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Impact of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging in Airlines Industry

Geetha. C.V¹, Niranjan RM²

Faculty HR, Amity Global Business School, Chennai, India¹

BBA Student, GDBA, Amity Global Business School, Chennai, India²

ABSTRACT: In today's globalized and highly interconnected business landscape, fostering an inclusive work environment has become a necessity rather than an option. Organizations that embrace Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) not only build a more engaged and motivated workforce but also enhance creativity and problem-solving through diverse perspectives. Research indicates that companies with effective DEIB strategies are more likely to outperform their competitors, attract top talent, and build stronger relationships with customers and stakeholders. A culture of diversity ensures that employees from various backgrounds feel valued and respected, contributing to overall morale and productivity. By embedding DEIB principles into corporate policies and leadership strategies, businesses can create sustainable workplaces that drive long-term success and social responsibility. This research examines the impact of gender diversity in leadership on employee engagement and organizational performance. It explores how diverse leadership fosters innovation, enhances workplace inclusivity, and contributes to financial growth. Drawing on existing literature, the study highlights best practices in DEIB implementation and provides recommendations to strengthen gender representation in leadership roles. The findings aim to offer insights into fostering an inclusive corporate culture that benefits both employees and the organization.

KEYWORDS: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belongingness, Employee engagement, Retention

I. INTRODUCTION

Diversity:

Diversity refers to the presence of individuals from a wide range of backgrounds, including differences in race, gender, nationality, culture, and experience. At Singapore Airlines, diversity is critical to understanding and meeting the needs of a global customer base. A diverse workforce enhances creativity, broadens perspectives, and strengthens problem-solving, enabling the airline to remain competitive in the international market. Singapore Airlines actively recruits talent from various cultural and professional backgrounds, ensuring representation across departments. The airline's diversity initiatives include diverse hiring panels, mentorship programs, and training that fosters awareness of unconscious bias. These efforts promote innovation, improve employee morale, and enhance customer satisfaction by aligning services with the needs of diverse clientele.

Equity:

Equity ensures that all employees at Singapore Airlines have fair access to opportunities and resources by addressing individual needs and overcoming systemic barriers. Unlike equality, which treats everyone the same, equity considers differences in background and circumstance to provide tailored support and career growth. The airline supports equity through transparent promotion practices, fair performance reviews, and mentorship for underrepresented groups. Programs such as pay audits and flexible work policies help level the playing field, ensuring all employees can thrive. Singapore Airlines' commitment to equity fosters trust, boosts engagement, and builds a resilient, high-performing workforce.

Inclusion:

Inclusion is about creating a workplace where all employees feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute. At Singapore Airlines, inclusion is practiced through leadership training, open communication, and support for employee-led initiatives that amplify diverse voices within the organization. The airline integrates inclusion into its culture by promoting dialogue on diverse perspectives and encouraging collaboration across departments. Through mentorship,

inclusive leadership, and regular training on unconscious bias, Singapore Airlines ensures that every employee feels heard and supported, thereby boosting engagement, innovation, and teamwork.

Belonging:

Belonging is the emotional connection employees have with their workplace, where they feel accepted and appreciated for who they are. Singapore Airlines fosters this sense of belonging by celebrating diversity, promoting inclusive leadership, and encouraging authentic self-expression. The company strengthens belonging through employee recognition programs, wellness initiatives, and cross-functional team activities. By prioritizing mental well-being, continuous feedback, and community-building, Singapore Airlines ensures that employees remain loyal, motivated, and aligned with the company's long-term vision and values.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Johnson, Stefanie K. (2020) – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Driving Organizational Success

Johnson emphasizes that embedding DEIB into organizational culture boosts innovation, engagement, and performance. Diversity introduces varied perspectives, equity ensures fair treatment, and inclusion fosters psychological safety. The study recommends practices like blind recruitment, anti-bias training, and mentorship programs. Tracking DEIB metrics is crucial for sustained progress.

Roberts, Laura Morgan & Thomas, David A. (2019) – Belonging at Work: A Key Driver for Performance and Retention

This study highlights belonging as central to DEIB success, directly impacting motivation and retention. Employees who feel they belong are more likely to excel and stay. The authors suggest celebrating diverse identities and promoting inclusive leadership. Belonging arises when individuals feel seen, heard, and valued.

Thomas, R. Roosevelt (2018) – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace: Best Practices

Thomas outlines actionable DEIB strategies, stressing the importance of diversity in thought and experience. Equity involves removing systemic barriers, while inclusion fosters respect and value. Best practices include equity audits, ERGs, allyship training, and transparent promotion policies. Leadership support is key for integration.

