ROLE OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND GENDER DIVERSITY IN CREATING INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE
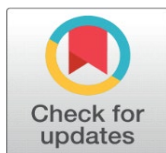
Mehak Gusain [1] ✉ , Dr. Harminder Kaur Gujral [2] ✉

[1] MBA (HR) Student, Amity Business School, Amity University Uttar Pradesh, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India
[2] Professor, Amity Business School, Amity University Uttar Pradesh, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

In the times of globalization where diversity, equity, and inclusion are at the forefront of organizational agenda to sustain business, expand and grow, cultivating an organizational culture that embraces inclusivity is imperative. Inclusivity now denotes not only a progressive culture, but also contributes significantly to the innovation, creativity, and sustenance of the business. In present research an attempt has been made to find out how employee engagement and gender diversity can create inclusive organizational culture. The study identified employee engagement and gender diversity as independent variables and inclusive organization as dependent variable. The workplaces seek employees who work together and collaborate for smooth functioning of the organization. For this they need to ensure that inclusiveness at all levels is taken care of in the organization. To make sure that employees stay loyal, motivated, and work hard, companies need to make them feel belonged and valued. The sense of belongingness in the organization is crucial to create an inclusive organizational culture. There are diverse set of people in the organization and when they are working with loyalty and commitment for the organization's benefit, they create a culture wherein everybody feels included. There are many factors that lead to an inclusive organizational culture. The present research aims to find out the factors responsible for creating an inclusive organizational culture and how do employee engagement and gender diversity influence organizational culture.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Gender Diversity, Inclusive Organizational Culture

1. INTRODUCTION

Every organization has its own unique way of functioning and has its own values, beliefs and behaviour that shape the organization's image, its goals and most importantly how it works to achieve its goals. It plays a crucial role in shaping employee behaviour, decision-making processes, and overall organizational performance. So, it can be said that organizational culture serves as the foundation upon which the identity, values, and behaviours of the workforce and organization are built, shaping the essence of the organization. The impact of organizational

culture is pervasive, influencing how employees collaborate, work, make decisions, and contribute to the achievement of the mission and vision of the organization. It acts as the invisible force that shapes the way things are done and reflects the shared values and norms that guide organizational members in a workplace. A positive organizational culture can foster a sense of belongingness and commitment among employees as everyone works with the beliefs and values which synchronize with the values and ethos of the organization. Not only that, but an organization with a positive culture can help the organization's reputation in the market as well. It can then help attract talent, establish good partnerships with external parties and provide a sense of promise to the shareholders and investors about peace in the organization. It can therefore foster growth.

An inclusive organizational culture ensures that everyone in the organization, no matter what race, caste, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or other characteristics, is valued, respected, recognized for their own contributions they have made in the organization. It ensures that the employees feel included and integrated into the fabric of the organization. Inclusivity ensures that there are no barriers or biases. It leverages the unique perspectives, experiences, and talents of everyone in the organization ensuring that everyone collaborates and contributes to the organizational success. All the processes, strategies, policies that are created for the organization are created with consideration of ensuring and inclusive culture. Organizations working towards diversity and inclusion implement strategies that attract candidates from a variety of backgrounds. They recruit and select candidates from various backgrounds. They recruit by giving people a fair opportunity to apply for the post, selection by keeping biased parameters out and selecting the best candidates for the right job. By embracing diverse perspectives, organizations set the stage for a more inclusive workforce. Such a workplace culture assures fairness in performance appraisal by assessing the performance with comparison based on pre-set metrics and compensating by giving fair and proper and deserving wages as per performance and parameters to the employees, and properly providing equal opportunities to learn and develop in the organization by providing training session accessible for the employees. There is training for team members to help equip them to contribute effectively to an inclusive environment, fostering understanding and empathy across diverse backgrounds. Leadership plays a pivotal role in creating an inclusive culture.

There is a popular concept of inclusive leadership that commemorates and influences inclusivity by its implementation and changing the mind-set of others. When leaders visibly champion diversity and inclusivity in the working environment, it signals to the entire organization that inclusivity is a shared value. There would be rules ensuring zero biasness, fairness, and open communication to all. The impact of inclusivity is massive. It promotes a heightened sense of belongingness among employees, leading to increased job satisfaction and retention. Moreover, it also acts as a catalyst for creativity and problem-solving, as diverse perspectives help in creativity, innovation and enhances the decision-making processes. Fostering inclusivity embodies fairness, dignity, and social responsibility which is ethical and moral.

