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A Study on Diversity and Inclusion: An HR Perspective

Diksha Gupta

Assistant Professor

Galgotias College of Engineering and Technology

ARTICLE DETAILS

ABSTRACT

Research Paper

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In today's globalized world, diversity and inclusion are essential because they recognize the importance of individual differences in enhancing corporate culture and stimulating creativity. While inclusion actively promotes an atmosphere where these distinctions are acknowledged and valued, diversity encompasses a variety of factors, including race, gender, age, ethnicity, and culture. Diversity and inclusion are essential for attracting, retaining, and engaging talent, as well as for creating a positive corporate culture that supports equal opportunity for all. The research methodology is descriptive and exploratory, deploying both primary and secondary data sources to provide a comprehensive view of this critical subject. The primary data collection method is administering questionnaires to HR professionals from various industries in the New Delhi, Greater Noida, and Noida region, ensuring diverse perspectives and experiences. This approach enabled the collection of firsthand insights and perspectives directly from those actively engaged in diversity and inclusion practices within their organizations. The secondary data sources, which complemented the primary data, included a review of the literature on diversity and inclusion that explored changing definitions, frameworks, and best practices. It was possible to thoroughly examine the complex subtleties of diversity and inclusion in modern workplaces thanks to this multifaceted research design. The study aims to investigate the notion of diversity and inclusion, gather perspectives from human resources



professionals in diverse sectors, and pinpoint the obstacles organizations encounter when implementing effective diversity and Inclusion initiatives. The data collection is geographically focused on New Delhi, Greater Noida, and Noida, with questionnaires distributed exclusively to HR professionals in these areas. It's important to note that the study's findings are limited to organizations within New Delhi, Greater Noida, and Noida.

1. Introduction

Definition

According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), "Inclusion focuses on fostering a supportive and respectful environment that embraces and values these differences, while diversity includes the various characteristics that distinguish individuals or groups from one another." Diversity and inclusion are now major topics in discussions about workplaces, organizations, and society at large in today's fast-paced and connected world. Diversity is essentially about appreciating and acknowledging the wide variety of human differences that enhance our common experiences. These distinctions cover a wide range of factors, such as abilities, sexual orientation, gender, age, race, ethnicity, and different viewpoints or ways of thinking. The distinctive tapestry that creates the dynamic fabric of contemporary society is made up of them all. The deliberate endeavor to create an atmosphere where these distinctions are not only recognized but also actively welcomed and used to the advantage of people and organizations is inclusion, which is a complement to diversity. Beyond simple tolerance, it aims to promote an environment of equity, respect, and self-determination. The concept of inclusion promotes the idea that all people should have an equal voice in the discussion and a seat at the table, regardless of their background. It serves as the foundation for cooperative innovation, fair opportunities, and peaceful coexistence. Diversity and inclusion work together to form a potent force that shapes the viability and success of contemporary organizations. They act as stimulants for bringing in and keeping top talent, improving worker satisfaction, and fostering a positive workplace culture. As we take a closer look at this research, we'll learn more about the importance of diversity and inclusion as well as the difficulties businesses have put these ideals into practice. By doing this, we hope to provide insight into the way forward for more equitable and inclusive workplaces that represent the diverse society we reside in.



2. History Background of Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and inclusion's history has changed dramatically over time. Although the idea of diversity has always been present in human societies, it became more well-known in the middle of the 20th century, when civil rights movements promoted equal rights and opportunities for all people, regardless of their gender, race, or other characteristics, both domestically and internationally. Due to societal and legal changes, diversity and inclusion gained recognition in the business sector in the second half of the 20th century. It became more well-known as companies realized the value of different viewpoints and the necessity of inclusive workplaces to promote creativity and efficiency.

The United States started its path toward accepting diversity and inclusivity about a century ago. Because the mainstream workforce was largely composed of white men, there were no laws guaranteeing workplace diversity and inclusion before the 1920s, which left women, people of color, immigrants, and other marginalized groups without equal protection. The founding of the Women's Bureau on June 5, 1920, just months before the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote, was one of the first significant turning points in this endeavor. As more women joined the workforce, they pushed for laws that would guarantee their welfare as workers and open doors for them to grow in their careers.

