

Connecting the gap between workforce diversity and emotional wellbeing of employees : An empirical study

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Abstract

In the current business context, handling staff diversity has become a crucial component of human-based talent administration. This study investigates the effects of staff diversity administration on the emotional wellbeing of employees in Information Technology (IT) parks throughout Kerala. The research involved sending out surveys to workers from diverse organizations in various IT parks, chosen at randomly. Here, emotional wellbeing is regarded as the dependent variable and workforce diversity as the distinct one. Inadequate management of workforce diversity has the potential to adversely affect employees' emotional well-being. The results suggest that a varied workforce—considering factors like gender, age, education level, marital status, race, and experience—can have a beneficial impact on the emotional wellbeing of staff in IT parks. There is a significant impact of internal, external and organizational diversity on employee emotional wellbeing in the information technology sector. The goal of this research is to investigate the impact of managing diversity in the staff on the emotional well-being of staff working for companies in IT parks. The empirical results, evaluated with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), demonstrate a notable connection between managing staff diversity and the emotional wellbeing of workers in IT parks.

Subject Classification: 62P25, 91C20.

Keywords: Workforce diversity, Diversity management, Emotional wellbeing, Internal diversity management.

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Introduction

In the rapidly changing era of the corporate world, the Information Technology sector is one of the leading job providers in the world. Especially, they recruit people from different regions, places, or countries [1]. Information technology has tremendous potential in terms of employment and income generation. The IT (Information Technology) sector has been recognized as one of the major contributors to employment opportunities and stimulators for economic and human development in India, and especially in Kerala [2]. IT recruiters bring diverse people into their industry, and it definitely helps to improve organizational output [3]. Emotional wellbeing of employees is referred to as an important tool to improve the job performance of an employee [4]. Usually, IT firms recruit employees from different places, religions, castes, languages, cultures, and age groups; the diversified workforce definitely has an important role in the improvement of employee emotional wellbeing [5], [6].

Diversity covers key dimensions of an individual including nationality, origin, sex, and sexual preference, and subordinate aspects such as communication style, work manner, organizational character, financial status, and origin of birth [7], [8]. The employee emotional wellbeing simply refers to the emotional happiness of employees, and the diversified labor force has a significant role in the development of emotional happiness among employees in the information technology sector [9], [10]. Employee wellbeing has emerged as a critical component of modern organizations, with initiatives aimed at enhancing psychological and emotional health playing a central role in improving overall employee satisfaction [11].

In the competitive world, employee emotional wellbeing leads to better job performance, which is a key factor in the success of a business firm [12]. Workforce heterogeneity management refers to building an organizational climate in which a diversified workforce performs to its best potential, without the firm favoring or disfavoring any segment of the workforce, with a focus on facilitating the speedy achievement of organizational objectives [5], [13]. Variables of a diversified workforce include age, gender, and culture. Workforce heterogeneity management based on knowledge, abilities, interests, functions, and tastes is very rare. One of the latest researches reveals that managing a diversified workforce is currently dealing with skill-oriented diversity problems [14]. The major advantages of a diversified workforce include increased creativity, better productivity, faster problem-solving, teamwork and idea sharing, learning

and development, effective communication, variety of experience, higher employee engagement, and higher innovation [3], [15].

Internal Diversity: Internal dimensions, often known as primary dimensions, are aspects of variety over which we typically have no influence and cannot change [7], [16]. This dimension encompasses the majority of variances between and within individuals. As a result, they serve as the cornerstone for diversity programs and numerous inclusion activities tailored to various employment situations.

External Diversity: External dimensions are called secondary dimensions, which are aspects of our lives that we have some control over and may change over time [7]. These are variables that may influence our job choices and workplace conduct, which influences who we choose to form friendships and relationships with [7].

Organizational Diversity: Characteristics associated with employment, including job role, work location, department, seniority, management status, and union affiliation, are referred to as corporate dimensions [7], [17]. These variables are linked to both past and present institutional or corporate experiences and contribute to the formation of employment climates [7].

Emotional Wellbeing: Employee wellbeing refers to the overall health of employees, which includes economic, physical, intellectual, and emotional strength. Major reasons for employee wellbeing are their relationships with coworkers and their decisions [9]. It entails being self-aware, understanding boundaries, knowing when to take a break, and recognizing when to seek help, either from a companion or an expert. Emotional health or happiness is directly connected with workplace courage and recognition, productivity-oriented job capacity, staff retention, and lower absenteeism [4].

The need for the study explains that IT companies are among the major recruiters in Kerala, and employees in this sector experience high stress, making it difficult to retain them and improve their emotional happiness. Stress or tension in the workplace can affect emotional wellbeing and, consequently, employee performance.

