



Leveraging Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives on the Work Behavior of Employees in the Polymer Industry

Priyanka Agarwal  ^{*}¹, Nitendra Kumar  [†]², and Rohan Mathur  [‡]³

¹Associate Professor, Amity Business School, Amity University, Noida, U. P.

²Assistant Professor, Amity Business School, Amity University, Noida, U.P.

³Student, Amity Business School, Amity University, Noida, U.P.

Abstract

Over the past few years, workplace diversity and inclusion initiatives have grown significantly in prominence. These initiatives can benefit firms in many ways, including increased employee happiness, more creativity and innovation, and greater financial outcomes. The current study surveyed 125 employees from a variety of firms to examine the relationship between initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion and productive workplace behavior. Employees who worked for companies that supported diversity reported greater levels of engagement, communication, organizational commitment, and teamwork. The findings highlight the necessity for businesses to implement and uphold such policies in order to promote a more positive and healthy work environment. They also demonstrate that diversity and inclusion programs have a positive impact on employee attitudes and behaviors.

Keywords: Diversity. Inclusion. Absenteeism. Turnover. Polymer division. High-performance.

*Email: pagarwal5@amity.edu Corresponding Author

†Email: nkshukla.kumar4@gmail.com

‡Email: rohan.mathur2@student.amity.edu

1 Introduction

Plastic, with numerous advantages and disadvantages, has now become an integral part of daily human life playing an important role in every aspect. Diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) will be key to unlocking and accelerating. Sustainable polymer-based solutions to meet the needs of our rapidly growing world Gajdzik and Wolniak's (2022). To achieve faster innovation, we must increase team performance by embracing diversity, ensuring systems and processes within polymer science are equitable and through increased emotional intelligence (EQ), fostering inclusion and belonging Wikina's (2011). The plastics industry needs to do more by seeking out and appreciating talent from diverse backgrounds to further grow their companies. The industry comprises of workforce is composed of a wide-ranging age demographic (20–71 years), and includes 47% women and ethnicities such as Chinese, Venezuelan, Swedish, Italian, and others. Diversity is a major business asset in international negotiations, technical expertise, and navigating the nuances in cultural differences between suppliers (Haase, Brettmann, & Peeters, 2021).

Diversity and inclusion are two interrelated concepts that refer to creating a workplace culture that embraces and values differences in people, including differences in race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, and more (O'Donovan, 2018). Diversity refers to the representation of different backgrounds and experiences in the workplace, while inclusion is the act of fostering a professional and welcoming environment wherein everyone feels appreciated, welcomed, and supported. Diversity and inclusion are important for the corporate workforce for several reasons. First, it can improve employee morale, job satisfaction, and productivity by creating a sense of belonging and purpose among all employees. It can also help companies to attract and retain top talent, particularly from underrepresented groups who may be looking for a more diverse and inclusive workplace. An inclusive workplace recognizes the diversity of its employees and creates policies and practices that ensure that all employees can contribute and feel comfortable being themselves at work. This includes providing training on diversity and inclusion, ensuring that policies and practices are fair and equitable, and creating opportunities for all employees to participate and succeed. Together, diversity and inclusion create a workplace culture where all employees can thrive. When employees feel appreciated & supported for who they are, they are more engaged and motivated at work. They are also more likely to be satisfied with their job, have positive relationships with their colleagues, and experience less stress and burnout.

Additionally, a diverse multicultural workforce might result in improved judgment and problem-solving skills. When people with various backgrounds and experiences get together, they contribute a range of viewpoints, concepts, and strategies. Better results and more creative ideas may result from this. In contrast, when individuals with similar backgrounds or experiences work together, they could be more prone to ignore particular

viewpoints or concepts. Diversity and inclusion are also important for social responsibility. Organizations that embrace diversity and inclusion are doing the right thing as they are also making a positive impact on society. By promoting fairness, equality, and social justice, companies can help to create a more equitable and just society, and contribute to a more peaceful and prosperous world.

1.1 Need for Diversity and Inclusion:

Simply developing a diverse workplace culture is significantly different from building an inclusive workplace environment. A diverse workforce involves maintaining a headcount of people of different genders, ethnic groups, and sexual orientations just for commercial reasons.(see figure 1). An inclusive corporate culture, on the other hand, sets itself apart from any potential unconscious bias in the workplace. No matter who they are or how they identify themselves, employees feel accepted. Inclusion fosters engagement and a sense of belonging among employees. In order to have successful talent, organizations must embrace and cultivate engagement Kuknor and Bhattacharya’s (2021).In addition to employee engagement, organizations must ensure they are diverse and have an inclusive culture. Employees should experience a sense of belonging within the organization. Participation, diversity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging coexist Wikina’s (2011). The majority of business leaders believe that having an inclusive workplace is crucial. However, what being inclusive entails and how it manifests itself differs greatly from business to business. For some, it entails bringing on and keeping a diverse group of staff.