The Bureau's assistance in passing the 1938 Fair Labour Standards Act (FLSA) was one of its most important contributions to diversity and inclusion. In addition to documenting the pay gap between white and Black women, the Bureau was instrumental in granting women the right to take the Civil Service examination (US House of Representatives, 2020).

Executive Order 9981, which desegregated the armed forces on July 26, 1948, was another step the US government took to promote diversity and inclusion.

The US Army was the biggest employer of minorities in the nation during World War II (US House of Representatives, 2020). Thousands of Black women and more than a million Black men served in the US military during World War II. Black veterans had to face the fact that their Galvanised Iron benefits, which were established to aid US military veterans, would not be paid out nationwide after the war.

The struggle for inclusion and diversity in the military began before the war. President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 in 1941 in response to complaints that Black members of the armed forces were subjected to discrimination. This order prohibited discrimination by defense contractors, established the Fair Employment Practices Commission, and required that Black members be admitted into job training programs. President Truman issued Executive Order 9981 in 1948, requiring equal treatment and



opportunity for all individuals in the Armed Forces regardless of color, race, national origin, or religion, following a failed attempt to get Congress to pass legislation requiring diversity inclusion within the Armed Services (US House of Representatives, 2020). Executive Order 10925, issued by President Kennedy in 1961, established Affirmative Action, which required government contractors to guarantee equal employment opportunities for applicants without taking into account characteristics such as race, national origin, color, or creed. The executive order was extended by President Obama in 2014 to forbid discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation.

The 1938 FLSA was modified in 1963 by the Equal Pay Act, which the US Congress passed. This Act prohibited discrimination in wages based on sex. In American history, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is arguably the most significant diversity and inclusion law. Sex, race, color, religion, and national origin are all grounds for prohibition under this historic law. After the Supreme Court affirmed Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896, the Jim Crow laws that discriminated against millions of Americans based on race, religion, and national origin were effectively abolished. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 forbade discrimination against Americans who were 40 years of age or older. Pregnancy discrimination was outlawed in 1978 with the introduction of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act.

The American Disabilities Act forbade discrimination against eligible disabled people in 1990. To compensate people who had been subjected to discrimination because of their backgrounds, the Civil Rights Act of 1991 was passed. To protect those who returned from military service, the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act was passed in 1994. To protect people with genetic issues, the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act was passed in 2008. The Lilly Ledbetter Fair-Pay Act was passed in 2009 to allow discrimination victims to get their lost wages back.

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generations. The benefits of the 1960s started to be felt by the diversity and inclusion movement. Vanderbilt University, for instance, had its first Black football player in 1969, its first Black nursing school graduate in 1970, its first Black medical school graduate in 1970, its first Black college football coach in the Southeastern Conference, and its first Black graduate with a degree from the School of Management (Vanderbilt University, 2023).

The 1970s and 1980s saw a continuation of the "firsts" trend. The 1980s saw a rise in diversity and inclusion as skilled and technological labor replaced industrial labor. Low-skilled workers found steady work during the Industrial Era, and those with less experience had opportunities.

However, the labor market was dominated by technological jobs in the 1980s, and for the first time, skill took precedence over a worker's race, gender, or creed. As a result, women, minorities, and other protected groups have greater opportunities in the workforce. Companies found a link between having a workforce that reflected their clientele and consumer brands starting to recognize the importance of having a diverse workforce that reflected their clientele in the 1990s and 2000s. There is a business impact from this diversity (Williams, 2020). Since a workforce made up of people from different backgrounds is more dynamic, more effort and resources are devoted to hiring, training, and keeping a diverse workforce. This is because it not only benefits the customer base but also encourages creativity and innovation. From building and maintaining diverse workforces that reflected customer bases to establishing diversity leadership, diversity and inclusion changed course in the 2010s. Having grown up with only diversity and inclusion in their minds, the Millennial generation came into the workforce expecting diversity at the top of corporate America (Williams, 2020). Many Fortune 500 companies created employee resource groups (ERGs), which are voluntary, employee-led organizations whose goal is to promote a diverse and inclusive workplace in response to this expectation of the newest hires.

