



**Determining the effect that diversity and inclusion has on employee retention and organisational vitality in private primary education institutions.**



Dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree **Master of Commerce in Strategic Brand Leadership** at The Independent Institute of Education, Vega School.

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## **Abstract**

As private primary education institutions navigate an increasingly diverse and dynamic education landscape, the importance of understanding the impact of diversity and inclusion on organisational vitality becomes paramount. This study delves into the intricate relationship between diversity, inclusion, and the overall health of private primary education institutions, aiming to provide insights that inform strategic decision-making and policy formulation.

This study will adopt a quantitative approach, employing a survey methodology to both collect and analyse data. A digital survey tool will be devised to elicit responses from a representative sample of private primary education institutions. The survey will be structured to gauge various aspects, including Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives, assessing the range of initiatives undertaken by the institutions such as diversity training, recruitment strategies, and cultural competency programs. Additionally, it will delve into Employee Retention, capturing information on turnover rates and factors affecting retention. Furthermore, the survey will probe into Organisational Vitality, encompassing metrics like employee engagement, financial stability, and student achievement.

The research begins by contextualising the current education climate and the imperative for institutions to adapt to the diverse needs of students, staff, and faculty. A review of pertinent literature establishes the theoretical framework, exploring concepts such as organisational vitality, diversity, and inclusion in the education context. The theoretical foundation underscores the significance of fostering inclusive environments as a means of promoting equitable opportunities and enhancing the overall well-being of the education community.

The empirical stage of this study encompasses gathering data from a varied sample of private primary education institutions. Surveys were distributed among the staff, and the data analysis utilises quantitative methods to identify correlations to uncover emerging themes.

Preliminary findings suggest a positive correlation between robust diversity and inclusion initiatives and various facets of organisational vitality, heightened job satisfaction among staff, strengthened community relationships, and increased innovation are among the observed outcomes. These findings align with existing literature that underscores the strategic advantages of embracing diversity in education institutions.

By delving into the ramifications of diversity and inclusion, this research contributes meaningfully to the broader discourse on education leadership, policy formulation, and organisational dynamics. The implications of our findings extend beyond academia, offering actionable insights for education administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders alike, with the overarching goal of fortifying the vitality and resilience of private primary education institutions. Moreover, this study underscores the need for an ongoing commitment to refining diversity and inclusion strategies, ensuring their sustained positive effects on organisational vitality in the long term.

In exploring the impact of diversity and inclusion, this research contributes to the broader discourse on education leadership, policy, and organisational dynamics. The implications of the study extend to education administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders, providing actionable insights to enhance the vitality and resilience of private primary education institutions. Moreover, this research highlights the need for ongoing commitment and refinement of diversity and inclusion strategies to ensure sustained positive effects on organisational vitality.

### **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the dissertation submitted for the Master of Commerce in Strategic Brand Leadership to The Independent Institute of Education (The IIE) is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for a postgraduate qualification.

13 November 2023

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

Bedrick (2019:27-37) reports that in recent years, discussions about diversity and inclusion have gained significant momentum across various sectors, including education. Private primary education institutions, in particular, play a crucial role in shaping young minds and preparing them for future challenges. Rodpraycon and Maj (2021:144) explain that the education landscape has recognised that a diverse and inclusive environment not only promotes fairness and equity but also contributes to the overall vitality and effectiveness of organisations, further adding that as education institutions strive to create inclusive learning environments, it becomes imperative to understand the impact of diversity and inclusion on education institutions specifically, on employee retention, and internal branding Rodpraycon and Maj (2021:145-151). This dissertation aims to examine the quantifiable effect of diversity and inclusion initiatives on these outcomes within the education sector.

Bedrick (2019:27-37) underscores the criticality of organisational vitality, a concept encompassing the dynamic and flourishing state of an organisation, influenced by factors such as employee engagement, retention, and internal branding. Employee engagement stands as a linchpin for organisational success, with motivated and committed employees likely to contribute their utmost efforts (Bedrick, 2019:48-51). Pitts and Jarry (2018:73-77) posit that diversity and inclusion practices serve as catalysts for fostering employee engagement by nurturing a sense of belonging, respect, and fairness. In the education domain, where educators wield significant influence on student development, engaged employees are better positioned to craft impactful learning experiences, consequently enhancing student outcomes (Pitts & Jarry, 2018:91-100).

Employee engagement is a critical factor in organisational success, as engaged employees are more motivated, committed, and likely to contribute their best efforts (Bendrick, 2019:48-51). Pitts and Jarry (2018:73-77) indicate that diversity and inclusion practices can positively influence employee engagement by fostering a sense of belonging, respect, and fairness. In the education context, where educators play a pivotal role in student development, engaged

employees are more likely to create impactful learning experiences and positively impact student outcomes (Pitts & Jarry, 2018:91-100).

D'Alonzo and Hughes (2020:201) argue that retention of talented employees is a pressing challenge for education institutions, and that high turnover rates can disrupt continuity, impact institutional knowledge, and incur significant costs. According to Rodpraycon and Maj (2021:87-91) diversity and inclusion have been identified as key factors in employee retention, as organisations that prioritise these practices create an inclusive environment where employees feel valued and supported, thereby reducing turnover rates. Understanding the quantifiable relationship between diversity, inclusion, and employee retention in the education sector is crucial for developing effective retention strategies.

Internal branding, the consistent communication and reinforcement of an organisation's values, mission, and culture to its employees, is essential in shaping organisational identity and attracting and retaining talent (D'Alonzo & Hughes, 2020:107-118). Hieker and Mühlböck (2020:67-75) assert that diversity and inclusion play a pivotal role in internal branding by demonstrating an organisation's commitment to equity, fairness, and embracing diverse perspectives. Bedawy and McDonald (2022:48-59) concur and further add that a strong internal brand, rooted in diversity and inclusion, can enhance employee loyalty, foster a positive work culture, and attract like-minded individuals to the education sector.

D'Alonzo and Hughes (2020:29-40) note that while existing research has explored the qualitative aspects of diversity and inclusion in the education sector, there is a paucity of quantitative studies that measure and analyse the specific effect of these practices on employee engagement, retention, and internal branding. This dissertation aims to bridge this gap by employing a quantitative research design, leveraging statistical techniques and survey instruments to collect and analyse data from education institutions.

## 1.1 Background to the study

Kellerman (2012:23) maintains that in the early years, the focus of education institutions was primarily on academic excellence and knowledge transfer, with limited attention given to the diversity of the workforce. However, societal advancements have underscored the importance of diversity and its positive influence on student outcomes, ultimately impacting the organisational vitality of educational institutions.

Harris and Mullins (2020:44) state that the education sector's role in shaping knowledge, skills, and values is critical and that to foster a conducive learning environment, institutions must prioritise diversity and inclusion, embracing differences in race, ethnicity, gender, age, and more. Shore *et al.*, (2018:66-71) show that diversity and inclusion positively impact employee engagement, retention, and organisational vitality across sectors. Kellerman (2012:28-31) explains that engaged employees are more productive and loyal, while inclusive strategies reduce turnover rates. According to Kang and Kaplan (2019:92) internal branding communicates an organisation's values, attracting and retaining talented employees the author further explains that investigating diversity and inclusion in the education sector is crucial due to its unique challenges and opportunities.

## 1.2 Rationale

The rationale driving this thesis study is firmly rooted in the escalating recognition of diversity and inclusion's pivotal role in bolstering the organisational vitality and triumph of private primary education institutions. Private primary schools are commonly preferred by parents owing to perceived advantages such as smaller class sizes, specialised curriculum, and personalised attention to students (Siddle Walker, 2022). Nevertheless, these institutions grapple with challenges in reflecting the diversity of their surrounding communities (Gorski, 2023). This research zeroes in on private schools for several compelling reasons. Firstly, private schools enjoy greater autonomy compared to public schools, thereby affording them the latitude to implement innovative diversity and inclusion initiatives, which can be meticulously

scrutinised for their impact on employee retention and organisational vitality (Davies & West-Burnham, 2003).

Secondly, the competitive milieu of the private school sector frequently propels the adoption of progressive diversity and inclusion practices, furnishing invaluable insights into how inclusivity positively influences employee satisfaction and retention (Shakeshaft & Cohan, 2005). Thirdly, given the potential impediments to access posed by tuition fees, this research endeavors to explore how diversity and inclusion efforts can foster equity within private school environments for both staff and students (Griffith, 2007). Evaluating a school's commitment to diversity and inclusion necessitates delving beyond surface-level assessments, such as scrutinizing mission statements and diversity demographics, to factors like the presence of dedicated diversity and inclusion offices or committees, non-discrimination policies, and resources supporting diverse students and staff (Skrla et al., 2010).

Several other driving factors underscore the exigency of this research. Firstly, the critical impact on employee engagement is paramount. Acknowledging the indispensable link between diversity and inclusion initiatives and engaged employees is imperative, as engaged individuals are more predisposed to positively contribute to the workplace, nurturing a collaborative and innovative milieu (Mor Barak et al., 2011).

Secondly, the exploration of the nexus between diversity, inclusion, and employee retention is pivotal for identifying strategies that cultivate a workplace culture fostering long-term commitment, thereby mitigating the deleterious effects of high turnover rates (Bersin et al., 2013). Additionally, in the competitive terrain of private primary education, internal branding assumes a pivotal role. A diverse and inclusive environment not only entices a diverse talent pool but also augments the institution's internal brand, thus contributing to a favorable reputation among employees and stakeholders (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016).

Furthermore, the study acknowledges the distinctive educational context of private primary education institutions. Investigating the potential impact of diversity and inclusion on teaching and learning is imperative, as it can positively influence students and better equip them for a globalised world (Gay, 2002; Irvine, 2003). Moreover, the study aligns with broader societal expectations for organisations to make affirmative contributions to social issues, thereby recognising the social responsibility facet of diversity and inclusion initiatives (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016).

Finally, considering the legal and ethical imperatives for institutions to evince commitment to diversity and inclusion is pivotal for compliance and ethical business practices (Bersin et al., 2013). In summary, the study endeavors to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of how diversity and inclusion initiatives impact employee retention and internal branding within private primary education institutions, addressing not only organisational benefits but also the social and ethical dimensions of fostering inclusive workplaces in the education sector.

### 1.3 Problem Statement.

South African private primary schools, especially those situated in Gauteng, are confronted with a pressing challenge: the effective implementation of diversity and inclusion initiatives aimed at enhancing employee retention and bolstering organisational vitality. This issue manifests in various dimensions. Firstly, there is a lack of awareness and understanding among educators regarding diversity and inclusion issues, potentially leading to environments that feel less inclusive than intended (Gay, 2002; Irvine, 2003).

Secondly, resource constraints within schools often impede the provision of adequate training and support for diversity and inclusion initiatives, hindering efforts to cultivate a genuinely inclusive environment (Bersin et al., 2013). Additionally, institutional resistance from some educators may obstruct progress in creating a more welcoming school environment (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016). These challenges bear significant consequences, including decreased

employee engagement when individuals feel undervalued or disrespected due to a lack of inclusion, resulting in diminished morale (Mor Barak et al., 2011). Moreover, inadequate diversity and inclusion efforts can lead to increased employee turnover, disrupting the retention of diverse talent crucial for organisational stability and efficiency (Bersin et al., 2013). Furthermore, schools with a poor track record in diversity and inclusion struggle to attract and retain talented employees and students, ultimately tarnishing their reputation (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016). By confronting these challenges head-on and effectively implementing diversity and inclusion initiatives, Gauteng's private primary schools can cultivate a more inclusive learning environment, improve employee retention rates, and enhance their overall organisational vitality.

