

Abstract

mgr Alicja Dudek

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is concept that is becoming increasingly important in the workplace. This results from various ongoing changes related to globalization, technological development, migration, and social transformation. As a result of these shifts, people working together within one organization are becoming more visibly diverse. Growing diversity also stems from the evolution of legal frameworks – human rights movements in the United States are often cited as pivotal in introducing affirmative action and the principle of equal employment opportunity. Currently, Poland, as a member state of the European Union, is working on implementing a gender equality strategy, which includes, for example, gender balance in company boards. It necessitates organizations to take practical steps to create inclusive environment.

The aim of this study was to explore inclusiveness in Polish organizations, with particular emphasis on the factors shaping the understanding of ‘inclusiveness’ and the inclusive practices being implemented.

To achieve the main objective, the following specific objectives have been defined:

- Cognitive objective: To examine the process of creating inclusive work environment in organizations operating in Poland.
- Theoretical objective: To develop a model of an inclusive organization adapted to the specifics of the Polish labor market, including elements such as organizational values, involved stakeholders, practices, as well as methods and tools for measuring the effectiveness of undertaken activities.
- Practical objective: To formulate recommendations for organizations operating in Poland that strive to create an inclusive work environment.

Main research question: What actions are undertaken by selected organizations in Poland to create an inclusive work environment?

Specific research questions:

- How is inclusion defined by employees of the organization?
- What inclusive practices are implemented within the organization?

- What role do individuals in managerial positions play in the development of inclusive practices?
- How are policies and procedures aimed at creating an inclusive work environment designed and implemented?
- Which groups are targeted by actions aimed at creating an inclusive work environment?
- What local conditions in Poland influence the process and specifics of inclusive practices, and in what ways?
- How is the effectiveness of actions aimed at creating an inclusive work environment monitored?

To investigate how organizations in Poland respond to these changes, a multiple-case study approach was applied. Six organizations operating in Poland were selected. Information about their DEI activities was collected from publicly available sources such as official websites. In-depth interviews were conducted with people responsible for DEI initiatives. Additionally, comments posted on the platform Gowork.pl were analyzed to gain insights from regular employees' perspectives.

Based on the analysis of the collected data, a model of an inclusive organization was developed. This model consists of the following components: organizational characteristics, motivation, local context, sources of initiative, inclusive solutions, and outcomes. It can be used to map key variables that influence DEI-related decisions. Furthermore, the study offers recommendations for organizations on how to implement inclusive practices more effectively.

A strength of the dissertation is its demonstration of how the concept of inclusion – understood as creating a welcoming and supportive work environment, where everyone belongs – can be implemented in different organizational contexts. The described solutions illustrate a range of existing approaches that are closely linked to key characteristics such as industry and organizational size. Another advantage lies in the presentation and analysis of data that is typically difficult to access. While the study also included secondary data, a crucial element was the collection of detailed information directly from individuals responsible for inclusive initiatives within organizations. This enabled a deeper understanding of the successive stages involved in creating an inclusive work environment.