3. Literature Review

(S. S. Jayakrishnan, 2020) The research paper provides by shedding light on the idea of diversity and stresses how crucial it is to embrace individual variations, both superficial and profound. The creation of an equitable and respectful workplace that provides everyone with equal opportunities is characterized as inclusivity. The article emphasizes how diversity and inclusion are closely related and how important they are to both organizational success and societal advancement. Notably, the article addresses gender diversity and the changing LGBT movement in India, addressing enduring social stigmas while acknowledging legal advancements. Additionally, it talks about actual instances of businesses that are



dedicated to inclusion and diversity. The article also discusses obstacles to these programs and offers ideas for promoting inclusivity in businesses.

(O'Donovan, 2017), a study titled "Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace" offers a thorough examination of the complex ideas of inclusion and diversity in corporate settings. Due to global demographic shifts and the existence of multinational corporations, the author emphasizes the growing significance of diversity. Diversity is defined in the paper as including both obvious and invisible individual differences, and inclusion is introduced as the process of fully involving people despite these differences. In addition to stressing the advantages of cost savings, increased innovation, and better customer service, it highlights the necessity of effective diversity management and integration into corporate culture. Furthermore, the paper recognizes issues like tokenism and resistance to change. The benefits and challenges of diversity and inclusion in modern workplaces are well-explained in this paper, which also highlights the significance of proactive management in fostering inclusive and effective work environments.

(Krithi, 2021) The authors of this paper examine the various facets of workforce diversity, classifying it into primary, secondary, and tertiary dimensions, which cover a range of diversity-related factors, both obvious and hidden, including age, gender, ethnicity, race, cognitive style, and educational background. It offers a thorough summary of workforce diversity and inclusion and seeks to compile the body of knowledge on the subject and pinpoint areas for further study. The researcher presents the idea that people with different backgrounds, traits, and characteristics make up organizations in this paper. They stress that in today's globalized world, managing workforce diversity and inclusion effectively is crucial to organizational competitiveness. The study also addresses the advantages of having a diverse workforce, emphasizing how it can boost creativity, enhance decision-making, and give businesses a competitive edge. It does, however, also recognize the difficulties in managing diversity, including misunderstandings and disputes that arise when not handled properly. The study emphasizes how important inclusion is to reducing the difficulties brought on by diversity. It is suggested that inclusive practices are essential for improving organizational commitment and promoting diversity management. This study offers a thorough examination of workforce diversity and inclusion, going over its aspects, advantages, difficulties, and the critical role that inclusion plays in attaining organizational competitiveness. The authors urge more study in the area, especially to learn more about how inclusion affects diverse workforces.

Nisha Nair (2015) The author offers a thorough examination of the constantly changing ideas of inclusion and diversity in the context of, as well as how they relate to, leadership. Definitions and interpretations of



diversity and inclusion, their effects on organizational procedures, the difficulties in managing them, and the critical roles that leadership and organizational climate play are just a few of the many topics covered in this paper. It also explores the nuances of diversity, covering both overt demographic differences and covert variations in beliefs and ways of thinking. The authors stress the value of creating inclusive cultures that embrace hidden identities and commonalities in addition to outward differences. Along with the obvious advantages, like increased financial performance, the paper also emphasizes the moral necessity of advancing diversity and inclusion.

(Ms. Aaiman Siddiqui, 2020), The study highlights the critical role that cultural diversity plays in today's workplaces against the backdrop of globalization, stressing its significant effect on the success of the organization. The authors emphasize how cultural diversity is dynamic and ubiquitous at all organizational levels, defining it as the acceptance and respect for differences across multiple dimensions. The report continues by emphasizing that managing this diversity well is not only morally required but also strategically beneficial, promoting a favorable company image, client loyalty, and employee commitment. The discussion is deepened by the expertly presented theoretical contributions, which include Hofstede's 5D model, Hall's high and low context in communication, and the systematic organic dimension. Additionally, the paper explores methods and tactics for handling cultural diversity while emphasizing the strong arguments for why businesses should take cultural differences into account when conducting their operations. These include trade shows, promotional strategies, international customer interactions, business restructuring, customized product development, and effective communication.