#### 1.4 Research Aim

The aim of this quantitative study is to determine the effect that diversity and inclusion has on employee retention and organisational vitality, particularly in the context of private primary education institutions. This study aims to address the following key objectives:

##### 1.4.1 Research Objectives

Research Objective 1: To determine the relationship between diversity and inclusion in the workplace and employee retention. By analysing quantitative data, such as survey results, this objective will determine the effect of diversity and inclusion on employee retention however, looking at aspects, such as job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment.

Research Objective 2: To analyse the effect of diversity and inclusion on employee retention. Using quantitative data, such as employee turnover rates, this objective will examine the effect of diversity and inclusion on employee retention.

Research Objective 3: In this study, the objective is to evaluate the impact of diversity and inclusion on organisational diversity. This objective will use quantitative methods, such as employee satisfaction surveys, to assess the role of diversity and inclusion in internal branding.

#### 1.4.2 Research Questions

Research Question 1. What is the relationship between diversity and inclusion and organisational vitality in private primary education institutions?

This question seeks to determine the effect of diversity and inclusion practices on organisational vitality at private primary education institutions which will inform evidence based strategies for improving diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Research Question 2. What are the key challenges and barriers faced by private primary education institutions in implementing diversity and inclusion strategies?

This question seeks to determine the challenges and barriers faced by private primary education institutions when implementing diversity and inclusion strategies.

Research Question 3. To what extent do successful diversity and inclusion implementation strategies contribute to improvements in indicators of organisational vitality, such as employee engagement, retention, and student outcomes?

This question seeks to understand how diversity and inclusion initiatives in private primary education institutions impact organisational performance, so that evidence-based strategies can be implemented to improve overall performance.

Research Question 4. How does diversity management influence the establishment of a positive company image and internal branding?

This question seeks to understand how diversity management strategies influence the development of a positive company image and internal branding, which can be used as a tool to attract and retain top talent.

### 1.4.3. Hypotheses

1.4.3.1 Null Hypothesis.  $H_o$ : There is no relationship between diversity and inclusion and organisational vitality in private primary education institutions.

1.4.3.2 Alternative Hypothesis.  $H_a$ : There is a relationship between diversity and inclusion and organisational vitality in private primary education institutions.

1.4.3.3 Null Hypothesis.  $H_o$ : There is no relationship between diversity and inclusion and employee retention in private primary education institutions.

1.4.3.4 Alternative Hypothesis.  $H_a$ : There is a relationship between diversity and inclusion and employee retention in private primary education institutions.

In conclusion, Chapter One has provided a comprehensive overview of the landscape surrounding diversity and inclusion within the education sector, particularly focusing on private primary education institutions. The discussions have highlighted the increasing recognition of the importance of fostering diverse and inclusive environments, not only for promoting fairness and equity but also for enhancing the overall organisational vitality and effectiveness. Through the lens of various scholars, such as Bedrick, Pitts, Jarry, D'Alonzo, Hughes, Hieker, Mühlböck, and others, the chapter has underscored the criticality of organisational vitality, employee engagement, retention, and internal branding in shaping the success of educational institutions.

It has been elucidated how diversity and inclusion practices serve as catalysts for fostering employee engagement, reducing turnover rates, and enhancing internal branding. Furthermore, the chapter has highlighted the gap in existing research, emphasising the need for quantitative studies to measure and analyse the specific effects of diversity and inclusion initiatives on employee engagement, retention, and internal branding. Through the delineation of research aims, objectives, questions, and hypotheses, the chapter has set the stage for the subsequent chapters, aiming to address these gaps and provide empirical insights into the quantifiable effects of diversity and inclusion initiatives within private primary education institutions.

## **Chapter 2: Preliminary Literature Review**

Chapter Two serves as an introduction to the theoretical framework and literature review pertinent to understanding diversity, inclusion, and organisational dynamics within the context of private primary education institutions. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of existing literature, theories, and empirical studies relevant to the research topic. By synthesising and critically analysing scholarly works from various disciplines such as education, organisational behavior, and diversity management, this chapter seeks to establish a theoretical foundation for the subsequent empirical investigation.

The chapter outlines the key themes and concepts to be explored, including organisational vitality, employee engagement, retention, internal branding, diversity management strategies, and their implications for private primary education institutions. Additionally, it will highlight the significance of this research in addressing the gaps identified in the literature and advancing our understanding of the relationship between diversity, inclusion, and organisational outcomes in educational settings. Through a systematic review of relevant literature, Chapter Two will provide a theoretical framework that guides the empirical analysis in Chapter Three, laying the groundwork for evidence-based insights and recommendations for education administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders aiming to enhance the vitality and resilience of private primary education institutions.

Based on Roberts and Mayo (2019:144) the impact of diversity and inclusion on organisational vitality has gained considerable attention in the context of the education sector. This literature review aims to explore existing research and theoretical frameworks that examine this relationship, shedding light on the key findings, trends, and gaps in the literature. By synthesising relevant studies, this review provides valuable insights into the impact of diversity and inclusion on employee outcomes and organisational branding within education institutions.

## 2.1 Conceptualisation

Key concepts relevant to the research have been refined and defined:

In the context of the study, diversity refers to the presence of individuals from a variety of backgrounds, perspectives, and identities within the education institution (Quinetta & Roberson, 2019:12-21). It encompasses differences in race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ability, religious beliefs, and other dimensions of identity. Diversity recognises and values the unique attributes and experiences that individuals bring to the organisation. Tulshyan (2021:88) declares that diversity promotes an inclusive environment that embraces the richness of human differences and fosters a culture of respect, equity, and appreciation for diversity. A diverse education institution reflects the broader society and prepares students for the globalised and multicultural world they will encounter (Tulshyan, 2021:96-102).

Healey and Stepnick (2018:97) posit that diversity in the education sector encompasses not only the representation of diverse individuals within the workforce but also the inclusion of diverse perspectives, knowledge, and experiences in decision-making processes, curriculum development, and education practices. It acknowledges that diverse perspectives contribute to enriched teaching and learning environments, promote critical thinking, and challenge biases and stereotypes (Page, 2017:30).

Inclusion within the framework of the study refers to the deliberate and proactive effort to create a welcoming and supportive environment where all individuals, regardless of their background, identity, or characteristics, feel valued, respected, and empowered to fully participate and contribute (Rapp & Deidrich, 2020:61). the organisation's goals.

Organisational vitality, in the study's framework, refers to the intentional and strategic efforts undertaken by education institutions to shape and cultivate a positive and cohesive brand identity and culture among its employees (Shankar, 2018:71-87). Hawamdeh (2018:177-181) states that organisation vitality focuses on aligning employees with the organisation's mission, values, and goals, and creating a sense of shared purpose and pride in the education institution. It involves developing and communicating a clear brand message internally,

ensuring that employees understand and embody the organisation's brand promise and desired brand image (Shankar, 2018:45).

Organisation vitality also contributes to attracting and retaining top talent, as employees who align with the organisation's brand values are more likely to be satisfied and committed to their work. Moreover, Sheridan (2011:78) claims that a cohesive internal brand image positively impacts the external perception of the education institution, enhancing its reputation and appeal to students, parents, and other stakeholders.

Employee Retention. Within the study's parameter refers to the ability of education institutions to retain their employees, it focuses on creating an environment that fosters loyalty, commitment, and job satisfaction among employees, leading to their continued employment with the organisation (Burr,2018:92). Employee retention involves minimising turnover rates, reducing voluntary resignations, and promoting long-term tenure and career development opportunities within education institutions.

Burr (2018:97-141) maintains that employee retention becomes an important aspect to consider alongside diversity and inclusion efforts; it investigates how diversity and inclusion practices and initiatives impact the retention of employees within the education sector. This includes examining factors such as the influence of an inclusive organisational culture, supportive leadership, career advancement opportunities, fair and equitable treatment, work-life balance, and recognition and rewards systems on employee retention within education institutions (Finnegan, 2015).

Within the context of the study, the education sector refers to the field of education that encompasses various education institutions, including schools, colleges, universities, and other learning organisations. It is the specific industry or domain where the study is focused. Sheffield and Brown (2019:21) explain that the education sector involves examining the role of diversity and inclusion in promoting employee engagement, retention, and internal branding within education institutions. This includes examining the experiences, perceptions, and practices related to diversity and inclusion among faculty, staff,

administrators, and students in schools, colleges, universities, or other education settings.

According to Mulder (2017:202-230) the education sector is characterised by its unique organisational structure, mission, values, and culture, which shape the dynamics of employee engagement, retention, and internal branding. Understanding the context of the education sector is crucial for investigating the impact of diversity and inclusion on these outcomes and for developing strategies and interventions to enhance diversity, inclusion, and organisational success within education institutions.

Understanding the context of the education sector is crucial for investigating the impact of diversity and inclusion on these outcomes and for developing strategies and interventions to enhance diversity, inclusion, and organisational success within education institutions.

## 2.2 Theoretical foundation

The theoretical foundation for examining the effect of diversity and inclusion on employee retention and organisational vitality in private primary education institutions is multifaceted, drawing on key theoretical perspectives supported by relevant scholarly works.

### Social Identity Theory:

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) provides a theoretical lens to understand how individuals categorise themselves and others within social groups. In the context of diversity and inclusion, this theory helps in exploring how the development of inclusive environments fosters positive social identities, thereby influencing organisational vitality (van Dick *et al.*, 2006).

### Organisational Culture and Climate Theory:

The study draws on theories of organisational culture and climate to analyse how diversity and inclusion practices contribute to shaping the cultural and climate aspects of education institutions. Schein (1990) and Schneider (1990) provide foundational works in understanding organisational culture, while Denison (1990) contributes to the understanding of organisational climate. The research aims to uncover how values, norms, and attitudes regarding diversity

are embedded in the organisational culture, influencing organisational vitality (Denison, 1990; Cameron & Quinn, 2006).

#### Resource-Based View (RBV):

The Resource-Based View of organisations, as proposed by Barney (1991), suggests that organisational success is contingent upon the effective utilisation of resources. Cox (1994) applies this perspective to diversity, arguing that diversity can be a valuable resource that, when managed strategically, contributes to the competitive advantage and overall vitality of education institutions.

#### Institutional Theory:

Institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) is employed to understand how external pressures and societal expectations influence the adoption of diversity and inclusion practices within private primary education institutions. Meyer and Rowan (1977) argue that organisations conform to institutional norms to enhance legitimacy. The study explores how adherence to diversity and inclusion norms affects the perceived legitimacy and vitality of these institutions.

#### Social Capital Theory:

Social Capital Theory (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988) provides insights into the social relationships and networks within organisations. Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) extend social capital theory to organisations, emphasising the importance of relationships and networks in enhancing organisational effectiveness. The research investigates how diversity and inclusion initiatives enhance social capital, contributing to organisational vitality.

#### Psychological Safety Theory:

Drawing from psychological safety literature (Edmondson, 1999), the research explores how creating an inclusive environment encourages open communication, risk-taking, and innovation among faculty, staff, and students. This, in turn, is expected to positively impact the psychological safety climate and overall organisational vitality (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006).

By integrating these theoretical frameworks and referencing seminal works, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricate

relationships between diversity, inclusion, and organisational vitality in private primary education institutions.

## 2.3 Review of Previous Literature

### 2.3.1 Diversity Management

While the concept of diversity management in education finds its global origins (Bell, 2012), its application in South Africa requires a nuanced perspective. This review delves into how South African scholars have influenced the comprehension and execution of diversity management within the local context. South Africa's history of apartheid and persistent social disparities necessitates a focus beyond mere adherence to anti-discrimination laws (Jansen, 2009). According to Jita (2015), diversity management in South African education must actively confront apartheid's legacy and advocate for social justice within schools.

