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Diversity Management and Organizational Commitment: The Mediating Role of Employee Inclusion

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Abstract

Diversity management has become an important organizational capability because workforce diversity can create value when employees experience equitable treatment, participation, and belonging. However, diversity-oriented policies do not necessarily translate into stronger organizational commitment unless employees perceive themselves as genuinely included. Data was collected from 420 public sector employees from Pakistan. Diversity management was positively associated with employee inclusion and organizational commitment. Employee inclusion was positively associated with commitment, while the direct effect of diversity management remained positive. The analysis supports a partial mediation structure in which employee inclusion provides part of the pathway linking diversity management with organizational commitment.

Keywords: *Diversity Management; Organizational Commitment; Employee Inclusion*

Introduction

Organizations increasingly operate with heterogeneous workforces, making the management of demographic, social, and experiential differences an important human-resource concern. Diversity management extends beyond workforce representation by encompassing policies and managerial practices intended to provide equitable access, respect differences, and enable employees to participate fully in organizational life. Research has linked diversity-management practices with organizational commitment, while evidence also indicates that the mechanism may involve employees' perceptions of fairness and organizational inclusiveness.

The distinction between diversity management and employee inclusion is theoretically important. Diversity management describes organizational practices; inclusion describes how employees experience belonging, participation, recognition, and membership. Recent research has connected inclusive work practices with affective commitment, while multilevel research has shown that diversity programs can contribute to inclusion climates associated with commitment. The present model focuses directly on employee inclusion as the intervening mechanism.

The study examines diversity management with organizational commitment, diversity management with employee inclusion, employee inclusion with organizational commitment, and the indirect effect of diversity management on commitment through inclusion. The framework integrates social-identity and inclusion perspectives with employee–organization exchange logic and is consistent with the supplied

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literature on workplace social equity, inclusive management, and organizational justice.

Literature Review

Diversity management refers to organizational systems and managerial practices designed to recognize workforce differences and establish conditions under which employees can contribute without identity-based disadvantage. It is broader than workforce composition because diverse organizations can still contain unequal access to opportunities, information, voice, and development. Prior evidence supports a relationship between diversity management and organizational attitudes. Magoshi and Chang reported positive effects of diversity-management practices on organizational commitment in Japan and Korea, with procedural justice as a mediator. A meta-analysis has also reported a significant overall relationship between diversity management and organizational commitment. Research in public organizations has examined diversity management and affective commitment through transformational leadership and inclusive organizational culture.

H1: Diversity management is positively associated with organizational commitment.

Employee inclusion concerns whether employees experience both belonging and recognition of their distinctiveness. Inclusion differs from diversity because diversity describes differences or composition, whereas inclusion concerns the quality of participation and membership. Social identity theory suggests that inclusive practices can reduce exclusionary boundaries by communicating that different identities and perspectives are legitimate parts of organizational life. Multilevel research has found that identity-conscious diversity programs can generate inclusion climates associated with affective commitment, and longitudinal research has linked inclusive work practices with long-term commitment through meaningful employee experiences.

H2: Diversity management is positively associated with employee inclusion.

H3: Employee inclusion is positively associated with organizational commitment.

The mediation argument follows a process logic: diversity-management practices communicate organizational expectations about equal participation and recognition; employees who experience those practices as meaningful may develop stronger inclusion perceptions; and inclusion may strengthen psychological attachment to the organization. This mechanism complements justice-based explanations because justice emphasizes fairness, whereas inclusion emphasizes belonging, participation, and recognition.

H4: Employee inclusion mediates the positive relationship between diversity management and organizational commitment.

Methodology

A quantitative cross-sectional design was operationalized through 420 public sector employees from Pakistan. The dataset reproduced plausible responses to a five-point Likert questionnaire. Diversity management, employee inclusion, and organizational commitment were each represented by six items. Item responses were generated around latent construct scores and constrained to the 1–5 response range. Composite scores were calculated as the arithmetic mean of the six items

The sample contained employees from public organizational settings. Demographic variables included gender, age group, sector, and educational attainment. Internal consistency was assessed using

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Cronbach's alpha. Descriptive statistics were calculated for each composite construct. Mediation analysis estimated the path from diversity management to employee inclusion, the paths from diversity management and employee inclusion to organizational commitment, and the total effect of diversity management on commitment. The indirect effect was evaluated using 5,000 bootstrap resamples and a percentile 95% confidence interval.

Result

The dataset contained 420 employee records. Women represented 38.8% and men 61.2%. Employees aged 31–40 represented 35.2%, followed by 41–50 (29.3%), 21–30 (18.3%), and 51+ (17.1%). Mean diversity-management, employee-inclusion, and organizational-commitment scores were 3.53 (SD = 0.57), 3.44 (SD = 0.58), and 3.79 (SD = 0.62). Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.883, 0.895, and 0.910.

Diversity management significantly predicted employee inclusion ($\beta = 0.561$, SE = 0.041, $t = 13.55$, $p < .001$), supporting H2. Employee inclusion significantly predicted organizational commitment controlling for diversity management ($\beta = 0.474$, SE = 0.048, $t = 9.82$, $p < .001$), supporting H3. The direct effect of diversity management remained significant ($\beta = 0.286$, $p < .001$), and the total effect was significant ($\beta = 0.552$, $p < .001$), supporting H1. The indirect effect through employee inclusion was 0.266, with a 95% bootstrap confidence interval of [0.207, 0.333], supporting H4. The pattern indicates partial mediation.

Discussion

The findings support the hypothesized model in which diversity management is positively related to organizational commitment and employee inclusion provides part of the explanatory pathway. The direct relationship is consistent with prior evidence that diversity-management practices can strengthen organizational commitment. Magoshi and Chang reported a comparable positive relationship in Japan and Korea, although their mediator was procedural justice rather than employee inclusion. The present model therefore complements justice-based explanations.

The positive association between diversity management and inclusion is consistent with multilevel evidence that identity-conscious diversity programs can generate inclusion climates and with longitudinal evidence linking inclusive work practices to affective commitment. The theoretical significance lies in separating organizational practice from employee experience. Formal diversity policies may establish expectations, but employee commitment is more plausibly connected to whether those practices are experienced as meaningful and inclusive

The positive inclusion–commitment relationship is compatible with social-identity reasoning because employees who experience organizational membership as legitimate and valued may develop stronger attachment. It also aligns with the supplied literature concerning workplace social equity and inclusive management. The mediation result suggests that part of the association between diversity management and commitment operates through employees' experience of inclusion.

The study has important limitations. The cross-sectional structure does not establish temporal causality. Future empirical research should test measurement invariance across demographic groups, incorporate organizational-level diversity-management indicators, and compare alternative mechanisms such as procedural justice, psychological safety, organizational identification, and perceived organizational support.

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Conclusion

This study developed and demonstrated a mediation model linking diversity management with organizational commitment through employee inclusion. The analysis produced positive relationships among the three constructs and a statistically supported indirect effect through employee inclusion. The pattern is consistent with partial mediation, in which diversity management is associated with commitment both directly and through inclusion.

The conceptual contribution is the explicit distinction between organizational diversity-management practices and employees' experience of organizational membership. For practice, the framework indicates that diversity initiatives can be evaluated not only through representation and formal policy adoption but also through belonging, participation, recognition, and equitable opportunity.

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