

**Implementation of Diversity and Inclusion Practices in Day-to-Day Work and Its Impact on Immigrant Employee Well-Being in The Hospitality Sector in Ireland.**

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# Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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## **Abstract**

The research investigates how diversity and inclusion (D&I) practices support well-being of immigrant employees working in Irish hospitality sector. Despite increasing workforce diversity and popularity of the topic, significant gaps exist in understanding how these practices are implemented on daily basis and their impact on employee well-being. The hospitality area presents an appealing context because of its multicultural workplace and unique job challenges such as high stress levels, unsocial hours, and customers interactions.

The study uses qualitative approach through semi-structures interviews with six immigrant employees, working in the hospitality in Ireland.

Key findings display that diversity can be harmful unless inclusion practices properly implemented. Management practices are crucial for the correct implementation of inclusion practices. Three management styles were discussed.

Multiple barriers faced by employees, while adapting to the new environment. Participants identified specific support mechanisms that can help them to handle the obstacles.

The research contributes significantly to practical side, providing with recommendations for improving employees' well-being through D&I practices.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This paper focuses on the importance of employee well-being throughout implementing Diversity and Inclusion practices in day-to-day work within the hospitality sector. This chapter will explore how Diversity and Inclusion are viewed in theory by professionals such as Stephen Taylor, Armstrong Michael, McMahon, and others. Followed by review on Employee Well-Being with focus on emotional and mental areas, including a chapter focusing on the research about the connection between Diversity and Inclusion practices with Employee Well-Being.

#### **1.1.a The problem that exists and its context**

Ireland has seen a significant increase in immigration over the last decade. Therefore, the workforce consists not only of diverse ranges of age and gender but is also multi-cultural. A competitive advantage may be achieved through developing diversity and inclusion practices, as a mix of different educational and personal backgrounds can bring new perspectives (McMahon

2010). In order to keep different types of people working well together, diversity management should be well-developed (Shatrughan and Usha 2020).

A job in the hospitality requires a lot of concentration and psychological resilience because of its fast-paced, customer-focused environment, as well as irregular schedule and late-night shifts (McManus *et al.*, 2025). Front-line jobs in this area can be stressful. Additionally, the workforce is diverse, represented by a wide variety of nationalities, age, sexual orientation, and more. People who have immigrated may face difficulties adapting to a new environment, which includes the absence of their family and friends, as well as adjusting to another culture and language.

Another significant barrier for immigrants is the lack of the recognition for foreign qualifications and experience. Many skilled immigrants find it difficult to have their credentials validated by employers or professional accreditation bodies. This often results in qualified individuals being forced to work in lower-paying, unskilled jobs unrelated to their expertise (Iwu *et al.*, 2019).

#### **1.1.b Why Diversity and Inclusion strategy is important for organisations**

Diversity and inclusion practices have become more popular due to their impact on different areas such as retention and turnover, innovation, and higher long-term firm performance (McMahon 2010).

Castrillon and Alfonso (2024) state that organisations that balance profitability, stakeholders needs, and a welcoming environment help employees develop skills to interact with diverse communities locally and globally. Embracing diversity within teams fosters innovation, improves problem-solving, boosts employees' creativity and motivation. However, sustaining diversity requires creating an inclusive environment that promotes equity, eliminates discrimination, and values diverse perspectives. It is also important for the hospitality business as a lot of customers are travelers and just people with different backgrounds as well as coworkers.

#### **1.1.c Research gap and main research question**

There is not much research on how line managers implement this strategy in their day-to-day work and how employees perceive it. A significant amount of research has been conducted on the topic, but the research was mainly carried out about gender, ethnicity and age (Shatrughan and Usha 2020). This gap is understanding how Diversity and Inclusion practices are implemented at the operational level, particularly in the context of immigrant employee well-being in Irish hospitality sector, necessitates further investigation.

## **1.2 Structure of Dissertation**

### *Chapter one: Introduction*

This chapter introduced the context of diversity and inclusion practices in the hospitality sector in Ireland. It begins with examining background of increased immigration in Ireland over years, which led to highly diverse workforce. It is particularly connected to the hospitality because of not only employees, but also customers coming from different countries and cultures.

Problem statement and research gap are stated in this chapter. The studies possible contribution to theoretical and practical perspectives of the topic is discussed in the chapter, justifying the need to conduct the research with immigrant employees.

### *Chapter two: Literature Review*

This chapter provides analysis of existing theoretical frameworks and practical research related to the hospitality sector, diversity and inclusion practices, and employee well-being. This chapter is structured around three main topics, which aligns with the research objectives.

The first section is about diversity and inclusion, including diversity as demographic representation and inclusion as mechanisms to manage diverse workforce. It has views not only on benefits from diversity and inclusion practices, but also its challenges, taking how it can bring innovation or create stress and identity conflicts.

The second section focuses on employee well-being, particularly on emotional well-being. It includes topics of belonging, psychological safety, and cultural integration.

The third part of the chapter combines research on relationships between diversity and inclusion practices and employee well-being. Management role as a mediator and the importance of organisational support are also mentioned in the chapter. In the conclusion to the chapter, gaps in research are identified.

### *Chapter three: Methodology*

This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research methodology, philosophical foundation, and approach for analysing the data. Participant recruitment strategy, primary data collection strategy, ethical considerations are addressed in this chapter. The chapter also addresses the choice of thematic analysis.

Chapter four: Thematic Analysis of Immigrant Employee Experiences in Irish Hospitality Sector

In this chapter presentation of the findings from six immigrant employees working in the hospitality sector can be find. The themes are shown at the beginning of the chapter, followed by detailed analysis of the data, including direct quotation. The focus is maintained on participants' voices, while keeping a robust structure.

#### Chapter five: Discussion

The discussion chapter present critical interpretation of the findings. There are a several key topics such as management practices, authenticity at work, diversity without inclusion, and others, including implementation for theory and practice.