Saxena (2014), This study offers a thorough investigation of the value of diversity in modern organizations. The workforce is defined by the author. Diversity, taking into account elements like gender, age, and cultural background, and highlighting its significance in the age of globalization. The study emphasizes that although a diverse workforce is necessary for competitiveness, it also presents management difficulties because of variations in attitudes, perceptions, and other factors. The paper summarises the results of several studies written by various authors, highlighting the complexity of workforce diversity and how it affects organizational productivity. The importance of leadership in cultural adaptation, the necessity of efficient diversity management, and the potential for diversity to stimulate creativity are some of the main conclusions. The problem statement acknowledges that firing employees is not the only way to address diversity-related issues.

Shore, Lynn M. (2011) Brewer's Optimal Distinctiveness Theory is presented in this essay as a fundamental framework for comprehending how to strike a balance between a person's need for



uniqueness within a group and their need for belonging. To avoid isolation and foster security, it emphasizes acceptance and connection, defining inclusion in work groups as the fulfillment of both of these needs. The authors stress how important it is to establish workplaces where diversity is valued, and differences are viewed as teaching opportunities. The study also explores how their inclusion framework complements and differs from other models and theories in the diversity literature, emphasizing, in particular, the emphasis on individual experiences in work groups. The paper's literature review covers several topics, such as how leader-member interactions can lower turnover in diverse work groups, how crucial leaders are to foster an inclusive culture, and insider status behaviors that promote inclusivity. It also emphasizes the benefits of inclusion, including increased career opportunities, well-being, creativity, job satisfaction, and decreased intentions to leave. The authors emphasize that more research is necessary to examine the mechanisms that mediate the relationship between inclusion and these results.

4. Problem Statement

In today's diverse work environment, organizations face the challenge of fostering inclusivity. The purpose of this study is to fill in the gaps in comprehending and putting diversity and inclusion strategies into practice. By analyzing the necessity of such programs, this study aims to offer insightful information to businesses looking to foster inclusive environments and capitalize on diversity's advantages.

4.1 Objectives of the study

- 1. To study the concept of Diversity and Inclusion
- 2. To gain insights of HR professionals across diverse industries regarding diversity and
- 3. inclusion practices.
- 4. To identify the challenges faced by organizations across various industries and regions when implementing successful diversity and inclusion programs.

4.2 Research Design

Type of Research- Exploratory and Descriptive

Type of Data- Primary and Secondary

Sampling technique- Snowball sampling

Size- 16 Companies

Research area - New Delhi, Greater Noida, and Noida

Research Instrument- Questionnaire



4.3 Research Methodology

Company Name	Location	Job Title
Cyient Limited	Noida	Senior manager-HR
Infosys Limited	Noida	Assistant manager-HR
Cadence Design System	Noida	Assistant manager-HR & Admin
TCS	New Delhi	Assistant Manager
Birla Soft Limited	Noida	HR Executive
Digital Global India	Greater Noida	Hr assistant manager
Innodata India Pvt.Ltd.	Noida	HR
IT Company India	Noida	HR
Rudra Technologies	New Delhi	HR Executive
Capgemini	Noida	Junior HR
THALES	Noida	Sr. Manager HR
Tech Mahindra	Noida	HR recruiter
Automation Engineers	Noida	Management Trainee
Ongraph Technologies Pvt. Ltd.	Noida	HR
Oracle	Noida	Assistant Manager
Delphix India	Noida	Manager HR and Administration

4.4 Limitations of the Study

The study's findings are restricted to organizations within the Delhi and Noida regions, limiting the applicability to a broader context. Data collection solely from HR professionals may not encompass the perspectives of others within the organizations.

5. Data Analysis



Options	Frequency
Under 18	0
18-24	5
25-34	7
35-54	3
55-64	1
65 or older	0
Total	16

Table 1: Age

Options	Frequency
Options	Frequency
Male	7
Female	9
Total	16

Table 2: Gender

Source: Complied from questionnaire

Options	Frequency
High school	0
Associate degree	0
Bachelor's degree	2



Master's degree	10
Doctorate/Ph.D	4
Total	16

Table 3: Education

Options	Frequency
Less than 1 year	7
1-5 years	6
6-10 years	1
11-20 years	2
More than 20 years	0
Total	16

Table No 4: Years of experience

Source: Complied from questionnaire

Options	Frequency
Strongly agree	6
Agree	7
Neutral	1
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	2
Total	16

