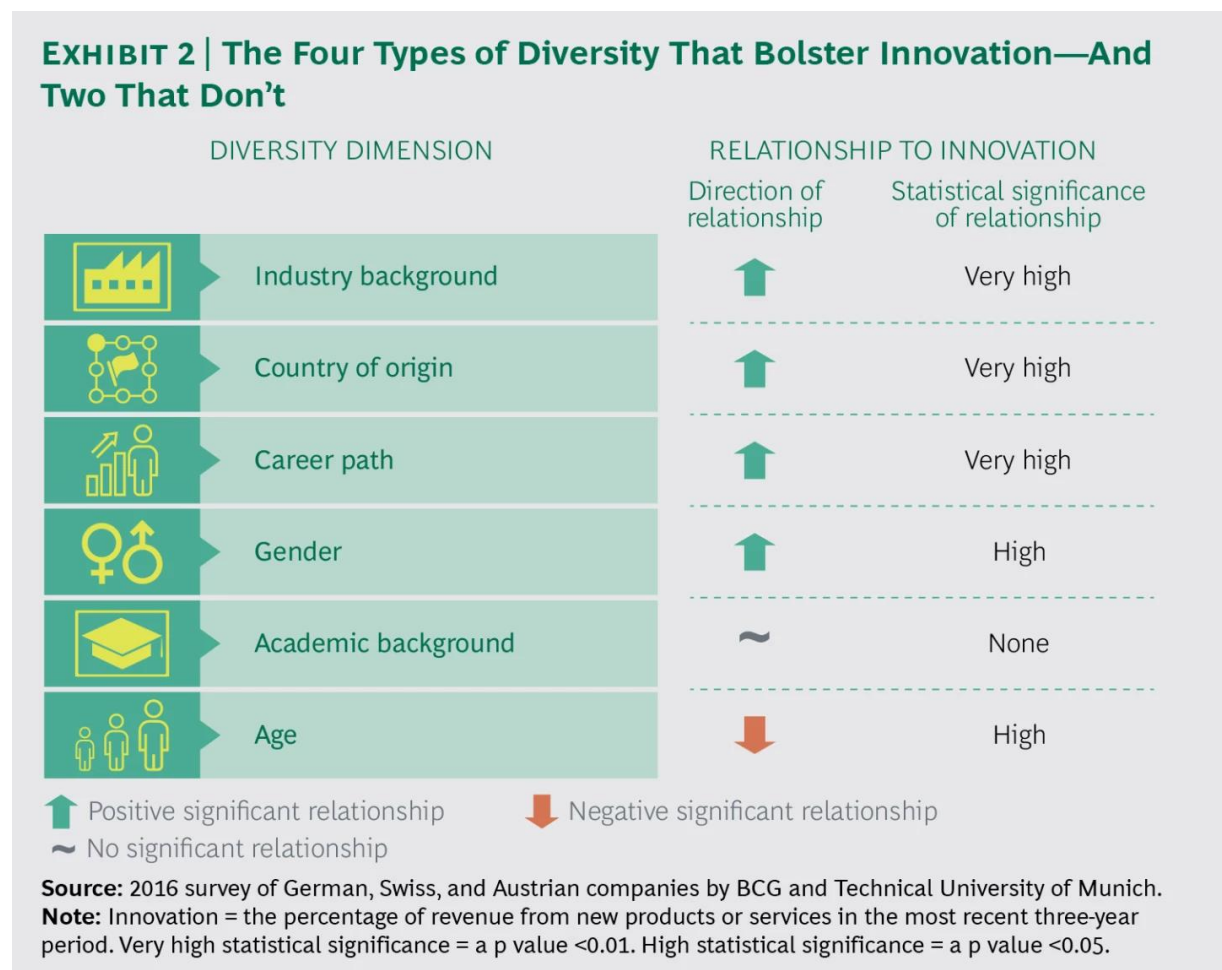


Figure 1. Types of diversity and their relationship with innovation

Source: Adapted from Boston Consulting Group and Technical University of Munich (2016), “The Mix That Matters: Innovation Through Diversity”

Among the different dimensions of diversity that is examined by the literature, gender diversity appears to have a really important relationship with innovation and organizational creativity.

The positive role of women in management was also pointed out in the findings of Boston Consulting Group. More specifically, the companies in which women were occupying more than 20% of the managerial positions demonstrated significantly higher levels of innovation revenue compared to the companies with lower female representation. Organizations with more than 20% women in management generated median innovation revenue of 25%, while organizations with a lower percentage of women in managerial positions reported innovation revenue of only 15%. This suggests that greater female participation in leadership can contribute to the development of new ideas, products and services. Figure 2 (Exhibit 6) below presents the relationship between diversity and innovation revenue (Lorenzo, et al., 2017).

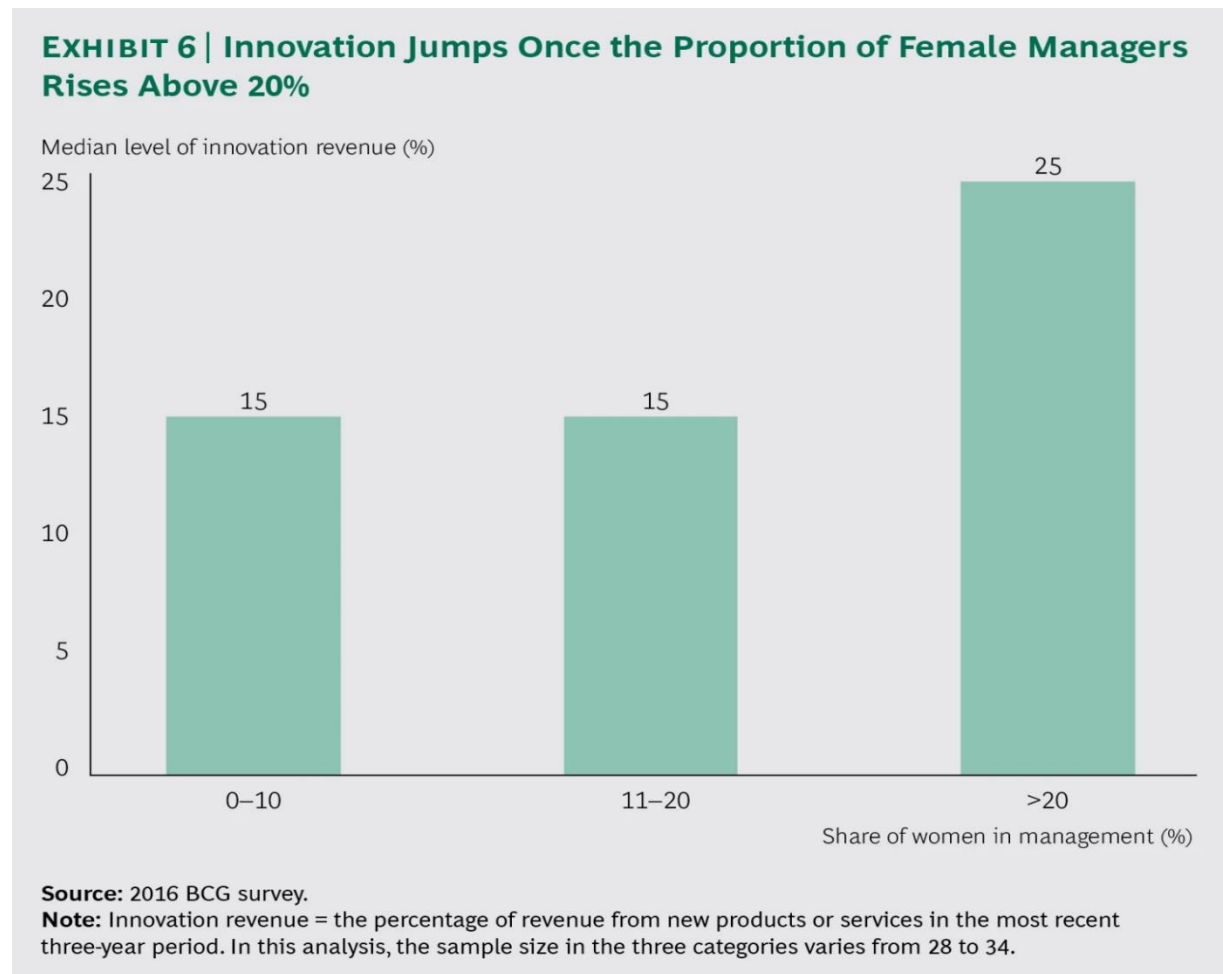


Figure 2. Relationship between the share of women in management and innovation revenue

Source: Adapted from Boston Consulting Group and Technical University of Munich (2016), “The Mix That Matters: Innovation Through Diversity”

According to a follow-up study of Boston Consulting Group that was published in 2018, additional evidence emerged about the relationship between diversity and innovation. The researchers examined 1.700 companies and concluded that companies with greater diversity in their managerial teams demonstrated innovation revenues 19% higher than the ones with lower levels of diversity. More specifically, 45% of the total revenues of organizations with more diverse management teams, were derived from innovative products and services, compared to only 26% in less diverse organizations. The study also showed that diverse managerial groups

were more capable of developing products for different customer groups and identifying new market opportunities (Lorenzo, et al., 2018).

The study also showed that diversity is more effective when it is supported by appropriate organizational conditions. Companies that are characterized by participative leadership, support from the CEO, open communication, fair practices and acceptance of new ideas demonstrated stronger innovation performance. In particular, organizations with the above supportive characteristics reported innovation revenues about 13% higher compared to companies where such characteristics were either weak or non-existent (Lorenzo, et al., 2018).

2.1.2 Diversity and Employee Satisfaction and Retention

Diversity and inclusion can significantly affect the employee satisfaction and the retention within an organization. When employees feel that they are treated with respect and justice, they are more likely to feel higher job satisfaction and a stronger connection with the organization. On the other hand, when there are discriminations, employees might feel disappointment, a lack of motivation and the desire to leave the organization (Mohanty & Acharya, 2020).

At the same time, inclusion enhances the feeling of belonging, which refers to the feeling that employees are accepted and are an important part of the organization. Employees that feel that their opinions are taken into consideration and that they have equal opportunities for development are most probable to demonstrate higher levels of commitment, organizational commitment and work satisfaction. For this reason, organizations that invest in diversity and inclusion often have lower levels of turnover (rate of employee departures from the organization) and higher employee retention (Mohanty & Acharya, 2020; Shore, et al., 2011).

Moreover, the organizational culture plays a crucial role in the relationship between diversity and retention. The existence of different groups of employees is not enough on its own, if the working environment is not supportive. Employees are more likely to stay in an organization when they feel that there is open communication, equal treatment, development opportunities and supportive leadership. On the other hand, when employees feel excluded or that they don't have equal opportunities, this might increase their intention to leave the organization (Ramasamy, et al., 2025; Shore, et al., 2011).

