

IMPACT OF DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND EQUITY (DIE) FRAMEWORK ON WORKPLACE CULTURE AND SUSTAINABLE PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IN PAKISTAN

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15344324>

Keywords

Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, Workplace Culture and Sustainable Performance, Special education institutions

Article History

Received on 11 March 2025

Accepted on 11 April 2025

Published on 29 April 2025

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Abstract

This study determines the impact of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity (DIE) frameworks on Workplace Culture and Sustainable Performance within the Special Education Department in Pakistan. Using a quantitative research approach, data was collected from 230 employees including administration, teaching, and supporting staff, using a five-point Likert scale. Analysis revealed that diversity, inclusion, and equity positively influence sustainable performance. Age and experience diversity significantly affect organizational performance. This research offers new insights into the link between DIE frameworks and workplace culture, aiding organizations in leveraging a diverse workforce for innovation and competitiveness. Diversity, inclusion, and equity play vital role in sustainable performance through the mediation of Workplace Culture specifically in Special education sector of Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Workplace diversity, inclusion and equity are becoming increasingly important nowadays. Impact of diversity, inclusion and equity initiatives has emerged as a focal point for organizations seeking to foster a workplace culture and sustainability performance that not only embraces differences but also maximizes performance outcomes. The discourse on diversity, encompassing factors such as race, gender, age, and ethnicity, etc., inclusion and equity is no longer confined to a moral imperative rather it is increasingly recognized as a strategic business imperative with profound implications for

organizational workplace culture and for sustainability of performance.

Diversity, encompassing factors such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, and more, is no longer merely a demographic composition within the workplace. It is a source of varied perspectives, experiences, and talents that, when effectively harnessed, can fuel innovation, creativity, and problem-solving capacities (Cox, 1994). In considering with diversity, inclusion emerges as the active and intentional effort to create an environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds feel valued, respected, and have

equitable access to opportunities for professional and personal growth (Nishii & Mayer, 2009).

The nexus between a diverse and inclusive workforce, workplace culture, and organizational performance is a subject of growing importance and academic inquiry. Research indicates that organizations embracing diversity and inclusion tend to foster a workplace culture characterized by open communication, mutual respect, and a strong sense of belonging (Cox & Blake, 1991). Moreover, the positive impact extends to organizational performance, with studies suggesting that inclusive practices contribute to heightened employee engagement, increased productivity, and enhanced innovation (Herring, Nishii & Mayer, 2009).

Equity puts emphasis on the fair distribution of resources and opportunities, ensuring that every individual has access to the same advantages (Oswal, et. al., 2023). In an organization, general norms are applied focusing facts, circumstances, unique clause and avoiding extremes. The inflexible fairness and objectivity given to employees regardless of their race, age, creed, nationality, religion and ethnic of an organization (Owa, 2022). Workplace equity starts by closing racial and gender gaps in employee pay and advancement (Miles, 2022). Equity often involves issues related to fairness in pay, opportunities for advancement and fairness in daily work experiences (Pendell, 2022). Equity also promotes equality and impartiality among people at the level of interpersonal relationships (Suchanek, 2011).

As businesses navigates the complexities of a rapidly changing global environment, the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at cultivating a diverse and inclusive workforce becomes a critical consideration. This study aims to contribute to the burgeoning discourse on the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion by delving into the multifaceted relationships between workforce diversity, inclusion practices, workplace culture, and organizational performance. By scrutinizing existing literature, evaluating organizational practices, and leveraging empirical evidence, the researcher seeks to uncover nuanced insights that can guide organizations in optimizing their strategies for a diverse and inclusive workforce. The study will provide knowledge how a diversity, inclusion and equity framework contribute for shaping a positive workplace culture in organizations.

This study will help organizations to utilize the full potential of a diverse workforce, leading to the development of new ideas and solutions. This study will shed light on how organizations will promote equality and fairness among their employees. It will provide guidelines to organizations to make more sustainable business decisions, considering social, environmental, and economic factors that will prioritize diversity and inclusion. Organizations that embrace diversity and inclusion are better positioned to understand and serve diverse markets. Examining the impact of a diversity, inclusion and equity framework on workplace culture can contribute to insights on how organizations can enhance their global competitiveness.