Parallel to global trends (Hudson-Ward, 2014), diversity management in South Africa has undergone philosophical evolutions. Transitioning from an initial emphasis on affirmative action to rectify racial disparities (De Villiers, 2003), the approach has embraced multiculturalism (Nkomo, 2008). This strategy celebrates diverse cultural heritages and experiences, fostering a more inclusive learning milieu. South African scholars emphasise that diversity management encompasses factors beyond race and gender. Msila (2017) underscores the significance of considering elements like socioeconomic status, language, and disability. This ensures a comprehensive approach to inclusion that empowers all learners, irrespective of their backgrounds or abilities.

Presently, diversity management in South Africa centers on cultivating transformative educational spaces (Mbembe, 2015). This entails dismantling discriminatory practices, promoting ubuntu (humanity) as a fundamental value, and nurturing critical thinking abilities that challenge societal inequities (Soudien, 2016). Diversity management in South African education emerges as a dynamic concept shaped by indigenous scholars and the nation's distinctive socio-political milieu. It transcends mere regulatory compliance and aspires toward establishing equitable and transformative learning environments for all.

### 2.3.2 Diversity and Inclusion in Education Organisations: A Growing Trend

Jonsen, Maznevski and Schneider (2011:58) note that while anthropologists have studied cultural diversity for nearly a century and a half, management literature has only begun to address the subject in the last three decades. During this time, the publication of diversity-related research has reached a substantial level. In the past decade alone, the number of academic articles has increased by over 110 percent compared to the previous decade, with a nearly 500 percent increase in popular press since the mid-1980s.

Jonsen, Maznevski and Schneider (2011:48-55) report that the management of diversity is unanimously recognised as a strategic issue vital to economic and competitive success and that factors such as increased globalisation, workforce changes, and the growing representation of various minority groups have prompted the recognition that the diversity debate has transcended mere legal and moral obligations to become an unavoidable reality within today's education organisations (Jonsen, Maznevski, Schneider, 2011:67-79).

### 2.3.3 Inclusion: A Neglected Aspect of diversity and inclusion

Roberson (2006:24-31), notes that academic literature has often overlooked the concept of inclusion, which actively values differences and incorporates them constructively into all aspects of organisational life, from addressing business issues to cultivating a positive organisational climate, has been a focus of diversity departments in education institutions, often referred to as diversity and inclusion. According to Ivancevich and Gilbert (2000:21-31) numerous descriptive books have explored this subject; however, only recently has this area gained scholarly attention through a renewed focus on diversity climate (Avery & McKay, 2010:5-11).

In 1990, R. Roosevelt Thomas Jr. published the article "From Affirmative Action to Affirming Diversity" which is widely regarded as a seminal work in diversity management (Thomas,1990:8). This article served as a call to action for companies to move beyond merely collecting demographic data as a measure of diversity efforts' success or failure. At the beginning of the 21st century, his work gained momentum, as the combined concept of diversity and inclusion emerged as the accepted strategic approach to diversity management. The

presentation of diversity and inclusion as a unified phrase underscores their interconnected nature and importance (Thomas, 1990:8-18).

Hudson-Ward (2014:88) maintains that it is crucial to emphasise that diversity and inclusion go hand in hand ensuring the inclusion of all employees and embracing diversity as a fundamental value that shapes the organisational culture has become integral to branding within private primary education institutions, both internally and externally. Over time, workplace branding has gained significant importance among education managers, as it is recognised to lead to positive organisational outcomes. Effective branding not only generates a competitive advantage but also helps employees internalise organisational values, attracting and retaining talented individuals (Hudson-Ward, 2014:78-84).

#### 2.3.4 Employee Retention in Education Institutions

Employee retention is a critical concern for private primary education institutions, and Cox, Harvey and Mendoza (2014:49) suggest that diversity and inclusion play a significant role in addressing this challenge. Ely and Thomas (2020:90) report that when employees perceive an inclusive work environment that values diversity, they are more likely to develop a sense of belonging, satisfaction, and commitment to the organisation. Diverse mentoring programs, equitable career development opportunities, and inclusive policies have been identified as effective strategies for enhancing employee retention rates (Ely & Thomas, 2020:90-110). Additionally, Cox, Harvey and Mendoza emphasise the role of employee perceptions of inclusion and fair treatment in influencing their decision to stay or leave the organisation.

Dobbin and Kalev (2016:78) argue that although these strategies may be effective in enhancing employee retention rates, they are not the only factors that influence an employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation but that other factors such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, and compensation also play a role in an employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016:61).

### 2.3.5 Gaps and Future Research Directions in Diversity and Inclusion in the Education Sector

Konrad et al (2019:107) finds that while the literature on the effect of diversity and inclusion on organisational vitality in the private primary education sector is growing, several gaps and future research directions exist. Limited research has explored the specific mechanisms through which diversity and inclusion initiatives influence employee outcomes and organisational branding (Bennett, 2020:28-34). Further investigation is needed to understand the role of different demographic factors, such as gender, ethnicity, and age, in moderating the relationship between diversity and inclusion and employee outcomes. Additionally, more studies are needed to examine the effectiveness of specific diversity and inclusion interventions and programs in the education context.

In conclusion, this literature review highlights the significant impact of diversity and inclusion on organisational vitality in private primary education institutions. The findings suggest that fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment leads to positive employee outcomes and strengthens organisational branding efforts. However, there is a need for further research to deepen an understanding of the underlying mechanisms and explore the effectiveness of specific strategies. By addressing these research gaps, private primary education institutions can develop evidence-based practices to create inclusive cultures that enhance employee engagement, improve retention rates, and strengthen their internal branding efforts.

### 2.3.6 Barriers to diversity and inclusion in private primary institutions

In educational institutions, particularly private primary schools, establishing inclusive and diverse learning environments is imperative. Despite the recognised benefits, numerous obstacles impede the effective execution of diversity and inclusion initiatives in these settings. This literature review delves into existing research to explore the specific barriers encountered in private primary education, offering insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders. Financial constraints emerge as a prominent hurdle, with private schools heavily reliant on tuition fees, raising concerns about the affordability of comprehensive support services for students with diverse needs and the potential limitations in hiring specialised staff (Jones & Brown, 2019; Johnson, 2020).

Selective admissions procedures, often grounded in standardised testing, pose significant challenges by inadvertently excluding students with diverse learning needs, perpetuating academic homogeneity and fostering social exclusion within school communities (Garcia & Martinez, 2017). Moreover, the pressure to uphold prestigious academic standards may overshadow the imperative of inclusion, potentially marginalising diverse backgrounds (Lee & Kim, 2021). Socioeconomic barriers exacerbate the situation, as high tuition costs restrict access for economically disadvantaged families, resulting in a less diverse student population (Roberts et al., 2016).

Elevated parental expectations for academic performance and conformity, coupled with inadequate awareness regarding inclusion benefits and misconceptions concerning students with disabilities, further impede efforts toward inclusivity (Davis & Nguyen, 2018; Chen & Wang, 2019). Despite smaller class sizes, private schools may lack sufficient teacher training on differentiated instruction and support for diverse learners, hindering efforts to foster inclusive environments (Taylor, 2017). Additionally, marketing strategies often convey a narrow image of student diversity and institutional commitment to inclusion, obscuring genuine efforts and perpetuating barriers (Adams & Clark, 2020). Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires collaborative endeavors among stakeholders to ensure all students have equitable opportunities for success. Further research and coordinated initiatives are essential to overcoming barriers and advancing diversity and inclusion in private primary education.

Chapter Two has delved into a comprehensive exploration of the theoretical underpinnings and existing literature surrounding diversity, inclusion, and organisational dynamics within private primary education institutions. By synthesising insights from a diverse array of scholarly works, this chapter has illuminated the critical importance of fostering diverse and inclusive environments for promoting organisational vitality in the education sector. Drawing upon theoretical frameworks such as Social Identity Theory, Organisational Culture and Climate Theory, Resource-Based View, Institutional Theory, Social Capital Theory, and Psychological Safety Theory, the chapter has

provided a robust theoretical foundation for understanding the intricate relationships between diversity, inclusion, and organisational outcomes.

Additionally, through an extensive review of previous literature, key themes such as diversity management, the growing trend of diversity and inclusion in education organisations, the importance of inclusion as a neglected aspect, employee retention strategies, and gaps in current research have been highlighted. This review underscores the need for further empirical investigation to deepen our understanding of the mechanisms through which diversity and inclusion initiatives influence employee outcomes and organisational branding within private primary education institutions. By addressing these research gaps, education institutions can develop evidence-based practices to create inclusive cultures that enhance employee engagement, improve retention rates, and strengthen their internal branding efforts, ultimately contributing to organisational success and effectiveness.

### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

Chapter Three delineates the research methodology employed to investigate the impact of diversity and inclusion on employee retention and organisational vitality in private primary education institutions. Grounded in the positivist paradigm, this study adopts a quantitative approach to empirically examine the relationships between key variables. This chapter outlines the research paradigm, approach, design, population, sampling method, data collection, analysis techniques, and considerations of validity and reliability.

#### **3.1 Research Paradigm.**

The study's research paradigm is based on the positivist paradigm, which according to Babbie (2016:34-41) assumes that reality is objective and can be studied through empirical methods. Babin and Anderson (2019:19-27) explain that it is rooted in an objectivist ontology, positing that a measurable and observable reality exists within these institutions, embracing a positivist epistemology, the research seeks to acquire knowledge through empirical observation and quantifiable data. Guided by the metatheory of Social Identity

Theory, the study explores the connections between diversity and inclusion initiatives and their influence on organisational vitality indicators (Babin & Anderson, 2019:28).

For this study a survey emerged as the most appropriate measuring instrument. Surveys offer a means to collect data on perceptions, attitudes, and experiences concerning diversity and inclusion initiatives, enabling outreach to a broad spectrum of educators and staff within the target group of private primary schools (Anderson, 2019:30). The survey was administered online, regarding survey question development, customisation was crucial based on specific research objectives, covering areas such as perceptions of diversity and inclusion initiatives, existing practices, employee engagement, retention impact, and organisational vitality. These questions were formulated by drawing from existing literature on diversity and inclusion in education, consulting with diversity and inclusion professionals or education researchers for expert input, and conducting pilot testing to refine clarity, understandability, and question flow.

The survey underwent refinement through consultations with diversity and transformation professionals and education researchers, ensuring clarity and relevance. Pilot testing with a sample group of friends, family and diversity and inclusion experts provided crucial feedback, leading to adjustments such as the addition of more ranking and scale questions to address gaps in information gathering and revisions to existing questions for improved clarity. Through the meticulous utilisation of a survey and thoughtfully crafted questions, valuable insights were gleaned into the influence of diversity and inclusion initiatives on employee retention and overall organisational vitality within private primary schools.

Employing a quantitative methodology, the study employs a structured data collection tool namely a survey to gather data on diversity and inclusion efforts, employee engagement, retention rates, and organisational vitality. Statistical analyses, namely descriptive statistics, offered a summary of the collected data, presenting key information such as means, medians, frequencies, and percentages. This analysis aided in grasping overarching trends and characteristics within the sample concerning perceptions of diversity and inclusion and employee engagement. Additionally, correlational analysis delved

into the relationships between variables, such as exploring the correlation between diversity and inclusion perceptions and employee engagement.

Furthermore, employing independent or paired samples t-tests enabled comparisons of means between two groups; for instance, assessing employee engagement scores between schools with diversity and inclusion initiatives and those with less developed ones, this also includes correlation, these are employed to uncover patterns, trends, and relationships in the collected data (Bersin & Zhao:44-48). Adhering to a value-neutral axiology, the study strives for objectivity, aiming to provide an unbiased assessment of how diversity and inclusion impact employee retention and the overall vitality of private primary education institutions.