Even though a lot of studies show that diversity and inclusion are linked with higher employee satisfaction and retention, these results are not the same in every organization. In some cases, employees may think that diversity initiatives are only superficial or that they are not reflected in the everyday operation of the organization. This can lead to lower trust towards management and limited commitment towards the organization. Moreover, factors like wages, development opportunities, quality of leadership and the general work culture can also significantly affect the intention of employees to stay in the organization. For this reason, further research is required on the factors that strengthen the relationship between diversity, inclusion and retention (Ibrahim, 2025; Ramasamy, et al., 2025).

2.1.3 Diversity and Competitive Advantage

Diversity and inclusion can be a significant source of competitive advantage for companies, because it allows them to respond more effectively in complex and uncertain environments. Modern businesses operate in conditions of rapid technological change, globalization and customers' increasing expectations. In these circumstances, companies that rely on employees

with different experiences, points of view and ways of thinking are often better prepared to recognize danger, to identify opportunities and to respond to unexpected challenges. As a result, these businesses can become more flexible and adaptable, something that is very important especially in extremely competitive sectors where change happens fast (Dixon-Fyle, et al. 2020).

At the same time diversity can strengthen the ability of organizations to attract and retain talented employees. Many younger generations of employees, as well as highly skilled professionals prefer to work in companies that promote justice, equal opportunities and respect towards personal differences. Therefore, businesses that invest in diversity and inclusion are often considered more attractive employers. This can improve the reputation and the employer brand of the organization, making it easier to attract talented employees and to reduce the employee turnover (Dixon-Fyle, et al., 2020).

Moreover, diversity on its own is not enough to create competitive advantage. Organizations also need inclusion to utilize fully the knowledge, the skills and ideas of their employees. Inclusive organizations are more likely to encourage participation, open communication and cooperation between employees. As a result, employees feel more comfortable to express their opinions and to suggest new ideas, something that can improve the organizational effectiveness and decision making. Consequently, the competitive advantage does not come only from the ability existence of diversity but also from the ability of organizations to manage and utilize it effectively (Dixon-Fyle, et al. 2020; Shore, et al., 2011).

The empirical data also suggest a relationship between diversity and competitive advantage. According to a McKinsey report published in 2020, companies in the top quartile for gender diversity in executive teams were 25% more likely to achieve above-average profitability than companies in the lowest quartile. Additionally, organizations in the top quartile for ethnic and cultural diversity outperformed less diverse companies by 36% in profitability. These findings suggest that diversity management can contribute not only to employee well-being but also to the creation of sustainable competitive advantage (Dixon-Fyle, et al., 2020).

Moreover, evidence provided by Urbancová et al. (2020), showed that many organizations consider diversity an important factor for the improvement of organizational performance. More specifically, 43,9% of the organizations participating in the study believed that diversity management contributes to the retention of key employees. In addition, 39,3% associated it with higher levels of motivation and performance, while 33,9% believed that it contributes to a better workplace climate. These findings show that the management of diversity can contribute not only in the well-being of the employees but also to the creation of a sustainable competitive advantage (Urbancová, Hudáková, & Fajčíková, 2020).

2.1.4 Challenges in Managing Diversity

Even though diversity can offer important benefits to the organizations, its management often is a complex process. The existence of employees with different cultural, social and professional background does not automatically lead in positive results. In many cases, organizations face significant difficulties when trying to create a really inclusive environment. These difficulties can appear in hirings, performance evaluations, promotion opportunities and in everyday interactions between employees. As a result, the effective management of diversity

requires not only typical policies, but also continuous organizational commitment and support from leaders (Mbonigaba & Vanitha, 2023).

One of the basic challenges in the management of diversity is the existence of unconscious bias. Unconscious bias refers to the automatic attitudes and stereotypes that affect decisions without individuals fully realizing it. According to Mbonigaba and Vanitha (2023) the most common forms of unconscious bias in organizations are the affinity bias, confirmation bias and halo effect. Between them, affinity bias seems to be the most frequent. The study found significant statistical difference among the different forms of bias in the workplace ($\chi^2 = 23,45$, $P < 0,05$), with affinity bias appearing more frequently. Affinity bias refers to the managers' and employees' tendency to prefer people who are similar to them in terms of gender, educational background, way of working or other personal characteristics. Confirmation bias refers to their tendency to search or interpret information in a way that confirms the existing perceptions or stereotypes about a person or a group. For example, managers can emphasize more on information that reinforces their initial impression of an employee, ignoring evidence that contradicts it. The halo effect refers to the tendency to evaluate an employee positively in all areas because of only one positive characteristic, like their communication skills, their education or their appearance. These forms of bias can create obstacles for employees from underrepresented groups and limit equal opportunities in the workplace (Mbonigaba & Vanitha, 2023).

At the same time, the challenges of managing diversity don't stop after the hiring process. Employees can continue facing unequal access to important projects, leadership opportunities and promotion possibilities. The study found strong negative relationship between unconscious bias and workplace diversity ($r = -0,67$, $p < 0,01$), which shows that the higher levels of bias are related with lower levels of diversity. Moreover, unconscious bias was found to explain 45% of the variation in the organizational performance, meaning that almost half of the differences in the lower organizational performance can be linked to the unconscious bias. Employees who work in environments with high levels of unconscious bias reported lower levels of engagement, with engagement levels decreasing from 90% in organizations with low levels of bias to only 60% in organizations with high levels of unconscious bias. Consequently, employees can become less motivated, less committed and more likely to leave (Mbonigaba & Vanitha, 2023).

Another important challenge is that diversity policies on their own are not enough to create real inclusion. Organizations may formally support diversity but employees can still experience exclusion if there is no meaningful commitment from leadership. This is why organizations need to adopt more effective measures that reduce subjectivity and to improve fairness in decision making. According to Mbonigaba and Vanitha (2023), some of the most effective practices include inclusive leadership programs, blind recruitment processes and diverse hiring panels. The inclusive leadership programs were considered the most effective strategy, receiving an effectiveness rating 4,5 out of 5, while the blind recruitment processes received a rating of 4,2 out of 5 (Mbonigaba & Vanitha, 2023).

However, some studies suggest that these practices are not always as effective in every organization. For example, unconscious bias training was found to be only moderately effective, receiving a rating of 3,5 out of 5, indicating that training on its own may not be

enough unless it is combined with further organizational changes, such as transparent policies and continuous monitoring of the outcomes (Mbonigaba & Vanitha, 2023).

2.1.4.1 Unconscious Bias and Workplace Stereotypes

Recent literature supports that unconscious bias in organizations should not be examined only as an individual issue but also as a structural and organizational phenomenon. Organizations are not always neutral environments, since the organizational processes, the workplace rules and the evaluation systems may unintentionally reproduce inequalities related to gender, race, social background and other demographic characteristics (Clar, Muhr, Reiss, & Storm, 2021).

At the same time, the literature indicates that bias in the workplace is not necessarily created exclusively inside organizations but is also influenced by broader social and psychological factors. Individuals often transfer pre-existing stereotypes, perceptions and behavioral patterns into the workplace affecting the communication, cooperation and the decision-making processes (Greenwald, et al., 2022).

Unconscious bias can affect the decision making, the promotion opportunities, leadership evaluation and the assessment of employee performance, even when the individuals believe they are acting objectively. Moreover, the stereotypes and unconscious bias continue to influence the workplace behavior even in organizations that officially support diversity and inclusion policies. According to the literature, stereotypes often function as automatic categorizations and cognitive shortcuts, that affect the way individuals evaluate and interact with other people in the workplace. As a result, different employee groups may be evaluated differently even when they present similar qualifications, performance and professional behavior (Clar, Muhr, Reiss, & Storm, 2021; Greenwald, et al., 2022).

For this reason, unconscious bias often leads to more subtle and less visible forms of discrimination rather than the direct exclusion. Employees who belong to underrepresented groups may experience unequal treatment, limited opportunities and lower levels of recognition within organizations, despite the existence of official inclusion initiatives (Greenwald, et al., 2022).

Figure 3 presents the evolution of workplace bias over time, showing the gradual transition from more direct and conscious forms of discrimination to more subtle and unconscious forms of bias. At the same time, the diagram highlights that, although the openly discriminatory behaviors have decreased overtime due to legal, social and organizational changes, the stereotypes, biases and unconscious perceptions continue to affect the workplace interactions, the employee evaluation and the inclusion within organizations (Greenwald, et al., 2022).

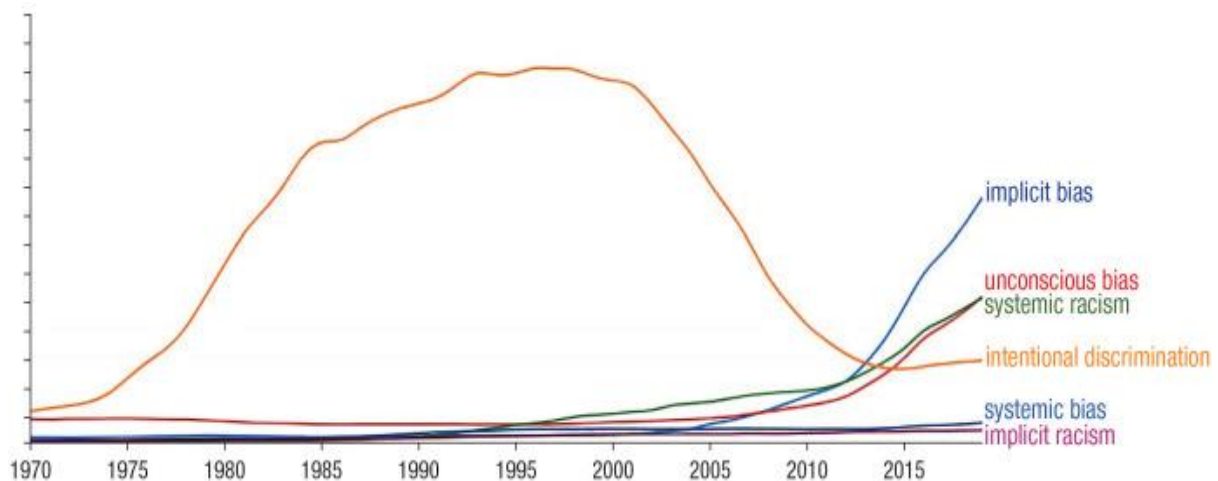


Figure 3. Transition from Explicit to Implicit Forms of Workplace Bias Over Time

Source: Adapted from Greenwald et al. (2022)

2.1.4.2 Psychological and Behavioral Effects of Exclusion

The literature suggests that bias and exclusion in the workplace shouldn't be examined only as organizational issues but also as psychological and behavioral phenomena that influence the everyday experiences of the employees within the workplace. Many studies show that stereotypes, unconscious bias and broader social beliefs can affect not only the organizational decisions but also the ways employees experience participation, communication and interpersonal relationships in the professional environments (Van Laar, et al., 2019).

