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***Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives on LGBTQI+
Individuals in Selected Companies in Johannesburg***

**A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law
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fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
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ABSTRACT

The study evaluates corporate diversity and inclusion efforts made in respect of LGBTQI+ individuals in selected organizations in Johannesburg, South Africa. The initial chapters lay the groundwork by outlining the study's importance, approach, and theoretical frameworks. The Introduction and Background sets the study's context by providing historical background, highlighting key issues, research questions, goals, and rationale. It offers an overview of the study's framework, guiding readers through subsequent chapters.

The Review of Existing Literature examines relevant practical and theoretical frameworks, including organizational diversity, human capital management, legislative protections for LGBTQI+ individuals in South Africa, and introduces a conceptual framework. It synthesizes previous research to support the empirical investigation.

Methodology of the Research explains the qualitative method that is utilised in this study, the rationale behind the chosen approach and the data collection techniques. The chapter discusses population and sample selection, emphasizing the importance of diverse perspectives.

Several key findings are uncovered by the study into corporate diversity and inclusion initiatives for LGBTQI+ persons in Johannesburg. It highlights some of the greatest challenges facing LGBTQI+ employees which include discrimination, lack of awareness and an absence of visibility around LGBTQI+ initiatives within organizations. The study spotlights the importance of companies having well-organized diversity programs and educational programs to help create a culture of inclusion in the workplace. Moreover, it sets out the need for organizations to be true and do not shy away from supporting LGBTQI+ rights, putting the rhetoric into practice, rather than tokenism/pink-washing. The study further demonstrated that making an active effort to promote diversity can ultimately boost employee morale and productivity, in addition to advancing corporate social responsibility for organizations. Such revelations also highlight the importance of policies that are inclusive and empower LGBTQI+ employees, transforming corporations into a more just environment.

DECLARATION

I, Nhlanhla Cleopas Ngubane, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Nhlanhla Cleopas Ngubane

Signed at Parktown

On the 28th day of January 2025

DEDICATION

To my beloved late father, Mandlenkosi Ngubane, whose unwavering love and guidance shaped me into the person I am today. Your strength, wisdom, and optimistic spirit continue to inspire me, and I am forever grateful for the memories we shared and the lessons you imparted to me.

To my late mother, Nomsa Erin-Joyce Ngubane (uMaCele), who tirelessly supported, and I was raised in the nurturing nature that enabled me to have a good base. Your love illuminated my life, and your gentle spirit will be in my heart forever. I miss you so much, but you are always in my heart.

In memory of my late sister, Nompumelelo Ngubane (uMacri), whose spirited personality and infectious laughter made our lives so much better. Your untimely departure left a void that can never be filled, but your memory remains etched on my heart. I cherish the bond we shared and the beautiful moments we experienced together.

To my siblings, Sithembile Cele, Thokozani Ngubane, Mzwandile Ngubane (together with my sister-in-law Anthea Ngubane), Muziwenkosi Ngubane, Nokuthula Ngubane, and Mpumelelo Ngubane, you are my pillars of strength and my constant source of love and support. Our bond is unbreakable, and I am grateful for the laughter, tears, and countless memories we've shared. Your presence in my life fills it with warmth and joy.

To my nieces and nephews, each one of you holds a special place in my heart. Your innocence, curiosity, and unconditional love brighten my days. The joy I feel in watching you grow and discover the world around you is immeasurable. This dedication is a testament to the love and pride I have for each of you. Remember, everything is in the hope that you are motivated to do better, to strive for better than we as your elders could ever imagine.

Lastly, but not least, to my late ex-husband, Mfanafuthi Motsweni, I want to express my deepest gratitude for your unwavering acceptance and understanding. You embraced my true self and never judged me. Your support during our time together was invaluable, and I will forever cherish the memories we created. Though our paths diverged, I carry the lessons of acceptance and love that you taught me.

This dedication is a heartfelt tribute to all the individuals who have touched my life and encouraged me in my journey; whether directly or indirectly, your love, support, and influence has not gone unnoticed.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
DECLARATION.....	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.....	1
1.1. Introduction and background.....	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem	2
1.2.1. Main Problem.....	2
1.2.2. Primary Research Questions	2
1.2.3. Research Objectives	3
1.3. Significance of the study	3
1.4. Rationale.....	3
1.5. Outline of the study	4
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	5
2.1. Introduction.....	5
2.2. Significance of Literature Review in Research.....	5
2.3. Empirical Review of Literature.....	5
2.4. Theoretical Frameworks	6
2.4.1. Organizational Diversity	6
2.4.2. Human Capital Management	7
2.5. Conceptual Framework.....	10
2.6 Summary of the chapter	12
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	13
3.1. Introduction.....	13
3.2. Research Paradigm.....	13
3.3. Research Design.....	13
3.4. Population and sample selection	14
3.4.1. Recruitment.....	14
3.4.2. Data collection	14
3.5. Open-ended interview questions	14
3.6. Research Instrument.....	15
3.7. Data Analysis strategy and interpretation	15

3.8. Preconceived Limitations of the study	15
3.9. Quality Assurance	16
3.9.1. External validity (or transferability).....	16
3.9.2. Internal validity (or credibility).....	16
3.9.3 Reliability (or dependability)	16
3.9.4 Reflexivity.....	16
3.10 Ethical Considerations	17
3.11. Summary of the chapter	17
CHAPTER 4 – DATA COLLECTION	18
4.1. Introduction.....	18
4.2. Analysis of Qualitative data collected.....	18
4.3. Demographics	19
4.4. Theme 1	20
4.5. Theme 2	22
4.6. Further Remarks on Initiatives.....	26
4.7. Summary of the Data Collected.....	26
4.7.1. Overview of Study Findings	27
4.8. Limitations	28
4.9. Summary of the chapter	29
CHAPTER 5 - INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS	30
5.1. Introduction.....	30
5.1.1. Main Components of the Framework	30
5.1.2. Theoretical Underpinnings.....	31
5.1.3. Application of the Framework	32
5.2. Appreciative Reflection.....	32
5.2.1. Interpretation of how the Equity Theory affects diversity management.....	32
5.2.3. Interpretation of how the Stakeholder Theory affects diversity Management.....	34
5.3. Potential Areas of Improvement	36
5.3.1. Interpretation of how the Equity Theory affects diversity management.....	36
5.3.2. Interpretation of how the Stakeholder Theory affects diversity Management.....	39
5.4. Summary of the chapter.....	41
CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	42
6.1. Introduction.....	42
6.2. Research Objectives.....	42
6.2.1. Research Objective One.....	42
6.3. Answering the Research Questions.....	43

6.3.1. Research Question One	43
6.3.2. Research Question Two.....	43
6.3.3. Research Question Three	44
6.4. Recommendations.....	44
6.5. Future studies.....	46
6.6. Conclusion	47
References.....	48
APPENDIX - Instrument for data collection	52

List of figures, Tables and Charts

Figure 1 - Equality Theory Strengths and Weaknesses	7
Figure 2 - Strengths and Weaknesses of stakeholder identification methods	9
Figure 3 - Conceptual Framework	11
 Table 1 - Demographics	 19

Note:

LGBTQI+ “An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer or Questioning. The ‘plus’ sign refers to the many other self-identifications under the umbrella of ‘sexuality’ and/or ‘gender’.” (Hart, 2024)

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction and background

Corporate diversity and inclusion (D&I) efforts are becoming increasingly significant in organizations around the world Perales (2022). These programmes seek to promote more inclusive and equitable workplaces for all employees, including LGBTQI+ people. These activities have an important impact on the well-being and performance of LGBTQI+ individuals, as well as for the whole company. Corporate diversity and inclusion initiatives for LGBTQI+ people in Africa have received increasing attention in recent years United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2023). The goal is to ensure that by 2030 all people in Sub-Saharan Africa enjoy inclusive, just, affirming, safe, productive, and fulfilled lives.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) perspective on corporate diversity and inclusion programmes for LGBTQI+ people reveals a substantial lack of visibility for this population in the business sector, with only a few countries actively addressing it Yono (2023). The invisibility of LGBTQI+ persons in the business sector is a widespread issue that prevents them from fully participating in economic, social, and political settings Yono (2023).

Despite constitutional and legislative safeguards, South Africa's LGBTQI+ community continues to encounter economic and societal challenges School of Law UCLA William Institute (2021). These challenges are frequently the result of systemic factors that limit LGBTQI+ people's prospects in a variety of areas. Corporate diversity and inclusion programmes play an important role in overcoming these hurdles and fostering equitable opportunities for LGBTQI+ people in the workplace and beyond.

Section 9 of the Constitution The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) forbids discrimination based on sex, gender, or sexual orientation. Implementation of this legislation emphasizes the importance of corporate diversity and inclusion activities in ensuring compliance with the country's legal framework in seeking to develop an inclusive society.

The study evaluated corporate diversity and inclusivity initiatives on LGBTQI+ individuals in selected companies in Johannesburg. This chapter provides the study's history, objectives, and problem statement, elaborates on the justification for the study, and presents the research question.

1.2.Statement of the Problem

1.2.1. Main Problem

While corporate diversity and inclusion efforts are being increasingly implemented, there is still a lack of understanding regarding their effectiveness and impact on LGBTQI+ individuals in companies in Johannesburg. The study evaluated the challenges, successes, and outcomes of diversity and inclusion programmes designed for LGBTQI+ employees in the corporate sector in Johannesburg. It aimed to advance inclusive workplace practices and promote LGBTQI+ rights in the South African business environment through various initiatives.

Brewster & Velez (2024) acknowledged the experiences of transgender and non-binary people in corporate diversity and inclusion programmes, although there is no thorough research that is dedicated to assessing the extent to which corporate diversity and inclusivity policies and initiatives affect LGBTQI+ employees especially in the context of South Africa (Johannesburg), where rights of LGBTQI+ people are protected by law. The aim of this study was therefore to examine the diversity and inclusion initiatives on LGBTQI+ employees' well-being in selected companies in Johannesburg.

1.2.2. Primary Research Questions

The study aimed to address the following research questions:

1. What are the diversity and inclusion programmes of LGBTQI+ employees in selected Johannesburg companies, and the shortcomings and challenges in these initiatives?
2. How can employers enhance their diversity and inclusion programmes to establish a more inclusive and supportive workplace environment for these individuals, and regarding the impact of stakeholders' perspectives, the potential benefits and hazards of these initiatives?
3. How do internal education and training best practices, the establishment of LGBTQ+ employee resource groups or diversity councils, and engagement with the LGBTQI+ community through corporate social responsibility initiatives contribute to fostering an inclusive culture and promoting corporate social responsibility within organizations?

1.2.3. Research Objectives

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the effects of diversity and inclusion programs/initiatives on LGBTQI employees' well-being in some selected companies in Johannesburg.

Specific objectives:

- To evaluate the variables that contribute to the difficulties faced by LGBTQI+ individuals in achieving diversity and inclusivity within selected companies in Johannesburg.