Organizations that are committed to diversity, inclusion, and equity often attract a more diverse pool of talent. Furthermore, a positive workplace culture contributes to employee retention. This study will expose how these factors play a role in talent acquisition and retention strategies. The study can explore how commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity principles aligns with legal and ethical standards. It will provide insights into the impact of these frameworks on justifying risks associated with discrimination and inequality in the workplace.

Purpose, of this survey based quantitative study was to determine the impact of diversity, inclusion, and equity (DIE) framework on workplace culture and sustainable performance. This study will help to develop diverse, inclusive and equitable workplace environment to improve sustainable performance for their organizations in Pakistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dike (2013) carried out a research to investigate how businesses handle workforce diversity and the effects it has on the business's survival. The study also looked at how businesses handle the difficulties that arise when they have employees from different cultural backgrounds. The study's findings demonstrate that, in certain businesses, workplace diversity is beneficial. However, a company's low production may result from inadequate mentorship and supervision. As the globe continues to progress, strategies for managing a diverse workforce must be continuously improved.

Durrah (2013) carried out a study at Walden University to investigate how hospital executives create and execute successful diversity and inclusion policies to boost corporate performance. Leaders from hospitals in the Southeast United States who had effectively used diversity and inclusion policies to boost performance made up the study's target group. Four hospital executives made up the sample for this qualitative investigation. The location and demographic of hospital leaders in the southeast United States served as the study's delimitations. This study came to the conclusion that people with different backgrounds may provide new and creative ideas to the workforce of their company.

In order to provide empirical insights on the workforce disparity, which has been a challenge for public universities as they need to benefit from talented individuals with diverse backgrounds, Bana conducted another study in 2016 to examine the impact of organizational culture on workplace diversity in Kenyan public universities from the viewpoint of the senior administrators or managers of the administrative departments and the schools/faculties. This study employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey-based research approach. The 22 Kenyan public universities with charters served as the study's population, while 245 managers made up the sample size. Purposive sampling was the method of sampling that was employed. Regression analysis and correlation were employed to ascertain the connections between the independent and dependent variables. The study came to the conclusion that workplace diversity was greatly impacted by company culture.

In 2022, a research based on a review of the literature was carried out in the hotel industry to emphasize how diversity management affects organizational performance. This study's approach was developed after a thorough literature evaluation. Numerous scientific online databases, including Web Knowledge, Emerald, Saga, ProQuest, and Science Direct, were assessed as part of the literature review process. A range of published and unpublished publications, reports, and other sources were used to collect secondary data. We looked at data from both government and non-government organizations. Organizational performance, learning organizations, and diversity management strategies

are the three main search terms used to look for these online resources. According to the study's results, diversity management would surely improve organizational performance and benefit the business if it is carried out properly and on the right basis, taking into consideration all of the concerns and challenges that it brings up.

Using both primary and secondary data, this study was carried out in 2018 to comprehend the value of a diverse workplace. One hundred workers in the IT and ITES sectors in Chennai, India, provided the study's primary data. SPSS was used to analyze primary data. The study found a correlation between workplace performance and diversity variables. The study came to the conclusion that variety was unavoidable since it encourages excitement and innovation at work.

Based on a number of research of diversity and its implications in various bank structures, Telyani, Farmanesh, and Zargar (2022) investigated the rise in employee diversity and its effects on company success. Using this approach to diversity research, the researchers assessed the impact of deep-level vs surface-level diversity on organizational performance. Furthermore, the mediating role of creative culture was discovered by the study's model. The financial sector in Lebanon served as the backdrop for this investigation. 75 distinct banks and financial organizations made up the study's population. SPSS was used to examine the data, and methods from structural equation modeling were applied to test the hypothesis. Accordingly, research showed that, via the mediating role of an innovative culture, age and experience diversity significantly impacted organizational performance.