At the same time, workplace bias is related closely to exclusion, the unequal treatment, the reduced participation and the weaker feelings of belonging within organizations. Employees who belong to underrepresented or stigmatized groups may experience difficulties in expressing themselves freely, participating actively in the organizational processes or feeling fully accepted within the workplace environment. As a result, inclusion is increasingly related to the broader psychological experience of the employees rather than only with the existence of formal diversity policies (Van Laar, et al., 2019).

The literature also suggests that many individuals unconsciously adjust or regulate their behavior in order to adapt easier the expectations of the workplace and to avoid negative judgment or stereotypes. In some cases, employees may limit the expression of certain aspects of their identity or feel pressure to conform to dominant organizational norms and behaviors. Consequently, inclusion in the workplace is strongly connected with psychological safety, which refers to the extent to which employees feel accepted, respected and comfortable enough to express their opinions and participate meaningfully and without fear of exclusion or negative evaluation (Van Laar, et al., 2019).

Additionally, many studies indicate that exclusion and low levels of inclusion can affect negatively the employee commitment, the communication, the organizational loyalty and more generally the interpersonal relationships within the workplace. Employees who experience lower levels of belongingness and psychological safety are often less likely to participate actively, share ideas or develop strong trust toward the organization. For this reason, the literature approaches inclusion as a long-term organizational process, that requires continuous

organizational commitment, leadership support and active efforts to create supportive and psychologically safe work environments (Hodkinson, 2011; Shore, et al., 2011).

2.2 Diversity and Organizational Performance

The relationship between diversity and organizational performance has attracted significant attention in the academic literature, since organizations increasingly recognize that diversity is not only a social or ethical issue, but also a factor that can affect the overall effectiveness. Organizational performance refers to the ability of a business to achieve its goals efficiently, including the financial outcomes, productivity, innovation and the employees' performance.

The existing literature suggests that diversity can affect organizational performance through multiple mechanisms. First, diverse groups tend to reinforce the quality of decision making as individuals with different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives contribute with alternative viewpoints. This allows the organizations to evaluate the problems more critically and to avoid limited or subjective approaches. As a result, the decision-making process is becoming more comprehensive and effective (Triana et al., 2021; Roberson, 2018).

Secondly, diversity can enhance the problem-solving capabilities and the adaptability of organizations. In dynamic and uncertain business environments, organizations must respond quickly to new challenges and opportunities. Groups composed by individuals with diverse knowledge and experiences are often better equipped to understand complex situations and to generate a wider range of solutions. This strengthens the overall flexibility and responsiveness of the organization (Triana et al., 2021).

The impact of diversity on organizational performance becomes even clearer when empirical evidence is considered collectively. Previous studies have shown that diversity is positively related to innovation outcomes, as organizations with more diverse leadership teams tend to generate higher revenues from innovative products and services. In addition, research suggest that firms with higher levels of demographic and sociocultural diversity are more likely to achieve an above the average profitability. When these findings are considered together, it becomes evident that diversity contributes to organizational performance both directly, through improved decision making and adaptability, and indirectly, through the enhanced innovation and financial outcomes. Therefore, diversity can be considered as a strategic factor that influences multiple dimensions of the organizational success (Dixon-Fyle et al., 2020; Lorenzo et al., 2018).

In practice, many large organizations have started treating diversity as a strategic objective that is associated directly to performance rather than a matter of complying to regulations. Multinational organizations are increasingly integrating diversity and inclusion into their strategic planning, aligning related goals with broader business outcomes. This shift reflects the increasing recognition that a diverse workforce can help organizations understand better the international markets, respond more effectively to their customers' needs and strengthen their position against competition.

However, the relationship between diversity and organizational performance is not always linear or inherently positive. Some studies suggest that diversity can also create challenges, especially when it is not supported by appropriate management practices. Differences in values, communication styles and expectations can lead to misunderstandings, conflicts and reduced

team cohesion. In such cases, diversity can result in neutral or even negative outcomes for organizational performance (Triana et al., 2021).

For this reason, many researchers argue that diversity alone is not sufficient to enhance organizational performance. On the contrary, inclusion plays a crucial role in determining whether diversity leads in positive results. When employees feel respected, valued, heard and able to participate actively, they are more likely to contribute effectively with their knowledge and skills. Inclusive leadership, a supportive organizational culture and a fair management are basic conditions for transforming diversity in a source of improved organizational performance (Shore, et al., 2011; Roberson, 2018).

Conclusively, diversity can have a positive impact on organizational performance but the outcome largely depends on how it is managed. Organizations that successfully combine diversity with effective inclusion practices are more likely to benefit from enhanced decision making, increased adaptability and overall improved performance.

2.3 Gender Inequality and Patriarchal Structures in the Workplace

Gender inequality in the workplace is a persistent and multidimensional phenomenon that continues to exist despite the significant progress achieved in recent decades. It refers to unequal opportunities, treatment and access to resources that individuals face based on their gender, affecting important aspects like wages, career advancement and participation in leadership positions. This phenomenon is closely linked to the patriarchal structures which reflect social systems in which power and decision making have traditionally been concentrated in male dominated environments. These structures continue to affect organizational practices and cultures, often in indirect and less visible ways, shaping processes like recruitment, evaluation and promotion.

Gender inequality in the workplace manifests through a series of structural and behavioral mechanisms that affect the professional course of employees. One of the most well documented phenomena is the “glass ceiling”, which refers to invisible barriers that prevent women of accessing higher level leadership positions despite being equally qualified as men. At the same time, the unequal pay continues to be a persistent issue since women often receive lower wages than men for work of equal value (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015).

Moreover, bias in hiring and promotion processes, whether explicit or implicit, are contributing to the underrepresentation of women in positions of high responsibility. Stereotypes related to leadership skills and behavior in the workplace, can also affect performance evaluation and decision making, reinforcing the already existing inequalities. These mechanisms demonstrate that gender inequality is not only the result of individual attitudes but is deeply embedded in the organizational systems and everyday practices (Son Hing, et al., 2023).

Empirical evidence further confirms that the gender gap in the workplace remains multidimensional, affecting wages, hiring processes and career progression. Studies show that women earn on average approximately 20% less than men, with this gap persisting even after controlling for factors like the educational level and professional experience (Toczek, Bosma, & Peter, 2021). Apart from the pay gap, inequalities are also evident in promotion opportunities as the research shows that women have approximately 14% lower chances of being promoted

compared to their male colleagues, despite often demonstrating similar or even higher levels of performance (Ryan, 2022).

Moreover, the gender inequality is also reflected in the representation within the organizations, where women remain underrepresented in leadership positions. For instance, women occupy approximately 37% of the leadership roles globally, highlighting the existence of persistent barriers in their professional progression. At the same time, the hiring and promotion processes are not free from bias, since studies indicate that women often are directed toward lower-paying positions or experience unequal treatment even within the same professional categories (Ryan, 2022).

Although gender inequality has received significant attention in the workplace, recent literature suggests that other groups also experience exclusion and unequal opportunities. In particular, LGBTQ+ employees have historically faced lower “visibility” in the recruitment processes and career development. According to Rustman (2023), workplace discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals remains widespread, with estimates ranging from 25% to 66%. At the same time, the literature suggests that the limited attention by organizations to LGBTQ+ employees may contribute to reduced opportunities and barriers to their professional development. These findings indicate that workplace inequalities are beyond gender and can affect multiple employee groups in different ways (Rustman, 2023).

The aforementioned findings show that workplace inequalities are not limited to a single stage of employment, but extends throughout the entire career lifecycle, from hiring to promotion and compensation. Overall, the persistence of these inequalities suggests that unequal opportunities are not only the result of individual factors but are also rooted in deeper systemic and structural characteristics of organizations and the labor market.

2.4 Best Practices for Inclusive Workplaces

The creation of inclusive workplaces is nowadays an important priority for modern organizations since the existence of diversity by itself is not enough to secure the employees’ equal participation and fair treatment. Even though organizations might employ individuals with different demographic and social characteristics, employees don’t always feel equally accepted, respected or free to express their opinions. For this reason, inclusion is considered a necessary requirement for the effective establishment of diversity in the workplace. Inclusive environments are characterized by open communication, equal opportunities, respect for individual differences and encouragement of employee participation in the organizational processes (Roberson, 2018; Shore, et al., 2011).

At the same time, more organizations recognize that inclusive practices can enhance the cooperation between employees, their commitment towards the organization and the general working environment. Employees are more likely to contribute substantially when they feel emotional security and when they believe that their opinions are taken into consideration by the organization. This is why many firms gradually adopt practices and strategies that aim to enhance inclusion and to create a more supportive working environment for employees with different characteristics and experiences (Shore, et al., 2011).

The meaning of inclusion is becoming even more evident when the way employees experience the workplace is examined. The existence of diversity within an organization does not

necessarily mean that all employees feel comfortable to express their personalities. In many cases, individuals who belong to diverse social or demographic groups may feel the need to hide elements of their identity in order to intergrade into the work environment. This is why inclusion is considered necessary so that diversity can exist more effectively within organization.

Findings from the Boston Consulting Group findings show that as an individual's dimensions of diversity increase, the likelihood of feeling less authentic in the workplace also increases. At the same time, individuals with more diverse characteristics appear to experience lower levels of feeling included compared to employees who belong to less diverse teams. These findings, presented in Figure 4 (Exhibit 1), demonstrate that diversity by itself is not enough to create a truly supportive work environment. On the contrary, organizations need to cultivate conditions of psychological safety, acceptance and equal participation, so that employees can express themselves freely without fear of negative treatment or exclusion (Krentz et al.,2019).