1.3. Significance of the study

The aim of the study is to make a contribute to the literature, assist stakeholders and shape policy direction towards diversity and inclusivity that protect all people including LGBTQI+ people in the t workplace. While corporate diversity and inclusion efforts are being increasingly implemented, there is still a lack of understanding regarding their effectiveness and impact on LGBTQI+ individuals in companies in Johannesburg. The study intended to address the gap in research by examining the challenges, successes and outcomes of diversity and inclusion programmes designed for LGBTQI+ employees in the corporate sector in Johannesburg.

1.4. Rationale

Lewis and Pitts (2017) observe that there are disparities in the views of fair treatment between LGBTQI+ workers and heterosexual employees, which they have likened to inequalities based on race and ethnicity. LGBTQI+ workers reported lower satisfaction levels compared to non-LGBTQI+ employees across several areas, such as performance reviews, promotions, increases, banned personnel practices Rawls (1999), commitment to diversity, and agency leadership Lewis & Pitts (2017). Employees largely questioned whether their real job performance determined the awards, promotions and salary hikes they received. LGBTQI+ employees showed significant disparities compared to non-LGBTQI+ employees in their views on advancement opportunities, equitable rewards based on performance, satisfaction with supervisors, peers, agency leaders, and employee empowerment Lewis & Pitts (2017).

1.5. Outline of the study

The research report consists of six chapters. Chapter One introduces the research and explains the focus on the importance of corporate diversity and inclusion (D&I) programmes for LGBTQI+ individuals in African organizations, particularly in Johannesburg. It highlights the impact of these initiatives on the well-being and performance of LGBTQI+ employees and the overall company. The study aims to examine the effects of diversity and inclusion programmes on LGBTQI+ employees' well-being in selected companies in Johannesburg to contribute to the literature and shape policies promoting inclusivity at work.

Chapter Two presented a literature review of the impact of corporate diversity and inclusion policies on LGBTQI+ individuals in selected Johannesburg companies, analysing strategies to promote diversity, combat prejudice, and support the LGBTQI+ community.

Chapter Three details qualitative method (interviews) used to examine the impact of diversity and inclusion programmes on LGBTQI+ individuals in selected Johannesburg companies in this study. The study employs purposive sampling and a mix of self-selection and snowball sampling for operational interviews to capture diverse perspectives, evaluating existing inclusivity policies and conducting narrative-based interviews with employees to examine their workplace experiences and perceptions.

Chapter Four introduces the qualitative data collection process, including analysis organized around four main themes aligned with the study's objectives. It presents the relevant interview questions and participant responses, followed by discussions on key findings and insights derived from the data collected.

Chapter Five interprets the findings in relation to the theoretical frameworks of Equity Theory and Stakeholder Theory, discussing their implications for diversity management. It identifies potential areas for improvement in corporate diversity and inclusion practices, emphasizing the importance of these theories in enhancing organizational effectiveness and employee satisfaction.

Chapter Six summarizes the research findings, reiterating the significance of diversity and inclusion for LGBTQI+ individuals in the workplace. It reflects on the study's contributions to knowledge in the field and suggests directions for future research, emphasizing the need for ongoing efforts to ensure inclusive environments in organizations.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of the literature review is to identify gaps, trends and valuable information that can enhance the understanding of the impact of corporate diversity and inclusion policies on LGBTQI+ individuals through the analysis and assessment of previous research, publications, and academic studies. This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the information and research related to the thesis. The literature review chapter establishes the theoretical framework and historical context of the study. The study aimed to clarify the importance of corporate diversity and inclusion programmes for LGBTQI+ individuals in selected companies in Johannesburg, South Africa.

2.2. Significance of Literature Review in Research

A literature review assists in the identification of areas requiring more research and which may have knowledge deficiencies. It helps to identify unresolved issues or areas with conflicting outcomes. Identifying these gaps can lead scientists to propose new questions and objectives for their research, enhancing the comprehension of business culture for LGBTQI+ individuals. This assists in developing practical consequences and recommendations for organizations and governments while also expanding the existing knowledge base.

2.3. Empirical Review of Literature

Studies indicated that LGBTQI+ employees continue to encounter distinct obstacles and inequalities at work in contrast to their non-LGBTQI+ peers Williams, Thompson, & Kandola (2022). LGBTQI+ employees are more than twice as likely to encounter unfavourable outcomes at work, such as harassment and discrimination, according to a Nova Southeastern University (NSU) Works survey Ng & Rumens (2017). The current body of research frequently concentrates on the immediate results and consequences of corporate diversity and inclusion programmes for those who identify as LGBTQI+ Williams, Thompson, & Kandola (2022). Research on the long-term effects of these programmes on job satisfaction, career advancement, and general well-being is, however, scarce Williams, Thompson, & Kandola (2022). To gauge the long-term efficacy of

diversity and inclusion programmes, future research ought to examine their enduring impacts after they have passed the initial stages Williams, Thompson, & Kandola (2022).

2.4. Theoretical Frameworks

The research focused on how the corporate sector is adopting diversity and inclusion programmes for LGBTQI+ individuals in selected companies in Johannesburg. It examined workplace equity, inclusion, and acceptance of LGBTQI+ individuals. Three crucial theories that could provide a sound basis for understanding and implementing effective diversity practices in an organization were considered in order to provide a conceptual framework for diversity management.

2.4.1. Organizational Diversity

Organizational Diversity theory emphasizes the need of companies to recognize and appreciate diversity. Diversity can contribute to unique perspectives, ideas and skills that enhance overall performance and encourage innovation and creativity. It is believed that diverse viewpoints and cognitive attitudes can be found in organizational work units where diversity is present Duchek, Raetze, & Scheuch (2019).

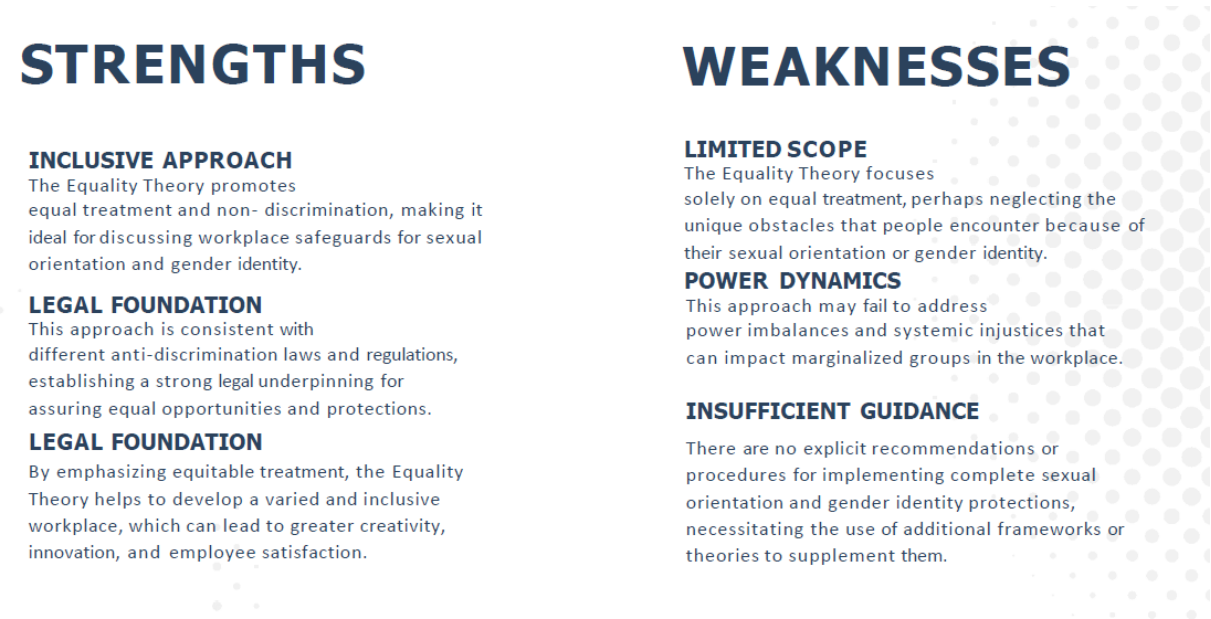
2.4.1.1. Equality Theory

According to Adams (1963), Equity theory is a social psychological concept that focuses on the perception of fairness and justice in social transactions, particularly within the context of workplace associations. It suggests that people try to maintain a sense of equity or justice in their relationships by comparing their own efforts (effort, input) and rewards (benefits, results) to those of others. When individuals notice an imbalance or a lack of equity in this transaction, they may feel tense, dissatisfied and motivated to reestablish equity. Addressing injustice can assist to reduce turnover and interpersonal disputes inside organizations. When employees believe they are being treated fairly and equitably, they are less inclined to seek alternative employment or engage in workplace disputes. Promoting equity in the workplace can help to create a positive corporate culture that values trust, collaboration, and justice. This can result in increased employee happiness, loyalty, and overall well-being.

The Equity Theory can both promote and undermine workplace protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity. It promotes Workforce Protections by emphasizing fairness and equality, encouraging inclusive cultures, and ensuring that all employees receive equal treatment and opportunities. However, it can jeopardize Workforce Protections if employees perceive

disparities in the workplace, leading to negative emotions and possible discrimination. Organizations should try to align their policies and practices with the concepts of the Equity Theory to protect and include all individuals, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Figure 1 outlines the strengths and weaknesses as identified in the International Labour Conference (2011).

Figure 1 - Equality Theory Strengths and Weaknesses



Source: International Labour Conference (2011)

Proposition 1 (P1): Enhanced employee well-being and organizational outcomes. Fostering equity and addressing injustice will ensure improved employee engagement, reduced turnover, enhanced corporate culture, legal compliance, social justice, and conflict resolution, ultimately creating inclusive and productive environments for all stakeholders.

2.4.2. Human Capital Management

Human capital management focuses on aligning employees’ skills, knowledge, and talents with the organization’s objectives to increase productivity, innovation, and overall performance Khoruzhy, Khoruzhy, Kubrushko, Karataeva, & Bitkova (2023). Organizations should aim to establish an inclusive and supportive atmosphere for all persons, irrespective of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Human capital management and stakeholder theory are closely connected in the realm of organizational management and ethics Greenwood & De Cieri (2005). Human Capital Management and Stakeholder Theory emphasize the intricate nature of stakeholder interactions in companies and the significance of considering different interests, power structures, and ethical considerations in efficiently managing stakeholders.

2.4.2.1. Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory highlights the significance of considering groups whose support is essential for an organization's survival Mahajan, Lim , Sareen , Kumar, & Panwar (2023). Initially, stakeholders consisted of shareholders, employees, clients, creditors, and the community Mahajan, Lim , Sareen , Kumar, & Panwar (2023). Stakeholder theory is characterized as both scientific and normative, attracting management theorists due to its practical and ethical consequences Mahajan, Lim , Sareen , Kumar, & Panwar (2023). According to Mahajan, Lim, Sareen, Kuman and Panwar (2023), stakeholders in the context of corporations and employee interactions are defined by the authors as individuals or groups with a vested interest in the organization and affected by its actions. Employees are considered stakeholders because of their important position in the organization. A more complete and inclusive approach to stakeholder identification is needed to integrate social identities and improve knowledge and engagement with varied stakeholder groups.