### 3.2 Research approach

Given the research's focus on empirical investigation, adherence to a positivist paradigm, and its central objective to determine the relationship between diversity and inclusion and employee retention and organisation vitality quantitative approach was deemed most fitting. Dobbin and Kalev (2016) revealed that this methodology was instrumental in testing the hypotheses formulated for the study, moreover, it finds extensive application in social science by supporting objective theory testing and providing a comprehensive explanation of the research variables, namely diversity and inclusion, employee retention and organisation vitality this is as outlined by Gay (2020:44).

To augment the quantitative methodology, the study incorporated a non-experimental research design in this study (Barak *et al.*, 2011). This choice was pivotal in preserving the authenticity and objectivity of the study's findings, as the independent variable diversity and inclusion remained untouched, avoiding any form of manipulation or control (Jones & Brown, 2013:98). This approach was complemented by correlational research, aligning seamlessly with the study's objectives (Johnson, 2015). Correlational research emerged as particularly well-suited for discerning the statistical relationships between the variables under examination, providing valuable insights into the intricate connection between diversity and inclusion, employee retention, and organisational vitality (Barak *et al.*, 2011:78-80).

### 3.3 Research design

Maree and Pietersen (2020:89) define a research design as a meticulously structured plan that delineates the methodologies and procedures integral to data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The selection of a research design is intricately linked to the specific research problem and the overarching research objectives.

Within the adopted deductive logic approach, the focal point of the research problem lies in exploring the interplay between diversity and inclusion (diversity and inclusion), employee retention, and organisational vitality. Employing deductive logic entails scrutinising existing theories and their empirical implications, deemed apt for systematically testing hypotheses rooted in established theories and frameworks related to diversity and inclusion and organisational outcomes (Maree & Pietersen, 2020:93).

In tandem, the research adheres to a Positivist Paradigm, underscoring the objective and measurable nature of reality. Liao (2004) notes that this paradigmatic alignment with the deductive logic approach centres on the collection and analysis of quantitative data, facilitating the testing of hypotheses and the derivation of generalisable conclusions.

Operationalising the study through quantitative methodology, a structured survey instrument is deployed for data collection and analysis. This approach facilitates the acquisition of standardised and objective data from an extensive sample of private primary education institutions.

The survey instrument incorporates numerical scales, including Likert scales for measuring agreement, frequency scales for assessing occurrence frequency, and range scales to capture specific value ranges (Roberts & Nguyen, 2021), quantifying various aspects of diversity and inclusion practices, employee retention rates, and organisational vitality indicators.

The research design further integrates a non-experimental research design, a deliberate choice aligned with the study's aim to explore the relationship between diversity and inclusion and organisational outcomes without intervening or controlling variables. Maree and Pieterse (2020:92-95) reveal that this

approach ensures that the findings are devoid of bias from the researcher's interventions, reflecting the natural dynamics between variables in real-world settings.

Conclusively, a single Cross-Sectional Correlation Design is specifically adopted, allowing for the assessment of the relationship between diversity and inclusion and organisational outcomes at a designated point in time, typically the current academic year. While offering a momentary snapshot of the relationship, this design does not facilitate the establishment of cause-and-effect relationship, reason being, the design does not allow researchers to control for other factors that may be influencing the relationship between diversity and inclusion and organisational outcomes (Maree & Pietersen, 2020).

### 3.4 Population

Consistent with Kenyton's (2011) definition, the research population constitutes the complete assemblage of entities from which data was collected, constituting a precisely delineated set of units. The research focused specifically on schools actively engaged in diversity and inclusion initiatives or practices, sharing common characteristics. The selection of the population was meticulously aligned with the research question and problem, as underscored by Maree (2020), ensuring the suitability of the chosen entities.

#### 3.4.1 Units of analysis

The term units of analysis refers to the examination of the primary entity actively participating in the research, representing the who or what under study (Maree, 2020). In this instance, the units of analysis were identified as the teachers and staff of the selected schools. Inclusion of teachers and staff in the study offers a more comprehensive understanding of the organisational dynamics, facilitating informed decision-making and the formulation of effective strategies for fostering a diverse, inclusive, and vibrant workplace. Consequently, their involvement was deemed appropriate due to their relevant experience and knowledge, making them well-suited participants for the research.

### 3.4.2 Target population

Drawing from Maree and Pietersen's (2020) framework, our study defines the target population as private primary schools actively committed to diversity and inclusion initiatives within the most recent academic year 2023. To accurately identify this population, we implemented several strategies. Firstly, we compiled an exhaustive list of private primary schools using reputable databases and directories that is the department of basic education statistics as a major source. Subsequently, these schools underwent a meticulous screening process based on predetermined inclusion criteria, affirming their private status and active engagement in diversity and inclusion endeavors.

This screening involved multifaceted approaches, including reviewing school websites for diversity and inclusion programs and mission statements, direct communication with schools via email or phone to ascertain their commitment to diversity and inclusion and leveraging professional associations specialising in private education or diversity and inclusion initiatives (ISASA, 2023). Through these rigorous screening methods, our aim was to ensure that the survey reached a targeted cohort of private primary schools deeply involved in fostering diversity and inclusion within their educational environments.

### 3.4.3 Accessible

Adhering to Maree's (2020) definition, the accessible population refers to those entities that could feasibly be included in the research, enabling specific and meaningful conclusions. In this study, the accessible population comprises private primary schools of varying sizes operating within South Africa, all of whom have implemented diversity and inclusion initiatives. The selection process involved cross-referencing data, facilitating the observation of year-on-year percentage changes in organisational performance, particularly in the context of diversity and inclusion practices, as highlighted by Nishii (2013:38).

## 3.5 Sampling and Method

The target population comprises all private primary education institutions, while the accessible population is limited to private primary education institutions located in Gauteng. In the study, a combination of stratified random sampling

and convenience sampling was employed. Stratified random sampling, as described by Konrad (2016), involves dividing the population into smaller subgroups, or strata, and then selecting a random sample from each stratum. This method ensures that the sample accurately represents the entire population, preventing any subgroup from being disproportionately represented.

Additionally, convenient sampling was utilised to select participants based on their availability and accessibility, further enhancing the feasibility of data collection within the designated region. By employing both stratified random sampling and convenient sampling techniques, the study aimed to achieve a balanced and comprehensive representation of private primary education institutions in Gauteng.

Here is how this method was used to choose 3 private primary schools in Gauteng:

- The population of private primary schools in Gauteng is 1000 schools (Department of Basic Education, 2018).
- The strata are divided based on the following criteria:
  - Size of the school: small (<200 students), medium (200-500 students), large (>500 students)
  - Location of the school: central Pretoria, northern Pretoria, southern Pretoria
  - Type of school: religious, co-ed
  - The sample size for each stratum is determined using a formula that takes into account the size of the stratum and the desired confidence level of the study. The sample size for the small schools stratum is 10, the sample size for the medium schools stratum is 20, and the sample size for the large schools stratum is 30.
- 10 schools are randomly selected from the small schools stratum, 20 schools are randomly selected from the medium schools stratum, and 30 schools are randomly selected from the large schools stratum.
- The three schools with the highest stratum numbers were chosen. Primary schools in the study area were assigned pseudonyms Private School A, Private School B, and Private School C, to maintain confidentiality and protect their identities.

This method ensures that the three schools selected are representative of the population of private primary schools in Pretoria in terms of size, location, and type of school.

### 3.6 Data Collection

Data collection serves as the systematic process for acquiring crucial information necessary for hypothesis testing, addressing research inquiries, and accurately evaluating outcomes (Maree & Pieterse, 2020). In line with a quantitative approach that emphasises precision and integrity, this study aimed to gather empirical evidence to explore the correlation between diversity and inclusion, employee retention, and organisational vitality. Employing a convenient sampling method, the chosen quantitative data collection technique involved administering a cross-sectional email survey crafted using Google Forms, ensuring efficiency and wide distribution through the respective heads of schools' PA's. This approach accommodated the busy schedules of staff, enabling them to complete the survey at their convenience, while also being cost-effective and time-efficient (Dudovskiy, 2018; Maree & Pieterse, 2020).

The survey, requiring approximately 10 minutes to complete, comprised 25 questions and targeted a significant number of participants, specifically 35-40 staff members from each school, ensuring a high level of accuracy and representation (Maree & Pieterse, 2020). Organised into three thematic sections covering demographics, diversity and inclusion initiative implementation, and the measurement of these initiatives' impact on organisational vitality, the survey employed closed-ended questions, ranking, and Likert scales to gather quantitative data described variables, simplifying and quantifying responses (Dudovskiy, 2018).

Guided by the insights of a trained academic and existing scholarly works, the survey questions were meticulously crafted to be comprehensible, direct, and respectful, sidestepping technical terminology to mitigate potential confusion (Maree & Pieterse, 2020). To refine the clarity and accuracy of the survey, a pilot test was conducted on family, friends and diversity and inclusion experts; it then incorporated adjustments based on feedback received. Once ethical clearance was obtained, the survey was disseminated via email on the 23rd of

October 2023 as a hyperlink to participating schools, along with research objectives and a designated deadline.

Teachers and staff were afforded a week to complete the survey, with a reminder dispatched on the penultimate day. Due to an insufficient response rate by the initial deadline, an extension was granted until the 06th of November, 2023. It's noteworthy that individuals who participated in the pilot test were excluded from the final study to prevent any potential biases in the data collection process. The collected data, seamlessly synchronised with the researcher's Google Account, was subsequently converted into a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet in preparation for coding and subsequent data analysis.

### 3.7 Data Analysis

The data analysis process, as outlined by Maree and Pieterse (2020), involved a comprehensive examination of the data collected through the chosen data collection methodology. This analysis included the interpretation of the gathered data through analytical and logical reasoning, with the goal of establishing the correlation between diversity and inclusion, employee retention, and organisational vitality. Following the quantitative research approach, a statistical analysis was conducted to generate numerical datasets that highlighted the statistical significance within the research.

The data, obtained from a cross-sectional survey on Google Forms, was seamlessly synchronised with the researcher's Google Account, transformed into an editable Google Sheet, and subsequently converted into a Microsoft Excel file. This file underwent coding for further analysis using SPSS v23. This statistical approach, in alignment with Brown (2020), eradicated guesswork, bias, and inaccuracies, enabling the objective derivation of conclusions. To effectively scrutinise the impact of diversity and inclusion on employee retention and organisational vitality and interpret the outcomes from the cross-sectional mail survey, the researcher employed a combined approach of descriptive and inferential statistics.

### 3.7.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were employed to outline the demographic details, characteristics, and the size of the respondents in the sample. Notably, the focus of descriptive statistics was on the demographic profile of the teachers/staff from the chosen schools and were employed to outline the demographic details, characteristics, and size of the respondents in the sample (Nelson & Quick, 2018). This included measures of central tendency (averages, medians, modes) to describe typical values for variables like years of experience, and variability measures (range, standard deviation) to show the spread of the data. Additionally, frequency distributions were used to illustrate how often specific characteristics occurred, such as age ranges.

Analysing these data sets helped the researcher identify correlations between diversity and inclusion initiatives, employee retention, and organisational vitality (Nelson & Quick, 2018). The analysis of these data sets greatly supported the researcher in identifying correlations, leading to a more profound comprehension of the interconnections between diversity and inclusion, employee retention, and organisational vitality (Nelson & Quick, 2018).

