

THE ROLE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAMS IN ENHANCING  
ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

by Onat Simsirdag

Dissertation

MA in Human Research Management

Submitted to the National College of Ireland 08.2025

## Abstract

Inclusivity and diversity are critical in the modern-day business environment. Companies operating in different markets and employees are interested in establishing healthy and harmonious relationships in the workplace. Considering the integration of the modern economy and globalisation, modern organisations cannot ignore D&I programs even if they do not expand internationally. In the IT sector, the situation is even more critical, as the lack of staff, constantly changing technologies, and harsh competition force companies to fight for highly skilled labour. Employees are seeking better conditions that allow them to work and collaborate with others. This study focuses on D&I programs in IT companies by investigating the impact of these initiatives on organisational performance. The effect of inclusive programs on underlying aspects as communication, teamwork, motivation, retention, satisfaction, innovation, and creativity is also explored. This study used a mixed research design by applying a survey and a semi-structured interview as the means of data collection at the quantitative and qualitative phases, respectively. Statistical tools and thematic data analysis were used to analyse data. The findings showed that D&I programs are particularly impactful on organisational performance as well as the majority of the underlying processes. However, no impact of D&I initiatives on motivation and retention was observed. It is recommended to implement similar programs in the IT industry, as it can determine the company's success, competitiveness, and overall outcomes.

*Key terms:* D&I programs, organisational performance, inclusion

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## Abbreviations

D&I – diversity and inclusion

H – hypothesis

M – mean

RQ – research question

RBV – resource-based view

SD – standard deviation

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) in the workplace have moved from a moral imperative to a strategic priority for organisations that seek competitive advantage. Businesses now realise that diverse teams, combined with an inclusive environment, drive innovation, increase adaptability, and raise customer satisfaction. McKinsey's (2020) report shows that for gender diversity, companies in the top quartile are 15% more likely to outperform their less diverse peers financially. For ethnic diversity, this goes up to 35%. These results underpin real value in diversity beyond its role in innovation to tackle complex global markets. Yet, getting to real inclusion is not just about numerical diversity. It is about cultural shifts that celebrate differences and build belonging. Hence, it becomes imperative to have such a foundation to tap into the full potential of diverse workforces to deliver long-term success.

### 1.1 Background to the Study

D&I initiatives quickly fit into an IT sector characterised by rapid-fire innovation and an acute talent shortage. Still, most underrepresented groups encounter barriers that stand in the way of their opportunities for leadership engagement, although most organisations highlight themselves as inclusive. This research aims to assess the relationship between organised diversity and inclusion programs on one hand and performance based on the impact created on team dynamic innovation and productivity measurements. The main research questions are: To what extent and how are D&I programs seen as beneficial in driving positive outcomes about performance at organisations and satisfaction of their employees within the IT industry? This question seeks actionable insights into how inclusive workplaces can sustain success.

D&I programs can vary across different companies in terms of their focus or a problem they aim to address. For instance, the company may choose to implement a diversity recruiting program to address the lack of multicultural hires within its HR politics (Rosales et al., 2022). While there are no specific laws demanding to hire diverse workforce, modern companies choose to do that to provide equal opportunities to everyone and ensure that their organisational culture is inclusive. Some companies introduce mentorship programs for small businesses owned by the underrepresented groups that focus on closing the racial pay gap (Congressional Research Service, 2021). Such initiatives help small business owners to improve their financial and performance indicators in a more accessible manner. Another

example of the D&I program is diverse leadership training to address unconscious bias and help employees who represent minorities to lead in their departments (Okatta et al., 2024). Also, businesses could integrate a complex D&I program that addresses all of these issues at once to boost the company's diversity and inclusion.

Yet, despite the apparent benefits, D&I programs are challenging to implement effectively. Hiring, promotion, and workplace interactions are still driven by unconscious bias, which remains a significant barrier (Rosenkranz et al., 2021). Although bias training programs are very popular, they are criticised as ineffective in changing behaviour. Okatta et al. (2024) show that requiring such efforts is better than pursuing them sporadically. As with IT companies, which frequently make decisions quickly, it is essential to tackle unconscious bias to foster inclusivity. Beginning the effort to tackle bias is an ongoing commitment with an organisation-driven leadership accountability.

Another obstacle to cultural resistance to D&I initiatives is traditional or hierarchical organisations. Employees may also feel they are being tokenised and won't take diversity efforts seriously. Organisations need to start talking about the value of D&I and get employees from the floor up to develop the programs (Saha et al., 2024). Trust will be built and anchored in transparent goals and measurable outcomes that support inclusivity. Cultural transformation that aligns with organisational values is also required for the success of D&I programs. To overcome resistance to change in the IT industry, you must create a culture of openness and respect.

The success of D&I programs depends heavily on accountability mechanisms. While it is clear that initiatives exhaust energy without metrics or evaluation, initiatives often turn into symbolic gestures (Rosenkranz et al., 2021). Data-driven diversity metrics and treatment efficacy are leading companies' tracking. Microsoft publishes its annual diversity reports tracking progress and potential improvements (Vorecol, n.d.). If leaders get written up for D&I outcomes, participation in inclusivity inevitably becomes part of the organisation's operating procedures. Accountability is key to making diversity efforts work.

However, because of resource limitations, it can be pretty challenging, especially for smaller organisations with limited budgets. That means investments in infrastructure, training, and mentorship. Despite this, even the most resource-limited companies have the option of deploying cost-effective strategies, including the use of employee resource groups and community partnerships. However, it should also be noted that collaboration with

external stakeholders could maximise the effects of diversity efforts. In addressing the challenges of resource constraints, organisations can prioritise strategic investment in D&I and benefit sustainably.

Yet, despite the apparent benefits, D&I programs are challenging to implement effectively. Hiring, promotion, and workplace interactions are still driven by unconscious bias, which remains a significant barrier. Although bias training programs are very popular, they are criticised as ineffective in changing behaviour. It was recognised that requiring such efforts is preferable to sporadic pursuit. As with IT companies, which frequently make decisions quickly, it is essential to tackle unconscious bias to foster inclusivity. An ongoing commitment to organisation-driven leadership accountability is needed to begin the fight against bias.

## 1.2 Methodology

The study used mixed-research design as its primary methodology by combining the benefits of the qualitative and the quantitative approaches. This research design was chosen to determine the relationship between studied variables and interpret them from the point of view of employees and management operating in the IT industry. The research uses survey and semi-structured interview as the methods of data collection. The instruments were developed by the researcher and piloted before initiating the study. Thematic analysis and statistical tools are applied to analyse data.

The difference in approaches to the research problem and a question is the main reason for choosing the mixed research design. Specifically, a quantitative approach allows for determining the relationships among variables and generating empirical, measurable findings. On the other hand, a qualitative approach allows answering the question “why” and explaining the phenomena (Ozdemir, 2020). These designs complement each other and help to look at a wider context of the research problem. The analysis is based on case studies of IT firms of different levels of D&I maturity. This design satisfied the study's objectives, and it balances depth and breadth of inquiry. The combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches enables the researchers to gather different types of data, compare the results, and synthesise them into complex and comprehensive recommendations.

Yet, considering the results of the preliminary review of past studies, it was determined that D&I initiatives are rarely explored in the context of the IT industry. Only a few studies were retrieved that were relevant in the context of this inquiry. Therefore, it is

proposed to address this gap in research by analysing D&I initiatives in the context of the IT segment.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The study answers the following research question (RQ) and sub-questions:

**RQ1:** To what extent do the D&I programs aid organisational performance and employee satisfaction in the IT sector?

**RQ1.1:** How do D&I initiatives affect the group dynamics and teamwork within IT organisations?

**RQ1.2:** What is the role of equitable access to opportunities in driving employee motivation and retention in IT companies?

**RQ1.3:** To what extent do D&I policies enhance innovation and creativity in IT teams?

**RQ1.4:** What issues with employee satisfaction in short and long-term perspectives do IT companies face when embedding D&I programs?

### **1.4 Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses (H) are tested during the process of this study:

**H1:** The D&I programs improve organisational performance and employee satisfaction in the IT sector.

**H1a:** D&I programs improve the group dynamics and teamwork within IT organisations.

**H1b:** Equitable access to D&I programs increases employee motivation and retention in IT companies.

**H1c:** D&I programs enhance innovation and creativity in IT teams.

**H1d:** IT companies face reduced satisfaction in the short term and improved satisfaction in the long-term perspective when embedding D&I programs.

### **1.5 Structure of Paper**

This inquiry is divided into six chapters. The first chapter provides the background of research and formulates research objectives that guide the study. The following chapter systemises recent literature on the main constructs of the inquiry, including diversity,

organisational performance, employee satisfaction, and D&I programs. Methodology chapter describes research framework, philosophy, data collection and analysis methods, ethical concerns, and limitations of this study. The fourth chapter is dedicated to the presentation of findings, including qualitative and quantitative results. After, the study presents the discussion of the findings in the context of past literature and practical outcomes. Finally, this research draws conclusions and provides recommendations for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This literature review focuses on the theoretical background of the research that became the basis for this inquiry. The review also analysed the concept of diversity and systemised the most relevant literature on the implementation of D&I programs and its relation to organisational performance. This study also aims to close the gap in research exploring D&I programs and their impact on organisational performance in the IT field.

### **2.2 Theoretical Background**

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory suggests the existence of diverse human capital as an unusual and inimitable organisational resource for innovation and adaptation. Organisations use innovative and creative approaches to solve complex problems by partnering with clients. It creates business diversity, allowing it to see through market demands and changing global environments (Ali, 2023). RBV, in this sector, highlights that diversity in the talent pool can give a competitive advantage in the IT sector. While many companies tout the benefits of diversity, having a diverse team can gain a competitive advantage by creating positive work environments that stimulate innovation and lead to adaptability. For this reason, diversity becomes a strategic resource for organisational sustainable growth.

Social Identity Theory, developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), examines the role of participants' affiliations with some social group as a determinant of the extent of team dynamics and cohesion. People engaged in and working well together tend to feel included and belong (Iyer, 2022). On the other hand, exclusionary practices tend to contribute to intergroup conflict and decreased morale. Social identity threats are mitigated in these environments of inclusion – actively fostering open communication and trust among team members (Gibson et al., 2021). The creation of fosters that encourage the respect of differences regarding other social identities is beneficial in the IT sector since this profession

relies on collaborative work. Social identity theory lends even more support to the need for intentional inclusivity and, thus, the desire for optimal team performance.

This study also uses Equity Theory, coined by Adams in 1963, fairness in organisational practices will directly impact employee motivation and performance. Situations such as different pay, unequal opportunities, and unequal recognition generate perceptions of inequity, leading to dissatisfaction and low productivity (Ahmad et al., 2021). In contrast, equitable practices create trust, engagement, and loyalty. Equity in IT organisations is about giving all fair access to mentorship, leadership roles, and development opportunities. Businesses that address inequities improve employee satisfaction and build a culture of fairness and collaboration. Equity theory offers a basis for evaluating and improving organisational processes and creating better results.

Organisational success is founded on equity and directly impacts job motivation and performance. As per Adams' (1963) equity theory, the psychological impact of perceived fairness in the workplace is. IT sector equity is more than pay parity; it's about equal opportunity, growth opportunities, mentorship, and leadership positions. Employees in inequitable environments are valued and motivated to contribute to the outstanding performance of the organisation (Leuhery et al., 2024). When companies invest in equity, there's a higher engagement and retention rate. Fairness leads to productivity. Fostering inclusive high-performing workspaces, therefore, requires equity-centred practices.