The prime objective of the research is to understand how a diversified labor force influences the emotional wellbeing of IT park employees. Hence, the current study focuses on identifying whether a diversified workforce is significantly connected to the emotional wellbeing of staff in randomly selected firms in Kerala's IT parks.

Review of Literature

According to Tajfel and Turner [18], social identity theory explains that individuals classify themselves and others into social groups based on traits such as age, gender, religion, and ethnicity. These classifications influence workplace relationships and psychological health. Properly managed diversity promotes inclusion and wellbeing, whereas poor management can lead to stress and identity conflict. Thomas and Ely [19] proposed the Inclusion Theory and Diversity Paradigm, which emphasizes that businesses can use diversity as a resource for learning and development, not just representation. To ensure that different personnel feel appreciated, respected, and assimilated into the company culture, inclusion plays a vital role. Netto and Sohal [20] conducted a study on Australian organizations examining HR practices related to workforce diversity management. Findings showed that diversity management was generally weak, especially in recruitment, selection, training, and development. Mujtaba [21] highlighted that effective diversity management requires cultural competence, self-awareness, and mutual respect. Developing inclusive relationships depends on understanding personal values and engaging the mind, heart, and behavior. Enchautegui-de-Jesús et al. [22] found a nonlinear relationship between shared ethnicity and employee wellbeing. Workers with either very few or many co-ethnic colleagues reported lower psychological health, emphasizing the complexity of workplace diversity.

Vanhala and Tuomi [23] linked HR management practices to company performance and employee wellbeing. However, the connection was indirect and influenced more by job security, engagement, and working conditions. Findler et al. [24] found that workforce diversity and inclusiveness affect employee wellbeing, job satisfaction, and commitment. Organizational culture elements like justice, support, and inclusivity play key roles in these outcomes. Patrick and Kumar [25] stated that properly managed diversity enhances communication, creativity, and employee engagement, which indirectly boost emotional fulfillment and mental health at work. Jan, Jonker, and Rabie [26] demonstrated that emotional intelligence plays an important role in determining employee wellness and workplace satisfaction, emphasizing that emotional factors are closely tied to overall wellbeing in organizational settings.

Jaiswal and Dyaram [27] found that knowledge-based diversity positively affects employee wellbeing, while surface-level diversity can harm it. Inclusion acts as a mediator that strengthens the link between

diversity and wellness. Mohamed, Massoud, and Ayoubi [28] discovered gender differences in perceptions of diversity management, with women viewing inclusiveness more positively. However, gender had little effect on overall job satisfaction. Plečnik and Wang [29] revealed that age diversity in top management improved creativity and problem-solving during COVID-19. Firms under high pressure benefited most, while already creative firms saw less advantage. Hernandez Grande, Buitrago, and Carter [30] found that emotional contagion in teams reduces stress and improves wellbeing. Organizational support combined with strong team dynamics leads to better mental health outcomes [30].

Very few research studies have done with workforce diversity and employee wellbeing and there is no research conducted with these effects of diversified workforce and employee emotional wellbeing in IT parks. The current study focused at finding the outcomes of diversified labor force and workforce whether definitely connected the working staffs' emotional wellbeing in randomly picked firms in IT parks.

Research Methodolgy

It is an empirical research purely based on the employees of IT parks. Design of research inferences are important to expose the exact idea of the methodology of research, evaluation and the problem statement of the research. The data collected for this study is using by questionnaire, which consists four heads, namely, demographic profile, concepts about diversified workforce and employee emotional wellbeing. The informants were asked to respond their answers in the five-point Likert scale varying from "5" Strongly Agree to "1" Strongly Disagree based on some statements and also provided some close ended questions, which are request to provide 'yes' or 'no' answers. Information are extracted through primary and secondary sources.

Sampling Plan:

Empirical research involves collecting data and information directly from the field. Since it is often impractical to obtain data from the entire population, studies typically rely on a representative sample. Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of the population, with the primary objective of making inferences about population parameters based on the characteristics of the sample. For this study, the sample was drawn from three information technology parks in Kerala. Respondents were

approached directly and informed about the purpose of the research before completing the questionnaire. The target population consisted of white-collar employees working in companies within these IT parks. Adequate time was provided to ensure accurate and thoughtful responses. Data were collected using a simple random sampling technique, allowing every employee in the selected IT parks an equal opportunity to participate. From the target population across multiple companies, a total of 220 respondents were included in the study. The collected data were analyzed using statistical tools, including the simple percentage method, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and moderation analysis.

Testing of hypothesis:

The research used correlation, regression and moderation analysis to find out the relationship among various factors; diversified workforce (DW), age diversity (AD) and employee emotional wellbeing (EW). The study constructed following hypotheses.

H1: There is a significant relationship between diversified workforce and employee emotional wellbeing.