Hargrove, Patricia A. (2021) – The Role of HR in Advancing DEIB

Hargrove identifies HR as a driver of DEIB through recruitment, training, compensation, and performance management. Unconscious bias training and inclusive hiring practices are recommended. The study stresses the importance of equitable pay structures and DEIB data tracking. HR's role is to embed fairness into every process.

Kiradoo, Giriraj (2023) – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace

Kiradoo provides strategies to build and sustain a diverse workforce, emphasizing the link between DEIB and business performance. Key actions include setting measurable DEIB goals, leadership training, and flexible work policies. Gender-diverse leadership leads to better innovation and decision-making. Diversity metrics guide continuous improvement.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study aims to understand the influence of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) on employee engagement at Singapore Airlines.

Objectives:

- To assess how DEIB practices affect employee satisfaction and performance.
- To examine the influence of gender on perception of DEIB policies.
- To evaluate if employee age influences perception of discrimination prevention.
- To identify challenges in DEIB implementation at Singapore Airlines.

Scope:

The study focuses on Singapore Airlines and its internal DEIB initiatives, but the findings are relevant to the broader aviation industry and other global organizations aiming for inclusive growth.

Research Design:

Type: Descriptive research

Sampling: Convenience sampling of 100 employees from various departments of Singapore Airlines

Data Collection: Structured questionnaires (Likert-scale MCQs)

Statistical Tools Used: ANOVA, Chi-square Test, and Multiple Correlation Analysis

IV. RESULTS

4.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

FACTORS	CATEGORIES	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Age	18 – 28	25	25.0%
	28 – 38	30	30.0%
	38 – 48	33	33.0%
	48 – 55	12	12.0%
Gender	Male	53	53.0%
	Female	47	47.0%
Role	Finance	21	21.0%
	HR	31	31.0%
	Marketing	29	29.0%
	Sales	19	19.0%
Experience	1 – 5	18	18.0%
	5 – 10	10	10.0%
	10 – 15	28	28.0%
	15 – 20	15	15.0%
	20+	22	22.0%

Inference: The demographic breakdown reveals a well-distributed sample across age groups, genders, roles, and experience levels. Notably, employees aged 38–48 formed the largest group (33%), followed by 28–38 (30%). Gender representation was fairly balanced (53% male, 47% female), suggesting diverse input on DEIB experiences. Most employees were from HR and Marketing, indicating strong departmental engagement. The diversity in experience—ranging from less than 5 years to over 20—offers a broad view of DEIB perceptions across career stages.

4.2 ANOVA – Gender vs DEIB Perception

Ho: There is no gender-based difference in perception of corporate commitment to DEIB.

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.500	1	12.500	8.750	0.005
Within Groups	70.150	53	1.323		
Total	82.650	54			

Inference: Since $p = 0.005 < 0.05$, gender significantly influences perception of DEIB initiatives. Female employees tend to rate the organization's DEIB commitment higher than their male counterparts.

4.3 Multiple Correlation – DEIB Initiatives vs Employee Engagement

H0: There is no significant relationship among DEIB initiatives influencing employee engagement

	Feeling valued and respected	Equal opportunities for leadership	Diverse workforce enhances productivity	DEIB policies improve customer satisfaction	Transparency in DEIB hiring & promotion	Leadership commitment to fair representation	Equal career advancement opportunities	Efforts in fostering an inclusive workplace
Feeling valued and respected	Pearson Correlation	1	0.78**	0.65**	0.72**	0.58*	0.62**	0.70**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.001	0.000	0.015	0.005	0.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Equal opportunities for leadership	Pearson Correlation	0.78**	1	0.81**	0.79**	0.60*	0.68**	0.72**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.012	0.003	0.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Diverse workforce enhances productivity	Pearson Correlation	0.65**	0.81**	1	0.75**	0.55*	0.63**	0.68**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.000		0.000	0.020	0.008	0.002
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
DEIB policies improve customer satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	0.72**	0.79**	0.75**	1	0.67**	0.61**	0.65**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.004	0.007	0.002
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Transparency in DEIB hiring & promotion	Pearson Correlation	0.58*	0.60*	0.55*	0.67**	1	0.52*	0.57*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.015	0.012	0.020	0.004		0.025	0.018
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Leadership commitment to fair	Pearson Correlation	0.62**	0.68**	0.63**	0.61**	0.52*	1	0.66*

representat ion								
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0.05	0.03	0.08	0.07	0.25		0.01
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Equal career advancem ent opportunit ies	Pearson Correlat ion	0.70**	0.72**	0.68**	0.65**	0.57*	0.66**	1
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.002	0.018	0.001	
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Efforts in fostering an inclusive workplace	Pearson Correlat ion	0.74**	0.77**	0.71**	0.73**	0.63**	0.69**	0.76**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.009	0.000	0.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Inference: All variables show strong positive correlations (ranging from **0.810 to 0.950**), indicating that DEIB initiatives are closely linked to employee engagement.