When the employees are engaged, they can feel a sense of belongingness as they are included in various activities which can help them feel valued and belonged. This sense of belongingness fosters the belief that the employees are working together with respect in spite of their diverse characteristics. Employee engagement cultivates a positive environment that supports collaboration and teamwork, leading to inclusivity. There is an open communication and a collaborative

environment that enables innovation and creativity in a workplace that encourages employee engagement and supports gender diversity. This ensures that the employees feel respected and recognized for their efforts. There are variety of inputs from various perspectives that come together and help the organization grow. Engaged employees are eager to learn and often keep an open mindset and thereby help encourage inclusivity in the workplace culture. Effective communication is also essential for conveying the importance of diversity and inclusion initiatives, ensuring that all employees understand and align with the organization's values. Engaged employees also function as advocates for inclusive practices, promoting communication channels that amplify diverse voices and perspectives. These engaged employees function as inclusive leaders. The recognition and feedback system of a workplace that encourages employee engagement and supports gender diversity is fair and just provides areas of improvement, ensuring ongoing practices based on the culture. This provides a fair system for the inclusivity to be practiced and creates a positive working environment. Employee engagement also provides a sense of psychological safety which encourages individuals to bring their authentic selves to work. When employees feel safe and supported, they are more likely to contribute their unique perspectives, experiences, and skills, enriching the overall diversity of thought within the organization.

Every organization is talking about how they support gender diversity. In an inclusive organization, gender diversity brings different perspectives and insights for decision making. Gender diversity stands against traditional stereotypes and biases that may exist within an organization. It promotes a diverse workforce and breaks down preconceived notions about gender roles and abilities. This creates an inclusive and equitable environment but also contributes to a culture where individuals are valued, known, and respected for their skills, talents, and potential, irrespective of gender.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Marker (2009) points out that organizational culture is the culmination of common beliefs, task approaches, and work dynamics within a corporation. It has the power to influence how people view their jobs, interactions, and contributions to goals. This encourages citizenship inside the business and a sense of belonging. Employees are bound by shared goals and values, and culture sets expectations for behavior, giving businesses a competitive edge Martins (2000). It has a significant impact on how people behave in respect to technological use, communication, cooperation, decision-making, and strategic goals Martins & Terblanche (2003). This culture is shaped by founders and leaders, which affects performance Sun (2008), Shahzad et al. (2012). Various viewpoints brought in by new members have an impact on how the organization operates Evangeline & Ragavan (2016).

2.1.1. INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Diversity in the workplace nowadays includes gender, race, ethnicity, and individual differences among employees; therefore, an inclusive culture is necessary for the benefit of both the firm and the individuals. With globalization, managing diversity is essential to use a variety of information sources. An inclusive workplace values all employees equally and without prejudice, which promotes collaboration. In order to foster diversity, inclusion, and equity, policies must be implemented,

guided by proactive leaders, to demolish discriminatory structures. Policy formulation is aided by the evaluation of measures such as engagement and satisfaction. The social identity theory places a strong emphasis on being inclusive to minority groups. Fair hiring, evaluation, and growth opportunities are guaranteed by inclusive organizations, which promote innovation and creativity and are essential for success. Inclusive leadership is connected with organizational citizenship behavior and employee commitment fueled by fairness and equity in practices. Training lessens prejudices, boosting the contribution of diversity to innovation.

2.1.2. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND GENDER DIVERSITY CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The concepts of inclusion and engagement are connected; committed workers feel appreciated and included, which promotes loyalty to the company and job happiness. On the other hand, exclusion results in less dedication and increased employee turnover. In order to promote inclusivity, build trust, and provide a secure work environment, managers are essential. Gender diversity affects creativity, innovation, and organizational performance, making it not just necessary but also morally required. But genuine inclusion necessitates treating every employee fairly, taking into account non-gender-specific elements like age, location, and skill. In the end, inclusion comes down to engagement, which emphasizes how important it is to provide every employee a sense of belonging.

Objectives:
- To identify the factors shaping inclusive culture.
- To find out the role of employee engagement in creating an inclusive culture.
- To find out the role of gender diversity in creating an inclusive culture.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample size: 131

Sampling technique: Convenience sampling

Tool: Self constructed questionnaire having reliability of .965 after pilot study on a sample of 40

4. DATA ANALYSIS

- **Population**

Table 1

Table 1 Gender		
	N	**%**
Female	64	78.9%
Male	60	45.8%
Other	7	5.3%

Table 2

Table 2 Age		
	N	**%**
23-25 years old	30	22.9%
25-30 years old	30	22.9%
30-35 years old	23	17.6%
35+ years old	48	36.6%

Table 3

Table 3 Work Experience		
	N	**%**
<5 Years	55	42.0%
>10 Years	50	38.2%
5-10 Years	26	19.8%

The questionnaire used was self-constructed, so reliability and validity of the questionnaire was checked.

- **Reliability Test**

To check its reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was used on 40 responses.

Table 4

Table 4 Cronbach's Alpha			
		N	**%**
Cases	Valid	40	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	40	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach 's Alpha	**N of Items**
.965	24

Cronbach's alpha value of 0.965 for a self-made questionnaire suggests an extremely high level of internal consistency among the items in the questionnaire and that the items are highly correlated with each other, indicating that the questionnaire is highly reliable for research purposes.

