The Impact of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiatives on Employee Performance

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Abstract: This study aims to understand the impact of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives on employee performance within organizations qualitatively using Systematic Literature. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within organizations have been proven through existing research with a correlation between variables and employee performance. This scientific article uses a structured literature review as its research approach. The literature review process involved the selection, identification, and analysis of relevant research publications. The PICO framework (Population/Problem, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome) was utilized to determine the study's scope by assigning scores to define research boundaries. During the literature review, pertinent scientific publications were chosen, located, and examined. Scores were used to identify the study scope using the PICO framework. The study scope boundaries are listed in Table 1 along with reviews of the literature from other journals. Metrics from scientific journals are used in Table 2, which will be explained and provided with the results in this article. The results show that DEI initiatives positively impact employee performance, with diversity enhancing creativity and innovation, and equity and inclusion improving employee morale and commitment.

Keyword: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Employee Performance

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, issues regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) have become major focuses in human resource management and organizational strategies. DEI initiatives aim to create a work environment that values and celebrates individual differences, ensures equality in opportunities and treatment, and builds a sense of inclusion where all employees feel accepted and valued (Bukhari et al., 2021; Gurková et al., 2021). Implementing these initiatives significantly impacts employee performance, which in turn affects the success and competitiveness of the organization. Diversity is the existence of differences inside an organisation, encompassing racial, gendered, age, cultural, sexual, and ability disparities, among others (Gupta, 2019). Effective diversity can enhance creativity and innovation due to the diverse perspectives brought by employees. When organizations adopt strong DEI policies,

they can attract talent from various backgrounds, enriching the work environment with new ideas and more creative solutions to problems (Mastrocola, 2019). According to (Steffens et al., 2019) diversity refers to the presence of differences within an organization, including but not limited to race, gender, age, cultural background, sexual orientation, and abilities. Effective diversity can enhance creativity and innovation due to the diverse perspectives brought by employees. When organizations adopt strong DEI policies, they can attract talent from various backgrounds, enriching the work environment with new ideas and more creative solutions to problems (Gutierrez, 2023).

Equity relates to fair and equal treatment of all employees, ensuring that every individual has equal access to opportunities and resources (Frederick and Hemema, 2019). By implementing equity policies, organizations can reduce injustice and discrimination, thereby improving employee morale and commitment. Equity in promotion, training, and career development also ensures that employees feel valued based on their performance rather than personal characteristics, ultimately increasing productivity and loyalty (Kamau, Wasike and Muturi, 2021). Inclusion is about creating an environment where every employee feels accepted, valued, and supported. When employees feel inclusive, they tend to be more engaged, motivated, and productive. An inclusive work environment promotes effective collaboration and communication, which are essential for the success of teams and the organization as a whole (Hamad et al., 2024).

Despite many organizations recognizing the importance of DEI initiatives, they still face empirical challenges in their implementation. Many organizations struggle to determine the right metrics to assess the success of DEI programs. Inadequate measurement can make it difficult for organizations to know if their DEI initiatives are truly effective. Although DEI policies may exist on paper, integrating them into the organization's daily culture is another matter. Many organizations face difficulties in ensuring that DEI values are genuinely internalized by all employees and not just regarded as formalities or slogans. Many organizations still struggle to achieve balanced representation of various groups in managerial and executive positions. Gender and racial gaps remain significant issues, where certain groups remain underrepresented in leadership roles despite DEI initiatives (Fritz & Gresham, 2024).

Unconscious bias remains a major obstacle to achieving true equity and inclusion. Even with increased training and awareness, implicit bias is often difficult to completely eliminate, affecting recruitment, promotion, and performance evaluation decision (Sreedhar and Nayak, 2023). In the digital transformation era, many organizations are adopting new technologies to support DEI initiatives. For example, using analytical tools to identify and address bias in recruitment processes or AI-based applications to provide personalized DEI training. However, digital transformation also brings new challenges, such as ensuring that algorithms and AI systems are free from bias that could exacerbate existing injustices (Ahmed et al., 2023). Social movements like Black Lives Matter and Time's Up have increased public awareness and pressure on organizations to improve their DEI practices. Organizations that fail to respond appropriately often face negative reactions from employees, customers, and the public, which can damage their reputation and business performance (Hermansyah, 2023).