1.2 Parameters of Organizational work Behavior

One of the main objectives of the study of organizational/work behavior is to comprehend why people behave in certain ways. Exactly what do we mean when we refer to "behaviors"? Work behavior is influenced by job effectiveness, corporate citizenship practices, absenteeism, and attrition.(see figure 2). The intention or method of communication a person uses to interact with others at work may also be referred to as work behavior. For instance, verbal communication in the workplace frequently mirrors the nonverbal behavior of confidence. It conveys how you feel about your teammates and coworkers. This helps in achieving corporate sustainability (Okr glicka, Mittal, & Navickas, 2023). A person’s positive and effective work behavior helps to boost morale, productivity, and team or individual success. From an organizational standpoint, this is the most important topic for human resource specialists to focus on.

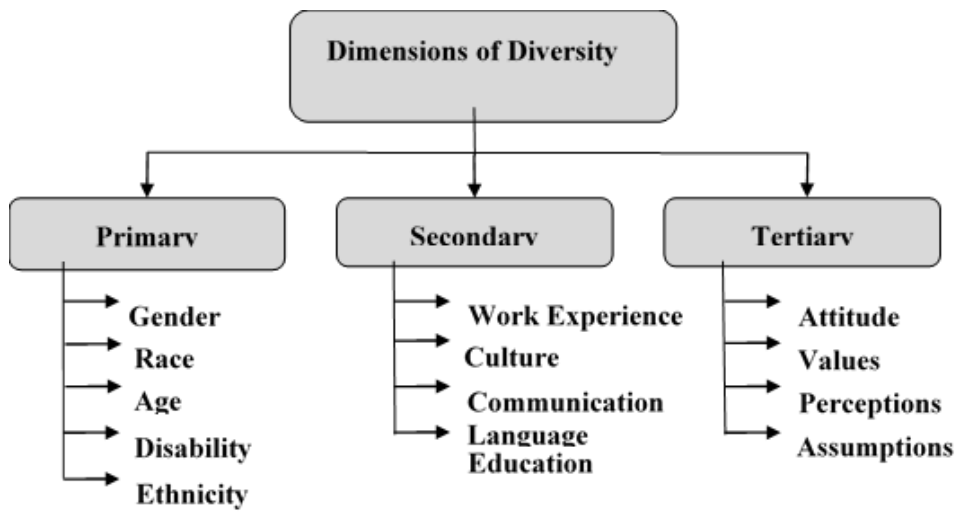


Figure 1. Dimension of Diversity

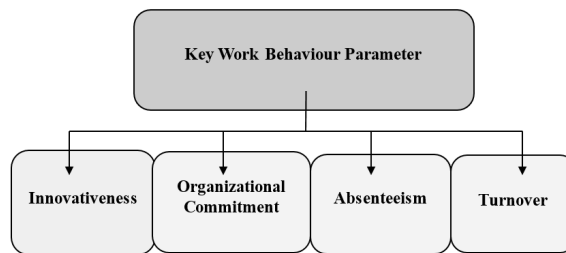


Figure 2. Key work Behaviour Parameters

2 Objectives

- To identify the various diversity initiatives in Polymer Industry of India.
- To study how significantly diversity & inclusion initiatives impact employee innovativeness, absenteeism, organization commitment, and turnover at workplace.

3 Literature Review

Pai's (2021), in this study there are three components that make up workforce diversity: primary, secondary, and tertiary components. Feelings of inclusion are assumed to be fostered through perceptions of value, belonging, and equality. To put it another way, if employees feel valued and included, they will assert that they are not just treated fairly and professionally but also that their unique worth is acknowledged and appreciated that they are a member of a team. A technique and organizational approach known as inclusion identifies, values, and respects groups or individuals from varied cultural and social origins. Instances of such alterations which might be self-evident or more basic include education, nationality, age, ethnic origin, faith, sexuality, marital status, and socioeconomic position. Handayani et al.'s (2017) in his research the aims was to examine how diversity in the workforce enhances employee performance and organizational effectiveness by reviewing existing research papers on workplace diversity.