#### Chapter six: Conclusion

It discuss the research journey, contributions, and limitations and future research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1. Diversity and Inclusion**

Diversity and inclusion are often linked, inclusion is more a mechanism to manage diversity. Diversity focuses on demographic representation, while inclusion fostering a culture where these differences are valued (Jaiswal *et al.*, 2022). Armstrong and Taylor (2023) state that diversity refers to people of different genders, ethnicity, race, age, and more in the workplace, while inclusion refers to these individuals feeling of being accepted as their true, unique selves.

Inclusion depends on diversity, but some practices like affirmative action can unintentionally create biases. For instance, choosing someone based only on their group identity might suggest they lack the skills or qualifications, making inclusion seem politically driven. Inclusion is about fairness, embracing differences, and leadership support. Fairness means treating everyone equally, no matter their background. Embracing differences helps employees feel they belong while still being themselves (Jaiswal *et al.*, 2022).

Age, race, gender, and ethnicity are referred as surface-level diversity, which is questioned because it has more aspects (Jaiswal *et al.*, 2022). There are also differences in language, education, and others (Khanom and Shee, 2024).

Language proficiency is important for effective communication, access to information, networks, and decision-making processes. Immigrants lacking local language skills often experience isolation, missed opportunities, and limited participation in organisational or social life (Kaushik

*et al.*, 2016). Therefore, language training and informing about local cultural norms might be a good way to facilitate inclusion (OECD, 2006).

Another perspective on Diversity and Inclusion is ‘psychological’ perspective. It takes into account invisible differences, including extraversion and introversion, which require different managerial approaches (Dagar, 2024).

Diversity and Inclusion practices are important not only from the business side (for example, lower levels of turnover, employee engagement and more) but also from the ethical side. Leuhery *et al.* (2024) state that strong D&I policies and commitment to them strengthen employees’ feeling of belonging.

It is believed that there is similarity attraction (people gravitate toward similar to them individuals) and diversity attraction (diversity is appreciated and exciting) (Khanom and Shee, 2024). It is also mentioned that if managers committed to diversity strategy, it is more likely to have diversity attraction.

Diversity attraction is important in the hospitality business because teamwork is crucial for this type of sector. People with different backgrounds, cultures, and attitudes to work have to respect and accept each other. Ideally, they may learn from each other, which in turn may lead to a better performance.

## 2.2 Employee well-being

Well-being includes dimensions such as subjective well-being, psychological well-being, workplace well-being. Workplace well-being includes physical safety, employee happiness at the workplace, organisational culture and organisational framework (Nafees *et al.*, 2024). It is also mentioned that work-life balance satisfaction affects both personal and workplace well-being.

This research will focus on emotional dimension of well-being at the workplace. It includes several key components such as self-acceptance, building positive relationships with others, maintaining autonomy, and having a clear purpose in life (Kelloway *et al.*, 2022).

The topic of well-being is very important in the hospitality business because it helps provide customers with better service (Khanom and Shee, 2024) and improves organisational performance (Walbeek and Hajal, 2022). Therefore, it is discussed in the research.

Employee well-being includes not only overall job satisfaction but also their relationships with colleagues and managers (Jaiswala *et al.*, 2022). McManus *et al.* (2025) highlight that employees

vary levels of commitment and expectations regarding the cost and benefits in their relationships. When the cost outweighs the benefits, individuals who may feel that they are giving more than receive are likely to end the relationships. Therefore, managers must ensure that employees feel valued and cared for, rather than being treated as mere commodities. The research shows that mental health issues have impact on organisations' operations such as reduced productivity and focus on work, which may lead to absenteeism or high turnover rates (Kelloway *et al.*, 2022).

Mental health at the work place is a range of conditions, rather than being a simple presence or absence of illness. At one end is healthiness, which can be seen in individuals' knowledge about their abilities, coping with normal work stress, productivity, and contribution to the community. Whereas, at the other end is illness, which includes strain, burnout, and more followed by diagnosable psychological disorders (Kelloway *et al.*, 2022).

Another approach to mental well-being at the work place is social sustainability, which represents the ability of society to maintain harmony and progress while ensuring that all individuals can thrive in the present moment and future. It focuses on implementing social systems that promote well-being, equality, and opportunities for everyone regardless their background (Rodrigues-Araneda and Livacic-Rojas, 2025). An organisation can implement this approach by creating inclusive work environment, developing fair procedures, supporting employee well-being, ensuring equal opportunities, and building positive organisational culture. However, Kelloway *et al.* (2022) stated that people still might have fear to seek help when they feel mentally unwell because they afraid of being misunderstood or discriminated against.

The research has shown that there are a few major factors which influence workplace well-being the most such as financial stability (96%), job security (83%), corporate image, including responsible management (69%), and friendly working conditions (66%) (Chomać-Pierzecka *et al.*, 2024).

It is a well-known fact that the hospitality sector is not financially stable, with periods of low activity when employees do not receive enough hours. The sector is also known for high turnover rates, which can lead to a nonchalant attitude from supervisors and managers. Therefore, two key factors influencing employees' well-being are under threat.

Walbeek and Hajal (2022) state that well-being is about people's mindset, which in turn may improve creative thinking and innovation when they feel well.

### 2.3 The influence of diversity and inclusion on employee well-being

The relationship between diversity, inclusion, and employee well-being is complex in the modern workplace environment. On one hand, diversity can improve how people think and solve problems because different perspectives help find better solutions and develop more creative work environment overall. On the other hand, diversity can make people feel emotionally uncomfortable or stressed. For instance, employees might feel anxious about fitting in, worry about being misunderstood, or feel isolated when they are different from their co-workers (Jaiswal *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, this dynamic requires understanding and careful management to create a healthy workplace environment.

