

Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

THE PATH TO SUCCESS IN CORPORATE AMERICA FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES AND
UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Global Leadership and Change

by

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Finally, to my teachers, mentors, my teams, leaders, peers, and friends thank you all for your support, understanding, and encouragement.

VITA

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Director of Human Resources, Oct 2008 – Sep 2014 (Corporate Functions, including Global Operations, IT, and Supply Chain)

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Certified Professional Coach (CPC) ■ Institute of Professional Excellence in Coaching (IPEC) 2013
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Board Member ■ Hudson Institute of Coaching Customer Advisory Board 2021 – Present
Board Member ■ Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, Lynchburg Chapter 2020 – Present
Diversity Committee; VP of Programs for Roanoke Valley Chapter; President-Elect; Past Chapter President and Social Media Director for Virginia State SHRM Council; Workforce Development Director for the VA SHRM State Council; Diversity Chair for VA State Council ■ Society of Human Resource Management
Board Member; State Strategic Planning Committee; Annual Giving/Membership Committee ■ Miriam’s House 2020 – Present
Board Member; Strategic Planning Committee; Facilitated Chapter Strategic Planning Session ■ Girls on the Run 2020 – Present
Corporate Development Committee ■ LOMA Learning and Development Council 2018 – Present
Chair, Annual Walk; Corporate Giving Committee ■ Alzheimer’s Association, Central and Western Virginia Chapter 2016 – 2020
Annual Fundraising & Budget Committee ■ Lynchburg Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors 2017 – 2019
Board Member; Corporate Partnership & Development Committee ■ Region 2000 Workforce Development 2016 – 2019
Board Member; 2018 Executive Chair ■ American Red Cross, Central Virginia Chapter 2016 – 2018
Board Member; Strategic Planning Committee ■ Iron Lives Inc. 2015 – 2018
Executive Chair ■ Lynchburg Heart Association Heart Walk 2018
Board Member; Corporate Giving Committee ■ Bedford Area Educational Foundation 2016 – 2017
Member ■ LOMA HR Executive Panel 2015 – 2016
Board Member; Strategy Development Committee/Review Board; Volunteers Committee ■ Junior Achievement of Roanoke Valley
Health and Wellness Committee; Annual Funding Committee ■ Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

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Panelist, Pepperdine GSEP ■ Black History Month Student Panel Series
Panelist, ILA Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Virtual Summit ■ DEIB from a Spiritual Perspective
Workshop Speaker ■ Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities Annual Inclusion Summit
Speaker ■ Diversity MBA 16th Annual National Business Leaders Conference & Awards Gala
Panelist, Coaching Conversations: “Leader as Coach” ■ Hudson Coaching
Panelist, Virginia Inclusion Summit ■ Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities
Workshop Speaker ■ Conference of African American Financial Professionals Conference
Guest Interview with Diversity MBA CEO ■ Diversity MBA Bold Business Webinar
Panelist, DEI for All Business Podcast ■ Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance
Panelist, Women’s Conference ■ Magnate Consulting
Panelist, Diversity Round Table ■ Cox Communication Business Series

ABSTRACT

Workforce diversity continues to expand in organizations across the United States and globally. However, organizations struggle to retain and maintain diverse representation in the workforce. The focus for organizations to ensure they have an established success model for underrepresented populations, specifically ethnic minorities, is a critical strategy for organizations seeking to maintain diverse workforce representation and cultures.

Ethnic minorities face many challenges to success, access to opportunities, and the same workplace experiences as their non-ethnic peers (Cole & Salimath, 2013). There have been steps taken to address the challenges created due to the inequities faced by ethnic minorities and underrepresented groups, however, there remains room for meaningful and sustainable change for ethnic minorities and underrepresented groups (James, 1991; Mor Barak, 2000).

The purpose of this study was to explore the critical success factors within organizations that ensure success for ethnic minorities and underrepresented groups. Deploying the Delphi method, a panel of subject matter experts participated in a questionnaire that generated critical success factors for ethnic minorities and underrepresented groups in organizations of five hundred or more employees that led to meaningful and sustainable success. Participants participated in multiple rounds of questionnaires to arrive at a consensus.

Keywords: workforce diversity, ethnic minorities, inequities, critical success factors, Delphi method, sustainable success

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background/Historical Context

The workforce continues to become more diverse as organizations expand their global reach. In fact, in 2021, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics released a report stating that 77% of the labor force is White, while Blacks and Asians comprise 13% and 6%, respectively, and people of Hispanic and Latino ethnicity comprise 18% of the total labor force. Workforce diversity has risen to the top when it comes to strategic focus areas for organizations and has led to increased expectations from corporate boards, employees, regulators, investors, customers, and suppliers (Collar & Greenbaum Sherer, 2022). Only 58 Black women and 71 Latino women get promoted for every 100 men promoted, highlighting that ethnic minorities continue to lag compared to their nonethnic peers when it comes to key leadership roles in the workplace (McLaren, 2020). Given the limited number of executive roles available, the gap continues to grow. This research focused on the journey to success in the workplace for ethnic minorities and underrepresented groups, the role of the leaders, culture, and workplace practices, in addition to the role of legislation in creating policies that would create equity and access in the workplace. In addition, the research explored best practices for creating a culture that led to success in the workplace for ethnic minorities.

Key Legislative Actions

Government laws and regulations such as the 1964 Civil Rights Act, a landmark piece of legislation that prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin, were put in place to support access and opportunities for underrepresented groups (Congressional Digest, 2021). In addition, affirmative action which was enacted in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy to protect federal contractors to ensure that applicants are treated equally without

regard to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin was established and in 1967 was amended requiring federal contractors to extend employment opportunities to women and minorities (American Association for Access Equity and Diversity [AAAED], n.d.). Researchers have studied the impact of affirmative action on corporations and industries and found that it has come with some significant challenges for ethnic minorities (Belliveau, 1996; Heilman, 1996; M. C. Taylor, 1995).

Gaining access and to experience upward mobility to leadership roles, equal wages, and advancement opportunities in corporate America for underrepresented groups has come with challenges despite policies makers best efforts to create opportunities for advancement, success, and even specific roles within an organization (M. C. Taylor, 1995). There have been efforts by regulators and government officials to require employers to create metrics that ensure underrepresented groups have equal access to quality jobs, promotions, and opportunities to advance.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is a regulatory agency established in 1964 under President Lyndon B. Johnson to ensure the enforcement of Title VII with the goal to eliminate unlawful employment discrimination, including wage disparities, bias, and other discriminatory practices (Maness & Conway-Klaassen, 2017). In 1938 the Fair Labor Standards Act was created to establish the right to a minimum wage and overtime pay and prohibited the employment of minors (Congressional Digest, 2021). The Equal Pay Act, an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act protects individuals against wage discrimination, was established in 1963 under President Johnson (McLean, 2021). The Fair Labor Standards Act was enacted to address the wage gap experienced in the workplace by minorities whose average salary fell below that of their non-ethnic peers (Derenoncourt & Montialoux, 2021). Fair pay for

underrepresented groups was also addressed in 2009 when legislation enacted the Lilly Ledbetter Pay Act, amending the 1962 Civil Rights Act, requiring employers to ensure their pay practices are non-discriminatory and records are maintained to provide fairness in pay decisions (Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, 2009). However, despite these efforts, pay disparities continue to exist between racial groups (Gould, 2017). The efforts put in place to ensure corporations provide equal access and treatment have been improving over the decades, however, there continues to be a lack of access, pay equality, and representation in certain industries, professions, and levels across the workforce (Brake, 2014).

Workplace Diversity Efforts

Corporations in both Europe and the United States have responded to racial disparities given the many racial incidents occurring globally; however, these disparities are much more prevalent in the United States (Baum, 2021). Structural racism and police brutality against Blacks ignited action across the globe to hold those with influence and authority accountable for change, including corporations (Kishi & Jones, 2020). Organizations found themselves driving efforts that focused on building standards when it comes to diversity, equity, and inclusion by creating guiding principles that would become the expectation for leaders, employees, and customers, and focused on building the awareness of crucial diversity, equity, and inclusion concepts (Cox & Lancefield, 2021). Along with intentional focus by organizations, corporate boards of directors also drove a significant effort to hold organizations accountable for building an inclusive culture and workforce (Beyoud & Ramonas, 2021).

As corporations and organizations begin to create a more diverse and equitable workplace, the focus not only remains on diversity as a strategic advantage for the organization but on simply doing what's right to demonstrate commitment to workforce diversity and

inclusion (Layne, 2002). Efforts must go beyond legal expectations to ensure the organization is protected from the legal impact of the lack of inclusion and diversity. Organizational focus and efforts must include creating a culture of inclusion where individuals from all backgrounds can develop, advance, and are able to perform at their highest potential (Pless & Maak, 2004). Eliminating hiring, promotion, and development bias will lead to a more inclusive and equitable workplace (Connley, 2021).

Organizations have established diversity strategies to show their commitment to a diverse workforce and culture where everyone can succeed by redefining talent processes to mitigate bias (Gartner, 2020). Best practices include (a) offering development opportunities and training programs focused on building diverse talent, (b) mentoring opportunities to allow for greater visibility of underrepresented groups to leaders, (c) opportunities for networking, (d) robust talent acquisition strategies to include external partnerships, and (e) succession planning that supports internal focus and advancement of diverse candidates (Salomon & Schork, 2003). Organizations also create councils that support the organization's diversity strategy and employee resource groups that help support connection and engagement. However, many attempts to implement impactful programs have failed, and organizations have not experienced the significant shift they believed they would (Seliverstova & Pierog, 2021).

Several of the challenges experienced by underrepresented groups in the workplace have been due to systemic racism (Pennington, 2020), which is defined as policies and practices that exist throughout a whole society or organization, and that results in, and support continued unfair advantage to some people and unfair or harmful treatment of others based on race (Cambridge University Dictionary, n.d-a.). A critical impact on ethnic minorities in the workplace is bias in performance management, recruiting, and development opportunities that directly impact one's

ability for development, advancement, and compensation (Slaughter & Greguras, 2008). Bias in the workplace is not an isolated issue among specific industries or groups of leaders; this is a long-standing issue that organizations have been addressing and, in some cases, ignoring existing bias for many years (Nangia & Enderes, 2020). In fact, a recent report published from the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) suggested that workplace bias is costing many U.S. organizations over \$50 billion in increased absenteeism, over \$50 billion in lost productivity, and more than \$170 billion in turnover on an annual basis (J. C. Taylor & SHRM, 2021).

Workplace Identity, Belonging, and Psychological Safety

The ability to belong in the workplace is connected to an individual's ability to create meaning, participate in shared goals, and learn through connection and relationships with coworkers (Filstad et al., 2019). Underrepresented individuals also report experiencing a lack of engagement and less than positive experiences at work compared to their nonethnic counterparts, including stereotypes, bias, and microaggressions (Cox & Lancefield, 2021). Organizations that lack the ability to support and encourage authenticity can impact employees' social identity, something experienced mainly by underrepresented groups. This social identity threat can result in negative consequences such as a lack of engagement, work satisfaction, performance, and a sense of belonging (Rahn et al., 2021). McKinsey and Company (2021) highlights that these issues have led to individuals struggling with gaining access to the same or similar opportunities as their nonethnic peers and finding their space within the organization once the opportunity is made available. Having allies within the organization that support them, create opportunities, speak up when witnessing negative behaviors, and find the opportunity to amplify their

contributions to the organization will lead to more positive work experiences and a higher level of engagement by ethnic minorities (Gardner, 2022).

Imposter syndrome, that is, feelings of self-doubt, is another issue faced by ethnic minorities and underrepresented groups in the workplace (Bravata et al., 2020). Individuals with imposter syndrome experience feelings of being a fraud. Despite their success, they are unable to accept their accomplishments and suffer from a persistent fear of being exposed as an imposter or fraud due to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt (Bravata et al., 2020). Imposter syndrome is seen most in high achievers, underrepresented groups such as women, racial, ethnic, and religious minorities. The impact of these feelings can lead to psychological distress to include but is certainly not limited to anxiety and depression (Chrousos & Mentis, 2020).

Individuals want to work in environments that feel safe from rejection or judgment for making mistakes and seek to be a part of an environment where one is not penalized if seeking information and feedback on performance or information that led to better performance (Edmondson & Roloff, 2009). Individuals that experience a lack of trust and safety and are able to function without fear that their race, gender, or social identity will lead to discrimination or bias do not experience the same level of success or engagement as their non-ethnic peers (Scott & Edmondson, 2021). However, when psychological safety exists, it provides a space for engagement and knowledge sharing and leads to feeling a sense of belonging and value in the workplace (McCluney et al., 2021).

Code-switching is another coping strategy that ethnic minorities embrace in the workplace (McCluney et al., 2021). Teachers are taught to ignore race when teaching and deploying code-switching as a linguistic best practice, however, race cannot be overlooked when, among underrepresented groups, they adjust their everyday diction, pronunciation, and

language to fit in (Young, 2009). Ethnic minorities in the workplace find themselves suppressing their ethnic identity and losing their authenticity to conform to the norm and find themselves mirroring the accepted behaviors, attitudes, language, and speech patterns most acceptable in the workplace and are thought to lead to greater success (McCluney et al., 2021).

Identity threats due to stereotypes based on historical legacies tied to certain groups the workplace continue to exist (Holmes & Howard, 2022). There are cases where underrepresented groups believe they are not seen as individuals and fear losing their individuality and ability to be authentic and themselves, given both positive and negative stereotypes (Emerson & Murphy, 2014).

Best Practices in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The journey to success for ethnic minorities in the workplace is not easily navigated. Having to experience many levels of bias, inequality, and psychological impacts certainly has its limits (Emerson & Murphey, 2014; Scott & Edmondson, 2021). However, organizations that appreciate and value diversity of thought, cultures, and individuality will lead to more significant innovation, engagement, customer retention, satisfaction, and business outcomes (Pless & Maak, 2004). Creating a space of belonging, trust, and safety, where all are valued, appreciated, and experience the same level of access to advancement, development, and workplace value, will help support the ability for greater success (Clark, 2020).

As noted previously it is critical for organizations to create a culture and space of belonging where individuals feel connected to a shared purpose, participate in shared goals, and learn through quality relationships with coworkers (Filstad et al., 2019). The level of connection, which is key to belonging, is a fundamental human need (Kennedy & Jain-link, 2021). Diversity practices alone will not solve the lack of belonging felt in the workplace. However, leaders who

create an inclusive culture find that there is a greater ability to develop a commitment to the organization and relationships that lead to higher retention, work satisfaction, and engagement (Panicker et al., 2017).

While creating a culture and space of belonging is important, it is also important that organizations successfully build diverse, equitable, and inclusive cultures to ensure the social wellbeing of their employees, especially those belonging to an underrepresented group (Shore et al., 2018). Social connection leads to greater belonging, given the strong relationships, teamwork, and engagement, and results in retention, engagement, and greater performance (Sloan et al., 2013).

Organizations with successful diversity, equity, and inclusion programs also embrace cultural competence (Guerrero et al., 2017; Ljubica et al., 2016). The ability to build skill, competence, and desire to successfully work with individuals from different cultures and backgrounds is essential in global work environments and is foundational to ethnic minorities' sense of belonging in the workplace (Carr et al., 2019). Organizations that promote psychologically safe environments create a space where employees across all backgrounds are comfortable being their full and authentic selves at work (Clark, 2020, Edmondson, 2020). Organizations must be open and curious, slow to make judgments, careful not to stereotype, and are intentional about connecting with individuals from other backgrounds and cultures (University of Southern California Online, 2022).

Inclusive leadership exists in organizations that have successfully created a culture of inclusion (Randel et. al., 2016). Employees want to feel valued and safe (Javed et al., 2019). Leaders committed to diversity and inclusion hold others accountable for creating a safe space and expect others to lead with core diversity principles. Authentic leaders in the workplace are

perceived as safe to members of underrepresented groups (Carmeli et. al., 2010). Inclusive leadership also means being conscience of one's own biases and being unafraid to challenge the bias of others (Randel et al., 2017). Also, inclusive leaders show genuine curiosity and have cultural intelligence. Inclusive leadership is also about empathy, support, and respect (Dow, 2017). Organizations that value and build inclusive leaders create a space of belonging and safety for ethnic minorities (Bourke & Titus, 2020).

When exploring the literature on successful organizations for diversity, equity, and inclusion, psychological safety is crucial to their success (Cole & Salimath, 2013; Edmondson, 1999; Foldy et al., 2009). In inclusive organizations, psychological safety (a) helps underrepresented groups to feel a sense of belonging, purpose, and authenticity; (b) gives them the ability to speak candidly without fear of repercussions; and (c) provides a space in which ideas are welcomed and encouraged (Edmondson, 2020).

Given the support of legislation and the expectation for accountability and action from corporations to build a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace where employees can advance, thrive, and succeed, the literature reveals the key elements are: psychological safety (Clark, 2020; Edmondson, 1999), belonging (McCluney et al., 2021; Rahn et al., 2021)), and inclusive leadership (Bourke & Titus, 2020; Randel, et al., 2017). Therefore, through appreciative inquiry, the concept of psychological safety was explored, along with belonging, inclusive leadership, and other key concepts.

Statement of the Problem

Underrepresented groups face many challenges when seeking to experience the level of success, access, and experiences in the workplace that are recognized by their nonethnic peers (Cole & Salimath, 2013; Gartner, 2020). While there has been a significant effort to close the

gap in hiring, promotions, advancement, and salaries, underrepresented groups are still striving for a workplace where they not only have equal access and opportunity but also feel as though they belong and are connected to the workplace culture (Baum, 2021; Beyoud & Ramonas, 2021; Carr et al., 2019; Connley, 2021). While there has been significant progress, there are still opportunities for organizations to create authentic and sustainable strategies that truly provide ethnic minorities with more meaningful opportunities for success (James, 1991).

Organizations across the U.S. and abroad have built diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies to facilitate inclusive workforces (Gardner, 2022), including increasing the level of hiring and promotion opportunities for ethnic minorities (Cox & Lancefield, 2021). However, ethnic minorities struggle to reach the level of success in the work environment as their non-ethnic peers. In addition, the organizations that employ these individuals struggle to engage and retain them due to a lack of belonging, connection, and inclusive leadership (Corkindale, 2008; Kennedy & Jain-Link, 2021).

Underrepresented groups struggle to find their identity and path to success, which includes feeling of belonging and safety. The literature is rich in the complexities and challenges faced by ethnic minorities in the workplace and highlights diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies that organizations adopt across the globe. However, where there is rich information covered in the literature on various methods for organizations to adapt, there is a lack of evidenced-based models highlighting sustainable solutions that lead to success for underrepresented populations and ethnic minorities in the workplace. This research explored the core competencies that lead to a sustainable model of success for ethnic minorities in the workplace.

Purpose Statement

This study sought to explore the critical factors within organizations that ensure the success of underrepresented groups within the workplace, specifically ethnic minorities. While there has been significant research done on the challenges faced by underrepresented groups in the workplace and the efforts taken by the government, organizations, interest groups, and individuals to improve the opportunities for success in the workplace, this study supported the existing research by providing a solution for success. The research explored the experiences and success factors of members of underrepresented groups in various workplace settings. The study, therefore, explored critical competencies identified by ethnic minorities that highlight leaders, teams, and organizations that have led to their success in the workplace. The research led to the development of a comprehensive and sustainable competency model that can be utilized by organizations across the globe to attract, engage, and retain ethnic minorities, as well as create a psychologically safe culture of belonging and connection where ethnic minorities can thrive.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study.

- RQ1. What are the critical factors in organizational cultures that lead to workplace success for underrepresented groups?
- RQ2. Can these critical factors be used to develop a theoretical framework for understanding success in corporate America for underrepresented groups?

Theoretical Frameworks

Appreciative inquiry searches for best practices in organizational systems and the people who allow them to be the most effective (Cooperrider et al., 2008). The theory of psychological

safety and the concept of belonging were explored to determine the ability of ethnic minorities to experience success in the workplace.

Edmondson (1999) wrote on psychological safety which other researchers and practitioners have further explored on cultural success, diversity, equity, and inclusion. This research further explored the theory of psychological safety and the best practices of organizations that create an environment of psychological safety for ethnic minorities, ultimately leading to their success and belonging in the workplace.

Through research, I deployed the 4-D cycle of appreciative inquiry, which is used to discover what is and to imagine what might be (Cooperrider et al., 2008). The 4-D process is described by four steps. First is discovery, which consists of engagement and dialogue, appreciating the best practices. As part of the research, individuals from corporate organizations participated in a survey to further identify best practices and competencies in the workplace that create a place of success for ethnic minorities. In addition, participants will share their experience with psychological safety in the workplace and will help to identify best practices based on their experiences with psychological safety and belonging. The second thing is dreaming, in which the study's participants were able to imagine what might be possible. Participants of the study were allowed to identify competencies that they experienced in the workplace or identified as an opportunity to support better the ability of ethnic minorities to be successful in the workplace. The third is design. Those that participated in the study co-constructed the future. During this phase, participants identified what type of culture and organization is needed for ethnic minorities to be successful in the workplace and how psychological safety and belonging should show up in the workplace. The fourth is destiny, meaning, through innovation and action, designing the organization's ability to learn, continue

curiosity, and adjust (Cooperrider et al., 2008). Through coding, common themes were identified that support the results of the framework (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The competency model was created based on best practices identified by participants of the study.

Significance of the Study

Organizations lack a blueprint to attract, recruit, engage, develop, and retain ethnic minorities. Where there are many models and examples of diversity programs aimed at accomplishing this, no competency model supports a clear strategic approach that is authentic, actionable, and sustainable.

The research and competency model will impact various industries globally and, in the U.S., and will close the gap for organizations looking for a model that supports the entire employee life cycle. In addition, organizations will be able to truly understand what it takes to sustain strategic diversity efforts to create a thriving working environment for ethnic minorities.

As a result of the research, organizations will have a leadership and cultural competency model that can be used to attract, retain, and advance ethnic minorities in the workplace and create a culture of belonging and connection where ethnic minorities will thrive. Application of the competency model will result in the organization's ability to create real inclusion and equity, reduce workplace discrimination, and reduce the social, and psychological impact on the workforce faced by underrepresented groups.

Assumptions of the Study

The first assumption of this study is that there is not one critical factor needed to support the ability for underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities to experience success in corporate work environments. Organizations often focus on creating learning programs focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion as a strategy to ensure a focus on diversity in the workplace

(Predoi-Cross, 2020). However, this study is focused on various factors of workplace culture that support underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities, such as belonging, inclusion, and psychological safety to name a few. While these factors are important, inclusive leadership is also important in building inclusive workplaces for underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities (Pless & Maak, 2004). Throughout the study the use of underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities will be used to ensure inclusion of non-traditional groups in the workplace.

There is also an assumption within the methodology that panelists will be experienced leaders that are available to serve and share their experiences and knowledge building inclusive cultures and creating psychological safety in the workplace. The Delphi method approach allows participants to remain completely confidential throughout the duration of the study which will support the ability for participants to be honest in their responses (Mehnen et al., 2012). As consensus is sought, there is also an assumption that participants will view their experiences objectively to eliminate the potential for personal factors to impact their ability to fully participate in the study. Finally, there is an assumption that participants will be able to receive fully feedback from each other that will support the ability to gain consensus.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations to the study that impacted the outcome of the research, however, not seeking input from underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities in the workplace may be one of the greatest limitations. However, these individuals will be one of the greatest benefactors of the research the use of this group was not included due to human subject protection and the studies' overall goal. It is however recommended that consideration to include this group in future studies could be warranted to gain greater insights and perspectives.

Another limitation is the panelists were limited to individuals from organizations with less than 500 or more employees and many panelists may not have been completely honest in their assessment of their workplace experience due to the inherent lack of trust that information would not be shared and could potentially impact them. While this could lead to a good representative population with participants, it remains that there will be a large number that will be excluded from the study. Some of the panelists were hesitant to participate given the lack of confidence in any significant outcomes because the study could limit my ability to collect data. Lastly, data that highlighted successful workplace outcomes for ethnic minorities were challenging to find, restricting my research. The desired result for this study is to support organization's ability to go beyond what they are currently doing to ensure success but will lead to sustainability culture change and transformation for underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities.

Definition of Terms

- *Ally/Allyship*. An individual of a non-diverse group seeking to transfer the benefit of privilege, educate themselves, promote DEI through actions, and support while embrace the complexity of DEI in an effort to end oppression by engaging in the improvement of the lives of individuals considered marginalized and underrepresented (Arif et al., 2022).
- *Appreciate*. "To value; recognize the best in people or the world around us; affirm past and present strengths, successes, and potentials; to perceive those things that give life (health, vitality, excellence) to living systems" (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p. 1).
- *Authentic Leadership*. In an examination of authentic leader impact on those that follow attitudes and behaviors, it was proposed that followers' behaviors and attitudes

are influenced by authentic leaders when psychological factors such as trust, hope, optimism, and social identification exist or followers feel a sense of belonging and connection (Avolio et al., 2004).

- *Bias*. A personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment (Baum, 2021; Merriam-Webster, n.d.)
- *Business Resource Groups or Employee Resource Groups*. Employee resource groups are voluntary, led by employees of the organization aiming to foster and create a more diverse, inclusive work environment that is aligned with the organization. These groups are typically led and participated in by employees who share a similar characteristic, whether gender, culture, ethnicity, religious affiliation, lifestyle, or other similar interest (Hastwell, 2020).
- *Code Switching*. A concept that emerged in linguistics to describe the ability to switch languages within a single conversation to assimilate to cultural expectations and norms (McCluney et al., 2021). Code switching is also a theory often associated with ethnic minorities in the workplace who are faced with the perception of having to adjust and mirror the accepted behavioral norms to be accepted and potential advance (McCluney et al., 2021).
- *Cognitive Diversity*. Defined as "differences in the beliefs, thinking styles, knowledge, values, assumptions, and preferences held by members within a team or organizational structure" (Liao & Long, 2016, p. 210) Cultural competence: There are several definitions of cultural competence, one being, "congruent behaviors, knowledge, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, organization, or

among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations”

(Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2022, p. 19).

