



A STUDY ON ROLE OF INCLUSIVE HIRING PRACTICES IN ENHANCING WORKPLACE MOTIVATION AT COGNIZANT

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the role of inclusive hiring practices in enhancing workplace innovation within a leading information technology organization. A structured questionnaire was administered to 100 employees selected through simple random and purposive sampling methods. Findings indicated that majority of employees received diversity and inclusion training, 50.0% rated team diversity as high or very high, and majority perceived inclusive hiring as improving innovation outcomes. Increased creativity and better collaboration emerged as the primary benefits of inclusive hiring. Areas for improvement included expanding training coverage, enhancing visibility of disability inclusion, and embedding inclusion metrics into organizational scorecards. The study underscored the positive association between inclusive recruitment, participatory decision-making, and innovation performance, while identifying gaps in executive engagement and under-represented group inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive hiring practices represented a progressive shift in the human resource management paradigm wherein organizations deliberately adopted equitable, non-discriminatory, and diverse recruitment policies to accommodate individuals from various backgrounds, including but not limited to gender, race, age, disability, socio-economic status, and sexual orientation. The foundational principle of inclusive hiring rested on the ideology that every individual, regardless of personal identity markers, possessed the potential to contribute meaningfully to organizational outcomes. As a result, inclusive hiring moved beyond compliance-oriented

affirmative action frameworks and focused on building an organizational culture that embraced differences as assets rather than anomalies. This approach created opportunities for underrepresented groups while simultaneously fostering a rich, multicultural talent pool that could infuse varied perspectives into routine work processes.

Lastly, the interconnection between inclusive hiring and innovation offered rich empirical and theoretical scope for academic inquiry. Scholars across disciplines such as human resource management, organizational behavior, and innovation studies increasingly examined this relationship to understand how structural inclusion mechanisms translated into creative outputs. Research in this area sought to uncover mediating variables such as team dynamics, knowledge sharing, and emotional intelligence, thus expanding the theoretical depth of both inclusion and innovation. The field, therefore, remained dynamic, with inclusive hiring practices acting as a pivotal force in shaping future-ready and innovation-driven workplaces.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the inclusive hiring practices followed by Cognizant in its recruitment and selection process.
- To analyze how inclusive hiring contributes to increased diversity in the workplace at Cognizant.
- To evaluate the relationship between workforce diversity and innovation outcomes within Cognizant.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- The scope of the study encompassed an in-depth analysis of inclusive hiring practices and their influence on workplace innovation.
- The research examined specific dimensions of inclusivity in recruitment, such as representation of marginalized groups, elimination of bias in selection processes, and fairness in opportunity access

- It also explored the direct and indirect effects of workforce diversity on innovation outcomes by analyzing aspects such as ideation quality, team collaboration, and creative problem-solving.
- The geographical and organizational scope was limited to a single large-scale corporation, thereby enabling focused analysis within a defined business context.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **Ezeafulukwe et al. (2024)** in their comprehensive review examined established human resource practices that organizations employed to promote inclusive employment.
- **Gardner, Love, and Waller (2023)** conducted a critical race analysis to explore how elite sport organizations constructed narratives around diversity and inclusion. The authors analyzed official communications, policy documents, and public statements to reveal discursive strategies that framed D&I efforts as benevolent gestures rather than structural imperatives.
- **Tarafdar, Rets, and Hu (2023)** investigated the role of information and communication technologies in enhancing workplace inclusion within organizations. Drawing on case studies and survey data, they identified ICT-enabled practices such as accessible digital platforms, collaborative tools with built-in equity features, and AI-driven talent analytics that supported diverse participation.
- **Khan et al. (2023)** proposed a multistage theoretical framework for creating and managing neurodiverse workplaces to achieve positive organizational outcomes. Their model delineated stages including needs assessment, workplace adjustments, targeted recruitment, structured onboarding, and continuous support through peer networks and coaching.
- **Russen and Dawson (2023)** examined the sequencing of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives within hospitality organizations to determine which dimension should precede the others.

DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

The research methodology adopted for this study was designed to systematically examine the role of inclusive hiring practices in enhancing workplace innovation, with a structured approach that integrated both quantitative data and descriptive analytical techniques. The study was grounded in a primary data collection strategy utilizing a closed-ended questionnaire that captured demographic information, multiple-choice responses, and Likert-scale feedback.