Equity in action means mentorship programs, which take action to address the disparities in access to career development. In IT organisations, there is a fundamental issue of how underrepresented groups navigate career pathways. Gaps between mentors and junior members can be bridged by structured mentorship initiatives that guide, network, and develop skills (Ahmad et al., 2021). For example, their link to female and minority employees' retention and promotion rates. These programs represent how equity absorbs practical results that improve organisational effectiveness and satisfaction (Munir et al., 2024). Businesses begin to see the value in mentorship and embed equity into their day-to-day core operational procedures.

Data-driven approaches to equity give organisations the tools to outline and answer aberrations. IT companies use analytics to evaluate hiring, promotions, and pay equity. Pay gap analyses and diversity audits show systemic inequities and help organisations identify corrective actions. For instance, Salesforce putting money on its side by committing to pay

equity has led to a \$3 million investment to close the gender gap (Gibson et al., 2021). Combining equity data practices with data-driven practices allows companies to become more transparent, build trust, and ultimately succeed organizationally. This evidence of the business case for inequality prioritisation is such.

Equally important is equity in facilitating the inclusive decision-making process. Including diverse employees in decision-making roles adds new inputs that improve innovation and adaptability. Muir et al. (2024) state that inclusive decision-making teams tend to do better, compared with homogeneous groups, in problem-solving. Organisations benefit from improved creativity and productivity by promoting equity in representation. The innovation-dependent IT sector greatly benefits from inclusive practices that amplify diverse voices. In other words, equity becomes a critical driving force behind organisational effectiveness and employee satisfaction.

By partnering with clients, businesses employ innovative and creative strategies to resolve complex issues. It makes it possible for businesses to adapt to changing global environments and market demands (Ali, 2023). In this sector, RBV emphasises that diversity in the talent pool can provide an IT sector competitive advantage. While many companies tout the benefits of diversity, having a diverse team can gain a competitive advantage by creating positive work environments that stimulate innovation and lead to adaptability. Diversity thus emerges as a strategic asset for the long-term expansion of an organisation. According to Tajfel and Turner's (1979) Social Identity Theory, team dynamics and cohesiveness are influenced by participants' affiliations with a social group. People who work well together tend to feel like they belong and are included (Iyer, 2022). On the other hand, exclusionary practices tend to contribute to intergroup conflict and decreased morale. Threats to one's social identity are lessened in inclusive settings that actively encourage open communication and trust among team members (Gibson et al., 2021). Since the IT industry relies on collaboration, it would be beneficial to create environments that foster respect for other social identity differences. The need for intentional inclusivity and, consequently, the desire for optimal team performance are further supported by social identity theory.

Overall, fairness in organisational practices will directly impact employee motivation and performance. Dissatisfaction and low productivity are caused by situations that create perceptions of inequity, such as disparities in pay, opportunities, and recognition. Equitable methods, on the other hand, foster loyalty, engagement, and trust. Giving equal access to mentorship, leadership roles, and development opportunities is the goal of equity in IT

organisations. Companies that address injustices increase employee satisfaction and cultivate a culture of collaboration and fairness. Equity theory offers a basis for evaluating and improving organisational processes and creating better results.

### 2.3 Conceptualisation of Diversity

Diversity drives organisational innovation and financial performance; therefore, organisations treat it as a strategic priority to stay competitive. Time and again, we see that a diverse team has different perspectives, which leads to greater creativity and better decisions. Okatta (2024) states that companies with leaders from above-average diversity experienced 19% greater innovation revenue. It emphasises how diversity makes a financial difference. Diverse talent pools are necessary in the IT sector, where to survive, organisations must constantly hone their solutions to cater to multiple customer needs through innovation (Iyer, 2022). As such, diversity is a key enabler of sustainable business success.

For diversity to be of value to the enterprise, corporate cultures must be inclusive. Accenture and SAP are two companies that clearly illustrate how effectively they embed inclusivity into organisational practices (Vorecol, n.d.). Accenture has used gender parity and minority representation programs to enhance employee engagement and customer satisfaction. SAP's Autism at Work initiative is similar to how bringing in different pools of people can lead to innovation (Saha et al., 2024). Furthermore, these examples illustrate how diversity and inclusivity reinforce each other in delivering business performance. Organisations that create inclusive cultures can get the most out of their diverse employees.

Not prioritising diversity is a risk to organisations. Publicised cases about a company's culture, like Uber, show how ignoring D&I can harm a company's reputation and destroy employee trust (Vorecol, n.d.). This can lead to poor long-run success and a high turnover rate. However, those organisations that utilise diversity as a proactive challenge and overcome it develop stronger employer brands and attract top talent. Beyond the financial, the business case for diversity goes beyond that; it brings organisational resilience and sustainability (Munir et al., 2024). Compared to organisations that do not prioritise diversity and inclusion (D&I) strategically, the former positions itself for success, as companies relying on D&I as a strategic initiative are positioned to do well in highly competitive markets.

Diversity in an organisation may also facilitate connections between it and its diverse customer base. Teams should hold distinct perspectives to understand the needs of global

consumers in the IT sector. Understanding the diversity of their customers will help a company anticipate and address market demands better (Ahmad et al., 2021). For instance, research has shown that these kinds of businesses are more successful when they enter new markets. This is consistent with McKinsey's finding that improved financial performance is driven by diversity. When a business embraces diversity, it improves internal operations, making it a powerful differentiator in the market and among rivals.

Organisations' diversity may also connect organisations with a diverse consumer base. Teams should hold distinct perspectives to understand the needs of global consumers in the IT sector. Understanding the diversity of their customers will help a company anticipate and address market demands better (Ahmad et al., 2021). For example, research has indicated that such organisations are more successful when entering new markets. That echoes McKinsey's finding that diversity drives better financial performance. When a business embraces diversity, it improves internal operations, making it a powerful differentiator in the market and among rivals.

## **2.4 D&I Programs and Organisational Performance**

The inclusivity programs could be extremely important for the organisations at several levels. One of the most common questions many companies try to determine is whether a D&I program has the potential to improve organisational performance. Specifically, it was recognised that inclusivity initiatives diversify the workforce, which allows companies to improve their innovativeness and employee satisfaction, leading to performance enhancement (Kasih and Ruslaini, 2024). Another study also admitted the indirect nature of the connection between organisational performance and D&I programs, as it was mediated by the improved teamwork in the companies (Suparyanto et al., 2025). However, these are the aspects of the indirect impact of D&I programs on organisational performance.

The direct effect could be more challenging to prove. As Turi et al. (2022) acknowledged, there could be a direct impact of D&I initiatives, considering that they improve employees' qualities that affect performance. At the same time, this effect might be more vivid in larger organisations that tend to be driven by employee-focused politics (Gould et al., 2022; Covington et al., 2025). Smaller companies could be more concentrated on competitiveness and the possibility of finding their target consumers, which could be less affected by the inclusivity policies. Also, as Duha and Gilaa (2024) noted, smaller organisations have limited resources for the implementation of D&I programs, leading to the

inability for many of them to explore diversity and inclusivity issues. Overall, the direct impact of D&I programs on organisational performance is difficult to assess, as it is possible that many underlying reasons could affect the outcomes.

At the same time, one of the most common results of D&I initiatives is the reduction of discrimination in the workplace, as many researchers agree. According to Duha and Gilaa (2024), the application of the inclusivity initiative allowed for the reduction of discrimination in several companies in the region. It is important, however, to consider that discrimination could be measured differently in companies and regions. For instance, it was revealed that a diversity program helped to reduce the instances of unequal hiring policies and distribution of power within the organisations (Anees, 2023; Nichols et al., 2023). Other studies showed that the inclusivity policies led to affirmative action in organisations with the goal of hiring 50% of women (Furtado, Moreira, and Mota, 2021). Another inquiry acknowledged that the D&I policies helped to make the physical environment of the companies more inclusive for employees with disabilities (Klinksiek, 2024; Leuhery et al., 2024). In general, D&I programs usually vary in terms of their focus or scope, which explains the different impact on organisational performance.

This variation could also be the reason why the outcomes generated by many studies find different confounding or mediating factors that affect the relationship between performance and D&I initiatives. The studies showed that access to inclusive or diverse opportunities could improve employee motivation, especially among employees with minority status (Dawson, Parker, and Okimoto, 2023). It was also revealed that D&I programs were responsible for increasing motivation to apply for the position among many diverse applicants (Jansen et al., 2024). For example, graduates representing minorities usually encounter multiple rejections as a result of discrimination in the job market. Their motivation can be improved when they face organisations that value diversity and seek staff members from multicultural backgrounds (Devine and Ash, 2022). Consequently, motivation to work in such companies can also be higher compared to companies that do not implement inclusive policies.

At the same time, several studies also acknowledged one of the negative outcomes of implementing D&I policies. Many researchers admit that employee resistance to such programs could be a problem in short- and even long-term perspectives (Gündemir et al., 2024; Meulenaere and Boom, 2024). Resistance could be a problem for the process of implementation, as it is often seen by employees as an unnecessary change or an

infringement of their current rights (Lima and Rahman, 2025). Also, as Wolfgruber et al. (2022) emphasised, resistance to the application of the inclusivity or diversity programs could be internal and external, which requires the organisations to cope with it differently. Particularly, organisations can introduce a “no tolerance” approach to internal resistance when the employees are forced to accept, while the external criticism could be dealt with via strategic communication (Wolfgruber et al., 2022). Yet, an aggressive approach to the implementation of D&I programs could be counterproductive since key talent can leave the organisation.

The character of implementation of such policies could be a major problem for the companies that do not take into account the opinions of the employees. As the studies confirmed, new policies or programs in the organisations almost always lead to a certain level of resistance or criticism among employees (Thomas, 2020). It was also revealed that the initial level of resistance is inevitable after any innovation or change within the organisation, yet this reaction usually lasts for a very short time (Adamson et al., 2020). At the same time, the manner of the application of D&I programs or the overall approach to communication with the employees is especially important if the organisation seeks to avoid any backlash in the future (Park et al., 2025). If the application of inclusive policies is uneven among the companies in the market, many employees could choose to change their place of work, leading to the inefficacy of such programs.

However, despite the potential threat of resistance to the implementation of D&I programs, there are still multiple benefits that such initiatives bring to individual employees and organisations. The studies reported the positive outcomes of the inclusivity initiatives in the form of improved individual results, approach to communication, teamwork, and improving the physical environment in the organisations (Mullin et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2025). Many organisations operating in different segments admitted the possibility of expanding the area of workforce attraction as the outcome of D&I policy application (Scheuer et al., 2025). For example, in the IT sector, the ability of the company to attract talent from around the world and hire staff via outsourcing or different visa applications is critical. As a result, the application of D&I initiatives ensures the possibility to develop a more inclusive environment where all employees are able to work and interact with each other more safely and effectively.

The connection between D&I initiatives and retention was also recognised by several studies. For example, as Shinde (2025) acknowledged, inclusive practices and policies in the

workplace can not only decrease attrition but also improve engagement, trust, and job satisfaction. Pal et al. (2024) also recognised that diversity and inclusivity programs have a multifaceted effect on employee satisfaction and commitment, and, as a result, improve the retention rates. It was also revealed that employee retention is directly connected to the overall diversity environment in the organisations (Seriwatana, 2021). At the same time, the connection between retention of workforce and D&I programs is more indirect than straightforward. It is clear that this interaction is based on the indirect effect, as retention is mediated by satisfaction and engagement with the organisation.