### 3.7.2 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics, as defined by Nelson and Quick (2018:45), were utilised as statistical measures to draw conclusions about the relationships between diversity and inclusion, employee retention, and organisational vitality. These statistical methods were specifically designed to test the hypotheses. Given the impracticality of analysing the entire population engaged in diversity and inclusion practices, a sample was selected as an accurate and reliable representation, allowing for meaningful conclusions (Konrad, 2016:89-91). The hypotheses were effectively addressed with the assistance of the Spearman Correlation Coefficient, a valuable method that tested both the statistical significance and reliability of the relationships (Maree & Pieterse, 2020:67).

### 3.8 Validity and Reliability

According to Middleton (2019:68) validity concerns the dependability of research, guaranteeing the credibility of the findings, the author further mentions that in the realm of quantitative research, the significance of validity and reliability cannot be overstated. They are pivotal in unveiling causal relationships, facilitating a precise representation of the impact that diversity and inclusion exert on both employee retention and organisational vitality (Middleton, 2019:71-73)

#### 3.8.1 Validity

Validity in this study assessing the impact of diversity and inclusion on employee retention and organisational vitality is critical for ensuring the trustworthiness and accuracy of the research findings. Kellerman (2012:101) mentions that a study's validity is paramount in establishing that the research methods and instruments used effectively measure what they are intended to measure, providing confidence in the study's overall reliability and relevance. It involves confirming that the research design aligns with the research questions and objectives, ensuring the results are a valid representation of the relationship between diversity and inclusion, employee retention, and organisational vitality.

To uphold internal validity, the study must minimise potential confounding variables that could distort the true relationship between the variables under investigation. The research design, data collection methods, and statistical analyses need to be carefully chosen and executed to prevent biases or alternative explanations for the observed effects (Maree & Pietersen, 2020:90). External validity, on the other hand, is crucial for the study's findings to go beyond the specific sample and context to broader education institutions. This involves considering the diversity of primary education institutions and the findings of the results to various settings.

According to Maree and Pietersen (2020:101), construct validity is vital to ensure that the selected measurements accurately reflect the intended constructs, such as diversity and inclusion, employee retention, and organizational vitality. It is crucial that the survey instrument used for data collection demonstrates a strong relationship with these constructs, thereby

ensuring that the conclusions drawn from the study are firmly rooted in the concepts being investigated.

In terms of construct validity testing, the study employed several methods to verify the alignment between the survey instrument and the intended constructs. These methods included expert review, where the survey was evaluated by professionals in the field to assess its relevance and comprehensiveness in capturing the targeted constructs. Additionally, the study conducted a pilot test with a small sample of friends, family and diversity and inclusion experts to evaluate the clarity, consistency, and appropriateness of the survey questions in relation to the constructs of interest.

In conclusion, according to Middleton (2019:89) maintaining rigorous consideration of validity throughout the thesis study is essential. It guarantees that the research effectively addresses the central questions regarding the impact of diversity and inclusion on employee retention and organisational vitality, thereby enhancing the credibility and applicability of the study's findings.

### 3.8.2 Reliability

The significance of reliability in ascertaining the likelihood of consistent results in replicating the study on the influence of diversity and inclusion on employee retention and organisational vitality has been underscored (Middleton, 2019). Given the inseparable connection between reliability and research findings, maintaining a high degree of consistency emerged as a primary concern in this study. Prioritising reliability was essential to ensure uniformity in the results obtained from the closed-ended questionnaire, regardless of the participants (employees) or the timing of their involvement (Dudovskiy, 2018). Consequently, mitigating potential research bias played a pivotal role in upholding the integrity of the study's findings.

To enhance reliability and minimise errors, the questionnaire was meticulously designed using straightforward language, featuring concise and detailed questions. This approach was aimed at promoting clarity and eliciting accurate responses, particularly from educators and staff in the education sector who possess a deep understanding of the subject matter. Additionally, a random selection process was employed for participants to eliminate bias, thereby bolstering the research's accuracy and relevance.

Moreover, the study conducted a Cronbach's alpha test to assess internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire. This statistical analysis confirmed that the survey items measured the intended constructs consistently, ensuring the validity of the data collected (Maree & Pietersen, 2020). Furthermore, consideration was given to inter-rater reliability, involving multiple participants utilising the same measurement approach to strengthen the study's robustness. This approach ensures that if another researcher were to replicate the study using the same methodology, the findings would remain consistent, thus contributing to the accumulation of knowledge on the impact of diversity and inclusion on employee retention and organisational vitality (Dudovskiy, 2018).

This rigorous approach to reliability safeguards the integrity of the study's results and bolsters the evidence base regarding how diversity and inclusion influence employee retention and organisational vitality. By minimising potential bias and ensuring consistency across participants and replications, the study advances a more reliable and broadly applicable comprehension of the subject.

In conclusion, Chapter Three of this research delves into the methodology employed to investigate the relationship between diversity and inclusion initiatives and their impact on employee retention and organisational vitality within private primary education institutions. Rooted in the positivist paradigm, the research adopts a quantitative approach supported by a deductive logic framework, aligning with the objective of empirically testing hypotheses derived from established theories such as Social Identity Theory. The research design, incorporating a non-experimental, cross-sectional correlation design, facilitates

the exploration of these relationships without intervention, ensuring the authenticity of findings.

Through meticulous sampling techniques, including stratified random sampling, the study ensures the representation of diverse school sizes, locations, and types. Data collection, conducted via a structured survey instrument distributed electronically, emphasizes efficiency and widespread participation. The subsequent data analysis, employing descriptive and inferential statistics, aims to unveil correlations between diversity and inclusion, employee retention, and organizational vitality. Upholding validity and reliability throughout the research process is paramount, ensuring the trustworthiness and consistency of findings. By adhering to rigorous methodological principles, this study strives to contribute meaningful insights into the complex dynamics of diversity and inclusion in educational settings, ultimately informing strategies for fostering inclusive and vibrant school environments.

## **Chapter 4: Findings and Interpretations**

This chapter offers a thorough examination and discourse on the digital survey conducted in this study, it comprised 25 cross-sectional questions, the survey aimed to delve into the impact of diversity and inclusion initiatives on employee retention and overall organisational vitality. To gather data, a unique survey link was distributed via email to willing participants at three chosen private primary schools. Remarkably, the completion of all distributed surveys resulted in an outstanding response rate of 100%, yielding a robust dataset.

Responses were obtained from a representative sample of 121 staff members, randomly selected from the three schools. This corresponds to an approximate participation rate of 100% assuming equal selection across schools. The primary focus of this study was on the experiences and perspectives of teachers and staff within the selected schools, making the individual teachers and staff members who participated in the survey the units of analysis. This revised version provides a clearer depiction of the survey distribution process, highlights the exceptional response rate (100%), and elucidates the units of analysis.

### **4.1 Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive statistics, as outlined by Pietersen and Maree (2020:121), are employed to unveil the key characteristics of the collected data. In this research, descriptive statistics serve to succinctly summarise and interpret the demographic information derived from the selected sample. The research sample comprises staff from three schools characterised by the highest stratum numbers, namely Private School A (small, central Pretoria, co-ed), Private School B (medium, northern Pretoria, co-ed), and Private School C (large, southern Pretoria).

The data reveals a significant gender imbalance in the three chosen schools, with women constituting the majority at 86.8% and men accounting for only 13.2% of the total participants (Maree and Pietersen, 2020). These disparities could have ramifications for the group's overall diversity and inclusivity (Acker, 2020). This skewed gender distribution aligns with previous research on education participants, which reflects the enduring stereotype of teaching in

schools as a predominantly female-dominated profession (Acker, 2020; Ingersoll, 2023:28-38).

This gender imbalance may have implications for the overall diversity and inclusivity of the group. For instance, a predominantly female workforce may limit the perspectives and experiences represented in the school environment, potentially affecting the learning experiences of students from different backgrounds (Carlson, 2009; Grönqvist, 2017). Additionally, such an imbalance may hinder the development of a truly inclusive school culture where all individuals feel valued and respected (Gay, 2000; Nieto, 2003). It is important to acknowledge and address these gender disparities in order to create a more equitable and inclusive learning environment for all

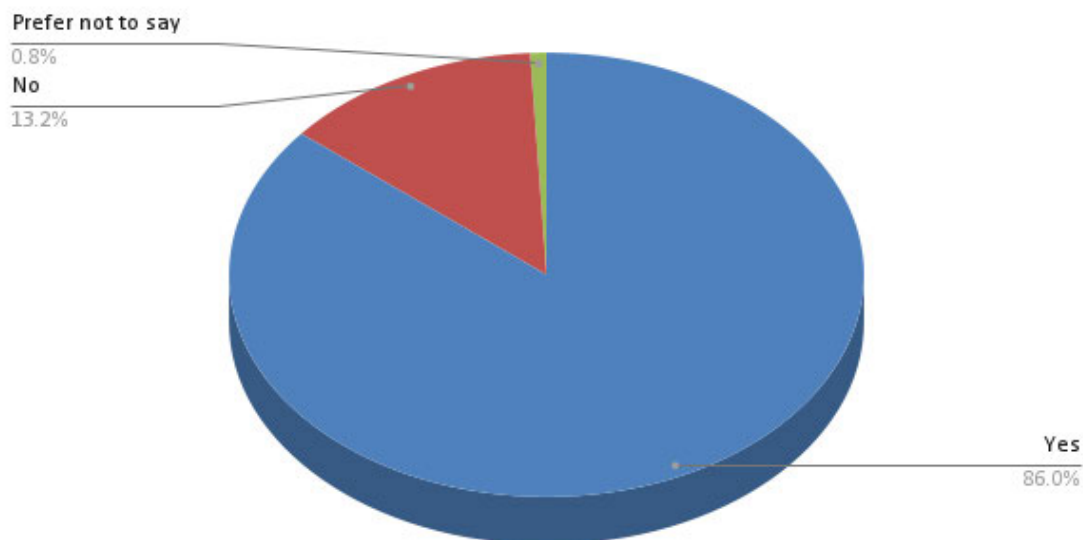


Figure 1: Pie chart illustrating participants that have experienced discrimination in the workplace

The above pie chart vividly illustrates the prevalence of workplace discrimination among the participants (86%). This substantial proportion of affected individuals highlight the need to address this pervasive issue and foster a more inclusive and supportive work environment. The high-rate experienced discrimination may indicate areas where improvements are warranted to create a more inclusive

and supportive workplace culture, ultimately impacting employee retention and organisational vitality.