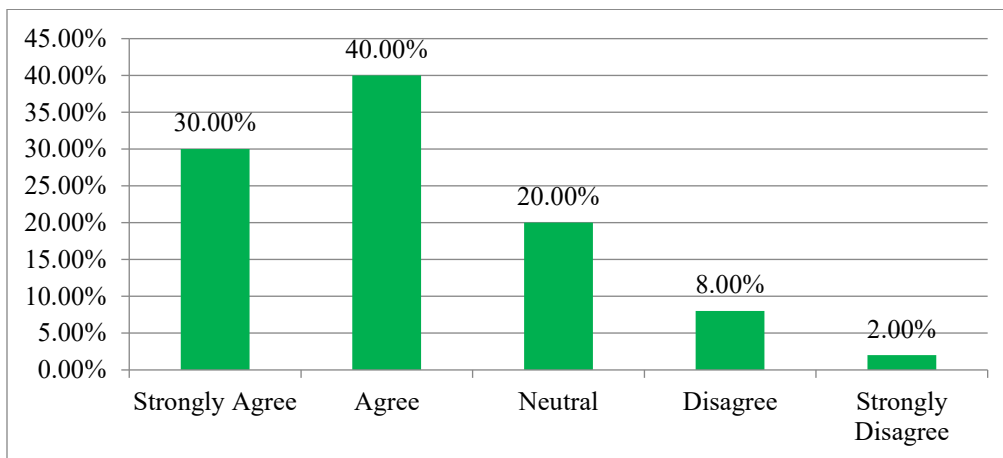
DATA ANALYSIS

01.Evidence of Inclusive Recruitment

Table:01 Recruitment

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	30	30.0%
Agree	40	40.0%
Neutral	20	20.0%
Disagree	8	8.0%
Strongly Disagree	2	2.0%
Total	100	100.0%

Figure: 01 Recruitment



Interpretation

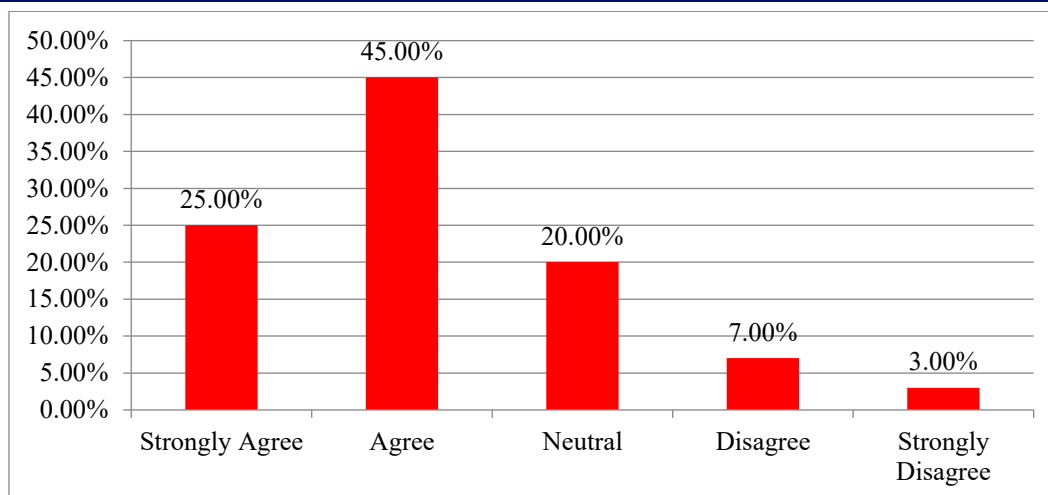
Seventy percent agreed or strongly agreed that recruitment processes clearly reflected inclusive hiring, while 10.0% expressed disagreement. The neutral respondents (20.0%) suggested moderate uncertainty but overall recognition of inclusive practices.

02. Efforts to Include Under-represented Groups

Table 1: Efforts

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	25	25.0%
Agree	45	45.0%
Neutral	20	20.0%
Disagree	7	7.0%
Strongly Disagree	3	3.0%
Total	100	100.0%