In order to examine the connection between workplace inclusion (WI) and employee engagement (EE), as well as the impact of workplace diversity, management support, and leader trust, Goswami (2018) carried out an additional study. Data for the study was gathered via a survey. Employees of India's private telecom businesses made up the study's population. In order to assess the factors that influenced workplace inclusion and employee engagement, a structured questionnaire was used to gather data from a sample of 383 employees in the National Capital Region (NCR), India. To determine the connection between the variables, a

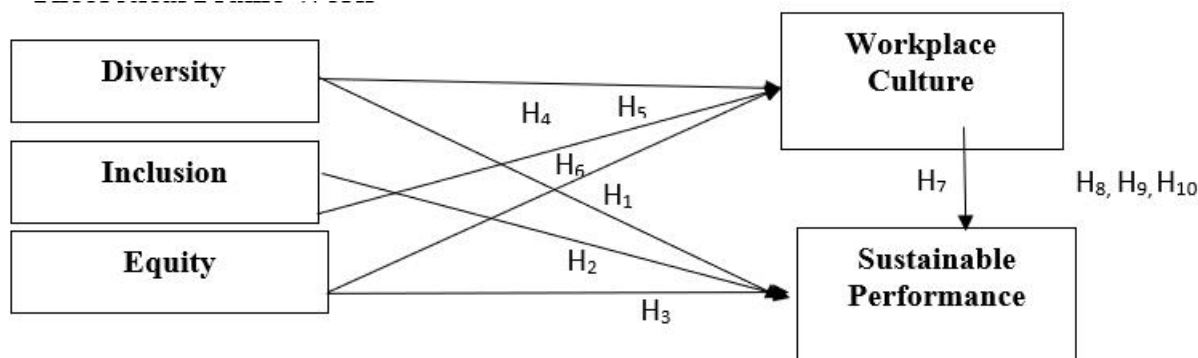
multiple regression model was employed, followed by the Karl Pearson correlation. Three characteristics were identified in this article as determining workplace inclusion: management support, leader trust, and workforce diversity. The findings showed that workplace inclusion, managerial support for workplace inclusion, and leader trust were significantly positively correlated with workforce diversity. Similar to this, workplace inclusion was favorably and considerably impacted by leader trust, and employee engagement was positively and dramatically impacted by workplace inclusiveness.

Statement of the problem

The current study aimed to determine the impact of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity (DIE) frameworks on Workplace Culture and Sustainable Performance within the Special Education Department in Pakistan.

Objectives of the study

Theoretical Frame Work



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Cross sectional design was used to collect the data by using quantitative research approach. The positivist research paradigm supports quantitative methodology. The focus of quantitative research approach is primarily on the confirmatory method because this emphasizes on hypothesis testing and theory testing (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). This increased the specification and accuracy of results when numeric data would be used.

Population and Sampling

The proposed population of study was male and female employees; administration, teaching and supporting staff of Special Education across Pakistan.

- To determine the relationship between diversity and sustainable performance.
- To assess the relationship between inclusion and sustainable performance.
- To ascertain the relationship between equity and sustainable performance.
- To pinpoint the relationship between diversity and workplace culture.
- To determine the relationship between inclusion and workplace culture.
- To find out the relationship between equity and workplace culture.
- To appraise the relationship between workplace culture and sustainable performance.
- To figure out the workplace culture as a mediator between diversity and sustainable performance.
- To determine workplace culture as a mediator between inclusion and sustainable performance.
- To assess workplace culture as a mediator between equity and sustainable performance.

A sample of 230 employees was selected using convenience sampling technique.

Instruments

By utilizing structured questionnaire respondents were instructed to respond the items by using 5-point Likert scale ranges from 1= "strongly disagree" to 5= "strongly agree".

- **Diversity:** This construct was measured using workplace diversity inventory containing twenty-four items. This scale was given by Taylor (2011) with 6 dimensions and 24 items. Respondents were asked to rate the statements on a five-point Likert scale. Reliability of the scale was 0.84.