Table 5: Diversity and inclusion positively impacts organizational performance

Source: Complied from questionnaire



Options	Frequency
Very effectively	6
Somewhat effectively	7
Neutral	2
Not very effectively	1
Not at all effectively	0
Total	16

Table 6: Organization effectively promotes Diversity and inclusion

Options	Frequency
Yes	10
No	6
Total	16

Table 7: Organizations have policies to promote Diversity and inclusion

Source: Complied from questionnaire

Options	Frequency
Yes, regularly	6
Yes, occasionally	4
No	6
Total	16

Table 8: Diversity and inclusion training programs

Source: Complied from questionnaire



Options	Frequency
Very effective	7
Somewhat effective	3
Neutral	3
Somewhat ineffective	1
Very ineffective	0
No training provided	2
Total	16

Table 9: Effectiveness of Diversity and Inclusion Training

Options	Frequency
Strongly feel a sense of belonging.	
Feel a moderate sense of belonging	9
Feel somewhat neutral about belonging	1
Do not feel a strong sense of belonging	0
Do not feel any sense of belonging	0
Total	16

Table 10: Sense of belonging

Source: Complied from questionnaire

Options	Frequency
Always	11
Often	2



Sometimes	3
Rarely	0
Never	0
Total	16

Table 11: Is your voice heard and valued

Options	Frequency
Yes	12
No	1
Not sure	3
Total	16

Table 12: Equal opportunities are provided to all for career advancement

Source: Complied from questionnaire

Options	Frequency
Yes, very comfortable	11
Yes, somewhat comfortable	4
No, not comfortable	1
I haven't tried	0
Total	16

Table 13: Feel comfortable discussing Diversity issues with superiors

Source: Complied from questionnaire

Options	Frequency
Options	Frequency



Yes, very diverse	9
Yes, somewhat diverse	6
No, not diverse at all	1
Total	16

Table 14: Organization has a diverse leadership team

Options	Frequency
Yes, actively	8
Yes, somewhat	8
No, not at all	0
I don't know	0
Total	16

Table 15: Workplace actively recruits from diverse backgrounds

Source: Complied from questionnaire

Options	Frequency
Yes	4
No	11
Maybe	1
Total	16

Table 16: Felt isolated at work

Source: Complied from questionnaire

Options	Frequency
Race/ethnicity	4



Gender	5
Age	3
Sexual orientation	3
Religion	5
Disability	3
Others	5
Not experienced	7
Total	35

Table 17: Types of discrimination experienced

Options	Frequency
Yes, significant positive changes	6
Yes, some positive changes	6
No noticeable changes	1
Yes, but with mixed or uncertain outcomes	0
I don't have enough information	3
Total	16

Table 18: Noticed transformation in workplace culture due to implementation of Diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Source: Complied from questionnaire

Options	Frequency
Frequently	4



Occasionally	9
Rarely	2
Never	1
Total	16

Table 19: Organizations Recognize and celebrate diversity

Options	Frequency
Yes	6
No	6
Not sure	4
Total	16

Table No 20: Unconscious bias exists in the workplace.

Source: Complied from questionnaire

Options	Frequency
Very aware	8
Somewhat aware	3
Not aware	1
Not sure	4
Total	16

Table 21: You are aware of your own unconscious biases?

Source: Complied from questionnaire

Options	Frequency
Yes	10



No	1
Not sure	5
Total	16

Table 22: There is a formal anti-discrimination policy in the workplace

Options	Frequency
Lack of diversity in leadership	8
Unconscious bias in hiring	6
Resistance to change from some employees	10
Insufficient diversity training	9
Stereotyping and microaggressions	9
Unequal access to growth opportunities	6
Inconsistent communication about	6
diversity.	
Difficulty in measuring diversity progress	6
Cultural insensitivity	6
Insufficient support for employee resource	7
Groups	
Bias in performance evaluations	6
Discriminatory company policies	4
Gender pay gap	3
Total	86