- *Diversity*. A collective mixture of differences and similarities, which includes individual and organizational characteristics, values, personal beliefs, individual experiences, backgrounds, personal preferences, and behaviors (J. C. Taylor & SHRM, 2021).
- *Diversity Climate*. An organization’s ability to be open and appreciative of diversity in the workplace, often associated with organizational identity in the literature (Hofhuis et al., 2012).
- *Employee Lifecycle*. This covers the entire relationship between the organization and employees from attraction until the time they leave the organization to including after leaving the organization (Academy to Innovate HR, 2021).
- *Equity*. Equity is equal treatment of groups and individuals. It is a form of equality that considers the needs and characteristics of the individual, the situation, and the conditions that result in disparate outcomes (Baum, 2021).
- *Ethnic Minority*. A group of people with a shared culture, tradition, language, race, history, gender, etc (Cambridge University Dictionary, n.d-b.).
- *Implicit Bias*. An extreme form of bias typically associated with the unawareness of bias and exclusion (Gawronski et al., 2022).
- *Imposter Syndrome*. "A collection of feelings of inadequacy that persist despite evident success" (Corkindale, 2008, para. 3).
- *Inclusion*. The ability for individuals to gain access to resources and information can influence the process of decision-making and can fully and effectively contribute to

- an organization. Another definition found is the ability for an individual to feel a sense of acceptance of their uniqueness and belonging (Baum, 2021).
- *Inclusive Mentoring*. When fully embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion by embedding core diversity, equity, and inclusion practices into development programs like mentoring, it is important to ensure “cultural respectfulness” exist, or there is a lack of bias, sensitivity to cultures and backgrounds of participants and potential participants, and a deep awareness of those cultures and backgrounds (Alston & Hansman, 2020).
 - *Innovation*. When psychological safety and a perception of belonging exist, individuals and teams experience higher levels of performance, and there is an increased level of innovation (Carmeli et al., 2010; Gardner, 2022; McKinsey & Company, 2021). One study showed that teams that are more optimistic and resilient have higher levels of confidence and hope and are more innovative (Dimas et. al., 2022).
 - *Inquire*. "1. to explore and discover. 2. To ask questions; to be open to seeing new potentials and possibilities" (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p. 1).
 - *Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX)*. Leader-member exchange theory (LMX) is centered around the relationship and interactions between the leader and the followers (Northouse, 2018). Brimhall et. al. (2017), through their study, showed a positive influence on the existence of workplace inclusion and leader-member exchange theory. When the quality of interactions and relationships is high in an organization, greater inclusion exists.

- *Microaggressions*. Subtle, unconscious degradations, that are difficult to connect to outwardly racist acts (Lui et al., 2022).
- *Nonethnic*. Nonethnic is described by dictionary.com as not of or associated with any particular ethnic background or group (Dictionary, n.d-a.).
- *Psychological Safety*.

Psychological safety is a condition in which human beings feel (1) included, (2) safe to learn, (3) safe to contribute, and (4) safe to challenge the status quo – all without fear of being embarrassed, marginalized, or punished in some way.
(Clark, 2020, p. 2)
- *Stereotype*. “Cognitive structures that provide knowledge, beliefs, and expectations about individuals based on their social group membership” (Meyer et al., 2022, p. 1909).
- *Success*.

(a) the favorable or prosperous termination of attempts or endeavors; the accomplishment of one's goals; (b) attaining wealth, position, honors, or the like; (c) a performance or achievement that is marked by success, as by the attainment of honors: a person or thing that has had success, as measured by attainment of goals, wealth, etc. (Dictionary, n.d-b.)
- *Systemic Racism*. Refers to all the way societies foster racial discrimination through mutually reinforcing systems of housing, education, employment, earnings, benefits, credit, media, health care, and criminal justice, which in turn reinforce discriminatory beliefs, values and distribution of resources (Sanders, 2022).

- *Underrepresented Groups*. “Underrepresented groups are nondominant groups such as people of color; people with disabilities; people from a lower socioeconomic status; people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender; people of a non-dominant religion; and retirees” (Hamlet, 2017, p. 1807).
- *Workplace Belonging*. Belonging at work is based on the premise that when an employee’s uniqueness is accepted and embraced, recognized and valued, and there is a space of psychological safety that exist and employees can be their authentic selves, are connected to others in the workplace which is a basic human need, and they are able to contribute to the goals of the organization (K-A. Allen et al., 2022; Baumeister, 2011; Baumeister & Leary, 1995).
- *Workplace Discrimination*. Can be experienced as a one-time incident or can be ongoing and significant. It can happen between employees or employees and employers and can be intentional or unintentional. Actions are often harmful regardless of intent or purpose (Work Places For All, n.d.).

Chapter Summary

Success in the workplace takes support, focus, and a culture designed to provide equal access and opportunity for workers to maximize their potential. Underrepresented groups have more significant challenges to attaining the success seen by non-ethnic peers.

Despite the efforts by legislators to put in place policy that reinforce the need for organizations to provide a safe, equitable, and fair workplace, there is still work to be done to not only enforce laws and policy but to truly embrace the essence and purpose of them. It is essential to understand the journey to success, belonging, and safety which starts with the support and enforcement by organizational leaders internally and externally from community partners and

legislators. Legislative acts and regulations are created such as the Civil Rights Act, Affirmative Action, and the Fair Labor Standards Act, to name a few. There has been progress as a result of these laws, however, the path to real success in the workplace for ethnic minorities remains.

Bias and stereotypes are factors in the workplace that ethnic minorities must navigate to gain the same level of access, advancement, and promotion as their nonethnic peers (Slaughter & Gregguras, 2008). The assimilation to workplace norms places many challenges on underrepresented groups, such as self-identity and one's ability to be their full and authentic self. Ethnic minorities adapt to microaggressions experienced by leaders, peers, team members, and customers in the workplace (Cox & Lancefield, 2021). Ethnic minorities face imposter syndrome, challenging and questioning the validity of their skills and abilities. They deploy coping strategies such as code-switching to embrace, fit in, and act on workplace norms and expectations to be accepted and seen (McCluney et al., 2021).

Organizations have stepped up by creating effective diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies in the workplace to facilitate cultures that allow all employees to feel as though they belong, especially for ethnic minorities and other underrepresented groups. They seek to create cultures where ethnic minorities experience the same access to advancement, development, promotions, and success as their nonethnic peers. Workplace cultures that do it well implement best practices in diversity, equity, and inclusion, such as trust, belonging, connection, and psychological safety.

Leaders often create the environment and cultural expectations in the workplace. Inclusive leadership where leaders are free of bias are bias disruptors, and promoters, supporters, and influencers of inclusive behaviors are important when prioritizing an equitable workplace. Literature around belonging, psychological safety, and other critical success factors for diversity,

equity, and inclusion in the work environment that support the success of underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities is reviewed in Chapter 2.

Identifying best practices using appreciative inquiry was vital to building a success model for ethnic minorities in the workplace. The research answers two key research questions: (a) What are the critical success factors in organizational cultures that lend themselves to success in the workplace for underrepresented groups? and (b) Can these essential success factors be used to develop a theoretical framework for understanding success in corporate America for underrepresented groups? As a result of the research, organizations will have access to a sustainable model for ethnic minorities in the workplace.

Some assumptions can be made. However, engaging in the research data gathered from research participants through the use of appreciative inquiry, identifying best practices, and key competencies will support organization's ability to build a psychologically safe workplace and an environment and culture of belonging will lead to the sustainability for successful workplace experiences and success for ethnic minorities in organizations across the globe.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the current literature on organizations' approach to creating a culture of success for diverse and ethnic employees. This chapter examines key concepts and ideas from the literature and theories developed to support leaders and organizations. It includes a brief review of legislation and social impacts that have either supported or led to the challenges faced by minorities in the workplace. Also, best practices deployed by organizations to support diverse employees and minorities at work and some of the challenges with these best practices are explored. Finally, existing studies supporting the recommendations are highlighted. The final section of this chapter provides an extensive review of the literature highlighting competencies used within organizations to support a culture of success for ethnic minorities in the workplace.

Background

It is important to examine the historical journey of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace, as well as the literature that highlights what has been done to support ethnic minorities and underrepresented groups in the workplace throughout history. First, a review of the literature that highlights the representation of these groups in the workforce is discussed along with key legislation to support ensuring protection, inclusion, and access for these groups. Finally, a review of the literature that highlights the impact of underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities has led to a heightened focus on ensuring inclusion and access in the workplace.

Representation

Ethnic minorities make up 23% of the workforce, according to a 2020 BLS report on the labor force composition (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). Before the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which is a landmark piece of legislation prohibiting discrimination based on race, color,

religion, sex, and national origin—legislators put in place laws aimed at increasing representation, rights, and equal access in the workplace (M. C. Taylor, 1995). However, access and opportunities for advancement and growth remain a topic for legislators who support equal rights (M. C. Taylor, 1995).

Organizations and legislators have doubled down on their efforts to ensure cultures of inclusion exist in organizations to ensure the ability to obtain jobs, promotions, and advancement opportunities to marginalized groups equal to those experienced by their nonethnic peers (Our 2020 Workforce Diversity Report, 2020). Agencies like the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), created under U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964, are tasked with enforcing Title VII and eliminating unlawful employment discrimination, including wage disparities, bias, and other discriminatory practices experienced in organizations (McLean, 2021). Despite attempts to regulate inclusion and increase diverse representation in the workplace, The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021), reported that the labor force participation rates are highest among Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders who make up 66.7% of the labor force, Hispanics make up 65.6%, Asians 62.7%, and blacks 60.5% and the percentage decreases among those employed.

Social Implications

Creating an environment of belonging is a fairly new term used by corporations that have placed diversity, equity, and inclusion as key business strategy (Belle et al., 2015; Davis et al., 2022; Kennedy & Jain-Link, 2021). The increased focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion is a reaction to the racial unrest that occurred in 2020 due to police brutality against Blacks and the social unrest across the nation, significantly impacting ethnic minorities in the United States and abroad (Kennedy & Jain-Link, 2021). The world froze in place, watching an on-line video of a

46-year-old black man, George Floyd, being kneeled on in the neck by a white police officer until he died (Amster, 2021; Kurtz, 2021). As a result, the world began to pay closer attention to the disparities occurring among Black, Brown, and other people of color, leading to a modern-day civil rights movement. This led corporations to examine their social impact and diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, specifically assessing the experiences of ethnic minorities and underrepresented populations within the organization (Baum, 2021).

Organizational Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

In a 2022 recap of a podcast interview hosted by McKinsey & Company, the host spoke to the correlation between business and financial performance and diversity highlighting the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion for organizations to experience more creativity, innovation, and different ways of thinking (Gardner, 2022). Global organizations with high levels of innovation are aware of and embrace diversity and inclusion efforts to ensure an engaged and positive organizational culture (Seliverstova & Pierog, 2021). To move diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts forward, focus on the human elements must exist within organizations as they relate to organizational values and leader messages of respect and dignity (Shore et al., 2009).

Organizations are also making efforts to deploy tools and resources that support bridging the gap of workforce inequality, beginning with building awareness and confronting topics such as privilege, with increased engagement by incorporating meaningful and transformative conversations with their employee basis (Riley et al., 2020). Diversity, equity, and inclusion should be included in the values of the organization and a part of the culture of an organization, with dedicated focus and engagement from senior leadership for real, sustainable change to occur (Geisler, 2021).

Understanding the makeup of a workforce is important to identifying workforce diversity goals and assessing the engagement of a diverse employee population is also key to the corporation's ability to understand where they are on their journey to creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environment (Institute of Real Estate Management, 2021). Efforts to increase workforce diversity are important. However, organizations must also build processes, programs, and practices that embed diversity, equity, and inclusion into the culture so that they are able to retain diverse populations and improve access to promotions, development, and other workforce benefits (Baum, 2021; Salomon & Schork, 2003; Shinnars & Graebe, 2021).

Organizations are experienced differently among ethnic and racial groups in organizations compared to experiences of their White counterparts and peers (Emerson & Murphy, 2014). According to Emerson and Murphy (2014), social identity threats are the reason for these differences, given the underrepresentation in the workplace and other cues in the social environment that exist within the workplace. Consequently, leaders are coming to the table to support a culture of inclusion that provides access, opportunities, and growth for underrepresented populations, seeking to close the gap in workforce representation and ensuring the success of those groups that align with their non-ethnic peers (Baker, 2020; Layne, 2002; Pless & Maak, 2004; Salomon & Schork, 2003). Being aware that systematically enabling equity requires that organizations are strategically planning and implementing comprehensive change and transformation initiatives (Bilimoria et al., 2008).

Many organizations have diversity statements and initiatives aimed at showing support to their minority employees (Pless & Maak, 2004; Salomon & Schork, 2003), and some organizations have placed diversity and inclusion as a key business strategy for many years (Kranc, 2014). Words such as belonging, safety, and connection have become critical to

organizations seeking to build a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace (Carr et al., 2019; Filstad et al., 2019; Jaitli & Hua, 2012; Kennedy & Jain-Link, 2021).

Robust hiring plans are important to closing the representation gap in an organization; however, hiring alone is not enough (Kennedy & Jain-Link, 2021). Diverse employees want to know they have a voice and can trust that they also have the support to be authentic and ensure that their efforts and contributions are recognized in the workplace (Geisler, 2021).

Organizations that double down on their efforts seek to build leadership capabilities by holding them accountable for leading with an inclusive mindset, creating a space of belonging and a culture of psychological safety where all employees can thrive (Cox & Lancefield, 2021).

In many cases, when it comes to the role of career development, theorists have focused on all employee demographics as opposed to highlighting the experience of ethnic groups and those from diverse cultures (D. Brown, 2002). D. Brown, to advance career theory, examined the role of cultural values and work on the ability of ethnic groups to experience occupational choice, satisfaction at work, and ultimate success in the workplace. D. Brown (2002) found that workplace culture and values were primary factors in the choice of occupation and ultimately the outcome of the choice made.

Key Theories & Frameworks

Throughout the literature key theories and frameworks important to the research are presented. Belonging theory, inclusive leadership, and psychological safety are explored in detail as they relate to the role of each in creating a culture for ethnic minorities and underrepresented groups to experience success in the workplace.

Belonging

Maslow developed a hierarchy of needs to highlight the fundamental human needs: first physiological needs like water and food, and then the need for safety, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization (Lussier, 2019). Belonging, according to Maslow, was one of the most important psychological needs of humans along with safety, security, love, and esteem (Acevedo, 2018). In the workplace, the need to experience belonging can lead to a perceived sense of inclusion (Canlas & Williams, 2022).

Within the workplace, belonging is tied to the need for greater connection, meaning, contribution, and community (Filstad et al., 2019). Having personal involvement and connection in a system or environment leads to the belief that one possesses shared value within the environment or system (Hagerty et al., 1992). Tied again to human motivation, belonging in the workplace allows for individual recognition, validation, and perceived achievement (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

The need to belong should exist among humans from all cultures, and it should be difficult to eradicate that need according to Baumeister and Leary (1995). Over time, researchers have expanded belonging theory through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion and the role of belonging in organizations for diverse populations (Canlas & Williams, 2022; Gkorezis et al., 2013; Underwood, 2021). Gkorezis et al. spoke of belonging being associated with the ability to thrive at work and found that positive relationships, acceptance, and belonging lead to positive work outcomes and performance.

There is also the need to belong for underrepresented groups in organizations tied to validation and inclusion; this stresses the importance of relationships and well-being (Thompson & McRae, 2001). Associated with the need to belong for diverse groups are isolation and

loneliness, often leading to a lack of thriving in the workplace (Daloye, 2022). Group membership is important to belonging and can lead to the elimination of the threat of ostracism, which creates a threat to other basic human needs such as self-esteem and safety (Eck et al., 2017).

Psychological Safety

Safety is another human need in Maslow's hierarchy (Lussier, 2019). Psychological safety is a term most associated with Edmondson (1999) used in her research on team learning. Edmondson defined psychological safety as having the ability for teams to take interpersonal risks.

Edmondson has continued to evolve this theory of psychological safety over time and is often associated with creating inclusive cultures for diverse employees in the workplace (Edmondson, 2020; Edmondson & Roloff, 2009). Organizations that create cultures and environments where employees can show up authentically, engage, ask questions, and feel safe to make mistakes are creating psychological safety and building an inclusive culture and environment for diverse populations (Edmondson, 2020).

Workplace diversity continues to increase forming the need for organizations to focus on creating a psychologically safe work environment and to have clarity that strategies and initiatives may need to look different when it comes to advancing psychological safety for racially diverse groups in organizations (Singh et al., 2013). The ability to have an open and honest dialogue that includes difficult conversations can be challenging in workplaces, and it is up to leaders to foster quality conversations and encourage employees to speak up, which are keys to creating a psychologically safe workplace (Edmondson & Besieux, 2021).

Inclusion safety is highlighted by Clark (2020) as one of the four stages of psychological safety. Clark shared that inclusion is an act of humanity that should be done with a lack of judgment based on individual worth. An individual's ability to experience psychological safety in an organization will enhance one's ability to feel safe enough to share knowledge and information for the greater good of learning and team success for all; however, it is not always easy to accomplish for diverse groups in the workplace (Gerpott et al., 2021).

Leadership

Leadership is important in the role of fostering an environment of psychological safety and belonging and enhancing positive diversity outcomes (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Gotsis and Grimani highlighted aspects of inclusive leadership to include servant leadership. When leaders exhibit open, available, and vulnerable behaviors, psychological safety and belonging increase (Zeng et al., 2020). Leader inclusion supports psychological safety, empowerment, and the perception of group connection, belonging, and acceptance (Shore & Chung, 2022).

Researchers continue to highlight the role and importance of inclusive practices and leadership when seeking to build an inclusive work environment of safety and belonging (Mor Barak, 2000; Randel et al., 2016; Shore et al., 2011). Organizations and leaders who value belonging, inclusive leadership, and psychological safety value the uniqueness of diverse groups in the workplace (Randel et al., 2017).

Best Practices of Organizations Seeking to Create a Culture of Inclusion and Belonging

The literature examines several best practices within organizations that seek to create a culture of inclusion and belonging for ethnic minorities and underrepresented groups. First examining the culture of organizations and key factors highlighted in the literature such as inclusion and belonging. Finally, a review of the literature that speaks to the impact of the lack of

inclusion and belonging and other key factors to creating and transforming the workplace for these groups.

Culture

There is an expectation for organizations to respond to the demand for change when it comes to creating more diverse, equitable, and inclusive cultures (Baum, 2021). Ethnic minorities have experienced a lack of inclusion in the work environment at much greater rates than their non-ethnic backgrounds peers and the lack of response by leaders in toxic cultures is much greater for these groups (Chee et al., 2022). Organizational inequality or access to resources is limited which also leads to a higher rate of underrepresentation in higher-level positions in the organization (Leslie & Flynn, 2022).

The behaviors of individuals within organizations shape the culture of the workplace and addressing the mindset of individuals within the system is a starting point when seeking to build a more inclusive culture (Seijts & Milani, 2022). Organizations must commit to a mission that addresses diversity and values the diversity of various views and perspectives, experiences, races, and ethnic backgrounds (White et al., 2022). Giannakoulis (2020) addressed the essence of deep diversity which recognizes how the organization organizes around rules, procedures, approach when addressing complex issues and challenges, and the leadership approach within the organization.

Cultures that support diverse groups experience greater results and performance, however, the path to achievement can come in many forms (Leslie & Flynn, 2022). Forming communities of support that can rally around culture work aimed at achieving a culture of inclusion is one strategy that organizations may embrace with some level of success (Morgan-Daniel et al., 2022). Leaders that embrace the role of sponsor of employee groups and both

leaders and members will need to demonstrate a level of empathy, compassion, and genuine care for others is also a key strategy for successful cultures seeking change (Seijts & Milani, 2022).

Inclusion

Organizations that recognize diverse representation is not the same as a culture of inclusion is important (Shore et al., 2018). Beyond building a diverse workforce, organizations need to build a workplace of inclusion where employees of all backgrounds are encouraged to bring their authentic selves, thoughts, and backgrounds to achieve important organizational goals and initiatives (Pless & Maak, 2004). This includes creating a space within the organizations where ethnic minorities are recognized for their efforts so they can flourish (Williams, 2001).

Many organizations put forth great effort to review policies, practices, and programs to check for bias that could potentially lead to a lack of inclusion (Baum, 2021), believing that implementing inclusive practices would lead to better business outcomes and retention of diverse employees (Panicker et al., 2017). The underrepresented population's equal access to resources and opportunities facilitates the ability to successfully contribute to the success of the organization (J. C. Taylor & SHRM, 2021).

Diversity in organizations is critical to building a diverse workforce; however, diversity without inclusion can lead to opportunities not being experienced by underrepresented populations, individuals being left out of key decisions, and increased turnover (Peretz et al., 2015). Leaders who embrace inclusion support underrepresented employees' ability to be themselves and accelerate underrepresented employees' progress in the organization (Jain-Link et al., 2020). Inclusive organizations value the differences of ethnic minorities and enable their contributions, which provides greater opportunities to succeed, according to Miller (1998). This requires strategic cultural change. This also requires the organization to create a clear vision

stating the value of diversity being key to culture and their commitment to inclusion as critical to the overall success of individuals and the organization (Miller, 1998).

Unlike workforce diversity measures, inclusion is not easily measured. However, inclusive organizations try to measure inclusion to understand their employees' value to the enterprise. They measure the impact on their inclusive practices and processes, and they analyze data that supports their ability to improve engagement among their underrepresented populations (Garr, 2021). The lack of inclusion within the workforce can leave ethnic minorities feeling a lack of accomplishment, value, appreciation, and recognition (Tantone, 2012). Recognizing that the simple existence of diversity does not guarantee an inclusive culture.

One framework of inclusion connects belonging to uniqueness where the individual's unique characteristics are viewed as a value to the organization's success, and inclusion exists because the individual characteristics are encouraged and connected to others in the organization (Shore et al., 2011). Minorities and marginalized populations within organizations desire authenticity in their connections and relationships because of the importance of relationships at work (Bohannon et al., 2021; Korn Ferry 2021).

Roberge et al. (2021) examined the impact on diverse employees in global organizations, given the increase in workplace diversity on a global scale when the organization is focused on building an inclusive work climate. The study highlighted five organizational antecedents that could potentially contribute to the ability to develop a climate of inclusion in the workplace. They showed the following factors: (a) individuals having the ability to experience a common in-group identity, (b) workforce composition and representation; (c) inclusive human resource processes and policies, (d) effective and functional communication, and (e) inclusive leadership. Roberge et al.'s study showed that the presence of these factors increases the likelihood that

underrepresented groups experiencing belonging and inclusion leads to positive performance outcomes. In addition, it is important that organizations strategically engage with human resources, which requires them to examine human resource practices such as talent acquisition, learning and development, compensation and rewards, benefits, and promotions to ensure inclusion is embedded in these critical practices (Wooten, 2008).

Downey et al. (2015) examined the role that inclusion plays in promoting trust and employee engagement and found that a positive view of diversity practices is correlated to a trusting work climate and high levels of inclusion. The research highlights the impact on workplace inclusion for underrepresented populations, their ability to be fully engaged, and their ability to be authentic (Shore et al., 2018). Individuals that feel the positive impact of inclusive cultures also desire workgroup inclusion to feel their uniqueness is fully valued and appreciated by the organization (Chung et al., 2020).

Globally, inclusion remains a key component of engagement, employee outcomes, and impact on performance for diverse employee groups (Hughes, 2009; Mor Barak, 2000; Pugh et al., 2008). In one study that examined the criticality of inclusion and diversity to job performance and organizational commitment in diverse groups, the researchers spoke with members of the Korean culture. The results showed that race, gender, and other diversity characteristics were significantly related to perceived organizational inclusion and commitment (Cho & Mor Barak, 2008). The literature indicates that one-way inclusive workplaces that value the differences of individuals within the workforce show their support is to contribute to the community of these groups by supporting key challenges faced by marginalized groups, and support collaboration within groups across cultural boundaries (Mor Barak, 2000). Mor Barak (2000) indicated that

inclusive workplaces are led by values embedded into practices, policies, and programs and can result in substantial benefits to diverse employees and the organization.

Furthermore, Pelled et al., (1999) examined the relationship between individual demographics different from co-workers and organizational inclusion and found that individuals different from those in their workgroup experience a greater disadvantage in terms of inclusion in key practices such as communication. The results of Pelled et al.'s study also highlighted that race dissimilarity impact was much more prevalent on inclusion and highlighted the need for organizations to place a high value on ensuring inclusive practices exist within policies, practices, and programs that impact the performance and outcomes of diverse groups (Garr, 2021; Mor Barak, 2000; Shore et al., 2018; Wooten, 2008).

Belonging

One's ability to feel connected to the propensity to create meaning and purpose, participate in shared goals, and have the potential to learn through participation and connection with others in the work environment is foundational to the perception of belonging at work (Filstad et al., 2019). Needing to belong is important when exploring the motivation of humans and behavior (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Organizations focused on creating safety, trust, and belonging where underrepresented populations feel valued and experience the same level of access to development, advancement, and workplace value experience greater engagement from underrepresented groups (Clark, 2020). Employees committed to company goals and the success of the organization experience belonging in the workplace (Jaitli & Hua, 2013). Being connected, accepted, and able to experience what matters in the organization supports an individual's ability to experience belonging (Carr et al., 2019). There are emotional aspects of belonging where one feels valued and connected and can identify with their peers and teams

(Davis et al., 2022; Insko et al., 1992). Belonging leads to one experiencing social identity and a sense of belonging to a group (Komisarof, 2022).

Organizations truly committed to building inclusive cultures place great value on the contributions of all employees and ensure policies, programs, and systems are designed to cultivate belonging (Adjo et al., 2021). A basic human need is the needing to belong and have connections socially that shape the belief in oneself (Baumeister, 2011). Leaders who value the uniqueness and varied contributions of diverse employees create an avenue of opportunities to highlight diversity and blend them into their organization and team (Randel et al., 2017).

Inclusive leadership begins with leaders' internal assessment of self and knowing when their own bias appears in their thinking and decision making which can potentially limit others' ability to be authentic, attain access to opportunities, and contribute effectively to the success of the organization (Dow, 2017). Creating a space of psychological safety and contributing to decisions and work outcomes is a crucial role for leaders in creating inclusion and belonging (Edmondson & Roloff, 2009).

Leaders must understand the value and true meaning of belonging in an organization. Kennedy and Jain-Link (2021) developed a quantifiable definition of what it means to belong at work, highlighting four key factors that create belonging: (a) individuals are seen and valued for their unique contributions, (b) there is a connection to peers and unit workgroups, (c) employees feel supported when it comes to their work and ability to development in their career, and (d) there is a sense of pride for the purpose and values of the organization. The literature further highlights the need for organizations to provide training in areas such as cohesion and communication so that diverse groups feel better connected and have a greater feeling of belonging (Davis et. al., 2022).

Individuals need to belong is a basic human motivation tied to psychology and can be a powerful factor when shaping the thoughts, behaviors, and actions of humans (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). A sense of belonging not only impacts individuals in the workplace but can be detrimental to the organizational culture. Belonging to diverse groups can lead to greater contributions when it comes to organizational performance and the ability to get ahead regardless of one's race or cultural background (Maitland, 2021).

The emergence of online workgroups created a different dynamic when it comes to one's ability to feel a sense of belonging. However, many are leveraging online interactions to increase relationships and collaboration (K-A. Allen et al., 2022). When considering belonging, it should be viewed from several aspects, including sociological, psychological, physical, and spiritual perspectives (Hagerty et al., 1992). A major aspect of the need-to-belong theory created by Baumeister and Leary's (1995) is that individuals have a strong need for acceptance and meaningful relationships that lead to greater connection and acceptance. Ensuring the creation of a culture of belonging within organizations continues to be a concept tied to increasing the engagement and retention of diverse employee populations.