Figure 1: Efforts



Interpretation

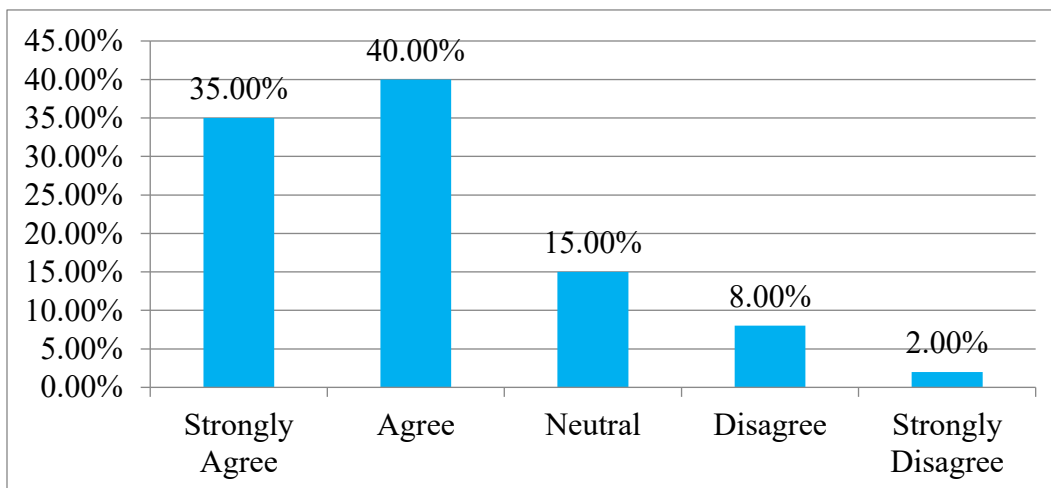
Seventy percent agreed that conscious efforts targeted underrepresented groups, with only 10.0% dissenting. The substantial agreement indicated organizational commitment to equitable recruitment.

03. Diversity and Problem-Solving

Table 2: Diversity

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	35	35.0%
Agree	40	40.0%
Neutral	15	15.0%
Disagree	8	8.0%
Strongly Disagree	2	2.0%
Total	100	100.0%

Figure 2: Diversity



Interpretation

Seventy-five percent agreed that diversity enhanced problem-solving, demonstrating a broad belief in the cognitive benefits of heterogeneous teams. The minority disagreement highlighted areas for reinforcing this linkage through practice.



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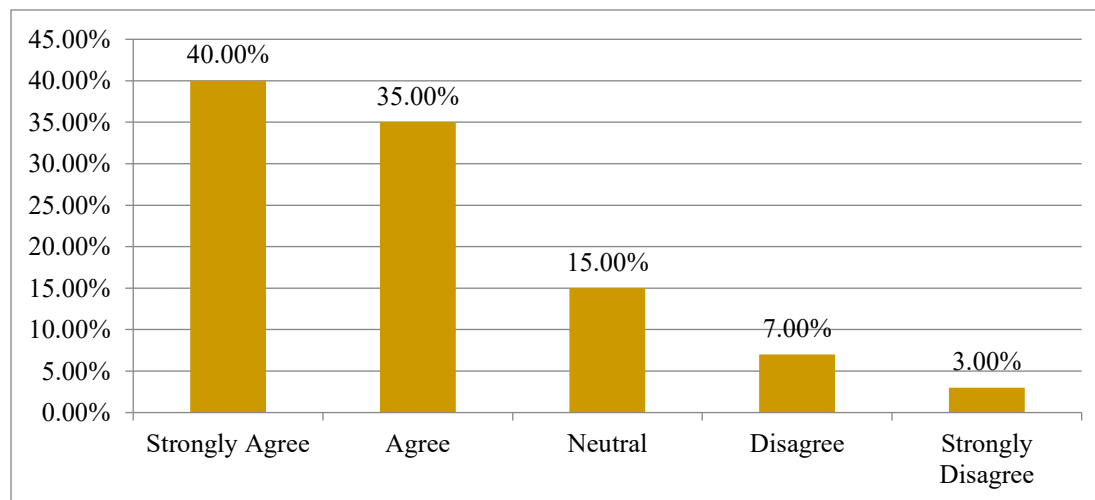
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14. Diversity and Unique Ideas

Table 3: Ideas

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	40	40.0%
Agree	35	35.0%
Neutral	15	15.0%
Disagree	7	7.0%
Strongly Disagree	3	3.0%
Total	100	100.0%