Theoretically, social identity theory explains how membership in social groups influences individual behavior. In the context of DEI, this theory can help understand how group identities (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation) affect interaction dynamics in the workplace (Sreedhar & Nayak, 2023) and how DEI initiatives can be designed to promote cohesion and cooperation among groups. Equity theory states that individuals compare their input (effort, skills, experience) and output (salary, recognition) ratios with others. If individuals feel that this ratio is imbalanced, they may feel unjust and demotivated (Thompson, 2022). Effective DEI initiatives aim to create balance and fairness in employees' perceptions of equity in the workplace. This study aims to understand the impact of Diversity, Equity, and

Inclusion (DEI) initiatives on employee performance within organizations qualitatively using Systematic Literature.

METHOD

An overview of the factors in this article should be given as follows, prior to delving into the results and discussion: Employee performance and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are related. The study employed systematic literature variables.This scientific article uses a structured literature review as its research approach. The literature review process involved the selection, identification, and evaluation of pertinent scientific articles. Using scores to establish research boundaries, The study's scope was established using the PICO methodology (Population/Problem, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome). During the literature review, pertinent scientific publications were chosen, located, and examined. Scores were used to identify the study scope using the PICO framework. The study scope boundaries are listed in Table 1 along with reviews of the literature from other journals. Table 2 is shown below, and it uses metrics from academic publications that will be described and presented in the following manner with the results in this article:

Table 1. Summary of PICO

Component	Information
Population/problem	Employees within organizations
Intervention	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiatives
Comparison	None specified (n.a)
Outcome	Employee performance
Key Findings	Employee performance has been shown to benefit from DEI programs, with diversity fostering creativity and innovation and equality and inclusion enhancing. employee morale and commitment.

The research process includes formulating research questions, literature search, study selection for data extraction, eligibility assessment, and quality evaluation. In this research paper, the focus is on exploring research questions through literature searches in various international journals. This study emphasizes the importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within organizations related to employee performance. The article search was conducted in June 2024 using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines for literature source selection. Article eligibility criteria include specific inclusion and exclusion standards: 1) Inclusion of scientific articles written in Indonesian and 2) Inclusion of literature published as scientific articles in both English and Indonesian journals. Research articles that did not meet these criteria were excluded without restriction on the year of publication.