The same processes may occur during the implementation of D&I programs in IT companies. Some researchers revealed that the performance of IT companies depends on the complex relationship between knowledge base diversity and network embeddedness (Zhou et al., 2023). Sahyaja and Shankar (2024) insisted that D&I programs in IT companies improve the innovativeness of employees and their intention to stay in the organisation. Others insist on the improvement of innovativeness and creativity in the IT sector when companies integrate D&I programs (Kaur and Jaiswal, 2025; Ks and Pai, 2021). However, according to Luhr (2025), the IT sector is overall ineffective in implementing proper diversity initiatives and combating racial or gender inequality, as they were only able to convince their employees that their companies are diverse. While the application of more inclusive and diverse perspectives in the IT industry is criticised, Putriani and Aras (2022) acknowledged the urgent need to apply more such initiatives to retain and attract more talent. In addition, Cillo et al. (2021) emphasised that this market segment has to eventually improve its inactivity politics, as this industry is growing fast, needing more employees and ideas.

Overall, as the literature analysis showed, D&I initiatives have a positive impact on organisational performance directly and indirectly. Research showed that such aspects as communication, teamwork, and group dynamics are usually improved when the inclusivity approaches are applied to the company policies. Also, it was shown that employee motivation could be positively affected by D&I programs, as employees feel safer and more open to expressing their opinions in teams. The organisational performance can be positively affected by D&I initiatives if companies choose to implement these programs correctly by focusing on the needs of the staff and their demands. Yet, such initiatives are usually encountered with resistance among employees, as they could criticise changes or additional spending. It is important to take into account that D&I initiatives could have different types or directions of their policies, which impact the organisational outcomes. In market segments, like the IT

industry, the application of inclusivity and diversity programs could determine the efficacy of the company in the market and its competitiveness.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed overview of the methodological approaches chosen by the researcher to collect, analyse, and present the data. Also, this chapter aligns the methods to the research objectives, hypotheses, and questions that guide this inquiry through the path of research.

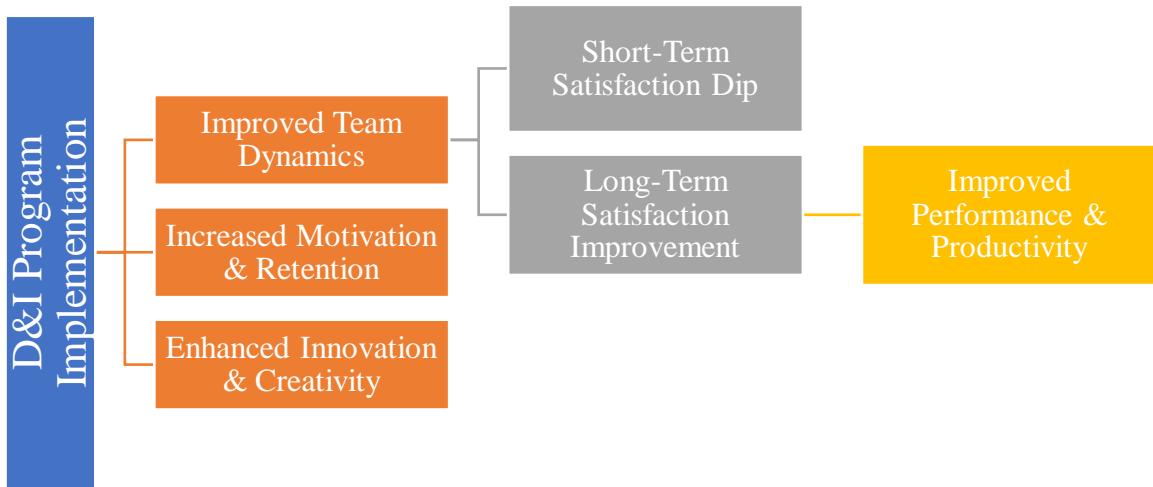
### **3.2 Research Aim and Objectives**

The study aims to determine the relationship between organisational performance and D&I initiatives. The secondary objectives of the study are:

- To detect how D&I initiatives affect the group dynamics and teamwork within IT organisations;
- To determine the role of equitable access to opportunities in driving employee motivation and retention in IT companies;
- To measure to what extent do D&I policies enhance innovation and creativity in IT teams;
- To reveal what issues with employee satisfaction in short and long-term perspectives that IT companies face when embedding D&I programs.

### **3.3. Research Framework**

This research framework is based on the theories chosen as the basis for this inquiry, including the resource-based view, social identity theory, equity theory, and organisational success concept. These theoretical frameworks informed the current conceptual model applied to test the hypotheses and answer research questions:



**Figure 1.** Research Framework

### 3.4. Research Philosophy

Since the study applied the mixed methods design, the pragmatism is applied as its main philosophical stance. This philosophy focuses on the practical side of research and the need to choose an approach that suits the initial goals and research objectives (Dube et al., 2024). Also, pragmatism concentrates on practical implications of research results for the industry and theory. Other philosophical approaches (like positivism or constructivism) that are usually applied when the qualitative or the quantitative designs are applied alone are too contradictory for them to drive the mixed-design research (Bashir, 2017). Both of these designs implement completely different set of tools, which allows pragmatic philosophy to unite them and apply for the benefit of the research.

### 3.5 Research Methodology Approach

This research used a mixed methods design to fully explore diversity and inclusion (D&I) programs in the IT sector. The study aimed to integrate qualitative and quantitative approaches to map the complexity of D&I initiatives and their influence on organisational performance. The choice of this methodology was based on the complex purposes of this study. The use of qualitative or quantitative designs alone would not allow this inquiry to fully interpret the interaction between the D&I programs and organisational performance in the context of IT industry. Quantitative design can determine the correlational relationship between variables, yet it does not allow interpret the nature of this interaction. Qualitative design would not be suitable for this study as well, as it was critical to detect how D&I

programs and organisational performance are interacting at the empirical level. Only the unity of these two designs helped to both determine the relationship between several variables and interpret the results based on the opinions of experts in the field.

As the preliminary analysis showed, D&I initiatives can vary dramatically across the organisations and have a complex effect on different aspects of the job and employees. Using only the qualitative or quantitative design alone might not be enough to address the research problem. For instance, the application of the quantitative design could help test the hypotheses and generate empirical findings. It is possible to determine the effect of, for example, D&I initiatives on organisational performance or employee satisfaction. Yet, it is impossible to interpret or explain this effect without exploring the opinions and lived experiences of employees and management. By adding the qualitative approach, this gap can be filled, as this design seeks to explore the personal encounters of workers and their leaders with D&I initiatives. While it is more challenging to retrieve the expanded information on the opinions of all participants involved in a quantitative study, as the sample tends to be larger, it is possible to interview a representative fraction of the target population. As a result, the combination of two different designs is more beneficial for the studies seeking to explore complex and multifaceted research problems.

During the course of the quantitative part of this study, the following variables were tested:

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Independent Variables (IV)</b>	<b>Dependent Variables (DV)</b>
H1	D&I program	Organisational performance, employee satisfaction
H1a	D&I program	Group dynamics, teamwork
H1b	Access to D&I program	Employee motivation, retention intention
H1c	D&I program	Innovation, creativity
H1d	D&I program	Employee satisfaction (short-term and long-term trajectories)

**Table 1.** Variables

The qualitative part of this research focused on the same concepts, yet they were targeted by different instruments and tactics. As noted earlier, in the quantitative study, the relationships between variables are tested by applying the tests that can measure them empirically. In the qualitative studies, the concepts (variables) are explored through the personal and subjective perspectives of individual participants. Particularly, the experiences with the D&I programs vary significantly among employees and higher management, as well as among those working in the software development departments and people operating in

HR. Consequently, the specificities of their differences in experiences and opinions on the initiatives made this study richer and more comprehensive.

### **3.6 Data Collection Approach**

A survey was chosen as the primary method of data collection for the quantitative sample. This type of data collection approach enabled testing the hypotheses and determining the relationships among variables. This employee survey explored the relationships between the D&I initiatives, satisfaction, performance, teamwork, group dynamics, innovation, creativity, motivation, and retention. The survey questions were closed-ended to capture quantitative metrics. They take the time to reflect upon several dimensions of workplace equity, access to opportunities, and how they affect the impacts of inclusive policies. Again, the questionnaires provided insight into how D&I initiatives influence a variety of individual and group-based outcomes. The survey was disseminated among the sample online by sending a link to Google Forms with the questionnaire. They had to fill it out with the results accumulated on the platform automatically. This process took a week to complete.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the qualitative part of the study to capture practices, challenges, and strategic considerations of D&I programs. This type of interview protocol allows researchers to ask preplanned questions and add new ones (or leading questions) if the interviewee raises an important or relevant topic. Since this interview was more appropriate for this study, as it granted a certain level of freedom, the researcher was able to expand the scope of the questionnaire. Using an interview format, the researcher can control the interview format, creating flexibility and allowing the participants to share in greater detail with analysis-enhancing anecdotes. The interviews highlighted the implementation process, leadership accountability, and methods to address unconscious bias. The interviews had to collect information that could explain the results of the quantitative survey. The interviews were conducted on Zoom or Google Teams (depending on the comfort of the respondents) and were recorded for further transcription. This process took two weeks to complete, as each interview was scheduled individually with every participant. Each session lasted for 25-30 minutes.

### **3.7 Data Collection Methods**

The quantitative survey was conducted by developing an original instrument that included 22 main items measured by the 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) and several items determining the main demographic characteristics of the

participants. The questionnaire tested the relationship between the variables shown in Table 1 (Appendix A). The examples of the items are the following:

- The D&I initiatives have made my workplace more inclusive and fair.
- Knowing my workplace values equity increases my motivation to perform well;
- Over time, the D&I initiatives have improved employee satisfaction.

This instrument was preliminarily tested in a brief pilot study (sample of 20 respondents) to determine its validity and reliability since this instrument was not validated earlier. The pilot testing showed that the items are reliable (Cronbach's alpha = .87). The assessment of the content validity index (CVI) showed that the instrument is validated (acceptable  $\geq 0.83$ ). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) testing showed alignment with the constructs tested by the survey.

The qualitative instrument was also originally developed by the researcher. The interview protocol had 20 questions exploring the D&I programs, satisfaction with them, performance, innovation, creativity, teamwork, and retention (Appendix B). The examples of the questions used during the interview:

- In your experience, how have D&I initiatives influenced collaboration and teamwork within your team or department?
- How has this perception affected your own motivation or your colleagues' motivation at work? Optional - Please, explain in more detail.
- In your view, does having a diverse and inclusive team contribute to innovation or creativity in your workplace? How so?

The interview was assessed by the overseeing instructor, who validated and confirmed the possibility of using this instrument in advance. The questions were slightly changed or added in individual sessions if the participants raised an interesting topic, according to the semi-structured protocol.

### **3.8 Sample Selection**

The setting of this study was limited to Europe and the U.S. The IT companies operating in these countries were targeted during the selection. It was critical to include the companies that already implemented D&I initiatives to retrieve relevant data and answer the research questions. The size of each company varied, as it was not the main focus of this

study. This contributed to a rich comparative analysis of best practices and emerging strategies. It was decided to choose these settings, as the D&I initiatives have certain similarities across the Western hemisphere, which allows for reducing the mediating effect of this confounding factor. Initially, 52 companies were approached by sending an e-mail to their email addresses, as it was critical to receive permission to collect their employees. It was expected that around half of them could confirm their participation.