Crane & Ruebottom (2012) identified strengths and weaknesses of the stakeholder theory, as outlined in Figure 2:

Figure 2 - Strengths and Weaknesses of stakeholder identification methods



Source: Crane & Ruebottom (2012)

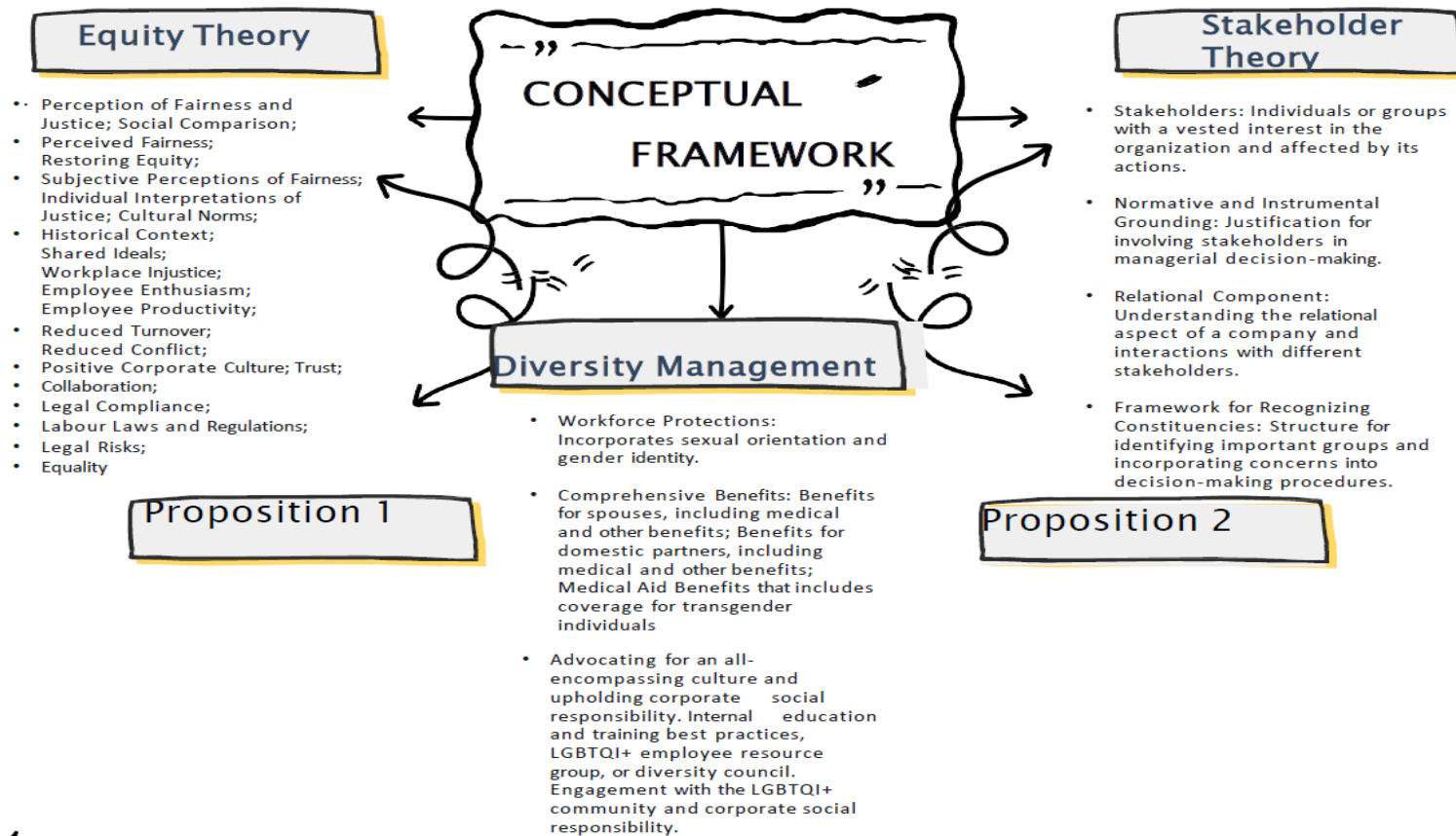
Proposition 2 (P2): The Proposition posits that by prioritizing stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes and implementing a comprehensive framework to acknowledge and address stakeholder interests and concerns, organizational performance, stakeholder satisfaction, and overall success in achieving strategic objectives will be improved.

2.5. Conceptual Framework

According to Machado and Costa (2022), Diversity Management in the article Diversity Management: Homosexuality and the Labor Market addresses the tactics and practices used by organizations to encourage inclusivity, equality, and respect for all persons, regardless of their sexual orientation. The paper focuses on diversity management, particularly addressing the integration of homosexual employees into the workforce. Key aspects of diversity management as identified by Machado and Costa (2022) include the significance of firms promoting inclusive environments that ensure homosexual and lesbian employees feel secure and valued. This entails enacting regulations to prevent prejudice and establishing conditions that encourage diversity and inclusivity. The article further discusses the obstacles and realities experienced by homosexual workers in the labour market, emphasizing how prejudice affects their physical and emotional health. According to the Human Rights Campaign Foundation (2023), diversity management in this sense entails addressing these difficulties and establishing a friendly and inclusive work environment for all employees.

Conceptual Framework is outlined in **Figure 3:**

Figure 3 - Conceptual Framework



2.6 Summary of the chapter

The chapter presented a literature review that serves as the foundation of the research study, examining the impact of corporate diversity and inclusion policies on LGBTQI+ individuals within selected companies in Johannesburg, South Africa. By analysing previous research, the report explored how businesses promote diversity, combat discrimination, and support LGBTQI+ individuals. It assessed the advantages and challenges of LGBTQI+ diversity and inclusion programmes, highlighting their potential benefits for job satisfaction, employee well-being, and organizational performance, while acknowledging the hurdles organizations may face in fostering inclusive workplaces. This chapter established the theoretical framework and historical context for the research, identifying best practices, key success factors, and areas for improvement in corporate diversity and inclusion initiatives, contributing to knowledge advancement and laying the groundwork for empirical investigations.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

Research methodology is necessary in any study as it serves as the blueprint for conducting research, guiding the researcher in collecting, analysing, and interpreting data to address the research questions or objectives effectively. This chapter addresses the quality, credibility, and ethical conduct of the research study and provides a structured approach to conducting research, ensuring generation of reliable findings, contributing to the existing body of knowledge, and making informed decisions based on empirical evidence.

3.2. Research Paradigm

There are three distinct methodologies for conducting educational research:

- Positivism refers to a philosophical approach that emphasizes the use of scientific methods and empirical evidence to understand and explain the world Rehman & Alharthi (2016).
- Interpretivism refers to a philosophical approach that emphasizes the importance of understanding and interpreting social phenomena based on subjective meanings and individual experiences Rehman & Alharthi, (2016).
- Critical theory is an intellectual framework that examines and questions power dynamics, disparities, and societal injustices. The primary objective of critical theorists is to advance social transformation, liberation, and empowerment through their scholarly investigation and examination Celikates & Flynn (2023).

The Research Paradigm that was selected for this research is Critical Theory.

3.3. Research Design

This study utilised qualitative research methodology. According to Ratner (2002), a qualitative method entails the collection of data using interviews. Qualitative research seeks to understand experiences and assess the importance afforded to them by both participants and researchers. Qualitative research may be used to facilitate in-depth discussion between researchers and participants regarding societal difficulties and injustices prevalent in contemporary society or workplaces. The selection of the research methodology is based on the objective of maintaining a strong emphasis on the participants, which is a fundamental element of qualitative research Taylor, 2006.

The study technique included conducting interviews with open-ended narrative-based questionnaires with the participants. Participants were required to analyse their work-related experiences as LGBTQI+ individuals as well as the initiatives being offered in the companies they work for. The experiences and initiatives were analysed to evaluate the degree of acceptance and support for LGBTQI+ individuals in the workplace.

3.4. Population and sample selection

3.4.1. Recruitment

The selection of personnel involved two different recruiting tactics: purposive sampling and a combination of self-selection and snowball sampling. The interviewees were selected using self-selection and snowball sampling techniques to ensure voluntary participation and prevent the disclosure of other participants' names through referrals. Purposive sampling was employed to target demographic groups that may be difficult to sample using conventional approaches Campbell, et al., (2020).

3.4.2. Data collection

This stage entailed conducting interviews with the employees to evaluate their experiences on the current diversity and inclusivity policies and its impact on their well-being. Given that workers may possess diverse experiences and viewpoints, it is necessary to conduct face-to-face interviews to comprehend their personal encounters within the current work setting and how these experiences might influence their job and future ambitions. Interviews with LGBTQI+ employees utilized a semi-structured method that included open-ended narrative-based questions.

3.5. Open-ended interview questions

Participants were asked through an interview what LGBTQI+ diversity and inclusion initiatives their organizations have, if any; their workplace obstacles, specifying if related to sexual orientation; their personal experiences with employer benefits for LGBTQI+ individuals, including medical coverage and transgender-inclusive benefits; their suggested measures for companies in Johannesburg to enhance diversity, inclusivity, and well-being for LGBTQI+ individuals in the corporate sector, and their proposed measures for the government to enhance diversity, inclusivity, and well-being for LGBTQI+ individuals in the corporate sector in Johannesburg.

3.6. Research Instrument

The selection of interviews as the data collection method to explore the impact of Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives on LGBTQI+ Individuals at specific companies in Johannesburg presented various advantages and rationales. Interviews provided a more personal and in-depth approach to gathering insights, allowing for nuanced responses and a deeper understanding of individual experiences. Conducting interviews can facilitate a more nuanced analysis of the data collected, as researchers have the opportunity to further explore the nuances of individual responses as well as the themes and patterns in a more comprehensive manner. This depth of analysis can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion initiatives and their impact on LGBTQI+ individuals within the corporate setting. Interviews provide a more tailored and insightful approach to data collection, particularly when exploring sensitive topics such as LGBTQI+ inclusion.

3.7. Data Analysis strategy and interpretation

Data analysis commenced after all the interviews with LGBTQI+ employees who work in Johannesburg were completed. The open-ended questions were transcribed exactly as communicated by the interviewees to enable the researcher to be fully immersed in the data and analysis thereof. Conceptual framework was used to analyse the information gathered through the interviews.

3.8. Preconceived Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study included potential sample size constraints affecting generalizability, limitations in data collection and analysis methods, ethical considerations regarding confidentiality, external factors not fully accounted for, and lack of specified timelines. The study did not consider external elements such as corporate culture, cultural attitudes or regulatory frameworks that could influence the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion programmes for LGBTQI+ individuals. The research had strict deadlines for gathering and analysing data. The actual limitations of the study that were encountered are discussed in Chapter 4.

3.9. Quality Assurance

3.9.1. External validity (or transferability)

The degree to which a study's conclusions can be applied to different contexts or demographics is referred to as external validity Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, (2002). External validity was important in the context of this study on Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives for LGBTQI+ individuals in Johannesburg in order to understand how the findings could be applied outside of the companies and individuals under examination.

3.9.2. Internal validity (or credibility)

The precision and dependability of the causal conclusions made within a study are known as internal validity, and it verifies that the variables being measured or controlled are indeed the cause of the observed effects Trochim (2006). Within the framework of this study, internal validity was necessary to demonstrate a robust causal relationship between diversity and inclusion programmes and the experiences of LGBTQI+ employees.