• **Inclusion:** This construct was measured using inclusion scale containing 8 items. This scale was given by Lennox et Al., (2022). Respondents were asked to rate the statements on a five-point Likert scale. Reliability of the scale was 0.81.

• **Equity:** This study used the adapted scale developed by Sauley (1995) for assessment of workplace equity. It is an 8-items scale. Scale reliability was 0.81.

• **Workplace Culture:** workplace culture was assessed using the 10-items adapted scale given by Sashkin (2013). Reliability of the scale was 0.90.

• **Sustainable Performance:** Sustainable performance was assessed using the 10 items adapted scale developed by Ji et al. (2021). Reliability of the scale was 0.74.

Reliability of instrument

Reliability coefficient of the instrument is given below:

Table 1

Reliability coefficient of Data

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	No. of Items
Diversity	.86	10
Inclusion	.86	8
Equity	.89	8
Workplace Culture	.93	10
Sustainable Performance	.80	10

In order to check the reliability of the data, Chronbach's alpha is applied on the data for each variable. The Chronbach's alpha value in table shows reliability of each of the variable and the next column shows the number of items used to measure each variable. The Chronbach's alpha column shows that none of the values are less than .70 ensuring that the data collected against each variable is reliable.

Self-adapted questionnaires were distributed among 300 employees of special education across Pakistan in person and through google from. Each sealed packet contained the cover letter outlining the objectives of the research to help the respondents and to maintain the confidentiality of the responses received. Among the 300 questionnaires distributed by using convenience sampling design, 239 questionnaires were returned. 230 questionnaires were complete, therefore considered as valid responses yielding a response rate of 76%.

Participants and procedure

A pilot study was conducted to check the internal consistency of instrument. Sixty questionnaires were circulated among the employees of special education in public and private both sectors. Fifty valid responses were received. The reliability measurements for measures of diversity, inclusion, equity, workplace culture and sustainable performance were 0.84, 0.81, 0.81, 0.90 and 0.74.

Data Analysis

Statistical analysis performed by using SPSS. Various statistical techniques including the frequency, percentage, correlation and regression analysis were used for the data analysis of the study.

RESULTS

Table 2

Response Rate

Questionnaire distributed	Questionnaire received	Excluded Responses	Correct Responses	Response rate (%)
300	239	09	230	76

Table 2 revealed that 300 questionnaires were distributed among respondents. 239 responses received in which 09 responses were incomplete.

230 responses were correct filled by respondents and the response rate was 76%.

Table 3

Respondents Profile

Variables	Demographics	Frequency (N=230)	%
Gender	Male	93	40.4
	Female	137	59.6
Age	Less than 20 Years	2	0.9
	21-30 Years	35	15.2
	31-40 Years	110	47.8
	41-50 Years	71	30.9
	More than 50 Years	12	5.2
Qualification	Intermediate	9	3.9
	Bachelor	19	8.3
	Masters	135	58.7
	M.Phil.	53	23.0
	Ph.D.	14	6.1
Location	Punjab	230	100
Job Nature	Administration	46	20
	Teaching	165	71.7
	Supporting Staff	19	8.3
Organization Type	Public	224	97.4
	Private	6	2.6
Work experience	Less than 2 Years	7	3
	2-10 Years	97	42.2
	11-19 Years	94	40.9
	20-28 Years	27	11.7
	More than 28 Years	5	2.2
Organization Name	Rising Sun Institute for Special Children ^{rehab}	6	2.6
	Special Education	211	91.7
	University of Okara	2	.9
	University of Education	3	1.3
	University of the Punjab	8	3.5

Table 3 shows that 40.4% of the 230 responses were submitted by male and 59.6% by female. The majority of respondents (47.8%) were aged 31 to 40 years, followed by those aged 41 to 50 years (30.9%), 15.2 % was those aged 21 to 30 years and more than 50 years were 5.2 % and those aged under 20 years were 0.9 %.

The majority of the participants had Masters qualifications (58.7%) while the remaining respondents had M.Phil. (23.0%), Bachelor (8.3%), Ph.D. (6.1%) and intermediate (3.9%) as table depicts.