However, only 16 companies returned the e-mail asking for further information on the study. After sending a basic information sheet on the aims of this research and the methods of data collection, 12 organisations provided permission to recruit their employees. Therefore, the setting of this study was 12 companies from the U.S. (n = 5), the UK (n = 3), Germany (n = 2), Sweden (n = 1), and Finland (n = 1). It was critical to preserve the confidentiality of all participants and businesses involved. Thus, only the information on the location, size, number of employees, and the market segment was collected. The characteristics of the companies are presented in Table 2.

Organisation	Location	Size	Employees	Segment
Company #1	U.S.	Large	826.000	Software development
Company #2	U.S.	Medium	235	IT consulting
Company #3	U.S.	Large	1.4 million	Cybersecurity
Company #4	U.S.	Small	89	Data analytics
Company #5	U.S.	Medium	369	App development
Company #6	UK	Large	596.000	Cloud computing
Company #7	UK	Medium	498	Cybersecurity
Company #8	UK	Small	78	IT support
Company #9	Germany	Large	5.000	Software development
Company #10	Germany	Small	69	Business intelligence
Company #11	Sweden	Medium	425	Data science
Company #12	Finland	Small	72	IT consulting

**Table 2.** Companies Included in the Study

As Table 2 shows, this study managed to select companies from diverse segments. The number of employees varied from 1.4 million to 69 people. It was also important to choose organisations of different sizes, allowing to include an even number of small, medium, and large companies (4 each). It is speculated that the experiences and impact of the D&I initiatives in organisations of different sizes could be distinctive, which can help to generate more accurate recommendations. After the permissions were retrieved, the process of recruitment was initiated.

Since the study used a mixed-design approach, two sampling strategies were used. The main sample for the quantitative part of the study was collected by using stratified random sampling. Since the main goal is to compare effects across different company sizes as well as D&I maturity levels, this type of sampling ensures balanced representation of the target population across these subgroups. Stratified sampling requires dividing the target population into relevant strata (subgroups) and then randomly selecting respondents from each of these groups. This sampling strategy increases statistical power, ensures comparability across different population groups, and increases generalisability. In this case, the participants were divided into geographic regions, company sizes, and job roles to recruit a relatively heterogeneous sample.

The criteria for inclusion were employment in the company for at least 12 months, experience with the D&I programs (directly and indirectly), full-time status of employment, English proficiency, and willingness to participate. The criteria for exclusion were the following: part-time employment status, experience for less than 12 months in this company, no or limited experience with D&I programs, low English proficiency, and reluctance to participate. The potential participants were sent an e-mail that included a brief inclusion survey, which confirmed their eligibility to take part in this study. When they expressed their desire to participate in the following e-mail, the researcher sent them the printed consent form for signing, together with the basic information on this research. The recruitment phase lasted for one month, leading to the recruitment of 241 participants, which is considered enough for the quantitative phase of this study.

These included participants from different employment levels and departments, including lower and middle-level management, executives, and employees. Participants operating in different departments were recruited, including HRM, quality control, software development, IT management, business development, and product management. The diverse choice of respondents was able to provide different points of view on the adoption and maintenance of D&I programs, their insights, and the implementation process. A multiplicity of representations across different levels ensures the coverage of top-down and bottom-up dynamics for D&I practices in the study (Leuhery et al., 2024). This is an effective strategy of including firms at different stages of D&I maturity in their effort to learn lessons for improving inclusivity.

The qualitative sample was recruited by using the purposive sampling strategy. This approach allows recruiting participants by choosing those with the needed characteristics. For

instance, in this study, participants were from different countries, companies, and job roles. Since it was critical to collect heterogeneous data, the use of purposive sampling helped to choose an even number of respondents from Europe and the U.S., different levels of management and companies, as well as different departments and job roles. Overall, it was considered that a sample of 15-30 respondents is enough. By approaching the participants individually via e-mail, the study recruited 19 participants for interviews. The approach was similar to the recruitment in the quantitative study by sending an e-mail to individual respondents from the sample of 241 people recruited for the first part of the study. The criteria for inclusion and exclusion were the same. After reaching 19 participants, the recruitment was over. This sampling occurred within a month and was planned in parallel to the quantitative sampling.

### **3.9 Data Presentation and Analysis**

The quantitative and qualitative data were analysed separately. The quantitative data was tested by using the SPSS package version 27. The descriptive statistical tests were used to retrieve the basic information and compare the overall results. Also, this type of test was applied to the demographic information. The study also included multiple regressions and Pearson's correlations. In addition, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each variable-testing element of the instrument.

Interview and open-ended survey data were thematically analysed for recurring themes and insights. Responses were coded manually based on coding techniques by theme. The six-step approach developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to apply thematic analysis. This process required collecting the data, engaging with it, coding and extracting the information from the dataset, generating the code categories, conceptualising the themes and subthemes, and representing findings (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This type of analysis assisted in bringing to light the contextual flavour of D&I practices in an endeavour to grasp the nuances of inclusion and alter the organisational dynamics. The study ensured the research question was comprehensively interpreted by triangulating qualitative and quantitative data.

Triangulation generated by a mixed methods approach helped to build credibility and reliability of the findings. The study compared data from surveys and interviews to identify converging trends and discrepancies. This was illustrated via cross-validation of employee perception of inclusivity with some organisational performance metrics, providing a more balanced view of D&I effectiveness. The study's conclusions were strengthened through this

multi-faceted analysis to inform practical action for impactful D&I endeavours by organisations.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

This study was ethical in considering the ethical considerations in this research process and the protection of participant rights. Detailed information about the study's objectives and methods, and what can be expected at the end, was delivered to all participants. Participation was subject to consent obtained before participation, enabling persons to know their rights and that participation is voluntary.

For participant privacy, all data were anonymised, and all reports and publications were excluded from identifying details. Sensitive information was going to be stored securely. The study followed guidelines published by academic and professional organisations on ethical work methods. It encompasses transparency in data collection and analysis methods, disclosure of any potential conflict of interest, and more (Ali, 2023). Relevant institutional review boards provided ethical approval so that the research follows research standards.

Organisations' hierarchical nature was considered when minimising power dynamics in participation responses. No information that could compromise any of the respondents was provided to the third parties or the leadership. It created a climate of trust, as genuine participation requires an honest and actual voice. By integrating these ethical considerations, this study upheld participants' dignity and rights in the process, increasing the credibility and validity of the resulting findings.

A few tested practices were implemented in this qualitative study to ensure trustworthiness and rigour. Member checking entailed forwarding the participant's transcripts or summarised versions of the interviews to show whether they were honest with themselves (McKim, 2023). From this procedure, a magnified image of the findings is thus shaped, with no cases of misinterpretation. Peer debriefing was employed, and the researcher presented to colleagues or supervisors developing themes to check bias and assumptions (McLeod, 2024). At the same time, an audit trail was saved; it showed all the decisions made in data collection, coding, and thematic analysis so that the research process was open and reproducible (Carcary, 2020). Finally, a thick description was given because rich and specific contextual information concerning participants and settings was included, which helped transfer their findings to other related healthcare settings (Ahmed, 2024). These implemented approaches

formed credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability marks, which were determinants for rigour in qualitative studies.

The reliability of findings in this study is ensured through a series of methodological and procedural safeguards designed to enhance consistency, accuracy, and reproducibility. Reliability refers to the degree to which the measurement instruments and data collection processes produce stable and consistent results across time, respondents, and contexts. Given that this research involves both quantitative and qualitative components, specific measures are taken in each methodological domain to ensure robustness.

For the quantitative component, reliability is primarily addressed through the careful construction and validation of the questionnaire used to assess variables such as AI usage, service personalisation, guest satisfaction, and operational challenges. A pilot test of the questionnaire is conducted to evaluate item clarity, eliminate ambiguity, and improve internal coherence. Subsequently, Cronbach's alpha is calculated for each of the composite indices (e.g., personalisation scale, satisfaction scale, usability/efficiency scale). A threshold of  $\alpha \geq 0.70$  is used to confirm acceptable internal consistency. Items that negatively impact the reliability of a given scale are reworded or excluded. Moreover, reverse-coded items are used strategically to control response bias and increase measurement integrity. Standardised administration procedures also contribute to reliability. All participants receive the same version of the questionnaire, and instructions are uniformly presented to avoid variations in interpretation. The data collection is time-bound and geographically consistent to minimise temporal or contextual influences that might introduce inconsistency.

For the qualitative component, reliability is reinforced through the use of a systematic thematic analysis framework. Coding is performed following Braun and Clarke's six-step method, and efforts are made to maintain a clear audit trail of decisions, code definitions, and theme development. To increase intercoder reliability, a second coder may be involved, and any discrepancies in coding are resolved through discussion and consensus. Direct quotations from participant responses are used to anchor themes, thereby enhancing transparency and confirmability. In addition, triangulation across data sources—quantitative survey data and qualitative quotations—supports the convergence of evidence, reinforcing the dependability of findings. Where possible, member checking or follow-up queries are employed to ensure that interpretations of qualitative data accurately reflect participants' perspectives.

By implementing these methodological practices, the study aims to deliver findings that are not only valid in their internal logic but also reliable in their capacity to be replicated, verified, and applied in similar hospitality contexts.

### **3.11 Limitations**

This study had a number of limitations that have to be considered during the result analysis. Specifically, while the study sample is relatively large, this research still has issues with the generalisability of findings. For instance, the setting is limited to European and U.S. companies, which might not reflect the experience and the overall impact of the D&I programs in other regions. Also, due to the location of this research, non-English speakers were not included in the sample. This also limits the results by failing to reflect the experiences of respondents from diverse racial or ethnic groups. As a result, the findings of this inquiry might not be as generalisable for the wider population as they could be.

It is also possible that some traces of participant bias could be present in the findings. Particularly, the survey is self-administered, and it targets the opinions of respondents, many of whom could be dishonest in their answers. The interview and survey do not explore particularly sensitive issues, yet the fear of being criticised or retaliated for the opinions on the inclusive initiatives could be present in some participants. In the modern conditions, when inclusivity and diversity are required to be in the organisational culture of all companies. Any resistance or negative attitudes towards such programs could be criticised or even punished. Consequently, the respondents who did not like the programs due to subjective or objective reasons could avoid answering honestly. Although the proportion of such respondents could be relatively low.

It is also important to note that the study used an original instrument developed by the researcher. While it was piloted, further validation of the questionnaire is critical to generate results with fewer limitations. Often, the instruments are validated by several preliminary independent studies before being fully validated. This is a minor limitation, as the original instruments are often used in dissertations and theses. However, it remains an issue for the internal validity of this inquiry.

Finally, this study was conducted in European countries and the U.S., yet it did not account for the differences in legal and cultural backgrounds of these locations. It is possible that the overall differences in D&I programs remained one of the confounding factors affecting the results of this study.

### 3.12 Conclusion

The overview of the research methodology and the tools used in this study showed how the findings of this research were generated. This inquiry followed all necessary requirements towards ethics, validity, trustworthiness, and reliability. The methods of data collection and analysis comply with the initial aims and objectives of this research.

## Chapter 4: Results

This chapter is divided into two parts: quantitative and qualitative. Since the study used a mixed research design, this division was essential to show the results analysed by using two different approaches. The results are synthesised and compared at the end of this chapter to provide more comprehensive findings.