Creating a culture where employees feel safe when it comes to expressing their true feelings is another aspect of creating a culture of belonging. A study examining the validity of belonging in the workplace was conducted using 12 key aspects of workplace belonging and found that organizations that foster and promote belonging in the workplace experience higher job satisfaction and demonstrate greater appreciation for individuals' personal goal achievement and greater commitment among employees (Jena & Pradhan, 2018). Leaders play a key role in shaping the culture of the organization by demonstrating respect and trust. Empowering

employees to actively participate in team goals and to share ideas is necessary to fostering a culture of belonging and psychological safety (Page et al., 2019).

Inclusive Leadership

Like the growing conversation and research around inclusion, there is a growing level of interest in inclusive leadership which focuses on the leader's ability to foster belonging, autonomy, uniqueness, and value among their followers (Nishii & Leroy, 2022). Organizations are paying attention not only to the need to increase representation but also strategies to retain diverse talent. Creating a culture of inclusion requires inclusive leadership—leaders who can create an environment where all employees feel a sense of belonging (Pless & Maak, 2004; Randel et al., 2017; Shore et al., 2011). Inclusive leaders create belonging by facilitating a work environment of support, ensuring equity in access and experience, and by providing opportunities for employees to achieve key goals and initiatives and share in decision making (Randel et al., 2017). Creating inclusive leaders is one strategy that organizations address through their development efforts—programs that seek to address issues that stem from diverse workforces (Byrd, 2022). In fact, organizations that appreciate the value of inclusion as part of their diversity strategy depend on leaders to ensure their success (Corley, 2020; Shore et al., 2018).

Leader-member exchange theory (LMX) describes leadership capabilities as the ability to have quality relationships with their followers built on mutual respect, trust, and the wellbeing and effectiveness of employees (Brimhall et al., 2017; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Nishii & Mayer, 2009). Nishii and Mayer (2009) examined the role of LMX, its relationship to diversity, and its impact on turnover. Findings indicated that relationships were more positive when high LMX existed. However, they also suggest that it can be harmful to turnover on teams when leaders'

relationships are higher with some of their followers and not all their followers, which highlights the need for and importance of inclusive leadership (Nishii & Mayer, 2009).

The ability for leaders to positively contribute to a diverse environment they should ensure the inclusion of individuals from various cultures and backgrounds and provide support to individuals who may experience bias or discrimination in the workplace which leads to fewer opportunities and signals value to the organization (Randel et al., 2016). Carmeli et al. (2010) assessed the relationship between psychological safety and inclusive leadership on the involvement of employees in creative work, which showed that leader's ability to be and create inclusion was linked to psychological safety which enhanced an employee's ability to be involved in creative work and positively impacts one's contribution to the organization. Inclusive leaders are available to their employees, are more open and accessible, and show great concern about their followers' interests, feelings, and expectations, which leads to greater engagement, commitment, and employee creativity (Choi et al., 2015).

Dow (2017) described inclusive leaders as champions for underrepresented groups. One can build inclusive leadership capabilities by deploying the following six strategies:

- Self-awareness is important as well as having a realistic view of how one shows up, thinks, and makes decisions.
- Have a strong strategic leadership capacity. This will enable leaders to achieve key objectives, but more importantly, leaders with this skill inspire others to join them by recognizing the contributions of others.
- Inclusive leaders model courage and inspire others to be bold and take risks courageously. They release control by trusting and delegating to others.

- They create a workplace of respect and trust by doing what they say they will do, demonstrating vulnerability, communicating transparently and openly, acting with honesty and integrity, and putting others' needs above their own.
- Inclusive leaders demonstrate a high level of self-control by being aware of what triggers them and having the emotional intelligence to identify the trigger and change the thought or potentially negative reaction.
- Inclusive leaders focus on attacking the problem and avoid blaming others by reflection, development, having the right people and diverse groups on the team, and not living in the past.

The ability to create a space of value for all employees is incorporating the six practices of inclusive leadership (Dow, 2017).

Hirak et al. (2012) assessed the effects on work unit performance in a hospital and the connection to psychological safety, leader inclusiveness, and the ability to learn from failures. They discovered that inclusive leadership is positively connected to psychological safety in a work unit which influences performance given their freedom to learn from failures. While the literature highlights the benefits of inclusive leadership in work groups, it is also critical to show the impact on members of diverse and marginalized groups (Shore & Chung, 2022).

Work environments aimed at fostering and promoting an inclusive work environment and offer diverse groups the opportunity to experience their full potential require leaders to play a key role by supporting a culture respectful of differences by empowering and enabling diverse groups to be their authentic selves (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Gotsis and Grimani provided a framework of servant leadership and its impact on the perception of inclusion in the workplace. Servant leadership requires leaders to focus on meaning, trust, and the desire to serve others,

which can support leaders' ability to create a culture and environment of inclusion by promoting a space of respect, equity, and fairness (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016).

Another aspect of inclusive leadership described in the literature is authenticity which is critical when seeking to contribute to employees' perception of inclusion (Cottrill et al., 2014). Authentic leadership can be defined as an individual who demonstrates values and ethics and are able to create a future vision that connects to the employees' heart and creates the feeling of belonging, purpose, engagement, and satisfaction (Adigüzel et al., 2022; George, 2003). In fact, Cottrill et al. (2014) examined the perception of inclusion by exploring authentic leadership as a factor of enablement and found that organizations that focus on developing authentic leadership capabilities can enhance employee inclusion and commitment.

It is critical for inclusive leaders to acknowledge that the levels of belonging in an organization are not static and will change throughout the employee's employment life cycle (Canlas & Williams, 2022). In some instances, employees' inability to be authentic at work can lead to feeling isolated in the organization (Slepian & Jacoby-Senghor, 2021). Inclusive leaders can foster engagement to create a climate of motivation and an empowering space for employees to be their authentic selves which can lead to a sense of belonging in the workplace (Vladić et al., 2021).

Innovation at work is another aspect of creating belonging and inclusion at work (Enaizan Bataineh, et al., 2022; Javed et al., 2019; Vladić et al., 2021). Enaizan Bataineh et al. assessed the effect of inclusive leadership on performance and innovative work behaviors. The researchers found that when inclusive leaders provide feedback, it enables individuals to articulate new ideas. Javed et al. described that both inclusive leadership and psychological safety result in innovative and creative work situations (Javed et al., 2019). When in a safe

environment, individuals are more open to providing workplace solutions and contributing in greater ways to the work group, in part due to the recognition of their unique contributions being of value to the team (Randel et al., 2017). As organizations become more global and diverse, the role of the leader becomes paramount to embracing differences to maximize performance for individuals and the team, ultimately leading to greater success for the organization (Javed et al., 2019; Randel et al., 2017).

Commitment to belonging, inclusion, and embracing the uniqueness of diverse workforces starts with senior leadership. A study conducted on the role of chief executive officers (CEO) found that when they exhibit inclusive leadership, it permeates across the organization, which demonstrates desirable leadership behaviors across all levels of leadership (Cao et al., 2022). They then begin to show up as inclusive leaders, which helps to promote organizational success and to support employees' well-being and authenticity.

Inclusive Development Practices

Underrepresented groups often seek supportive cultures and work environments conducive to providing support as they grow through various stages of their professional careers. In some instances, these supportive units are sought during their college careers as they seek guidance on navigating their entrance into the workforce. This often shows up as mentoring, an expected career growth upon beginning their professional career journeys (Alston & Hansman, 2020; Predoi-Cross, 2020). It is important that organizations embrace inclusive development practices, including mentoring (Predoi-Cross, 2020). Alston and Hansman (2020) outlined the importance of ensuring equitable and inclusive practices when implementing leadership development programs, including mentoring and think it is important to recognize the impact of culture and power dynamics on the mentoring relationship. This is demonstrated through a model

developed by Alston and Hansman (2020), known as the take good care model for inclusive mentoring. The tenets of the take good care model represent the following:

- *Trust*: Trust must be high between the mentor and protégé.
- *Accountability*: Both the mentor and protégé must hold each other accountable to their commitment to the relationship to achieve established, mutually agreed upon goals.
- *Kinship*: This is when the mentor and protégé recognize shared cultural characteristics and values. There is mutual respect for the cultural background between the mentor and protégé.
- *Emancipate*: Mentoring relationships that allow a safe space that is caring and supportive for the mentor and protégé to share and explore aspects of their full selves (both current and past). This is critically important for individuals of marginalized and underrepresented groups.
- *Grace*: Grace must be demonstrated toward oneself as well as others. In a mentoring relationship, it is necessary when demonstrating cultural respect that as the relationship grows, it grows gracefully. Grace should be a component of each of the model components.
- *Objectives*: The mentor and protégé must be transparent in establishing mutually agreed upon objectives that they revisit often throughout the mentoring relationship.
- *Openness*: Both the mentor and protégé must remain open and curious and exercise transparent communication. Openness allows for both participants to feel free to share their cultural backgrounds, which leads to learning and growth and ultimately cultural respect.

- *Deconstruct*: Both the mentor and protégé should release any preconceived ideas and/or expectations of what the relationship should be and shift their mindset to a space of openness.
- *Courage*: Like positive inclusive leadership practices, inclusive mentoring takes courage and a commitment to embrace diversity, equity, and inclusive practices.
- *Affirm*: Affirming each other by showing up with empathy, encouragement, and emotional support is critical in a mentoring relationship.
- *Reflect*: Alston and Hansman (2020) highlight that in cross-cultural mentoring relationships, it is critical that participants support and engage in reflective moments that help to navigate tension as it relates to power, marginalization, and privilege as they seek to embrace inclusive practices.
- *Engage*: Commitment to showing up for each other in every interaction. (Alston & Hansman, 2020)

It is believed that the model supports an inclusive mentoring relationship that will establish cultural respect (Alston & Hansman, 2020).

Culture begins and ends with strong leaders, leaders who can build trust and psychological safety and take intentional effort and accountability to build inclusion and equity throughout the organization (Byrd, 2022; Corley, 2020). These inclusive cultures cultivate a space of belonging and safety for their employees by building an inclusive mindset among their leaders through modeling behaviors, ensuring measures of accountability, and commitment from the top of the organization (Adjo et al., 2021).

Psychological Safety

One aspect essential to creating an environment of belonging and genuine inclusiveness is fostering a culture of psychological safety (Scott & Edmondson, 2021). Inclusion cannot exist without creating belonging, meaning, value, and a psychologically safe work environment (Canlas & Williams, 2022; Edmondson, 2020). Edmondson (1999) explored the impact on team learning and effectiveness based on their ability to take an interpersonal risk and whether trust is high among its members (what is known as team psychological safety).

Psychological safety is promoted in organizations by inclusive leaders who are intentional about including others in critical discussion, making others a part of the decision-making process, and ensuring those whose voices are typically silent are heard and appreciated (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Nembhard and Edmondson discovered that when inclusive leadership exists, there is also the existence of psychological safety. Creating psychological safety becomes even more important for members of the organization who are marginalized, typically lack support, and feel excluded (Shore & Chung, 2022).

Psychologically safe spaces allow for learning from mistakes, which helps to alleviate the fear of failure. Individuals feel free to express themselves on key work issues without judgment or consequences, thus fostering confidence and commitment among members of the workgroup (Edmondson & Roloff, 2009; The Center for Creative Leadership, 2022). Clark (2020) outlines the four stages of psychological safety in the workplace as beginning with employees needing to have the sense and perception of belonging. Those four stages are:

- Stage 1: Inclusion safety: Individuals feel safe to connect by being accepted for their full selves.

- Stage 2: Learner safety: Individuals feel safe to participate in learning and are comfortable asking questions and making mistakes, and they do not fear receiving or providing feedback.
- Stage 3: Contributor safety: Employees are comfortable leveraging the uniqueness of their skills and abilities to make a meaningful difference.
- Stage 4: Challenger safety: Employees feel safe to challenge the status quo and to speak up.

For organizations to support employees navigating all four stages, it is important for leaders to advance a place of psychological safety. Organizations seeking to support psychological safety for marginalized employees should also consider participating in uncomfortable conversations on topics such as race and culture. However, it is important that these discussions are structured and authentic, which leads to marginalized groups feeling accepted, heard, and sometimes validated by their organizations (Ajayi-Hackworth, 2020). This becomes even more critical with diverse teams, given that individuals with similar backgrounds tend to be more comfortable interacting with those most like them and when psychological safety exists, and there is a willingness to build relationships with members different than you (Hill & Farkas, 2001).

In a study of work experiences of marginalized individuals, researchers examined both predictor (work violation and career advancement) and moderator variables (critical consciousness, economic conditions, social support, and proactive personality) and found that work should be a pathway to social connection and safety (Duffy et al., 2016). Burrell (2022) explored the aspects of an organization's ability to develop a more inclusive and psychologically safe work environment for Black females in public health. The outcome of the research was the

development of the Darrell Burrell supervisory workplace psychological safety model; the model designed to support organizations and leaders to help people of color as well as women in the workplace (Burrell, 2022). Burrell's model highlights several key aspects from the research and the literature on psychological safety including: (a) building awareness in key aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion to include microaggressions, racism, and unconscious bias; (b) authentic communication; (c) active listening; (d) promoting changes to policies and practices that impact ethnic minorities; (e) creating and providing internal resources focused on mental health support for ethnic minorities; (f) diversity training; (g) diversity metrics and goals clearly communicated with a high level of transparency; and (h) embedded activities and measures tied to performance.

Global organizations seeking to create a culture of openness and trust show an appreciation for diverse backgrounds and cultures and foster a diverse climate with open communication, inclusion, and learning (Hofhuis et al., 2016). Diverse groups are more engaged and more inclined to contribute to the organization when leaders listen to concerns and take the necessary action to support diverse teams and see the leaders' action of support as a statement of trust, which creates psychological safety (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018).

Cruz and Blancero (2017) analyzed the success factors for Latino/a in corporate America and found that although Latinos experience career success, which they defined as a work environment where psychological safety and positive outcomes and work achievements exist, Latino/a employees do experience success in corporate work environments given their ability to maintain bicultural identities and connection to many cultures and groups. When it comes to factors that impact performance and behaviors, diversity climates where employees feel a greater

level of psychological safety to express themselves and their racial identities experience better engagement and performance (Singh et al., 2013).

Organizations still face challenges and barriers when it comes to advancing ethnic minorities in the workplace. However, deploying tactics that support inclusion, belonging, and psychological safety is critical in inclusive work environments (Baker, 2020). Baker (2020) suggests that the relationship between the employee and the leader, building growth-focused networks that encourage networking across underrepresented groups to support performance, the development, and advancement of underrepresented groups, and challenging bias that exist in the talent management process, increases the perception of inclusion and belonging in the workplace (Baker, 2020).

Challenges to Best Practices

Despite the different application to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workforce aimed at hiring, engaging, developing, and fostering a place of belonging and psychological safety, there are some challenges that organizations and ethnic minorities face to transform the culture and organizational efforts (Nangia & Enderes, 2020). Organizations must realize that not all initiatives and advances to diversity, equity, and inclusion will work, and having resources that are able to address challenges faced by underrepresented groups is important (Geisler, 2021). The path to fostering belonging and psychological safety in the workplace requires the organization to mitigate challenges at the systemic level (Cox & Lancefield, 2021).

Ethnic minorities historically have faced disparities in the workplace to include negative experiences brought on by such factors as unconscious bias, disparate impact, exclusion, and a lack of belonging to name a few (Baum, 2021; Joplin & Daus, 1997; Tackey, 2001). In fact, an estimated 31% AAPI and 25% Hispanic and Black employees reported experiencing negative

workplace experiences daily (Cox & Lancefield, 2021). Organizational practices and leadership influence and support will assist with addressing lack of inclusion in the work environment (Castilla, 2011).

Individuals want to experience workplace conditions conducive to success, where they feel safe, valued, and appreciated (Ferdman, et al., 2010). Organizations with policies and practices that address workplace challenges and encourage participation and acceptance support individual connection and inclusion (Mor Barak, et al., 2022). Addressing workplace challenges and concerns faced by diverse groups to ensure they feel safe to contribute and perform leads to greater engagement and job satisfaction (Mor Barak, 2000).

Unconscious Bias

One potential challenge in the workforce is the existence of unconscious bias that can show up in key human resource practices and programs, which can impact ethnic minorities' performance feedback (Tackey, 2001). When bias in performance evaluations exists, it could unfairly promote or reward employees if it is not based on the performance of the individual (Slaughter & Greguras, 2008). Leadership influence on workplace equality is key to the success of organizations and their ability to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion. One study found that certain influences, such as the manager's network influence, which is when the feedback of others in the manager's network is accepted as input in an individual's performance, manager-to-manager homophily which states that managers with like-qualities and similarities tend to assess and rate performance similarly, and manager to employee homophily which is when an employee of a managers same social group tend to receive better assessments given the connection based on social identity, it was found that these three factors can have a direct impact on the performance evaluations and ratings of employees (Castilla, 2011).

Organizations often implement training for leaders and employees to address unconscious bias with the hopes of mitigating any future issues that arise due to unconscious bias (Financial Planning Association, 2020). However, training alone cannot solve the issue of unconscious bias but having strategies to ensure accountability and individual recognition when bias shows up is important (Meyer, 2018). Unconscious bias training often has gaps that the organization is either unaware of or is not equipped to address when designing training which can lead to a lack of sustainable change (McCormick et al., 2020).

Disparate Impact

There are other challenges with organizations making real culture changes in policies and programs when it comes to their diversity efforts, such as disparate treatment and disparate impact, which are related to Title VII or other key discriminatory laws. Another challenge that shows up in the workplace is when individuals are thought of based on stereotypes of that group (Baum, 2021). These factors identified by Baum can impact the ability of members of those groups to thrive in the workplace. They also suggest that organizations take the pulse of their employees to check the culture using employee surveys or internal audits of key human resource practices such as performance, pay, and current recruitment practices.

Disparate impact is not an intentional act of discrimination (Hoffman, 2021). Although organizations put measures and strategies in place with the goal of preventing disparate impact in employment practices, in some cases the federal law may prevent tools from being used that can appear to be group neutral (Ruffini, et al., 2021). In certain instances of discrimination, disparate impact because of intentional discrimination can be difficult to prove (Robinson et al., 2009).

Decision Making

Decision-making power has several ramifications when those in key leadership roles are making decisions and have a high level of influence over advancement, development, and involvement in critical work initiatives (Smith & Hunt, 2020). Bias in decision-making is another potential barrier to creating an equitable work environment. Bias alone does not impact those on the other end of it. However, the often irrational and unjust decisions and actions of bias have a great impact on underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities in the workplace (Nangia & Enderes, 2020). Nangia and Enderes supported organizations' ability to create an approach to performance management that would support greater growth and development through the elimination of bias and help to mitigate some of the negative consequences of bias known as ACT. ACT stands for Awareness – providing the tools, resources, and education to support leaders' ability to recognize bias and challenge it when they see it in others; Calibration – using data to make more informed and factual decisions; and Technology – the use of technology to assess trends that detect patterns of decisions and sources of bias in key people processes. In many cases, efforts to prevent bias and discriminatory practices in the workplace have increased given the level of bureaucracy and lack of leader involvement (Dobbin et al., 2015).

When organizations have a diversity lens on ethical decision-making, it can uncover certain issues that may have been missed without it (Polavarapu et al., 2022). In fact, Vinkenburg (2017), spoke to interventions when challenged with advancing decision-making, engaging leaders, and mitigating bias. In certain instances, bias can be seen and is often prevalent in decisions around selection and promotions for underrepresented groups (Vinkenburg, 2017). A bias that influences decision-making is often due to stereotypes of certain groups (Feng, et al., 2020).

Decisions impacting underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities continue to be a challenge which has led to greater corporate governance that can provide oversight and input into the process (Rao & Tilt, 2016). In addition, organizations are putting practices and interventions in place to address the challenge of decision-making that is often arrived at due to individual values, beliefs, and experiences (Fujimoto & Härtel, 2017). Values and morals play a part in this, however, Patel and Schaefer (2009) suggested that in ethical decision making there is not a compelling connection between being aware of moral and moral decision-making. Organizations must consider employee participation in decision-making as it can lead to greater outcomes, creativity, and innovation (Panicker & Sharma, 2020).

Workgroup Exclusion

As organizations build an inclusive workforce, internal exclusion occurs throughout workgroups and creates increased tension at work, a lack of connection, and turnover (Scott et al., 2015). The perception of workgroup exclusion in the workforce makes it challenging for organizations to close the gap that exists in workforce diversity. Joplin and Daws (1997) outlined several obstacles that organizations face with leading a diverse workforce including:

- the power dynamics that exist given the increased presence of diverse employees that do not fit the model employee in the organization,
- the differences in opinions based on different views and experiences,
- leaders not having the ability to show empathy with groups of individuals from different backgrounds and cultures,
- when new employees feel that they were hired to fill a quota as opposed to being hired based on their skills and qualifications or tokenism,

- dismissing diverse employees and not allowing real participation in decisions and initiatives, and
- leader mindsets ensuring a high level of tolerance and patience. The ability to create an environment of belonging can be difficult when employees experience adverse treatment from leaders and peers.

Workgroup exclusion can become a risk for individuals who are seen as not contributing to the group goals (Thau et al., 2014). Ethnic minorities are often challenged with perceived exclusion in the workplace that is often linked to their relationship with peers and leaders (Rezai, et al., 2020). There is research that has concluded that ethnic minorities' response to exclusion is determined by culture and greatly impacts belonging, engagement, and productivity (Williams & Liu, 2022).

The impact both physical and mental on individuals facing exclusion is great and is often brought on by the need to belong (Pereira et al., 2013; Scott et al., 2015). There is also a connection between exhaustion and exclusion that occurs in the workplace and results in a lack of psychological safety (Anjum et al., 2022). Belonging indicates there is inclusion in the group and the perception of psychological safety is present, however, often ethnic minorities are excluded and marginalized resulting the absence of belonging that leads to substantial impact on the individual and in the workplace (Wang et al., 2021).

Workplace Incivility

The literature highlights the existence of workplace incivility, or when employees violate workplace norms, values, and policies with the intent to harm another, which can leave employees feeling isolated and distracted (Gkorezis et al., 2013). Workplace incivility is not easy to recognize, which makes it difficult to prevent and manage. However, having organizational

procedures and policies that explicitly address organizational norms and expectations of behaviors towards ethnic groups in the workplace is one way to address the challenge (Cortina, 2008). In another study on workplace incivility, researchers examined the impact of workplace incivility on specific individuals and the impact on job insecurity, the potential threat to organizational belongingness, and the level of embarrassment on the individual (Hershcovis et al., 2017). They found that individuals felt more embarrassed when threatened with a lack of belonging and lacked the desire to remain with an organization or perform when perpetrators have more power in the organization (Hershcovis et al., 2017).

Workplace incivility can impact the individual's ability to thrive and perform in an organization significantly (Sharma & Mishra, 2022). Sharma and Mishra (2022) through their research examined several factors that potentially prompted rude or demeaning behavior towards individuals in the workplace and one key factor was the experienced incivility of the perpetrator. It is also found that workplace incivility is less intense and does not require as much energy as other potential discriminatory acts or workplace aggression (Jelavić, 2021). The impact on the organization is significant given that, the greater one experiences workplace incivility, the higher their intention is to leave the environment (Moon & Morais, 2022).

Organizations seeking to retain, develop, and promote diverse employees should ensure the creation of policies and guidelines conducive to promoting a workplace free of discrimination and addressing acts of incivility (He et al., 2020). Although it is not as intense and sometimes difficult to identify, workplace incivility is a violation of others and demonstrates a lack of respect that should be addressed consistently by the organization (Guo et al., 2022). Organizations should take a strategic approach when influencing and forming employee attitudes and behaviors through organizational practices, leadership, and programs (Namin et al., 2022).

Moral leadership plays a key role in influencing the attitude and behaviors of employees (Deng et al., 2022). The result of workplace incivility on culture is significant and leads to the lack of psychological safety and belonging required for teams and employees to perform the goals of the group (Srivastava et al., 2022). Again, leaders greatly impact the behaviors and attitudes of employees and should consider co-creating solutions to diminish incivility and its impact on individuals and groups (Mangioficio & Tompkins, 2021).

Identity Concealment

Another barrier to belonging is negative workplace experiences leading to individuals questioning whether they should reveal their true identity or continue to conceal it. Identity concealment is often done when individuals believe it is better to conceal, be accepted, and experience growth in organizations (Newheiser et al., 2017). Newheiser et al. (2017) examined the impact of identity concealment versus revealing stigmatized identities and found that concealing one's real identity reduced belonging and impacted self-esteem, job satisfaction, and performance. Marginalized groups want to experience ethnic minority representation and see someone with a level of success that provides a connection to one's identity. A McKinsey & Company (2021) study conducted on race in the workplace examined the experience of Blacks in U.S. corporations and found that participation is low in the workforce among Blacks, with Black workers accounting for only 12% of U.S. private sector workers. In addition, the majority of roles are entry-level, and the representation declines at higher levels to about 7% which creates a difficult path to leadership roles and advancement in the workplace according to the study McKinsey & Company (2021). Representation matters, and Blacks are not the only ethnic group that faces challenges. Other ethnic minorities face similar challenges when entering and existing in the workforce (McKinsey & Company, 2021). The literature suggests that the U.S. labor

market is not color blind, and neither is it race-neutral which, despite legislative efforts, leads to discriminatory acts such as workers being segregated by race and ethnicity among industry and occupations, positions, and pay. Organizational biases impact decision-making and other inequalities in the work environment and can have an impact on advancement and opportunities (Spalter-Roth et al., 2005).

The paths to success for ethnic minorities is riddled with challenges in not only feeling workplace belonging, but the literature also submit that psychological safety is lacking, which leads to the inability to be one's true self. There is also a lack of connection and trust, and a sense that because one's ethnicity one cannot experience success and advancement. Ethnic minorities and marginalized groups find themselves needing to assimilate to and lack the belief that they are worthy of being amongst other groups (Andrews & Ashworth, 2015; Ernst & Yip, 2008; Hatfield & Rapson, 2012).

A study led by the Coqual (2019), formerly Center for Talent Innovation, on being Black in corporate America highlights the challenges faced by a marginalized group. They shared that despite obstacles faced by Black professionals, tactics to support them are taken from approaches used for other underrepresented groups including White women, which do not always work or apply. Coqual (2019) showed that there is not a lack of ambition among Black professionals, yet one in five Black employees perceives that they will never achieve a top corporate job at their organizations due to barriers to advancement. The study showed that 65% of Black professionals experience these thoughts. In addition, there is a lack of access to senior leaders with only 31% believing they are able to connect with senior leaders at their organizations. According to Coqual (2019) these beliefs leave marginalized groups wanting to leave their organizations as they do not feel they have the support of others within the organization, and their organizations lack

solutions that will close the gaps or alleviate these negative perceptions. This study supports the literature which reveals the need for solutions in the workplace that support greater representation, advancement, and development of these groups for them to experience success in the workplace (Bencsik, et al., 2022; Turi et al., 2022). Black professionals and other marginalized groups face not only ramifications but also the emotional tax that comes from being amongst these groups (Roberts & Mayo, 2019).