3.9.3 Reliability (or dependability)

Reliability is the degree to which study findings are stable and consistent throughout time, in various settings, and can be repeated or relied upon Babbie (2021). Reliability was essential in this research in order to guarantee that the techniques used for data collecting, measuring instruments, and analytical processes would produce consistent outcomes.

3.9.4 Reflexivity

Von Unger (2021) highlights the importance of ethical reflexivity in research practice. This concept plays a central role in improving the quality and validity of study findings, as well as boosting researcher accountability in ethical terms. Ethical reflexivity extends beyond conventional issues of research ethics, such as the rights and welfare of participants, to encompass the wider societal consequences of the study process for all parties involved.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Prior to collecting data, the researcher is required to obtain ethical approval from the institution's ethical reviews committee and secure the agreement of the subjects. A comprehensive informed consent form was furnished to apprise the participants of the intricate particulars of the research and obtain their commitment to participate. Confidentiality was upheld by saving responder data in a file protected by a password and ensuring the security of the emailed link. To avoid the necessity of identifying specific individuals, anonymity was preserved through the use of confidential identifiers. Participant identities were kept confidential throughout the report, and information was presented in a combined format for the analysis and presenting of findings.

3.11. Summary of the chapter

Research technique important in determining the quality, reliability and ethical conduct of research projects. Methodology establishes a systematic framework for gathering, analysing and interpreting data, ensuring that research findings are accurate, dependable and consistent with the study's goals. The systematic methodology for designing research assists in reducing bias, improving the repeatability of findings, and contributing to the progress of knowledge in the respective field. Furthermore, the ethical considerations described in the methodology ensured the protection of participants' rights and maintained the integrity of the study process.

CHAPTER 4 – DATA COLLECTION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research results that emerge from the analysis of the selected organisations' diversity and inclusion policies for employment of LGBTQI+ in Johannesburg, South Africa. The chapter offers a qualitative analysis of data gathered by conducting interviews and focus group discussions of both hetero- and homosexual employees, while focusing on how they responded to the current diversity policies within their organizations. In this regard, the purpose of this chapter is to present the practical concern of corporate strategies concerning the concept of diversity within the workplace as well as presenting the problems and limitations that have been encountered in the realisation of diversity projects. As such, this chapter aims to advance the discourse on diversity and inclusion, discussing the experiences of LGBTQI+ employees in organisations based in Johannesburg.

4.2. Analysis of Qualitative data collected

The results of the data analysis are presented and discussed with reference to two themes developed in Chapter 1, namely:

- Theme 1: To investigate the variables that contribute to the difficulties experienced by LGBTQI+ individuals in achieving diversity and inclusivity within selected companies in Johannesburg.
- Theme 2: To examine corporate diversity and inclusivity initiatives for LGBTQI+ individuals in selected companies in Johannesburg.

These themes were predetermined in this study and conform with its objectives. The research interview questions for each developed theme and subtheme are listed, and the participants' responses are provided in italics. A brief analysis of the responses to each theme and subtheme are provided below each response.

4.3. Demographics

There were 12 participants that were interviewed for this study. Table 1 below show their demographics, Pie Chart 1 – Pie Chart 4 further outlines the breakdown:

Table 1 - Demographics

	GENDER	SEXUAL ORIENTATION	ETHNICITY	AGE GROUP	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	GEOGRAPHICAL AREA	INDUSTRY	POSITION	LEVEL OF EDUCATION
1	FEMALE	LESBIAN	BLACK	26-44	6-11	JOHANNESBURG CENTRAL	EDUCATION	MIDDLE MANAGEMENT	HONOURS/PG DIP
2	NON-BINARY	TRANSGENDER (DEMISEXUAL)	WHITE	26-44	12-17	JOHANNESBURG CENTRAL	EDUCATION	SKILLED/PROFESSIONAL	DEGREE
3	NON BINARY	GAY	BLACK	26-44	6-11	JOHANNESBURG CENTRAL	EDUCATION	MIDDLE MANAGEMENT	MASTERS/PHD
4	MALE	QUEER / QUESTIONING	BLACK	26-44	12-17	JOHANNESBURG CENTRAL	ENERGY AND MINING	SENIOR MANAGEMENT	MASTERS/PHD
5	MALE	QUEER / QUESTIONING	BLACK	26-44	0-5	JOHANNESBURG CENTRAL	ENTERTAINMENT / MEDIA	SKILLED/PROFESSIONAL	DIPLOMA
6	MALE	BISEXUAL	BLACK	45-59	0-5	JOHANNESBURG CENTRAL	TRANSPORT	SKILLED/PROFESSIONAL	GRADE 12
7	MALE	GAY	BLACK	45-59	18 <	JOHANNESBURG EAST	TRANSPORT	SKILLED/PROFESSIONAL	GRADE 12
8	FEMALE	QUEER / QUESTIONING	BLACK	18-25	0-5	JOHANNESBURG CENTRAL	EDUCATION	MIDDLE MANAGEMENT	DEGREE
9	MALE	BISEXUAL	INDIAN	26-44	12-17	JOHANNESBURG NORTH	FINANCIAL SERVICES	SKILLED/PROFESSIONAL	MASTERS/PHD
10	MALE	GAY	BLACK	26-44	12-17	JOHANNESBURG EAST	FINANCIAL SERVICES	SENIOR MANAGEMENT	DEGREE
11	MALE	GAY	BLACK	26-44	6-11	JOHANNESBURG WEST	ENERGY AND MINING	MIDDLE MANAGEMENT	HONOURS/PG DIP
12	MALE	SELF IDENTIFYING	BLACK	26-44	18 <	JOHANNESBURG EAST	TRANSPORT/LOGISTICS	SKILLED/PROFESSIONAL	DIPLOMA

4.4. Theme 1

Investigate the variables that contribute to the difficulties faced by LGBTQI+ individuals in achieving diversity and inclusivity within selected companies in Johannesburg.

For Theme 1, the purpose was to examine and define what prevents the members of the target group from perceiving authentic diversity and inclusion at work in the selected Johannesburg-based organizations. From the analysis of these variables, the study captured the factors experienced by LGBTQI+ employees to assess other systemic, cultural and organizational barriers that promote LGBTQI+ marginalization.

a) Incorporation of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Policies

Sexual orientation and gender identity inclusion in organization policies is one of the ways of fostering equity in workforce. It not only safeguards the liberties of every walk of life but also guarantees the best dimension of correspondence which enhances the well-being of the employees, resulting in better retention rates and organizational effectiveness of the company.

These are some of the comments obtained from the participants interviewed:

- *“I don’t know if the organization incorporates sexual orientation or gender identity in its policies. The way we address each other is either by name or whatever, and the forms we fill out are open-ended.”*
- *“There was nothing on paper that indicates a policy for LGBTQI+ individuals, but there is a general understanding among employees not to discriminate.”*

b) Overview of LGBTQI+ Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives

A general discussion is useful as it establishes guiding structures when attempting to enhance the equality climate of an organisation. This not only briefs individuals on the core reason for standing for the LGBTQI+ community but also on how diversity and inclusion enhance organizational effectiveness, productivity, morale, and cohesion. When this statement was asked of the participants, these were some of the replies:

- *“I don’t know of any specific initiatives that are currently implemented for LGBTQI+ individuals in my organization.”*
- *“We do celebrate Pride Month and support various Pride events, but there’s a lack of formal initiatives or policies.”*

c) Benefits for Domestic Partners

It is necessary to accept and promote various types of more intimate connections in organizations, and this statement speaks about it. In offering such options, organizations play their part in ensuring that employee equality and diversity is enforced and achieved while at the same time improving the overall satisfaction and turnover of their employees, which contributes to organizational productivity. Some of the participants' responses included:

- *"The organization does not have clear policies regarding benefits for domestic partners, but they don't discriminate against anyone."*
- *"I'm not sure if there are specific benefits for domestic partners, as the policies are not clearly communicated."*

d) Medical Aid Benefits for Transgender Individuals

This is an important factor as it calls for equal treatment in relation to issues to do with health for transgender employees. To this end, with these advantages, organizations not only ensure that their employees' health needs are well met, but also ensure that employees irrespective of their gender, marital status and other factors are respected in the workplace, hence boosting morale towards work.

Participants offered the following comments:

- *"I'm not sure if the medical aid benefits include coverage for transgender individuals, as there's no clear communication on this."*
- *"The organization provides the same medical aid amount to all employees, but how it's used is up to the individual."*
- *"I've never had to find out from a transgender perspective. But I think it's a very good question to ask my colleagues. I'm going to make a note of that. Thank you. But is it something that is discussed or I don't think it is then? We discuss the transgender community quite a lot in work that we do, largely because we do it for educational purposes. And also we're starting to see members of the transgender community finally being able to access more formal employment versus before."*
- *"...This is not a South African problem with medical aids, and in general, I mean, across the globe, there are many countries that have health insurance that don't cater for gender affirming healthcare."*

e) Gender Neutral Restrooms

This may foster a safe and equitable environment for persons of all gender identities. These facilities in organizations encourage equity and are a display of respect but also improve the ambiance of every person within the facilities. This is what the participants had to say:

- *“I don’t think there are gender-neutral restrooms in our office; it’s typically male and female only.”*
- *“I believe that my boss, who is openly lesbian, would support the idea of gender-neutral restrooms, but I’m not sure if they exist.”*

4.5. Theme 2

To examine corporate diversity and inclusivity Initiatives for LGBTQI+ individuals in selected companies in Johannesburg.