### 4.1 Quantitative Study: Statistical Analysis

#### 4.1.1 Descriptive Analysis

The overall demographic characteristics of the sample were calculated by using descriptive statistics. The results showed that the mean age of respondents was 38.2 years, ranging from 24 to 68 years old. The gender was divided into three categories, including males 49.7% (n = 120), females 45.6% (n = 110), and non-binary or other 4.5% (n = 11). In terms of racial makeup of the sample, the majority of respondents were White 60% (n = 145), others were of African descent 11.6% (n = 28), Hispanic 9.9% (n = 24), Asian 13.2% (n = 32), and others 4.9% (n = 12). The proportion of respondents from different locations varied with most of them living in the U.S. 41.4% (n = 100), many living in the U.K. 24.9% (n = 60), some in Germany 16.6% (n = 40), Sweden 8.7% (n = 21), and Finland 8.3% (n = 20). Job roles ranged from the software developers 33.2% (n = 80) to higher-level managers 8.3% (n = 20). Respondents were selected from companies of different sizes equally (n = 80-81). Most participants had from two to five years of experience in their companies 43.57 (n = 105). Table 3 shows the demographic data of this study:

Variable	Category	N	%
Age	18–29	60	24.9
	30–39	90	37.34
	40–49	55	22.82
	50+	36	14.94
Gender	Male	120	49.79
	Female	110	45.64
	Non-binary/Other	11	4.56
Race/Ethnicity	White	145	60.17

	Black/African Descent	28	11.62
	Hispanic/Latinx	24	9.96
	Asian	32	13.28
	Other/Prefer not to say	12	4.98
Location	U.S.	100	41.49
	UK	60	24.9
	Germany	40	16.6
	Sweden	21	8.71
	Finland	20	8.3
Job Role	Software Developer	80	33.2
	HR/People Ops	40	16.6
	Mid-Level Manager	45	18.67
	Low-Level Manager	30	12.45
	Data/QA Analyst	26	10.79
	High-Level Manager	20	8.3
Company Size	Small	80	33.2
	Medium	80	33.2
	Large	81	33.61
Experience	<2 years	70	29.05
	2–5 years	105	43.57
	>5 years	66	27.39

**Table 3.** Demographic Data

Two descriptive tests were used to calculate the mean and standard deviation of each item:

Item	Mean	SD
1. D&I programs contribute to overall performance	3.59	0.71
2. D&I improved the company's reputation	4.01	0.69
3. Overall work satisfaction	3.66	0.66
4. D&I made the workplace more inclusive and fair	4.03	0.7
5. Engagement since D&I policies	3.59	0.59
6. D&I improved team collaboration	3.6	0.68
7. Team communication improved via D&I	3.53	0.66
8. Team benefits from diversity of perspectives	3.63	0.71
9. D&I enhanced trust and cohesion	2.49	0.7
10. Fair distribution of promotion opportunities	2.64	0.67
11. Equal chances for growth for underrepresented groups	2.62	0.66
12. Equity increases motivation	2.36	0.67
13. Intention to remain in current job	3.64	0.65
14. Fair access to leadership influences retention	2.56	0.73
15. D&I led to innovative ideas	4.01	0.72
16. Encouraged to contribute ideas regardless of background	3.54	0.67
17. Diverse team boosts creativity and effectiveness	3.6	0.68
18. Leadership supports innovation via inclusion	2.59	0.68
19. Initial D&I caused disruption	3.69	0.64
20. D&I improved satisfaction over time	3.23	0.66
21. Long-term benefits of D&I outweigh early challenges	2.64	0.72

22. Positive cultural change from D&I 4.11 0.71

**Table 4.** Descriptive Analysis of Individual Items

According to the results of descriptive analysis, the participants believed that the D&I programs improve their satisfaction ( $M = 3.66$ ;  $SD = 0.66$ ). The teamwork and collaboration also benefited from these initiatives ( $M = 3.6$ ;  $SD = 0.68$ ). However, in terms of equality of opportunities ( $M = 2.64$ ;  $SD = 0.67$ ) or motivation ( $M = 2.36$ ;  $SD = 0.67$ ), the results were not as positive. It is clear that respondents did not consider the D&I programs as effective in regard to opportunities or motivation. The same negative results were observed in assessing the retention ( $M = 2.56$ ;  $SD = 0.73$ ). Better results were received when the respondents analysed the effect of D&I initiatives on innovation ( $M = 4.1$ ;  $SD = 0.72$ ) and creativity ( $M = 3.6$ ;  $SD = 0.68$ ). Also, it is important to admit the high assessment of the positive culture change as a result of inclusive programs ( $M = 4.11$ ;  $SD = 0.71$ ), as well as a lower score for the long-term benefits ( $M = 2.64$ ;  $SD = 0.72$ ). In addition, the satisfaction of employees improved over time after the initiatives were implemented ( $M = 3.23$ ;  $SD = 0.66$ ). In general, as Table 4 revealed, the respondents showed positive assessment of the D&I programs and their impact on different work-related aspects within the organisation, with some minor exclusions.

#### **4.1.2 Inferential Analysis**

***H1: The D&I programs improve organisational performance and employee satisfaction in the IT sector.***

The main hypothesis was tested by using multiple regression analysis, considering that there are three variables. This hypothesis theorised that the inclusive initiatives can increase the performance of the organisations and their employee satisfaction, which was confirmed by the results:

Item	B	Std. Error	t	p	F	$R^2$	95% Conf. Inter.	
							Lower	Upper
D&I programs	2.145	0.03		0.001	25.369		1.258	6.215
Organisational performance	0.42	0.08	5.25	0.001	27.56	0.21	0.26	0.58
Employee Satisfaction	0.48	0.09	5.33	0.000	28.41	0.22	0.31	0.65

**Table 5.** Multiple Regression: D&I initiatives, Organisational Performance, Satisfaction

As Table 5 showed, the D&I initiatives have a positive statistically significant effect on in organisational performance ( $R^2 = .21$ ;  $\beta = .42$ ;  $t = 5.25$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and employee

satisfaction ( $R^2 = .22$ ;  $\beta = .48$ ;  $t = 5.33$ ;  $p < .000$ ). This finding confirms the positive direct interaction among three variables showing that H1 was supported. Kasih and Ruslaini (2024) and Shinde (2025) confirmed a strong correlational and causational interaction between organisational performance and employee satisfaction after the D&I initiatives were implemented.

		D&I Programs	Organisational Performance	Employee Satisfaction
<b>D&amp;I Programs</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	0.712	0.698
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001	0.000
	N	241	241	241
<b>Organisational Performance</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.712	1	0.621
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001		0.020
	N	241	241	241
<b>Employee Satisfaction</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.698	0.621	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.020	
	N	241	241	241

**Table 6.** Correlation: D&I initiatives, Organisational Performance, Satisfaction

Table 6 shows the Pearson correlation between D&I initiative, organisational performance, and employee satisfaction. All three correlation coefficients were strong and positive, which reinforced the support of the main hypothesis. The significance of the correlation among three variables is demonstrated as well.

***H<sub>1a</sub>:*** *D&I programs improve the group dynamics and teamwork within IT organisations.*

This hypothesis also seeks to determine the relationship among three variables, including D&I programs, teamwork, and group dynamics. The preliminary descriptive analysis revealed that the participants rated these aspects relatively high.

Item	B	Std. Error	F	R <sup>2</sup>	t	p	95% Conf. Inter.	
							Lower	Upper
<b>D&amp;I Programs</b>	1.256	0.023			32.369	0.000	1.236	2.369
<b>Group Dynamics</b>	0.621	0.011	33.269	0.658	6.215	0.010	0.478	0.589
<b>Teamwork</b>	0.639	0.021	28.369	0.426	4.125	0.000	0.258	0.896

**Table 7.** Multiple Regression: D&I Programs, Group Dynamics, Teamwork

According to Table 7, D&I programs have a positive and statistically significant effect on group dynamics ( $R^2 = .658$ ;  $\beta = .621$ ;  $t = 6.215$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and teamwork ( $R^2 = .426$ ;  $\beta =$

.639;  $t = 1.125$ ;  $p < .000$ ). These findings point to the strong impact of the inclusive programs on how team operate in IT companies. Therefore, the H1a is supported.

		D&I Programs	Group Dynamics	Teamwork
<b>D&amp;I Programs</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	0.660	0.530
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001	0.000
	N	241	241	241
<b>Group Dynamics</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.660	1	0.569
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001		0.015
	N	241	241	241
<b>Teamwork</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.530	0.569	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.015	
	N	241	241	241

**Table 8.** Correlation: D&I Programs, Group Dynamics, Teamwork

Table 8 revealed that the Pearson correlation coefficient among D&I programs, group dynamics, and teamwork is positive, strong, and significant. This result confirms the multiple regression findings, showing the significance of the impact of D&I initiatives on the interaction within the teams.

**H1b:** *Equitable access to D&I programs increases employee motivation and retention in IT companies.*

It is considered that the D&I programs could improve the motivation and retention of employees if it is implemented effectively. The multiple regression analysis shows the relationship among these variables:

Item	B	Std. Error	F	R <sup>2</sup>	t	p	95% Conf. Inter.	
							Lower	Upper
<b>D&amp;I Programs</b>	1.147	0.014			31.259	0.000	2.369	3.214
<b>Employee Motivation</b>	0.789	0.026	29.157	0.021	7.326	0.422	0.589	0.998
<b>Retention</b>	0.478	0.034	26.327	0.014	3.189	0.326	0.125	0.586

**Table 9.** Multiple Regression: D&I Programs, Employee Motivation, Retention

Table 9 shows that D&I programs have a positive and statistically insignificant impact on employee motivation ( $R^2 = .021$ ;  $\beta = .789$ ;  $t = 7.326$ ;  $p > .422$ ) and retention ( $R^2 = .014$ ;  $\beta = .478$ ;  $t = 3.189$ ;  $p > .326$ ). This result points that there is no connection between the introduced initiatives and the possibility of retaining or motivating the employees. Consequently, H1b is rejected. This result did not support the findings of Pal et al. (2024)

who reported the improvement of retention rates as a result of D&I program implementation. The same results apply to the connection between motivation and D&I program integration showing that the findings of Dawson, Parker, and Okimoto (2023), Jansen et al (2024), and Devine and Ash (2022) were not supported by this result.

		D&I Programs	Employee Motivation	Retention
<b>D&amp;I Programs</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	0.017	0.029
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.421	0.325
	N	241	241	241
<b>Employee Motivation</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.017	1	0.014
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.421		0.147
	N	241	241	241
<b>Retention</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.029	0.014	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.325	0.147	
	N	241	241	241

**Table 10.** Multiple Regression: D&I Programs, Employee Motivation, Retention

Table 10 confirms the results of the regression analysis, showing that the correlation among the D&I programs, employee motivation, and retention is positive, weak, and insignificant. This result supports the results of previous analysis, revealing that there is no impact of the D&I programs on motivation and retention.

