
Theses and Dissertations

2020

What goes into successful diversity and inclusion initiatives in entertainment? Lessons from advocates of creative talent

Lindsey Sands
lindseysands@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/etd>



Part of the [Film and Media Studies Commons](#), and the [Organization Development Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Sands, Lindsey, "What goes into successful diversity and inclusion initiatives in entertainment? Lessons from advocates of creative talent" (2020). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1155.
<https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/etd/1155>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Pepperdine Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Pepperdine Digital Commons. For more information, please contact Katrina.Gallardo@pepperdine.edu, anna.speth@pepperdine.edu, linhgavin.do@pepperdine.edu.

**WHAT GOES INTO SUCCESSFUL DIVERSITY
AND INCLUSION INITIATIVES IN ENTERTAINMENT?
LESSONS FROM ADVOCATES OF CREATIVE TALENT**

**A Research Project
Presented to the Faculty of
The Graziadio Business School
Pepperdine University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
In
Organization Development**

**by
Lindsey Sands
July 2020**

© 2020 Lindsey Sands

This research project, completed by

LINDSEY SANDS

under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the faculty of The Graziadio Business School in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Date: July 2020

Faculty Committee

Committee Chair, Miriam Y. Lacey, Ph.D.

Committee Member, Terri Egan, Ph.D.

Deryck J. van Rensburg, D.B.A., Dean
The Graziadio Business School

Abstract

Entertainment offers a powerful medium in reducing bias and prejudice. Therefore, its critical role in shaping bias through on-screen representation needs to be explored through people who work directly with writers, directors, and actors. This qualitative study aimed to determine the impact of diversity and inclusion approaches by interviewing 14 advocates of creative talent in the entertainment industry. The study explored the types of Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) initiatives prevalent in entertainment, the correlation between bias and prejudice reduction, and the perceived impact of these initiatives in improving environments. The study found that six themes emerged: access to relationships, highlighting talent, perceptions of the underrepresented, motivations for engagement, hiring as a metric, and positivity of incremental change. Three conclusions were drawn based on each inquiry area: programs based in support and contact, mixed signals in program effectiveness, and a promising path when disregarding speed.

Keywords: entertainment, bias, prejudice, diversity, inclusion

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
List of Tables	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
Chapter	
1. Introduction.....	1
Background & Pressures in Entertainment.....	2
Purpose and Origins of Purpose.....	4
Significance of Study.....	7
Implications for OD.....	8
Thesis Outline.....	8
2. Literature Review.....	10
The Evolution of Contact Theory.....	11
Gaps in the Contact Theory Conversation.....	15
A Closer Look at Bias and Prejudice Reduction Methods.....	16
Approaches to Bias Reduction for Inclusive Environments.....	18
Ways to Best Manage Bias and Prejudice.....	20
The Reverse Consequences of Reducing Bias and Prejudice.....	21
Diversity Approaches and Initiatives.....	23
Types of Diversity Approaches and Programs.....	23
The Problem with Diversity Initiatives.....	28
Diversity "Experts".....	29
A Lack of Measurement of Impact.....	29
Diversity Initiative Ineffectiveness Explained.....	29
Diversity Solutions that Foster Inclusion.....	31
Summary.....	35
3. Research Methodology.....	36
Research Design.....	36
Participants.....	37
Sampling Methodology.....	38
Data Collection.....	39

Data Analysis Procedures	41
Protection of Human Subjects	42
Summary	42
4. Research Findings	43
Sampling Methodology.....	43
Themes Summary	44
Types of D&I Programs.....	46
Access to Relationships	47
Highlighting Talent.....	49
Signs of Bias and Prejudice Reduction.....	54
Perceptions of the Underrepresented	53
Motivations for Engagement.....	54
Success of D&I Programs in Improving Environments	55
Hiring as a metric.....	56
The Positivity of Incremental Change	57
Summary.....	58
5. Discussion.....	59
Summary of Findings.....	59
Conclusions.....	61
Programs based in support and contact.....	62
Mixed Signals in Program Effectiveness	62
A Promising Path when disregarding speed	63
Recommendations to Impact D&I in Entertainment	64
Recommendations to OD Practitioners.....	66
Limitations	67
Suggestions for Future Research	67
Summary.....	69
References.....	70
Appendix A: Interview Protocol Form	74

List of Tables

Table 1. Summary: Types of Diversity Programs, Initiatives, and Policies	28
Table 2. A How to Guide to Inclusive Organizations.....	35
Table 3. Interview Questions and Purpose Relationship	41
Table 4. Types of D&I Programs Comments Summary.....	47
Table 5. Bias Reduction Comments Summary	52
Table 6. The Success of D&I Programs in Creating Improvement	56

List of Figures

Figure 1. Participant Criteria.....	38
Figure 2. Participant Demographics	44
Figure 3. Themes Summary	45
Figure 4. Themes Heat Map.....	46

Chapter 1: Introduction

The entertainment industry saw a flurry of pressure to focus its diversity and inclusion efforts with the uprising of the Oscars So White and #Metoo movements occurring within one year of each other, 2016 and 2017, respectively. The call for immediate change was resounding with new stories being written every day highlighting the implications of entertainment's diversity problem.