H2: There is a significant relationship between age diversified workforce and employee emotional wellbeing.

Analysis and Results

The data analysis section outlines the statistical methods used to examine the relationship between employee emotional well-being and a diverse workforce. Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the association between emotional well-being and workforce diversity, with the correlation coefficient indicating the presence of a statistically significant positive or negative relationship. Regression analysis was used to evaluate the predictive impact of workforce diversity on employee emotional well-being, where the R^2 value represented the proportion of variance explained by the model, and the standardized coefficients (β) highlighted the relative importance of the predictor variable. Moderation analysis was performed using multiple regression, with age included as a moderator to explore potential age-related differences in the relationship between workforce diversity and emotional well-being. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variables	Charecterstics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	142	64.2
	Female	78	35.8
Age	Below 25 Years	38	17.4
	25-35	134	60.6
	36-45	46	21.1
	Above 45 Years	2	.9
Educational Qualification	Graduation	56	25.7
	Post-Graduation	126	56.9
	Professional Degree	38	17.4
Marital Status	Married	148	67
	Single	72	33
Experience	Below 5 Years	76	34.9
	5-10	84	37.6
	11-15	48	22
	Above 15 Years	12	5.5

The following is a summary of the demographic profile of the 220 employees who took part in this survey and worked in Kerala's information technology (IT) parks. Gender-wise, men made up the bulk of responders (64.2%), while women made up 35.8% of the sample. In terms of age distribution, the majority of participants (60.6%) were in the 25–35 age range, with 21.1% falling into the 36–45 age range. The percentage of respondents over 45 was a pitiful 0.9%. In terms of educational background, 25.7% of participants had a bachelor's degree, 17.4% had a professional degree, and more than half (56.9%) had finished post-graduation. Two-thirds of the respondents were married, according to a marital status analysis, while one-third were single. Regarding employment experience, 34.9% of the respondents had fewer than five years of experience, while 37.6% had five to ten years in the IT sector. Furthermore, a lesser percentage of participants (5.5%) had more than 15 years of experience working in IT parks, whereas 22% reported having 11–15 years of experience.

The relationship between diversified workforce and emotional wellbeing of employees

Table 2
Correlation

		Diversified Workfrce	Employee Emotional Wellbeing
Diversified workfrce	Pearson Correlation	1	-.231*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.015*
	N	220	220
Employee emotional wellbeing	Pearson Correlation	-.231*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	
	N	220	220

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 presents the correlation between diversified workforce (dwf) and employee emotional wellbeing (ewb). The Pearson correlation coefficient indicates a weak negative relationship ($r=-0.231, p=0.015$), suggesting that as workforce diversity increases, employee emotional wellbeing slightly decreases. The asterisk (*) denotes statistical significance at the 0.05 level, indicating that the relationship is significant ($p<0.05$) (Table 2; Author’s own analysis, 2025). Based on these results, the first hypothesis, which states that there is a significant relationship between diversified workforce and employee emotional wellbeing, is supported.

Table 3
Regression analysis with significance

lm(formula = ewb ~ dwf)				
Residuals:				
Min 1Q Median 3Q Max				
-3.5710 -0.9095 0.3837 1.1060 1.7299				
Coefficients:				
	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	2.4426	0.3513	6.953	4.09e-11***
dwf	0.3761	0.1075	3.500	0.000565***

ewb-emotional wellbeing, dwf-diversified workforce,

Table 3 presents the regression analysis examining the influence of diversified workforce (dwf) on employee emotional wellbeing (ewb). The regression results indicate that DWF has a significant positive effect on ewb ($\beta=0.376, p=0.000565<0.05$), suggesting that as workforce diversity increases, employee emotional wellbeing also slightly increases (Table 3; Author's own analysis, 2025). The R^2 value of 0.05319 shows that approximately 5.31% of the variance in employee emotional wellbeing is explained by diversified workforce. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.04885 indicates that after adjusting for the number of predictors, 4.89% of EWB can be explained by DWF. The remaining 95% of variance in emotional wellbeing is influenced by other factors not included in this model. Since the model is statistically significant ($p<0.05$), the first hypothesis (H1) is accepted

The relationship between diversified workforce and emotional wellbeing of employees based on age as a moderator variable

Moderation analysis was conducted to examine the impact of diversified workforce on employee emotional wellbeing, considering age as a moderator variable. The results indicate that diversified workforce significantly influences employee emotional wellbeing ($p=0.0408<0.05$), demonstrating the moderating effect of age (Author's own analysis, 2025).