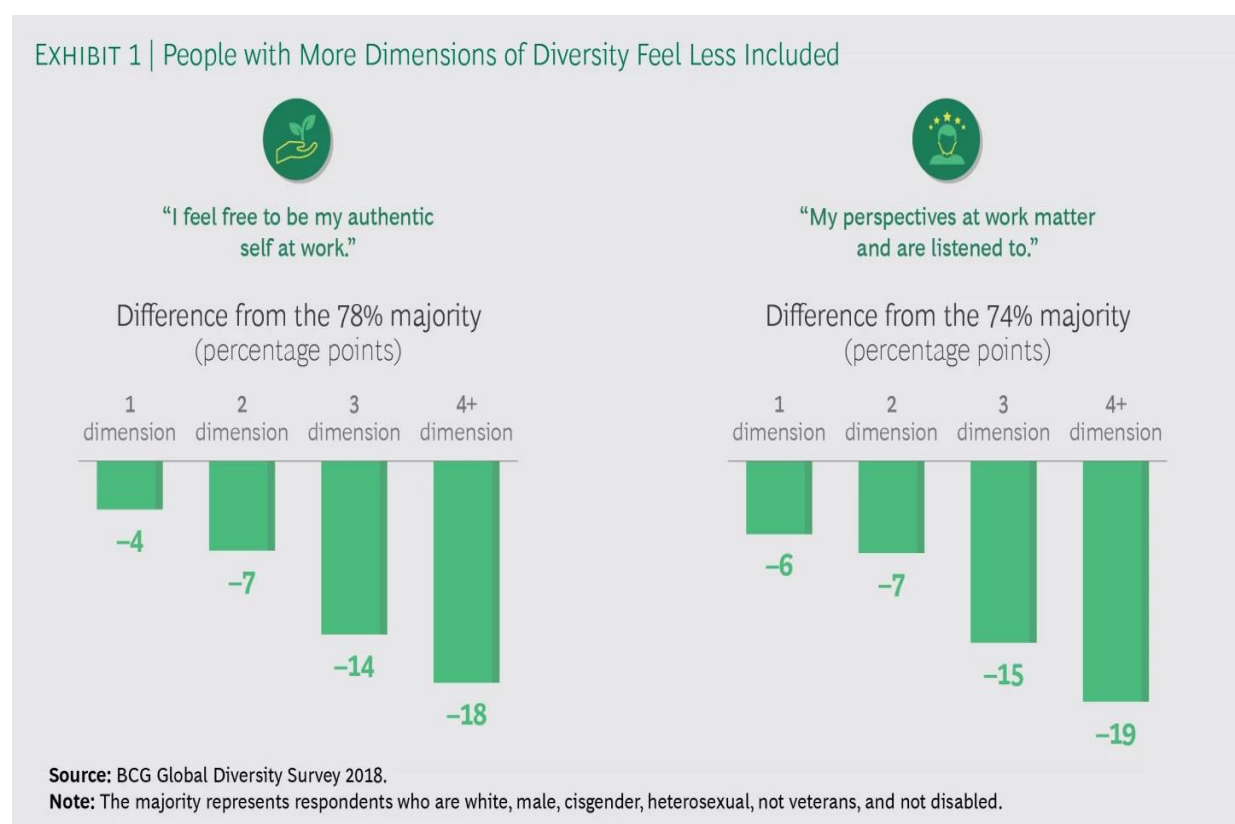


Figure 4. People with More Dimensions of Diversity Feel Less Included

Source: Adapted from **Diversity is Just the First Step. Inclusion Comes Next**, Boston Consulting Group (2019)

For the creation of more inclusive workplaces organizations increasingly adopt specific practices and strategies that aim to reinforce employees' participation and fair treatment. According to Boston Consulting Group, one of the most important factors for the successful implementation of inclusion initiatives is leadership commitment, as the active support of senior management strongly affects the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion policies. When leaders actively promote inclusion, employees are more likely to perceive diversity as an

important organizational value rather than just as a formal organizational policy (Krentz, Dean, & Novacek, 2019).

At the same time, many firms invest in training programs for managers related to communication, inclusion and the management of diverse employee groups. These practices aim to decrease of bias, enhance cooperation and strengthen employees' ability to cooperate effectively with individuals with different characteristics and experiences. Moreover, organizations pay attention on the existence of accountability mechanisms and on the systematic monitoring of the progress of diversity and inclusion initiatives. The continuous evaluation of these practices allows firms to identify weaknesses and to improve their strategies effectively over time (Krentz, Dean, & Novacek, 2019; Mbonigaba & Vanitha, 2023).

Therefore, the creation of inclusive working environments does not depend only on the existence of formal diversity policies, but also on the continuous organizational commitment to inclusion. For this reason, inclusion should be treated as an ongoing organizational process that requires active participation, continuous evaluation and long-term support from leadership.

According to Boston Consulting Group many firms adopt organized strategies that include clear goals, measurable evaluation indicators and tailored initiatives based on employees' needs and the organization's characteristics. In this context, the continuous monitoring of outcomes and employee feedback are considered important practices for evaluating the effectiveness of inclusion strategies and identifying areas that require improvement (Krentz, Dean, & Novacek, 2019).

At the same time, many firms implement additional practices, like flexible working models, mentoring programs, and the promotion of role models from underrepresented groups. Moreover, organizations increasingly use practices like blind resumes and blind recruitment processes, aiming to reduce bias during the hiring process and strengthen the equal treatment of the candidates. These practices can contribute to the creation a more supportive and inclusive work environment by enhancing employees' sense of participation and equal opportunities. Furthermore, organizations increasingly recognize that inclusion shouldn't be limited only to recruitment processes but should also extend to promotion opportunities, organizational culture and everyday interactions in the workplace (Krentz, Dean, & Novacek, 2019; Mbonigaba & Vanitha, 2023).

2.5 Challenges in Implementing Diversity and Inclusion

Despite the efforts of many organizations to enhance diversity and inclusion the implementation of relevant policies is often is accompanied by significant difficulties and challenges. The existence of formal initiatives and policies does not necessarily ensure that employees experience a really fair and inclusive work environment. In many cases, organizational factors like stereotypes, bias and already established beliefs can limit the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion initiatives. For this reason, the implementation of inclusion is considered a complex organizational process that requires substantial changes not only in the firm's policies but also in the organizational culture and the everyday practices of the workplace (Mbonigaba & Vanitha, 2023; Shore, et al., 2011).

At the same time, many employees and managers may approach diversity and inclusion initiatives with reservations, especially when they believe that such changes affect already

existing balances or practices within the organization. As a result, resistance to change may emerge, together with reduced participation in diversity and inclusion initiatives. This shows that the effective implementation of inclusion does not depend only on the existence of formal policies but also on the acceptance and active support of the members of the organization.

One of the most important challenges in the implementation of diversity and inclusion is the existence of unconscious bias in the workplace. These biases affect significantly the managerial and employee decisions without individuals fully realizing it, influencing processes like hiring, performance evaluations and promotions. As a result, employees from underrepresented groups may continue to face unequal treatment and limited opportunities for their professional development despite the existence of formal diversity policies (Mbonigaba & Vanitha, 2023).

According to Mbonigaba and Vanitha (2023) some of the most effective practices include inclusive leadership programs, blind recruitment processes and diverse hiring panels. These practices aim to reduce subjectivity in organizational decision-making and enhance equal treatment during the hiring and promotions processes. In particular, the programs of inclusive leadership were evaluated as the most effective strategy, while the blind recruitment processes also demonstrated high levels of effectiveness. These findings show that organizations increasingly recognize the importance of implementing more structured and transparent practices, in order to reduce the effect of bias in the workplace.

However, the results of the study also showed that not all diversity and inclusion initiatives are equally effective. For instance, the unconscious bias training programs showed only moderate effectiveness when they were not accompanied by broader organizational changes, like transparent processes, accountability mechanisms and continuous evaluation of outcomes. This suggests that diversity and inclusion cannot be achieved only through individual training initiatives but also require long-term organizational commitment and substantial changes in the organizational culture (Mbonigaba & Vanitha, 2023).

At the same time, many businesses face difficulties in the effective implementation of these practices, especially when these initiatives are applied at a more symbolic rather than practical level. In some cases, employees may approach such initiatives with skepticism when they believe that they are not accompanied by meaningful changes and evaluation processes. This can negatively affect employees' trust towards the organization and reduce their commitment to the process.

Ultimately, the challenges related to diversity and inclusion show that organizational change is often more difficult in practice than in theory. Although many businesses publicly support diversity and inclusion, the effective transformation of the organizational culture requires consistency, active effort and visible results capable of challenging already established organizational norms and behaviors. For this reason, the success of these initiatives depends not only on the existence of formal policies but also on the ability of organizations to integrate inclusion into everyday workplace practices beginning from the upper levels of management and extending throughout the entire organizational structure. In this context, diversity and inclusion should not be approached merely as formal organizational practices but as a broader organizational mindset based on openness, acceptance and respect towards different perspectives and experiences.

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

The aim of this study is to examine the role of diversity and inclusion in the modern working environment as well as the ways in which these concepts affect the organizational culture, the employee experience and the overall effectiveness of the organizations. To achieve this goal the present study follows a thematic literature review approach that is based on the analysis and interpretation of secondary data and existing academic literature that is related to diversity and inclusion in organizations (Snyder, 2019).

More specifically, the study uses academic articles, scientific publications, professional reports and empirical studies that are related to diversity and inclusion in the organizations. The use of secondary data allows the examination, comparison and synthesis of existing theoretical approaches and empirical evidence from different studies and organizational contexts (Bowen, 2009). As a result, the present study does not include the collection of primary data through interviews, questionnaires or direct observation.

At the same time, the research follows a descriptive and interpretive approach. More specifically, the study aims to examine, through the analysis of the existing literature, the basic dimensions of diversity and inclusion, the challenges related to their implementation, as well as the practices that organizations use to create more inclusive working environments (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Moreover, the study examines the relationship between diversity and innovation, employee retention, organizational performance and competitive advantage.

Furthermore, the study utilizes thematic analysis in order to identify, compare and interpret themes, patterns and perspectives that emerge through the existing literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach was considered appropriate for the present study, since diversity and inclusion are multidimensional concepts closely linked to organizational culture, leadership, employee experiences and social interactions in the workplace.

Finally, the research adopts an interpretive perspective, as it focuses on the interpretation and critical examination of the existing literature rather than on the statistical measurement or the quantitative analysis of data. As a result, the study aims to identify common themes, similarities and differences within the existing literature and to evaluate the ways in which diversity and inclusion are approached in modern organizations (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

3.2 Data Collection Method

For the collection of references, academic databases and electronic scientific publishing platforms like Google Scholar were primarily used, along with scientific journals related to business management, human resource management and organizational behavior. In addition, reports and professional publications from international organizations and consulting companies, like Boston Consulting Group and McKinsey & Company, were also utilized, as they provide recent empirical data and statistical evidence related to diversity and inclusion in organizations.

The selection of the bibliography was based on specific criteria. Initially, emphasis was placed on sources directly related to the research subject like the organizational performance,

leadership, employee experience, innovation and the challenges of managing diversity. Furthermore, preference was given to recent academic studies so that findings reflect modern developments and current workplace conditions. At the same time, some older theoretical sources were also used when considered necessary for understanding the historical evolution and theoretical foundation of the subject.