Roberts and Mayo (2019) encouraged organizations to talk about race, support difficult conversations around race in the work environment, and suggest that organizations revisit their diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and strategies. The emotional tax or having to constantly protect oneself from bias or unfair treatment (Agnihotri & Bhattacharya, 2021) cannot be ignored. Like their nonethnic peers, these marginalized groups wish to have the same or similar access to development, inclusive and influential leaders, promotional opportunities to advance to senior-level roles, and the ability to engage and participate in meaningful work (Travis et al., 2016).

Ethnic minorities in various professions within corporate America often experience microaggressions or subtle biases, often delivered without an awareness of the impact on these individuals. This results in damage to self-confidence, perceptions of belonging, and feeling psychologically safe with the organization, ultimately leading to long-term impacts on advancement within the organization (García et al., 2021).

Underrepresented groups face not being able to be their true selves at work. Many believe they have to assimilate or deploy a variety of behaviors or methods in order to be accepted, such as code-switching or mirroring the existing norms, attitudes, and behaviors of those in the accepted group within the workplace. These tactics create a challenge in the workplace but even

more important to note is the impact on individuals socially and psychologically. Code-switching has no proven impact on their ability to advance professionally (McCluney et al., 2021).

Shaked and Hau (2021), sought to provide individuals who experience imposter syndrome a way to reframe their thoughts, first by addressing the experience as a phenomenon and not as a syndrome that indicates an illness or disorder. The researchers proposed that connecting to one's feelings, thoughts, and behavior it will support the ability to see your self-worth, unique qualities, talents, and abilities and release yourself from the limiting beliefs brought on by imposter syndrome (Shaked & Hau, 2021). Reframing can also support the individual ability to effectively manage the interpersonal consequences that also come as a result of the behaviors and thoughts that show up with imposter syndrome (Tewfik, 2022).

Imposter Syndrome

Another psychological impact experienced by underrepresented and marginalized groups in the workplace is imposter syndrome—the feeling that despite experiences and qualifications, there is a constant fear of being exposed. This leads to burnout, decreased job satisfaction, and underperformance (Bravata et al., 2020). Marginalized groups that experience this syndrome also experience a greater sense of emotional exhaustion which impacts job attitude and satisfaction (Hutchins et al., 2018).

Race-based stereotypes can lead to imposter syndrome and heightened self-doubt (Collins et al., 2020). Identity in the workplace and a feeling of belonging are challenged by the emotional trauma created by imposter syndrome (Lacey, 2022). Depending on the culture or work environment it can prevent one from challenging the thinking that arises as imposter syndrome is being experienced (Slank, 2019). Wester et al. (2020) suggested that when feelings of fraud exist, one may be more inclined to approach the achievement of a goal with greater

intensity but at a higher cost emotionally. The research indicates that imposter syndrome is experienced most those that expect to achieve high results and performance (Tourish, 2020).

Thoughts derived from imposter syndrome in organizations can be experienced when one is promoted or advanced in a position with an expectation to effectively execute new responsibilities (Tewfik, 2022). When underrepresented groups experience imposter syndrome at work when given a promotion or advancement opportunity, for example, it is common for thoughts of fear to come up due to the belief that the success is not real or is happening due to luck or extra hard work as opposed to believing that success occurred due to professional or academic achievements (Muneer et al., 2021). Feelings experienced from imposter syndrome can be detrimental to an individual's career trajectory if not managed or addressed (Vergauwe et al., 2015).

Individuals go through various stages throughout their careers and peer relationships and relationships with leaders can impact their thoughts or feelings throughout each stage (Aparna & Menon, 2022). Depending on whom leaders are leading in terms of diversity or other workforce demographics, it can impact their attitudes towards an individual which can lead to perceived feelings of fraud if being advanced under their leadership according to Aparna and Menon (2020). These feelings of fraud can lead to an unrealistic quest towards perfection and high standards for performance expectations (Grubb III & Grubb, 2021).

Lack of Inclusive Development

Organizations establish programs such as mentoring and sponsorship programs aimed at developing and supporting diverse talent throughout the organization; however, they often fall short of the goal given the lack of leadership commitment and demonstration of inclusive behaviors (Alston & Hansman, 2020; Predoi-Cross, 2020). Organizations focused on enhancing

the talent within the organization must consider the global makeup of the workforce and have a clear strategy and focus on the development of diverse employees. However, the literature suggests that organizations fall short of a clear strategy to support the development of their diverse populations despite the impact to culture and organizational performance (Sinicropi & Cortese, 2021).

Mentoring is a relationship between two individuals with the willingness to share between each other and requires trust and mutual respect between both parties, however, when psychological safety and belonging do not exist, the success and impact of the mentoring relationship are challenged (Page et al., 2019; Pless & Maak, 2004). Having individuals within the organization who are willing to sponsor diverse employees to ensure access to places that are not typically accessible for underrepresented populations is a way to empower individuals to take charge of their careers (Hernandez & Longman, 2020). Many of these programs fail due to the lack of intentionality and focus needed (R. S. Allen & Montgomery, 2001).

Human Resource Policies, Programs, and Practices

Embedding diversity, equity, and inclusion into key human resource practices, policies, and programs is important to the effectiveness of building a culture of belonging and inclusion. However, they often are not as inclusive as intended (B. Brown et al., 2021). Diversity practices and policies have led to an increase in grievances, complaints of inequities, or lack of fairness by underrepresented populations in the workforce (Carrell & Mann, 1993).

Leaders within the organization often lack the cultural awareness and courage to facilitate difficult conversations and the ability to effectively administer policies and practices fairly (Fujimoto & Presbitero, 2022). Inclusive human resources practices and policies foster inclusion

and connection, but equal access and involvement often prevent the perception of inclusion or equity by diverse populations in the workplace (Panicker et al., 2017).

Measures of Success

Workforce Representation. Organizations that try to create a culture of belonging and psychological safety are often tied to their diversity, equity, inclusion, and workplace culture initiatives (Page et al., 2019). Suggested in the literature, building a diverse workforce and increasing representation is one way to assess the success of the organization's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and efforts (R. S. Allen & Montgomery, 2001; Salomon & Schork, 2003). However, the being able to measure the journey of the company's diverse employee population during every aspect of the employee life cycle is one solution that can be deployed, but it is not always easy to measure (Collins, 2012). Organizations often concern themselves with the impact of an intentional focus and efforts when trying to increase diversity representation. However, having the ability to show the benefits associated with a diverse workforce is critical when developing and communicating the organization's employee value proposition (Shinners & Graebe, 2021).

Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Talent. Having the ability to measure the results of the company's recruitment initiatives and efforts can be done by having clear metrics around the organization's engagement with diverse organizations that support the ability to increase the representation of the candidate pool. Having a clear measure of success is also the ability to measure the level of passive candidates applying to open positions (Cox & Lancefield, 2021). Candidates want to know the organization's stance on many issues. Thus, displaying the organization's dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion can be shared through its corporate

social responsibility strategy and should be displayed on the organization's internal and external website and social media platforms (Gray, 1994; Wheeler, 1998).

Once the candidate is hired, having measures throughout the employee life cycle can provide valuable data showing success in valuing and supporting diversity within the organization (Thomas, 1999). The literature also suggests that measuring success through the onboarding process and the engagement level of the new hire through the process can provide data that highlights a culture of belonging and psychological safety (Hopkins, 1982; Pennington, 2020; Pitts & Thomas, 1999).

Organizations will sometimes look on the surface when measuring engagement according to Doyle and George (2008). However, soliciting employees' perceptions and experience of the organization by asking targeted questions related to belonging and psychological safety, development, the onboarding process, and the level of support from key leaders is important when measuring a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the organization (De Meuse & Hostager, 2001; Doyle & George, 2008).

Implementing a balanced scorecard to measure both extrinsic and intrinsic factors within the organization and the success of key diversity, equity, and inclusion activities, initiatives, and goals can also be used to measure key workforce, recruiting, retention, turnover, promotional and advancement activity, and level of engagement and involvement of diverse employees (B. Brown et al., 2021; Rodrigues Quesado et al., 2016; Thomas, 1999).

Diversity programs are another way to measure success. Many organizations implement employee resource groups that provide the opportunity to build awareness, connection, and engagement of diverse cultures and backgrounds and moments for training and awareness on key diversity topics. They can also measure the success of their efforts by the level of engagement,

the number of offerings, and the impact on culture and other key diversity metrics critical to the diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy (Page et al., 2019; Peretz et al., 2015; Pless & Maak, 2004). Program metrics can also be a part of the balanced scorecard when sharing internally and externally (Rodrigues Quesado et al., 2016).

Leaders play a significant role in creating a diverse organization; however, the leader's role is equally critical to building a workplace culture of belonging and psychological safety. Thus, measuring the level of involvement, engagement, and support is a key measure of success (Choi et al., 2015; Nishii & Leroy, 2022; Vladić et al., 2021). Organizations can measure leader engagement and involvement not only by assessing engagement data but also by establishing metrics of accountability for leaders as part of the performance expectations. Some organizations will tie diversity, equity, and inclusion metrics to bonuses and performance ratings (Nishii & Leroy, 2022). Meaningful metrics support the ability for the organization to build a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion and ensure the sustainability of the organization's diversity strategy and impact on a diverse workforce (Pitts & Hopkins, 1982; Thomas, 1999).

Culture of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Belonging is a new topic connected to diversity and inclusion with limited, however, rich literature available for review and consistent with the experiences connected to underrepresented populations in the workplace. Although limited in peer-reviewed literature, there is substantial literature that highlights the need for organizations to recognize diversity and inclusion as a strategic imperative that supports the continued growth and success of the organization (Institute of Real Estate Management, 2021; Maitland, 2021). The literature supports the need for companies to build cultures of diversity, equity, and inclusion that support the ability of

underrepresented employees to perceive belonging and connection in the workplace (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Belle et al., 2015).

The literature recommends that organizations recognize and embrace the value of diverse talent in the workforce (Collins, 2012; Tantone, 2012). Organizations with diverse representation at all levels of the organization experience greater performance and innovation (Peretz et al., 2015; Vladić et al., 2021). Recognizing the value of diverse thought and experiences to organizational success is seen throughout the literature as a key factor of transforming the culture (Andrews & Ashworth, 2015; Brimhall et al., 2017).

To accomplish a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion, organizations must build a work environment where psychological safety is high (Burrell, 2022; Duffy et al., 2016; Edmondson, 2020). Intentional focus on building policies, practices, and programs should be a strategic priority when changing the culture in support of a diverse workforce (R. S. Allen & Montgomery, 2001; Pless & Maak, 2004). Efforts should begin by ensuring both potential and active candidates can see themselves at the organization, which begins with diverse representation at all levels and an employee value proposition that clearly highlights need for the organization to focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (Pennington, 2020; Salomon & Schork, 2003).

A diversity recruiting strategy with clear focus areas and metrics to measure the progress the organization is making to increase diverse candidate slates, diverse hiring, and influencing hiring managers' mindsets as it relates to diversity hiring is key to increasing workforce representation (B. Brown et al., 2021; Doyle & George, 2008; Ernst & Yip, 2008). Leaders should be equipped with and focused on the ability to eliminate bias in the process—from hiring considerations to technology and systems that support the hiring process to ensure the

elimination of bias in job descriptions and algorithms that eliminate certain groups from the process (Pitts & Hopkins, 1982; Riley et al., 2020; Salomon & Schork, 2003).

Bringing diverse employees into the organization is one step closer to closing the representation gap, according to the literature on workforce diversity efforts (Andrews & Ashworth, 2015; Doyle & George, 2008). However, the literature also supports that having an inclusive onboarding and training strategy to support the individual successfully integrating into the culture is important to retention, engagement, and increased representation (Adjo & Prakash, 2021; Pless & Maak, 2004). Identifying gaps or opportunities where bias may exist in training, benefits, access to leaders, and inclusion in workgroups should be considered as diverse employees are hired into the workplace (Bilimoria et al., 2008; Downey et al., 2015).

The literature is substantial supporting development, engagement, and connection at every phase of the employee's life cycle; however, it is limited in providing an approach and clear steps to success, although consistent in recommending a focus on connection, development, inclusive policies, and practices (Peretz et al., 2015; Pless & Maak, 2004). The development of diverse talent is a key part of the research and literature which states that leaders play a crucial role (Predoi-Cross, 2020; Sinicropi & Cortese, 2021). Leaders creating a space of inclusion in work initiatives and team goals is one recommendation that exists in the literature (Nishii & Leroy, 2022; Singh et al., 2013).

Eliminating bias in the performance and talent management process will create opportunities for richer conversations about diverse employees and increase the development of underrepresented groups in the organization (Pless & Maak, 2004; Slaughter & Greguras, 2008; Tackey, 2001). Leaders being aware of their biases is important when making decisions about talent in the organization (Dow, 2017). There is substantial literature recommending inclusive

leadership when seeking to change the culture and embracing and developing diverse talent within the organization (Nishii & Leroy, 2022; Shore & Chung, 2022). Building a culture of inclusive leaders that provides rich development opportunities, sets clear expectations, and provide coaching and unbiased feedback will support the ability of the organization to build a more inclusive culture where underrepresented employees can thrive (Shore & Chung, 2022; Shore et al., 2018).

Diverse employees who have access to development often perceive a greater feeling of belonging and engagement, which results in greater performance and retention (Singh et al., 2013; Sinicropi & Cortese, 2021). The literature recommends focused programs such as mentoring, which benefits both the mentor and mentee (Predoi-Cross, 2020). There must be significant trust that exists for the relationship to be successful and beneficial to the mentor and mentee. It will increase cultural awareness and connection to the organization which will lead to a greater perception of the potential for the mentee's advancement (Alston & Hansman, 2020; Predoi-Cross, 2020).

Mentoring alone, however, does not provide the total development solution; augmenting mentoring with sponsorship can open greater opportunities for advancement and a voice in key decisions and participation in critical business initiatives and strategies (Alston & Hansman, 2020). The literature recommends other inclusive development strategies, including ensuring diverse employees' involvement in large organizational projects and initiatives and being purposeful about soliciting the ideas and thoughts of diverse employees to increase innovation and creativity (R. S. Allen & Montgomery, 2001; Bilimoria et al., 2008). Inclusion in leadership development programs to help build cultural awareness throughout the organization and to ensure diverse populations are provided the access to develop the skills and knowledge that that

ensures equitable access to higher-level positions and critical projects and initiatives is a consistent strategy highlighted throughout the literature (Clark, 2020; Spalter-Roth et al., 2005).

In addition to creating belonging, connection, and ensuring access and involvement in meaningful development opportunities, the literature also recommends creating an environment of psychological safety (Clark, 2020; Edmondson, 2020). There is a connection between greater experiences, performance, and retention of diverse employees when psychological safety exists within the organization (Edmondson, 1999, 2020; Edmondson & Roloff, 2009). Highlighted again is the need for strong leadership commitment, accountability, and engagement when it comes to diversity, equity, and inclusion activities and initiatives (Fujimoto & Presbitero, 2022).

Cultural transformation happens when organizations recognize and respect cultural differences and are not afraid to embrace the experiences and backgrounds of underrepresented groups (Ernst & Yip, 2008; Fujimoto & Presbitero, 2022). Recognizing differences, including race and gender differences, is also important in the literature for building a space where employees can be their authentic and true selves and social identity is not an issue (García et al., 2021; Gardner, 2022). Organizations and leaders cannot be afraid to have uncomfortable conversations around race or gender, and as the literature suggests, there is greater success in a global workforce when all employees are recognized, embraced, and accepted for the unique differences that they bring to the organization (Newheiser et al., 2017).

The literature also suggests that involving individuals and teams in the process of building an inclusive culture supports belonging and connection. This can be accomplished through engaging in work projects, implementing employee resource groups, and providing opportunities for employee connection and engagement (Pugh et al., 2008; Riley et al., 2020).

Successfully measuring the efforts of the organizational effort towards advancing inclusion, diversity, and equity is important. The literature is limited but consistent about the importance of defining clear measures and metrics. A level of transparency is key to communication when sharing not only the success of the organization's efforts but also the areas of opportunity where employees and leaders can engage in supporting a path to greater inclusion (De Meuse & Hostager, 2001; Doyle & George, 2008; Gray, 1994).

The recommendations suggested in the literature can be implemented when organizations are committed to cultural transformation. As the literature suggests, there are challenges that organizations and individuals will face when seeking to build a culture of inclusion, belonging, trust, and psychological safety for underrepresented populations. However, the research suggests that there are actions that can be taken with the right focus, effort, and intentionality.

Critiques of Topic

Workplace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

There is substantial literature available that highlights the significance and importance of workplace diversity in support of global organizations (Collins, 2012; Doyle & George, 2008). However, the literature is limited in peer-reviewed research that provided proven strategies for increasing diverse representation in the workforce. Despite the focus on inclusion, diversity, and equity, in the workplace being a challenge for decades, there continues to be a lack of literature that provides a model of success that organizations can follow.

The literature focuses heavily on the legal ramifications that can develop as a result of bias and discrimination in the workforce, including the impact of new legislative efforts being implemented and imposed on employers (Gardner, 2022; Heilman, 1996). Understanding the role of race in the workforce is a discussion in the literature, but it is limited to the experience

faced by marginalized groups and ethnic minorities (Gardner, 2022; Smith & Hunt, 2020). The literature outlining proven methods and solutions that extend beyond workforce diversity and inclusion is limited and generalized, leaving the opportunity for further study.

Belonging

There is a lack of literature around the topic of belonging, given the newness of the topic as it relates to workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion, made it difficult to explore various benefits and challenges. However, the literature explored the most critical elements of the topic of belonging in the workplace related to social identity, connection, and leadership commitment and engagement (Baum, 2021; Canlas & Williams, 2022; Emerson & Murphy, 2014). The literature was substantial on the topic of belonging for underrepresented groups in the workplace, however, there was a lack of references to race and gender, and it was presented in a more generalized context.

Methods deployed in organizations that have proven to be successful in creating a culture of belonging were also limited and found to be associated with other theories not necessarily connected to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The challenges faced by ethnic minorities that may limit the ability to experience a sense of belonging, such as identity alienation and need-to-belong theory, were discussed in the literature. However, solutions to address these complex issues in the workplace leave room for further discussion (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Belle et al., 2015).

Psychological Safety

Trust is essential when establishing a psychologically safe work environment (Clark, 2020; Edmondson, 2020). Research on the evolution of the concept of psychological safety as it relates to race and ethnic minorities in the workplace is limited. As workforce diversity continues

to be a strategic focus for organizations, the factors that create psychological safety are important (Roloff, 2009). The literature that connects the challenge of creating psychological safety in the workforce tied to race and marginalized groups is limited. There is literature that highlights the role of psychological safety as it relates to creating diversity, equity, and inclusion, building strong teams, high commitment, and trust, but it is limited and discussed in generalization. It also lacks the connection and impact to racial diversity (Edmondson & Roloff, 2009).

Inclusive Leadership

The literature is rich in the discussion on inclusive leadership connected to successfully building diverse organizations, creating belonging in the workplace, and creating high trust and psychological safety (Hirak et al., 2012; Nishii & Leroy, 2022). However, literature is limited in research connecting the role that inclusive leadership plays in relation to the success of ethnic minorities and marginalized groups in the workforce.

The Balanced Scorecard

Measures and metrics are important to assessing the success of organizational diversity and inclusion programs and initiatives. The literature highlights the need to implement a balanced scorecard and common metrics that are measured in organizations, including retention, promotions, turnover, and other workforce metrics (B. Brown et al., 2021; Doyle & George, 2008). There is limited research that discusses the impact of metrics on belonging, trust, and psychological safety, except for workforce engagement metrics (Doyle & George, 2008; Edmondson, 2020; Garr, 2021).

Data transparency is a factor in measuring diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace, but connection to the success of ethnic minorities in the workplace is limited as data

that are shared internally and externally are often related to workforce representation (Gray, 1994; Kranc, 2014; Rodrigues Quesado et al., 2016).

The literature is rich in discussions connected to workforce diversity, but there is a lack of discussion around race as it relates to organizational diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. This is consistent in the literature across key factors such as belonging, workforce diversity, equity, and inclusion, psychological safety, and inclusive leadership. Many of the topics addressed in the literature are new or evolving as the world of work becomes more global.

Many of the studies focused on global diversity highlight the need for leaders to be culturally intelligent, accepting, and respectful of ethnic groups and their contributions to the workforce, and in some cases, provide solutions for how to include them and create a space of belonging. However, the literature was limited in addressing racism and workforce incivility that exists.

The trauma that is often associated with race in the workplace, given societal impact and other external factors, was limited in discussion as it relates to creating individual success and psychological safety for ethnic minorities. Highlighting methods for addressing trauma were limited to employee wellbeing, which was discussed in generalities.

The literature was significantly limited around the topic of the development of ethnic minorities in the workplace. There was substantial literature that spoke to mentoring and leadership development, but it was associated with individual accountability and the role of the individual in their development, as well as tied to supporting leaders' ability to become more culturally aware. There was limited research available on the role of sponsorship for minorities in the workplace.

Overall, however limited, the literature provided significant research and insights that highlight the criticality of diversity, equity, and inclusion and the role of meaningful and intentional focus when leading a global workforce. Where the literature is limited and focused significantly on factors that support total employee populations that support the growth and success of individuals and organizations, there is a gap in the literature that supports the growth and success of minorities and underrepresented individuals in the workplace and a model that organizations can embrace as a method to real and meaningful culture change.

Conclusion

This review of the literature began by exploring how it relates to the legal and social aspects of diversity, inclusion, and equity in the workplace. A review of representation of the workforce by ethnic minorities and the journey to ensure a greater level of representation was conducted. Organizations seeking to build diverse, inclusive, and equitable cultures were discussed, and the various paths to achievement were explored. Further exploration was done to evaluate the various methods, theories, concepts, and frameworks used in organizations to embrace and create more inclusive cultures.

Best practices deployed in organizations that embrace a culture of inclusion and belonging were discussed. Creating inclusive practices, programs, and policies was evaluated in the literature, along with the role of bias in limiting the effectiveness and impact on diverse populations (Pless & Maak, 2004; Slaughter & Greguras, 2008). Various studies explored the impact on marginalized populations of bias in key human resource practices and policies (R. S. Allen & Montgomery, 2001; Baum, 2021). In addition to a review of theories such as diversity climate (Hofhuis et al., 2016), workplace belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Belle et al., 2015), and belonging theory were explored (Kennedy & Jain-Link, 2021; Maitland, 2021).

The leader's role in creating a culture of inclusion was explored along with the evaluation of several leadership theories, such as servant leadership (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016), LMX theory (Brimhall et al., 2017), inclusive leadership (Corley, 2020), and authentic leadership (Cottrill et al., 2014). Psychological safety, highlighted as one of the key components of creating a culture of inclusion, was examined along with the leader's role in creating a workplace and culture of trust, empowerment, and inclusion (Clark, 2020; Edmondson, 1999, 2020). In addition, the literature highlighted the key factors of building and creating a psychologically safe workplace (Clark, 2020; Edmondson, 2020).

Next, challenges to best practices were explored, including the challenges of creating a culture and environment of belonging and psychological safety. Also, a review of the literature exploring workplace dynamics to include social exclusion, workplace incivility, racism, and identity concealment was included (Cortina, 2008; Emerson & Murphy, 2014; Hershcovis et al., 2017). The literature also speaks to the challenges faced by ethnic minorities, such as imposter syndrome, stereotypes, code-switching, and bias (Bravata et al., 2020; Collins et al., 2020; García et al., 2021; McCluney et al., 2021).

Finally, an exploration of measures of success was explored, including workforce representation, recruitment strategies focused on increasing diverse candidate pools, and eliminating bias in hiring practices (Krank, 2014; Pitts & Hopkins, 1982; Rodrigues Quesado et al., 2016, Thomas, 1999). As organizations continue to explore the path to creating a culture of inclusion for underrepresented populations having clear measures and metrics that are a part of a balanced scorecard, such as key diversity initiatives, activities, turnover, promotional and advancement activities, and engagement was also explored (Rodrigues Quesado et al., 2016;

Shinners & Graebe, 2021). A summary of key competencies and common themes found in the literature are listed in Table 1.

Chapter 3 will be an exploration of the research methodology and design and includes survey questions and a detailed approach to collecting and assessing the data.

Table 1

Summary of Competencies and Common Themes

Strengths/Best Practices	Challenges	Measures of Success	Existing Recommendations
Culture of inclusion	Unconscious bias	Workforce representation	Culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion
Diverse workforce representation	Conscience bias	Engagement	Connection to business strategy, initiatives, and goals
Inclusive policies, practices, and programs	Bias in feedback	Retention	Culture of belonging
Clear diversity vision, mission, purpose	Bias in decision making	Promotion and advancement	High psychological safety
Belonging	Lack of transparency	Recruitment Efforts	Intentional focus on inclusive practices, policies, and programs
Connection	Lack of clear measures and metrics	Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy	Diversity recruitment strategy
Trust	Leader influence	Communication Strategy	Diverse candidate slates
Authenticity	Disparate treatment	Balanced scorecard	Equipped leaders
Social Identity	Disparate impact	Measures throughout the employee lifecycle	Eliminate bias in hiring
Clear and transparent communication	Fear	Turnover	Supporting systems and processes
Inclusive leadership	Lack of connection	Diversity activities and initiatives	Bias elimination in technology
Uniqueness	Workplace Tension	Training engagement & impact	Cultural integration
Engagement	Dismissive	Program metrics	Gap identification in existing policies where bias may exist
Community	Leader Mindset	Level of employee and leader involvement & engagement	Inclusive development
Meaning	Lack of inclusion	Leader commitment and accountability	Inclusive leadership
Purpose	Adverse treatment		Leader awareness and transparency

Strengths/Best Practices	Challenges	Measures of Success	Existing Recommendations
Psychological Safety	Isolation		Access to development
Access	Intent to harm		Equal access to opportunities and work goals
Meaningful Development	Workplace incivility		Mentoring programs/Mentorship
Mentoring	Job insecurity		Sponsorship
Sponsorship	Negative workplace experiences		Leadership development
Accountability	Stereotypes		Recognition
Transparent measures & metrics	Identity concealment		
Balanced Scorecard	Lack of representation		
Commitment	Lack of trust		
Involvement in decision making	Lack of psychological safety		
Support	Cultural insensitivity		
Training & development	Workplace traditions		
Collaboration	Assimilation		
Acceptance	Emotional tax		
Active participation	Unfair treatment		
Autonomy	Lack of access		
Access	Code-switching		
Bias disruption and elimination	Imposter Syndrome		
Creativity	Disengagement		
Innovation	Performance decline		
Self-awareness	Emotional exhaustion		
Realistic	Self-doubt		
Risk-taking	Emotional trauma		
Courage	Lack of leader commitment		
Vulnerability	Inequalities		
Transparency	Racism		
Honesty	Lack of workplace safety		
Integrity			
Emotional Intelligence			
Blame avoidance			
Forward thinking			
Ok to fail and learn			
Respectful			
Cultural intelligence			
Fairness			

Strengths/Best Practices	Challenges	Measures of Success	Existing Recommendations
Equity			
Recognition			
Embracing			
Empowerment			
Wellbeing			
Mental stability			
Workplace Safety			
Leadership development			
Openness			
Empathy			
Value			
Freedom of expression			
Validate			
Active Listening			
Inclusive Human Resources			
Workforce Representation			

Note: The table represents consistent themes and competencies found throughout the literature.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter will describe the research methodology used in this study. The study aimed to explore best practices used in private industry to create success in the workplace for underrepresented populations and ethnic minorities. A detailed description and examination of the research design is included and explored in great depth.