This article, which is written in the manner of a literature review, discusses research articles about the significance of diversity, equity, inclusion, and employee performance. The article's knowledge is basic, the whole text is not available, and the source selection process in this research was not completed using the appropriate criteria. A collection of literature is shown in Figure 1 along with a comparison of related literature, demonstrating the material synthesis process. The data, or the combined quality data results, is the final phase. The findings of data extraction are shown in the fabrication matrix table.
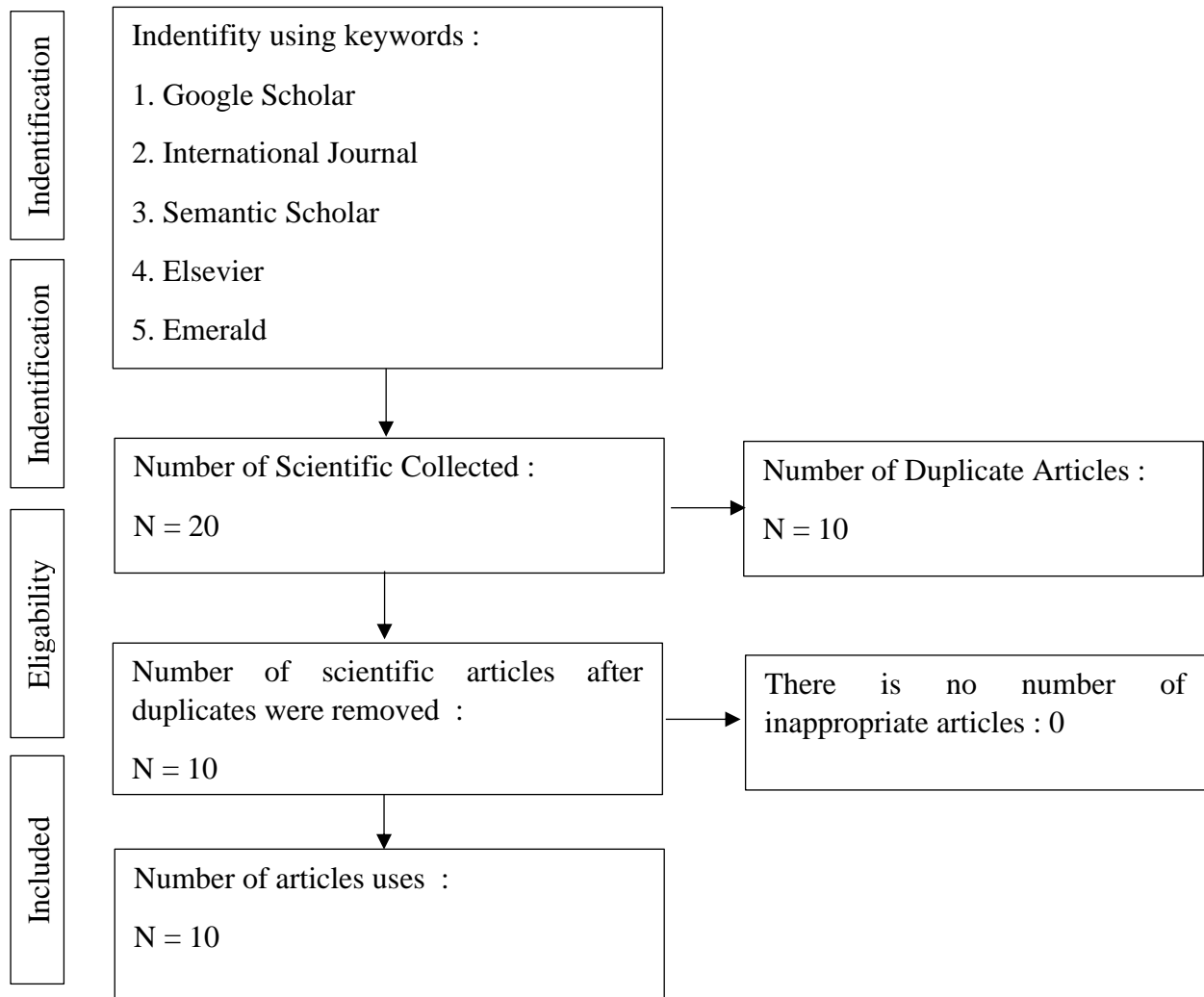
Indentification

Indentification

Eligability

Included

Indentifity using keywords :

1. Google Scholar

2. International Journal

3. Semantic Scholar

4. Elsevier

5. Emerald

Number of Scientific Collected :

N = 20

Number of Duplicate Articles :

N = 10

Number of scientific articles after duplicates were removed :

N = 10

There is no number of inappropriate articles : 0

Number of articles uses :

N = 10

Figure 1. Scientific Article Selection Process

Table 2. Distribution of Journals, Publishers, and Findings

Number	Article Name	Authors	Journal	Publisher	Findings
1	Diversity within management levels and organizational performance: employees' perspective	(Kundu et al., 2020)	Journal of Advances in Management Research Vol. 17 No. 1,	Emerald Publisher	Views of senior, middle, and lower management employees towards diversity in organisations relate to weak organizational performance, significantly both positively and negatively.
2	Workplace Diversity and Employee Performance: An Empirical Analysis of Nigeria's Banking Sector	(Ngalo et al., 2023)	Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies, 2023, 11, 211-233	Scientific Research Publishing	Employee effectiveness and performance are significantly impacted by diversity in the following areas: gender, income, ethnicity, and beliefs.
3.	Effect of Workplace Diversity on Employee Performance in DSIBS in Nigeria	(Ehilebo et al., 2022)	WSEAS TRANSACTI ONS on ENVIRONME NT and DEVELOPME	Scopus Index	Provides guidance on managing workforce diversity in the banking and financial sector to improve employee performance. The study