Finally, the use of secondary data allowed the comparison of different opinions, theoretical approaches and research findings, contributing to a more comprehensive and critical understanding of diversity and inclusion in the modern working environment.

3.3 Data Analysis

For the analysis of the literature used in the present study, thematic approach was used, in order to critically examine and synthesize the main ideas, research findings and theoretical perspectives related to diversity and inclusion in organizations (Braun & Clarke, 2006). More specifically, the analysis was focused on the identification, comparison and interpretation of basic issues and social patterns that appear in the relevant literature related to diversity and inclusion in organizations.

The process of the analysis was based on the study and comparison of different theoretical approaches and empirical findings from academic journals and research studies and professional reports. Through this process matters like the relationship between diversity and innovation, organizational performance, employee experience and competitive advantage were examined as well as the basic challenges that organizations face during the implementation of inclusion policies.

At the same time, the analysis emphasized on recognizing similarities and differences between studies, in order to locate not only the common conclusions but also the different approaches that appear in the literature. In addition, critical results of previous researches were examined, aiming to provide a better understanding of the facts that affect the effective management of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

A thematic approach was considered appropriate for this study, since diversity and inclusion are particularly complex and sensitive issues that are closely connected to the human behavior, perceptions, stereotypes and the interaction between individual and organizational culture. According to Braun & Clarke (2006), a thematic approach allows researchers to identify and interpret recurring themes and patterns within a body of literature. Therefore, this approach was considered suitable for examining the multiple organizational and social dimensions of diversity and inclusion since the issue is characterized by the complexity of human relationships and experiences that are formed in a working environment.

For this reason, the thematic approach provided a deeper understanding of the ways in which diversity and inclusion affect the everyday operation of organizations. At the same time, it allowed issues, like prejudice, unconscious bias and difficulties in changing established perceptions and behaviors to be examined. Through the comparison of different studies and theoretical approaches, the analysis highlighted the practical difficulties that emerge during the implementation of inclusion policies and the positive impact that diversity can have on organizational culture and performance.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

The current research is based exclusively on secondary data and previously published academic literature, which means that it didn't involve human subject participation through interviews, questionnaires or direct observation. For this reason, issues related to personal data protection and participant anonymity, were not necessary for the present study.

Nevertheless, significant emphasis was placed on the ethical and academically appropriate use of sources throughout the research process. More specifically, all of the theoretical approaches, statistical evidence and research findings that were included in the study, derived from academic journals, scientific publications and reliable professional reports, which are properly referenced in the bibliography of the study.

Moreover, important effort was made in order to ensure that the presentation of different opinions and research findings remained as objective as possible. Given that the subject of diversity and inclusion is linked to social issues, stereotypes and human behavior, it was considered important that the analysis maintain an academic end neutral perspective, avoiding generalizations or subjective judgments.

Finally, the purpose of this study was the critical evaluation of the existing literature with respect to the different theoretical approaches and the social dimensions of the subject, contributing to a more comprehensive and balanced understanding of diversity and inclusion in the modern workplace.

4 Findings/Analysis

4.1 Overview of Findings

The analysis of the existing bibliography showed that diversity and inclusion play a significant role in the modern workplace and the organizational strategy. The majority of the academic studies and professional reports suggest that organizations that promote inclusive practices and maintain a workforce with diverse characteristics are most likely to achieve positive outcomes that are related to innovation, employee experience, organizational performance and competitive advantage (Triana et al., 2021; Patrick & Kumar, 2012; Cletus et al., 2018; Dixon-Fyle et al., 2020).

At the same time, the findings showed that the effective management of diversity does not depend only on the existence of official policies and regulations, but also on the development of an inclusive organizational culture and effective leadership practices (Shore et al., 2011; Krentz et al., 2019). Research by Shore et al. (2011) and Krentz et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of inclusive leadership, equal opportunities and active participation of the employees in creating a working environment where individuals feel respected, accepted and have the ability of meaningful contribution.

However, the literature also highlighted important challenges related to the implementation of diversity and inclusion practices. Studies by Mbonigaba and Vanitha (2023), Shore et al. (2011) and Roberson (2019) suggested that stereotypes, unconscious bias, the resistance to change and difficulties in communication continue to affect the working environment and often limit the effectiveness of the inclusion policies. Additionally, the literature showed that the impact of diversity and inclusion may vary depending on the organizational, social and cultural context in which these practices are implemented (Roberson, 2018; Triana et al., 2021).

Overall, the analysis of literature suggests that diversity and inclusion should not be treated only as social or moral obligations of the organizations but also as strategic organizational factors that can influence the long-term sustainability, the wellbeing of the employees and the overall organizational performance (Roberson, 2018; Dixon-Fyle et al., 2020; Triana et al., 2021).

4.2 Key Themes Identified

4.2.1 Diversity and Organizational Performance

The analysis of the literature showed that diversity and inclusion are closely linked with organizational performance and overall effectiveness of firms. Most academic studies and professional reports including those by Triana et al. (2021), Roberson (2018) and Dixon-Fyle et al. (2020) support the view that organizations that promote inclusive practices and maintain a more diverse workforce are more likely to achieve positive outcomes like the increased productivity, improved decision making and more powerful competitive advantage.

At the same time, literature showed that diversity can contribute positively to the adaptability and flexibility of organizations, especially in a modern business environment that is characterized by constant change and globalization (Triana et al., 2021; Patrick & Kumar, 2012). Employees with different experiences, cultural backgrounds and ways of thinking can

offer broader perspectives and alternative approaches to problem solving and the decision-making processes (Cletus et al., 2018).

An important part of the literature focused on the gender diversity and the representation of women in leadership and management positions. Studies by Lorenzo et al. (2017), Dixon – Fyle et al. (2020) and Ryan (2022) suggested that organizations with greater female participation in managerial roles often demonstrate higher levels of collaboration, better communication and stronger organizational performance. However, previous studies also indicated that women continue to face obstacles related to stereotypes, unequal opportunities and limited representation in senior leadership positions (Ryan, 2022; Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015).

Nevertheless, the literature showed that diversity by itself does not lead automatically to positive organizational outcomes. According to Shore, et al. (2011), Krentz et al. (2019) and Triana et al. (2021), the effective management of diversity seems to depend significantly on the existence of an inclusive organizational culture, effective leadership practices and equal participation opportunities for all employees. In organizations where inclusion remains limited or discriminations and communication barriers continue to exist, diversity may lead to conflicts, reduced collaboration and lower organizational cohesion.

4.2.2 Diversity and Innovation

The literature analysis showed that diversity is closely linked to innovation and creativity within organizations. Studies by Triana et al. (2021), Cletus et al. (2018) and Patrick and Kumar (2012) suggested that employees with different experiences, cultural backgrounds and ways of thinking can contribute to a broader exchange of ideas and more creative approaches in problem solving and the decision-making process.

Studies by Triana et al. (2021), Lorenzo et al. (2017) and Cletus et al. (2018) suggested that different work groups are often more capable of producing alternative perspectives and adapt better to the continuously changing business conditions. In addition, professional reports, like those published by Boston Consulting Group and McKinsey & Company, also indicated that organizations with higher levels of diversity often present stronger innovation and improved business performance (Dixon-Fyle et al., 2020; Lorenzo, et al., 2017).

At the same time, the literature suggests that diversity on its own cannot lead automatically to innovation. According to Shore et al. (2011) and Krentz et al. (2019), the positive impact of diversity seems to depend on inclusive leadership, effective communication and the creation of an organizational environment in which employees feel comfortable to express their opinions and ideas.

4.2.3 Inclusion and Employee Experience

The literature analysis showed that inclusion is closely linked to the overall employee experience, including employee satisfaction, commitment to the organization and workplace engagement. Studies by Shore et al. (2011), Mohanty and Acharya (2020) and Hodkinson (2011) suggested that employees are more likely to feel motivated and engaged when working in environments where they feel respected accepted and equally treated.

The literature also showed that inclusive organizational cultures can contribute positively to employee retention and psychological safety in the workplace. According to Shore et al. (2011)

and Hodkinson (2011), employees who feel comfortable expressing their opinions and participate actively in the organizational processes are more likely to develop stronger trust and commitment towards the organization.

The findings also showed that difficulties in communication and differences in cultural perceptions may lead to misunderstandings and conflicts within diverse working environments. In some organizations, the diversity policies may exist at a theoretical level, however employees may still experience unequal treatment, exclusion or limited participation in the decision-making processes (Shore, et al., 2011; Krentz et al., 2019).

At the same time, the literature indicated that exclusion, discrimination and unequal treatment can affect negatively the well-being of the employees and consequently their relationships with other individuals within the organization. Studies by Van Laar (2019), Mbonigaba and Vanitha (2023) and Greenwald et al. (2022) suggested that stereotypes, unconscious bias and limited opportunities may create obstacles to inclusion and increase the likelihood of employee withdrawal or turnover.

Finally, the findings showed that organizations promoting inclusion and equal opportunities are generally more capable of creating positive working environments that support the overall organizational effectiveness (Roberson, 2018; Shore, et al., 2011).

4.2.4 Inclusive Leadership and Organizational Culture

The literature analysis indicated that the effective leadership and organizational culture play a significant role in the effective implementation of diversity and inclusion practices. Many studies suggested that organizations that encourage the participative leadership, open communication and mutual respect are more likely to create an inclusive working environment (Shore, et al., 2011; Triana, et al., 2021).

At the same time, organizational culture seems to influence significantly the way employees perceive diversity within the workplace. In organizations where equality, transparency and acceptance of different opinions are promoted, employees often present greater trust toward management and higher levels of participation and collaboration (Shore, et al., 2011; Hodkinson, 2011).

Particular emphasis was also given to the concept of inclusive leadership, since many studies reported that leaders can directly influence the working climate and employee behavior. Supporting equal opportunities, encouraging participation and ensuring fair treatment of employees were considered essential elements in the creation of a more inclusive organizational environment (Shore, et al., 2011; Triana, et al., 2021)

However, the literature also demonstrated that the implementation of such practices is not always easy. In many cases, the resistance to change, the traditional beliefs and the lack of substantial support by the management, may limit the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion policies (Mbonigaba & Vanitha, 2023).

These challenges were reflected in many organizational and social obstacles that are identified in the literature. Studies by Shore et al. (2011), Krentz et al. (2019) and Roberson (2018) suggested that stereotypes, unconscious bias and resistance to change keep affecting the workplace relationships and often limit the effectiveness of the inclusion policies.

At the same time, many studies showed that the successful implementation of diversity and inclusion practices depends greatly on the continuous organizational support, the inclusive leadership and the employee training (Krentz et al., 2019; Shore, et al., 2011; Roberson, 2018). Without substantial commitment from the management and support from the organizational culture, inclusion initiatives may remain limited at a theoretical or superficial level.