The purpose of this theme is to assess the degree of success of the actions taken as well as policies that have been adopted by various firms located in Johannesburg in respecting diversity and the inclusion of the members of the LGBTQI+ community. This includes the assessment of effects of such efforts on the organizational climate and culture. In this respect, the evaluation aims to interpret the results in order to identify outcomes of working in these organizations as an LGBTQI+ employee. This includes information pertaining to their level of experience of workplace-related loneliness as well as acceptance.

a) Disclosure of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

Through concentrating on the measurements and disclosure, more has to be done for the organizations on both the recognition of identity dynamics at work and the support of the cultural diversity and inclusion policies to allow all the workers to be accepted as valuable and appreciated for their identity. This in turn leads to promoting a more positive organisational climate and a better structure, especially in terms of gender, as participants explained:

- *“I have avoided disclosing my sexual orientation due to fear of negative consequences, especially in smaller towns.”*
- *“I feel comfortable being open about my identity, but I know others may not feel the same.”*

b) Threatening or Derogatory Communications

This provides a solution to a major problem that affects the health and safety of people in different contexts, but mainly at places of work. When addressing this matter, organizations should be able to maximise their efforts towards eradicating negative actions hence making

positive changes that would lead to productive workplaces all round. Challenging verbally aggressive or obscene language is important if the company has to develop a culture whereby everyone can work in positive conditions with minimal interference from unchecked behaviours. This is what some participants observed:

- *“... I’ve received two death threats in my career when in relation to my queerness. Oh, yeah, through a phone call and email. One was via email. One was an anonymous call from a private number. I suppose what was reported internally to bodies like campus protection services, the gender equity office, so full investigations were run, and those who were implicated in the second the email, I mean, it’s an email, you trace the IP address your sentence, and we did a series of interventions in that iteration and a day threat that was communicated telephonically.”*
- *“...things that have been happening in the past now and again they will bring up but specifically when they talk about that guy they will mention his sexuality and they will talk about whatever they wanted to talk about but otherwise currently there is no one in the department to talk about it...”*

c) Engagement with the LGBTQI+ Community

Greater emphasis is placed on engagement and linkages between organisations and the LGBTQI+ population. Engagement with such community results in a progressive approach from the organizations (Chung, 2013) and in turn provide improved results in any community and everyone engaging within it. It is not only the LGBTQI+ persons who benefit from this engagement, but the organisational culture and inclusion is also boosted, as explained by participants:

- *“The organization does engage with the LGBTQI+ community through various initiatives, but it’s not very visible.”*
- *“There’s a lack of structured engagement; it’s more informal and based on individual efforts.”*

d) Internal Education and Training

This signifies the need to work and ensure that the environment within which people work is sensitive to the different needs of workers. In this case, adequate funding to support educational and training needs can help organizations achieve a vision that is informed through assimilation of data on equal rights for the LGBTQI+ community, in order for organisations to provide a safe workplace for everyone. Engagement in education is not only good for LGBTQI+ but also

augments the organization's culture and inclusion endeavours. Some of the participants explained:

- *"There's no formal internal education regarding LGBTQI+ issues, which is a significant gap."*
- *"I believe that if we had more training, it would help in creating a more inclusive environment."*

e) LGBTQI+ Employee Resource Group

Such a group will demonstrate the commitment of organizations to provide equal rights for everyone regardless of sexual orientation and individuals in the LGBTQI+ community will also have capable support to perform well in their organizations. This essentially not only serves the needs of the employees in the LGBTQI+ community in organizations but also addresses consideration for the overall positive impact to organizational culture and thus the engagement and wellbeing of employees within organizations. Some of the participants observed:

- *"I'm not aware of any LGBTQI+ employee resource group in our organization."*
- *"There should be a charter for LGBTQI+ individuals to foster a sense of community and support."*

The work experience of LGBTQI+ people often includes fear and a lack of support, and many choose not to disclose for fear of negative ramifications. Single-Identity Policies Like many organizations, the lack of engagement with the LGBTQI+ community and lack of corporate responsibility initiatives reinforce the culture of ignorance and exclusion with few, if any, opportunities to correct the behaviour through engagement – making the case for an LGBTQI+ employee resource group or diversity council irresistible. The absence of support then hurts their feeling of belonging and safety.

4.6. Further Remarks on Initiatives

Participants were asked to give further general comments regarding LGBTQI+ diversity and inclusivity in corporate Johannesburg, South Africa and responded as below:

- *“There’s a need for more visibility and structured initiatives for LGBTQI+ individuals in Johannesburg companies.”*
- *“Education and awareness are crucial; starting from a young age can help eliminate stigma.”*
- *“...in closing on that question, I would say there needs to be a very precise and explicit responsibility taken to prevent pink washing. So when we have, you know, Joburg Pride, and the biggest thing about Joburg Pride is perhaps, let’s say that corporate one, two and three are sponsoring it. Corporate one may be a company that is perhaps a global company. They have branches of their company in countries where being queer is illegal. Yes, say where there’s not Joburg Pride, in this hypothetical scenario, which is not all that hypothetical, in the days when they don’t sponsor pride, pride is one day. Joburg Pride is one day other than Joburg Pride, I want to hear from people in the same company that their company is leading in supporting queer employees. If they’re not, why are they sponsoring Joburg Pride? Are they sponsoring it to get their brand on size marketing material, or they’re sponsoring it because it’s trendy, because they’re buying into the pink round corporates are investing in queer advocacy need to do so responsibly, and organizations that accept donations from queer corporates need to do so with caution. I don’t think that we see that currently...”*

4.7. Summary of the Data Collected

The data analysis from participants’ responses in the semi-structured interviews as a method of data collected was explained in chapter four. Data analysis was done under different themes bringing out the study objectives that were classified according to aspects of organizational culture, deterrence, and awareness of information on diversity and inclusivity.

4.7.1. Overview of Study Findings

The findings are summarized per theme as follows:

Theme 1: Difficulties Faced by LGBTQI+ Individuals

- Policy Awareness - Recent research showed that many workers cannot tell whether or not their employer has policies that protect against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, suggesting several important issues that prevail with organizational communication.
- Initiative Gaps - Currently, it is not well understood what exactly has been done by organizations in this regard, which implies that such programmes may not be well executed or promoted.
- Benefits and Coverage - It remains unclear whether domestic partners are offered benefits, and whether medical aid extends to transgender persons.
- Restroom Accessibility - Lack of gender inclusive restrooms is presented as a weakness of the current designed environment.
- Pronoun Usage - There is no structure which promotes correct pronoun accountability, which ultimately negates inclusion.
- Pride Celebrations - Participation in or support of Pride events is viewed as another way of eradicating the problem rather than a sign of sincere efforts in defending queer individuals.

Theme 2: Corporate diversity and inclusivity Initiatives

- Disclosure Challenges - This research revealed that employees causing their employers to feel uncomfortable remain reluctant to come out and express their sexual orientation because of the possibility of negative consequences particularly where homophobic attitudes are rife such as in small towns.
- Threatening Communications- Examples of such remarks were reported, which were commented in relation to the lack of awareness among employees, especially in smaller branches.
- Internal Education: Insufficient internal education of employees on LGBTQI+ concerns was established and demands for the development of compulsory diversity training were made.
- Resource Groups - Lack of one or more LGBTQI+ employee resource groups was viewed as the organizations lacking an opportunity to foster community and support.

4.8. Limitations

The study faced several limitations, including the inability to cover all aspects of the LGBTQI+ spectrum. The experiences of transgender individuals in corporate settings were not fully represented, as this group has only in the past few years started entering corporate spaces; this was also emphasised by one of the participants: *“We discuss the transgender community quite a lot in work that we do, largely because we do it for educational purposes. And we’re starting to see members of the transgender community finally being able to access more formal employment versus before. But we are starting to see as transgender people enter the workplace, workplaces are completely not equipped to understand them. So, we spend a lot of time trying to explain the community and we even explain them in the context of what is a transgender person, what is a drag queen and what is a crossdresser. So that people don’t have very clear understandings of each of those and don’t confuse them.”*

There were no intersex people were interviewed, as there were hard to track down. The experience of gays may be different from that of lesbian in the workplaces. It would have been opportune to interview an equal number of the individuals of each alphabet in the group. The confidence, and how people work on their sexual orientation in corporate spaces may also depend on their ethnicity, and the way they grew up. However, there was a limitation on identifying an equal number of participants from each ethnicity. In addition, leadership positions by the LGBTQI+ individuals remain rare, which reduces opportunities for the members to be involved in formulation of organizational policies and views from the leadership positions of the members of the LGBTQI+ community.

4.9. Summary of the chapter

This chapter presented the analysis of the qualitative findings based on 12 participants focusing on the lived experiences of LGBTQI+ people in the corporate space in Johannesburg. The findings suggest that these individuals encounter serious challenges such as organizational illiteracy, inadequacy of LGBTQI+ programmes and poor internal organization structures or systems.

The lack of adequate resources and communication and promotion of the policies was not considered surprising as the other half of the respondents reported they knew of such policies. However, it was stated that most organizations do not implement them. There were reports that several companies were involved in Pride events, but such involvement was regarded as work without specific commitment to any LGBTQI+ rights. The findings in Chapter 4 suggest that organizations should work towards the implementation of policies with the view to ensuring enhancement of inclusivity and support for LGBTQI+ employees. This includes having specific policies, creating awareness of existing initiatives, and the need for all people at work to be valued and respected. The perspectives drawn from participants provided relevant suggestions for monitoring the current situation and potential forthcoming attempts towards diversity and inclusivity drives in the workplace.

CHAPTER 5 - INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter identifies the research findings in relation to the current literature, to determine the influence of organisation culture and deterrence in a university information security environment. The themes of the findings reflect the study objectives in the description, analysis, and interpretation of the findings. Recommendations are made based on this analysis. Chapter 3 introduced a conceptual framework that provides a foundational structure in order to understand the dynamics of diversity and inclusion in organizations, particularly with regard to LGBTQI+ individuals. This framework combines different theoretical insights and empirical findings to provide a basis for the analysis and evaluation of effective diversity management practices. The conceptual framework demonstrates the relationship among the key variables of diversity management. It gives a systematic methodology for understanding how organizational culture, stakeholder engagement, and diversity policies interact to contribute to the experiences of LGBTQI+ employees. The framework seeks to provide insights into the elements contributing to a more inclusive workplace.

5.1.1. Main Components of the Framework

The framework consists of the following related parts (Diversity Management):

- **Organizational Culture**

This element focuses on the values, beliefs and practices that define an organization. A positive organizational culture promoting inclusivity and respect for diversity is critical to ensure an environment where LGBTQI+ individuals feel safe and appreciated.

- **Stakeholder Engagement**

This feature emphasizes the need to involve different stakeholders like employees, management, and third parties in the decision-making process. By engaging stakeholders, they better ensure that diverse perspectives are considered, which ultimately leads to more effective diversity initiatives.

- **Diversity Policies and Practices**

This element examines diversity and inclusion policies and practices, both formal and informal, in organizations. Inclusive policies should include Recruitment, Retention, Training, and Support for LGBTQI+ colleagues. It also examines the results of successful diversity management, such as employee satisfaction, organizational performance, and equity in the workplace. These outcomes are among important markers of the success of efforts to increase diversity.

5.1.2. Theoretical Underpinnings

The framework is grounded in several theoretical perspectives:

- **Equity Theory**

This theory posits that fairness and equity are critical components in workplace satisfaction and engagement. Addressing inequities and promoting fairness is likely to be beneficial and lead to better outcomes for all employees.

Proposition 1 (P1): Enhanced employee well-being and organizational outcomes. This will result in increased employee engagement, reduced loss of talent, improved corporate culture, compliance with laws, social justice, and mediated conflict among all stakeholders due to fostering equity and addressing injustice.

- **Stakeholder Theory**

This theory, as explored in previous sections, suggests that the success of any business is contingent upon how it caters to the desires of its stakeholders as opposed to only the shareholders. However, by putting stakeholder engagement front and centre, organizations can raise the potential for creating environments that balance the interests of all involved. This leads to the derived Proposition:

Proposition 2 (P2): Prioritizing stakeholder involvement in decision-making, and establishment of a comprehensive framework to acknowledge stakeholder interests and concerns provide broad frameworks that would overall improve organizational performance, stakeholder satisfaction, thereby enhance success in organizational goals.

5.1.3. Application of the Framework

Through the conceptual framework, studies can identify and evaluate the performance of diversity management practices within an organizational context. It can act as a reflection of how well organizations are implementing their diversity policies as intended, how much stakeholders are engaged, and the overall impact of diversity on LGBTQI+ employees. This framework allows researchers and practitioners to decide what can be done better and design mechanisms to enrich diversity and inclusion initiatives. Chapter 3 offered a conceptual frame through which to analyze the complexity of diversity management in organizations. The integrated framework, which includes factors such as organizational culture, stakeholder engagement, and diversity policies, provides important insights on how organizations can foster both diversity and inclusion that will support LGBTQI+ individuals. This organized framework assists in reporting the status of existing diversity initiatives and provides for current knowledge of diversity initiatives to be applied in future research and practice.