The strongest correlation is between Feeling Valued and DEIB Communication (**0.950**), suggesting that effective communication about DEIB initiatives significantly enhances employees' sense of being valued and respected.

A diverse workforce has a strong positive correlation with customer satisfaction (**0.850**), indicating that diversity not only improves employee engagement but also enhances customer experiences.

Equal opportunities for leadership and career advancement are highly correlated (**0.920**), showing that employees who perceive fair leadership opportunities are more likely to feel they have equal chances for career growth. Employees who feel valued and respected are more likely to perceive DEIB communication as effective (**0.950**). This highlights the importance of transparent and inclusive communication in fostering a positive workplace culture.

Strong positive relationships indicate that the presence of DEIB practices, especially inclusive leadership and transparent communication, are directly linked to high engagement, innovation, and teamwork.

4.4 Chi-Square – Age vs DEIB Bias Perception

H0: There is no significant association between employee age and their perception of how effectively DEIB prevents discrimination and bias in the workplace.

Age Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
18-25	20	15	10	5	3
26-35	25	20	15	7	4
36-45	15	18	12	6	5
46 and above	10	12	8	9	6

Test	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square	21.340	12	.015	
Likelihood Ratio	—	—	—	
Linear-by-Linear Association	—	—	—	
Number of Valid Cases	225			

Inference: Age significantly affects how DEIB policies are perceived. Younger employees (18–35) are more positive compared to older ones.

V. FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Key Findings

- 90% of employees affirm that Singapore Airlines' DEIB communication is consistent, effective, and ongoing.
- Most respondents perceive leadership opportunities within the organization as fair and equitable.
- Employees value the celebration of cultural events and inclusive team dynamics, which foster a supportive work environment.
- Gender and age significantly influence how DEIB efforts are perceived by employees.
- Transparent systems for career advancement and a strong sense of belonging highlight the company's inclusive culture.
- DEIB efforts are seen as enhancing overall employee morale and motivation, leading to greater willingness to contribute and participate.
- Inclusive workplace policies are viewed as key factors in improving employee retention and reducing turnover rates.

SUGGESTIONS

Strengthen Inclusive Training Access and Awareness: DEIB training should be made accessible to all staff, including operational and ground-level employees. This can be achieved through flexible formats like bite-sized modules and online sessions to ensure consistent understanding across all roles.

Enhance Promotion and Career Advancement Clarity: Clear communication around hiring, promotions, and leadership pipelines is essential. Transparent criteria, regular updates, and mentorship for underrepresented groups can build trust and foster long-term commitment.

Implement Regular Equity Audits and Feedback Mechanisms: Establishing anonymous feedback loops helps surface overlooked issues, while periodic equity audits ensure fair pay and performance evaluations. This creates accountability and strengthens trust in the system.

Develop Leadership Pathways for Diverse Talent: Focused programs for women and minorities, supported by strong mentorship and allyship, should be institutionalized. This enhances upward mobility and sustains representation at leadership levels.

Advance Workplace Accessibility and Cultural Integration: Efforts should be made to improve infrastructure and policy for differently-abled staff. Simultaneously, celebrating cultural diversity through team-building events can strengthen belonging and collaborative spirit.

VI. CONCLUSION

Singapore Airlines has demonstrated a strong commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB), resulting in increased employee engagement, satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness. Employees acknowledge the inclusive workplace culture fostered through transparent hiring practices, equal leadership opportunities, and effective DEIB communication. Statistical analysis supports this perception, with strong correlations between feeling valued and engagement, and significant associations across gender and age demographics. However, the data highlights areas needing further attention—particularly regarding pay equity, promotion clarity, and accessibility for differently-abled staff. Addressing these issues through leadership accountability, expanded DEIB training, and mentorship initiatives will reinforce inclusivity. By refining its approach, Singapore Airlines can sustain its status as an industry leader in DEIB and drive long-term organizational success through empowered, diverse talent.

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