Patrick and Kumar's (2012) explored the purpose of diversity management is to develop and sustain an inclusive work environment that celebrates both the unique and shared characteristics of individuals. Literature on diversity management has focused extensively on organisational culture, its influence on diversity openness, human resource management practices, institutional environments and organisational contexts to pressure and expectations related to diversity, requirements and incentives, perceived practices, and organisational outcomes associated with managing a diverse workforce. In this study, a number of barriers to diversity are analysed, and suggestions are provided for enhancing workplace inclusion and diversity. The analysis was built from a survey of three hundred IT specialists. The findings of the study suggest that an organisation's profitability may increase and its employees may be more dedicated, joyful, and productive if diversity is managed effectively.

The objective of the study by Kundu and Mor's (2017) was to analyze the relationship between perceived organizational performance and employee perceptions of diversity It also seeks to ascertain the opinions of employees in the Indian IT sector from various diverse backgrounds. The primary data was collected from 402 respondents using statistical methods such as factor analysis, regression analysis, correlations, means, grand means & analysis of variance. The paper by Cletus et al.'s (2018) focused on and evaluated key issues influencing diversity in modern organisations throughout the globe. The researchers were able to recognize, evaluate, and emphasise the many advantages and challenges that workplace diversity presents. The findings of the study demonstrate that diversity stimulates fresh concepts and skills in the workplace, employee development and progress, the blending of various competencies, company attractiveness, and analytical and problem-solving skills. Sadly, a no. of problems, including but not limited to the following, are currently hindering the full realization of these advantages. Gender and lifestyle preferences, eth-

nic and cultural differences, physical or mental disability, workplace communication, and generational differences are among the primary causes of workplace problems.

Itam and Bagali's (2018) revealed that a survey suggests that many companies may not have the requisite diversity in their workforces. According to a separate study, some employees may experience feelings of exclusion because they believe that only a small portion of the components that comprise their social identities are appreciated and recognised. These actions could result in low morale, a high rate of absenteeism, and an absence of job satisfaction, poor reputations, and other issues that could ultimately cause the alienated employee to quit their job or organisation. The performance of people, groups, and organisations is examined in relation to inclusivity and diversity via the lens of employee engagement. The study's goal is to offer a framework with solid theoretical support for its ability to determine if a company has genuinely produced an egalitarian and stimulating work environment for its employees.

Alshaabani, Hamza, and Rudnák's (2022) explored that the constant changes in the world caused by globalization, new technological breakthroughs, and a rise in migratory patterns have resulted in an extremely diverse workforce. Managers addressed these difficulties by implementing the most effective diversity management practises for long-term human resource management. These practises are also seen to be particularly beneficial in terms of increasing staff productivity, motivation, and work engagement. This study examines the link between employee engagement and diversity management systems in service organizations, as well as the moderating factors of organisational trust and job insecurity. The poll is based on a questionnaire distributed to 580 workers of Hungarian companies specialising in marketing, management consulting, information technology, and logistics in order to fully assess the hypothesis established from the literature review. The findings show that when structural equation modelling (SEM) is used as a data analysis tool, organisational trust and job insecurity dramatically and effectively change the relationship between diversity management and worker engagement. According to research, managers may positively aid their staff, enhance engagement, and reduce job fears by implementing efficient diversity management practises and delivering a dependable atmosphere and outstanding working circumstances. This study lends credence to the social exchange idea.

Seliverstova's (2021) studied that the main objective of the research is to analyze the concept of the theoretical contributions that have been made to the term "workforce diversity management" in order to systematize the body of existing knowledge, clarify the meaning of WDM in organizations, and pinpoint areas that require further investigation. In this theoretical investigation, samples were taken from the Scopus. 19 studies that have been published since 2015 were found, and the chosen papers were then examined in accordance with important research definitions. WDM frequently plays a vital role

in HRM in businesses as it enables organizations to maintain a competitive advantage in the present globalization and innovation era. The study's findings indicate that a modest number of current publications view Diversity Management as a strategy that contributes to both an advantageous company culture and organizational success. The work contributes to the literature on management and business by evaluating recent studies on Diversity Management & shows the potential because the field under consideration appears to be a desirable one for further study.