Perceived diversity can influence people in several significant ways. When individuals see themselves as different from their colleagues, they often try to assimilate with others, which might lead to acculturative stress. That in turn, can create an identity conflict and impacts their sense of belonging. Moreover, social categorisation can lead to feelings of insignificance and inadequacy, which may negatively affect psychological well-being (Le and Zheng, 2016). Cultural and social dynamics play a crucial role, as different social categories in workplaces can create barriers that affect mental health and emotional stability.

Inclusion practices serve as a vital mediator between diversity and employee well-being. If it is properly implemented, it provides psychological comfort and feelings of adequacy, helping employees feel personal significance when interacting with others (Le and Zheng, 2016). It is important to notice that happiness and well-being perceived differently across personality types and cultures, with some employees finding comfort through high-energy social interactions while others prefer more competitive environment (Jaiswal *et al.*, 2022).

Another factor that may affect employee well-being is organisational politics. How employees see organisational politics can strongly affect how diversity and inclusion efforts influence their well-being. If employees feel there is a lot of politics at work, it can cause pushback and make them feel more excluded. Organisations need transparent systems and fair human resource policies to reduced perceived politics and build open systems that help weigh down social hierarchies embedded in organisational culture (Jaiswal *et al.*, 2022).

As it was mentioned before, the hospitality sector is highly stressful by itself. Therefore, organisational support becomes particularly important in the hospitality context. When employees see strong organisational support, they demonstrate higher levels of engagement and better service quality (McManus *et al.*, 2025). The social support structure, including both co-workers and

supervisors support, plays a fundamental role in maintaining emotional stability and workplace well-being. Cultural values of friendly relationships contribute significantly to overall employee well-being in the sector (McManus *et al.*, 2025).

Creating a supportive environment in the hospitality sector requires specific attention to cultural integration and team dynamics. Organisations must focus on respecting diverse cultural backgrounds while encouraging cross-cultural understanding. This includes developing strong team cultures and ensuring fair treatment across diverse groups. Organisations should emphasise on promoting teamwork where peer-to-peer relationships can flourish and knowledge sharing becomes natural.

The hospitality sector is challenged by diversity, which also shifts demographically. To improve employee well-being, the sector must create support systems, create meaningful career development, and maintain healthy work-life balance. Diversity and inclusion have a profound impact on employees' emotional and mental well-being, making it essential to remain committed, regularly assess their practices, and adapt to changing employees' needs. By doing so, they can cultivate work environment where all employees feel valued and supported, leading to improved service quality and long-term organisational success.

## 2.4 Conclusion

The different perspectives on diversity and inclusion reveal that while these practices have significant potential to enhance employee well-being, their implementation requires careful management and consideration of various factors. The positive outcomes of diversity and inclusion management in creating supportive work environments and improving performance are well-documented, yet the challenges of potential discomfort and stress cannot be ignored. The mediating role of inclusion practices appears crucial in determining whether diversity initiatives will have positive or negative effects on employee well-being.

### *Importance of the research*

The hospitality sector is challenged by diversity, which also shifts demographically. To improve employee well-being, the sector must create supportive systems, create meaningful career development, and maintain healthy work-life balance. As it was mentioned, the hospitality sector is known for high turnover rates and financial instability, which may lead to a nonchalant attitude from supervisors and managers. This creates a particularly challenging environment for

implement ineffective Diversity and Inclusion strategies while supporting immigrant employee well-being.

This research applies a qualitative approach to gain an understanding of how diversity and inclusion practices implemented by line managers affect immigrant employees' well-being and workplace experiences in the hospitality sector. In-depth semi-structured interviews will be conducted with immigrant employees to gather context-rich data about diversity and inclusion implementation strategies, while also exploring their understanding of how these practices impact immigrant employees' sense of belonging, psychological well-being, and workplace integration.

## **2.5 Ethics and Justification**

This type of research must be thoroughly considered from an ethical perspective as it is about employee well-being. Therefore, it is value-laden research as it must be unbiased, with these values ensuring that investigation and analysis of the data are protected, respected and accurately presented. Hopefully this research will be helpful in a practical way not only for companies who has just started implementing diversity and inclusion practices, but also for companies with established practices helping them to gain perspective from employees' side.

## **2.6 Research question and subjective**

### **Main research question:**

How do diversity and inclusion practices can support the well-being of immigrant employees working in the hospitality sector in Ireland?

### **2.6.a Research objectives**

- To explore how line managers' implementation of Diversity and Inclusion strategies affects immigrant employees' sense of belonging and workplace integration in the hospitality sector
- To identify barriers that prevent immigrant employees from fully benefiting from Diversity and Inclusion initiatives in their daily work experiences
- To determine what support mechanisms and resources immigrant employees need most to thrive within Diversity and Inclusion frameworks in hospitality operations

### **2.6.b Sub-questions**

Sub-question 1:

How do immigrant employees in the hospitality sector perceive and experience support through diversity and inclusion initiatives implemented by their line managers?

Sub-question 2:

What specific impacts do diversity and inclusion practices have on immigrant employees' sense of belonging and psychological well-being in the hospitality workplace?

Sub-question 3:

In what ways do Diversity and Inclusion practices support cultural integration and reduce acculturative stress among immigrant employees in the hospitality sector?

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

This research investigates how diversity and inclusion practices can support the well-being of immigrant employees working in the hospitality sector in Ireland. It addresses a gap in research regarding how line managers implement diversity and inclusion strategies in day-to-day work and how employees, particularly immigrant workers, perceive these practices.

The research focuses on three primary objectives, which are exploring how implementation of diversity and inclusion practices influence immigrant employees' sense of belonging and integration at the workplace, identifying barriers that prevent employees from fully benefiting from the practices, and determining what support mechanisms immigrant employees need most to feel comfortable within diversity and inclusion framework. These objectives will be examined through three corresponding sub-questions focusing on immigrant employees' perception of support, the specific impacts on belonging and psychological well-being, and the ways diversity and inclusion practices support harmonisation of cultural differences while reducing psychological strain during acculturation.

