


Chapter 12

Managing Diversity in Organization: A Universal Approach on Equality, Equity, and Inclusion

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines how effective diversity management can guide organizations through a unified framework of equality, equity, and inclusion (EEI). This chapter traces how diversity programs have moved beyond mere legal compliance to become broad, strategic systems that recognize all kinds of differences—primary and secondary, cognitive and experiential dimensions. It examines the roadblocks, such as unconscious bias, resistance to change, and rigid policies, offering research-grounded tactics to overcome hurdles. The chapter further stresses the need for sound metrics so that progress on EEI can be tracked and improvements pursued without pause. When EEI values are woven into culture, leadership behavior, and everyday routines, firms not only tap the full talent of their staff but also create deeper feelings of belonging and work toward fairer societies. These insights provide concrete pointers for executives, human resources teams, and policymakers with the intention to make diversity management a lasting source of strength in twenty-first-century organizations.

INTRODUCTION

The globalization of business activities is faster than ever and organizations that wish to stay ahead of their competitors must think of workplace diversity as a strategic issue rather than a compliance issue (Köllen, 2021). The interplay of global trade, emerging technologies, and changing demographics have made the standard workplace a patchwork of different languages, traditions, and bios. That diversity is a double-edged sword—companies have the opportunity to tap new ideas, and reach new markets, and identify unrecognized skills. However, it also requires corporations to tackle systemic inequities that result in the marginalization of certain actors (Post

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et al., 2021; Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023). Commentators suggest that it is necessary for corporations to develop embedded operational cultures that uplift the entire ecosystem so that it enhances the level of innovation while moving the ecosystem closer to authentic social equity (Feitosa et al., 2022; Ferraro et al., 2023).

The meaningful movement of workplace diversity from theory to practice is required from many, and sometimes of a similar, sources. However, the recruiting marketplace has become a kaleidoscope of cultures, and firms that aim to recognise talent, retain, and motivate people with very different background and skill sets (Philip et al. 2024). At the same time, customers and business partners are signaling that organizations should reflect the diversity present in their own communities; and make inclusion as a necessity (Ferraro et al., 2023). Social movements, supported by a public that no longer overlooks persistent inequalities, are increasing the urgency for accountability which compel companies to eliminate discriminatory practices or risk public exposure (Tao, 2024). It has become evident that effective diversity policy is no longer optional but essential for organizational sustainability and success.

Managing diversity now stretches well beyond the familiar markers of race, gender, and age (Kirton & Greene, 2021). Scholars and practitioners alike have begun to fold in less visible traits, ranging from cultural heritage and sexual orientation to disability status, religion, socioeconomic background, education profile, and even preferred modes of thinking. These dimensions may bring about complexities that lead to intersectional identities (Adeyeba et al., 2025). When organizations learn to fully embrace this spectrum, they create environments where people feel psychologically safe to voice and socioeconomically safe to create (int). This multiplicity of perspectives ensures that the elaboration of ideas and innovations is not the monopoly of one voice.

This chapter addresses the paradox of managing diversity in organizations with a single construct approach to equality, equity, and inclusion which is the EEI triad. In this case, these three constructs inform the paradox of how organizations embrace fairness and representation to parity. Equality is the sameness of the distribution of opportunities, resources, and other benefits without any form of discrimination (Dawkins, 2024). Equity enters this scenario by leveling the playing field. In other words, equity is primarily - what is the combination of support that will equalize the degree of advantage each individual has (Hubbard, 2024). Inclusion directs the leaders to create spaces and environments where multiple different voices are not only able to speak but are invited to contribute to the discourse and decision-making processes that truly matter (Seijts & Milani, 2022).

Upon adopting the universal equity, equality, and inclusion model, many organizations realize that what started out as simple box-ticking compliance activities transforms into something much greater. It becomes a pathway for the organization to achieve increased innovation, employee engagement, and enhanced overall performance (Özbilgin & Erbil, 2023). This model encourages leaders to stop ignoring and treating diversity initiatives as something extra. Instead, they integrate EEI principles into the organization's mission, employee recruitment, daily management activities, and the culture of organizational conversations (Umeh et al., 2023). The result is a model where a multiplicity of voices is the primary focus, thus, becoming a driving force for better quality decisions, greater organizational innovation, and improved market responsiveness.

Examples of such organizational barriers include the unconscious biases that shape who is invited to participate, who is invited to ideate, who is promoted, and how certain contributions are recognized and/or ignored (Onyeador et al., 2021). Sometimes, internal organizational resistance emanates from employees who are victims of workplace bias and tend to respond to

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