Urbancová, Hudáková, and Fajčíková's (2020) studied the Globalization is expanding variety to all areas of human performance, including the workplace and teams. This study examines diversity management as a predictor of competitive advantage in light of these changes. Primary analysis collected data from 549 Czech enterprises via questionnaire. Diversity management implementation correlates with corporate size and industry. Diversity management was most beneficial for retaining important personnel (43.9%), improving employee performance and motivation (39.3%), and adapting to the working environment (33.9%). Organizations should focus more on this issue as the talent shortage intensifies. This requires prioritising underrepresented groups of potential hires.

Satharasinghe and Ushara's (2023) studied that the Diversity in the workplace has been touted as a key competitive advantage. This research examines how workforce diversity affects garment workers in Sri Lanka. Many diversity factors can influence how well employees perform, but this research only looked at the most important ones. These factors were diversity in the employees' ages, educational backgrounds, religions, work experiences, and attitudes towards their jobs. Employee performance in an organization served as the dependent variable. Data for this study was gathered by personally delivering 120 questionnaires to the production level employees of one of the garment companies in Sri Lanka using the basic random sample approach. The influence of the factors was discovered using the regression analysis approach. The findings showed that variety in workforce has a substantial and favourable impact on employee performance.

4 Research Methodology

The study is conducted using primary data in the form of a structured questionnaire. It is a descriptive study. This type of research design involves systematically observing, documenting, and analysing existing phenomena or situations in order to describe and understand them. Snowball and Convenience sampling methods have been used to collect the data for analysis. Sample size taken for the study is 125. The geographic area of the study is Delhi NCR. Secondary data will be studied for better analysis and supplementing the findings.

5 Data Analysis and Interpretation:

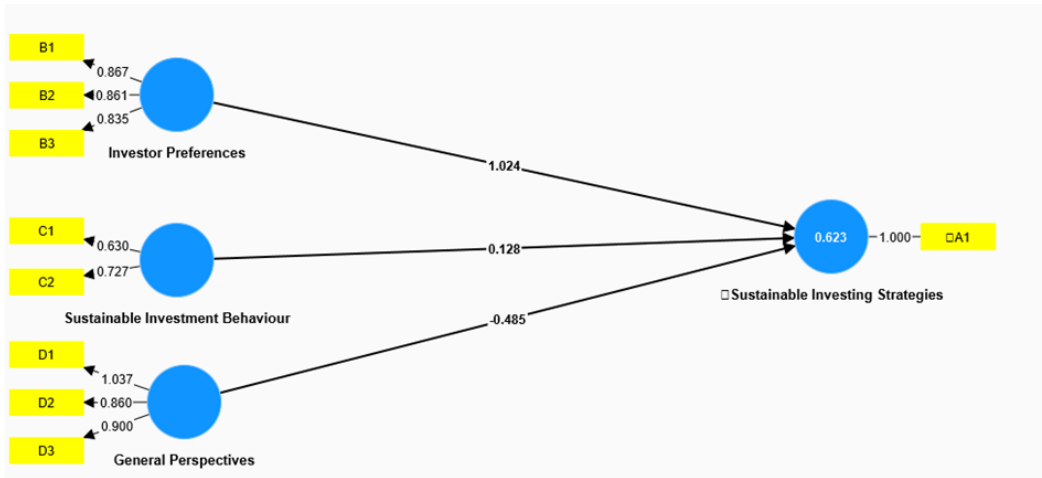


Figure 3. Diversity, Work Behaviour and Inclusion

As shown in figure 3 HO1: Diversity factors have no influence on inclusion practices
H11: Diversity factors positively influence inclusion practices

Table 1. Correlation between Work Behaviour and Diversity

	WORK BEHAVIOUR	DIVERSITY
WORK BEHAVIOUR	1	
DIVERSITY	0.584278462	1

A correlation value of 0.584278462 between diversity and work behavior implies that as workplace diversity rises, work behavior is more likely to exhibit a somewhat good trend.(see table 1). This indicates that work behavior (such as innovativeness, organizational dedication, absenteeism, and turnover) is more likely to grow or demonstrate positive changes when the level of staff diversity (for example, variety in terms of ethnic background, gender, values, and communication language) increases.

Inclusion and work behavior have a substantial positive connection of 0.850741652.(see table 2). This suggests that workplace inclusivity improves work performance. For instance, individuals who feel included and valued at work are more likely to be innovative, absentee, loyal, and committed.