#### 3.2 Methodological approach

The research adopts a qualitative methodology grounded in interpretivist philosophy with subjectivism and social constructionism perspectives (Saunders *et al.*, 2023). This philosophical foundation recognises that human behaviour and social phenomena, such as diversity

management's impact on well-being, can be understood through the perspectives on those directly involved. The interpretivist approach is particularly appropriate given that the connection between diversity and inclusion practices and well-being create complex social dynamic.

The study applies an abductive research approach that moves between theory and data, which allows to explore both existing theoretical frameworks and insights from participants experiences. This approach aligns with the research's goal to understand not only what practices exist, but also how they are experienced and interpreted by immigrant employees in real workplace contexts.

Social constructionism is central to this methodology as it recognises that experiences of managers and employees are socially constructed, shaped by their actions, making the nature of relationships between them dynamic. This perspective is essential when examine how immigrant employees experience belonging, as these experiences are constructed through daily interactions with colleagues and management team.

### 3.3 Chosen Approach and Justification

#### 3.3.a. Academic Justification

The qualitative approach is academically justified by the nature of the research questions, which seek to understand subjective experiences, perceptions, and complex social processes surrounding, including diversity and inclusion implementation (Have, 2007). The research by Waisto et al. (2024) showed that similar methodologies have been successfully implemented in related studies. This demonstrates how suitable this approach is for examining diversity and inclusion practices at workplace.

According to the research onion (Saunders *et al.*, 2023) this research adopts interpretivist philosophy, subjectivism with social constructionism view of reality.

The interpretivist philosophy is particularly suites this research because it acknowledges that immigrant employees' experiences of well-being and belonging cannot be measured purely through quantitative metrics. Instead, these experiences are deeply personal, culturally influenced, and require nuanced understanding through participant voices. The literature reveals that perceived diversity might also create identity conflict and influence their sense of belonging, necessitating an approach that can capture these diverse experiences.

Subjectivism focuses on individual perceptions, which may help to understand how employees interpret their well-being through diversity management. Social constructionism recognises that the experiences of managers and employees are socially constructed, shaped by their interactions,

contexts, and perceptions. Therefore, the nature of relationships between managers and employees is rather dynamic. Abduction is chosen as a research approach as it moves between theory and data.

The research addresses theoretical gaps in understanding how diversity and inclusion practices are important not only for business side, but also from ethical side, which requires exploration of both practical outcomes and moral principles in the workplace.

### **3.3.b Practical Justification**

From a practical perspective, the hospitality sector presents unique challenges that require awareness of the context. The sector is characterised by high stress levels and cultural complexity as the sector has plenty of different backgrounds and cultures. As it was mentioned in the literature review, it is very stressful environment because of financial instability, long and unsocial hours, and more. High turnover rates might cause lack of effort from managers side, which can create challenges for implementing D&I practices as well as for supporting employees' well-being.

The qualitative approach can help to have a deeper look at the specific challenges that immigrant workers face daily at the workplace, including what can bring them back a sense of belonging and improve their mental well-being.

### **3.3.c Organisation Profile**

The research will focus on hospitality organisations operation in Ireland, which have established diversity and inclusion practices. Target organisations include restaurants, hotels, and others. Immigrant workers, who will be interviewed, can be in various roles such as waiter, receptionist, kitchen porter, and other positions.

The hospitality sector is particularly relevant because it requires not only effective teamwork, but also involves diverse customers. Selected organisation will be different in sizes and types of hospitality to grasp different approaches to diversity management.

### **3.3.d Data collection**

#### **3.3.d.a Primary Data Collection**

In-depth semi-structured interviews were chosen to gather context-rich data, while also allowing the participants to share their understanding of the concept and the challenges of implementing D&I strategies in day-to-day work. While this type of research relies on subjective judgments, it will help to explore how immigrant employees perceive these practices, including how it affects their experiences. Therefore, exploring their insights may be highly valuable.

Interviews are justified because it allows to analyse complex topics such as how immigrant employees experience psychological well-being, belonging, and cultural integration within diversity and inclusion framework in detail. It is also a flexible approach, which is important because everyone has their unique experiences and adjusted questions can help to cover topics emerged during interviewing.

The question asked vary to go deeper and more individually into the topics of diversity and inclusion, emotional well-being, and sense of belonging. However, some questions asked were the same. For example, ‘could you describe me a day-to-day inclusion practices at work?’ or ‘How do you deal with work-related stress and what support you need?’, and others. Participants were asked if they are familiar with terms diversity and inclusion as not everyone is aware of that, especially because it is not their first language.

### **3.3.b.b Secondary Data Collection**

Secondary data might supplement primary data through exploring available organisational policies and training materials about participation organisations. It will help to understand if there is a gap between the formal policies and actual implementation of it in day-to-day work.

Additionally, secondary sources will include existing research on the topic of D&I practices in Irish hospitality sector, which will provide with broader context.

### **3.3.e Gaining Access**

The contact with participants will be established directly, which will ensure completely volunteer choice without pressure from managers about involvement or refusing to take part in the research.

### **3.3.f Informants and Their Recruitment**

Six individuals were recruited for the interviews. They had to answers recruitment criteria. Firstly, they must be born in another country and currently working in the Irish hospitality sector. Secondly, individuals must be employed for at least six months as they have to be exposed to diversity and inclusion practices for a while. The research will focus on different national origins to ensure varied cultural perspectives.

The selection of participants is justified by the research objectives and the challenges this part of population faces. As it has highlighted in the literature review, immigrant employees overcome barriers connected to their roles as well as tackle difficulties in adaptation to a new environment, language, culture, and others. Peer referrals is used as recruitment strategy.