The majority of the respondents were from the Punjab (100%). The majority of the participants were from Teaching cadre (71.7%), 20% were from Administration and 8.3% respondents were from

supporting staff. 97.4 % respondents were from public sector organizations and 2.6% participants were from private organizations.

The majority of the participants (42.2 %) had 2 to 10 years work experience; 40.9 % respondents had 11-19 years' experience, 11.7% participants had 20-28 years, 3% had less than 2 years' experience and 2.2% had more than 28 years' work experience.

The majority of the participants (91.7%) were from Special Education organization and remaining participants (8.3%) were from different public and private organizations providing services to children with special needs across the Pakistan as shown in above mentioned table.

Table 4*Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis*

Variables	n	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Div	230	3.85	.616	-				
2. Inc	230	3.84	.611	.768**	-			
3. Eqty	230	3.69	.745	.743**	.761**	-		
4. WC	230	3.61	.789	.754**	.783**	.892**	-	
5. SP	230	4.11	.417	.531**	.520**	.457**	.505**	-

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Div- Diversity, Inc- Inclusion, Eqty- Equity, WC-Workplace Culture, SP- Sustainable Performance

Table 4 shows variables (Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, Workplace Culture, and Sustainable Performance), n (230) sample for each variable, mean (M) (average) value for each variable and standard deviation (SD) which represents the dispersion or variability of scores around the mean for each variable as shown in the table 3.

This table also shows that diversity had strong positive correlations with inclusion (0.768), equity (0.743), workplace culture (0.754), and positive correlation with sustainable performance (0.531). These correlations propose that higher diversity is associated with higher levels of inclusion, equity, positive workplace culture, and sustainable performance. Inclusion showed strong positive correlations with diversity (0.768), equity (0.761), workplace culture (0.783), and sustainable performance (0.520). Inclusion is positively associated with other variables, indicating that higher levels of inclusion lead to higher diversity, equity, positive workplace culture, and sustainable performance.

Equity also showed strong positive correlations with diversity (0.743), inclusion (0.761), workplace culture (0.892), and positive but weaker correlation with sustainable performance (0.457). Equity shows strong positive relationships with diversity, inclusion, and workplace culture which suggests that higher equity is associated with higher diversity, inclusion, and positive workplace culture. The correlation with Sustainable Performance is positive but weaker.

Workplace culture also had strong positive correlations with diversity (0.754), inclusion (0.783), equity (0.892), and sustainable performance (0.505). Workplace culture reveals strong positive relationships with diversity, inclusion, and equity which shows that a positive workplace culture leads to higher levels of diversity, inclusion, and equity. The correlation with sustainable performance is also positive but moderate.

As shown in the table sustainable performance had positive correlations with diversity (0.531), inclusion (0.520), equity (0.457) and workplace culture (0.505). Sustainable performance shows positive relationships with diversity, inclusion, equity and workplace culture but these relationships are weaker compared to the relationships among diversity, inclusion, equity, and workplace culture.

Table 5*Regression Coefficients of Diversity on Sustainable Performance*

Variable	B	β	SE
Constant	2.73		.148
Diversity	.36	.53	.038
R ²	.28		

N=230

***p<.001

Table 5 shows the impact of diversity on sustainable performance in employees of special education. The R square value of .28 revealed that the diversity explained 28% variance in the

sustainable performance with $F(1, 228) = 89.59$, $p < .001$. The findings revealed that diversity positively predicted the sustainable performance. As diversity increases one unit then sustainable performance increases .36 unit.

Table 6*Regression Coefficients of Inclusion on Sustainable Performance*

Variable	B	β	SE
Constant	2.744		.150
Inclusion	.355	.520	.039
R ²	.271		

N=230

***p<.001

Table 6 shows the impact of inclusion on sustainable performance in employees of special education. The R square value of .271 revealed that the inclusion explained 27% variance in the

sustainable performance with $F(1, 228) = 84.570$, $p < .001$. The findings revealed that inclusion positively predicted the sustainable performance. Sustainable performance increases .355 unit by increasing one unit in inclusion.