*H<sub>1c</sub>: D&I programs enhance innovation and creativity in IT teams.*

The study also theorised that D&I initiatives could potentially increase the level of individual innovation and creativity in IT companies, which is tested by using a multiple regression test:

Item	B	Std. Error	F	R <sup>2</sup>	t	p	95% Conf. Inter.	
							Lower	Upper
<b>D&amp;I Programs</b>	1.369	0.011			27.369	0.000	0.214	3.214
<b>Innovation</b>	0.852	0.015	32.236	0.682	21.784	0.003	0.236	1.269
<b>Creativity</b>	0.987	0.026	32.646	0.841	28.214	0.000	0.314	0.874

**Table 11.** Multiple Regression: D&I Programs, Innovation, Creativity

As Table 11 shows, D&I programs have a positive and statistically significant effect on innovation ( $R^2 = .682$ ;  $\beta = .852$ ;  $t = 21.784$ ;  $p < .003$ ) and creativity ( $R^2 = .841$ ;  $\beta = .987$ ;  $t = 28.214$ ;  $p < .000$ ). Therefore, the results of this analysis showed that H<sub>1c</sub> is supported in full capacity. A study by Kasih and Ruslaini (2024) previously confirmed that D&I initiatives

improves diversity level of workforce leading to improvement in innovativeness and employee satisfaction. Several past studies confirmed that innovativeness and creativity are boosted in organisations that implement D&I programs (Kaur and Jaiswal, 2025; Ks and Pai, 2021).

		D&I Programs	Innovation	Creativity
<b>D&amp;I Programs</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	0.685	0.842
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.003	0.000
	N	241	241	241
<b>Innovation</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.685	1	0.657
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003		0.000
	N	241	241	241
<b>Creativity</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.842	0.657	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	
	N	241	241	241

**Table 12.** Correlation: D&I Programs, Innovation, Creativity

According to Table 12, the Pearson correlation coefficient among D&I programs, innovation, and creativity confirms the strong, positive, and significant correlation. This result reinforced regression findings, pointing to the strong connection between D&I programs, individual innovation, and creativity.

*H<sub>1d</sub>: IT companies face reduced satisfaction in the short term and improved satisfaction in the long-term perspective when embedding D&I programs.*

This study also aimed to detect if satisfaction among employees changes over time depending on the D&I program implementation in the organisation. This relationship is also tested with the help of multiple regression analysis:

Item	B	Std. Error	F	R <sup>2</sup>	t	p	95% Conf. Inter.	
							Lower	Upper
<b>D&amp;I Programs</b>	1.325	0.021			27.369	0.000	0.312	1.245
<b>Short-Term Satisfaction</b>	0.954	0.011	24.125	-0.874	21.784	0.002	0.147	2.369
<b>Long-Term Satisfaction</b>	0.258	0.022	23.146	0.983	28.214	0.004	0.515	0.974

**Table 13.** Multiple Regression: D&I Programs, Short-Term, and Long-Term Satisfaction

According to Table 13, D&I programs have a negative statistically significant effect on short-term satisfaction ( $R^2 = -.874$ ;  $\beta = .954$   $t = 21.784$ ;  $p < .002$ ) and a positive significant

effect on long-term satisfaction ( $R^2 = .983$ ;  $\beta = .258$ ;  $t = 28.214$ ;  $p < .004$ ). This means that the positive impact of the inclusive initiatives could be better seen in a long-term perspective, while the short-term effect could be negative due to resistance. Consequently, the hypothesis H1d is supported.

		D&I Programs	Short-Term Satisfaction	Long-Term Satisfaction
<b>D&amp;I Programs</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.876	0.985
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.002	0.004
	N	241	241	241
<b>Short-Term Satisfaction</b>	Pearson Correlation	-0.876	1	0.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002		0.432
	N	241	241	241
<b>Long-Term Satisfaction</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.985	0.012	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004	0.432	
	N	241	241	241

**Table 14.** Correlation: D&I Programs, Short-Term, and Long-Term Satisfaction

As Table 14 showed, the Pearson correlation coefficient between D&I programs and short-term satisfaction is negative, strong, and significant, while it is positive, strong, and significant with long-term satisfaction. There is no correlation between short and long-term satisfaction. This result confirms the multiple regression findings, revealing that the satisfaction grows over time alongside the maturity of the D&I implementation.

Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) was calculated to determine the reliability of the instrument:

Items	$\alpha$	Range	Assessment
Organisational Performance and Satisfaction	0.785	0.70-0.79	Acceptable
Group Dynamics and Teamwork	0.824	0.80-0.89	Good
Equitable Access, Motivation, and Retention	0.697	0.6-0.69	Questionable
Innovation and Creativity	0.741	0.70-0.79	Acceptable
Short-term vs. Long-term Satisfaction	0.743	0.70-0.79	Acceptable
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.758</b>	<b>0.70-0.79</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>

**Table 15.** Cronbach's Alpha

According to the analysis, the overall analysis of reliability of the instrument is at an acceptable level (Table 15). This means that the questionnaire is, overall, reliable and can be utilised in similar studies in future.

#### 4.2 Qualitative Study: Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis conducted using the six-step approach generated different results grouped by the themes and subthemes:

Theme	Subtheme	Representative Quote
Perceived Value of D&I Programs	Formal D&I structures and awareness	"The training sessions helped us realise biases we didn't even know we had."
	Positive employee perception	"D&I is more than a checklist here—it's part of the company culture."
Impact on Teamwork and Communication	Improved collaboration	"There's definitely more openness to ideas now, and people from all backgrounds feel encouraged to speak."
	Enhanced communication	"Communication is more respectful, and meetings are less dominated by the same voices."
Equity and Motivation	Promotion fairness	"There are equal opportunities now, but only in some departments. Others still have a way to go."
	Motivational effects of equity	"Honesty, I do not see the connection between the initiatives and my or others' motivation to come to work."
Innovation through Diversity	Creative outcomes	"One of our best product updates came from a brainstorming session led by a diverse task force."
	Inclusive idea sharing	"Our leadership genuinely encourages new ideas from everyone, not just senior staff."
Barriers and Limitations	Leadership inconsistency	"Managers say the right things but don't follow through."
	Tokenism and uneven application	"It feels like some programs are just for show, especially in smaller teams."

**Table 16.** Thematic Analysis

#### **4.2.1 Theme 1: Perceived Value of D&I Programs**

The majority of participants acknowledged the overall value of D&I programs in their companies. One of the subtopics retrieved after the analysis referred to the awareness and the formal D&I structures, which showed that these initiatives helped employees to realise the importance of inclusivity. According to one of the participants, *"The training sessions helped us realise biases we didn't even know we had"* (Participant 3). Many interviewees insisted that they very superficial perception of other cultures until they encountered foreign-born colleagues. *"I honestly did not consider myself biased or ignorant, but when we hired several employees from different countries, I realised I was"* (Participant 6). An increased level of awareness about the meaning of diversity and inclusivity was acknowledged by all

respondents. As a result, all of them confirmed that D&I programs were important for them individually and for the company in particular. This feedback on the importance and significance of these initiatives complied with the empirical findings retrieved with the help of the statistical analysis.

Another subtopic captured by the thematic analysis was positive employee perception, as the majority of interviewees confirmed their favourable view of D&I programs. Many admitted that these initiatives became the driving force in their companies. "*D&I is more than a checklist here – it's part of the company culture*" (Participant 15). The perception of inclusivity in IT companies was overall positive, with very few exclusions. Only two participants expressed their opposition to D&I programs, claiming that they are unnecessary. For example, "*I think that the company overinvests in all that inclusivity and diversity, and we have a lack of funding into actually important areas, like staff training in innovations or new software*" (Participant 18). It was noted earlier that the topic of inclusivity could be challenging to discuss objectively, as many people tend to be afraid to express their personal opinions. This issue might be a barrier to more expanded and honest opinions, as the programs were not criticised by almost anyone.

#### **4.2.2 Theme 2: Impact on Teamwork and Communication**

The second theme was also divided into two subtopics, which referred to the interaction of employees in the companies. Specifically, one of them focused on the improved collaboration as a result of the D&I program implementation. First of all, interviewees admitted that they felt freer to express themselves. "*There's definitely more openness to ideas now, and people from all backgrounds feel encouraged to speak*" (Participant 6). The possibility to collaborate and interact better was the most common feedback provided by the respondents. For example, many participants, especially those working in their companies for a long time, claimed that their executives were often sceptical or even dismissive when foreign-born colleagues expressed their opinions or proposed a new initiative. "*I remember, in the past, one of my subordinates who came from a different country proposed to our executives a new idea of an app update, a change in our communication policy, and a new client-targeting campaign. She was ignored in all of those cases*" (Participant 8). The past problems with collaboration or initiative were addressed, according to most of the respondents.

The same improvement was observed by participants in their communication within the team. The second subtopic focused on enhanced communication by showing that D&I initiatives helped the company to improve the interaction among employees.

*"Communication is more respectful, and meetings are less dominated by the same voices"* (Participant 14). Many participants claimed that they work in a safe environment where everyone can express their opinions and address their issues if a conflict situation occurs. Some participants, however, admitted that they have to be very careful when they are speaking in team meetings in order not to offend the feelings of others. Yet, this aspect was not perceived as negative by the participants but rather as the improvement of their awareness. *"I think in the past, we were way too ignorant when it comes to a different culture. I would say everything without considering the cultural context of our interaction, and I know it was not adequate"* (Participant 17). In general, all participants admitted that their communication inside the company improved dramatically since the application of the D&I program.

#### **4.2.3 Theme 3: Equity and Motivation**

Here, the results showed a different picture. Specifically, this theme was also divided into two main subthemes. The first one of which was the promotion of fairness. Many participants admitted that even though D&I initiatives were helpful in improving their communication and teamwork, there are still examples of inequity in the company. *"There are equal opportunities now, but only in some departments. Others still have a way to go"* (Participant 7). This type of response was observed among the vast majority of the respondents who claimed that they encountered several culture-motivated conflicts. For example, one of the participants remembered several misunderstandings that were not addressed by the management correctly. *"One of our former employees was from a different country. She said something inappropriate due to her lack of English proficiency and was very confused when our HR department fined her. Even though she apologised and explained the situation, she was eventually let go due to this issue"* (Participant 16). Many respondents discussed similar situations, claiming that management simply does not want to explore the issue in more detail or conduct a thorough investigation when something like that occurs.

The second subtopic focusing on the motivation showed similar responses. The majority of participants admitted that they do not see a clear link between a more equitable or inclusive environment and their motivation to work. *"Honesty, I do not see the connection between the initiatives and my or others' motivation to come to work"* (Participant 9).

Respondents recognised that they are motivated by different things, including the overall environment inside the company and the possibility to develop professionally. *“Motivation is an individual thing, I think. I am more interested in the possibility to improve my financial situation at the moment”* (Participant 10). As the overall responses showed, interviewees did not perceive the possibility of working in a more diverse environment as the motivation in itself.

#### **4.2.4 Theme 4: Innovation through Diversity**

The responses relating to the innovativeness were more positive. Particularly, one of the topics referred to creative outcomes as a result of the D&I programs. As one of the interviewees admitted, *“One of our best product updates came from a brainstorming session led by a diverse task force”* (Participant 13). As the vast majority of participants showed, they have noticed the connection between hiring a multicultural team and the possibility of innovating in the respective field. *“When we started hiring more people from abroad, our team managed to develop better and more cost-effective products. I figured this is connected”* (Participant 19). The inclusion of people from different backgrounds allowed the companies to become more innovative and creative, as most respondents acknowledged.

The second subtopic related to inclusive idea sharing which was closely connected to D&I programs. *“Our leadership genuinely encourages new ideas from everyone, not just senior staff”* (Participant 1). Many participants admitted that they not only saw positive changes in creativity and the possibility to express their ideas in terms of cultural diversity, but also the status of an employee in the company. *“I have worked for this company for 15 years already. In the past, we were only focused on the ideas incepted by our executives or higher management. Today, it is the company’s policy to include all levels of workers in our meetings and brainstorming”* (Participant 11). In general, around half of the respondents pointed to a change in idea sharing in their companies among all levels of employees, including the newly hired ones.