### **3.3.g Ethical Considerations**

The research requires careful ethical consideration as it explores the topic of well-being. It might involve potentially vulnerable topics for the participants while discussing potentially sensitive information about their workplace experiences. Therefore, the study follows key ethical principles taken from Kvale (2007). Firstly, participants will receive informed consent that they will have to sign to proceed to the interview. The informed consent includes information about the research purpose, procedures, and their rights as participants. The consent is for both participation and audio recording.

It follows confidentiality principle, which reassures that participants' identities are protected, the data is anonymised and stored securely. The organisations' names are hidden as well as it might be a way to reveal participants' identities.

Voluntary participation is emphasised as it is a crucial element of doing interviews. Participants have the right to withdraw at any moment without any consequences as well as not to answer questions they do not want to.

Cultural differences must be considered. If it is necessary, informant consent will be provided in native language of the participant. The research itself must answer to inclusive practices.

As the research is connected to mental well-being, in order to provide psychological safety for the participants, the researcher is obligated to be fair, honest, non-judgemental, empathetic, knowledgeable, familiar with ethics guidelines, understanding, and others.

### **3.3.h Data Analysis**

The study uses **thematic analysis** as the main analytical approach as it is flexible in identifying patterns and themes across interviewees' experiences. This approach aligns with the social constructionist perspective.

The approach had six phases of analysis (Willig and Rogers, 2017):

1. Familiarisation with data through repeated reading of transcripts
2. Coding where the data is identified and sorted into meaningful and relevant themes
3. Theme Development includes categorising related codes into broader patterns
4. Reviewing Themes is important to verify that themes work well in alignment with the research question
5. Defining Themes is for creating suitable names for themes and explaining what each theme means

6. Producing the Report help create an analytical narrative which integrates themes with the data

## **Chapter 4: Thematic Analysis of Immigrant Employee Experiences in Irish Hospitality Sector.**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Based on data from six immigrant employees working in Irish hospitality sector, this thematic analysis shows key parts of their experiences in diversity and inclusion practices, sense of belonging, barriers, and well-being support mechanisms.

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Origin</b>
P1	Waiter	Chile
P2	Bartender, Waiter	France
P3	Waiter	South Africa
P4	Waiter	Mexico
P5	Porter in a hotel	Mexico
P6	Receptionist	Mexico

Identified themes:

1. Workplace Diversity
2. Formal and Informal Inclusion Practices
3. Management Response to Discrimination
4. Sense of Belonging and Authentic Self-Expression
5. Cultural Integration and Adaptation Challenges
6. Emotional Well-being and Mental Health Support
7. Training and Development Needs
8. Support Mechanisms

#### 4.2. Workplace diversity.

Hospitality sector in Ireland demonstrates great diversity across all participants' workplaces. P4 mentioned that their workplace has 'over 32 nationalities', while P5 talks about their hotel having people all around the world 'including people from Asia, Latin America, Europe'. Some participants state that their workplaces diverse not only with nationalities, but also with age, sexual orientation, and cultural backgrounds.

#### 4.3. Formal and Informal Inclusion Practices.

A few interviewees recognised **structured inclusion practices**. P2 noted that their place of work conducts regular surveys assessing if it is 'a good place to work', where diversity and inclusion is the main topic. Organised events connected to Pride were mentioned by P6:

*'They do like try to bring us together, obviously, and do some activities, for example, on The Pride. They did, like an event for everyone, like not just people that are part of the pride community. But it was, I think that is one of the inclusions activities that they have done, just to involve everyone, no matter what their sexual orientation is. It makes me feel like they care for everybody. I think it's. I don't know, I would say that they really try to involve everyone. It doesn't matter about what is it. So sometimes they do activities like that.'* (P6)

Muslim religion is recognised and respected at P4 workplace, as during Ramadan, Muslim people take breaks at any moment they need, not when it is convenient for the management:

*'They're Muslims and during this period of the Ramadan and they're fasting, I think the managers are very open to give them their breaks whenever they have to. Sometimes it's in the busiest times in the evening and they don't really care, they don't force them to take their break whenever they have to, but they listen to them and just send them on break whenever they have to.'* (P4)

**Informal inclusion practices** can be observed through daily interactions. For example, P2 described that managers try to unite team including all the departments, which create a 'safe place' for everyone:

*'I can see it many places in hospitality are really like separate between the staff and the kitchen stuff, back and the front door. And I believe my manager always makes sure we are all in the team with the kitchen, with the front of the house, with the KP (kitchen porter), with the cleaner, it's like you have to make it as a safe place.'* (P2)

P4 mentioned that expressing interest in different cultures and exchanging cultural backgrounds makes them feel included:

*'In my workplace, we all get along very well and I feel like these differences in the nationalities are just very interesting for me. I always want to know more about their hometown and their local food and that makes me want to go to these places and visit and try these food and just to, I don't know, I feel like I know this country, by this person and that makes me, yeah, I feel included.'* (P4)

At P3's workplace they share food from their counties on special days such as Easter, which brings them sense of belonging:

*'We had a few moments at work where I felt included. For example, when there is Christmas or any festivals like Easter, so usually we make like get together so everyone brings food from their own country and then share it to everyone in the department. So, yeah, that's really something that makes us feel included.'* (P3)

#### 4.4 Management Response to Discrimination

Participants reported different ways of dealing with discriminatory incidents at work. The participants mentioned that if this type of incident occurs, it is from customers, not colleagues or managers. P4 talks about recent situation where their colleague faced inappropriate comments from customers about her nationality. The management response was asking these customers to leave the restaurant.

*'Recently, we had an issue with one of my colleagues. She's Mexican as well and she had a problem with American customer. They were very difficult and they were a little bit racist against her. They were making very racist comments and racist jokes and she started crying and she didn't want to do her section anymore. The manager to cover her section and eventually asked the customers to leave the restaurant because they don't allow racist practises in the restaurant. And I feel like that was a very nice approach and that makes us feel included and more comfortable just being ourselves.'* (P4)

However, P6 noted less responsive management practices on these incidents, saying that 'let it go and pretend that nothing happens'.