5.2. Appreciative Reflection

5.2.1. Interpretation of how the Equity Theory affects diversity management

Proposition 1 (P1): Enhanced employee well-being and organizational outcomes. Promoting equity and addressing injustice will contribute to improved employee engagement, reduced turnover, enhanced corporate culture, legal compliance, social justice, and conflict resolution, ultimately creating inclusive and productive environments for all stakeholders.

This Proposition is based on Equity Theory, which deals with the necessity of equity and fairness being applied in business relationships. According to the theory, when employees feel they are treated fairly in comparison with their co-workers, they are more likely to enjoy increased job satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty, all of which can ultimately lead to increased retention and a positive overall corporate culture.

5.2.1.1. Perception of Fairness

Equity Theory: Employees compare their inputs and outputs to those of others. The Asking Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity policy by organizations is one of sixty policies for LGBTQI+ individuals that should be integrated as insight into policy. As reflected in the interviews, many participants noted that they were uncertain if their organizations had formal policies addressing LGBTQI+ issues. For example, one respondent explained, *“I don’t know whether the organization currently incorporates sexual orientation or gender identity in its policies.”* This vague language leaves the potential plaintiffs, LGBTQI+ employees, with a tendency to feel deprived, and possibly to assume that their rights and needs are not important.

5.2.1.2. Impact on Employee Engagement

In a diverse atmosphere where inclusion is promoted by organizations, employees tend to become more engaged and committed to their work. The interview responses suggest there is a desire for more formal initiatives to support LGBTQI+ people. One interviewee remarked, for example, *“We celebrate Pride Month and advocate for different Pride events, but there are no established initiatives or policies.”* From the results above, it indicates that although actions do take place towards inclusion, nonetheless, on the same scale, lack of specific policies cannot help in improving the outreach of the LGBTQI+ employees. Filling these gaps and creating organization-wide diversity strategies positions organizations to drive employee engagement and satisfaction.

5.2.1.3. Enhanced Corporate Culture

Regarding corporate culture, a commitment to equity and inclusion can have a dramatic positive impact on the organization. Participants acknowledged the role of diversity initiatives, but there were also calls for more substantial support. Organizations can create a culture of respect and inclusion by implementing policies that speak to the specific needs of LGBTQI+ employees. As a result, it can enhance collaboration, trust, and overall workplace comfort by laying the foundation for employees to know they are valued and supported regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

5.2.1.4. Legal Compliance and Social Justice

Equity Theory highlights the significance of legal compliance and social justice working together to create an inclusive environment. Institutions that address matters of equity and inclusion are not only working within the confines of the law but also showing a commitment to social justice. The interviews point to a need to do more than simply comply; organizations should be actively advocating for the rights of LGBTQI+ people. In this way organizations are highly capable of strengthening their brands, helping to bring in varied talents and build a better society.

5.2.1.5. Conflict Resolution

Equity ensures better conflict resolution in organizations. In the context of fairness perception, employees would be less likely to become involved in conflicts. The interview responses suggest that there is a basic understanding among employees that discrimination is not acceptable, but without a real policy in place, there could be confusion or tension. Organizations can counter this by setting clear ground rules and maintaining a supportive environment for LGBTQI+ colleagues and managing conflict when it happens. When applying Equity Theory to diversity management,

the importance of equity, and addressing injustice in the workplace, particularly for LGBTQI+ employees, is emphasised in the relationship with Proposition 1. Based on responses from the interviews, the research was able to identify the good and bad practices they admitted following within their organizations. However, by adopting robust policies and initiatives to support LGBTQI+ individuals, organizations can also boost employee wellness, increase engagement, decrease turnover and develop a more equitable and functional workplace for all stakeholders. Not only does such conduct align with the foundational principles of Equity Theory, but it also serves the greater good, making society fairer and more equitable in general.

5.2.3. Interpretation of how the Stakeholder Theory affects diversity Management

Proposition 2 (P2): Emphasizing stakeholder cognition by following a broad stakeholder ideology which recognizes both stakeholder interests and stake, will improve organizational performance, stakeholder satisfaction and strategic objectivity. Based on the analysis, Proposition 2 states that prioritizing stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes and adopting an all-encompassing framework to recognize and address stakeholder concerns helps immensely in increasing organizational performance, stakeholder satisfaction, and overall achievement of strategic objectives. Stakeholder Theory appears relevant in understanding this Proposition as organizations need to pay attention to needs and interests of all parties affected by an organization's actions. This approach, where the stakeholder theory helps to shape the diversity management practice, not only leads to better practices but is also better for the organization, as well as its stakeholders.

5.2.3.1. Understanding Stakeholders

Stakeholder Theory recognizes different groups that have a stake in an organization, such as employees, customers, suppliers, investors and the community. Particularly in diversity management, recognizing the distinct perspectives and requirements of these constituencies related to diversity and inclusion is essential. As the interviews in the study show, it is common for employees, especially from marginalized groups, to feel that their perspectives and concerns are not sufficiently represented in decision-making processes. As one participant said: *"I wish management would ask us more about policies that impact how we work."* Recognizing the varying agendas of stakeholders, organizations can then develop more inclusive policies that address the needs of everyone who works there.

5.2.3.2. Putting Stakeholder Inclusion at the Forefront

The perspective underlines the need for consent of stakeholders in selection. Such engagement might include creating diversity councils or surveys or conducting focus groups to solicit input from employees regarding diversity initiatives. Participants expressed interest in having a robust role in shaping diversity policies, according to the interviews. *“It would be great to have a seat at the table when decisions are made about diversity programmes,”* noted one participant. Organizations can invite the stakeholders to co-create relevant initiatives to build on their diversity.

5.2.3.3. An All-Encompassing Framework for Interests

Constructing a comprehensive stakeholder interest framework should incorporate ongoing dialogue and feedback mechanisms that enable stakeholders to share their opinions and perspectives. The interviews emphasize the importance of such frameworks, with participants expressing frustration at the lack of transparency in decision-making. One participant expressed this as follows: *“I tend to feel out of the loop regarding changes that impact us.”* Organizations that write Frequently Asked Questions invest in building trust and belonging by creating channels for feedback and communication.

5.2.3.4. Improve the performance of the organization Stakeholder Engagement

Organizations can improve their performance by placing a stronger emphasis on stakeholder engagement and catering to their respective interests. According to the interviews, a strong sense of agency also contributes to higher levels of employee engagement, particularly when employees feel that their feedback is acknowledged and appreciated. For example, one participant explained, *“When I see my company taking our feedback seriously, it motivates me to give more.”* Engaged employees are generally more productive, less likely to leave, and more likely to encourage a positive atmosphere in their teams, which in turn leads to better performance for the whole organization. Organizations that are proactive in engaging stakeholders in managing diversity can enhance their competitive advantage by attracting the most talented and diverse workforces.

5.2.3.5. Improving Stakeholder Satisfaction

The way in which an organization can engage with its stakeholders to meet their needs is closely related to stakeholder satisfaction. Interviews suggest that members of these organizations believe their organizations can do more to promote diversity and inclusion. For instance, one participant said, *“If I knew my company was genuinely committed to diversity, I would feel more fulfilled in my job.”* Engaging stakeholders and putting in place policies that align with their interests will

lead to higher satisfaction levels, both among employees and other stakeholders. Customer satisfaction can be a strong factor in customer loyalty and the promotion of the organization, contribution to the growth and flourishing of the organization.

5.2.3.6. Achieving Strategic Objectives

Aligning stakeholder interests and organizational goals is necessary for meeting strategic objectives. Interviews conducted for this research revealed that the diversity initiatives aligned with the wider goals of the organization are more likely to succeed. As one participant highlighted, *“If diversity is established as a core company value, it is much more likely to be something employees and customers alike will be onboard with.”* Stakeholder voices holding relevance in strategic planning will make their diversity goals meaningful and impactful, leading to success and greater prominence. Such a convergence can result in enhanced brand image, customer loyalty, and competitive edge in the market.

Stakeholder Theory has been particularly relevant in this context, showcasing the need for organizations to consider not just the performance of individual stakeholders from a diversity perspective, but rather their own role in decision-making processes, as per Proposition 2. The interview responses emphasised how organizations need to build intersectional frameworks so that stakeholders feel that they can demonstrate meaningful engagement. By acknowledging the various perspectives of stakeholders about diversity and actively engaging those stakeholders in designing the diversity initiative, organizations can improve their performance and stakeholder satisfaction while accomplishing their strategic goals. Not only does this lay the groundwork for a more inclusive workplace, but it also strengthens the organization in a competitive environment.

5.3. Potential Areas of Improvement

5.3.1. Interpretation of how the Equity Theory affects diversity management

Equity Theory - what it teaches us about managing diversity.

Proposition 1 (P1): Employee well-being and organizational outcomes. Higher employee engagement and lower turnover, better culture, less litigation and fewer bankruptcies, social justice and conflict resolution, and thus an inclusive and productive environment for all stakeholders will be driven by equity and justice.

Justice-enhancing organizational justice and employee well-being introduces the Equity Theory, which illustrates the social dynamics of workplace exchanges and the reciprocal behaviour of the employees and organizational culture. By leveraging a framework like Equity Theory, organizations can better understand their behavioural motivations and connect their diversity goals to a broader context, thus facilitating greater engagement and effectiveness in these efforts.

5.3.1.1. Understanding Equity Theory in the Workplace

Equity Theory according to Adams (1963) aligns with the principle that humans compare their input-output ratio to others. When employees sense inequity — in salary, recognition or opportunity — it undermines their levels of satisfaction and motivation and causes a decline in engagement. It is important to have representation since employees are not only part of organizations, whether private, public or as social workers, but equity and fairness must also be in place. As far as diversity management is concerned, it is important that all the people working there feel like they are being treated equally according to their worth regardless of their background, gender and sexual orientation. Participants in the study spoke about their concerns around perceived inequities. *“No-one ever told me that I wasn’t useful enough, but because I am an introvert, I obviously get overshadowed by my colleagues, and it tends to make me second guess my use to the team,”* one participant said. This comment suggests that organizations cannot undo these internalizations without first recognizing the need to do so to cultivate a welcoming work environment.

5.3.1.2. Fostering Equity and Addressing Injustice

Achieving Equity and Challenging Injustice Organizations must focus on equity and perceived injustices as levers to enhance employee health. This can be done by establishing transparent policies and practices that provide equal opportunity to all the employees. The interviews reveal there is an interest in organizations exhibiting fair hiring and promotion processes as well as equal pay. *“It’s like, if I knew that everyone had an equal chance of doing well, I would want to add my effort,”* as a participant suggested. This reflects the importance of using fair techniques to motivate and engage employees.