Diversity and inclusion have a perfect positive relationship, indicating that as diversity

Table 2. Correlation between Inclusion and Work Behaviour

	INCLUSION	WORK BEHAVIOUR
INCLUSION	1	
WORK BEHAVIOUR	0.850741652	1

Table 3. Correlation between Diversity and Inclusion

	DIVERSITY	INCLUSION
DIVERSITY	1	
INCLUSION	1	1

boosts inclusion increases and vice versa.(see table 3). This implies that an organization that encourages and supports diversity, such as having a workforce that is reflective of different genders, ethnicities, values, and communication languages, is likely to have a strong culture of inclusion, where all individuals feel belonging, uniqueness, and collaborate with one another and get opportunities regardless of their differences. An inclusive workplace that values everyone’s opinions and contributions will also recruit and retain a varied staff.A coefficient of correlation of 1 shows that inclusion and diversity are strongly and favorably related, and organizations that prioritize both are likely to benefit from a more diverse and inclusive workplace culture.

HO2: Workforce diversity has no impact on organizational innovativeness, organizational commitment, absenteeism & turnover H12: Workforce diversity positively impacts organizational innovativeness, organizational commitment, absenteeism & turnover

5.1 Regression Analysis

Table 4 represents the Regression Statistics.

Table 4. Diversity and Work Behaviour Summary Output

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.645610535
R Square	0.416802607
Adjusted R Square	0.384227179
Standard Error	0.813079959
Observations	135

The ANOVA results have been demonstrated in table 5:

Table 5. ANOVA

	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	4	57.63473149	14.40868287	21.902074	7.3286E-14
Residual	130	85.05984059	0.654306466		
Total	134	142.6945721			

A p-value of 0.000111056, which is below the significance level of 0.05, indicates that the association between team diversity and innovativeness is statistically significant.(see table 6). This indicates that, based on the regression analysis, there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis and draw the conclusion that diversity in the team does, in fact, facilitate the introduction of innovative and creative ideas. We therefore accept the alternate hypothesis. The hypothesis that the company’s diversity and inclusion activities have a positive impact on an employee’s commitment to the organization is supported by data with a p-value of 0.027981, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the organization’s personnel are probably becoming more committed as a result of the inclusion and diversity activities. We therefore accept the alternate hypothesis

A p-value of 0.896570137 above the 0.05 criterion of significance. The results are not statistically significant and might have happened by chance if the p-value is higher than 0.05. Accordingly, in this instance, the study and the provided p-value do not support the argument that diversity has a significant impact on workplace attendance. We shall therefore accept the null hypothesis. The association between diversity and the likelihood of quitting the company owing to unwelcoming workplace culture is not statistically significant at levels of significance of 0.05, according to a p-value of 0.564556965. It implies that there is insufficient evidence to establish the existence of a significant association between diversity and the likelihood of quitting the company owing to a lack of an inclusive workplace culture, the p-value is larger than the utilized level of significance.

Table 6. Coefficients with Detailed Descriptions

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Intercept	2.1210	0.2794	4.3335	2.91E-05	0.6581	1.7634
Q12: I think that diversity in my team contributes to the introduction of new and innovative ideas.	0.3744	0.09391	3.9868	0.0001	0.1868	0.5601
Q13: You feel that the company's diversity and inclusion initiatives have positively impacted your commitment to the organization.	0.2189	0.09851	2.2224	0.0279	0.02404	0.4138
Q14: I feel that the company's diversity and inclusion initiatives have positively impacted my attendance at work.	0.0119	0.09167	0.13025	0.89657	-0.1692	1.1933
Q15: I have considered leaving the organization due to a lack of inclusive workplace culture.	0.03995	0.0691	0.5776	0.5645	-0.0969	0.1768

6 Discussion and Findings

The bulk of respondents (53.3%) identified as male, followed by females (31.9%), with lesser percentages identifying as non-binary and those who prefer not to say (8.9%). This predominately male population, alongside the small percentage of non-binary respondents and those who prefer not to say, indicates a lack of gender diversity. Additionally, the majority of respondents were in the 25–34 age range, followed by the 18–24 age range, further highlighting the lack of generational diversity in the IT business. The survey also showed religious diversity, with the bulk of respondents from the Hindu group and similar numbers from other communities. In the area where the study was conducted, English and Hindi were the most common workplace languages, indicating their predominance in communication. Cultural celebrations or events were more popular than participation in Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) focused on specific origins or experiences as part of inclusion practices.