Figure 3: Ideas



Interpretation

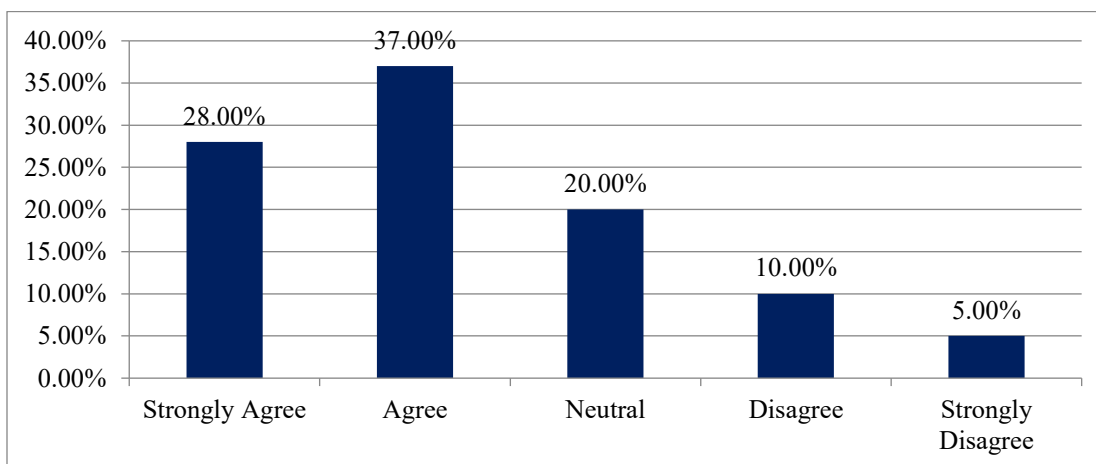
Seventy-five percent agreed that diverse backgrounds contributed novel ideas, underscoring the perceived value of cognitive diversity for driving innovation. A small disagreement suggested occasional underutilization of such ideas.

05. Comfort in Expressing Views

Table 4: Comfort

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	28	28.0%
Agree	37	37.0%
Neutral	20	20.0%
Disagree	10	10.0%
Strongly Disagree	5	5.0%
Total	100	100.0%

Figure 4: Comfort



Interpretation

Sixty-five percent felt comfortable sharing views in an inclusive environment, whereas 15.0% expressed discomfort. This suggested generally supportive psychosocial conditions, with room to further strengthen psychological safety.



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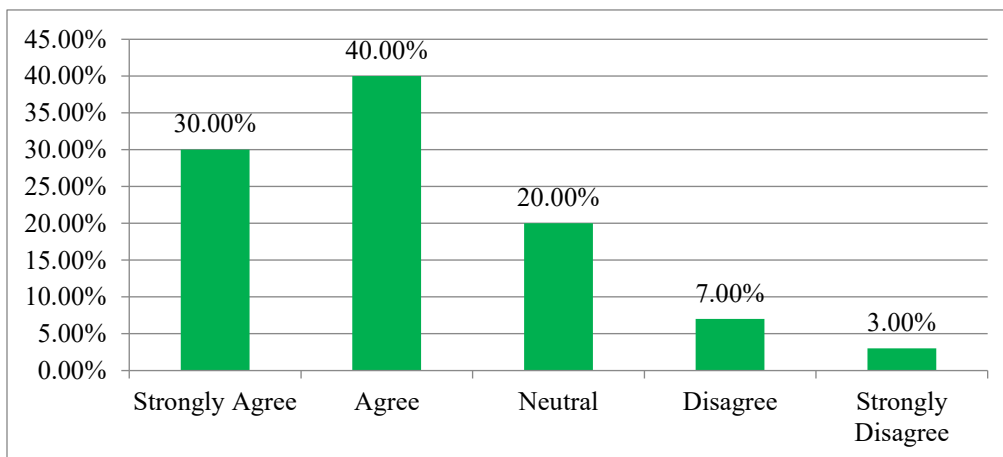
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06. Diversity and Collaboration

Table 5: Collaboration

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	30	30.0%
Agree	40	40.0%
Neutral	20	20.0%
Disagree	7	7.0%
Strongly Disagree	3	3.0%
Total	100	100.0%

Figure 5: Collaboration



Interpretation

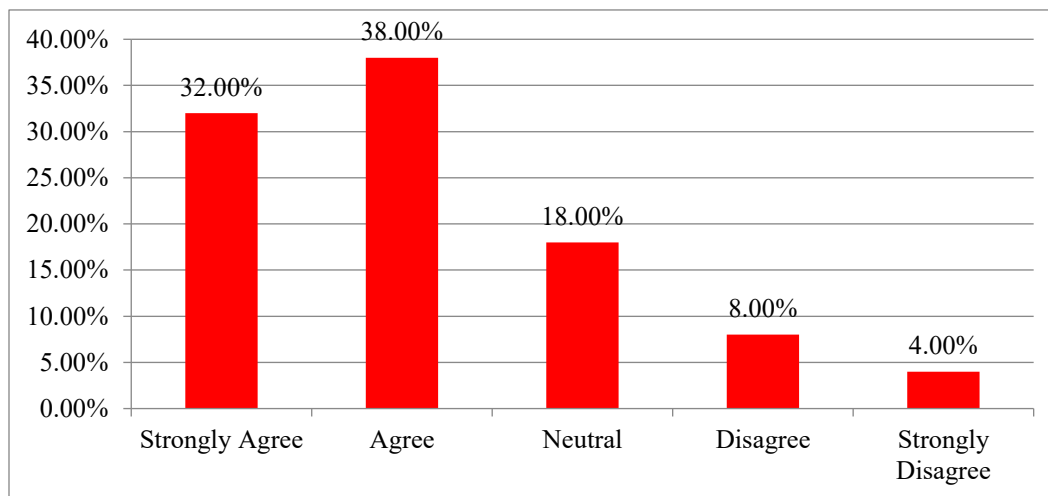
Seventy percent agreed that diversity improved collaboration, reflecting strong consensus on teamwork benefits. The minority dissent highlighted situations where diversity might introduce coordination challenges.