Re-Statement of the Research Questions

The establishment of diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies seeking to express organizational support and commitment to diverse workforces and cultures of success for all employees is seen as a key strategic business goal and priority for organizations (Gartner, 2020). Creating a workplace where individuals are attached to a greater sense of purpose and meaning, tied to the vision and mission of the organization, and can participate in shared goals and learning is essential to establishing a space of belonging (Filstad et al., 2019).

Underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities report they experience a lack of engagement and negative work experiences, including bias, microaggressions, and stereotypes, are more significant than their non-ethnic peers (Cox & Lancefield, 2021). Organizations with successful inclusion, diversity, and equity strategies, programs and initiatives, and have high psychological safety experience greater success (Edmondson, 1999).

This study sought to explore the critical factors within organizations seeking to ensure the success of underrepresented groups, specifically ethnic minorities, within the workplace. This chapter describes the research methods applied to achieve the objectives of this study, which is primarily to answer these two research questions:

- RQ1. What are the critical factors in organizational cultures that lead to workplace success for underrepresented groups?

- RQ2. Can these critical factors be used to develop a theoretical framework for understanding success in corporate America for underrepresented groups?

Research Design

This study deployed a Delphi approach in addressing the research questions proposed. In the fifties, the U.S. Rand Corporation adopted Delphi as a term to be used for the purposes of research and the U.S. Airforce sponsored project Delphi ten years after the U.S. Rand Corporations' initial launch of project Rand (Von der Gracht, 2012). The Delphi method, when deployed as a research method, where information, data, or a phenomenon is lacking uniformity is a very effective technique (Skulmoski et al., 2007).

The goal of the Delphi technique is to gain consensus (Naisola-Ruiter, 2022). A group of experts responds to a series of questionnaires that are used to gain the most reliable consensus (Moore, 1977). Naisola-Ruiter (2022) describes the Delphi method as a multilevel qualitative approach that uses a series of rounds to collect data using a structured approach and iteration with a panel of experts with four key objectives:

1. Obtaining and filtering information from a panel of subject matter experts.
2. The ability to gain agreement on complicated issues when more specific information is not available to establish a future prediction.
3. The potential to explore innovative and well-founded ideas.
4. Producing acceptable data that will be essential to critical decisions.

Skulmoski et al. (2007) described the classical Delphi method by four key attributes:

1. Delphi participants are guaranteed anonymity which allows for freedom of expression and elimination of fear or pressure to group conformity and leads to the evaluation of

- feedback being based on the merit of thoughts and opinions and not who provided the feedback.
2. The Delphi method allows participants to refine their thoughts by going through several iterations.
 3. Another key aspect of the classical Delphi method is to provide controlled feedback which informs participants of each other's perspectives as well as the ability to provide participants the opportunity to reassess and clarify their individual views.
 4. Aggregating group responses allows for quantitative analysis and interpretation of data.

Appropriateness of the Delphi Method

In assessing the appropriateness of the use of the Delphi method for this study, a review of Linstone and Turoff's (2002) key considerations for researchers was assessed. Linstone and Turoff (1975) state that the study should fit into one or more of the following properties when considering deploying the Delphi method:

- The problem does not lend itself to precise analytical techniques, however, can benefit from subjective judgments on a combined basis.
- The individuals needed to contribute to the assessment of a complex or broad problem have no history of adequate communication and can represent diverse backgrounds with respect to expertise or experience.
- More individuals are needed that are able to effectively interact in a face-to-face exchange.
- Time and cost prevent the ability for frequent group meetings.

- The efficiency and effectiveness of face-to-face meetings can be increased with supplemental group communication processes.
- Disagreements among individuals are politically unpalatable and can be severe, impacting the communication process so that interactions must be refereed and/or anonymity assured.
- “The heterogeneity of the participants must be preserved to assure the validity of the results, that is, avoidance of domination by quantity or by the strength of personality” (Linstone & Turoff, 1975, p. 4).

The Delphi method was appropriate for the purposes of this study given the desire to identify best practices that would lead to a theoretical model or framework for understanding success in corporate America for underrepresented groups. In addition, this study aligned with four of the properties described above, specifically, (a) participants will contribute to a broad complex problem and represent diverse backgrounds; (b) the need for individuals is greater than the ability to interact face-to-face; (c) resource needs such as cost and time decrease the ability to facilitate live interactions, and (d) the need to limit group think is important to the validity of the study (Linstone & Turoff, 1975).

In the review of the literature, it was highlighted that the experiences of organizations vary among ethnic and racial groups compared to those of their non-ethnic counterparts which leads to greater complexity in the work environment (Emerson & Murphy, 2014). Given this level of complexity individuals contributing to the problem must represent diverse backgrounds (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). The ability to have greater outreach to diverse participants will lead to greater input and thoughts (Naisola-Ruiter, 2022) which could incur significant cost and time (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). In addition, having the ability to gather input from diverse groups

with a significant sample size was a critical part of the study which limited the ability to interact face-to-face. Finally, a key aspect of the study was the significance of the heterogeneity of the participants (Linstone & Turoff, 1975).

While the examples explored in the literature are not directly related to the research topic explored in this study, they do highlight the use of the model when exploring key components like belonging and success factors in global organizations. The Delphi method was a method deployed in a study focused on the individual need to belong and be connected to a team (King, 2017). King (2017) deployed the methodology to collect data from subject matter experts for the purposes of narrowing down any assumptions, and supporting evidence, to use the results from the Delphi study to design a toolkit that would be used in clinical learning environments to support building a culture of belonging for students.

Baumann Montecinos and Grünfelder (2022) used the Delphi method when studying the success factors of a global organization. The insights and data obtained from the panel of experts are what shape each Delphi study (Gordon, 2022). In the study by Baumann Montecinos and Grünfelder (2022) they employed the 3-stage Delphi model which consisted of idea aggregation, the establishment of views derived from subject matter experts, arriving at consensus, and three rounds were conducted to collect the data.

Procedural Steps in the Delphi Process

The Delphi method is an interactive process that collects information from a panel of experts and requires data collecting through the use of a questionnaire with points of analysis and feedback interspersed throughout the process (Skulmoski et al., 2007). The process requires multiple rounds of questionnaires on a topic with the goal of allowing the panel of experts to

provide additional feedback or adjust their original responses (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). Rounds are complete after a predefined number of rounds or once a consensus has arrived.

The Delphi exercise and the Delphi conference are the two distinct forms of the Delphi process. The Delphi exercise is the most common form which uses a small monitor team to design a questionnaire that will be deployed to the panel of experts. The Delphi conference, which is a newer form of Delphi that utilizes technology to carry out the compilation of the results and other information obtained reduces the time to deploy the rounds and creates a real-time communication system (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). Both the Delphi exercise and the Delphi conference require four phases and utilize a panel of experts. Turoff (2002), also outlines six phases that can be identified as part of the communication process. They are:

- What is the issue to be taken under consideration or formulating the issue?
- What are the available options or exposing the options?
- What are the initial positions on the issues?
- Explore and evaluate the reasons for disagreements.
- Evaluate the underlying reasons.
- Reevaluate the options. (p. 84)

Once the issues have been identified and the researchers have decided on their approach, a panel of experts will be identified.

Panel of Experts

The Delphi process requires that you first identify a group of individuals that possess a level of expertise within the field being studied. It is recommended that the researcher establishes a predetermined list of qualifications to select the panelist, as well as the number of panelists to be used in the study (R. A. Green, 2014). The researcher defines the criteria for considering a

panelist an expert and must ensure the panelist possesses the knowledge needed to provide input to the research (Keeney et al., 2001). Below are four requirements that can be used to determine a panelist as an expert as defined by Adler and Zigilio (1996):

- The individual possesses knowledge and experience with the topic.
- There is the willingness and the ability to participate in the study.
- The individual can commit to and has the time needed to complete the Delphi questionnaires.
- The individual possesses effective communication skills.

Once the criteria have been defined to select the expert panelist, the researcher will establish a goal for the number of individuals to participate and serve on the panel. Although Delphi studies can vary significantly, a review of the literature found it rare that there are fewer than eight participants (Beiderbeck et al., 2021). The literature found Delphi studies that consisted of panel sizes ranging from 5 to 50 (Baumann Montecinos & Grünfelder, 2022; Maassen et al., 2021). As previously stated, for the purposes of this study, the researcher will follow the recommendation of Turoff (2002) and seek the recommended panel size of 15-20.

Phases of a Delphi Study

There are multiple phases to the Delphi process. R. A. Green (2014) outlines these steps as follows:

- Developing the initial questions or formulating the issue.
- Exposing the options, given the issue.
- Determining the positions initially taken on the issue and identifying which ones everyone agrees on and which are bringing up disagreement amongst the panelists.
- Obtaining the reasons for disagreement by the panelist.

- Evaluating the underlying reason for the individual viewpoints
- Reevaluating the views of the underlying evidence and assessment.
- The researcher will analyze the results and distribute the results to the panelists.

Linstone and Turoff (1975) outlined four distinct phases within a Delphi study as follows:

1. Exploring the subject that is being discussed, where each participant will contribute information that they deem as pertinent to the issue.
2. Outlining a process for reaching clarity as to how the participants view the issues which also includes identifying where participants agree and disagree, as well as reviewing relevant terms like importance to ensure alignment.
3. Exploring and evaluating any additional underlying reasons for disagreements. If there are any prevalent disagreements this phase is deployed.
4. The final evaluation is conducted once the information is gathered, analyzed, and returned to the panelist for review and returned once again (pp. 5-6).

In the first phase of the Delphi method, the initial questionnaire is distributed to the panel (Mehnen et al., 2012). Linstone and Turoff (1975) states that “in addition to the questionnaire, a factual summary of background material is usually supplied, and in some cases, single or multiple sets of scenarios specify certain items the respondents are to assume as given” (p. 93). It is also important that participants are prepared and informed on what they are being asked to do, the time commitment for participation, and how the information they provide will be used (Hasson et al., 2000).

Developing the questionnaire has two different approaches that can be taken. In one instance the researcher will rely on an additional panel of individuals that will contribute to the

development of the survey and in the other instance, the researcher will rely on the existing literature on the issue to develop the questionnaire (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). Linstone and Turoff (1975) highlight the use of panelist to contribute to the questionnaire in an effort to mitigate any potential bias in the original development. In another study, the researcher asks the panelist to provide additional characteristics related to the study along with a description to ensure clarity which helped to develop the final questionnaire before arriving at consensus (Enzer, 1975). Utilizing sections to break the questionnaire up, including adding a section that asks for additional qualitative feedback to include term definitions or responses to the survey is another recommendation when developing the questionnaire (Jillson, 1975).

The approach taken to develop the questionnaire is at the discretion of the researcher; however, it is important that the majority of the questionnaire consist of items paired with a Likert scale and anchored on a *Strongly Agree* and *Strongly Disagree* rating (Jerkins & Smith, 1994). The questionnaire should also be easy to understand for the participants, compound statements should be broken up for clarity and to eliminate any ambiguity (Turoff, 1975). As an example, if a statement ask “If A and B...” opposed to “if A then B...” the statement should be broken up in order to have results for each of the topics. According to Linstone and Turoff (1975), the ideal length to arrive at consensus is 20 to 25 words within a statement, however, statements that are longer are clearer and are less ambiguous providing more opportunity to gain consensus.

Finally, consideration for the effective distribution of the questionnaire takes place. The Delphi method is known to be paper-based primarily given the delays created by hard-copy paper questionnaires and most recently electronic communications have been used (Jillson, 1975). However, the use of electronic communications does require panelists to be comfortable

with the process being used and clear on instructions for completion (Hasson et al., 2000).

Today, Delphi questionnaires can be deployed and used electronically through the use of online technology and tools.

Hasson et al. (2000) outline three issues that guide the second phase of the Delphi method which are: (a) opinion discovery; (b) determine the most important issues; and (c) managing opinions. Detailed questionnaires could lead to fewer rounds that the researcher will have to conduct. Past Delphi studies had a total of four rounds (Young & Hogben, 1978), however, most recently two to three rounds are more common (Beech, 1997; B. Green et al., 1999).

Overall, the goal is to gain consensus among the items in the questionnaire. In order to support the analysis, the researcher will need to ensure clarity as to what will determine consensus (Brady, 2015). Consensus is defined as gathering individual responses around the median response with limited amounts of straying (Brooks, 1979). There are many opinions on what drives consensus. In some instances, it is believed that 51% equates to consensus (Loughlin & Moore, 1979; McKenna, 1994) and some believe that 70%-80% is a more accurate to arriving at consensus (B. Green et al., 1999; Sumsion, 1998). There are some that believe that a percentage will not represent consensus, however, consistency among the responses throughout the rounds will drive consensus (Crisp et al., 1997).

Once the results of the first survey have been evaluated, additional surveys are created and distributed to panelists. The Delphi process requires multiple rounds of questioning and analysis which supports the ability of the researcher to identify various implications that can exist in the data. Delphi also seeks to reach consensus which requires participants to provide feedback during each round while the researcher is encouraged to create checklists to increase validity and feedback during each round (Maassen et al. 2021; Skulmoski et al., 2007). The

Delphi process consists of the following to be effective and to ensure consensus (Skulmoski et al., 2007):

Round 1: This is the initial release of the questionnaire to be returned for initial analysis of the participant's initial perspective and insights of the topic being researched and support the ability for subsequent rounds.

Round 2: The use of responses from round one supports the questionnaire for round two and is used to pare down the list developed from round one. Participants are also asked to verify round one responses and reflect on their insights with the ability to expand on their thoughts based on having access to the other participant responses.

Round 3 and Subsequent Rounds: Round 3 questions are focused on specifics of the research. Participants are also given the opportunity to expand their responses and comment on the perspectives of other participants. If consensus is achieved and the research questions are answered, rounds will end. However, if consensus is not achieved subsequent rounds will be necessary, following the same steps outlined above.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Delphi Method

A known phenomenon with the Delphi methodology is the attrition of participants as multiple rounds are conducted (Maassen et al., 2021). However, the participants are selected given their level of knowledge and experience, and expertise in the field of study which makes participation potentially beneficial and could decrease the likelihood of panelists dropping out of the study during rounds (Naisola-Ruiter, 2022). Another challenge with the Delphi method is identifying a participant as an expert which could impact research validity (Naisola-Ruiter, 2022).

Anonymity is a key characteristic of the Delphi method (R. A. Green, 2014). R. A. Green (2014), however, explains where this is positive to participants who are concerned with identification, it could lead to questioning the credibility of a study and remove the ability for experts to be available for future research. Research bias is a limitation noted about the Delphi method given the potential not to select appropriate participants. It's important to recognize one's bias as a researcher and remain focused on the literature and participant selection process.

Modified Delphi Methodology

A modified Delphi technique was deployed for the specific purposes of this study which consisted of the following steps: (a) first formulating an issue to be explored, (b) through an extensive review of the research and literature critical items relevant to the research topic were generated, (c) a questionnaire was developed using a Likert scale that was deployed to a panel of experts, (d) a panel of subject matter experts was selected to participate in the study, (e) the initial round was distributed to the panel of experts, (f) the data were collected and analyzed, (g) feedback from the first round of questions was provided and used to formulate the next round of questions, (h) steps e-g were repeated for three rounds until stability is reached, and (i) the final results were analyzed.

Participant Selection

The selection of study participants consisted of several techniques including ensuring the retention of participants throughout the process. Below were the steps taken to solicit potential participants:

- Through the review of literature, a list of potential participants was identified given their participation in research based on the field of study.

- Utilizing the contact information provided in the literature or through a search on LinkedIn, an e-mail was sent utilizing the LinkedIn platform seeking their participation in the study.
- Additional participants were solicited utilizing LinkedIn by posting a message on the researchers personal LinkedIn page sharing information about conducting research along with the inclusion criteria.
- Those who self-identified were asked to send an e-mail utilizing the LinkedIn platform stating their interest along with their e-mail information.
- Individuals that were identified as eligible for participation based on the inclusion criteria were then sent an invitation to participate in the study utilizing the e-mail address sent to the researcher through LinkedIn.
- Finally, the researcher posted the same message notifying members about the start of a research study along with the inclusion criteria on the CHIEF platform. CHIEF is a private member network for female executive leaders with over one thousand members.
- CHIEF members were asked to self-identify and express interest through their member portal by sending a private message to the researcher expressing interest and sharing their e-mail address.
- Individuals that were identified as eligible for participation based on the inclusion criteria were then sent an invitation to participate in the study utilizing the e-mail address sent to the researcher through the CHIEF portal.

The analysis unit for the purposes of this study is defined as a subject matter expert who is 18 years or older, and an individual within the field of human resources that has served as a

generalist, academician, consultant, human resource business partner, diversity practitioner, sr. human resource executive, or talent development practitioner in a corporate work environment with a minimum of 5 years of experience in a mid-large size organization with five hundred or more employees.

The inclusion criteria were as follows:

- Individuals within the field of human resources, diversity, equity, and inclusion, or a manager that has led teams of four or more to a senior leader or individual that has led teams of five or more and has five plus years' experience leading diverse teams or groups.
- Minimum of 5 years' experience in a mid-large size organization with five hundred or more employees.
- A consultant with more than 20 clients.
- An academician that has published in the area of human resources, workplace cultures, diversity, equity and inclusion, belong, psychological safety.
- Individuals are willing to provide authentic responses based on personal experiences or observations.

The criteria for exclusion were as follows:

- The subject matter expert did not have to be a person identified as an ethnic minority or underrepresented minority, although important to the study, the participant will need to identify as having experience leading diverse teams, groups, or global organizations of 500 or more employees.
- Individuals with less than 3 to 7 years of experience leading diverse teams or groups.
- Small business owners or noncorporate organizations with less than 500 employees.

- Individuals who identify having concerns providing honest feedback throughout the process due to concerns of confidentiality.
- Individuals that do not have access to the technology to participate in the questionnaire.
- Participants will also be excluded if they are not able to commit to being available during the full extent of the study, are not able to participate in a minimum of three rounds of questionnaires, and do not possess the technology or skill to access the questionnaires.

The intended participant size was between 15 and 20 based on the recommended size noted by Turoff (2002). The ideal plan is to reach maximum participation with a high level of retention through rounds. If after applying the criteria for inclusion and exclusion eligible participants exceeded the required number of participants, criteria for maximum variation was used to refine the list. Although Delphi studies can vary significantly, a review of the literature found it rare that there are less than 8 participants (Beidebeck et al., 2021). The literature found Delphi studies that consisted of panel sizes ranging from 5 to 50 (Baumann Montecinos & Grünfelder, 2022; Maassen et al., 2021). As previously stated, for purposes of this study, the researcher followed the recommendation of Turoff (2002) and sought the recommended panel size of 20.

Criteria for maximum variation were pre-selected and identified as follows:

- Job/career identification
- Ethnicity and race to ensure diverse representation
- Years of working experience
- Gender, defined as male, female, or other

Protection of Human Subjects

Research involving human subjects requires protection in accordance with the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations. Pepperdine's Graduate School of Education and Psychology (GSEP) is a part of Pepperdine's Graduate and Professional Schools (GSP) Institutional Review Board (GSP IRB). The mission of Pepperdine's IRB is defined as aiming to provide a full circle of protection for research participants and researchers by:

- Promoting and facilitating the protection of rights, welfare, and dignity of human research participants;
- Helping ensure compliance with federal regulations, state laws, University policies, and national standards for research involving human research participants;
- Providing timely and directed high-quality education, review, and monitoring for human research projects;
- Assist investigators in conducting ethical, sound research of the highest quality that complies with applicable regulations" (Pepperdine University, n.d., community.pepperdine.edu/irb).

Pepperdine University's policy requires that research involving the participation of human subjects is conducted in accordance with accepted ethical, federal, and professional standards for research and approved by one of the University's IRBs. In addition, Pepperdine requires that all human subjects research conducted by or under the auspices of Pepperdine University will be performed in accordance with the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, DHHS (CFR), Title 45 Part 46 (45 CFR 46), entitled Protection of Human Research Subjects, and Parts 160 and 164, entitled *Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information* and the California Protection of Human Subjects in Medical Experimentation Act. "Where

applicable, FDA regulations on human subjects research will be followed (CFR Title 21 Parts 50 and 56 *Protection of Human Subjects and Institutional Review Boards*).”

Furthermore, research conducted with human subjects must be performed in accordance with the accepted ethical principles established by professional organizations or societies that are applicable to the area of investigation. The actions of Pepperdine University will also conform to all other applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Pepperdine University has assured the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) of the DHHS that all human subjects research will be conducted in accordance with 45 CFR 46 and has been issued Federal Wide Assurance by the OHRP (Pepperdine University, n.d., community. Pepperdine.edu/irb).

Due to the participation of human subjects to conduct the study, it was required in accordance with the policy set forth by the university to file an IRB application. The researcher completed the CITI Program course and received a certificate of completion (see Appendix A). Participants of this study were professionals in corporate America in the field of Human Resources, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and are in leadership roles in mid-large size organizations. The Risk identified for these individuals were minimum. As a result of a minimum risk to the study participants, the study met the requirements for exemption as outlined by the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, DHHS (CFR), title 45 part 46 (45 CFR 46). The application for a claim of exemption was filed with the institutional review board (IRB) at Pepperdine University. Approval was given to conduct the study (see Appendix B).

Ensuring the security of the research data is important to the protection of the participants. Participants of the study were provided an informed consent form that included the following: (a) requirements for participation, (b) the purpose of the study, (c) detailed information regarding the research process, (d) an explanation as to how the data will be used,

(e) why they are being ask to participate, (f) any potential risk to participation, (g) the benefits of participation, (h) benefit to others, (i) alternative to being in the study, (j) any cost associated with participation, (k) any compensation to be received for participation, (l) process for reporting any problems, (m) protection of personal information, and (n) an outline of their rights as a study participant (see Appendix C).

Information obtained by the participants will remain anonymous. The data were collected from participants using the Qualtrics survey platform. The platform was only accessible by the researcher and a password was required for access. All data files were stored on a computer that is password protected and encrypted and was only accessible by the researcher. The analysis of the study was also conducted using a password-protected statistical analysis platform. After the required period upon completion of the study, the raw data files will be destroyed to further protect the participants of the study.

Instrument Design

For the purposes of this study questionnaires were used. The questionnaires were distributed to participants in multiple rounds until consensus was reached. Through the extensive review of the literature, a list of critical items was established and used to create a Likert scale questionnaire. The Likert scale is also known as a summated rating scale that is based on the assumption that each item included on the scale has equal attitudinal value (Kumar, 2014). However, it is also important to note, according to Kumar (2014), that the Likert scale does not necessarily measure attitude, but instead does assist the researcher with rating participants in descending or ascending order with respect to their attitudes towards the issues being assessed in the questionnaire; but they cannot be presumed equal (Jamieson, 2004).

A key strength of a Likert scale is the convenience it provides when constructing and modifying responses generating appropriate results to be used in statistical inference with good reliability and having the ability to analyze large data sets with limited time and effort (Heo et al., 2022). According to Heo et al. (2022), researchers have expressed there are limitations associated with the Likert scale to include not being sufficiently reliable. Rating results from the Depending on the individuals responding, specifically when it comes to extreme options the Likert scale may have different implications (Hui & Triandis, 1989). According to Heo et al. (2022), findings between cultural and ethnic groups differ in their extreme response style (Heo et al., 2022).

Providing participants with clarity of the Likert scale process to ensure understanding among participants and emphasizing consistency of participation to promote reliability of data, supports the ability to increase validity and can be defined on the questionnaire. Providing definitions of key terms which is available to all participants and can be found in Chapter 1. In addition, providing clarity to all participants also included definitions of each measure along the continuum of the questionnaire. Pilot testing may be conducted to test the questionnaire and improve prior to round one (Skulmoski et al. 2007). A draft questionnaire can be found in Appendix D and was peer-reviewed by three current students of Pepperdine University's GSEP program. The second-round questionnaire is found in Appendix E.

Data Collection

Upon confirmation of participants, the use of a recruitment script was used for outreach to all participants and was sent via the contact information obtained in the literature or using the e-mail address provided in response to the request to participate (see Appendix F). If an e-mail address was not available, outreach to participants was made using LinkedIn and the CHIEF

member portal. Communication asking for an e-mail address was sent through the LinkedIn and CHIEF member portal that would be used to send the recruitment script for consistency.

If there was no response to the request to participate, a second e-mail request was then sent five days later and a follow-up request was sent three days later noting the final deadline to participate. The process included maintaining a list of participants using an excel spreadsheet and noting that they were no longer interested if no response was provided, and they would be considered no longer eligible for participation in the study.

Upon confirmation of participants based on responses, the first questionnaire was distributed providing participants a week to respond and an e-mail reminder to highlight the deadline to submit the questionnaire was sent to participants three days following the release of the first questionnaire. A final reminder was sent to participants on the morning of the questionnaire's due date. The process was repeated during the second round; however, an extended due date was provided for round two to provide the participants with adequate time to review the round one summary report. A reminder e-mail was sent three days prior to round two due date and again on the date that round two questionnaire was due.

Statement of Personal Bias and Lived Experiences

The ability to set aside personal bias or judgement which is also known as epoche, will allow the researcher to see the research from a new perspective (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). As a Black female human resource and diversity, equity, and inclusion executive with extensive experience supporting global organizations, this study is significant to the researcher's body of work. Where there could be the potential for bias in promoting a model to be used in global organizations, no interrater dependability was used given the research is founded on an

extensive review and assessment of the literature and not the researcher's own lived experiences and knowledge.

Epoche takes place at the beginning of the research process in order for the researcher to place their personal bias aside and ensure focus on views and lens from the participants (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). Epoche also allows for the researcher to eliminate bias or any preconceived thoughts about a topic (Moustakas, 1994). Bracketing is also known as epoche, and the bracketing process occurs through journaling and preconceived views about the research (Tufford & Newman, 2012). The bracketing process allows the researcher the opportunity to explore the topic with greater clarity and new perspectives (Giorgi, 1997). According to Gearing (2004), bracketing is typically associated with qualitative research. For the purposes of this study, the researcher will use journaling when ideas, thoughts, or preconceived thoughts come up based on the researcher's lived experiences.