Therefore, firms need to address workplace challenges not only at a structural level but also at a behavioral level, since human attitudes and organizational behaviors are often difficult to change.

4.3 Interpretation of Results

As it was highlighted throughout the literature, inclusion deeply depends on the ability of individuals to understand, accept and cooperate with other people who may have different experiences, identities and perceptions (Shore, et al., 2011; Roberson, 2018). However, this process is often complicated because workplace behavior is often influenced by stereotypes, biases and social perceptions that individuals develop throughout their lives, starting from childhood, when the ability to critically evaluate unconscious or conscious stimuli is still limited (Mbonigaba & Vanitha, 2023; Van Laar, et al., 2019).

The findings of the current study demonstrate that diversity and inclusion are considerably more complex concepts than the simple implementation of organizational policies and typical diversity initiatives. Even though many organizations attempt to promote equality and inclusion in the workplace, the literature suggested that the long-term social perceptions and behavioral patterns continue to influence workplace relationships, communication and the overall organizational culture (Roberson, 2018; Shore, et al., 2011).

At the same time the workplace is a highly demanding social environment, as employees are expected to cooperate, compete, adapt to organizational requirements and to maintain high levels of professional performance simultaneously. In addition, the professional success and financial stability are often connected with individuals' need of personal achievement, security and social survival within competitive working environment. As a result, the workplace interactions may become emotionally and psychologically demanding, especially when employees understand that their professional position, their recognition or career development may be affected by organizational changes and diversity related practices.

Within such an environment, the already existing stereotypes and biases may become more visible, especially when individuals interact daily with people from different social, cultural and personal backgrounds often without having the necessary tools to effectively manage such situations (Mbonigaba & Vanitha, 2023; Van Laar, et al., 2019).

Overall, the interpretation of the findings suggests that diversity and inclusion should not be treated solely as organizational or structural issues but also as concepts closely connected with the human psychology, socialization and interpersonal behavior (Roberson, 2018; Shore, et al., 2011). Therefore, the effective management of diversity requires not only organizational strategies and policies, but also a continuous effort to understand the deeper social and psychological factors that influence the human behavior in the workplace.

5 Discussion

5.1 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this dissertation show that diversity and inclusion can produce important organizational benefits when they are supported by inclusive leadership, fair organizational practices and a supportive organizational culture.

The findings related to organizational performance showed that diversity can create positive outcomes to organizational effectiveness through an improved decision making, adaptability and the ability to respond to complex and continuously changing environments. The analysis showed that when an organization has diverse workforces and leadership structures it is often more likely to evaluate better a wider range of perspectives, understand the needs of different stakeholders and act more effectively regarding to the market demands (Patrick & Kumar, 2012; Triana et al., 2021). These findings are consistent with previous studies that associated the workforce diversity with better organizational performance, competitiveness and long term sustainability (Roberson, 2018; Triana et al., 2021). However the findings also showed that this positive outcome does not come automatically, since its effectiveness depends on the existence of inclusive organizational practices that encourage employees to participate meaningfully and contribute their skills, their knowledge and their experiences to the organizational procedures (Roberson, 2018; Shore, et al., 2011).

Another important finding of the study was that diversity and innovation are linked positively. The findings showed that a diverse workforce is more capable of generating new ideas, approaching problems from different perspectives and creating innovative solutions to complex problems (Triana et al., 2021; Lorenzo et al., 2018). The literature also showed that diversity often brings together individuals with different experiences, knowledge and viewpoints enhancing creativity and improving the quality of the decision making (Patrick & Kumar, 2012; Triana et al., 2021). Furthermore, the organizations that successfully use diverse perspectives seem to be able to adapt better to the changing market conditions, to understand the needs of different customers and to maintain a competitive advantage in the increasingly dynamic business environments (Cletus et al., 2018; Lorenzo, et al., 2017).

At the same time, the analysis showed that inclusion is connected with the psychological experience of the employees within the workplace. Studies by Shore et al. (2011) and Van Laar et al. (2019) supported the view that feelings of belonging, psychological safety and acceptance significantly affect the employee participation, communication and the loyalty towards the organization. Employees who feel excluded or afraid of the negative judgement are less likely to participate actively, to express their opinions or to contribute meaningfully to the organizational processes. As a consequence, inclusion seems to be connected not only with the existence of formal diversity policies but also with the everyday interactions and the overall organizational culture within the workplace. Furthermore, according to Mbonigaba & Vanitha (2023) and Roberson (2018), diversity and inclusion are influenced by broader social and psychological factors, which the individuals often transfer into the workplace. Stereotypes, unconscious bias and behavioral patterns that are formed throughout the individuals' lives continue to affect the workplace relationships and the organizational decisions even in organizations that officially support diversity and inclusion policies.

The findings regarding inclusive leadership and organizational culture also showed that diversity on its own does not lead automatically to positive organizational outcomes. Studies by Shore et al. (2011), Krentz et al. (2019) and Mbonigaba and Vanitha (2023) indicated that the benefits of diversity depend to a great extent on the existence of an inclusive organizational culture, supportive leadership and equal participation opportunities for employees. In workplace environments where stereotypes, unconscious bias and communication barriers continue to exist, diversity can lead to conflicts, reduced cooperation and lower organizational cohesion instead of positive results.

Overall, the findings of the present study suggest that diversity and inclusion should be approached as multidimensional organizational issues that are closely connected with leadership, organizational culture, communication and human behavior (Roberson, 2018; Shore, et al., 2011). Therefore, organizations that wish to utilize the benefits of diversity effectively need to create supportive and inclusive work environments, that encourage equal treatment, respect and psychological safety for all employees.

5.2 Implications for Organizations and Management

The findings of the present study indicate that the effective management of diversity and inclusion may have significant implications not only for the well-being of the employees but also for the overall operation, adaptability and the long-term sustainability of organizations. The literature reviewed in this study showed that modern organizations increasingly operate in environments that are characterized by uncertainty, technological change, globalization and continuously evolving workforce expectations. Within these conditions, organizations are expected not only to manage the demographic diversity but also to create working environments in which employees can participate actively, communicate openly and to contribute meaningfully to organizational processes and decision-making.

At the same time, the findings show that inclusion appears to influence several important organizational dimensions, including innovation, organizational agility, employee participation and the collaboration among teams. According to Deloitte (2020), an international consulting and professional services organization, organizations characterized by inclusive cultures are twice as likely to achieve or exceed their financial goals, three times more likely to achieve high performance and six times more likely to generate better overall business outcomes. These findings suggest that inclusion may influence the organizational performance not only directly through the overall employee experience but also indirectly through enhanced innovation, adaptability and the overall organizational effectiveness (Deloitte, 2020).

Additionally, Deloitte (2020) approaches the feeling of belonging as a multidimensional organizational condition associated with comfort, connection and the meaningful contribution in the workplace. This approach is particularly important, as it suggests that inclusion should not be limited only to the representation of different demographic groups within organizations. On the contrary, employees need to feel psychologically comfortable, connected to the organizational environment and able to contribute actively to the organizational goals and everyday operations. As a result, the organizational value of inclusion appears to depend greatly on the extent to which employees feel able to participate meaningfully and express their opinions without the fear of exclusion or negative evaluation (Deloitte, 2020).

The findings also support the importance of leadership and organizational culture in the effective implementation of diversity and inclusion practices. According to Deloitte (2020), 46% of the participants identified the lack of leadership prioritization of inclusion as one of the most important obstacles to developing a sense of belonging within organizations. This finding suggests that diversity and inclusion initiatives may remain ineffective when organizations approach them mostly as symbolic or formal policies without meaningful support from the upper management and the organizational leadership. Consequently, inclusion appears to require constant organizational commitment, leadership accountability and active participation across all managerial levels of the organization (Deloitte, 2020).

However, the relationship between diversity, inclusion and organizational performance doesn't always appear simple or automatically positive. The literature shows that diversity initiatives may generate more positive organizational outcomes when they are accompanied by meaningful inclusion practices, leadership commitment and employee development opportunities. In contrast, approaches that treat diversity as a symbolic procedure or a "checking-the-box" practice may limit the potential organizational benefits of inclusion initiatives (Hartmann Bjorndalen, 2023).

Furthermore, the literature suggests that diversity and inclusion may also influence measurable organizational indicators and broader market performance. Previous studies have identified positive relationships between board gender diversity and financial indicators such as Tobin's Q, Operating ROA, revenue growth, profitability, operational performance and market value while diversity reputation was also associated with stronger market valuation and organizational performance. At the same time, the findings show that organizations appear to gain stronger financial benefits when diversity is embedded meaningfully within the organizational structures and the leadership practices rather than when it is treated only as an externally driven initiative. Within this context, businesses that are characterized by meaningful diversity and inclusion practices appear better positioned to strengthen their long-term organizational sustainability, workforce stability and competitiveness in modern business environments (Hartmann Bjorndalen, 2023).

In addition to the organizational implications that were discussed above, the findings of this study also shows several important implications for managers and leaders who are responsible for implementing diversity and inclusion practices in the everyday workplace environment.

The findings of the present study indicate that the effective management of diversity and inclusion increasingly requires not only organizational and managerial skills from executive members but also stronger interpersonal, communication and managerial skills. As organizations become more multicultural and diverse, managers are often required to coordinate employees with different cultural backgrounds, ways of thinking, values and perceptions. Even though diversity may contribute positively to the creativity and the organizational adaptability, the literature also shows that the differences among the employees may sometimes create misunderstandings, communication barriers and tensions within groups when cooperation and inclusion are not supported effectively (Triana et al., 2021; Shore, et al., 2011).

Within this context, the managerial executives appear to play a significant role in maintaining the organizational cohesion and enhancing constructive communication among employees. The literature suggests that inclusive leadership is associated with higher levels of employee

participation, stronger trust toward the organization and more effective cooperation between teams. Consequently, managers need to create work environments inside which employees feel comfortable enough to express their opinions, to participate in the organizational procedures and to contribute meaningfully (Hodkinson, 2011; Shore, et al., 2011).

At the same time, the findings show that organizations may need to invest more resources in the development of leadership skills, in the communication training and awareness initiatives related to bias, in order to manage effectively a diverse workforce. Previous studies indicate that practices like the inclusive leadership programs can contribute positively to fairness, cooperation and the participation of employees within the workplace. However, the literature also shows that the training programs alone are not always sufficient when they are not accompanied by broader organizational support, transparent procedures and long-term changes in the organizational culture (Mbonigaba & Vanitha, 2023).