07.Diversity and Creativity

Table 6: Creativity

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	32	32.0%
Agree	38	38.0%
Neutral	18	18.0%
Disagree	8	8.0%
Strongly Disagree	4	4.0%
Total	100	100.0%

Figure 6: Creativity



Interpretation

Seventy percent reported observing enhanced creativity following inclusive hiring. The remaining respondents indicated either neutrality or disagreement, suggesting variability in how inclusion translated into creative outcomes.



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FINDINGS

- The **sample comprised** 58.0% male and 42.0% female respondents, indicating a higher representation of male employees in the study.
- The **largest age cohort fell** within the 26–35 years bracket (40.0%), followed by 36–45 years (25.0%), reflecting a workforce concentrated in early and mid-career stages.
- **Tenure analysis** showed that 35.0% of respondents had served 1–3 years, 30.0% had served 4–6 years, 25.0% had served more than six years, and 10.0% had served less than one year, indicating a balanced distribution of organizational experience.
- **Forty percent** of participants worked in Technology/IT, 25.0% in Operations, 15.0% in Finance, 10.0% in Marketing, and 10.0% in other departments, illustrating functional diversity within the organization.
- **Seventy percent of employees reported having received diversity and inclusion training**, while 30.0% had not, revealing both a strong organizational emphasis on D&I and potential gaps in program coverage.
- **Gender diversity was identified as the most evident form of inclusivity (30.0%)**, with cultural/ethnic diversity (25.0%) and age diversity (20.0%) following, whereas disability inclusion was less observed (15.0%) and 10.0% perceived no evident form.

SUGGESTIONS

- Cognizant should expand diversity and inclusion training to cover the 30.0% of employees who had not yet participated.
- Recruitment processes should incorporate structured bias-mitigation techniques to enhance the visibility of disability inclusion at Cognizant.
- Talent acquisition metrics should track representation across all identity dimensions, including cultural, gender, age, and disability categories.
- Leadership should implement periodic surveys to monitor employee perceptions of inclusivity and address emerging concerns.
- Cross-functional innovation workshops should be organized to leverage the diverse problem-solving strengths identified among different teams.

- Mentorship programs should be established pairing mid-level employees with executives to strengthen leadership diversity pipelines.

CONCLUSION

- The study demonstrated that the majority of respondents were male, mid-career professionals employed in Technology/IT and operations, and that tenure spanned across all experience levels, thereby providing a comprehensive view of organizational demographics. High levels of reported diversity and inclusion training coincided with generally positive perceptions of team heterogeneity, problem-solving efficacy, and creative contributions, establishing a clear association between inclusive hiring and enhanced innovation outcomes.
- Although most participants agreed that recruitment processes and leadership practices supported inclusivity, notable minorities reported gaps in training coverage, disability inclusion visibility, and participatory decision-making, indicating areas requiring targeted intervention. The findings underscored that while inclusive hiring had been effectively institutionalized in many respects, sustained progress depended on continuous measurement, leadership accountability, and the expansion of equitable practices to all employee segments.
- Data indicated a strong positive link between inclusivity and innovation but also revealed that not all dimensions of diversity were equally recognized or leveraged, particularly in the context of disability inclusion and age diversity. The study thus emphasized the importance of broadening the scope of inclusivity beyond gender and ethnicity to maximize the creative potential of the entire workforce. It also recommended integrating inclusion metrics into performance evaluations and strategic planning to institutionalize accountability for innovation outcomes.
- By aligning human resource policies with participatory governance and targeted support for under-represented groups, the organization could further harness workforce diversity as a sustainable competitive advantage. This research confirmed that the systematic adoption of inclusive hiring practices had yielded perceptible improvements in team creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving. Nevertheless, achieving full inclusivity required ongoing commitment to training, policy enhancement, and leadership engagement.
- The organization was thus positioned to build upon its existing strengths by addressing identified gaps, reinforcing inclusive culture at the executive level, and embedding

diversity metrics into strategic objectives. Such actions would ensure that inclusive hiring remained a dynamic driver of innovation and long-term organizational success.

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