#### **4.2.5 Theme 5: Barriers and Limitations**

It is important to note that only a fraction of interviewees were eager to discuss barriers and problems with D&I programs during the sessions. It is speculated that this is the limitation of the nature of such initiatives, as they tend to monitor the opinions of all employees, including those who criticise them. One of the most common criticisms referred to leadership inconsistency. *“Managers say the right things but don’t follow through”*

(Participant 14). The problems with leaders and higher-management staff were admitted by a large proportion of those criticising the D&I program implementation. “*I think our executives do not follow the equity rules themselves. I have caught one of our leaders doing and saying inappropriate things, which I cannot repeat*” (Participant 8). As this example revealed, participants were afraid of the possible retaliation, even though this study guaranteed confidentiality.

Another common criticism was grouped into the subtopic of tokenism and uneven application. According to one of the interviewees, “*It feels like some programs are just for show, especially in smaller teams*” (Participant 12). Many respondents claimed that they saw the application of inclusivity programs in some rare instances, despite the fact that their implementation had been done years ago. “*Oh, we have our D&I policy in place for, like, six years already. Only the hiring politics changed a bit. The rest remained the same*” (Participant 8). Overall, only four out of 19 respondents talked about the limitations and problems of D&I initiatives. Yet, it was important to include it to balance the conversation about these programs and ensure that this discussion is objective.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

This study aimed to determine the effect of D&I programs on organisational performance in the context of IT organisations. After testing the hypotheses, it was discovered that D&I initiatives are effective in increasing organisational performance. This effect is affected by the impact of these programs at several levels and aspects of the organisational functionality. Specifically, it was revealed that D&I programs improve teamwork and communication in the teams. These initiatives also help to increase innovativeness and creativity. Satisfaction among employees is also improved in the long-term perspective as a result of D&I programs. Yet, at the beginning of implementation, the satisfaction level is reduced. Also, the inclusive and diverse initiatives do not improve motivation and retention, which could be part of a larger issue.

The thematic analysis confirmed the findings generated with the help of the statistical analysis. Particularly, the majority of participants agreed that D&I programs are beneficial to their businesses as a whole. One of the subtopics retrieved after the analysis referred to the awareness and the formal D&I structures, which showed that these initiatives helped employees to realise the importance of inclusivity. When confronted with coworkers who were born in another country, numerous interviewees insisted that they had only a superficial

understanding of other cultures. All respondents acknowledged an increased awareness of the significance of diversity and inclusivity.

Consequently, they all confirmed the significance of D&I programs for the company as a whole and for each individual. The empirical findings that were retrieved with the assistance of the statistical analysis were consistent with this feedback regarding the significance and importance of these initiatives. Positive employee perception was another subtopic uncovered by the thematic analysis, as the majority of interviewees confirmed their favourable perception of D&I programs. Many acknowledged that these initiatives became the company's driving force. In general, IT companies viewed inclusivity positively, with few exclusions. Only two participants expressed their opposition to D&I programs, claiming that they are unnecessary. It was mentioned earlier that it might be hard to talk about inclusivity in an objective way because many people are afraid to say what they think. This issue might be a barrier to more expanded and honest opinions, as the programs were not criticised by almost anyone.

The second theme was also divided into two subtopics, which referred to the interaction of employees in the companies. One of them specifically emphasised the improved collaboration brought about by the implementation of the D&I program. First and foremost, interviewees acknowledged feeling more at ease in expressing themselves. The most frequently offered suggestion by respondents was the opportunity to collaborate and interact more effectively. For example, many participants, especially those working in their companies for a long time, claimed that their executives were often sceptical or even dismissive when foreign-born colleagues expressed their opinions or proposed a new initiative. The majority of respondents stated that the previous difficulties with collaboration and initiative were resolved.

The same improvement was observed by participants in their communication within the team. The second subtopic focused on enhanced communication by showing that D&I initiatives helped the company to improve the interaction among employees. In the event of conflict, many participants stated that they work in a secure setting where everyone is free to voice their opinions and resolve issues. Some participants, however, admitted that they have to be very careful when they are speaking in team meetings in order not to offend the feelings of others.

However, the participants did not see this as a negative aspect; rather, they saw it as an improvement in their awareness. In general, everyone who took part acknowledged that as a result of implementing the D&I program, their communication within the company significantly improved. Here, the results showed a different picture. This particular theme was further subdivided into two primary subthemes. The first one of which was the promotion of fairness. Many participants admitted that even though D&I initiatives were helpful in improving their communication and teamwork, there are still examples of inequity in the company. This type of response was observed among the vast majority of the respondents who claimed that they encountered several culture-motivated conflicts. For example, one of the participants remembered several misunderstandings that were not addressed by the management correctly.

According to a lot of respondents, management simply doesn't want to look into the problem in greater depth or conduct a thorough investigation when something like that occurs. The second subtopic focusing on the motivation showed similar responses. The majority of participants admitted that they do not see a clear link between a more equitable or inclusive environment and their motivation to work. The respondents acknowledged that a variety of factors, such as the opportunity to grow professionally and the overall atmosphere within the company, motivate them. As the overall responses showed, interviewees did not perceive the possibility of working in a more diverse environment as the motivation in itself.

The responses relating to the innovativeness were more positive. Particularly, one of the topics referred to creative outcomes as a result of the D&I programs. The vast majority of participants demonstrated that they have recognised the link between the opportunity to innovate in the field and hiring a multicultural team. The inclusion of people from different backgrounds allowed the companies to become more innovative and creative, as most respondents acknowledged.

The second subtopic, which had a close connection to D&I programs, was inclusive idea sharing. Many participants admitted that they not only saw positive changes in creativity and the possibility to express their ideas in terms of cultural diversity, but also the status of an employee in the company. In general, around half of the respondents pointed to a change in idea sharing in their companies among all levels of employees, including the newly hired ones.

It is important to note that only a fraction of interviewees were eager to discuss barriers and problems with D&I programs during the sessions. It is speculated that this is the limitation of the nature of such initiatives, as they tend to monitor the opinions of all employees, including those who criticise them. One of the most common criticisms referred to leadership inconsistency. The problems with leaders and higher-management staff were admitted by a large proportion of those criticising the D&I program implementation. Even though this study guaranteed confidentiality, this example revealed that participants were afraid of retaliation. The subtopic of tokenism and uneven application was another common criticism. Despite the fact that inclusivity programs have been in use for a number of years, many respondents claimed that they only occasionally observed their application. Overall, only four out of 19 respondents talked about the limitations and problems of D&I initiatives. Yet, it was important to include it to balance the conversation about these programs and ensure that this discussion is objective.

### **5.1 Findings in the Context of Past Studies**

The results of the current study showed that the findings in past research analysed in the literature review were predominantly confirmed. Specifically, on a number of levels, inclusiveness programs may be extremely important for organisations. The question of whether a D&I program has the potential to boost organisational performance is one of the most frequently asked by businesses. In particular, it was recognised that initiatives that promote inclusivity broaden the workforce, enable businesses to increase their innovativeness and employee satisfaction, both of which improve performance (Kasih and Ruslaini, 2024). According to another study (Suparyanto et al., 2025), improved teamwork in companies mediated the indirect connection between organisational performance and D&I programs.

However, as the study showed, these are the aspects of the indirect impact that D&I programs have on the performance of the organisation. Proving the direct effect might be more difficult. D&I initiatives may have a direct impact, Turi et al. (2022) acknowledged, given that they enhance performance-affecting qualities in employees. However, this effect may be more pronounced in larger organisations, where employee-focused politics tend to dominate (Covington, Le, and Ngo, 2025). Smaller companies could be more concentrated on competitiveness and the possibility of finding their target consumers, which could be less affected by the inclusivity policies. Also, as Duha and Gilaa (2024) noted, smaller organisations have limited resources for the implementation of D&I programs, leading to the inability for many of them to explore diversity and inclusivity issues. Overall, the direct

impact of D&I programs on organisational performance is difficult to assess, as it is possible that many underlying reasons could affect the outcomes.

According to the current findings, a number of researchers concurred that one of the most common outcomes of D&I initiatives is a reduction in workplace discrimination. According to Duha and Gilaa (2024), the inclusivity initiative enabled the reduction of discrimination in several regional businesses. It is important, however, to consider that discrimination could be measured differently in companies and regions. According to Nicholas, Axt, and Ariely (2023), for instance, a diversity program was found to reduce instances of unequal hiring policies and power distribution within organisations. According to Furtado, Moreira, and Mota (2002), additional studies demonstrated that inclusive policies resulted in affirmative action in organisations aiming to hire fifty per cent women. According to Klinksiek (2024) and Leuhery et al. (2024), the findings of another investigation indicate that the D&I policies contributed to the improvement of the physical workplace environment for employees with disabilities. The various effects that D&I programs have on organisational performance can be attributed to differences in their focus or scope.

The results of this research revealed that this variation could also be the reason why the outcomes generated by many studies find different confounding or mediating factors that affect the relationship between performance and D&I initiatives. According to the studies (Dawson, Parker, and Okimoto, 2023), having access to diverse or inclusive opportunities may boost employee motivation, particularly among minority employees. It was also revealed that D&I programs were responsible for increasing motivation to apply for the position among many diverse applicants (Jansen et al., 2024). Discrimination in the job market, for instance, typically results in multiple rejections for graduates from minority backgrounds. Their motivation can be improved when they face organisations that value diversity and seek staff members from multicultural backgrounds (Devine and Ash, 2022). Consequently, motivation to work in such companies can also be higher compared to companies that do not implement inclusive policies.

It was also confirmed that one of the negative outcomes of implementing D&I policies. According to Gündemir et al. (2024), numerous researchers acknowledge that employee opposition to such programs may pose a problem in the short term as well as the long term. Employees frequently view resistance as an unnecessary change or an infringement on their existing rights, which could be problematic for the implementation process (Lima and Rahman, 2025). Additionally, as Wolfgruber, Einwiller, and Wloka (2022)

emphasised, organisations must respond differently to internal and external resistance to the implementation of inclusivity or diversity programs. Particularly, organisations can introduce a “no tolerance” approach to internal resistance when the employees are forced to accept, while the external criticism could be dealt with via strategic communication (Wolfgruber, Einwiller, and Wloka 2022). Yet, an aggressive approach to the implementation of D&I programs could be counterproductive since key talent can leave the organisation.

The results confirmed that companies that do not take into account the opinions of their employees may face a significant challenge as a result of the nature of the implementation of such policies. As the studies confirmed, new policies or programs in the organisations almost always lead to a certain level of resistance or criticism among employees (Thomas, 2020). According to Adamson et al. (2020), the initial level of resistance that follows any innovation or change within the organisation is unavoidable, but it typically lasts only a short time. However, if the company wants to avoid retaliation in the future, the manner in which D&I programs are implemented or the overall approach to employee communication is especially crucial (Park, Park, and Kwon, 2025). Many employees may choose to change their workplaces, making inclusive policies ineffective if they are not implemented consistently across the market. However, despite the potential threat of resistance to the implementation of D&I programs, there are still multiple benefits that such initiatives bring to individual employees and the organisations. The studies reported the positive outcomes of the inclusivity initiatives in the form of improved individual results, approach to communication, teamwork, and improving the physical environment in the organisations (Mullin et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2025). As a result of the implementation of D&I policies, numerous businesses in various industries acknowledged the potential to broaden the scope of workforce attraction (Scheuer et al., 2025).