		NT Volume 18, 2022		examines the impact of workforce diversity on employee performance in Systemically Important Banks (DSIBs) in Nigeria, filling existing knowledge gaps.
4	Examining the relationship between employment equity implementation and employee performance at workplace: Evidence from a leading organisation in South Africa	(Utete, 2022)	INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN BUSINESS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE 11 (8) (2022) 141-152	Ssbfnet	Positive relationship between job equity implementation and employee performance. Statistical tests show a significant relationship between eliminating discrimination and improving employee performance in the workplace. However, statistical tests show an insignificant relationship between maintaining affirmative action and improving employee performance in the workplace.
5	Relationship between Job Equity and Performance of Employee: A Literature Review	(Inuwa, 2017a)	International Journal of Business and Management Future Vol. 1, No. 1; 2017	Centre for Research on Islamic Banking & Finance and Business	To make employees feel safe and secure and boost productivity, At every stage of the decision-making process, managers, employers, and organizations as a whole should ensure that equity and fairness are always taken into consideration.
6	Stereotype Threat in Organizations: Implications for Equity and Performance	(Walton et al., 2015)	Annual Reviews	Stanford University	Explains the mechanism by which the threat of stereotypes might influence workplace results. Furthermore, situational cues in work environments that may heighten stereotype risks are discussed, along with the reasons behind and mechanisms by which these cues impact persons who are stereotyped. Lastly, evidence-based tactics that are reasonably easy for organisations to follow are covered in order to lessen the threat of stereotypes and foster an environment where candidates and workers from all backgrounds can achieve.
7	Gender diversity, ethnic diversity and employee	(Zhuwao et al., 2019)	SA Journal of Human Resource	AOSIS	Employee performance is positively and significantly correlated

		Management 1-8		with both gender diversity and ethnic diversity. In order to optimize the benefits of diversity in gender and ethnicity on employee performance , this study advises higher education institutions to put in place efficient diversity management policies and procedures.
	performance in a South African higher education institution			
8	A Study on Embracing Workforce Diversity on Employee Performance	(shri, 2023)	International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR) Volume 5, Issue 6, November-December 2023	IJFMR	Workforce diversity plays an effective role in organizations. Workforce diversity helps organizations work effectively.
9.	Financial inclusion and performance of MSMEs in Eswatini	(Anthanasius Fomum & Opperman, 2023)	International Journal of Social Economics Vol. 50 No. 11, 2023 pp. 1551-1567	Emerald Publisher	Financial inclusion makes it more likely for microenterprises to fall into the growing and developing business category rather than being categorised as the most developed.\
10	Role of Diversity and Inclusion on Employee Performance Evaluation: Tourism and Hospitality Industry	(Singh, 2024)	https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3598-8787 Lovely Professional University, India	IGI Global	Diversity in organisations within the public sector as demonstrated by empirical data and academic frameworks. Incorporating diversity and inclusion into the assessment process can increase employee motivation, job enthusiasm, and productivity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After elaborating on the dozens of existing literature on the variables in this article, the results obtained are consistent with the findings described, namely diversity, equity, inclusion, and employee performance with various research objects related to one variable and another. Proven by research results from (Inuwa, 2017a) It emphasises the need for supervisors, employers, and organizations to ensure that justice and equity are constantly considered at all levels of decision-making. This will help employees feel safe and secure, which will boost their output and performance (Rony, 2020). Furthermore, diversity in public sector organisations is demonstrated by empirical data and theoretical frameworks. Incorporating diversity and inclusivity into the evaluation procedure can enhance employees' job satisfaction, motivation, and productivity (Singh, 2024).

Implementation of the above results is represented by the elaboration of the existing literature review, strengthening this article empirically within organizational scope but not limited to a single field because references found other fields with the same variable (Djoko Setyo Widodo, P. Eddy Sanusi Silitonga, 2017). The perspective given from this analysis as a discussion of results by (Kundu et al., 2020) is that efforts to enhance diversity and inclusion

should focus holistically at all management levels to maximize the positive impact on organizational performance. Effective diversity strategy integration at all management levels can improve employee perceptions and ultimately organizational performance (Susanto, Simarmata, et al., 2024).

Further, the research results from (Ngalo, Ogohi and Ibrahim, 2023) suggest that organizations should implement effective diversity management policies and strategies to maximize this potential. Thus, organizations can create an inclusive and productive workplace beneficial for employees and the organization as a whole. The research findings from (Ehilebo et al., 2022) emphasize the importance of good management of workforce diversity to improve worker performance in the finance and banking industry. Managers and legislators can utilise the empirical data and helpful advice from this research to establish a welcoming and effective work environment (Widodo, 2021).