Another important implication for management is the increasing significance of diversity within the leadership and managerial positions. The literature shows that diversity and leadership may influence not only decision-making processes but also the perception of the employees about fairness, inclusion and equal opportunities within the organization. More specifically, the presence of diverse individuals in leadership positions can operate as an “inclusion signal”, reinforcing the perception that the organization supports fair participation and more objective management practices. For the employees that belong to underrepresented groups, the representation of diverse individuals in leadership positions can strengthen the feelings of trust, psychological safety, participation and inclusion within the workplace. At the same time, the literature shows that diversity in leadership can contribute positively to communication, knowledge sharing and active participation of employees, as employees are more likely to engage when they perceive the organizational environment as fair and supportive (Gip et al., 2025; Shore, et al., 2011).

However, diversity within leadership teams may also create additional challenges for management. Leaders with different professional experiences, communication styles, cultural backgrounds and perceptions may approach the organizational problems and decision-making processes in a different way, which may increase disagreements or tensions within managerial teams. For this reason, organizations may require leaders who are capable not only of managing diverse employee groups, but also of cooperating effectively within diverse leadership structures. As a result, the executives and organizational leaders may need stronger communication skills, conflict management abilities, emotional intelligence and inclusive leadership skills, in order to maintain cooperation, organizational cohesion and effective decision-making within increasingly diverse organizational environments (Gip et al., 2025; Triana et al., 2021).

5.3 Recommendations

Over the last decades, organizations have increasingly adopted various diversity and inclusion practices aiming to reduce bias in the workplace and enhance equal opportunities. Some of the most common approaches include diversity training programs, blind recruitment procedures, hiring tests, structured performance evaluation systems and grievance procedures. In many organizations these practices have been implemented in an effort to improve representation, reduce discrimination and create fairer organizational procedures related to hiring processes,

promotions and employee development. However, although many of these traditional diversity management practices continue to be widely used, the literature suggests that several of them produce only limited or short-term outcomes when they are implemented in a formal or mandatory way without broader organizational commitment and long-term cultural change.

However, organizations may benefit more from long-term inclusion strategies that encourage the active participation of employees and the meaningful interaction between diverse teams within the workplace. Research suggests that voluntary participation in diversity-related initiatives can lead to a more positive employee engagement and reduce the resistance compared to mandatory interventions. Moreover, the behavioral participation in inclusion initiatives can reinforce supportive attitudes and behaviors toward diversity over time. Many organizations have also adopted mentoring programs and targeted hiring practices aiming to enhance the representation of minority groups and reduce managerial bias through direct interaction and employee development. Previous studies in the United States have shown that mentoring programs have contributed to an increase in the representation of black, Hispanic and Asian American women, as well as Hispanic and Asian American men, while in many sectors also enhanced the representation of white women and black men in managerial positions by more than 10%. Additionally, greater cooperation and contact between employees from different backgrounds can help reduce stereotypes and workplace bias. Practices such as the self-managed teams and the rotation of management trainees across different departments may strengthen the communication between teams, the organizational integration and the cooperation between employees from different organizational functions (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016).

Moreover, organizations can strengthen inclusion more effectively through approaches that rely on accountability and the continuous monitoring of the outcomes related to diversity. Many companies have created diversity task forces in which senior executives, department managers and representatives of underrepresented groups participate, aiming to reinforce organizational accountability and the more systematic evaluation of diversity practices. The regular monitoring of statistical evidence related to diversity may help organizations identify sectors that require further improvement regarding hiring procedures, promotions and the representation of minority groups. Additionally, the mechanisms of social accountability can encourage managers and employees to examine more carefully their behavior and decisions within the workplace. According to the accountability theory, the presence of diversity representatives or diversity task forces members within the departments can increase the awareness related to hiring and promotion decisions and encourage managers to reflect more carefully the extent to which their decisions align with the organization's inclusion goals. Therefore, instead of relying exclusively on mandatory diversity interventions, organizations may benefit more from long-term strategies that promote accountability, inclusive leadership and sustainable cultural change within the workplace (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016).

Figure 5 presents the effectiveness of several diversity programs in increasing minority representation among managers in large US organizations. The findings show that practices such as mentoring programs, diversity task forces, self-managed teams and diversity managers were associated with some of the strongest positive changes in minority representation over time.

% change over five years in representation among managers

Type of program	White		Black		Hispanic		Asian	
	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN
Voluntary training			+13.3		+9.1		+9.3	+12.6
Self-managed teams	-2.8	+5.6	+3.4	+3.9				+3.6
Cross-training	-1.4	+3.0	+2.7	+3.0	-3.9		+6.5	+4.1
College recruitment: women*	-2.0	+10.2	+7.9	+8.7		+10.0	+18.3	+8.6
College recruitment: minorities**			+7.7	+8.9				
Mentoring				+18.0	+9.1	+23.7	+18.0	+24.0
Diversity task forces	-3.3	+11.6	+8.7	+22.7	+12.0	+16.2	+30.2	+24.2
Diversity managers		+7.5	+17.0	+11.1		+18.2	+10.9	+13.6

Figure 5. Effectiveness of Diversity Programs in Increasing Minority Representation

Source: Adapted from Dobbin & Kalev (2016)

In the context of the organization's long-term commitment, the following recommendations reinforce further the importance of approaching diversity and inclusion as a long-term priority rather than a short-term managerial initiative. Before the implementation of the initiatives related to diversity and inclusion, organizations should initially try to identify the specific need, challenge or business opportunity that they aim to address, so that these initiatives match with their broader priorities and goals. At the same time, organizations may benefit by the creation of teams that will be responsible for evaluating the potential benefits, costs and challenges that are related to the diversity and inclusion initiatives, while also making sure that representatives from different departments such as engineering or IT are participating, rather than approaching diversity and inclusion exclusively as an HR issue. The literature also indicates that diversity and inclusion initiatives seem to be more effective when they are supported in action by the senior management and CEOs, since leadership commitment can affect the implementation, communication and acceptance of these practices. Moreover, organizations may need to evaluate not only the potential organizational benefits but also the possible implementation cost, the execution risks and the potential delays that may emerge during the implementation of these practices. The aforementioned costs may include personnel training, communication related costs, the use of external consultants, as well as broader organizational adjustments (Morley, 2018).

Organizations may also benefit by measuring the return on investment outcome (ROI) of the diversity and inclusion initiatives, so they can evaluate if the organizational benefits that derive from these practices justify the resources and the costs related to their implementation. In this context, ROI can help organizations assess the point to which these initiatives contribute to the organizational effectiveness, the employee retention, the productivity, the innovation and the overall business performance. The literature suggests that the outcomes of the diversity and inclusion initiatives can be categorized as tangible and intangible. The tangible outcomes may include increased productivity, higher levels of innovation, improved employee attraction and

retention, as well as stronger organizational performance and market competitiveness. At the same time, the intangible outcomes may include the improvement of the employer brand and the organizational reputation, the creation of a more healthy and supportive work environment, as well as better opportunities for the development and professional growth of employees. Moreover, organizations may benefit from the continuous monitoring and communication of the effectiveness of the diversity and inclusion initiatives through measurable indicators, like hiring statistics, employee survey results, turnover rates and employee retention levels. The evaluation and communication of these outcomes may also help organizations present more effectively the broader business case of diversity and inclusion initiatives to management, stakeholders and employees, reinforcing the perception that diversity and inclusion should not be treated only as social or ethical obligations but also as important strategic and organizational investments (Morley, 2018).

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The present study presents some limitations that should be considered during the evaluation of the findings. Initially, the study is based exclusively on secondary data and the existing literature, without the collection of primary data through interviews, questionnaires or other research methods. As a result, the conclusions of the study depend greatly on the findings and approaches of previous studies (Bowen, 2009; Snyder, 2019).

Moreover, a big part of the bibliography that was used, comes from different social, cultural and organizational environments. This means that some conclusions may not be applicable in the same way across all organizations or countries, since the diversity and inclusion practices are affected significantly by the organizational culture, social conditions and the institutional framework of each environment (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

At the same time, diversity and inclusion is a multidimensional and continuously evolving subject. The social perceptions, the working conditions and organizational practices are constantly changing, which means that new data and new approaches may alter some of the conclusions presented in the existing literature (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Snyder, 2019).

Finally, even though the study attempts to present different theoretical approaches and research findings with objectivity, the qualitative nature of the analysis may be influenced to some extent by the interpretation of the bibliography. For this reason, the findings of the study should not be considered absolute or universally applicable, but rather as a critical and theoretical approach to diversity and inclusion in the modern workplace (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

The present study highlighted different organizational, psychological and managerial dimensions related to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. However, despite the continuous academic and organizational interest in diversity and inclusion practices, many aspects of the employees' experiences and the organizational implementation procedures still remain inadequately explored. Future research could examine further the psychological dimensions of inclusion, especially in relation to the sense of belonging, the psychological safety and the degree to which employees feel able to express genuinely their identities within the workplace. Previous literature has indicated that inclusion is not only limited to the representation and participation but is also connected with employees' perceptions of

acceptance, uniqueness and organizational support. Future studies could therefore examine in depth the relationship between organizational inclusion practices and employees' emotional experiences, such as fear of negative judgment, identity suppression, behavioral adaptation and workplace anxiety, in order to better understand the way employees experience inclusion within everyday organizational environments. Moreover, future research could further investigate the possible gap between official organizational policies and the actual experiences of employees within the workplace, since organizations may publicly support diversity and inclusion, while employees may continue to experience indirect exclusion, stereotypes or bias in the workplace (Shore, et al., Inclusion and Diversity in Work Groups: A Review and Model for Future Research, 2011).

Additionally, future studies could examine the long-term effectiveness of diversity and inclusion initiatives and to assess whether these practices lead to sustainable organizational and behavioral change or mostly to temporary attitudinal changes. As discussed throughout the present study, many diversity initiatives may create resistance, backlash or symbolic organizational reactions when implemented without broader organizational support and cultural adaptation. Future research could therefore, investigate the long-term organizational outcomes of diversity training, accountability systems, mentoring initiatives and leadership practices that focus on inclusion across different organizational environments and sectors. Additional research could also examine the way in which organizational culture, leadership commitment and employee participation affect the sustainability and effectiveness of diversity and inclusion initiatives over time (Fraccaroli et al., 2024).

Finally, future research could also examine the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and the automated decision-making systems in the reducing of bias in the workplace and the improving fairness in hiring processes, evaluations and promotions. Given that many stereotypes and unconscious biases are deeply rooted in human behavior and the socialization processes, future studies could explore whether the organizational decision-making systems supported by artificial intelligence can contribute to more objective decisions and reduce certain forms of human subjectivity within the organizational processes. However, further regarding the potential risks of algorithmic bias is also required, as well as the possibility that the AI systems may reproduce already existing inequalities through biased data or organizational practices. At the same time, the rapid transformation of work environments through technology, automatization and new organizational structures may create additional diversity and inclusion challenges, which the future studies will need to further examine (Fraccaroli et al., 2024; Nixon et al., 2024).