*'Sometimes you can see that some people, even though they don't notice, sometimes you can feel people that they there's a little bit of racism towards you or to your colleagues and I think that is something that obviously affects you emotionally. Management just let it go and pretend that nothing happens, that I don't think that's good. But at the same time, I can understand a little bit that because they don't want to upset the customers, but I don't think not upsetting the customer is worth enough to make other people feel bad about their nationality.'* (P6)

P3 talked about favouritism from managers side to employees their nationality:

*'I'd say we have three supervisors so two of them are from Romania. We have few stuff from Romania and few from different countries. The ones that are from Romania get a different treatment compared to us from different countries. It's not really like we are all treated the same and fairly. They have an edge over us in terms of roasters, in terms of job and they have kind of an ad advantage because of the supervisors off from their own country.'* (P3)

#### 4.5 Sense of Belonging and Authentic Self-Expression

Several participants noted a strong sense of belonging in their workplace. P2 felt “equal with everyone,” regardless of colleagues’ backgrounds, and was comfortable being fully themselves, even in interactions with senior management:

*'I'm not ashamed to be myself, to dance at work, to laugh with my, could be the big boss. I don't mind to talk to him like I talk to my colleagues. It's, yeah, I'm truly myself. I'm even more like one hundred and 50 percent myself.'* (P2)

P5 described feeling “100% comfortable” at work due to the trust and support shown by their managers:

*'I mean sometimes I'm just being myself and I do whatever I want to. As long as I do the job. As manager told me once, he's Irish, but part of his life, he grew up in Spain. And he speaks Spanish as well as me. I remember at one time he told me 'I don't care what you're doing, as long as you do your job, that's fine for me you know?'* (P5)

P4 shared that they felt valued when serving Mexican visitors, as it allowed them to connect culturally, boosting both their own experience and customers and colleagues:

*'There's a time of the year in the restaurant where loads of Mexican people come over Ireland to visit their families because I think it's like a graduation from college. The restaurant is full of Mexicans. And in that time of the year, I felt very important for speaking Spanish and being Mexican so I could help my colleagues with the Mexican guest or Spanish speaker guests. I felt more important because I could help the guys translating and I could offer the customers a better experience in hospitality.'* (P4)

For some, belonging was less about the workplace environment and more about personal acts of service for others. P1, for example, felt more connected through helping others than through the workplace itself:

*'It's pretty weird at the moment because I do feel that my future in the current industry is not on this particular one. The sense of belonging, for me, makes more about the things that I do for people, not on the workplace. For example, if I serve people, if I help people, if I do my best service with people, I'm feeling the belonging on what I do. But not necessarily in a restaurant. It could be in a hotel, could be in a company, it could be in another place, so my sense of belonging belongs to what I do, not where I am.'* (P1)

P3 experienced discomfort when they witness bias from supervisors towards certain staff.

P5 sometimes felt excluded when working alone for extended periods or when their contributions were undervalued by other departments:

*'Well, sometimes I don't feel included at all because I said before, most of the time I'm working alone in the second floor, and I can be speaking with no one for like, three or four hours and just do with my job, you know. And whenever I go down to reception, a restaurant, everyone believes that I'm doing nothing, and sometimes it might be true, or sometimes it's like, I'm working, I didn't have time there. And I just feel excluded the flight everyone believed that I do nothing when I'm working, and I'm alone, and then everyone has their own group in the bar, reception and hotel.'* (P5)

#### 4.6 Cultural Integration and Adaptation Challenges

Language was a challenge for participants. P4 initially struggled with the “language barrier” and learning job-specific vocabulary. However, they find cultural integration exciting:

*'You have to look after people from all over the world. I think that's challenging as well, trying to see that, for example, American customers are more demanding than Irish customers or Italian customers are this way, and French customers are different as well. I think that has been challenging for me, but exciting as well.'* (P4)

It was not so exiting for P2 as they had a tough first month due to both language and cultural adjustment difficulties:

*'The first challenging was to understand and to be understood also. I'm not gonna lie in my first month's was a disaster. It's really challenging to move to another country, another way to work. Even though it's the same job, serving people and being a bartender is the same job everywhere. But of course, it changes about the countries, about all people, the culture. It's really challenging.'* (P2)

Although P6 had strong English skills, they were shy about speaking in another language in the beginning.

Adapting to cultural differences was another challenge. P6 experienced culture shock around greetings, explaining that in Mexico greetings are common even with strangers, whereas in their workplace they were not always greeted by their co-workers:

*'I was too shy to be like I'm in Mexico, for example. For example, in Mexico, it doesn't matter where you are or if you don't know the person. You always say, good morning, good afternoon, good evening. You say always hi, you know? But here is like you arrived to work and nobody says anything to you unless you say it and sometimes, they don't even reply to you. So that put me off a little bit at the beginning, but then I understood that obviously with all the multicultural people at work and different, you know, customs. It's normal not to feel like that. But yeah, at the beginning was a shock for me.'* (P6)

P1 felt that their “emotional way of dealing with problems” was the least understood and supported part of their identity at work.

#### 4.7 Emotional Well-being and Mental Health Support

The emotional demands of hospitality work were significant. P1 described their job as “demanding, stressful”, often requiring them to hide negative emotions and appear cheerful:

*'Sometimes when I'm stressed or just sad or just angry, I just have to pretend on work that I'm happy all the time because obviously I don't want to give that energy to people that doesn't have anything to do with my problems. So obviously I had to dominate that emotions and just feel chill. But outside of the front of the house, I don't have a problem to talk to my co-workers or my supervisor even. You know, I'm not having a good day. But most of the time I am happy what I'm doing. So, it will be an overall situation. Yeah, I'm happy with it.'* (P1)

The interviewee's answer to what kind of support they would like to receive in this kind of situation:

*'I would love to get, okay, it's not a problem. We're going to not ask you about this anymore. We're going to give you the time and space that you are requesting. But the most common answer and the ones that I get in my job, it's to try to deal with it, not try to hide it, but try to work on it. Just leave it outside of the door and go back to work. That's what I always hear, which is really a professional, I always say, way in quotes, but it's not that human and I'm really emotional person,*

*so I would love more human response. I feel like a robot. I feel like someone that has to be 100% unemotional and that's not me. ' (P1)*

This answer also can be linked to authentic self-expression.