Additionally, job equity and eliminating discrimination are important factors that can improve employee performance. Organizations need to develop and implement policies that ensure a fair and inclusive work environment to achieve better performance outcomes. Furthermore, reducing stereotype threats through inclusive and evidence-based strategies is crucial for enhancing employee performance and well-being in the workplace. Organizations need to actively identify and eliminate situational cues that exacerbate stereotype threats and commit to creating a fair and supportive work environment (Silitonga et al., 2017).

Diversity
Refers to the variety of people or groups that exist within a certain setting, such as an environment, community, or organization. This variety encompasses a range of characteristics, including age, physical or mental disabilities, sexual orientation, gender, cultural background, race, and ethnicity., and other characteristics that distinguish individuals from one another (Barak, 2022). Diversity is the state or condition of having different elements or qualities. In various contexts, such as organizations or communities, diversity refers to the presence of individuals with various characteristics, backgrounds, and perspectives. This includes differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, and educational background, but is not limited to these (Triana, 2017).

Research indicates that there is a positive correlation between independent variables (e.g., age, gender, educational background, and ethnic diversity) and dependent variables (e.g., employee performance) in regard to diversity and employee performance (Khan et al., 2019). Other research findings from (Mahdi Abaker et al., 2023) show an increase in employee performance when diversity is well managed for employees from various age groups, collaboration between men and women, and a work environment consisting of employees from different countries.

Equity
Relates to efforts to create fair and equal conditions for all individuals, including access to opportunities, resources, recognition, and rewards. The principle of equity strives to reduce or eliminate disparities that may exist in treatment or outcomes obtained by these individuals (Ainscow, 2015). Another definition states that the concept of equity focuses on providing fair and equal treatment to every individual, regardless of their personal characteristics such as race, gender, or socioeconomic background. Equity also means ensuring that everyone has the same opportunity to succeed and develop, as well as equal access to resources and opportunities (Li and Wang, 2014).

Regarding employee performance, previous research findings state that there is a positive and significant correlation between job equity and the performance of non-academic university staff. Therefore, this study suggests that equity should always be a consideration in

every decision-making process within organizations, ensuring organizational justice in every unit and department, so that employees feel treated fairly, ultimately improving their performance (Inuwa, 2017b). Other research findings also state that there is a positive correlation between the implementation of job equity and employee performance. Therefore, organizations need to ensure that they eliminate all forms of unfair discrimination as this can improve employee performance (Utete, 2022).

Inclusion

Refers to efforts to create an environment where every individual feels accepted, valued, and supported. Inclusion requires organizations to actively promote collaboration, participation, and contributions from all group members, regardless of their differences (Kirton and Greene, 2021). According to (Holmes, 2020) inclusion refers to practices or policies to include individuals who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those with disabilities, special needs, or from minority groups. It emphasizes creating an environment where all individuals feel respected, valued, and can fully participate. Inclusion promotes equal opportunities, encourages diversity, and fosters a sense of belonging. Regarding employee performance in organizations, previous research findings state that work dignity and inclusion positively impact employee performance, with work inclusion moderating the relationship between dignity and performance, making the relationship stronger positively when the level of work inclusion is high.

Employee Performance

Refers to the level of achievement or work results obtained by an employee in carrying out their tasks at the workplace. This includes various aspects such as productivity, quality of work, initiative, adherence to work procedures, teamwork, and contribution to the overall goals and results of the organization (Shields et al., 2015). Another definition also states it as a measure of an individual's achievement or contribution to the goals and targets set by the organization at the workplace (Susanto, Sawitri, et al., 2024). This includes evaluating various aspects such as productivity, efficiency, work quality, initiative, problem-solving ability, teamwork, attendance, discipline, and contribution to the company's culture and values (Agus Triansyah, Hejin and Stefania, 2023), (Widodo, 2017).

CONCLUSION

This study shows that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives have a significant positive impact on employee performance. Diversity in organizations enhances creativity and innovation, while equity and inclusion improve employee morale and commitment. However, challenges in integrating DEI values into organizational culture remain, and effective strategies are needed to address implicit bias and ensure balanced representation in leadership positions. Recommendations for organizations include continuing to develop comprehensive and inclusive DEI policies and providing ongoing training to increase awareness and reduce bias. This research provides important contributions to understanding the impact of DEI on employee performance and emphasizes the need for a holistic approach in implementing DEI to maximize its positive impact on organizational performance.

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