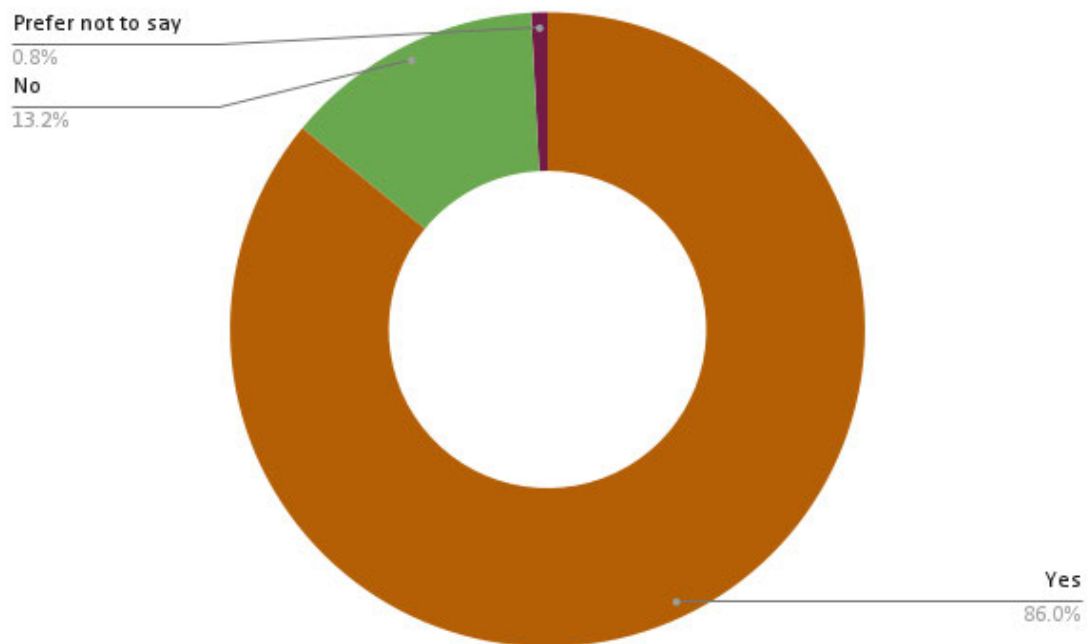


Figure 2: Pie chart depicting the percentage of participants who have witnessed or experienced discrimination in the workplace

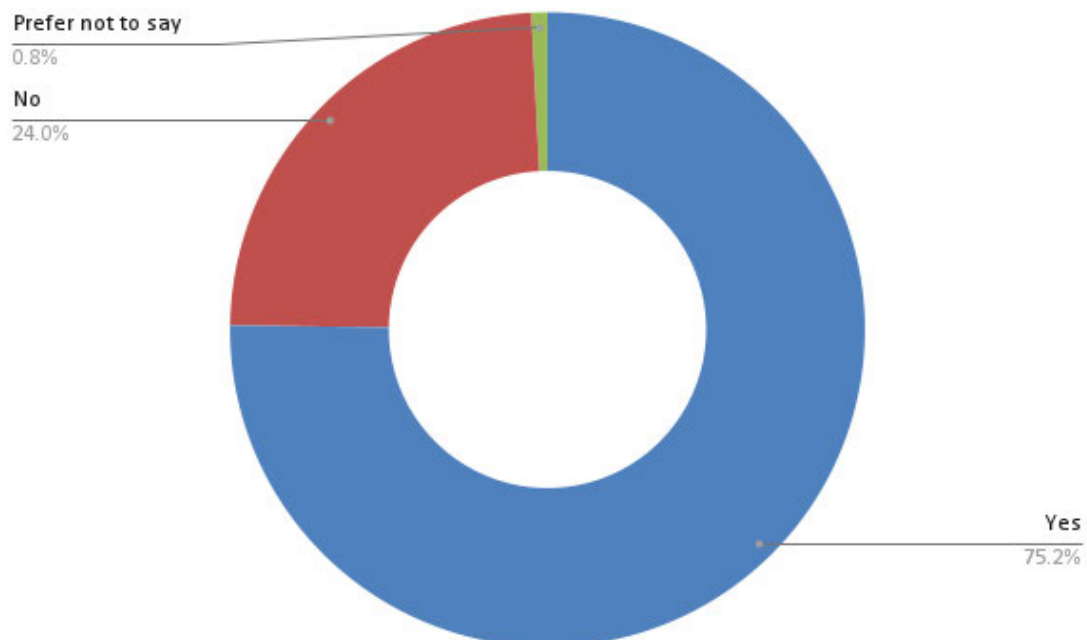


Figure 3: Pie chart depicting the percentage of participants that have experienced or witnessed biased behaviour in the workplace

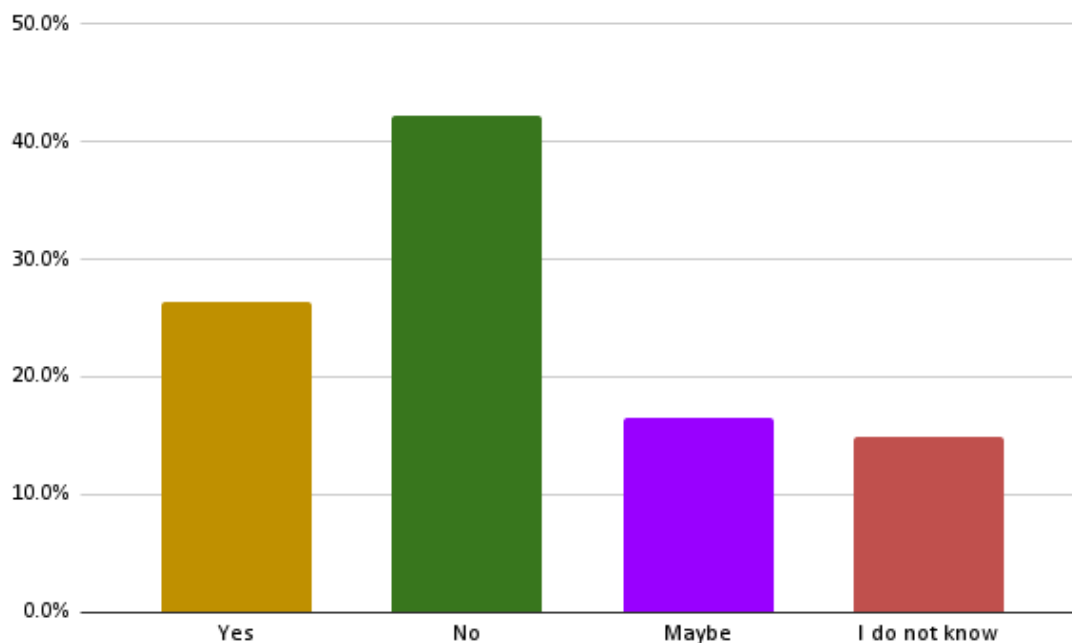


Figure 4: Bar chart indicating the percentage of participants who perceive biases in their school's recruitment and selection processes.

By looking at Figures 3, 4, and 5, it is evident that a substantial portion of respondents (86%) have observed or encountered workplace discrimination, with 75% witnessing or experiencing biased behaviour. Moreover, the majority (58%) believe that their school's recruitment and selection processes are not devoid of biases. These findings highlight a systemic challenge with discrimination and bias in these schools, potentially impacting employee retention and organisational vitality.

#### 4.1.2 Inferential statistics

According to Dudovskiy (2018), inferential statistics refers to statistical methods used to draw conclusions about the relationships between diversity and inclusion, employee retention, and organisational vitality. The utilisation of this approach was essential due to the impracticality of analysing the entire population involved in diversity and inclusion initiatives. Instead, a thoughtfully chosen sample was employed, recognised as a reliable and accurate representation that facilitated meaningful findings, as emphasised by Bucklow

(2020). The hypotheses were appropriately tested using the Spearman correlation coefficient.

#### 4.1.2.1 Spearman Correlation Coefficient

Spearman's rank-order correlation was employed to determine the coefficients between variables, which were then used to gauge the strength and direction of the association between diversity and inclusion and employee retention as well as organisational vitality (Dudovskiy, 2018).

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6 \sum d_i^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

Figure 5: Spearman correlation coefficient formula (Maree & Pieterse, 2020).

Table 1 below shows the correlation coefficients between different survey items. Dudovskiy (2018) explains that a correlation coefficient of 1.0 indicates a perfect positive relationship, meaning that the two variables are perfectly correlated in the same direction, while a correlation coefficient of -1.0 indicates a perfect negative relationship, meaning that the two variables are perfectly correlated in opposite directions. A correlation coefficient of 0.0 indicates no linear relationship between the two variables.

**Diversity's Impact on Organisational Vitality:** There is a strong positive correlation between diversity and organisational vitality ( $r_2 = 0.822$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ) implying that schools with a diverse workforce tend to foster a positive and supportive school culture, potentially enhancing student outcomes.

**Effectiveness of Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives:** A strong positive correlation coefficient of ( $r_2 = .717$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ) indicates that schools with effective diversity and inclusion programs are more likely to cultivate a positive and supportive school culture, contributing to organisational vitality.

Employee Satisfaction with Workplace Diversity: With a moderate positive correlation coefficient of ( $r_2 = .668$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ) employee satisfaction with workplace diversity correlates with organisational vitality, suggesting that content employees contribute to a positive school culture.

Frequency of Diversity Surveys: There is a strong positive correlation between the frequency of diversity surveys and the impact of diversity and inclusion on school vitality ( $r_2 = .717$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ). This suggests that schools that conduct diversity surveys more frequently are better able to identify and address issues related to diversity and inclusion, which can ultimately lead to a more positive impact on school vitality.

Impact of Diversity and Inclusion on School Vitality: The moderate positive correlation coefficient of ( $r_2 = .668$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ) indicates that employees who perceive a positive impact of diversity and inclusion on organisational vitality are more likely to engage and contribute to a positive school culture

Employee retention:

Inclusive Approach to Decision-Making: A strong positive correlation coefficient of ( $r_2 = .725$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ) indicates that an inclusive approach to decision-making correlates with teacher satisfaction, highlighting the importance of valuing teacher input and shows that employees who perceive their school to be more inclusive in its decision-making processes are also more satisfied with their work environment.

Inclusive Approach to Policy Development: A strong positive correlation coefficient of ( $r_2 = .819$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ) suggests that an inclusive approach to policy development is associated with higher teacher satisfaction, emphasising the importance of considering teacher perspective

Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives: There is a strong positive correlation between employees' satisfaction with diversity and inclusivity and the effectiveness of the school's diversity and inclusion initiatives ( $r_2 = .822$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ). This suggests

that employees who perceive their school to be more effective in promoting diversity and inclusion are also more satisfied with their work environment.

Staff Diversity: The strong positive correlation coefficient of ( $r_2 = .864$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ) indicates a substantial connection between staff diversity and teacher satisfaction, emphasising the positive impact of a diverse work environment on job satisfaction.

In addition to the aforementioned data, there is a growing body of research that supports the positive correlation between staff diversity and teacher satisfaction. Notably, a study conducted by the RAND Corporation found that schools with a more diverse staff exhibited lower rates of teacher absenteeism and turnover (RAND Corporation, 2018). Similarly, research from a different country, American Federation of Teachers indicated that teachers in schools with greater staff diversity were more prone to report a sense of support from their colleagues and administration (American Federation of Teachers, 2019).

Together with this study's data, the studies constitute compelling evidence that underscores the significance of staff diversity as a valuable asset for private primary schools (Carlson, 2009:89). Institutions dedicated to fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment are poised to witness favourable outcomes in terms of teacher satisfaction, student performance, and the overall climate within the school.

The data reveals several other noteworthy correlations. The correlation between employee perceptions of discrimination, harassment, and biased behaviour is 0.626. This is a strong positive correlation, which means that as employee perceptions of discrimination, harassment, and biased behaviour increase, so too does the likelihood of experiencing all three. This suggests that employees who experience one form of negative behavior are more likely to experience others. Additionally, these negative perceptions are inversely correlated with employee satisfaction regarding diversity and inclusion initiatives, suggesting that instances of mistreatment can compromise overall contentment with such efforts.

Furthermore, there is a correlation between employee perceptions of the racial and ethnic diversity of both student and staff bodies and their satisfaction with the diversity and inclusivity in their work environment is ( $r_2 = .822$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ) this is a strong positive correlation, which means that as employee perceptions of the diversity of the student and staff bodies increase, their satisfaction with the diversity and inclusivity of their work environment also increases.

This suggests that employees who believe that their school is diverse and inclusive are more likely to be satisfied with their work environment overall. Finally, satisfaction with diversity and inclusion initiatives shows a positive correlation with the perceived diversity of both student and staff bodies. This suggests that effective diversity and inclusion initiatives contribute to higher employee satisfaction, emphasising the need to address and mitigate discrimination, harassment, and biased behaviour for these initiatives to be truly impactful.