While P5 experience another management approach:

*'And I just tell my manager the situation, and he told me 'look, look, you just go home, tomorrow I'm gonna move the roster, so tomorrow you're gonna be off, and the next day is gonna be off as well. And then if you want to take one extra day, just let me know, as a holiday, because I know, I understand that it's a very hard situation for you. ' (P5)*

Some support systems exist but underused. P4 and P6 are aware about their workplaces well-being websites but they lack the knowledge how to access it. Therefore, it was never used by them:

*'They do say there is a well-being website that we can access, but nobody has told me how to properly use it. If we have a personal problem, I think we can talk to the manager and just tell them that we're not having a great day and they will understand and they won't be as rough as they would be in a regular day and they will understand if I make a mistake. I feel listened as well there. ' (P4)*

P2 received personal support from managers and colleagues during their adaptation period as they felt that management team was approachable:

*'They didn't leave me by myself, struggling. So, yeah, they were great. I felt supported but not by everyone because it makes sense. You're new staff, so you're not going to have like 20 managers helping you. But I got like really help for my bar manager, for my supervisor and a couple of waitresses. ' (P2)*

#### 4.8 Training and Development Needs

Several participants talked about areas for improvement in initial training. P3's opinion on how to train people better in the beginning included the need for more comprehensive training, particularly for immigrant workers unfamiliar with the role, management and customer expectations. They would like a longer training and more thorough approach:

*'I think they could be helpful by providing trainings, so they should provide some trainings for a longer amount of time compared to just a day of training. Sometimes it's just half day of training. Or if you have previous experiences, they just put you to work straight away. I think they can do better about that, providing trainings, especially if you are from a different country. Yeah, so you'd*

*like a little more explanation and about the role itself. And maybe also interactions with customers or like differences in Ireland.*’ (P3)

P6 and P2 would benefit from clearer explanations of payslips, Irish workplace norms, tax systems, and employment procedures. As it was the hardest part to understand by themselves:

*‘Everybody should have at their first day or when they signed the contract is just to explain to them, obviously, about the payslip and the norms here in Ireland, because sometimes we don’t know any of that. We don’t know what taxes are we paying or how does the payslip works.’* (P6)

P4 suggested specific training on service standards and cultural differences, such as variations in steak preparation between Ireland and America. It was also advised to avoid making assumptions based on European norms because a lot of immigrant workers have never come across it:

*‘Don’t assume that, you know, things just because they’re used to like European employees or European customers, like, I wouldn’t assume anyone would know how the temperatures of the stakes are different from in Ireland that in America, just don’t assume and do trainings about everything as well. Don’t assume that, in all the countries there’s the same kind of service and standards just train your people, train based on your standards and yeah, just listen to the people what they have to say and ask questions as well.’* (P4)

#### 4.9 Support Mechanisms

Some of participants acknowledge the importance of practical assistance. P4 suggested support with the visa process, including training on applications and PPS numbers. Providing with advice on how to find accommodation would be extremely beneficial for new arrivals:

*‘I think if they could have like a proper training or how to apply for visas and how to start their revenue process and the PPS number, like I think that would be very helpful for new people coming to Ireland because you feel very lost at the beginning and no one is trying to help you. And as well in the restaurant I work, they provided me the letter to be able to have my PPS number and I think that is a very good example and that was a huge help for new people coming to Ireland. More companies should do and help you with the letter.’* (P4)

As speaking on another language is an obstacle for most of immigrants, P2 recommended to have a ‘tutor’ who speaks the same language. In this case. It will be easier to understand the job processes and requirements:

*'Maybe someone speaking the same language in the place and telling is going to be your tutor for the next few months. If you need a help, this person's gonna be there for you. If you need help from us, if you need any paper, if you need any I don't know, medical advice, accommodation advice, even though for revenue, making like a paper to make your PPS number, we're going to help you. And as well maybe I don't know, like, maybe something about the language, like, listen, this guy is speaking the same language as you. Why you don't try to make like some English classes with him and translate.'* (P2)

Interviewees have different experience in recognition and career development. P3 felt immigrant workers often did not receive adequate recognition for their efforts and called for greater acknowledgment as they work hard and 'contribute to taxation':

As for P2, they are excited for their upcoming promotion from a waiter to supervisor, viewing it as a sign of professional growth:

*'Firstly, I'm feeling really proud of myself. I did that by myself. I came to this restaurant three years ago. Start as a bartender and then moved as a waitress. And now, after a year on the floor, they offer me the job, so I'm feeling incredibly proud to be a part of the management team. I couldn't realise when they told me. And the staff is amazing, the management is amazing. I just can't wait to learn from them. And even like from the waitress, like because like we keep saying when you move as a supervisor and as a could be a director, you are nothing without the staff. You are really nothing. I can't wait to learn from both sides.'* (P2)

Additionally, participants suggested supportive mechanisms from management side. P1 encourages managers to listen to employees, offer counselling, and promoting open communication:

P4 has a similar idea to P1, stressing the importance of prioritising dialogue and actively seeking employees' feedback:

*'Counselling and trying to hear them once in a while, not trying to be so serious about our conversation, don't have to ask five minutes of your time to talk about random things. Just let them talk and if you're a manager, you just have to hear that's the only thing yet a manager should do well, not talk, hear. But what I meant of not taking too seriously, which means I can you can talk to me any time, whenever you want. You don't have to go to my office, have a sit, have a cup of tea, five minutes over my time, just to tell them how I am. Could be a random conversation in the*