Despite most respondents feeling comfortable expressing their views at work, there is room for improvement in fostering a culture of open expression. Most respondents have access to formal training or resources on working with colleagues from diverse backgrounds, yet a small minority do not, pointing to the need for more research and support. While the majority believe their organization provides adequate resources and support for bringing new perspectives to work, some indifferent and unfavorable responses indicate room for improvement in diversity and inclusion commitments. Additionally, while most respondents think diversity on their team fosters innovative ideas, some disagree, highlighting the need for greater education on the benefits of diversity. Overall, the majority agree that the company's diversity and inclusion initiatives positively impact organizational commitment, though neutral and disagreeing comments underscore the need for continuous review and improvement.

7 Conclusion

In the current global economy, organizations that capitalize on the strengths of a diverse workforce are better positioned to compete and innovate. Embracing diversity and inclusion broadens the talent pool and fosters the development of new ideas, products, and services. A primary research study indicates that diversity initiatives positively impact workplace behavior by strengthening organizational commitment, boosting innovation, and reducing turnover. These findings are crucial for executives and policymakers advocating for diversity, as they demonstrate the tangible benefits of such initiatives. However, addressing bias, discrimination, and harassment is essential to fully realize these benefits. Overall, fostering a diverse and inclusive culture enhances employee satisfaction and retention, leading to improved organizational performance and productivity.

References

- Alshaabani, A., Hamza, K. A., & Rudnák, I. (2022). Impact of Diversity Management on Employees' Engagement: The Role of Organizational Trust and Job Insecurity. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14010420>
- Cletus, H. E., Mahmood, N. A., Umar, A., & Ibrahim, A. D. (2018). Prospects and Challenges of Workplace Diversity in Modern Day Organizations: A Critical Review. *HOLISTICA – Journal of Business and Public Administration*, 9(2), 35–52. <https://doi.org/10.2478/hjbpa-2018-0011>
- Gajdzik, B., & Wolniak, R. (2022). Smart Production Workers in Terms of Creativity and Innovation: The Implication for Open Innovation. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.3390/joitmc8020068>
- Haase, D. N., Brettmann, B., & Peeters, M. (2021). Leveraging diversity and inclusion in the polymer sciences: The key to meeting the rapidly changing needs of our world. *Pure and Applied Chemistry*, 93(10), 1141–1158. <https://doi.org/10.1515/pac-2021-0601>
- Handayani, S., Udin, Suharnomo, Yuniawan, A., Wahyudi, S., & Wikaningrum, T. (2017). A systematic literature review of managing workplace diversity for sustaining organizational competitive advantage. *International Journal of Mechanical Engineering and Technology*, 8(12), 398–406.
- Itam, U., & Bagali, M. M. (2018). Diversity and inclusion management: A focus on employee engagement. *Gender and Diversity: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications*, 4, 1771–1788. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-6912-1.ch093>
- Kuknor, S., & Bhattacharya, S. (2021). Exploring organizational inclusion and inclusive leadership in Indian companies. *European Business Review*, 33(3), 450–464. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-04-2020-0089>
- Kundu, S. C., & Mor, A. (2017). Workforce diversity and organizational performance: a study of IT industry in India. *Employee Relations*, 39(2), 160–183. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-06-2015-0114>
- O'Donovan, D. (2018). Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace, 73–108. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-66864-2_4
- Okr glicka, M., Mittal, P., & Navickas, V. (2023). Exploring the Mechanisms Linking Perceived Organizational Support, Autonomy, Risk Taking, Competitive Aggressiveness and Corporate Sustainability: The Mediating Role of Innovativeness. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 15(7). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15075648>
- Pai, R. (2021). a Review on Diversity and Inclusion in the Workforce for Organizational Competitiveness. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 9(7), 2320–2882. www.ijcrt.org

- Patrick, H. A., & Kumar, V. R. (2012). Managing workplace diversity: Issues and challenges. *SAGE Open*, 2(2), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244012444615>
- Satharasinghe, I., & Ushara, S. A. I. (2023). Impact of workforce diversity on employee performance among operational level Employees in selected apparel companies of western province, Sri Lanka. *Proceedings of the 7th CIPM International Research Symposium – Sri Lanka*, 489–495. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372647208>
- Seliverstova, Y. (2021). Workforce diversity management: A systematic literature review. *Strategic Management*, 26(2), 3–11. <https://doi.org/10.5937/straman2102003s>
- Urbancová, H., Hudáková, M., & Fajčíková, A. (2020). Diversity management as a tool of sustainability of competitive advantage. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 12(12). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12125020>
- Wikina, S. (2011). *Diversity and Inclusion in The Information Technology Industry: Relating Perceptions and Expectations to Demographic Dimensions* [Doctoral dissertation, Indiana State University].