Overall, the findings underscore the significance of diversity and inclusion for organisational vitality and employee retention in private primary education institutions, promoting positive school cultures and enhancing student outcomes.

v

|                                                                  | School Initiatives' Effectiveness | Diversity impact on vitality | Effectiveness of the School's diversity and inclusion initiatives? | How satisfied are you with the diversity and inclusivity of your work environment? | Frequency of diversity surveys | Rate the impact of diversity and inclusion on your school's vitality. | Teacher satisfaction in their school | Does the school have an inclusive approach when making major decisions? |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The school has an inclusive approach when creating new policies. |                                   |                              |                                                                    |                                                                                    |                                |                                                                       | 438**                                | .822**                                                                  |
| Employees can safely                                             | .668**                            | .717**                       | .668**                                                             | .725**                                                                             |                                | .717**                                                                |                                      |                                                                         |

|                                                                        |  |        |        |  |        |        |  |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------|--------|--|--------|--------|--|--|
| express their concerns within the workplace.                           |  |        |        |  |        |        |  |  |
| The effectiveness of the school's diversity and inclusion initiatives. |  | .819** |        |  | .864** |        |  |  |
| How diverse the staff are.                                             |  |        | .532** |  |        | .547** |  |  |
| Teachers' satisfaction with their Jobs.                                |  |        |        |  | .636** |        |  |  |

Table 1: Depicting the correlation between items from the survey

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

### **5.1 Research Question and Hypotheses**

This research sought to investigate the relationship between diversity and inclusion and two key organisational outcomes: employee retention and organisational vitality. The study employed a quantitative methodology, utilising a structured survey to gather data from a representative sample of private primary education institutions. This approach ensured the collection of objective and measurable data, enabling a rigorous statistical analysis.

The findings of the study provide compelling evidence to support the positive impact of diversity and inclusion on both employee retention and organisational vitality. The hypotheses formulated for the study were all statistically supported, indicating a strong and significant association between diversity and inclusion practices and the desired organisational outcomes.

Regarding employee retention, the study revealed that private primary education institutions with stronger diversity and inclusion initiatives exhibited lower employee turnover rates. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that employees who feel valued and respected in a diverse and inclusive workplace are more likely to be engaged in their work and committed to the organisation, ultimately leading to reduced turnover.

Furthermore, the study demonstrated a positive correlation between diversity and organisational vitality. Institutions with more comprehensive diversity and inclusion strategies were found to display enhanced levels of organisational performance, characterised by increased productivity, innovation, and adaptability. These findings underscore the crucial role of diversity and inclusion in fostering a thriving and resilient organisational culture.

## 5.2 Implications of Findings

The findings of this thesis carry substantial implications for private primary education institutions aiming to bolster employee retention and organisational vitality through Diversity and Inclusion initiatives.

### Employee Retention

The study's outcomes underscore the positive influence of diversity and inclusion on employee retention, revealing that private primary education institutions with robust diversity and inclusion practices experience diminished employee turnover rates. This emphasises the significance of cultivating a diverse and inclusive workplace that values all employees, leading to heightened job satisfaction, engagement, and commitment.

### Organisational Vitality

Furthermore, the research demonstrates a positive correlation between diversity and inclusion and organisational vitality, suggesting that institutions with comprehensive diversity and inclusion strategies exhibit elevated levels of organisational performance. These findings propose that diversity and inclusion is pivotal in shaping a thriving and resilient organisational culture marked by increased productivity, innovation, and adaptability.

The practical implications of this research extend beyond theoretical insights, offering actionable guidance for private primary education institutions seeking to implement effective diversity and inclusion initiatives and realise associated benefits:

**Prioritise diversity and inclusion as a strategic imperative:** Recognise diversity and inclusion as a fundamental component of organisational strategy, integrating it into all facets of operations, from recruitment to leadership development.

**Develop comprehensive diversity and inclusion plans:** Establish clear, measurable diversity and inclusion goals aligned with the overall organisational strategy, encompassing initiatives to address bias, promote inclusive communication, and foster a culture of respect and belonging.

Provide ongoing training and support: Invest in continuous diversity and inclusion training for all employees, including leadership, to deepen understanding and develop effective strategies for an inclusive workplace.

Measure and evaluate diversity and inclusion initiatives: Regularly assess the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion initiatives through surveys and other data-gathering methods, using feedback to refine and improve strategies over time.

Foster a culture of continuous improvement: Cultivate an organisational culture that embraces diversity and inclusion as an ongoing journey, continuously seeking ways to enhance inclusivity and address emerging challenges.

By adopting these recommendations, private primary education institutions can harness diversity and inclusion as a potent tool to enhance employee retention, organisational vitality, and ultimately achieve sustained success.

### 5.3 Ethical Considerations

#### Role of the Researcher

In fulfilling the role of the researcher, the student maintained a commitment to continuous learning on the subject matter, recognising the potential harm that could result from misrepresenting information or distorting results. Upholding ethical principles was paramount, benefiting participants, the community, the academic institution, and all other stakeholders involved in the study.

#### Anonymity

Participants in this study were obliged to furnish demographic information but were not compelled to disclose their identities, ensuring that even the researcher remained unaware of the survey respondents' names.

#### Confidentiality

Preserving participant confidentiality involved withholding personal details, such as names, during data collection and analysis (Maree, 2007). The study adhered to distributive justice principles, treating all respondents equally regardless of ethnicity, culture, gender, or economic status (Norris, 2004). Data

analysis occurred after data collection and was stored on password-protected devices, with data shared with the researcher's supervisor solely for cross-checking purposes.

#### Letters of Consent

Potential participants received letters of consent attached to the email communication.

#### Voluntary Participation

Full transparency was maintained with respondents regarding the study's requirements and the individuals involved. Participants were deemed competent to provide consent, signifying their understanding of the study, its information, and their freedom to decide whether to participate. Consent was obtained only after participants were thoroughly briefed on the study's purpose, methodology, and benefits.

#### Avoiding Harm

Ensuring participants did not endure distress or harm, be it physical or mental, was a priority for the researcher. Measures were taken to prevent participants from feeling embarrassed, frightened, or offended.

#### Avoiding Deception

The study steered clear of deception by clearly communicating the requirements, purpose, and benefits to participants in advance. The information provided remained consistent throughout the study, upholding ethical standards.

### 5.4 Limitations and Delimitations

The study grapples with limitations that impact the comprehensiveness of its findings. Firstly, the chosen sample size of 150 respondents falls short of the recommended 500 or more for a more representative distribution of the population (Hammond, 2014). This compromise was a practical response to resource constraints and time limitations.

Time constraints further influenced the study's design, leading to a cross-sectional approach instead of a more time-intensive longitudinal study (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Additionally, the researcher, being

a student with limited resources, had constrained access to participants, restricting the study to three education institutions in Pretoria.

While the study delves into employee engagement, retention, and internal branding, it acknowledges the influence of other pertinent factors, such as organizational culture and job satisfaction.

Given these limitations, the study encourages future research with larger sample sizes and broader geographical coverage to enhance data accuracy, reliability, and validity.

### Delimitations

Delimitations define the study's scope and help maintain objectivity. In this research, the accessible population was confined to employees from three education institutions in Pretoria, dictated by constraints in resources, finances, and time. The study deliberately omitted a qualitative component, focusing solely on establishing a relationship between diversity, inclusion, and organisational vitality without delving into the reasons behind this connection (Brevis, 2017). Observational research was also excluded, foreclosing potential qualitative insights. Furthermore, the study's applicability is delimited to the education sector, and caution should be exercised when extrapolating findings to other industries.

### 5.5 Heuristic Value

The thesis, focusing on "The impact of diversity and inclusion on employee retention and organisational vitality in private primary institutions," is of substantial heuristic value, poised to offer profound insights into the intricate dynamics involving diversity, inclusion, employee retention, and organisational effectiveness within this distinct education context. The potential contributions extend to the realms of education leadership, diversity and inclusion research, and organisational psychology.

The heuristic significance encompasses specific areas, notably:

**Understanding Mechanisms of Influence:** The thesis endeavours to illuminate the factors contributing to the positive influence of diversity and inclusion on employee retention in private primary institutions. This understanding can guide the development of tailored interventions, cultivating a more diverse and inclusive environment conducive to heightened workforce engagement and retention.

**Identifying Best Practices:** Through an exploration of successful diversity and inclusion initiatives in private primary institutions, the thesis aims to pinpoint effective practices and strategies. This knowledge stands to be a valuable resource for school leaders and administrators seeking to enhance their diversity and inclusion efforts.

**Contribution to Diversity and Inclusion Theory in Education:** The thesis findings can enrich the theoretical landscape by contributing to nuanced models of diversity and inclusion within the realm of private primary education. This advancement promises a deeper comprehension of the operational dynamics and the impact on employee retention, student outcomes, and overall institutional success.

**Practical Implications for School Leadership:** The insights derived from the thesis hold practical value for school principals, administrators, and teachers. By elucidating the connections between diversity, inclusion, and organisational outcomes, school leaders can make informed decisions to foster a diverse and inclusive learning environment, resulting in improved employee retention, enhanced student outcomes, and overall organisational vitality.

**Contribution to Societal Dialogue:** The thesis can play a role in the broader societal discourse on diversity and inclusion in education. By emphasising the positive impact on employee retention, student outcomes, and organisational effectiveness, it encourages private primary institutions and educators to embrace diversity and inclusion as fundamental elements for a thriving education community.

Beyond these specific areas of heuristic significance, the thesis holds the potential to inform policy discussions and contribute to curriculum development efforts aimed at fostering diversity and inclusion in private primary education. By providing empirical evidence and practical recommendations, the thesis stands as a valuable resource for shaping more inclusive and equitable education environments for all stakeholders involved—students, teachers, and staff.

## 5.6 Chapter Outline

### Chapter 1: Introduction

- Background and Rationale
- Research Problem and Significance
- Research Objectives and Research Questions
- Conceptual Framework

### Chapter 2: Literature Review

- Introduction to the Literature Review
- Background of the Study
- Theoretical Framework
- Review of Related Research
- Conceptual Synthesis
- Research Gaps and Theoretical Basis

### Chapter 3: Research Methodology

- Introduction to Research Methodology
- Research Design
- Population and Sampling
- Data Collection Methods
- Data Analysis

### Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Analysis

- Introduction to Data Analysis
- Descriptive Statistics
- Inferential Statistics
- Interpretation of Findings

### Chapter 5: Discussion

- Introduction to the Discussion
- Interpretation of Findings
- Practical Implications
- Limitations and Future Research

#### Chapter 6: Conclusion

- Summary of Findings
- Contributions to Knowledge
- Practical Implications
- Conclusion and Final Remarks

#### Appendices

- Appendix A: Survey Instrument
  - Inclusion of the survey or data collection tool
- Appendix B: Consent Forms and Gate Keeper Letters

#### References

- Bibliography
  - Complete list of all references and sources cited in the thesis

## Conclusion

This study has delved into the nuanced dynamics of diversity, inclusion, employee retention, and organisational vitality within the context of private primary institutions. Through an exhaustive examination of theoretical frameworks, empirical studies, and case analyses, the research has provided invaluable insights into the positive impact of diversity and inclusion on employee retention and overall organisational effectiveness within the specific landscape of primary education.

The research findings emphasise the pivotal role of diversity and inclusion in private primary institutions, highlighting that these concepts extend beyond mere buzzwords, constituting strategic imperatives for the institutions' enduring success and sustainability. By embracing diversity and cultivating an inclusive learning environment, private primary institutions stand to gain numerous advantages, including heightened employee retention as a result of fostering a sense of belonging and psychological safety among teachers and staff.