*work, could be a random conversation anywhere where the trust relationship build up with the time being just natural with everyone. ' (P1)*

P6 values simple acts of appreciation, such as “thank you,” as well as regular check-ins, and offers of help, which they do not get very often:

*'I think support from them when we are really busy, that would be good. And also just just saying thank you, you know, like sometimes even though it's not something like, I mean, like it's not an award or money or whatever, but sometimes you just being thankful with people can change the day, you know, like, yeah, it was a bad day, but thank you for being here. Thank you for your effort during the day and all this stuff we went through, but we did it together and we were a good team. I don't know, just, yeah, like you said, like words of of just compliments, just compliments, yeah. '* (P6)

## **5. Discussion of The Findings**

### **5.1. Diversity Without Inclusion**

All participants mentioned that their workplaces are highly diverse. However, not all participants mentioned inclusion practices. For instance, P3's situation when they do not get the same treatment as their peers who are the same nationality as the supervisors. That shows that diversity without inclusion can make inequality even worse.

### **5.2. Language as an Inclusion Barrier**

Language proficiency affects not only practical work performance, but also psychological well-being. Firstly, participants struggled with work-related vocabulary. Secondly, if a person feels shy to speak in another language, it may lead to isolation, including not being able to express yourself authentically and ask for help like in P6's story.

### **5.3. Management Practices**

The research shows that immigrant employees face with a vast range of management approaches. Two participants (P2 and P4) have supportive management at their workplaces. It is noted that it positively influences on employees' well-being. P2 feels like a human-being when management recognises that everyone can make mistakes, while P4 feels protected when eye-witness situation with inappropriate comments towards their colleague and management respond, asking the customers to leave. Therefore, supportive approach nurturing employees' sense of belonging and well-being.

P6 talked about inconsistent managerial practices. At their workplace, everything ‘depends on the manager and the situation’, with tendency to ignore difficult situations to avoid conflict. It can hinder inclusion efforts as inclusion practices vary from manager to manager.

P1 perceive management practices as focused on financial gain rather than employees, mentioning that sometimes they feel like a robot. Therefore, this approach can harm immigrant employees’ well-being.

#### **5.4. Identity and Authenticity**

The findings show that interviewees choose to express themselves and their culture to different extent. Some of them feel fully themselves, while being accepted at their workplace. Some adjust their behaviour to local cultural norms such as greeting co-workers with just ‘hi’, whereas in their country they would hug. One participant brought his difference in their way of expressing emotions, saying that his strong feelings are usually encouraged to be hidden. That reflects acculturative stress described in the literature review.

Additionally, as it was mentioned in the literature review, diverse workforce can bring new perspectives and help find new ways of completing tasks. This idea was supported by participants as one of them gave an example of helping customers and co-workers communicating with customers from their country, which helps deliver better service. Another individual mentioned that diversity must be used as a tool.

Overall, it is suggested that just tolerance is not enough to implement genuine inclusion. It requires deliberate efforts to understand and accommodate diverse cultural and individual norms.

#### **5.5. Training and Development Gaps**

The data suggest that current training approaches are often inadequate and culturally insensitive. Because sometimes it is assumed that immigrant employees are familiar with local norms, customers’ expectations, taxes, and more.

#### **5.6. Employee Well-Being**

Well-being was partially defined as self-acceptance, positive relationships, and autonomy in the literature review. Therefore, one of participant’s experience at their workplace is underwhelming because they mentioned that they have to suppress their authentic emotions turning into a ‘robot’. That threatens to authenticity and autonomy.

Having said that, positive well-being outcomes were mentioned by other participants. The workplaces, which have been successfully implementing inclusion, have immigrant employees happy to come to work as they have friends there. This demonstrates that diversity and inclusion implementation can improve employee well-being.

Overall, the studies suggest that well-being depends on employees feeling valued for their authentic selves rather than pressured to follow only dominant cultural norms. This aligns with the literature view that inclusion is the key factor defining whether diversity benefits or threatens well-being.

### **5.7 Implications for Theory and Practice**

Theoretical implication is that existing diversity and inclusion practices should be extended beyond tolerance, including active cultural competence and emotional support. Most of employees requested a conversation or words of appreciation as a way of supporting them. It is one of the examples of what line-managers can take from this research and implement in practice.

Some participants mentioned guidance with tax, payslip, cultural differences, which is relevant for the Human Resources department. The existing policies and training programmes might be revised and adjusted.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The research was carried out to explore how diversity and inclusion practices support immigrant employees' well-being through in-depth qualitative analysis. Valuable insights about complex relation between workplace diversity, formal and informal inclusion practices, and employee well-being were discussed throughout the study.

### **7.2 Limitations and Future Research**

The research has its limitations. While the study provides in-depth insights into immigrant employees experiences, it is only six participants, which is appropriate for qualitative research. Another aspect is that the perspective is only from employees' side. Managers can bring another view on the topic such as barriers faced while implementing diversity and inclusion practices. Therefore, it could be a topic for further research.

Additionally, a few of participants mentioned that friendships that they have at work, makes them feel happy and gives them excitement to come to work. How creating friendships at work may influence on employees' well-being or diversity and inclusion practices can encourage to form strong connections between employees might be fascinating topics to research.

### 7.3 Conclusion

The study showed that implementation diversity and inclusion practices is a complex process with its benefits and challenges. The findings are useful because diversity in Ireland continue growing. Therefore, the topic might become even more accurate.

Additionally, the research question and its objectives were answered.

The research encourages genuine inclusion with moral imperative as poor implementation might cause harm to vulnerable populations. The study also inspire to work towards future where all employees, native and immigrant, can be fully authentic at work, contribute their unique perspectives, and develop together.

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