Table 7*Regression Coefficients of Equity on Sustainable Performance*

Variable	B	β	SE
Constant	3.166		.124
Equity	.256	.457	.033
R ²	.21		

N=230

***p<.001

Table 7 shows the impact of equity on sustainable performance in employees of special education. The R square value of .21 revealed that

the equity explained 21% variance in the sustainable performance with $F(1, 228) = 60.143$, $p < .001$. The findings revealed that equity positively predicted the sustainable performance. Sustainable performance increases .256 units as equity increases one unit.

Table 8*Regression Coefficients of Diversity on Workplace Culture*

Variable	B	β	SE
Constant	-.106		.217
Diversity	.966	.754	.056
R ²	.569		

N=230

***p<.001

Table 8 shows the impact of diversity on workplace culture in employees of special education. The R square value of .569 revealed that the diversity

explained 56.9% variance in the workplace culture with $F(1, 228) = 300.682$, $p < .001$. The findings revealed that diversity positively predicted the workplace culture. Workplace culture increases .966 unit by increasing one unit in diversity.

Table 9*Regression Coefficients of Inclusion on Workplace Culture*

Variable	B	β	SE
Constant	-.272		.207
Inclusion	1.101	.783	.053
R ²	.613		

N=230

***p<.001

Table 9 shows the impact of inclusion on workplace culture in employees of special education. The R square value of .613 revealed that the

inclusion explained 61.3% variance in the workplace culture with $F(1, 228) = 360.784$, $p < .001$. The findings revealed that inclusion positively predicted the workplace culture. Workplace culture increases 1.101 unit by increasing one unit in inclusion.

Table 10*Regression Coefficients of Equity on Workplace Culture*

Variable	B	β	SE
Constant	.130		.119
Equity	.945	.892	.032
R ²	.796		

N=230

***p<.001

Table 10 shows the impact of equity on workplace culture in employees of special education. The R square value of .796 revealed that the equity

explained 79.6% variance in the workplace culture with F (1, 228) = 887.297, p<.001. The findings revealed that equity positively predicted the workplace culture. Workplace culture increases .945 unit by increasing one unit in equity.

Table 11*Regression Coefficients of Workplace Culture on Sustainable Performance*

Variable	B	β	SE
Constant	3.144		.112
Equity	.267	.505	.030
R ²	.26		

N=230

***p<.001

Table 11 shows the impact of workplace culture on sustainable performance in employees of special education. The R square value of .26 revealed

that the workplace culture explained 26% variance in the sustainable performance with F (1, 228) = 78.196, p<.001. The findings revealed that workplace culture positively predicted the sustainable performance.

Table 12*Regression Coefficients of Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Workplace Culture on Sustainable Performance*

Variable	B	β	SE	T	p	95% CL
Constant	2.622		.159	16.528	.000	[2.309, 2.934]
Diversity	.190	.281	.064	2.995	.003	[-.065, .315]
Inclusion	.146	.214	.067	2.170	.031	[-.013, .279]
Equity	-.074	-.132	.071	-1.049	.295	[-.213, .065]
Workplace Culture	.129	.243	.070	1.851	.065	[-.008, .266]

R² = .323, F (4, 225) = 26.892

Table 12 shows the impact of diversity, inclusion, equity and workplace culture on sustainable performance in employees of special education. The R square value of .323 revealed that the predictor variables explained 32 % variance in the outcome variables with F (4, 225) = 26.892, p<.001. The findings revealed that diversity positively predicted

the sustainable performance (β =.281, p<.05), inclusion also positively predicted the sustainable performance (β =.214, p<.05) whereas equity did not significantly predict the sustainable performance (β =-.132, p>.05) and workplace culture also did not predict significantly the sustainable performance (β =.243, p>.05).