5.6 Conclusion

The present study examined the role of diversity and inclusion in the modern workplace through the thematic analysis of the existing literature. The findings showed that diversity and inclusion are linked with important organizational benefits, such as the enhanced innovation, a positive employee experience and the creation of competitive advantage. The literature also indicated that the effective management of diversity does not only depend on the existence of employees with diverse characteristics but also on the development of an inclusive organizational culture, the implementation of effective leadership practices and continuous organizational commitment.

Even though challenges like stereotypes, unconscious bias and resistance to change continue to exist, the findings of this study suggest that diversity and inclusion should be considered as strategic priorities and not exclusively as social or ethical obligations. As a result, organizations that invest in inclusive practices and in a supportive working environment are more likely to enhance the wellbeing of the employees, the overall organizational effectiveness and their long-term sustainability.

Bibliography

- Dixon-Fyle, S., Hunt, V., Dolan, K., & Prince, S. (2020, May). *McKinsey & Company*. Retrieved from [www.mckinsey.com: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpgclefindmkaj/https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/diversity%20and%20inclusion/diversity%20wins%20how%20inclusion%20matters/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters-vf.pdf](https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/diversity%20and%20inclusion/diversity%20wins%20how%20inclusion%20matters/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters-vf.pdf)
- Ramasamy, I., Natarajan, S., & Mittal, A. (2025, October-December). Impact of Workforce Diversity on Employee Retention and Engagement: Mediating Role of Organizational Climate. *Sage Open*, pp. 1-20.
- Bailey, M. J., Helgerman, T., & Stuart, B. A. (2024). How The 1963 Equal Pay Act and 1964 Civil Rights Act Shaped the Gender Gap In Pay. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 1827-1878.
- Bowen, G. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, Vol 9, pp. 27-40.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006, January). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, Vol 3 (2), pp. 77-101.
- Clar, M., Muhr, S., Reiss, L., & Storm, K. (2021, December). Unconscious bias in organizations: Discriminatory forces at work. *Research Gate*, pp. 5-9.
- Cletus, H., Mahmood, N., Umar, A., & Ibrahim, A. (2018). Prospects and Challenges of Workplace Diversity in Modern Day Organizations: A Critical Review. *Holistica*, pp. 35-52.
- Creswell, J., & Creswell, J. (2022). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.
- Deloitte. (2020). *Deloitte Insights*. Retrieved from [www.deloitte.com: https://www.deloitte.com/content/dam/assets-zone1/za/en/docs/services/consulting/2023/za-Deloitte-Global-Human-Capital-Trends.pdf](https://www.deloitte.com/content/dam/assets-zone1/za/en/docs/services/consulting/2023/za-Deloitte-Global-Human-Capital-Trends.pdf)
- Deloitte. (2020). *Deloitte Insights*. Retrieved from [www.deloitte.com: https://www.deloitte.com/content/dam/assets-zone1/za/en/docs/services/consulting/2023/za-Deloitte-Human-Capital-Trends-SA-Report-2020.pdf](https://www.deloitte.com/content/dam/assets-zone1/za/en/docs/services/consulting/2023/za-Deloitte-Human-Capital-Trends-SA-Report-2020.pdf)
- Deloitte. (2020). *Deloitte Insights*. Retrieved from [www.deloitte.com: https://www.deloitte.com/content/dam/assets-zone1/za/en/docs/services/consulting/2023/za-Returning-to-work-in-the-future-of-work-2020.pdf](https://www.deloitte.com/content/dam/assets-zone1/za/en/docs/services/consulting/2023/za-Returning-to-work-in-the-future-of-work-2020.pdf)
- Dobbin, F., & Kalev, A. (2016, July-August). Why Diversity Programs Fail. *Harvard Business Review*.

- Fauzi, F., Ibrahim, M., Andri, I., Akbar, M., & Yendra. (2024). The Evolution of Employment Law and Its Impact on Workplace Dynamics. *Advances in Human Resource Management Research* 2(1), pp. 1-10.
- Fraccaroli, F., Zaniboni, S., & Truxillo, D. (2024, Januray). Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior Challenges in the New Economy: A New Era for Work Design Keywords. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, pp. 1-31.
- Gip, H., Russen, M., & Guchait, P. (2025, March 29). Climate perceptions for underrepresented leaders: Influencing service employees' proactive behaviors through psychological safety and knowledge sharing. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, pp. 1-10.
- Goldman, B. M., Gutek, B. A., Stein, J. H., & Lewis, K. (2006, December). Employment Discrimination in Organizations: Antecedents and Consequences. *Journal of Management*, 32(6), pp. 787-795.
- Greenwald, A., Dasgupta, N., Dovidio, J., Kang, J., Moss-Racusin, C., & Teachman, B. (2022, May 19). Implicit-Bias Remedies: Treating Discriminatory Bias as a Public-Health Problem. *Association of Psychological Science* , pp. 7-40.
- Hartmann Bjorndalen, O. S. (2023, May). *Beyond Representation: Examining the Link between Diversity, Inclusion and Financial Performance*. Ανάκτηση από [www.research-api.cbs.dk: https://research-api.cbs.dk/ws/portalfiles/portal/98731616/1617790_Beyond_Representation_Examining_the_Link_between_Diversity_Inclusion_and_Financial_Performance.pdf](https://research-api.cbs.dk: https://research-api.cbs.dk/ws/portalfiles/portal/98731616/1617790_Beyond_Representation_Examining_the_Link_between_Diversity_Inclusion_and_Financial_Performance.pdf)
- Hodkinson, A. (2011). Inclusion: a defining definition? *Power and Education (Vol 3)*, pp. 179-185.
- Ibrahim, I. (2025, August 7). Employee Turnover: Diversity of Predictors, Consequences and Retention Variables in Different Continents. *Universal Journal of Green Human Resources and Sustainable Humanities*, pp. 1-13.
- Krentz, M., Dean, J., & Novacek, G. (2019, April 24). *The Boston Consulting Group*. Retrieved from [www.bcg.com: https://www.bcg.com/publications/2019/diversity-first-step-inclusion-comes-next](https://www.bcg.com/publications/2019/diversity-first-step-inclusion-comes-next)
- Lorenzo, R., Voigt, N., Schetelig, K., Zawadzki, A., Welpe, I., & Brosi, P. (2017, April 26). *The Boston Consulting Group*. Retrieved from [www.bcg.com: https://www.bcg.com/publications/2017/people-organization-leadership-talent-innovation-through-diversity-mix-that-matters](https://www.bcg.com/publications/2017/people-organization-leadership-talent-innovation-through-diversity-mix-that-matters)
- Lorenzo, R., Voigt, N., Tsusaka, M., Krentz, M., & Abouzahr, K. (2018, Januray 23). *The Boston Consulting Group*. Retrieved from [www.bcg.com: https://www.bcg.com/publications/2018/how-diverse-leadership-teams-boost-innovation](https://www.bcg.com/publications/2018/how-diverse-leadership-teams-boost-innovation)
- Mbonigaba, C., & Vanitha, N. (2023, July-December). Unmasking Unconscious Bias: The Silent Killer of Workplace Diversity. *Indo American Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Review (IAJMRR)*, pp. 92-101.

- Mohanty, V., & Acharya, S. (2020, January). Examining Workforce Diversity and Job Satisfaction on Employee Retention. *Shodh Sarita*, 7(25), pp. 201-207.
- Morley, T. (2018). Making the business case for diversity and inclusion: Short case studies and research papers that demonstrate best practice in HR. *Strategic HR Review*, pp. 58-60.
- Nixon, N., Lin, Y., & Snow, L. (2024). *Catalyzing Equity in STEM Teams: Harnessing Generative AI for Inclusion and Diversity*. Retrieved from arXiv: <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2402.00037>
- Patrick, H., & Kumar, V. (2012, April-June). Managing Workplace Diversity: Issues and Challenges. *SAGE Open*, pp. 1-15.
- Roberson, Q. M. (2018, October 31). Diversity in the Workplace: A Review, Synthesis, and Future Research Agenda. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, pp. 69-88.
- Rustman, R. (2023). *LGBTQ Inclusion in the Workplace: An Understanding of Hiring and Promotional Practices*. San Diego, California: National University.
- Ryan, M. (2022, November 7). Addressing workplace gender inequality: Using the evidence to avoid common pitfalls. *The british psychological society* , pp. 1-11.
- Shore, L., Randel, A., Chung, B., Dean, M., Ehrhart, K., & Singh, G. (2011, July 4). Inclusion and Diversity in Work Groups: A Review and Model for Future Research. *Journal of Management*, pp. 1-28.
- Shore, L., Randel, A., Chung, B., Dean, M., Holcombe Ehrhart, K., & Singh, G. (2010, October 28). Inclusion and Diversity in Work Groups: A Review and Model for Future Research. *Sage Journals Home*, pp. 1-23.
- Shore, L., Randel, A., Shore, L., Chung, B., Dean, M., Holcombe Ehrhart, K., & Singh, G. (2011, July 4). Inclusion and Diversity in Work Groups: A Review and Model for Future Research. *Journal of Management (Vol. 37)*, pp. 1262-1289.
- Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research Vol 104*, pp. 333-339.
- Son Hing, L., Sakr, N., Sorenson, J., Stamarski, C., Caniera, K., & Colaco, C. (2023, April 30). Gender inequities in the workplace: A holistic review of. *Human Resource Management Review*, pp. 1-25.
- Stamarski, C., & Son Hing, L. (2015, September 16). Gender inequalities in the workplace: the effects of organizational structures, processes, practices, and decision makers' sexism. *Frontiers in Psychology*, pp. 1-20.
- Toczek, L., Bosma, H., & Peter, R. (2021, December 23). The Gender Pay Gap: Income Inequality Over Life Course – A Multilevel Analysis. *Frontiers in Sociology*, pp. 1-14.
- Triana, M., Gu, P., Chapa, O., Richard, O., & Colella, A. (2021). Sixty years of discrimination and diversity research in human resource management: A review with

suggestions for future research directions. *Human Resource Management (Vol 60, Issue 1)*, pp. 145-204.

Urbancová, H., Hudáková, M., & Fajčíková, A. (2020, 12(2), June 19). Diversity Management as a Tool of Sustainability of Competitive Advantage. *Sustainability*, pp. 1-16.

Van Laar, C., Meeussen, L., Veldman, J., Van Grootel, S., Sterk, N., & Jacobs, C. (2019, August 27). Coping With Stigma in the Workplace: Understanding the Role of Threat Regulation, Supportive Factors, and Potential Hidden Costs. *BMC Medical Ethics*, pp. 1-21.