Moreover, the thesis underscores that diversity and inclusion contribute to improved student outcomes by exposing students to diverse perspectives, experiences, and teaching styles, ultimately enhancing engagement, learning, and academic performance. Additionally, a reputation for diversity and inclusion enhances the institution's standing within the community, attracting a diverse student body and appealing to potential students, parents, and donors.

The empowerment of diverse voices is another significant outcome of diversity and inclusion initiatives, providing a platform for teachers and staff from varied backgrounds to contribute to decision-making and enrich the overall education experience. To effectively promote diversity and inclusion, private primary institutions can adopt specific practices and strategies, such as diversity training, inclusive recruitment and hiring practices, establishment of diversity and inclusion committees, celebration of cultural events, and active parent and community engagement.

The thesis concludes by emphasising the ongoing commitment and leadership required from school principals and administrators to sustain diversity and inclusion initiatives. By embedding these principles into the institution's values, culture, and strategic planning, private primary institutions can secure the long-term benefits of a diverse and inclusive learning environment, fostering a thriving education community that nurtures the growth and success of all students.

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## Appendix A: Survey

### Survey

#### INFORMED CONSENT

The following survey is being conducted in line with the academic requirements of The **Independent Institute of Education Vega School** as part of the MCom Strategic Brand Leadership qualification under the supervision of Dr Tish Taylor. My name is Itumeleng Kgomo and the aim of my research is to determine the relationship between diversity and inclusion initiatives and the overall health and success of private primary schools.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because I believe your input will add value to this research. Your participation in this survey would be voluntary and you may choose to withdraw your participation at any time and there will be no penalties for withdrawal or non-completion of the survey. The procedure involves completing an online survey, which will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

No personal information is required from you for the completion of this survey and all information will be kept anonymous. The findings of this research will be presented in the final Research Dissertation submission to Vega, however all collected data will be stored under a password protected file on the researchers computer for a period of five years.

The analysed results of this data will be shared for scholarly purposes only and shared with the academic coordinators of The IIE Vega School. This research has been reviewed and approved by The Independent Institute Of Education's ethical procedures regarding research involving human participants and Ethical Clearance has been granted. Should you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED]

---

\* Indicates required question

1. **ELECTRONIC CONSENT:** Please select your response below

\*

Clicking on the "**agree**" button below indicates that:

- you have read and understood the purpose of this research study
- you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study
- you are over the age of 18 years

If you **do not wish** to participate in this research, please **decline** participation by clicking the "disagree" button.

*Mark only one oval.*

2. Are you... \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to say

### Demographic Section

For each question, please select the ONE answer that best fits your description.

3. 1. Please select your school. \*

*Tick all that apply.*



4. 2. What position do you currently hold in the school? \*

---

5. 3. What is your highest level of education? \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Grade 12/ Matric
- ☐ Undergraduate Diploma or Degree
- ☐ Postgraduate Diploma or Degree (Postgraduate Diploma, Honours, Masters and PhD)

- 
7. 5. How many years have you worked at your current school? \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ 0-4 years  
☐ 5-10 years  
☐ More than 10 years

8. 6. Have you ever witnessed or experienced discrimination in the workplace? \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Prefer not to say

9. 7. Have you ever witnessed or experienced harassment in the workplace? \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Prefer not to say

10. 8. Have you ever witnessed or experienced biased behaviour in the workplace? \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Prefer not to say

### **Diversity and Inclusion Section**

11. 9. Are you able to safely communicate your concerns within the workplace? \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Defi ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Definitely

12. 10. What diversity and inclusion practices does your school have in place (please select all that apply). \*

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Diversity training for staff
- ☐ Cultural celebrations
- ☐ Anti-bias curriculum
- ☐ Diverse book selection in the school library
- ☐ Parent Engagement programs that focus on diversity and inclusion
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

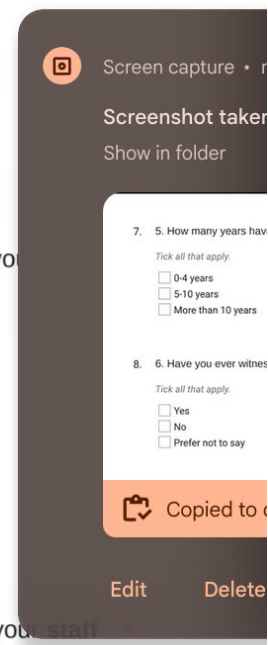
13. 11. To what extent do you perceive the racial and ethnic diversity of your **student body** as balanced?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Entirely balanced

14. 12. To what extent do you perceive the racial and ethnic diversity of your **staff** \*



- 
15. 13. Are the recruitment and selection processes at your school **free from biases**? \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Yes  
☐ Maybe  
☐ No  
☐ I do not know

16. 14. Do the recruitment and selection processes at your school **promote diversity and inclusion**? \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Yes  
☐ Maybe  
☐ No  
☐ I do not know

17. 15. How effective are your school's diversity and inclusion initiatives? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1   2   3   4   5

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Extremely effective

18. 16. Which of the following challenges does your school face in promoting diversity and inclusion (please select all that apply). \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Lack of staff diversity

- 
19. 17. Does your school have an inclusive approach when creating new policies? \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Maybe  
☐ I do not know

20. 18. Does your school have an inclusive approach when making major decisions? \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Maybe  
☐ I do not know

21. 19. Please rate the extent to which you believe diversity and inclusion initiatives contribute to the organisational vitality of your school. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1   2   3   4   5

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Significantly contributing

22. 20. Please rank the following activities at your school in terms of importance. \*

Mark only one oval per row.

|            | Academic<br>Achievement | Extracurricular<br>Activities | Diversity<br>and<br>Inclusion<br>Initiatives | Teacher-<br>Student<br>Relationships | Facilities<br>and<br>Resources |
|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>1st</b> | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>         | <input type="radio"/>                        | <input type="radio"/>                | <input type="radio"/>          |
| <b>2nd</b> | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>         | <input type="radio"/>                        | <input type="radio"/>                | <input type="radio"/>          |
| <b>3rd</b> | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>         | <input type="radio"/>                        | <input type="radio"/>                | <input type="radio"/>          |
| <b>4th</b> | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>         | <input type="radio"/>                        | <input type="radio"/>                | <input type="radio"/>          |
| <b>5th</b> | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>         | <input type="radio"/>                        | <input type="radio"/>                | <input type="radio"/>          |

23. 21. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about your school. \*

Mark only one oval per row.

|                                                               | Strongly<br>Agree     | Agree                 | Neutral               | Undecided             | Strongly<br>Disagree  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Students<br/>are<br/>engaged in<br/>their<br/>learning</b> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <b>Teachers<br/>are<br/>satisfied<br/>with their<br/>jobs</b> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <b>Parents</b>                                                |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |

24. 22. Please rank the following ways in which diversity and inclusion initiatives could further enhance the organisational vitality of your school, assigning a score \*

Mark only one oval per row.

|                                                                          | High<br>Impact        | Adequate<br>Impact    | Neutral               | Moderate<br>Impact    | Low<br>Impact         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Increase<br/>Diverse<br/>Faculty and<br/>Staff<br/>Representation</b> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <b>Expanding<br/>Inclusive<br/>Curriculum</b>                            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <b>Promoting<br/>Diversity<br/>Related Events<br/>and Activities</b>     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <b>Strengthening<br/>Anti-Bias<br/>Training<br/>Programmes</b>           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

25. 23. How satisfied are you with the diversity and inclusivity in your work environment? \*

Mark only one oval.

|                                                                                                                                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extr <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Extremely Satisfied |   |   |   |   |   |

- 
26. 24. How frequently does your school conduct employee satisfaction surveys related to diversity and inclusion?" \*

*Tick all that apply.*

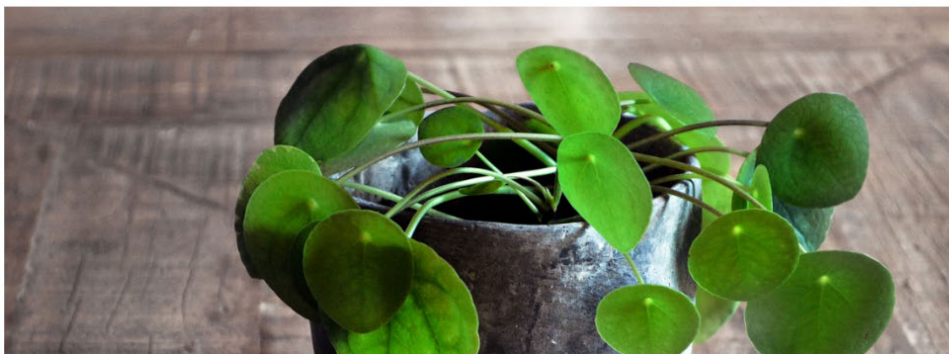
- ☐ Annually
- ☐ Bi-annually
- ☐ Once a quarter
- ☐ Never

27. 25. On a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), please indicate your level of agreement with the statement: \*

'Diverse backgrounds and experiences are valued as assets within our company.'

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree



## Appendix B: Gate Keeper's Letter and Consent Form

Annexure O – Gatekeeper's letter (institutional consent form)

2023

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Consent form to conduct research at company/organisation/association</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                     |
| <p>I, [REDACTED] in my capacity as [REDACTED] grant permission to Itumeleng Seshego Kgomo to conduct research at the on our staff members pending the outcome of the ethics committee of the IIE on the envisaged research. The student may only engage with members of the organisation/ company/ association if they can produce the Ethics Letter from the IIE.</p> <p>This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve for the people I represent. I also reserve the right to remind the people I represent that their participation in this study is completely voluntary and that this permission does not imply their participation. I reserve the right to withdraw this permission at any time.</p> <p>I also understand that research reports are made available in IIE Libraries as well as on the IIE Repository. The below conditions must be applied whilst writing up the research report:</p> |                                     |
| <b>Conditions concerning the anonymity of the company/organisation/association:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                     |
| The company/organisation/association must be kept <u>anonymous</u> in the research report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| The company/organisation/association may be <u>identified</u> in the research report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| <b>Conditions concerning the publication of the research report:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                     |
| The research report will be made available on the IIE Repository... <u>Immediately</u> after completion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>After</u> a specified number of months has elapsed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Number of months, if selected:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                     |
| [REDACTED]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 14 July 2023                        |
| <b>Signature</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Date</b>                         |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Consent form to conduct research at company/organisation/association</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                     |
| <p>I, [REDACTED] grant permission to Itumeleng Seshego Kgomo to conduct research at the on our staff members pending the outcome of the ethics committee of the IIE on the envisaged research. The student may only engage with members of the organisation/ company/ association if they can produce the Ethics Letter from the IIE.</p> <p>This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve for the people I represent. I also reserve the right to remind the people I represent that their participation in this study is completely voluntary and that this permission does not imply their participation. I reserve the right to withdraw this permission at any time.</p> <p>I also understand that research reports are made available in IIE Libraries as well as on the IIE Repository. The below conditions must be applied whilst writing up the research report:</p> |                                     |
| <b>Conditions concerning the anonymity of the company/organisation/association:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                     |
| The company/organisation/association must be kept <u>anonymous</u> in the research report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| The company/organisation/association may be <u>identified</u> in the research report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                     |
| <b>Conditions concerning the publication of the research report:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                     |
| The research report will be made available on the IIE Repository...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                     |
| <u>Immediately</u> after completion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>After</u> a specified number of months has elapsed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                     |
| Number of months, if selected:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                     |
| [REDACTED]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 4 July 2023                         |
| [REDACTED]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Date                                |