5. FINDINGS

The most effective factors that influence inclusive culture are mostly concerned with employees' participation and involvement in the organization no matter who they are, especially when their skills are effectively utilized by the organization Another crucial factor found in the research is the acknowledgment and support

provided by the organization towards its employees. This includes recognizing their contributions, looking after their well-being, and offering necessary support when needed. When employees feel acknowledged and supported, they are more likely to feel included and motivated to contribute positively to the organizational culture. To be supported they employees need the leader's reassurance to create inclusive and safe culture, fostering effective communication, makes employees feel empowered to express themselves freely, leading to a more inclusive and cohesive organizational culture. When employees receive such reassurance from leaders, it contributes significantly to building trust and promoting inclusivity. When employees feel that the organization has created a place wherein everyone feels safe, get to be treated fairly and equally, it fosters an inclusive culture.

Impact of Employee Engagement factors on creating an Inclusive Organizational Culture

6. FINDINGS

There is a positive relationship between all factors of employee engagement and inclusive organizational culture. Figure 1

Figure 1

Figure 1 Impact of Employee Engagement Factors on Factors Creating an Inclusive Organizational Culture

Impact of Gender Diversity factors on factors creating an Inclusive Organizational Culture

7. FINDINGS

There is a positive relationship between all factors of gender diversity and inclusive organizational culture. Figure 2

Figure 2

Figure 2 Impact of Gender Diversity Factors on Factors Creating an Inclusive Organizational Culture

Association between the two independent variables and a dependent variable

Table 5

Table 5 Univariate Analysis of Variance					
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: My organisation has policies and practices for employee inclusion					
Source	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Corrected Model	51.392[a]	14	3.671	15.352	<.001
Intercept	118.819	1	118.819	496.909	<.001
Imengaged and involved in organizations working	10.700	3	3.567	14.916	<.001
I believe that my organization promotes diversity in recruitment and hirin	17.722	4	4.431	18.529	<.001
Imengaged and involved in organizations working* I believe that my organization Promotes diversity in recruitment and hirin	4.234	7	.605	2.529	.019
Error	27.737	116	.239		
Total	1445.000	131			
Corrected Total	79.130	130			

a. R Squared .649 (Adjusted R Squared .607)

Employee involvement (statement: I participate actively in the operations of the organization) The view of organizational inclusion policies is significantly impacted by this factor (F(3, 116) = 14.916, p <.001). Workers who are actively involved in their organizations, serving in a variety of roles, tend to view the company's inclusion policy favourably. The dependent variable is significantly impacted by gender diversity (statement: I think my organization encourages diversity in hiring and recruitment; F(4, 110) = 17.736, p <.001).

Perception of inclusion policies is strongly influenced by belief in the organization's recruitment and hiring processes that promote diversity (F(4, 116) = 18.529, p <.001). Workers are more likely to think positively of the inclusion policy if they believe their company actively promotes diversity.

There is a significant interaction effect between being engaged and involved in organizations working and believing in the organization's promotion of diversity in recruitment and hiring (F(7, 116) = 2.529, p = .019).

8. FINDINGS

The findings suggest that both individual engagement in organizations and the belief in organizational diversity initiatives play crucial roles in shaping employees' perceptions of inclusion policies and practices within the organization.

9. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings of this research underscore the crucial role of employee engagement and gender diversity in shaping the creation of an inclusive organizational culture. Through rigorous analysis of research data, it has been demonstrated that there exists a positive relationship between employee engagement and inclusive culture, as well as a positive relationship between gender diversity and inclusive culture. Moreover, the interaction between these two factors further strengthens the fabric of inclusivity within an organization. The results of this research highlight the critical roles that gender diversity and employee engagement play in influencing the development of an inclusive workplace culture. It has been shown through analysis of research data that there is a positive correlation between gender diversity and inclusive culture and between employee engagement and inclusive culture. Furthermore, the interplay between these two elements fortifies an organization's inclusive culture.

Numerous crucial elements have been recognized as noteworthy facilitators of promoting inclusion in the setting of organizations. These encompass, but are not restricted to, participation in decision-making procedures, gratification obtained from applying one's abilities, and equitable remuneration policies in relation to employee engagement. In a similar vein, the development of an inclusive organizational culture depends on elements like equitable treatment, non-discrimination, fair performance appraisal systems, recognition of varied contributions regardless of background or gender, and the application of consistent work-life policies.

The research findings make it clear that to effectively foster inclusivity, firms need to give priority to efforts that aim to improve employee engagement as well as gender diversity. Organizations can unleash the potential of their workforce and develop an inclusive culture that benefits workers and increases organizational success and sustainability by addressing the factors that have been identified and creating an atmosphere where everyone feels appreciated, respected, and empowered.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be recommended that the organizations must keep on focusing on engagement and fostering diversity, since they do foster inclusivity. There are certain things like feedback on inclusion, facilities for disabled people (in some organizations) that need to be taken care of.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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