5.3.1.3. Improved Employee Engagement

A higher level of engagement is more common whenever employees believe that they were treated justly and fairly and are likely to derive an equal degree of satisfaction from their work. These interviews show that people who feel valued and recognized are even more likely to remain engaged. *“When there is acknowledgment of my efforts, I feel more connected to my work and my*

team,” one participant explained. This connection is instrumental in creating a feeling of belonging and affinity towards the organization.

5.3.1.5. Enhanced Corporate Culture

An organization’s corporate culture can be significantly improved by a commitment to equity. Prioritizing equity cultivates a culture of trust, collaboration and respect for workers. The interviews indicated that there should be a workplace culture of inclusion and equity that people said they valued, namely, *“A culture that embraces diversity and equity makes me proud to work here. It’s not just about policy, it’s about how we treat one another every day.”* Having a strong corporate culture can motivate workers and create a more productive and positive environment.

5.3.1.6. Legal Compliance and Social Justice

Perspective on Social Justice Promoting equity is not only a moral imperative; in many areas it is also a legal requirement. These organizations have the advantage of potentially being more compliant in general with discrimination and equal opportunity labour laws. This, the interviews indicate, reflects an awakening of awareness of employees by their employers, and of the need for their institutions to be rooted in a sense of social justice. As one of the participants put it, *“I want to work somewhere that stands for what’s right. My employer must embody my values.”* Legal compliance is expected to benefit both businesses and organizations as organizations can largely enjoy a positive reputation all the more and also enter into the minimal risk of litigation and legal claims in cases of leading social justice.

5.3.1.7. Conflict Resolution

This is invaluable in conflicts within organizations. It explains unequivocally that, if employees do not experience equitable treatment, the natural outcome will be conflicts with co-workers or managers. Those who do participate in the programme say they believe that addressing inequities is part of the solution to avoiding disputes. *“If everyone felt that they were being treated fairly, there would be less tension in the workplace, and we could return to what we were doing and lose this concern about who got what”*, noted one participant. A balanced space results in a challenging yet collegial office. When organizations can help every employee feel as if he or she will be treated fairly, the results include increased employee satisfaction, better engagement, more satisfaction and reduced turnover. Additionally, equity underlies legal compliance, social justice, and good conflict resolution. The interviews revealed that organizations cannot afford to simply be equal opportunity employers anymore; they must be proactive about equity being part of their

diversity management plan to create an environment for all stakeholders that guarantees no-one is left behind, and everyone is a catalyst for productivity.

5.3.2. Interpretation of how the Stakeholder Theory affects diversity Management

Proposition 2 (P2): According to this Proposition the increased degree of stakeholder engagement in organizational decision-making along with the systematic framework to recognize and manage the concerns and interest of stakeholders will lead to the enhanced organizational performance, satisfaction of stakeholders and enhanced success in the strategic management of the organization. This Proposition postulates that the enhanced approach of involving stakeholders in the decision-making and developing a framework to acknowledge and manage stakeholder interests and issues will enhance organisational performance, stakeholder satisfaction and achieve greater organizational success in attaining strategic goals. This Proposition emphasises the need to understand the many and multifaceted stakeholder interests as employees, customers, suppliers, and local people towards creating a comprehensive and fair organising environment.

5.3.3.1. Understanding Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory according to Freeman (1984) states that the corporation has an obligation to all individuals and groups who are influenced by it. This approach was counter to the conventional theories about organizations where the focus was primarily on shareholders. When the needs and views of different stakeholders are considered, it would be easier to embrace equality and diversity within organizations.

5.3.3.2. Engaging Stakeholders in Decision-Making

An equally salient feature of Stakeholder Theory is participation in decision-making of the key stakeholders. Interviewees in the study emphasised the need for individuals to feel heard in their workplaces: “*When we are able to make a point to management to listen it is something of a big deal. It demonstrates that they are interested in opinion and ideas that are held by the consumers.*” Such feelings prove the requirements of the existence of organizational voices that will engage stakeholders in the decision-making process, hence offering better solutions.

5.3.3.3. Communal, Interests and Concerns for the Diverse

Ensuring realistic representation of stakeholders’ interests is essential to the general approach applied to diversity management. What emerged were participants’ concerns and interests including the need for organizations to understand and address disparities experienced by diverse populations. One of the respondents emphasised that, “*It is not enough to say that we have the*

diversity policy; it is time to address the concern how we may support more diverse communities.” This underscores the need for staff diversity to move to the next level where organizations shape diverse strategies and policies that will help them listen then respond appropriately to the grievances that may emanate from diversity in organizations.

5.3.3.4. Organizations' Performance Improvement

Stakeholder involvement in their affairs can improve the performance of organizations. Involved stakeholders could be expected to have a commitment to the organizational aims and objectives and enhance the organisational climate. One of the participants noted, *“I will work harder and stay focused on the company's goals when I am included in the decision-making process.”* This link tendered between stakeholder engagement and organizational performance makes it clear that stakeholder inclusion is essential for success.

5.3.3.5. Building and Maintaining Good Stakeholder Relations

Customer satisfaction is closely related to the total social responsibility organizational responses to the needs of different groups. Participants pointed out that organizations that request feedback and act on it make the employees more satisfied with the organization. Another participant said, *“I always value it when my company does not only consult us but also implements what we have to say on their matters. It makes me feel valued.”* It is this feedback loop that is necessary in establishing the rapport that is needed with stakeholders in any organization.

5.3.3.6. Creating a Culture of Inclusion

The purpose of this study is to establish whether commitment to Stakeholder Theory can assist in development of the value of inclusion. Thus, understanding multiple views of stakeholders allows the organization to create a framework in which all people find themselves appreciated and accepted. Every participant noted diversity in organizations or companies. The diverse team makes for a strong team According to one of the participants, *“We are three people, and when we all pool our different ideas together, we are so much more productive for the group.”* This underscores the opportunity that diversity presents to organizations in containing innovation and creativity.

5.3.3.7. Strategies for Achieving Change: The Transition to a Comprehensive Framework

In order to cater for all stakeholders, the organizations requires policies, practices, and programmes that support diversity and inclusion. The participants mentioned that specificity within tone and practice over diversity policy means that there must be proper standards and

consequences with regard to diversity. This is especially important for diversity issues, as one participant noted, *“We need to ensure that our leaders are being made accountable for diversity targets. It can’t only be words; there has to be some deeds.”* This call for accountability suggests that organizations should set quantitative goals and targets to show signs of achievement or lack thereof. Stakeholder Theory in relation to diversity management can be advanced as Proposition 2 (P2), that is the organization should incorporate the stakeholder interests and concerns into their decision-making processes. The integration of stakeholder participation may improve organizational performance, satisfaction and engagement of the individuals. The understanding of participant interviews demonstrates that organisations need to extend their effort to engage with stakeholders, adopt adequate policies, and remain accountable for diversity and inclusion.

5.4. Summary of the chapter

Interview data for this study was gathered and is what is critically analysed. It provides an extensive job analysis on diversity management and the impact that this has on organisation effectiveness. In this chapter, using Equity theory, the research focuses on the importance of equity/fairness in the workplace, arguing that wherever equity is predominant, employees are healthy, they commit to their work and organizations are successful. In addition, Stakeholder Theory focuses on the idea that communication with or handling of different stakeholder interests will yield superior decisions and thus improved organisational performance and stakeholder satisfaction will result. This study offers a theoretical lens for envisioning how organisations can have a clearer view regarding the efficiency of diversity programmes as well as the oversight of diversity strategies and plans in adopting increased diversity approaches. In the process of helping organisations achieve such programmes and strategies gradually, the research recommends essential steps towards greater inclusiveness among businesses and employees.

The findings highlight that engaging in equity, treating stakeholders justly, and practicing social justice are all necessary conditions for creating workplaces that are more productive and inclusive, which benefit the employee experience and promote long-term organizational success.

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

The concluding chapter presents the discussion viewed through the lens of the outcomes of this study regarding corporate diversity and inclusion efforts for LGBTQI+ members in the sampled organizations in Johannesburg, South Africa. In this chapter, the theoretical perspectives presented in Chapter 1 were validated with empirical data and overarching themes and patterns that emerged from the research were identified. In the conclusion, the significance of these findings is discussed, as well as the necessity for workplaces to create more inclusive workplace cultures which empower and uplift LGBTQI+ employees, and recommendations made with regard to policy changes informed by the findings. Moreover, as the findings from this research elucidate both the challenges and the opportunities for diversity, the chapter provides practical recommendations for organizations seeking to enhance their diversity and inclusion strategy. The research furthermore contributes to the literature around corporate social responsibility and egalitarianism in the context of how the barriers and opportunities of the study for implementation shape a more just culture within corporate spaces, in which all who engage with it are able to thrive.

6.2. Research Objectives

6.2.1. Research Objective One

This objective was to examine the factors that lead to challenges of celebrating diversity of sexuality and gender by the selected LGBTQI+ persons in Johannesburg in selected companies. This objective was to establish and understand the factors that might limit the complete inclusion and acceptance of LGBTQI+ persons within the workplace environment. The qualitative research conducted to establish key variables that may contribute to challenges experienced by gay and lesbian employees exposed issues like discrimination, lack of knowledge, and inadequate organizational support. The findings offer insights into these barriers and are thus aligned with the aim of the research.

6.3. Answering the Research Questions

The paper responded to the research questions formulated in Chapter 1 based on the findings of the study and linked to the theoretical concepts examined in Chapter 2 and the analysis presented in Chapter 5. The responses to each question are summarised below:

6.3.1. Research Question One

In selected Johannesburg companies, what are the diversity and inclusion programmes for LGBTQI+ employees, and what are the gaps and difficulties in these initiatives? In combining different theories, this research identified that Equity Theory and Stakeholder Theory were useful in establishing the way Diversity and Inclusion programmes can be instituted in the organisation to address equitable treatment of the LGBTQI+ employees in those organisations. Equity Theory, for example, targets the aspect of perceived organizational justice, a factor that LGBTQI+ employees, and particular those who are younger, should consider in the choice of their workplace. The assessment showed that despite finding many organizations have instituted diversity programmes, diversity deficiencies are apparent, and diversity sensitization remains a challenge coupled with the absence of personalized employee training session programmes or demonstrable management support. These findings align with the anchored theoretical frameworks, which underscore the need for fairness and involvement of stakeholders in the creation of a supportive climate.

6.3.2. Research Question Two

In what ways can employers build up the strategies for managing diversity and inclusiveness of LGBTQI+ people so as to create favourable working conditions and what advantages and risks may be involved in those measures? Human Capital Management (HCM) is a theory that postulates that companies with high human capital and diverse human capital will realize better performance than companies that invest in expensive training programmes. This theory provides strong evidence for the proposition that improving diversity interventions can be of value for the employees and the organisation. The results highlighted that organisations could derive greater effectiveness of programmes by having further training, facilitating employee resource groups for the LGBTQI+ population, and undertaking outreach in the community. The risk factors that include reactions from negative employees were discussed, which coincide with the literature on the management of diversity, as identified in the theoretical frameworks.