Table 13*Mediation Analysis of the Effect of Diversity (X) on Sustainable Performance (Y) through Work place Culture (M)*

	Estimate	SE	t	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Total Effect of Div on SP	.3595	.0380	9.4651	< .001	.2846	.4343
Direct Effect of Div on SP	.2354	.0569	4.1360	<.001	.1233	.3476
Indirect Effect of Div on SP through WC	.1240	.0612			.0080	.2347

Note. Div (X) represents Diversity, SP (Y) represents Sustainable Performance, and WC (M) represents Workplace Culture. SE = Standard Error; CI = Confidence Interval.

Table 13 shows that the diversity has a significant direct effect on the sustainable performance ($p < .05$). This indicates that changes in diversity are directly associated with changes in sustainable performance. The workplace culture as mediating variable had a significant effect on the sustainable performance and the indirect effect of diversity on sustainable performance through workplace culture is also significant (p based on confidence interval not exceeding 0). This shows that changes in diversity can indirectly influence

sustainable performance through changes in workplace culture.

This table also indicates that the total effect of diversity on sustainable performance is statistically significant ($p < .05$) with a positive relationship. The total effect of diversity on sustainable performance, which combines both the direct and indirect effects, had the sum of these two effects ($0.1555 + 0.4704 = 0.6259$). This indicates that the overall impact of diversity on sustainable performance is substantial. The total effect shows that sustainable performance increases by approximately 0.6259 units on average for each unit increase in diversity.

The significant direct and indirect effects of diversity on sustainable performance along with the significant effect of the mediating variable (workplace culture) are evidence of partial mediation.

Table 14

Mediation Analysis of the Effect of Inclusion (X) on Sustainable Performance (Y) through Workplace Culture (M)

	Estimate	SE	t	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Total Effect of Inc on SP	.3551	.0386	9.1962	< .001	.2790	.4312
Direct Effect of Inc on SP	.2196	.0611	3.5933	.0004	.0992	.3400
Indirect Effect of Inc on SP through WC	.1355	.0565			.0238	.2464

Note. Inc (X) represents Inclusion, SP (Y) represents Sustainable Performance, and WC (M) represents Workplace Culture. SE = Standard Error; CI = Confidence Interval.

Table 14 shows that the indirect effect represents the influence of inclusion on sustainable performance through its impact on workplace culture. This also indicates the effect of inclusion on sustainable performance without considering the mediator (workplace culture). The direct effect is also statistically significant ($p < .05$). This table also indicates that the total effect of inclusion on sustainable performance is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) with a positive relationship. The estimate

shows that sustainable performance increases by approximately 0.3551 units on average for each unit increase in inclusion.

This mediation analysis results indicate that workplace culture partially mediates the relationship between inclusion and sustainable performance. Both the direct effect of inclusion on sustainable performance and the indirect effect through workplace culture are statistically significant.

Table 15

Mediation Analysis of the Effect of Equity (X) on Sustainable Performance (Y) through Work place Culture (M)

	Estimate	SE	t	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Total Effect of Eqty on SP	.2557	.0330	7.7552	< .001	.1907	.3207
Direct Effect of Eqty on SP	.0168	.0709	.2364	.8133	-.1229	.1564
Indirect Effect of Eqty on SP through WC	.2390	0.0803			.0678	.3860

Note. Eqty (X) represents Equity, SP (Y) represents Sustainable Performance, and WC (M) represents Workplace Culture. SE = Standard Error; CI = Confidence Interval.

Table 15 shows that the direct effect is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) indicating that there

is no significant direct relationship between equity and sustainable performance. This table also

indicates that the indirect effect is statistically significant ($p < .05$) as the confidence interval does not include zero. This table indicates that the total effect of equity on sustainable performance is statistically significant ($p < .05$) with a positive relationship. This suggests that for each unit increase in equity, sustainable performance increases by approximately 0.2557 units on average.

The mediation analysis indicates that workplace culture significantly mediates the relationship between equity and sustainable performance. While there is no direct effect of equity on sustainable performance, a significant indirect effect exists through its impact on workplace culture. This suggests that improvements in equity can lead to enhancements in workplace culture, which in turn positively influences sustainable performance.