Data Analysis

Having the right amount of rigor is important in good research and can contribute to a successful Delphi study (Skulmoski et al., 2007). Robertson et al. (2017) used traditional measurement properties to include content validity, re-test reliability, and responsiveness by respondents. In another study, the researchers analyzed the data using elements of a six-phase framework which ensures rigor in the data analysis process (Naisola-Ruiter, 2022).

Naisola-Ruiter (2022) describes additional steps in the analysis process to include coding emerging themes that are derived from the data. It is also important during the analysis process that the researcher demonstrates reliability which can be minimized by ensuring bias and errors are limited in the research so that if conducted in the future, using the same procedure, the findings are conclusions will match.

One rationale of the Delphi method is that the feedback from the statistical group response and participant comments can lead to a convergence among the participant's opinions (Gary & Von der Gracht, 2015). There is controversy when seeking to ensure consensus on whether a reduction in variance over rounds truly reflects the consensus and whether increased consensus and increased conformity can show up as a convergence of participants over rounds (Rowe & Wright, 1999).

Determining consensus is the goal when conducting a Delphi study and is essential to the data analysis portion of the study (Gary & Von der Gracht, 2015). Consensus has been used by most researchers as a stopping point throughout the research process (Von der Gracht, 2012). Dajani et al. (1979) define this step as hierarchical stopping criteria and suggests measuring the level of agreement only if there is a stable answer reached. The majority was defined as more than 50% and plurality as receiving a larger portion of results but not more than 49%. This was challenged by Chaffin and Talley (1980) who stated that if individual answers are fluid the group consensus cannot be valid and argued that individual stability in fact should not be the primary focus for arriving at a consensus. Before going into the data analysis portion, it will be important that I am clear on what will determine consensus.

Beginning with round one and once all questionnaires have been completed, a calculation of the median, mode and interquartile range (IQR) was completed. Utilizing the IQR, an item's stability was determined. Items with an IQR less than or equal to 20% of the range are deemed to have reached consensus and stability which was determined as a result of the compilation of Delphi studies that were conducted by Plinske (2008) which is available in Table 2. Once the process is complete for each item, a round one summary is prepared and given to participants before moving to round two.

Table 2*IQR Values Used to Determine Consensus in Delphi Studies*

Author(s)	Year	Scale	Maximum IQR Used to Establish Consensus	IQR as % of the Scale
Stines	2003	6	1	17%
Kaliner et al.	2005	100	20	20%
Wicklein & Rojewski	1999	5	1	20%
Wright	2007	5	1	20%
Rayens & Hahn	2000	4	1	25%
Kim, Barnett, & Bragg	2003	7	2	29%
Osika	2006	7	2	29%
Brunner, Lienhardt, Kissling, Bachmann, & Weber	In press	10	3	30%
Mackellar, Ashcroft, Bell, James, & Marriott	2007	9	3	33%
Rasmussen, Sondergaard, Kampmann, & Andersen	2004	9	3	33%
Na	2006	7	2.5	36%
Comer, Birkenholz, & Stewart	2004	5	2	40%

Note: From The Next Generation of Community College Presidents: Critical Characteristics, Competencies, and Professional Experiences (p.59), (Publication No. 3331199) [Doctoral dissertation, Pepperdine University], by K. Plinske, 2008, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. In the public domain.

A round two instrument is developed, despite the analysis being complete in round one. Those items deemed as reaching consensus are removed, median scores are added to the remaining items from the study. Upon receiving a completed round two questionnaire, a median, mode, and IQR were all calculated for each item. The same criteria – an IQR of 20% or less was used to determine whether an item met consensus. A review is conducted to see if a final consensus could be determined at this point in the analysis. If more than 85% of the items in the instrument including those from the first round had reached individual consensus and stability then the final consensus was reached. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend that in order to emphasize triangulations, the final consensus is also reached if the following are true:

- Median Stability Index (MeSI): Less than 10% of the remaining items show there is no movement or change in the value of the median from round one to the next round which means, for each item, the median rating from the prior round is subtracted from the median rating in the current round which results in a difference of zero. A zero result demonstrates no item movement and therefore can be deemed stable.
- Modal Stability Index (MOSI): Less than 10% of the remaining items show no movement or change in the value of the mode from the first round to the second round which indicates for each item, the mode rating for the item from the prior round is subtracted from the mode rating in the current round which results in a difference of zero. A zero result indicates the item did not move and is therefore stable.
- IQR Stability Index (IQRSI): Less than 10% of the remaining items showed no movement or change in the value of the IQR from the first round to the second round which indicates for each item, the IQR rating from round one is subtracted from the IQR rating in the current round which results in a difference of zero. A result of zero indicates the item did not move and is therefore deemed to be stable.

As this study was concluded, it was important to clearly define the determination of consensus before beginning the data analysis. Two independent measurement processes were deployed to reduce interpretation uncertainty (R. A. Green, 2014). Upon collecting the survey data feedback, calculating the median, mode, and interquartile range (IQR) were completed. Upon completing the analysis and arriving at a final consensus, the study items were tabulated and sorted to be included in Chapter 4. If consensus was not reached, another round was repeated following the steps outlined in round two.

Coding

Coding requires the researcher to aggregate the data into categories seeking evidence from information used in the study, and then assign a label to the code and reduce it to a set of explored themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To assess whether a theoretical framework could be developed for understanding success in corporate America for underrepresented groups, intercoder reliability was used, which is the process of two or more coders establishing agreement on coding themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Finally, the following process was used for coding:

1. Items were analyzed, and stability was reached during the Delphi analysis which led to the assignment of codes.
2. The researcher engaged a minimum of three peer reviewers (see Appendix G) from a doctoral program familiar with the coding process to review the identified themes and codes for agreement.
3. Codes were assigned to remaining critical items and reviewed with peers for agreement.

The results of the coding will be displayed in Chapter 4.

Protecting participants by deploying the policies and processes defined by Pepperdine's Internal Review Board (IRB) was followed. In addition to protecting the participants data during and post the study was important to continue to support and ensure the anonymity and protection of participants. Delphi analysis of the data was conducted to validate the data and achieve stability and consensus. The results were tabulated and presented using charts and graphs. A full report of the data analysis can be found in Chapter 4.

Conclusion

To effectively identify the critical success factors in organizational cultures that lead to workplace success for underrepresented groups, a Delphi methodology was used. The Delphi methodology was appropriate for this study given the ability to engage experts that would share their experiences and opinions through survey responses that would contribute to the research (Moore, 1977).

Key to the Delphi methodology is the ability for participants to remain anonymous throughout the process (Skulmoski et al., 2007). The ability to engage research participants in rounds to provide feedback that would be used to refine the questionnaires used throughout the process is an important aspect of the Delphi methodology and for gaining consensus.

Protecting participants by deploying the policies and processes defined by Pepperdine's Internal Review Board (IRB) was followed. In addition to protecting the participants data during and post the study was important to continue to support and ensure anonymity and protection of participants.

Delphi analysis of the data was conducted to validate the data and achieve stability and consensus. The results will be tabulated and presented using charts and graphs. A full report of the data analysis can be found in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Chapter 4 presents the data collection and research analysis conducted. The Delphi methodology was deployed and used to analyze RQ1, and the process of coding was used for RQ2.

Recruitment of Participants

Participants were recruited first by examining the existing literature used in the research. Second, the on-line platform LinkedIn was used to source additional participants. These individuals are prominent in the field of workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion and building cultures of inclusion, diversity, equity, and safety. The analysis unit for the purposes of this study was defined as a subject matter expert who is 18 years or older, and an individual within the field of human resources that has served as a generalist, academician, consultant, human resource business partner, diversity practitioner, sr. human resource executive, or talent development practitioner in a corporate work environment with a minimum of five years of experience in a mid-large size organization with five hundred or more employees.

The initial list consisted of 60 individuals based on the criteria and a total of 35 individuals were contacted upon receiving their e-mail addresses, which resulted in a final list of 25 participants. The 35 individuals contacted were sent the recruitment script, available in Appendix F along with informed consent for participation document found in Appendix C, and a link to the first survey. Individuals that did not complete the initial survey were sent a follow-up reminder five days after the initial request. Final reminders were sent to individuals prior to the first deadline date, kicking off phase one of the Delphi process.

Re-Statement of the Research Questions

- RQ1. What are the critical factors in organizational cultures that lead to workplace success for underrepresented groups?
- RQ2. Can these critical factors be used to develop a theoretical framework for understanding success in corporate America for underrepresented groups?

Delphi Phase One

Distribution of Questionnaire #1

The initial phase of the Delphi process consisted of a questionnaire that included 63 critical items derived from the literature. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix D. The Qualtrics survey platform was used to conduct the questionnaire which created a survey link that was distributed to participants along with the instructions, as part of the recruitment script and was sent via e-mail.

The instructions to participants were to rank the critical items based on their perception of importance when it comes to critical factors that lead to a culture of success for underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities in the workplace. Success is defined as the ability to attain one's goals, performance, accomplishments, wealth, and honors for the purposes of this study. The questionnaire used a 7-point Likert scale to rank the level of importance for each of the critical items. Definitions for each point within the Likert scale were provided to participants and is noted in Table 3.

A total of 35 participants were sent the recruitment script along with the link to the questionnaire. Of the 35, 25 individuals ($n = 25$) consented to participate in the study and completed the questionnaire by the deadline provided.

Table 3*Likert-scale Values and Definitions*

Likert-Scale Value	Definition
Not at all Important – (1)	This item is not detrimental to the organization or individual
Low Importance – (2)	This item is not beneficial but could be detrimental to the organization and individuals' success
Slightly Important – (3)	This item is somewhat beneficial to the organization and individuals; however, it would not impede success for individuals or the organization if it did not exist.
Neutral – (4)	No strong feeling or experience with this item.
Moderately Important – (5)	This item is beneficial to the organization and individual, however, it would not completely impede success for individuals or organizations if it did not exist.
Very Important – (6)	This item is beneficial and not having it would impede success for individuals and the organization.
Extremely Important – (7)	This item is necessary and critical, not having it would impede success for both the organizations and individuals within the organization.

Round One Analysis

RQ1 as stated in Chapter 1 is: What are the critical factors in organizational cultures that lead to workplace success for underrepresented groups? Data were collected during Round 1 from 25 participants. Upon retrieval of the data, it was assessed by calculating the median, interquartile range, and the mode. The items that had an interquartile range of one or lower demonstrated consensus and accordingly, six items of the 63 items did not reach consensus and the remaining 57 items did have consensus as shown below in Table 4. The 10% of items not achieving consensus demonstrated that most of the items were very important or extremely important to the success of underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities in the workplace.

Table 4*Round One Results*

Item #	Items	Median	IQR	Mode	Decision
1	A workplace that supports a culture of inclusion	7	1	7	Consensus
2	Diverse workforce representation	7	1	7	Consensus
4	You feel like you belong	7	1	7	Consensus
6	There is a high level of trust	7	1	7	Consensus
9	Communication is clear and transparent	7	1	7	Consensus
10	Leaders demonstrate inclusive leadership	7	1	7	Consensus
15	Psychological safety is embraced and promoted	7	1	7	Consensus
16	Access to development opportunities, promotions, and other advancement opportunities are equal throughout the organization	7	1	7	Consensus
21	Workplace policies, programs, and practices are inclusive	7	1	7	Consensus
25	Leaders, teams, and individuals hold themselves and each other accountable	7	1	7	Consensus
34	All employees feel accepted throughout the organization	7	1	7	Consensus
42	Honesty is a core value of the organization	7	1	7	Consensus
43	Integrity is a core value of the organization and leaders and peers demonstrate a high level of integrity in all that they do	7	1	7	Consensus
47	Respect of all is encouraged and a key value of the organization	7	1	7	Consensus
49	There is fairness in key policies, programs, and practices	7	1	7	Consensus
50	Equity is a key strategy for the organization in promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce	7	1	7	Consensus
52	The organization encourages, promotes, and recognize embracing the differences of all employees	7	1	7	Consensus

Item #	Items	Median	IQR	Mode	Decision
53	Employees feel empowered to perform	7	1	7	Consensus
57	The organization is open and accepting all employees	7	1	7	Consensus
61	Leaders, employees, and teams practice active listening	7	1	7	Consensus
62	The organization has inclusive Human Resource Practices	7	1	7	Consensus
63	The organization is representative of the workforce demographic	7	1	7	Consensus
26	Key measures and metrics are clear and transparent	6.5	1	7	Consensus
30	Leaders are supportive of teams and individuals	6.5	1	6	Consensus
41	A high level of transparency with key data, actions, and key information exists	6.5	1	7	Consensus
51	Programs exist and are accessible to all	6.5	1	6	Consensus
56	Workplace safety is a key strategic initiative of the organization	6.5	1	7	Consensus
3	A clear diversity mission, vision, and purpose	6	1	6	Consensus
7	Employees are able to be their authentic selves	6	1	6	Consensus
8	Social identity exists or employees are connected to other groups and teams	6	1	6	Consensus
11	Individual uniqueness is promoted and accepted	6	1	6	Consensus
12	Employee engagement is promoted and a part of the culture	6	1	6	Consensus
13	A sense of community among teams, groups, and divisions	6	1	6	Consensus
14	A sense of meaning exists within the culture	6	1	7	Consensus
17	Leaders and employees are bias disruptors and support the elimination of bias within the organization	6	1	6	Consensus
18	Creativity is promoted, encouraged, and recognized	6	1	6	Consensus

Item #	Items	Median	IQR	Mode	Decision
20	Leaders and peers are self-aware of their bias (conscience & Unconscious)	6	1	6	Consensus
22	Development is meaningful and supports individual development goals	6	1	6	Consensus
23	Mentorship opportunities and programs exist	6	1	6	Consensus
27	The organization operates with a balanced scorecard	6	0	6	Consensus
28	Commitment to organizational goals is important for leaders, teams, and individuals	6	1	6	Consensus
31	Team support is recognized and encouraged	6	1	6	Consensus
32	Training and development are accessible to all employees and support individual development goals	6	1	6	Consensus
33	Collaboration amongst teams, groups, and individuals is encouraged and supported	6	1	6	Consensus
35	There is active participation in teams, and groups in key initiatives and goals	6	1	6	Consensus
36	Autonomy is encouraged and recognized	6	1	6	Consensus
38	There are realistic expectations for accomplishing goals and objectives	6	1	6	Consensus
44	Leaders possess a high level of emotional intelligence	6	1	6	Consensus
45	Leaders are forward thinking	6	1	6	Consensus
46	It is ok to fail and learn in order to improve work performance and increase innovation	6	1	6	Consensus
48	Leaders demonstrate a high level of cultural intelligence in support of diverse populations throughout the organization	6	1	6	Consensus
54	A clear well-being strategy exists and is practiced throughout the organization	6	1	6	Consensus
55	Leadership development opportunities exist and are accessible to all employees	6	1	6	Consensus
58	Leaders and peers practice and encourage empathy	6	1	6	Consensus

Item #	Items	Median	IQR	Mode	Decision
59	All employees feel valued for their contributions	6	1	6	Consensus
29	Employees at all levels are involved in key decisions	5	1	6	Consensus
40	Leaders at all levels express vulnerability with teams, groups, and individuals	5	1	5	Consensus
1	A workplace that supports a culture of inclusion	7	1	7	Consensus
2	Diverse workforce representation	7	1	7	Consensus
4	You feel like you belong	7	1	7	Consensus
6	There is a high level of trust	7	1	7	Consensus
9	Communication is clear and transparent	7	1	7	Consensus
10	Leaders demonstrate inclusive leadership	7	1	7	Consensus
5	There is connection to the organizations vision, goals, and purpose	6.00	2.00	6.00	No Consensus
19	Innovation is promoted, encouraged, and recognized	6.00	2.00	6.00	No Consensus
24	Access to sponsorship opportunities or programs	6.00	2.00	6.00	No Consensus
37	Innovation is accepted, encouraged, and recognized	6.00	1.25	6.00	No Consensus
60	Freedom of expression is encouraged and recognized	6.00	2.00	6.00	No Consensus
39	Risk-taking is rewarded and encouraged	5.00	1.25	5.00	No Consensus

Highlighted below in Table 5 are the items that reached consensus, arranged by level of importance, as determined by the 25 ($n = 25$) participants in the study. The importance level is derived from the median score, with 7 demonstrating an extremely important level and 1 demonstrating not being important at all. The 57 items that reached consensus were not included in the second round of the Delphi process.

Table 5*Consensus Items from Round One*

Item #	Items	Median	IQR	Mode	Decision
1	A workplace that supports a culture of inclusion	7	1	7	Consensus
2	Diverse workforce representation	7	1	7	Consensus
4	You feel like you belong	7	1	7	Consensus
6	There is a high level of trust	7	1	7	Consensus
9	Communication is clear and transparent	7	1	7	Consensus
10	Leaders demonstrate inclusive leadership	7	1	7	Consensus
15	Psychological safety is embraced and promoted	7	1	7	Consensus
16	Access to development opportunities, promotions, and other advancement opportunities are equal throughout the organization	7	1	7	Consensus
21	Workplace policies, programs, and practices are inclusive	7	1	7	Consensus
25	Leaders, teams, and individuals hold themselves and each other accountable	7	1	7	Consensus
34	All employees feel accepted throughout the organization	7	1	7	Consensus
42	Honesty is a core value of the organization	7	1	7	Consensus
43	Integrity is a core value of the organization and leaders and peers demonstrate a high level of integrity in all that they do	7	1	7	Consensus
47	Respect for all is encouraged and a key value of the organization	7	1	7	Consensus
49	There is fairness in key policies, programs, and practices	7	1	7	Consensus
50	Equity is a key strategy for the organization in promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce	7	1	7	Consensus
52	The organization encourages, promotes, and recognizes embracing the differences of all employees	7	1	7	Consensus
53	Employees feel empowered to perform	7	1	7	Consensus

Item #	Items	Median	IQR	Mode	Decision
57	The organization is open and accepting all employees	7	1	7	Consensus
61	Leaders, employees, and teams practice active listening	7	1	7	Consensus
62	The organization has inclusive Human Resource Practices	7	1	7	Consensus
63	The organization is representative of the workforce demographic	7	1	7	Consensus
1	A workplace that supports a culture of inclusion	7	1	7	Consensus
2	Diverse workforce representation	7	1	7	Consensus
4	You feel like you belong	7	1	7	Consensus
6	There is a high level of trust	7	1	7	Consensus
9	Communication is clear and transparent	7	1	7	Consensus
10	Leaders demonstrate inclusive leadership	7	1	7	Consensus
26	Key measures and metrics are clear and transparent	6.5	1	7	Consensus
30	Leaders are supportive of teams and individuals	6.5	1	6	Consensus
41	A high level of transparency with key data, actions, and key information exists	6.5	1	7	Consensus
51	Programs exist and are accessible to all	6.5	1	6	Consensus
56	Workplace safety is a key strategic initiative of the organization	6.5	1	7	Consensus
3	A clear diversity, mission, vision, and purpose	6	1	6	Consensus
7	Employees are able to be their authentic selves	6	1	6	Consensus
8	Social identity exists or employees are connected to other groups and teams	6	1	6	Consensus
11	Individual uniqueness is promoted and accepted	6	1	6	Consensus
12	Employee engagement is promoted and a part of the culture	6	1	6	Consensus
13	A sense of community among teams, groups, and divisions	6	1	6	Consensus
14	A sense of meaning exists within the culture	6	1	7	Consensus

Item #	Items	Median	IQR	Mode	Decision
17	Leaders and employees are bias disruptors and support the elimination of bias within the organization	6	1	6	Consensus
18	Creativity is promoted, encouraged, and recognized	6	1	6	Consensus
20	Leaders and peers are self-aware of their bias (conscience & Unconscious)	6	1	6	Consensus
22	Development is meaningful and supports individual development goals	6	1	6	Consensus
23	Mentorship opportunities and programs exist	6	1	6	Consensus
27	The organization operates with a balanced scorecard	6	0	6	Consensus
28	Commitment to organizational goals is important for leaders, teams, and individuals	6	1	6	Consensus
31	Team support is recognized and encouraged	6	1	6	Consensus
32	Training and development are accessible to all employees and support individual development goals	6	1	6	Consensus
33	Collaboration amongst teams, groups, and individuals is encouraged and supported	6	1	6	Consensus
35	There is active participation in teams, and groups in key initiatives and goals	6	1	6	Consensus
36	Autonomy is encouraged and recognized	6	1	6	Consensus
38	There are realistic expectations for accomplishing goals and objectives	6	1	6	Consensus
44	Leaders possess a high level of emotional intelligence	6	1	6	Consensus
45	Leaders are forward thinking	6	1	6	Consensus
46	It is ok to fail and learn in order to improve work performance and increase innovation	6	1	6	Consensus
48	Leaders demonstrate a high level of cultural intelligence in support of diverse populations throughout the organization	6	1	6	Consensus
54	A clear well-being strategy exists and is practiced throughout the organization	6	1	6	Consensus

Item #	Items	Median	IQR	Mode	Decision
55	Leadership development opportunities exist and are accessible to all employees	6	1	6	Consensus
58	Leaders and peers practice and encourage empathy	6	1	6	Consensus
59	All employees feel valued for their contributions	6	1	6	Consensus
29	Employees at all levels are involved in key decisions	5	1	6	Consensus
40	Leaders at all levels express vulnerability with teams, groups, and individuals	5	1	5	Consensus

Table 6 represent the non-consensus items from round one. As such, a second questionnaire will be created and distributed to the 25 participants using the 6 items that did not reach consensus. In addition, two new items were included from the questionnaire and will be included in the second questionnaire. The median result of each item will be included with the item and returned to participants for Round 2 of the Delphi process.

Table 6

Non-Consensus Items from Round One

Item #	Items	Median	IQR	Mode	Decision
5	There is connection to the organizations vision, goals, and purpose	6.00	2.00	6.00	No Consensus
19	Innovation is promoted, encouraged, and recognized	6.00	2.00	6.00	No Consensus
24	Access to sponsorship opportunities or programs	6.00	2.00	6.00	No Consensus
37	Innovation is accepted, encouraged, and recognized	6.00	1.25	6.00	No Consensus

Item #	Items	Median	IQR	Mode	Decision
39	Risk-taking is rewarded and encouraged	5.00	1.25	5.00	No Consensus
60	Freedom of expression is encouraged and recognized	6.00	2.00	6.00	No Consensus

Delphi Phase Two

Distribution of Questionnaire #2

Phase Two of the Delphi process consisted of the distribution of a second questionnaire consisting of eight critical items identified during the Round 1 questionnaire. There were six items that did not reach consensus during Round 1 and two of the items were identified as new. The use of the Qualtrics platform was used to administer the questionnaire and a link to the questionnaire was used to distribute to participants along with the follow-up recruitment script. A copy of the second-round questionnaire can be found in Appendix E.

Round 2 participants were asked again to rank the critical items based on their perception of importance when it comes to critical factors that lead to a culture of success for underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities in the workplace. The median response from the first questionnaire was also included next to the critical item and any new items were also added and noted next to the new item. The 25 participants from questionnaire one were sent the second questionnaire and was given five days to complete the Round 2 questionnaire. Three days after distributing the second questionnaire, a reminder was sent to participants reminding them of the deadline for completion. All 25 participants ($n = 25$) completed the second-round questionnaire.

Round Two Analysis

Items with no consensus were analyzed for Round 2. Upon retrieval of the questionnaire results, the median, interquartile range, and the mode were calculated for the remaining critical items. Those items where the IQR was less than or equal to 15% of range met the criteria for consensus. Out of the eight items included in the Round 2 survey; six items reached consensus. This resulted in a consensus rate of 96.9% and therefore meant final consensus had been reached. Table 7 highlights the final results of Round 2, to include the median, IQR, mode, and consensus rating.

Table 7

Round Two Results

Item #	Items	Median	IQR	Mode	Decision
5	There is connection to the organizations vision, goals, and purpose (Med = 6)	6.00	1.00	7.00	Consensus
19	Innovation is promoted, encouraged, and recognized (Med = 6)	6.00	0.50	6.00	Consensus
24	Access to sponsorship opportunities or programs (Med = 6)	6.00	2.00	6.00	No Consensus
37	Innovation is accepted, encouraged, and recognized (Med = 6)	6.00	2.00	6.00	No Consensus
39	Risk-taking is rewarded and encouraged (Med = 5)	6.00	1.00	6.00	Consensus
60	Freedom of expression is encouraged and recognized (Med = 6)	6.00	1.00	6.00	Consensus
86	Employee Moral & Leadership Moral being equal in the workplace (New Item)	6.00	1.00	7.00	Consensus
87	Courageous Leaders (New Item)	6.50	1.00	7.00	Consensus

Table 8 represents the six items that reached consensus in order of importance as determined by the panel of experts ($n = 25$). The median score is representative of the level of importance, and seven demonstrates extreme importance, and one demonstrates an item not being at all important.

Table 8

Consensus Items from Round Two

Item #	Items	Median	IQR	Mode
87	Courageous Leaders (New Item)	6.50	1.00	7.00
5	There is connection to the organizations vision, goals, and purpose	6.00	1.00	7.00
19	Innovation is promoted, encouraged, and recognized	6.00	0.50	6.00
39	Risk-taking is rewarded and encouraged	6.00	1.00	6.00
60	Freedom of expression is encouraged and recognized	6.00	1.00	6.00
86	Employee Moral & Leadership Moral being equal in the workplace (New Item)	6.00	1.00	7.00

Upon completion of Round 2, 96.9% of the items reached consensus. Therefore, the Delphi analysis did achieve stability as highlighted in Table 9. Three additional items were analyzed, the median consensus index, the interquartile range index, and the model consensus index.

The respondents arrived at consensus for 96.9% of the survey items and anything over 85% was deemed consensus. In addition, the three measures that were used came back as 3%,

2%, and 3%, and the threshold for consensus is 15% and therefore, final consensus has been met.

Table 9 and Table 10 highlight the stability Round 2 criteria.

Table 9

Stability Round Two Analysis

Items	Decision	Diff in Med	Diff in IQR	Diff in Mode
There is connection to the organizations vision, goals, and purpose	Consensus	0.00	0.00	0.00
Innovation is promoted, encouraged, and recognized	Consensus	0.00	0.00	0.00
Access to sponsorship opportunities or programs	No Consensus	0.00	0.00	0.00
Innovation is accepted, encouraged, and recognized	No Consensus	0.00	0.74	0.00
Risk-taking is rewarded and encouraged	Consensus	0.00	0.00	0.00
Freedom of expression is encouraged and recognized	Consensus	0.00	0.00	0.00
Employee Moral & Leadership Moral being equal in the workplace (New Item)	Consensus	0.00	0.00	0.00
Courageous Leaders (New Item)	Consensus	0.00	0.00	0.00

Table 10*Stability Round Two Criteria*

% of unstable items as total # of items =	3.1%
Stability Criteria 1 (>85% of total items stable) =	96.9%
Stability Criteria 2 (MeCI<15%) =	3%
Stability Criteria 3 (IQRCI<15%) =	2%
Stability Criteria 2 (MeCI<15%) =	3%

The Round 2 questionnaire reached final consensus and therefore concludes the Delphi rounds. Table 11 highlights the critical items that reached final consensus in order of the level of importance (highest to lowest median score) along with the Likert scale rating.