6.3.3. Research Question Three

What role do internal education and training best practices, the development of queer support groups in the work setting, or LGBTQI+ corporate responsibility programmes play in an organization's progression of an inclusive culture? The Organizational Diversity approach has education and training as critical components since it focuses on raising diversity appreciation amongst employees. The described framework can be used to promote the view that it is possible to implement structured interventions that introduce more tolerant approaches to the representation of people with disabilities or differences in the workplace. The research substantiated the Proposition that internal education and the formation of resource groups has a positive effect on organizational climate. All these initiatives aim at promoting diversity while simultaneously improving the likelihood of work fulfilment and reducing employee turnover, as reflected in the practical implications of the theoretical concepts assessed.

The research questions were comprehensively addressed in relation to theoretical debates and empirical evidence, providing broad information on the potential and challenges around promoting organizational diversity and supporting the inclusion of LGBTQI+ personnel in the Johannesburg's corporate sector.

6.4. Recommendations

Based on the findings and analysis of the study there are specific recommendations that will promote corporate diversity and inclusion efforts targeting LGBTQI+ people within organizations. The recommendations focus on addressing the challenges discussed in the research, and creating a workplace that is more strongly oriented towards inclusion.

Inclusion starts at the top, and many organizations develop diversity policies to guide their companies in the right direction with respect to diversity and inclusion initiatives, ensuring that all employees are included and feel valued. Every organization needs to agree to publish and enforce clear and comprehensive diversity and inclusion policies, and to make their policies regarding LGBTQI+ issues known. This means, for example, committing to support LGBTQI+ staff and ensuring that all employees are fully informed of the policies as well as the resources available to them.

Regular training sessions should be conducted to raise awareness about LGBTQI+ issues and promote understanding among all employees. These programmes should cover topics such as

unconscious bias, the importance of inclusivity, and the specific challenges faced by LGBTQI+ individuals in the workplace. Research indicates that training can significantly improve workplace culture and employee relations.

Networks of support and mentorship for LGBTQI+ employees should be established within companies that will provide a safe space for those within it to discuss experiences and concerns and to seek the advice of more experienced colleagues. These communities can be especially significant for individual employee welfare and to inculcate a sense of belonging.

Pertinent questions that organisations should raise include whether the organisation has ever worked with an LGBTQI+ stakeholder. To better understand how LGBTQI+ stakeholders (employees, advocacy groups, and community organizations) will react to their diversity efforts organizations will need to seek their feedback. This participatory approach is likely to assist organizations to better understand the needs and interests of LGBTQI+ individuals and contribute to developing appropriate policies.

There should be model initiatives to track and assess diversity efforts. Tracking Diversity and Inclusion programmes regularly will assist in assessing the organization's efforts and to support regular evaluation of the initiatives to determine whether they are making significant change in the workplace culture. This reflects the analytical structure discussed in Chapter 3 regarding the way in which diversity management practices should be evaluated.

Advocating visibility means that organisations must take affirmative action to ensure the visibility and leadership of LGBTQI+ people in decision-making processes. This could include, for example, targeted recruiting and ensuring that diverse voices are present where the conversation about organizational policies and processes is taking place.

A further recommendation requires training of employees for a culture and environment that values diversity and respects all employees. Initiatives include participating in LGBTQI+ events, featuring LGBTQI+ staff members and ensuring an environment where all employees feel safe being who they are. Such recommendations are intended to provide organizations with a roadmap for prioritizing and implementing diversity and inclusion for LGBTQI+ people in their workplaces and supply chains. Through strategic initiatives and continued actions, they can contribute to a more inclusive workplace that will be more conducive to the well-being of all individual employees and the organization overall.

6.5. Future studies

Considering the findings and insights provided by this study on corporate diversity and inclusion initiatives for LGBTQI+ individuals in Johannesburg, the following potential opportunities for future research are proposed. These examples are not exhaustive and may be augmented by other studies to increase the general knowledge around LGBTQI+ experiences at work and inspire the implementation of more targeted diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Future research may take a more intersectional approach and explore how sexual, and gender identities intersect with other social categories (e.g., race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status) in the senior management. Understanding how these layers of identity shape people's experiences in the workplace can contribute to more effective and nuanced diversity initiatives.

Future research could undertake enquiry into employees with LGBTQI+ status or use diversity as tokenism. This study would investigate whether employee involvement in such programmes to encourage diversity will be perceived as genuine support (if they participate voluntarily) or merely compliance (if they are coerced), and how participation or lack thereof will affect employee morale as well as levels of engagement.

Future research could examine the commitment of those in charge of diversity and inclusion efforts in an organization in order to understand the potential implications of organizational leaders' visible support on employees navigating inclusivity and diversity-related practices and/or initiatives in the workplace.

Future research could expand into regional and continental aspects of diversity and inclusion in organizations across Africa where organizations could begin to act in solidarity and share experiences to build stronger LGBTQI+ rights frameworks and promote more inclusive workplaces. Inter-organisational sharing of best practice and support has the potential to bring about change and contribute to more equitable and inclusive workplaces for all employees, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

6.6. Conclusion

Although LGBTQI+ Rights are included in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of South Africa, the realities of implementation are not necessarily sufficiently evidence within various workplaces and in corporate diversity programmes. While South Africa was one of the first countries to legalize such rights, the realities of equal rights implementation within the corporate environment front require further assessment and evaluation.

In South Africa, the legal framework that provides the basis for these rights is considered as being amongst the most progressive legislation in the world. However, these legal frameworks do not necessarily reflect the lived experience of LGBTQI+ people who may continue to experience social stigma, discrimination, and a lack of support in the workplace. This emphasises the importance of organizations to support diversity and inclusion policies and ensure that these are implemented as such policies have significant meaning and are necessary in seeking to create a lived culture of inclusivity. They illustrate that, although some businesses in Johannesburg have demonstrated commitment to the support of diversity and inclusion, in particular in support of LGBTQI+ employees, a significant gap remains between the implementation of these programmes and their impact on the employees for whom they are intended. Examples of identified challenges such as unclear understanding of current policies and stronger need for training initiatives suggest that ongoing review and improvement are required. LGBTQI+ workplace inclusion is internationally recognised as a critical area of focus in the context of increasing global recognition of diversity as a driver for innovation and organizational success. This should encourage organizations in Johannesburg and elsewhere to align their conduct with international expectations. This will assist to strengthen their access to the international marketplaces. In addition, by leveraging on the various challenges as identified as well as the positive developments and opportunities presented I the recommendations of this research, organizations could create a more inclusive atmosphere that not only benefits their LGBTQI+ employees, but one that will also contribute to improved overall corporate performance and a more equitable society in general.

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APPENDIX - Instrument for data collection

To create a comfortable and warm atmosphere before diving into the main questions of the interview, the interviewer will start with some introductory questions that are light-hearted and non-intrusive.

Icebreaker Questions:

- How has your day been so far?
- Did you have any trouble finding the location for our meeting today?

Personal Interest Questions:

- Do you have any exciting plans for the upcoming weekend?

Complimentary Questions:

- I noticed you have a great sense of style. Where do you usually shop for your clothes?

SECTION A - Demographic

1. What is your Gender?

- a) Male
- b) Female
- c) Non-Binary / 3rd Gender
- d) Prefer not to say

2. How do you identify yourself in terms of sexual orientation?

a) LGBTQI+

b) Heterosexual/Straight

3. If you identify as part of LGBTQI+ above, in which category do you identify as?

a) Lesbian

b) Gay

c) Bisexual

d) Transgender

e) Queer / Questioning

f) Intersex

g) + (Other self-identifications)

h) N/A

4. What is your ethnicity?

a) Black

b) White

- b) Middle Management
- c) Senior Management
- d) Non-Skilled

10. What is your level of education?

- a) Grade 12 or less
- b) Diploma
- c) Degree
- d) Honours/PGDip
- e) Masters / PhD

SECTION B – Diversity and Inclusion initiatives for LGBTQI+ Individuals

- a) Does the organization you work for incorporate sexual orientation and gender identity as part of its workforce protections / policies? Please elaborate.
- b) Can you provide a brief overview of the LGBTQI+ diversity and inclusion initiatives currently implemented in your company?
- c) Does the organization provide benefits for domestic partners, including medical and other benefits for the LGBTQI+ Individuals? Please elaborate.
- d) Does the organization offer Medical Aid Benefits that include coverage for transgender individuals? Please elaborate.
- e) Does your organisation have gender neutral restrooms? Please elaborate.
- f) Does your organisation encourage the use of correct pronouns? Please elaborate.
- g) Does your organisation celebrate PRIDE/PRIDE month? Please elaborate.

SECTION D – Employee Recruitment and Retention

- a) When you were applying for the current position did you verify if the company you are considering joining has policies and programmes in place for LGBTQI+ individuals? Please elaborate.
- b) Rate your satisfaction level at your current workplace on a scale of 0-10 (where 0 is very dissatisfied and 10 is very satisfy) Please elaborate.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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- c) Do you intend to leave your current employment? Please elaborate.
- d) If you intend to leave your current employment, what is the following? Please elaborate.

- c) Coloured
- d) Indian / Asian
- e) Other

5. What is your age group?

- a) 18 - 25
- b) 26 - 44
- c) 45 - 59
- d) 60 - 65

6. How many years have you been working?

- a) 0 - 5
- b) 6 - 11
- c) 12 - 17
- d) 18 and above

7. Which geographical area do you work in?

- a) Johannesburg North
- b) Johannesburg South
- c) Johannesburg East
- d) Johannesburg West
- e) Johannesburg Central
- f) N/A

8. Which industry does your organisation of work belong to?

- a) Financial Services
- b) Tourism and Hospitality
- c) Transport
- d) Energy & Mining
- e) Manufacturing
- f) Agriculture
- g) Others (specify).....

9. Which position do you hold in your current place of work?

- a) Skilled/Professional

SECTION E - Effects of diversity and inclusivity initiatives for LGBTQI+ employees with regards to job satisfaction

Perceptions of frequency of victimisation

- a) Since being at this workplace have you ever avoided disclosing your sexual orientation or gender identity due to fear of negative consequences? Please elaborate.
- b) How often do you think colleagues at your workplace might receive threatening or otherwise, derogatory notes, phone calls or emails because they were thought/known to be LGBTQI+? Please elaborate.

SECTION F - Internal education and training best practices, the establishment of LGBTQ+ employee resource groups or diversity councils

- a) Does the organization engage with the LGBTQI+ community through corporate social responsibility initiatives? Please elaborate.
- b) Does the organization advocate for an all-encompassing culture through internal education and training best practices regarding the LGBTQI+ Community? Please elaborate.
- c) Does the organization have an LGBTQI+ employee resource group or diversity council? Please elaborate.
- d) How does working for an organization that ensures there is internal education, training, and engages in corporate social responsibility specifically targeting the LGBTQI+ community impact your sense of recognition as an employee of the same community? Please elaborate.

SECTION G – Open Ended Questions

- a) Are there any ongoing challenges or areas for improvement in terms of LGBTQI+ inclusion initiatives in the company you work for?
- b) What measures in your view should companies in Johannesburg take to enhance diversity, inclusivity, and well-being experience for LGBTQI+ individuals in the corporate sector?
- c) What measures in your view should the government take to enhance diversity, inclusivity, and well-being experience for LGBTQI+ individuals in the corporate sector in Johannesburg?
- d) What further remarks do you have about the initiatives for LGBTQI+ individuals in Johannesburg companies?