Findings

The results show relationship with diversity, inclusion and equity through the mediating workplace culture on sustainable performance. Considering the significant direct and indirect effects of diversity on sustainable performance, along with the significant effect of the mediating variable (workplace culture), there is evidence of partial mediation. This means that while diversity directly affects sustainable performance, a portion of its influence operates indirectly through workplace culture.

The direct effect of Inclusion on sustainable performance is not statistically significant, suggesting that Inclusion alone may not directly influence sustainable performance. However, there is evidence of an indirect effect of inclusion on sustainable performance through workplace culture, indicating that inclusion indirectly affects sustainable performance through its impact on workplace culture.

This suggests that workplace culture acts as a mediator between inclusion and sustainable performance. In other words, the influence of inclusion on sustainable performance is mediated by workplace culture. Improving workplace culture as a result of promoting inclusion could lead to enhanced sustainable performance. While equity does not have a direct impact on sustainable performance, it significantly influences sustainable performance

through its effect on workplace culture. This suggests that improvements in equity may lead to positive changes in workplace culture, which in turn can enhance sustainable performance within the organization. This analysis highlights the importance of workplace culture as a mediator between equity and sustainable performance. Organizations aiming to improve sustainable performance may need to focus on fostering a supportive workplace culture, which could be achieved, at least partially, by addressing issues related to equity within the organization.

Conclusions

Based on discussion it is concluded that diversity, inclusion, and equity play vital role in sustainable performance through the mediation of Workplace Culture specifically in Special education sector of Pakistan. Analysis revealed that diversity, inclusion, and equity positively influence sustainable performance. Age and experience diversity significantly affect organizational performance. This research offers new insights into the link between DIE frameworks and workplace culture, aiding organizations in leveraging a diverse workforce for innovation and competitiveness.

Discussion

The outcomes of this research affirm the prevailing notion in organizational psychology and management literature that diversity, inclusion, and equity initiatives significantly influence workplace culture and sustainable performance. The identified positive correlation between these variables, coupled with a substantial 45% multiple regression result, underscores the critical importance of prioritizing these initiatives within organizational frameworks.

Research by Cox and Blake (1991) established early insights into the business case for diversity, highlighting how diverse teams can offer a wider range of perspectives, innovative solutions, and enhanced problem-solving capabilities. Similarly, studies by Thomas and Ely (2001) and Cox (1994) emphasize the pivotal role of inclusion in harnessing the full potential of diverse workforces, fostering a sense of belonging and psychological safety crucial for collaboration and engagement.

Moreover, the equity dimension, as elucidated by researchers like Shore et al. (2009) and Robinson et al. (2013), ensures fairness in opportunities, resources, and rewards, thereby addressing systemic biases and promoting organizational justice. By acknowledging and rectifying disparities in access and treatment, organizations can cultivate an environment where every individual feels valued and empowered to contribute their best.

These findings align with recent research by Rynes et al. (2019), which emphasizes the positive impact of diversity, inclusion, and equity on organizational outcomes, including enhanced innovation, decision-making effectiveness, and financial performance. Additionally, studies by Rock and Grant (2016) and Nishii (2013) highlight the link between inclusive cultures and improved employee well-being, job satisfaction, and retention rates, ultimately bolstering sustainable performance over time.

In conclusion, this research reinforces the strategic imperative for organizations to embrace diversity, foster inclusion, and uphold equity as integral components of their workplace culture. By doing so, they not only harness the collective potential of their workforce but also position themselves for long-term success in today's increasingly diverse and dynamic business landscape.

Recommendations

The study recommends that diversity culture should be promoted at all levels of education, workplace, home and community in order to bring sustainable harmony and collaboration for effective adjustment of the society. Inclusive environment helps to bring highly good results in the effective societal development and progress. Future researcher may be carried out to explore the effective of diversity, inclusion and equity across various provinces of the country.

Ethical Consideration

The data of the study was collected by getting the consent of the study respondents. Researchers ensured the safety and confidentiality of the study facts provided by the study participants.

Acknowledgement

Researchers are highly grateful of all the study respondents for provision of data for the study purpose and their cooperation and support while providing the necessary details and study facts.

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