Table 11*Final Consensus*

Item #	Items	Median	IQR	Likert-Scale Rating
1	A workplace that supports a culture of inclusion	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
2	Diverse workforce representation	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
4	You feel like you belong	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
6	There is a high level of trust	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
9	Communication is clear and transparent	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
10	Leaders demonstrate inclusive leadership	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
15	Psychological safety is embraced and promoted	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
16	Access to development opportunities, promotions, and other advancement	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important

Item #	Items	Median	IQR	Likert-Scale Rating
	opportunities are equal throughout the organization			
21	Workplace policies, programs, and practices are inclusive	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
25	Leaders, teams, and individuals hold themselves and each other accountable	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
26	Key measures and metrics are clear and transparent	6.50	1.00	Extremely Important
30	Leaders are supportive of teams and individuals	6.50	1.00	Extremely Important
34	All employees feel accepted throughout the organization	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
41	A high level of transparency with key data, actions, and key information exists	6.50	1.00	Extremely Important
42	Honesty is a core value of the organization	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
43	Integrity is a core value of the organization and leaders and peers demonstrate a high level of integrity in all that they do	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
47	Respect of all is encouraged and a key value of the organization	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
49	There is fairness in key policies, programs, and practices	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
50	Equity is a key strategy for the organization in promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
51	Programs exist and are accessible to all	6.50	1.00	Extremely Important
52	The organization encourages, promotes, and recognize embracing the differences of all employees	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
53	Employees feel empowered to perform	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important

Item #	Items	Median	IQR	Likert-Scale Rating
56	Workplace safety is a key strategic initiative of the organization	6.50	1.00	Extremely Important
57	The organization is open and accepting all employees	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
61	Leaders, employees, and teams practice active listening	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
62	The organization has inclusive Human Resource Practices	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
63	The organization is representative of the workforce demographic	7.00	1.00	Extremely Important
29	Employees at all levels are involved in key decisions	5.00	1.00	Moderately Important
40	Leaders at all levels express vulnerability with teams, groups, and individuals	5.00	1.00	Moderately Important
3	A clear diversity mission, vision, and purpose	6.00	1.00	Very Important
7	Employees are able to be their authentic selves	6.00	1.00	Very Important
8	Social identity exists or employees are connected to other groups and teams	6.00	1.00	Very Important
11	Individual uniqueness is promoted and accepted	6.00	1.00	Very Important
12	Employee engagement is promoted and a part of the culture	6.00	1.00	Very Important
13	A sense of community among teams, groups, and divisions	6.00	1.00	Very Important
14	A sense of meaning exists within the culture	6.00	1.00	Very Important
17	Leaders and employees are bias disruptors and support the elimination of bias within the organization	6.00	1.00	Very Important
18	Creativity is promoted, encouraged, and recognized	6.00	1.00	Very Important
20	Leaders and peers are self-aware of their bias (conscience & Unconscious)	6.00	1.00	Very Important

Item #	Items	Median	IQR	Likert-Scale Rating
22	Development is meaningful and support individual development goals	6.00	1.00	Very Important
23	Mentorship opportunities and programs exists	6.00	1.00	Very Important
27	The organization operates with a balanced scorecard	6.00	0.00	Very Important
28	Commitment to organization goals is important by leaders, teams, and individuals	6.00	1.00	Very Important
31	Team support is recognized and encouraged	6.00	1.00	Very Important
32	Training and development are accessible to all employees and supports individual development goals	6.00	1.00	Very Important
33	Collaboration amongst teams, groups, and individuals is encouraged and supported	6.00	1.00	Very Important
35	There is active participation in teams, groups in key initiatives and goals	6.00	1.00	Very Important
36	Autonomy is encouraged and recognized	6.00	1.00	Very Important
38	There are realistic expectations to accomplishing goals and objectives	6.00	1.00	Very Important
44	Leaders possess a high level of emotional intelligence	6.00	1.00	Very Important
45	Leaders are forward thinking	6.00	1.00	Very Important
46	It is ok to fail and learn in order to improve work performance and increase innovation	6.00	1.00	Very Important
48	Leaders demonstrate a high level of cultural intelligence in support of diverse populations throughout the organization	6.00	1.00	Very Important
54	A clear well-being strategy exist and is practiced throughout the organization	6.00	1.00	Very Important

Item #	Items	Median	IQR	Likert-Scale Rating
55	Leadership development opportunities exist and are accessible to all employees	6.00	1.00	Very Important
58	Leaders and peers practice and encourage empathy	6.00	1.00	Very Important
59	All employees feel valued for their contributions	6.00	1.00	Very Important
5	There is connection to the organizations vision, goals, and purpose (Med = 6)	6.00	1.00	Very Important
19	Innovation is promoted, encouraged, and recognized (Med =6)	6.00	0.50	Very Important
39	Risk-taking is rewarded and encouraged (Med = 5)	6.00	1.00	Very Important
60	Freedom of expression is encouraged and recognized (Med = 6)	6.00	1.00	Very Important
86	Employee Moral & Leadership Moral being equal in the workplace (New Item)	6.00	1.00	Very Important
87	Courageous Leaders (New Item)	6.50	1.00	Very Important

Coding

RQ2, as previously stated, asked can these critical factors be used to develop a theoretical framework for understanding success in corporate America for underrepresented groups?

Qualitative content analysis was utilized to conduct thematic analysis. The process began by coding the critical items that arrived at consensus into themes. The process included connecting each item by definition and words that are closely related to one other. This was not a simple process and included breaking each word down not only by definition but also by word association. The 63 items with consensus were then coded into four categories:

- Attainment: These items represent the ability for access, opportunity, accountability, and innovation.

- Belonging: These items represent inclusion, authenticity, social identity, connection, and representation.
- Inclusive Leadership: These items represent empowerment, vulnerability, transparency, and self-awareness.
- Psychological Safety: These items represent trust, respect, bias disruptors, wellness, and engagement.

The initial coding and themes were reviewed with three peer reviewers. The three reviewers are final year doctoral students that have experience with qualitative content analysis and coding. Each of the peer reviewers was contacted individually and ask to review the assigned codes and determine if they agree. The peer reviewers validated the assigned codes and themes, and no changes were made. Table 12 highlights the critical consensus items and the assigned codes to determine if they were in agreement.

Table 12

Consensus Items and Assigned Codes

Critical Item	Code
Access to development opportunities, promotions, and other advancement opportunities are equal throughout the organization	Attainment
Workplace policies, programs, and practices are inclusive	Attainment
There is fairness in key policies, programs, and practices	Attainment
Equity is a key strategy for the organization in promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce	Attainment
Key measures and metrics are clear and transparent	Attainment
A high level of transparency with key data, actions, and key information exist	Attainment
Programs exist and are accessible to all	Attainment

Critical Item	Code
Development is meaningful and support individual development goals	Attainment
Mentorship opportunities and programs exists	Attainment
The organization operates with a balanced scorecard	Attainment
Commitment to organization goals is important by leaders, teams, and individuals	Attainment
Training and development are accessible to all employees and supports individual development goals	Attainment
There are realistic expectations to accomplishing goals and objectives	Attainment
Leadership development opportunities exist and are accessible to all employees	Attainment
Innovation is promoted, encouraged, and recognized (Med =6)	Attainment
A workplace that supports a culture of inclusion	Belonging
Diverse workforce representation	Belonging
You feel like you belong	Belonging
Communication is clear and transparent	Belonging
Leaders, teams, and individuals hold themselves and each other accountable	Belonging
All employees feel accepted throughout the organization	Belonging
The organization encourages, promotes and recognize embracing the differences of all employees	Belonging
The organization is open and accepting all employees	Belonging
Leaders, employees, and teams practice active listening	Belonging
The organization has inclusive Human Resource Practices	Belonging
The organization is representative of the workforce demographic	Belonging
A clear diversity mission, vision, and purpose	Belonging
Individual uniqueness is promoted and accepted	Belonging
A sense of meaning exists within the culture	Belonging
Creativity is promoted, encouraged, and recognized	Belonging

Critical Item	Code
Collaboration amongst teams, groups, and individuals is encouraged and supported	Belonging
There is active participation in teams, groups in key initiatives and goals	Belonging
Autonomy is encouraged and recognized	Belonging
All employees feel valued for their contributions	Belonging
Employees at all levels are involved in key decisions	Belonging
There is connection to the organizations vision, goals, and purpose (Med = 6)	Belonging
Leaders demonstrate inclusive leadership	Inclusive Leadership
Employees feel empowered to perform	Inclusive Leadership
Leaders are supportive of teams and individuals	Inclusive Leadership
A sense of community among teams, groups, and divisions	Inclusive Leadership
Leaders and employees are bias disruptors and support the elimination of bias within the organization	Inclusive Leadership
Leaders and peers are self-aware of their bias (conscience & Unconscious)	Inclusive Leadership
Team support is recognized and encouraged	Inclusive Leadership
Leaders possess a high level of emotional intelligence	Inclusive Leadership
Leaders are forward thinking	Inclusive Leadership
Leaders demonstrate a high level of cultural intelligence in support of diverse populations throughout the organization	Inclusive Leadership
Leaders at all levels express vulnerability with teams, groups, and individuals	Inclusive Leadership
Courageous Leaders (New Item)	Inclusive Leadership
There is a high level of trust	Psychological Safety
Psychological safety is embraced and promoted	Psychological Safety
Honesty is a core value of the organization	Psychological Safety
Integrity is a core value of the organization and leaders and peers demonstrate a high level of integrity in all that they do	Psychological Safety
Respect of all is encouraged and a key value of the organization	Psychological Safety
Workplace safety is a key strategic initiative of the organization	Psychological Safety

Critical Item	Code
Employees are able to be their authentic selves	Psychological Safety
Social identity exists or employees are connected to other groups and teams	Psychological Safety
Employee engagement is promoted and a part of the culture	Psychological Safety
It is ok to fail and learn in order to improve work performance and increase innovation	Psychological Safety
A clear well-being strategy exist and is practiced throughout the organization	Psychological Safety
Leaders and peers practice and encourage empathy	Psychological Safety
Risk-taking is rewarded and encouraged	Psychological Safety
Freedom of expression is encouraged and recognized	Psychological Safety
Employee Moral & Leadership Moral being equal in the workplace	Psychological Safety

Conclusion

RQ1 required an assessment of critical factors in organizational cultures that lead to workplace success for underrepresented groups. A Delphi analysis was conducted which consisted of two rounds of questionnaires before arriving at final consensus. The first round consisted of 63 items and 25 panel of experts participated and responded to the questionnaire. 57 of the 63 critical items were deemed as arriving at consensus and 6 items did not arrive at consensus, leading to a second-round questionnaire being deployed.

Round 2 consisted of six critical items that did not reach consensus during Round 1, and 2 new items were added that were noted from the panel of experts. 25 participants responded to the Round 2 questionnaire. Round 2 resulted in a 96.9% stability rating, therefore reaching final consensus, along with the additional measures of the MeCI score of 3%, a IQRCI score of 2%, and a MoCI score of 3%.

RQ2 examined if the critical success factors can be used to develop a theoretical framework for understanding success in corporate America for underrepresented groups? A qualitative content analysis was conducted which consisted of coding the 63 items that reached consensus into four themes: attainment, belonging, inclusive leadership, and psychological safety. The examination of the codes and themes were conducted by three peer reviewers who reached agreement during the first round. Findings from the research will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Findings

Summary of the Study

Workforce diversity continue to be a key strategic focus area for organizations given increased globalization and expectations from corporate boards, employees, regulators, investors, customers, and suppliers (Baum, 2021; Gardner, 2022; Salomon & Schork, 2003). However, despite the growing focus in the workforce only 58 black women and 71 Latino women get promoted for every 100 men promoted, further demonstrating the lag in growth and promotions in key leadership roles by ethnic minorities compared to their non-ethnic peers (McLaren, 2020).

Access to experiences that lead to upward mobility to leadership roles, other advance opportunities, development, and equal wages in corporate America continue to be a challenge for underrepresented groups (M. C. Taylor, 1995). Many of the barriers to success and challenges faced by underrepresented groups in the workplace are due to system racism (Pennington, 2020). Impacting the ability for underrepresented groups in the workplace are factors such as bias in various Human Resource practices such as performance management, succession and talent planning, recruiting, and development preventing the ability for upward growth, advancement, and increased compensation (Slaughter & Greguras, 2008).

The need for organizations to create a culture of inclusion and success for underrepresented groups is critical to the evolution of the workforce due to globalizing and the changing demographics of the workforce. Organizations that not only value the differences in underrepresented groups and enable and promote their contributions to the organization, experience greater success (Miller, 1998). Despite the literature highlighting best practices for organizations to build stronger cultures and inclusive organizations, there is a gap in the

literature when it comes to actionable and sustainable solutions that organizations can take to transfer their organizations to be a place for diverse groups to succeed.

This study sought to explore the critical factors within organizations that ensure the success of underrepresented groups within the workplace, specifically ethnic minorities. While there has been significant research done on the challenges faced by underrepresented groups in the workplace and the efforts taken by the government, organizations, interest groups, and individuals to improve the opportunities for success in the workplace, this study supported the existing research by providing a solution for success. The research explored the experiences and success factors of members of underrepresented groups in various workplace settings. The study, therefore, explored critical competencies identified by ethnic minorities that highlight leaders, teams, and organizations that have led to their success in the workplace. The research led to the development of a comprehensive and sustainable competency model that can be utilized by organizations across the globe to attract, engage, and retain ethnic minorities, as well as create a psychologically safe culture of belonging and connection where ethnic minorities can thrive.

Research Questions (RQs)

The following research questions (RQs) were explored to further assess the critical factors within organizations that create a successful workplace for underrepresented groups.

- RQ1. What are the critical factors in organizational cultures that lead to workplace success for underrepresented groups?
- RQ2. Can these critical factors be used to develop a theoretical framework for understanding success in corporate America for underrepresented groups?

This study was significant given organizations lack a blueprint to attract, recruit, engage, develop, and retain ethnic minorities. Where there are many models and examples of diversity

programs aimed at accomplishing this, no competency model supports a clear strategic approach that is authentic, actionable, and sustainable.

The research and competency model will impact various industries globally and, in the U.S., and will close the gap for organizations looking for a model that supports the entire employee life cycle (Gladka et al., 2022; Smither, 2003). In addition, organizations will be able to truly understand what it takes to sustain strategic diversity efforts to create a thriving working environment for ethnic minorities (Adjo & Prakash, 2021; Buttinger, 2023).

As a result of the research, organizations will have a leadership, organizational, and cultural competency model that can be used to attract, retain, and advance ethnic minorities in the workplace and create a culture of belonging and connection where ethnic minorities will thrive. Application of the model will result in the organization's ability to create real inclusion and equity, reduce workplace discrimination, and reduce the social, and psychological impact on the workforce faced by underrepresented groups (England et al., 2020; Gardner, 2022; Tantone, 2012).

A questionnaire was created utilizing 63 critical items discovered from an in-depth review of the literature. The questionnaire was used to examine research question one through the deployment of the Delphi methodology. A panel of experts were asked to rank the level of importance for each of the critical items based on their perception of factors that lead to a culture of success for underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities in the workplace. The 7-point Likert-scale was based on items being not at all important (1) and extremely important (7). Two rounds of questionnaires were sent to the panel of experts and consensus was reached at the end of round two. The participants arrived at 96.9% consensus on 65 of the 65 critical items. The

stability analysis for the median, IQR, and mode were analyzed after the completion of Round 2, noting that the questionnaire had reached final stability.

Upon arriving at consensus, qualitative content analysis was used to conduct a thematic analysis to answer Research Question 2 (RQ2). Through the coding process, four categories were created for the 63 items with consensus. The four categories were:

- Attainment: These items represent the ability for access, opportunity, accountability, and innovation.
- Belonging: These items represent inclusion, authenticity, social identity, connection, and representation.
- Inclusive Leadership: These items represent empowerment, vulnerability, transparency, and self-awareness.
- Psychological Safety: These items represent trust, respect, bias disruptors, wellness, and engagement.

This chapter will explore the findings obtained from the analysis of the data for each of the research questions. In addition, the implications of the study will be discussed, and the research application through the introduction of the B.A.I.L.S Organizational Inclusion Model, and future research recommendations.

Findings

Research Question One (RQ1)

Research Question 1 (RQ1) asked, what are the critical factors in organizational cultures that lead to workplace success for underrepresented groups? A total of 63 original critical items were surveyed in order to arrive at consensus and two additional items were added from the

feedback from the panel of experts during round 1 questionnaire, a total of 63 items reached consensus and 2 did not reach consensus at the end of the survey process.

Items of Extreme Importance. Twenty-two critical items received a median score of extremely important (median = 7) critical factors in organizational cultures that lead to workplace success for underrepresented groups. Several of the critical items related to access to development, support of development opportunities, and mentorship all of which were ranked as extremely important by the panel of experts (Median = 7.0, IQR = 1.0). As underrepresented groups grow through the various stages of their professional careers, they seek organizational cultures that provide supportive environments conducive to their development and growth. It is important that organizations embrace and provide inclusive development practices like mentoring (Alston & Hansman, 2020; Predoi-Cross, 2020).

Supportive organizations also provide underrepresented groups a space to feel supported to participate in learning and are comfortable with asking questions and learning from mistakes, this is also known as learner safety (Clark, 2020). Individuals are free from fear of receiving or providing feedback when learner safety exist (Clark, 2020; Edmondson & Roloff, 2009; The Center for Creative Leadership, 2022). Underrepresented groups often thrive in these environments and experience greater success.

A critical factor that ranked with an extremely important ranking is organizations with diverse workforce representation (Median = 7.0, IQR = 1.0). Underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities often find themselves in spaces that lack other representation. Being a part of an organization where diverse representation is strong builds connection and identity for underrepresented groups (Filstad et al., 2019; Jaitli & Hua, 2012; Kennedy & Jain-Link, 2021). Organizations efforts to increase the representation of their workforce is important, however,

they must have cultures that supports the ability for diverse and underrepresented groups to have access to development, promotions, and other workforce benefits (Baum, 2021; Salomon & Schork, 2003; Shinnars & Graebe, 2021). Having robust hiring plans that support the organizations' ability to increase diverse representation in an organization is important to building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace (Carr et al., 2019; Filstad et al., 2019; Jaitli & Hua, 2012; Kennedy & Jain-Link, 2021).

A fundamental human need is belonging in fact, it is one of the most important psychological needs of humans along with safety, security, love, and esteem (Acevedo, 2018; Lussier, 2019). Another critical item ranked as extremely important is, you feel like you belong (Median = 7.00, *IQR* = 1.0). Underrepresented groups seek belonging in organizations tied to validation and inclusion (Thompson & McRae, 2001). Belonging is also linked to connection, motivation, and achievement in the workplace and often connected to one's ability to thrive, have positive relationships, and acceptance which leads to positive work outcomes and performance (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Canlas & Williams, 2022; Gkorezis et al., 2013; Underwood, 2021). There are several factors that connect to an individual's ability to feel a sense of belonging in an organization and it is often a challenge for organizations to measure and create belonging for underrepresented groups.

One way to create belonging in the workplace is for organizations to ensure inclusive workplace policies exist. In fact, another critical factor that was ranked as extremely important was inclusive workplace policies exist (Median = 7.0, *IQR* = 1.0). Having a true commitment to building inclusive cultures and creating a space conducive to success for underrepresented groups includes ensuring policies, programs, and systems are designed to cultivate and support belonging (Adjo et al., 2021). Embedding diversity, equity, and inclusion practices and concepts

into key human resource policies, practices, and programs is important to building an organizations and cultures of inclusion.

Having support from those around you, is a way for individuals to feel connected, a part of, and a greater sense of belonging. In fact, the panel deemed all employees feel accepted throughout the organization (Median = 7.0, *IQR* = 1.0) as another critical item that is extremely important. Given the emotional aspects of belonging and the need for feeling value and connected with peers and teams, having team support is important to belonging and inclusion in the workplace (Davis et al., 2022). Workplace exclusion is one of the challenges faced by underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities, often linked to their relationship with peers and leaders (Rezai et al., 2020). Therefore, organizations that promote and encourage team support will create greater opportunities for belonging and inclusion in the workplace.

Leadership is important in organizations when building environments of inclusion and belonging in fact, Leaders demonstrate inclusive leadership (Median = 7.0, *IQR* = 1.0) was another critical factor identified as extremely important for success that was identified by the panel of experts. This aligns with the research on the role of inclusive leadership in creating and fostering a workplace of belonging, psychological safety, empowerment, and acceptance (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016; Shore & Chung, 2022). In fact, organizations and leaders that place high value on belonging, inclusive leadership, and psychological safety also value the unique qualities and contributions of diverse groups in the workplace (Randel et al., 2017).

Inclusive leadership, when demonstrated positively contributes to a diverse culture and signal the organizations value on diverse backgrounds. When leaders demonstrate inclusive leadership within organizations, they show that they are available, open and accessible, and show great concern for their employee's feelings, expectations which often leads to greater

engagement and commitment (Choi et al., 2015). In order for leaders to achieve inclusive leaders' capabilities there is a level of vulnerability and self-awareness that is needed. Inclusive leaders model courage and inspire others to take risk, they create a workplace of respect and trust (Dow, 2017).

An extremely important critical factor identified by the panel of experts is there is a high level of trust (Median = 7.0, *IQR* = 1.0) which is connected to inclusive leadership and the ability to create psychological safety within the organization. In fact, psychological safety is embraced and promoted (Median = 7.0, *IQR* = 1.0) was another extremely important critical factor identified by the panel of experts. Organizations that seek to create authentic belonging, inclusion and a space for underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities to thrive must ensure a high level of trust and psychological safety. When psychological safety is promoted within organizations by inclusive leaders, they are intentional about including others in critical discussions, making intentional effort to include others in the decision-making process, and those that are not typically silent are also brought into key conversations and appreciated for their contributions (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). This makes trust essential when establishing a psychological safe culture and environment in which to work and thrive in (Clark, 2020; Edmondson, 2020).

Creating a high level of trust and psychological safety within organizations becomes even more important for those individuals within the organization who are marginalized or from underrepresented groups that typically lack support and feel excluded (Shore & Chung, 2022). Organizations that seek to create a culture of openness and trust express an appreciation for diverse backgrounds and cultures and foster a climate where open communication, inclusion and learning takes place (Hofhuis et al., 2016). Leadership again is essential to creating cultures that

build trust, and psychological safety, and are intentional about the effort and accountability taken to build inclusion and equity across the organization (Byrd, 2022; Corley, 2020).

Employees feel empowered to perform and there is access to development opportunities, promotions, and other advancement opportunities are equal throughout the organization (Median = 7.0, *IQR* = 1.0) was also identified as critical factors that are extremely important by the panel of experts. Organizations that build belonging, have access to development, and create an environment of psychological safety ensure proper appreciation and recognition of the contribution of diverse talent across the organization. A key aspect to creating psychological safety is the organization's ability to create cultures and workspaces where employees are able to bring their authentic selves to work, engage, ask questions, are free to make mistakes, and are able to contribute to the goals and objectives of the organization (Edmondson, 2020). Inclusion safety is also important to one's ability to feel value for their contributions. Inclusion safety happens when an employee within an organization feels safe enough to share their knowledge and information for the greater good of both learning and team success (Clark, 2020; Gerpott et al., 2021).

Underrepresented populations and ethnic groups within organizations desire greater leadership, transparency, authenticity in the relationships within the organization because of the importance of relationships to navigate the complexity of most organizational cultures (Bohannon et al., 2021). Organizations committed to building inclusive cultures also place significant value on diverse employees and ensure that policies, programs and systems are designed to foster and cultivate belonging (Adjo et al., 2021). Underrepresented groups seek cultures that are supportive and environments conducive to leading with support as they grow through the various stages of their professional careers.

Notable Items. Six critical items received a median rating of 6.5 with an *IQR* of 1.0. These items directly correlate to the extremely important factors identified. Having clarity of expectations is directly related to transparency in communication and the ability for one to successfully contribute to the goals and objectives of the organization. The panel rated key Measures and metrics are clear and transparent (Median = 6.5, *IQR* = 1.0) and a high level of transparency with key data, actions, and key information exist (Median = 6.5, *IQR* = 1.0) between very important and extremely important. This directly relates to one's ability to contribute to decisions and work outcomes and is a crucial aspect of leader's ability to create inclusion and belonging (Edmondson & Roloff, 2009). When it comes to performance and behaviors, having a diversity climate where employees experience connection to purpose, meaning, and outcomes, these individuals experience greater performance (Singh et al., 2013).

Leaders are supportive of teams and individuals (Median = 6.5, *IQR* = 1.0) and courageous leaders which was a new item added during round 2 (Median = 6.5, *IQR* = 1.0) were also rated by the panel of experts between very important and extremely important. Directly related to the extremely important critical item of inclusive leadership, psychological safety, and belonging. The lack of inclusion which is promoted by inclusive leaders can leave underrepresented groups with a sense that they lack accomplishments, value, appreciation, and recognition (Tantone, 2012). Leaders that foster connectedness and team involvement which is key traits of inclusive leaders have a great level of courage and are often seen as champions for underrepresented groups. In fact, inclusive leaders model courage and release control by trusting, empowering, and delegating to others (Dow, 2017).

Having the ability to access opportunities and development that will lend to the success of the individuals career means there need to be equal access for all. The panel of experts rated

programs exist and are accessible to all (Median = 6.5, *IQR* = 1.0) between very important and extremely important. Organizations that provide development opportunities ensure equitable access and that programs are inclusive. Underrepresented groups seek supportive work environments and organizations that are supportive of growth through the various stages of their careers (Alston & Hansman, 2020; Predoi-Cross, 2020). Again, as highlighted earlier, workplaces that seek to provide psychologically safe work environments ensure individuals feel safe to participate in learning or what is known as learner safety (Clark, 2020). Therefore, the availability and having access to programs is important to the ability for growth in inclusive organizations.

Finally, connected to psychological safety, workplace safety is a key strategic initiative of the organization (Median = 6.5, *IQR* = 1.0) that was rated by the panel of experts between extremely important and very important. Confirming that inclusive organizations ensure a space of safety for individuals to thrive and succeed in.

Very Important Items. Thirty-three critical items received a median rating of 6.0 with an *IQR* of 1.0 related to factors such as, having a clear mission, vision, and purpose, empowerment, connections, creativity, and collaboration to name a few. However, one critical item received a median score of 6 and an *IQR* rating of 0.0. The organization operates with a balance scorecard (Median = 6.0, *IQR* = 0.0) which indicates the importance of having metrics to measure the organizations diversity, equity, and inclusion practices, programs, and policies. Having a balance scorecard to measure key initiatives such as diversity recruitment, hiring, and organizational engagement can also support the ability to increase representation in diversity candidate pools (Cox & Lancefield, 2021). Throughout the employee life cycle, it is also good to have measures that provide valuable data that highlights the success of the organization's

diversity efforts (Thomas, 1999). Having meaningful metrics will support the organizations' ability to build a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusive but more importantly will support the sustainability of the organization's inclusion efforts (Pitts & Hopkins, 1982; Thomas, 1999).