Table 23: Challenges that hinder Diversity and inclusion

Source: Complied from questionnaire

Options	Frequency
Implement mandatory diversity training	11



Foster open dialogues on diversity.	9
Create mentorship programs for	7
underrepresented groups.	
Promote diverse recruitment practice	13
Recognize and celebrate cultural holidays.	6
Sponsor diversity-related events.	3
Promote diversity in decision-making	6
Improve accessibility for all employees.	8
Address unconscious bias in hiring	7
Enhance diversity in leadership roles	8
Promote flexible work arrangements.	9
Implement fair promotion policies.	7
Develop a zero-tolerance policy for	8
discrimination.	
Total	102

Table 24: Initiatives that could enhance Diversity and inclusion

6. Findings

Age

According to the study, the largest percentage of respondents—seven—were between the ages of 24 and 34, while the smallest percentage—one—were between the ages of 55 and 64. (See Reference Table No. 1)

Gender

According to the study, The maximum respondents were male with 7 responses and the rest were female is 9 respondents. (Ref Table no. 2).

Education



According to the study, The greatest number of respondents—10—had a master's degree, while the smallest number—two—had a bachelor's degree. Refer to Table No. 3.

Years

According to the study, Seven respondents, or the maximum, had less than a year's experience, while one respondent, or the minimum, had six to ten years' experience. (See Reference Table No. 4).

• Diversity and Inclusion Positively Impacts Organizational Performance

According to the study, Eight respondents, or the maximum, agreed with the statement, while one respondent, or the minimum, was neutral. Refer to Table No. 5.

Organization Effectively Promotes Diversity and Inclusion

According to the study, Seven respondents, or the majority of the respondents, chose that the organization promotes diversity and inclusion (D&I) somewhat effectively, while only one respondent agreed that it does not promote D&I very effectively. Refer to Table No. 6.

Policies to Promote Diversity and Inclusion

According to the study, The maximum number of respondents who agreed was 10, and the remaining number of respondents who disagreed was 6. (See Reference Table No. 7)

Diversity and Inclusion Training Programs

According to the study, A minimum of four respondents indicated that training was given occasionally, while the majority of respondents (six responses) agreed that it was given on a regular basis. (See Reference Table No. 7)

• Effectiveness of Diversity and Inclusion Training

According to the study, Seven respondents, or the maximum number, agreed that diversity and inclusion training was very effective, while one respondent, or the minimum number, thought it was only moderately effective. (See Reference Table No. 8)

Voice is Heard and Valued



According to the study, The highest number of respondents indicated that their voices are consistently heard and valued, totaling 11 responses, whereas the lowest number of respondents felt their voices were heard only occasionally, amounting to 1 response.

• Equal Opportunities are Provided to All for Career Advancement

According to the study, Twelve responses, or the maximum number of respondents, agreed with this statement, while one response, or the minimum number of respondents, disagreed. (See Reference Table No. 11).

• Feel Comfortable Discussing Diversity Issues with Superiors

According to the study, The majority of respondents—11—said they felt very comfortable talking to superiors about diversity issues, while the smallest percentage—1—said they did not feel comfortable. (See Reference Table No. 12).

• The organization has a Diverse leadership Team

According to the study, The majority of respondents (nine) agreed that their leadership team is diverse, while the smallest percentage (one) stated that the team is not diverse. (See Reference Table No. 13)

Workplace Actively Recruits from Diverse Backgrounds

Eight responses, or the maximum number of respondents, indicated that the workplace actively or somewhat actively recruits diverse employees. Refer to Table No. 14.

7. Future Scope of the Study

- 1. Expanding the study's geographic scope to include areas other than New Delhi, Greater Noida, and Noida.
- 2. Expanding data collection beyond HR to incorporate feedback from staff members in other departments.
- 3. Investigating additional attributes and elements impacting diversity and inclusion programs to deepen the analysis in further studies.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study concludes by highlighting the importance of diversity and inclusion (D&I) in the workplace and its beneficial effects on organizational performance. The results imply that although D&I efforts are appreciated and have had an impact, problems such as unconscious bias and resistance to



change persist. It's critical to keep advocating for diversity and inclusion, make diversity training mandatory, and encourage candid discussions about diversity. Organizations should concentrate on encouraging diverse hiring practices and actively recognizing and celebrating diversity to effectively address challenges.

This study has the potential to benefit organizations that want to create more inclusive workplaces and reap the benefits of diversity. Expanding the study's scope and including a broader range of participants could help us better understand D&I in a variety of contexts.

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