Overall, it was discovered that in the information technology industry, for instance, a company's ability to hire staff through outsourcing or various visa applications is crucial. Consequently, the implementation of D&I initiatives makes it possible to create a more welcoming workplace where all employees can work and interact with one another in a safer and more productive manner. D&I initiatives have a positive effect on organisational performance both directly and indirectly, as the literature review demonstrated. According to research, when inclusivity strategies are incorporated into a company's policies, they typically result in improvements in areas like communication, teamwork, and group dynamics.

Also, it was shown that employee motivation could be positively affected by D&I programs, as employees feel safer and more open to expressing their opinions in teams. D&I initiatives can have a positive impact on organisational performance if companies choose to properly implement them by focusing on the demands and needs of employees. However, employees frequently resist such initiatives because they may criticise changes or additional expenditures. It is important to take into account that D&I initiatives could have different types or directions of their policies, which impact the organisational outcomes. The company's market effectiveness and competitiveness may be determined by the implementation of inclusivity and diversity programs in market segments like the IT sector.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations**

This study showed that organisations that operate in the IT sector have to focus on D&I initiatives, as they provide a range of benefits to them. The companies can retrieve a competitive advantage by implementing diversity and inclusion in the workplace, as they can improve their performance. IT companies have a chance to enhance their creativity and innovativeness level, which is paramount in this segment. The industry of information technologies changes and develops very frequently, which demands that companies react promptly to any updates, changes, or implementations. Results of this study point to real value in diversity even beyond its role in innovation. For example, the companies can increase their inner efficacy by improving teamwork and communication among employees. As a result, the workers will be operating more effectively and ensure their competitive levels within the long-term perspective.

D&I initiatives are benefiting in the IT sector, as it is characterised by rapid-fire innovation and an acute talent shortage. If the companies in this market are able to hire more employees abroad, they are better equipped to remain relevant in the segment. Despite the fact that the majority of organisations proclaim themselves to be inclusive, the majority of underrepresented groups encounter obstacles that prevent them from participating in leadership roles. The purpose of this study was to examine the connection between organisational performance and D&I initiatives by tackling the inner aspects of the organisational policies. Insights into how inclusive workplaces can maintain success revealed that these programs are inevitable and critical for companies to remain effective in their respective segments.

Inclusiveness programs may be extremely important for organisations. The question of whether a D&I program has the potential to boost organisational performance is one of the most frequently asked by businesses. In particular, it was recognised that initiatives that promote inclusivity broaden the workforce, enable businesses to increase their innovativeness and employee satisfaction, both of which improve performance. Improved teamwork in the companies mediated the indirect connection between organisational performance and D&I programs.

However, as the study showed, these are the aspects of the indirect impact that D&I programs have on the performance of the organisation. It might be harder to demonstrate the direct effect. D&I initiatives may have a direct impact because they enhance employee characteristics that influence performance. However, this effect may be more pronounced in larger organisations, where employee-focused politics typically predominate. Smaller companies could be more concentrated on competitiveness and the possibility of finding their target consumers, which could be less affected by the inclusivity policies. Smaller organisations have limited resources for the implementation of D&I programs, leading to the inability for many of them to explore diversity and inclusivity issues. Overall, the direct impact of D&I programs on organisational performance is difficult to assess, as it is possible that many underlying reasons could affect the outcomes.

The findings showed that the outcomes of D&I initiatives is a decrease in workplace discrimination. The inclusivity initiative made it possible for discrimination to be reduced in a number of regional businesses. It is important, however, to consider that discrimination could be measured differently in companies and regions. For instance, a diversity program was found to reduce instances of unequal hiring policies and power distribution within organisations. Inclusive policies led to affirmative action in businesses that wanted to hire fifty per cent women. The findings indicated that the D&I policies contributed to the improvement of the physical workplace environment for employees with disabilities.

The differing focus or scope of D&I programs can be credited with the various effects they have on organisational performance. The results of this research revealed that this variation could also be the reason why the outcomes generated by many studies find different confounding or mediating factors that affect the relationship between performance and D&I initiatives. Having access to diverse or inclusive opportunities may boost employee motivation, particularly among minority employees, according to the studies. It was also revealed that D&I programs were responsible for increasing motivation to apply for the

position among many diverse applicants. Graduates from minority backgrounds typically face multiple rejections as a result of discrimination in the job market, for instance. Their motivation can be improved when they face organisations that value diversity and seek staff members from multicultural backgrounds. Consequently, motivation to work in such companies can also be higher compared to companies that do not implement inclusive policies.

Additionally, it was established that one of the undesirable effects of implementing D&I policies. Numerous researchers acknowledge that employee opposition to such programs may pose a problem in the short term as well as the long term. Employees frequently view resistance as an unnecessary change or an infringement on their existing rights. Organisations must respond differently to internal and external resistance to the implementation of inclusivity or diversity programs. Particularly, organisations can introduce a “no tolerance” approach to internal resistance when the employees are forced to accept, while the external criticism could be dealt with via strategic communication. Yet, an aggressive approach to the implementation of D&I programs could be counterproductive since key talent can leave the organisation.

The findings confirmed that the nature of the implementation of such policies may pose a significant obstacle for businesses that do not consider the opinions of their employees. As the studies confirmed, new policies or programs in the organisations almost always lead to a certain level of resistance or criticism among employees. The initial level of resistance that follows any innovation or change within the organisation is unavoidable, but it typically lasts only a short time. However, if the company wants to avoid retaliation in the future, the manner in which D&I programs are implemented or the overall approach to employee communication is especially crucial. Many employees may choose to change their workplaces, making inclusive policies ineffective if they are not implemented consistently across the market. However, despite the possibility of resistance to D&I programs' implementation, there are still numerous advantages for both individual employees and organisations. The studies reported the positive outcomes of the inclusivity initiatives in the form of improved individual results, approach to communication, teamwork, and improving the physical environment in the organisations. As a result of the implementation of D&I policies, numerous businesses in various industries acknowledged the potential to broaden the scope of workforce attraction.

Overall, it was discovered that in the information technology industry, a company's ability to hire staff through outsourcing or various visa applications is crucial. As a result, putting D&I initiatives into action enables the creation of a more welcoming workplace where all employees can work and interact with one another in a manner that is both safer and more productive. The literature review demonstrated that D&I initiatives have a direct and indirect positive impact on organisational performance. Research shows that when inclusivity strategies are incorporated into a company's policies, improvements typically occur in communication, teamwork, and group dynamics. Also, it was shown that employee motivation could be positively affected by D&I programs, as employees feel safer and more open to expressing their opinions in teams. If businesses choose to properly implement D&I initiatives by focusing on the demands and requirements of employees, they can have a positive impact on organisational performance. However, due to the possibility that they will criticise changes or additional expenditures, employees frequently resist such initiatives. It is important to take into account that D&I initiatives could have different types or directions of their policies, which impact the organisational outcomes. The company's market effectiveness and competitiveness may be determined by the implementation of inclusivity and diversity programs in market segments like the IT sector.

## 6.1 Future Research Directions

This study recommends exploring the impact of D&I programs on different populations groups in IT sector and other industries. For instance, future studies could compare how such initiatives affect racially diverse employees and White workers, those with disabilities and their colleagues without disabilities, or workers from different religious groups, and different sexual orientation and identities. Such comparisons could help determining if the D&I programs work differently or similarly in terms of their effect on different employee groups. It is also recommended to conduct observational or longitudinal studies by measuring the diversity and equality levels before the D&I program application and after one to three years post-implementation. In this case, the results will be more accurate in terms of measuring inclusive and diverse initiatives in the organisational environment.

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## Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

### *Demographic & Organisational Information*

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Race/Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_

Country of residence: U.S.

European country (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Current job role:

Company size:

- Fewer than 50 employees
- 50–249 employees
- 250+ employees

Experience in the current company:

- 1 year–2 years
- 2–5 years
- More than 5 years

### **I. Organisational Performance and Satisfaction**

(5-point Likert scale: Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree)

1. I believe the D&I programs in my company contribute positively to its overall performance.
2. D&I efforts have improved the company's reputation in the industry.
3. I am satisfied with my overall work experience at this company.
4. The D&I initiatives have made my workplace more inclusive and fair.
5. I feel more engaged in my work since the implementation of D&I policies.

### **II. Group Dynamics and Teamwork**

(5-point Likert scale)

6. D&I initiatives have improved collaboration within my team.
7. Team communication has become more open and respectful due to D&I practices.
8. My team benefits from a diversity of perspectives when solving problems.
9. D&I efforts have enhanced trust and cohesion among colleagues.

### **III. Equitable Access, Motivation, and Retention**

(5-point Likert scale)

10. Opportunities for promotion and advancement are fairly distributed in my organisation.
11. I believe employees from underrepresented groups have equal chances for growth.
12. Knowing my workplace values equity increases my motivation to perform well.
13. I plan to remain in my current job over the next two years.
14. Fair access to leadership roles encourages me to stay with this company.

### **IV. Innovation and Creativity**

(5-point Likert scale)

15. D&I policies have led to more innovative ideas within my team.
16. I feel encouraged to contribute new ideas, regardless of my background.
17. A diverse team leads to more creative and effective solutions.
18. Leadership encourages innovation by supporting inclusive practices.

### **V. Short-term vs. Long-term Satisfaction**

(5-point Likert scale)

19. Initially, the implementation of D&I programs caused some disruption or dissatisfaction.
20. Over time, the D&I initiatives have improved employee satisfaction.
21. The long-term benefits of D&I programs outweigh any early implementation challenges.
22. I have seen positive cultural change in my organisation since D&I efforts began.

### **Appendix B: Interview Questionnaire**

- 1.** Can you briefly describe your current role in your organisation and how long you've been working there?
- 2.** Does your organisation currently implement formal D&I programs? If so, can you describe what these programs involve (e.g., training, policies, resource groups)?
- 3.** How would you describe your organisation's approach to diversity and inclusion in general?
- 4.** In your experience, how have D&I initiatives influenced collaboration and teamwork within your team or department?
- 5.** Have you noticed any changes in how team members communicate, share ideas, or support one another since D&I efforts began?
- 6.** Are there specific examples where D&I practices either helped or hindered team dynamics?
- 7.** Do you feel that everyone in your organisation has equal access to professional opportunities (e.g., training, promotions, leadership roles)? Why or why not?
- 8.** How has this perception affected your own motivation or your colleagues' motivation at work?
- 9.** To what extent do you think equitable practices affect employee retention in your company?
- 10.** Have you considered leaving or staying at your company based on its commitment to inclusion and fairness? Please explain.
- 11.** In your view, does having a diverse and inclusive team contribute to innovation or creativity in your workplace? How so?
- 12.** Can you share any examples where team diversity led to a new idea, product, or solution?
- 13.** Do you think D&I policies support or limit creative expression and idea generation? Why?
- 14.** What was your or your team's initial reaction when the D&I programs were introduced? Were there concerns, resistance, or confusion?

- 15.** Have your perceptions or feelings changed over time as these programs became more embedded in the organisation? If yes, how?
- 16.** Do you believe D&I initiatives have had a lasting positive or negative effect on employee satisfaction in your workplace? Please elaborate.
- 17.** What do you believe is working well in your company's D&I strategy?
- 18.** What challenges or limitations still exist?
- 19.** If you could recommend one change to improve D&I programs in your company or the IT sector in general, what would it be?
- 20.** Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with D&I in your workplace that we haven't discussed yet?