One critical item received a median rating of 6 and an *IQR* rating of 0.5, Innovation is promoted, encouraged, and recognized (Median = 6.0, *IQR* = 0.5). In fact, organizations with greater innovation are aware of and embrace diversity and inclusion efforts in order to ensure and promote an engaged and positive organizational culture (Seliverstova & Pierog, 2021). Having the ability to be innovative at work is another aspect of creating belonging and inclusion (Enaizan Bataineh, et al., 2022; Javed et al., 2019; Vladić et al., 2021). The role of inclusive leadership and psychological safety results in innovative and creative work solutions (Javed et al., 2019).

Moderately Important Items. Two critical items received a median rating of 5.0 with an *IQR* of 1.0. Employees at all levels are involved in key decisions (Median = 5, *IQR* = 1.0) and leaders at all levels express vulnerability with teams, groups, and individuals (Median = 5, *IQR* = 1.0). Both are related to creating a workplace of belonging and the role and need for inclusive leadership. In addition, as previously highlighted, decision making and inclusive leadership is tied to psychological safety, creating a space for individuals to provide input into key decisions within the organizations creates greater connection to the vision and mission of the organization. Inclusive leadership requires vulnerability and the need to recognize one's own bias when it comes to decisions or actions being made (Dow, 2017; Pless & Maak, 2004; Shore et al., 2011).

No Consensus Items. Two items did not received consensus and received a median rating of 6.0, an *IQR* rating of 2.0 and a mode of 6.0. Although they did not reach consensus, the items are connected to items that were rated as important and gained consensus. Access to

sponsorship opportunity or programs (Median = 6.0, *IQR* = 2.0, Mode = 6.0) is related to the having access to programs and development. Innovation is accepted, encouraged, and recognized (Median = 6.0, *IQR* = 2.0, Mode = 6.0) is directly related to and very similar to the factor mentioned in the previous section related to innovation.

Research Question Two (RQ2)

Research Question Two asked, can these critical factors be used to develop a theoretical framework for understanding success in corporate America for underrepresented groups? A qualitative content analysis was used to conduct a thematic analysis using the 63 items that reached consensus. Through the coding process four themes emerged and the 63 critical factors were categorized under each of the themes. The themes, highlighted below, made it possible to form a model that highlight the major critical factors and can be found in Figure 1.

Attainment. The factors coded under the theme attainment related to access, goals, accountability, and innovation. The following critical items were included in this category:

- Programs exist and are accessible to all
- Workplace policies, programs, and practices are inclusive
- Key measures and metrics are clear and transparent
- A high level of transparency with key data, actions and key information exist
- Access to development opportunities, promotions, and other advancement opportunities are equal throughout the organization
- Equity is a key strategy for the organization in promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce
- There is fairness in key policies, programs, and practices

- Training and development is accessible to all employees and supports individual development goals
- Development is meaningful and support individual development goals
- Mentorship opportunities and programs exists
- The organization operates with a balanced scorecard
- Commitment to organization and goals is important to leaders, teams, and individuals
- There are realistic expectations to accomplishing goals and objectives
- Leadership development opportunities exist and are accessible to all employees
- Innovation is promoted, encouraged, and recognized

These factors directly contribute to the ability for underrepresented groups having equal access to their ability to grow, develop, and advance throughout the organization. In addition, these factors contribute to the ability for fair and equitable performance standards, workplace policies, and goals providing underrepresented groups the opportunity to experience the ability to greater performance feedback, outcomes, and expectations (Alston & Hansman, 2020; Predoi-Cross, 2020). The ability to safely engage in learning from asking questions and learning from mistakes crates psychological safety and belonging in the organization (Clark, 2020). Having the ability to demonstrate innovation is a factor of belonging and inclusion in the workplace (Enaizan Bataineh, et al., 2022; Javed et al., 2019; Vladić et al., 2021). Finally, these factors are directly connected to the ability to feel a sense of belonging, experience psychological safety, and access to inclusive leadership.

Belonging. The factors coded under the theme belonging related to inclusion, social identity, connection, and representation. The following critical items were included in this category:

- A workplace that supports a culture of inclusion
- Diverse workforce representation
- You feel like you belong
- Communication is clear and transparent
- Leaders, teams, and individuals hold themselves and each other accountable
- All employees feel accepted throughout the organization
- The organization encourages, promotes and recognize embracing the differences of all employees
- The organization is open and accepting all employees
- Leaders, employees, and teams practice active listening
- The organization has inclusive Human Resource Practices
- The organization is representative of the workforce demographic
- A clear diversity mission, vision, and purpose
- Individual uniqueness is promoted and accepted
- A sense of meaning exist within the culture
- Creativity is promoted, encouraged, and recognized
- Collaboration amongst teams, groups, and individuals is encouraged and supported
- There is active participation in teams, groups in key initiatives and goals
- Autonomy is encouraged and recognized
- All employees feel valued for their contributions
- Employees at all levels are involved in key decisions
- There is connection to the organizations vision, goals, and purpose

Many of the items in this category were rated extremely important by the panel of experts. In order for organizations to create inclusion within the workplace, these items represent the ability for underrepresented groups to engage, experience, and participate fully and equitably. Individuals that experience the factors in this category are led by inclusive leaders and feel safe to participate in shared goals, create meaning and purpose and perform (Filstad et al., 2019). When employees are committed to organizational goals and are involved in key decisions experience belonging (Jaitli & Hua, 2013). When employees feel a sense of belonging, they feel seen and valued for their individual contributions, they have a sense of connection with their peers and teams, they feel supported to develop and advance in their career, and they have a sense of pride and purpose and connection to the organization (Kennedy & Jain-Link, 2021). Underrepresented groups need to know that their voices are heard and they are able to trust the organization's ability to support them and recognize them for their efforts and contributions in the workplace (Geisler, 2021). The factors that create belong contribute to the organizations ability to support underrepresented groups' ability to experience success.

Inclusive Leadership. The factors coded under the theme inclusive leadership related to empowerment, transparency, self-awareness, and vulnerability. The following critical items were included in this category:

- Leaders demonstrate inclusive leadership
- Employees feel empowered to perform
- Leaders are supportive of teams and individuals
- A sense of community among teams, groups, and divisions
- Leaders and employees are bias disruptors and support the elimination of bias within the organization

- Leaders and peers are self-aware of their bias (conscience & unconscious)
- Team support is recognized and encouraged
- Leaders possess a high level of emotional intelligence
- Leaders are forward thinking
- Leaders demonstrate a high level of cultural intelligence in support of diverse populations throughout the organization
- Leaders at all levels express vulnerability with teams, groups, and individuals
- Courageous leaders

Organizations seeking to provide an inclusive space for all to have the ability to thrive and succeed requires leaders that can demonstrate the capabilities of inclusive leadership.

Leadership inclusion supports an environment of psychological safety, empowerment, connection, belonging and acceptance throughout the organization (Shore & Chung, 2022).

Creating an environment for individuals that is free of bias and have leaders that are courageous to support, encourage, and provide a workplace where one feels a sense of belonging and safety is important to organizational inclusion and the ability for underrepresented groups to succeed (Randel et al., 2016). Inclusive leaders are champions for underrepresented groups and demonstrate self-awareness, inspire others, are courageous, ensure respect and trust in the workplace, have a high level of self-control, and focus on reflection developing and learning from the past and mistakes which is important when creating organizational inclusion (Dow, 2017).

Psychological Safety. The factors coded under the theme psychological safety related to trust, respect, and empathy. The following critical items were included in this category:

- There is a high level of trust

- Psychological safety is embraced and promoted
- Honesty is a core value of the organization
- Integrity is a core value of the organization and leaders and peers demonstrate a high level of integrity in all that they do
- Respect of all is encouraged and a key value of the organization
- Workplace safety is a key strategic initiative of the organization
- Employees are able to be their authentic selves
- Social identity exists or employees are connected to other groups and teams
- Employee engagement is promoted and a part of the culture
- It is okay to fail and learn in order to improve work performance and increase innovation
- A clear well-being strategy exist and is practiced throughout the organization
- Leaders and peers practice and encourage empathy
- Risk-taking is rewarded and encouraged
- Freedom of expression is encouraged and recognized
- Employee morale and leadership moral being al being equal in the workplace

Most of the factors in this category were rated very important by the panel of experts.

Psychological safety is often associated with creating inclusive cultures for diverse employees in the workplace (Edmondson, 2020; Edmondson & Roloff, 2009). Inclusive organizations seek to create environments where employees are able to be their authentic selves, engage, ask questions, and feel safe to make mistakes (Edmondson, 2020). Organizations that demonstrate the factors of psychological safety have inclusive leaders who are intentional about ensuring voices that are not typically heard are encouraged to be heard in critical decisions (Nembhard &

Edmondson, 2006). Factors that promote psychological safety become even more important for underrepresented groups and those within the organization that are considered marginalized (Shore & Chung, 2022).

Implications of the Study

This study highlighted additional insights into the literature that supports the ability for organizations to create, build, and sustain organizations conducive to success for underrepresented groups. The literature highlights the factors that create workplaces where underrepresented groups feel accepted, appreciated, and can thrive (Belle et al., 2015; Davis et al., 2022; Kennedy & Jain-Link, 2021; Riley et al., 2020; Seliverstova & Pierog, 2021). There is also increased organizational success when workplace inclusion, diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies, and diverse representation exists (Davis et al., 2022; Pless & Maak, 2004; Salomon & Schork, 2003). An organization's ability to create inclusive practices, programs, and policies is key to underrepresented groups feeling a sense of belonging and ability to thrive within the organization (Pless & Maak, 2004; Slaughter & Greguras, 2008). Finally, the literature also highlights the theories that exist such as workplace belonging, psychological safety, and inclusive leadership (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Belle et al., 2015; Edmondson, 1999; Clark, 2020; Corley, 2020). The literature speaks to the factors that create positive workspaces for organizations and the benefits to both the organization and those that benefit from these practices.

The ability to assess the importance ranking of the critical items supports the ability to highlight the most important areas that organizations can focus on when creating organizational inclusion and workplaces that seek to establish an environment where underrepresented groups

are able to thrive and succeed. This will help to support the ability of organizations to implement more sustainable strategies and increase their diverse employee population.

The Garrett-Ragland B.A.I.L.S. Organizational Inclusion Model

The Garrett-Ragland B.A.I.L.S. organizational inclusion model was created to highlight the significant findings of the study (see Figure 1). The model includes the four themes discovered during the intercoder reliability analysis and was used to create the acronym B.A.I.L.S. which represents: (B) belonging, (A) attainment, (I) inclusive (L) leadership (S) safety. Each category consists of key items that the panel of experts ranked extremely or very important.

The goal of the model is to provide an organization with an easy method to assess their current state of inclusion and to have access to a model that supports their ability to build a strategy that aims to ensure success for underrepresented groups. The model also provides organizations with the language that represents what it means to have a culture of belonging, psychological safety, inclusive leadership, and attainment. The model was built for diversity, equity, and inclusion practitioners, human resource professionals, and organizational effectiveness consultants to support their ability to build sustainable workplace strategies and cultures that ensure inclusive practices, programs, and policies that supports the ability for underrepresented groups to thrive.

The ability to integrate the model with key organizational policies is one use that will contribute to the ability for underrepresented groups to experience inclusion in processes such as performance management, talent, succession planning, and recruiting. An example of this is, building inclusive interview guides during the hiring process using the model is another way to ensure organizational inclusion. Using the model as a basis to ensure questions around each of

the four themes are included in interview guides and during the discussions with hiring managers when hiring decisions are taking place.

Integrating the model into the organization's evaluation process is another effective use of the model. Ensuring that the four themes of the model are included as employees and leaders are developing annual goals to ensure inclusion is being assessed throughout the year and are integrated into key strategic goals and initiatives. Finally, utilizing the model's themes as a foundation for leadership expectations and team norms will support the organization's ability to build a culture conducive to underrepresented groups' ability to thrive and succeed.

Model or Theoretical Framework

Figure 1

B.A.I.L.S. Organizational Inclusion Model



Recommendations for Future Research

The final findings highlight two areas for future research, and they are (a) Access to sponsorship opportunities or programs which did not reach consensus but received a median rating of 6 and (b) innovation is accepted, encouraged, and recognized, which also did not reach consensus but received a median rating of 6. Both of which are very important and related to development, belonging, inclusive leadership. Further research could provide additional insights into the impact on underrepresented populations if these two factors exist.

A key factor identified as very important was the organization operating on a balanced scorecard (*med* = 6). Creating an instrument that the organization can use to measure the impact from the strategy created as a result of the model or creating an assessment from the model as part of the organizations engagement strategy could support the organizations' ability to gauge success and sustainability of programs, policies, and practices implemented.

Conclusion

A key highlight from the study was the importance for actionable focus for organizations that came out of the research. Having inclusive policies, programs, and practices that ensures the ability for greater performance, access, empowerment, and success was extremely important. This further supports the need for organizations not to just have great vision and mission statements around diversity, equity, and inclusion but the importance of taking sustainable action that supports real and authentic organizational inclusion for underrepresented groups. Organizations are equipped with workshops and training to improve the work environment for underrepresented groups and often struggle to create actions and strategies that support one's ability to truly feel like they can succeed and thrive (Kennedy & Jain-Link, 2021; Riley et al, 2020).

Underrepresented groups often are an invisible force within organizations, left to fit into a structure not conducive to diverse populations ability to succeed. There remains so much more to discover that can support the ability for underrepresented groups to experience greater success in the workplace. While there exist many resources that organizations can use to have deeper conversations and training, it is the desire for this research to provide a greater ability for organizations to build authentic and sustainable strategies and a method to assess the current state for underrepresented groups within the workforce to succeed.

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APPENDIX A

CITI Certification



APPENDIX B

Pepperdine University IRB Approval Notice

Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: February 23, 2023

Protocol Investigator Name: Tina Garrett-Ragland

Protocol #: 22-09-1958

Project Title: The Path to Success in Corporate America for Ethnic Minorities and Underrepresented Groups

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Tina Garrett-Ragland:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

cc: Mrs. Katy Carr, Assistant Provost for Research

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent

(Graduate School of Education and Psychology)

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES



IRB TEMPLATE SOCIAL- BEHAVIORAL ADULT PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT

IRB #: (will be provided by office of IRB once approved)

Formal Study Title: Add title here

Authorized Study Personnel:

Principal Investigator: Student,
Student Number,
Student e-mail.

Key Information:

If you agree to participate in this study, the project will involve:

- ☒ (Males and Females) between the ages of (18-90)
- ☒ Procedures will include (Contacting participants using the recruitment script, informed consent, data collection via questionnaire, analysis of data, documentation of findings)
- ☒ The completion of the questionnaire 3 times.
- ☒ The total time commitment of 90 minutes (30 minutes for each cycle).
- ☒ There is minimal risk associated with this study
- ☒ You will not be paid any amount of money for your participation
- ☒ You will be provided a copy of this consent form

Invitation

You are invited to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant to help you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are a leader in the _____ industry. You must be _____ years of age or older to participate.

What is the reason for doing this research study?

The purpose of this study is to determine (please include your purpose here)

What will be done during this research study?

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire for a total of 3 cycles. Each cycle will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. You will be asked a series of questions aimed at figuring out how industry experts perceive certain behaviors. While the research will take approximately 26 to 52 weeks, your participation will only take 90 minutes over the course of several weeks.

How will my data be used?

Your questionnaire responses will be analyzed, and aggregated in order to determine the findings to the established research questions.

What are the possible risks of being in this research study?

This research presents minimal risk of loss of confidentiality, emotional and/or psychological distress because the questionnaire involves questions about your leadership practices. You may also experience fatigue, boredom, or anxiety as a result.

What are the possible benefits to you?

You are not expected to get any benefit from being in this study.

What are the possible benefits to other people?

The benefits to society may include better understanding of leadership strategies used within your industry. Other emerging leaders might also benefit from any additional recommendations that are shared through this process.

What are the alternatives to being in this research study?

Participation in this study is voluntary. There are no alternatives to participating, other than deciding to not participate.

What will participating in this research study cost you?

There is no cost to you to be in this research study.

Will you be compensated for being in this research study?

There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

What should you do if you have a problem during this research study?

Your welfare is the major concern of every member of the research team. If you have a problem as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact one of the people listed at the beginning of this consent form.

How will information about you be protected?

Reasonable steps will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data. The data will be deidentified and stored electronically through a secure server and will only be seen by the research team during the study and until the study is complete.

The only persons who will have access to your research records are the study personnel, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and any other person, agency, or sponsor as required by law. The information from this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but the data will be reported as group or summarized data and your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

What are your rights as a research subject?

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study.

For study related questions, please contact the investigator(s) listed at the beginning of this form.

For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB):

Phone: 1(310)568-2305

E-mail: gpsirb@pepperdine.edu

What will happen if you decide not to be in this research study or decide to stop participating once you start?

You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study ("withdraw") at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator or with Pepperdine University.

You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

Documentation of informed consent

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to be in this research study. Signing this form means that (1) you have read and understood this consent form, (2) you have had the consent form explained to you, (3) you have had your questions answered and (4) you have decided to be in the research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Participant

Name:

(First, Last: Please Print)

Participant

Signature:

Signature

Date

APPENDIX D

Questionnaire #1

Draft Instrument: Peer-Reviewed by Three Students of Pepperdine's GSEP Program

Critical Factors for Success in the Workplace for Underrepresented Groups

Please rank the items listed in order of importance for leaders and organizations to create a culture of success for underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities.

The definitions of each ranking are listed below:

Not at all Important: This item is not detrimental to the organization or individual.

Low Importance: This item is not beneficial but could be detrimental to the organization and individuals' success.

Slightly Important: This item is somewhat beneficial to the organization and individuals; however, it would not impede success for individuals or the organization if it did not exist.

Neutral: No strong feeling or experience on this item.

Moderately Important: This item is beneficial to the organization and individual, however, it would not completely impede success for individuals or organizations if it did not exist.

Very Important: This item is beneficial and not having it would impede success for individuals and the organization.

Extremely Important: This item is necessary and critical, not having it would impede success for both the organizations and individuals within the organization.

...

* Required

1. Please indicate your role in the organization *

☐ Senior Leader (More than 7 Years of leadership experience)

☐ Manager (Less than 7 years of leadership experience)

☐ Individual Contributor

☐ Other

2. Please indicate your time in role: *

- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 3-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ > 10 years

3. Please indicate the size of your organization *

- ☐ >500
- ☐ <500

4. Please indicate your current industry in the space below *

Enter your answer

5. Please rank the importance of each of the items below as factors to your success in the workplace *

	Not at all Important	Low Importance	Slightly Important	Neutral	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
A workplace that supports a culture of Inclusion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diverse Workforce Representation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Clear Diversity Mission, Vision and Purpose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You feel like you belong	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is connection to the organizations vision, goals and purpose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a high level of trust	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees are able to be their authentic selves	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Identify exist or employees are connected to other groups and teams	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication is clear and transparent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leaders demonstrate inclusive leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individual Uniqueness is promoted and accepted	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employee engagement is promoted and a part of the culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

A sense of community among teams, groups, & divisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A sense of meaning and purpose exist within the culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Psychological safety is embraced and promoted	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to development opportunities, promotions, and other advancement opportunities are equal throughout the organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leaders and employees are bias disruptors and support the elimination of bias within the organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creativity is promoted, encouraged, and recognized	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Innovation is promoted, encouraged and recognized	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leaders and Peers are self-aware of their bias (conscience & Unconscious)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Please rank the importance of each of the items below as factors to your success in the workplace *

	Not at all Important	Low Importance	Slightly Important	Neutral	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Workplace policies, programs, and practices are inclusive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Development is meaningful and support individual development goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mentorship opportunities and programs exist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to sponsorship opportunities or programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leaders, teams, and individuals are hold themselves and each other accountable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Key measures and metrics are clear and transparent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There organization operates with a balanced scorecard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Commitment to organization goals is important by leaders, teams, and individuals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees at all levels are involved in key decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leaders are supportive to teams and individuals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Training & Development is accessible to all employees and support individual development goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collaboration amongst teams, groups, and individuals is encouraged and supported	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All employees feel accepted throughout the organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is active participation in teams, groups in key initiatives and goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Autonomy is encouraged & recognized	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Innovation is accepted, encouraged, and recognized	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are realistic expectations to accomplishing goals and objectives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Risk-taking is rewarded and encouraged	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leaders at all levels express vulnerability with teams, groups and individuals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Please rank the importance of each of the items below as factors to your success in the workplace *

	Not at all Important	Low Importance	Slightly Important	Neutral	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
A high level of transparency with key data, actions, and key information exist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Honesty is a core value of the organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Integrity is a core value of the organization and leaders and peers demonstrate a high level of integrity in all that they do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leaders possess a high level of emotional intelligence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leaders are forward thinking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is ok to fail and learn in order to improve work performance and increase innovation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Respect of all is encouraged and a key value of the organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leaders demonstrate a high level of cultural intelligence in support of diverse populations throughout the organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

There is fairness in key policies, programs, and practices

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Equity is a key strategy for the organization in promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Recognition programs exist and accessible to all

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

The organization encourages, promotes and recognize embracing the differences of all employees

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Employees feel empowered to perform

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

A clear well-being strategy exist practiced throughout the organization

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Leadership Development opportunities exist and accessible to all employees

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Workplace safety is a key strategic initiative of the organization

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

The organization is open and accepting all employees

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Leaders and peers practices & encourage empathy

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

All employees feel valued for their contributions

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Freedom of expression is encouraged and recognized

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

8. Please rank the importance of each of the items below as factors to your success in the workplace *

	Not at all Important	Low Importance	Slightly Important	Neutral	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Leaders, employees and teams practice active listening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization has inclusive Human Resource Practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization is representative of the workforce demographic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Please use this space to add key factors for success in the workplace that was not listed in the survey. *

Enter your answer

10. Please use this space for additional comments. *

Enter your answer

Submit

APPENDIX E

Questionnaire #2



Critical Factors for Success in the Workplace for Underrepresented Groups

Please rank the items listed in order of importance for leaders and organizations to create a culture of success for underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities. The definitions of each ranking are listed below:

Not at all Important: This item is not detrimental to the organization or individual.

Low Importance: This item is not beneficial but could be detrimental to the organization and individuals' success.

Slightly Important: This item is somewhat beneficial to the organization and individuals; however, it would not impede success for individuals or the organization if it did not exist.

Neutral: No strong feeling or experience on this item.

Moderately Important: This item is beneficial to the organization and individual, however, it would not completely impede success for individuals or organizations if it did not exist.

Very Important: This item is beneficial and not having it would impede success for individuals and the organization.

Extremely Important: This item is necessary and critical, not having it would impede success for both the organizations and individuals within the organization.

Round 2 - Critical Factors for Success

▼ Default Question Block

Q5

There is connection to the organizations vision, goals, and purpose (median 1st round score = 6)

- ☐ Not at all Important
- ☐ Low Importance
- ☐ Slightly Important
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Moderately Important
- ☐ Very Important
- ☐ Extremely Important

Q19

Innovation is promoted, encouraged, and recognized (median 1st round score = 6)

- ☐ Not at all Important
- ☐ Low Importance
- ☐ Slightly Important
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Moderately Important
- ☐ Very Important
- ☐ Extremely Important

Q24

Access to sponsorship opportunities or programs (median 1st round score = 6)

- ☐ Not at all Important
- ☐ Low Importance
- ☐ Slightly Important
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Moderately Important
- ☐ Very Important
- ☐ Extremely Important

[+ Add page break](#)

Q37

Innovation is accepted, encouraged, and recognized (median 1st round score = 6)

- ☐ Not at all Important
- ☐ Low Importance
- ☐ Slightly Important
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Moderately Important
- ☐ Very Important
- ☐ Extremely Important

Q39

Risk-taking is rewarded and encouraged (median 1st round score = 5)

- ☐ Not at all Important
- ☐ Low Importance
- ☐ Slightly Important
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Moderately Important
- ☐ Very Important
- ☐ Extremely Important

Page Break

Q60

Freedom of expression is encouraged and recognized (median 1st round score = 6)

- ☐ Not at all Important
- ☐ Low Importance
- ☐ Slightly Important
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Moderately Important
- ☐ Very Important
- ☐ Extremely Important

Q86

Employee Moral & Leadership Moral being Equal in the workforce (New Item)

- ☐ Not at all Important
- ☐ Low Importance
- ☐ Slightly Important
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Moderately Important
- ☐ Very Important
- ☐ Extremely Important

Q87

Courageous Leaders (New Item)

- ☐ Not at all Important
 - ☐ Low Importance
 - ☐ Slightly Important
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Moderately Important
 - ☐ Very Important
 - ☐ Extremely Important
-

APPENDIX F

Recruitment Script



Sample Recruitment Script Template

Dear [Name],

My name is Tina Garrett-Ragland, and I am a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. I am conducting a research study examining the critical success factors in the workplace that lead to success for underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities and you are invited to participate in the study.

The study will take approximately a year to complete, from July 2022 through May 2023 beginning through data analysis. However, the human subjects' component will take approximately 2-3 months from the end of February through the end of May. If you agree, you are invited to participate by completing a survey over the course of 3 distinct cycles that will help to highlight what factors lead to success in the workplace for underrepresented groups and ethnic minorities. The survey is anticipated to take no more than 30 minutes for each cycle.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your identity as a participant will remain confidential during and after the study. Confidentiality will be maintained using a series of security measures, including password-protected email communication using university firewall protections, deidentification of data using pseudonyms as well as compartmentalization of the various data elements, and keeping all information separate.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tina Garrett-Ragland
Pepperdine University| Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX G

Peer Reviewer Form

Dear Reviewer:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. The table below is designed to ensure that may research questions for the study are properly addressed with corresponding interview questions.

In the table below, please review each research question and the corresponding interview questions. For each interview question, consider how well the interview question addresses the research question. If the interview question is directly relevant to the research question, please mark “Keep as stated.” If the interview question is irrelevant to the research question, please mark “Delete it.” Finally, if the interview question can be modified to best fit with the research question, please suggest your modifications in the space provided. You may also recommend additional interview questions you deem necessary.

Once you have completed your analysis, please return the completed form to me via e-mail to xxxx@pepperdine.edu. Thank you again for your participation.

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question
RQ1: Placeholder	<p>Placeholder</p> <p>a. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated</p> <p>b. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it</p> <p>c. The question should be modified as suggested:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
RQ2: Placeholder	Placeholder

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question
	<p>a. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated</p> <p>b. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it</p> <p>c. The question should be modified as suggested:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
RQ3: Placeholder	Placeholder
RQ4: Placeholder	Placeholder