Specifically, the effect of diversified workforce on emotional wellbeing is strongest among employees below 25 years old ($\beta=1.3209$), moderate for employees aged 25–35 ($\beta=0.548$), and slightly higher for employees aged 36–45 ($\beta=0.5888$). This analysis confirms that age significantly moderates the relationship between workforce diversity and employee emotional wellbeing. Therefore, the second hypothesis (H2) is accepted

Findings

The study reveals a complex relationship between workforce diversity and employee emotional wellbeing in IT parks across Kerala. Correlation analysis shows a weak but significant negative relationship ($r = -0.231, p < 0.05$), suggesting that poorly managed diversity can sometimes lead to stress or emotional strain among employees. Regression analysis indicates that workforce diversity significantly influences emotional wellbeing ($\beta = 0.3761, p = 0.000565$), though it accounts for only 5.3% of the variance, implying that other organizational or individual factors play a larger role in shaping employee mental health.

Moderation analysis further shows that age significantly moderates this relationship. The effect of workforce diversity on emotional wellbeing is strongest among employees under 25 years old ($\beta = 1.3209$), moderate for those aged 25–35 ($\beta = 0.548$), and slightly higher for employees aged 36–45 ($\beta = 0.5888$), indicating that younger employees are more sensitive to workplace diversity dynamics. These findings emphasize the importance of age-sensitive diversity management strategies to create an emotionally supportive work environment. Overall, the results highlight the critical role of well-planned and inclusive diversity initiatives in safeguarding employee emotional wellbeing in the competitive IT sector.

Discussions

This study contributes to research on workforce diversity by focusing on its psychological and emotional impact on employees, rather than the commonly emphasized organizational advantages. While prior studies highlighted the benefits of diversity for innovation, creativity, and performance Change Thomas and Ely to [19], more recent research indicates that diversity without inclusion can lead to social isolation, communication challenges, and reduced mental wellbeing [32].

Jaiswal and Dyaram [27] found that both surface-level and knowledge-based diversity significantly influence employee wellbeing, aligning with the present study's findings. Similarly, L. Findler et al. [24] reported that diversity, inclusion, and organizational culture collectively affect employee wellbeing, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, consistent with the results in Kerala's IT sector. Douglas G. Campbell also confirmed a significant link between diversity and job satisfaction[16].

In this study, workforce diversity shows a weak but significant negative relationship with employee emotional wellbeing, suggesting that greater diversity may correspond with a slight decrease in emotional health among IT employees in Kerala.

This could be attributed to insufficient inclusive practices; employees may feel undervalued or excluded, especially if they belong to minority groups in terms of culture, language, or identity [32]. These results underscore the importance of not only hiring diverse talent but also fostering inclusive, psychologically safe environments to fully realize the benefits of workforce diversity. Furthermore, according to Rupali et al. [31], diversity climate and ethical culture significantly influence employees' affective commitment and turnover intention, which supports the current study's observations.

Managerial implications

A diversified workforce enables managers to recognize inequities and reduce discriminatory practices, giving organizations a competitive edge over rivals who lack similar initiatives. Employees from diverse backgrounds bring fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and enhanced skills, which improve productivity, creativity, and problem-solving capabilities. The study also shows that workforce diversity significantly influences employee emotional wellbeing, with younger employees, particularly those under 25, being more psychologically affected by inclusion-related issues. While diversity fosters creativity and global competitiveness, it can also create interpersonal, cultural, or communication challenges that subtly impact employees' emotional states. Therefore, IT firms must implement deliberate inclusion strategies, regularly monitor employee emotions through surveys and feedback, and cultivate an environment where all team members feel valued and supported, turning diversity into a source of strength rather than stress.

Conclusion

Companies in information technology parks must recognize and leverage the significance of a diversified workforce to gain a competitive edge, address globalization challenges, and enhance innovation and productivity. The analysis indicates a weak negative correlation between workforce diversity and employee emotional wellbeing, yet there is a significant link between diversity and employees' emotional happiness. This study emphasizes that workforce diversity plays a crucial role in promoting employee emotional wellbeing, which in turn contributes to organizational growth and improved performance.

A diversified workforce enhances creativity, innovation, and the ability to compete at a global level. Employees in diverse teams feel more engaged, motivated, and likely to remain with the organization, fostering emotional wellbeing that directly impacts performance and organizational goals. IT companies should implement peer support networks, inclusive onboarding, structured mentoring, team-building exercises, and psychological safety measures. Managers should receive cultural and emotional intelligence training, and organizations should promote open-door policies, anonymous feedback mechanisms, equitable task allocation, recognition programs, flexible work arrangements, and career development opportunities. Since factors beyond diversity account for 95% of employee

wellbeing, periodic evaluation of diversity and inclusion initiatives is essential to measure their impact on emotional health and representation.

Overall, the findings highlight that IT organizations must move beyond superficial diversity metrics, adopting intentional, inclusive, and demographic-sensitive strategies to create an emotionally supportive and high-performing workplace.

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