The Oscars So White backlash came immediately after nominations for the 88th Academy Awards were announced and revealed that all 20 nominees in the acting categories were white despite several well-reviewed performances by actors of diverse backgrounds in films such as Creed and Straight Outta Compton (Keegan & Zeitchik, 2016). In 2017, the #Metoo movement became a viral hashtag used by numerous women in an effort to come forward with stories of sexual misconduct against some of Hollywood's strongest powerbrokers. Most notably, award winning producer Harvey Weinstein was accused by more than 75 women of wrongdoing (Samuelson, 2018). With so much media attention, the entertainment and media industry had no choice but to take action.

This is not to say that diversity and inclusion (D&I) in entertainment had not been a topic of conversation previous to these movements. To name a few instances, in 1999 Asian American, Hispanic, and American Indian civil rights groups, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), formed a coalition to lobby television networks to put substantial efforts into increasing the number of members of minority groups in their programs. In 2009, The Screen Actors Guild (SAG) formed an agreement with Hollywood producers which stipulated that they would

ensure diversity and non-discrimination in their projects. SAG then gathered diversity-related data from film and television programs to advise producers on underrepresented minority groups as a method of measuring the effectiveness of the agreement (Luther, Lepre, & Clark, 2017).

These lobbying efforts to promote diversity were effective in that it convinced major broadcast networks to create programs designed to enhance the hiring of actors, writers, and directors. One instance is Walt Disney ABC's Creative Talent Development and Inclusion department, which consists of a writing program, directing program, and casting initiatives. Several networks such as NBC, CBS, and Fox also created executive level positions dedicated to increasing the hiring of minorities. Despite the implementation of various initiatives, evidence of improvement in diversity and, the less mentioned, inclusion remains questionable.

Background and Pressures in Entertainment

Although D&I in entertainment has been a discussion for many years, Oscars So White and the #MeToo movement were pinnacle moments in creating an intensified level of emphasis on changing the representation of the entertainment landscape. These two movements have allowed for a moment in which the entertainment industry's concern with diverse representation and eradicating sexism is at an all-time high. This is due to the overwhelming news coverage that shone a light on an issue that directly impacts business widely. Entertainment's realization of the importance of diverse representation can be seen through the decision to designate Chris Rock, a Black comedian, as the host of the 2016 Academy Awards in response to the backlash of Oscars So White. This response was for the business purpose of maintaining high ratings. Despite the reaction of

hiring a diverse host, ratings for the Academy Awards have continued to significantly decline from previous years (O'Connell, 2018).

In response to the #Metoo movement, over 40 entertainment companies made pledges to become 50/50 in their representation of women in leadership roles by 2020. Both the hiring of a diverse host for the Academy Awards and the pledging of entertainment companies to become 50/50 were reactionary pressures of these movements without a subsequent assessment of their tangible impact.

Dass and Parker (1999) present a general framework for managing diversity that suggests that an organization's diversity approach depends on the degree of internal and external pressures for and against diversity. The entertainment and media industry's reaction to D&I approaches since 2016 reveals that the previously mentioned internal and external pressures instigated the demand to address diversity with a new-found vigor. The external pressure for D&I initiatives took the form of large amounts of negative media coverage. Both the Oscars So White and the #MeToo movements had extensive amounts of media coverage. Oscars So White faced internal pressures through A-List celebrities such as Spike Lee, George Clooney, and Will Smith's boycott of the Academy Awards (Oswald, 2016). The Academy relies on celebrity appearances to boost ratings and therefore create monetary gain from advertisement sales. Executives who worked within entertainment came forward with personal stories of sexual harassment, further revealing internal pressures of #MeToo. Sexual harassment allegations escalated issues to a legal standpoint with the most prominent cases being the criminal charges and arrests of film producer Harvey Weinstein (Samuelson, 2018) and Bill Cosby. The pressure of pending

court cases and criminal charges against multiple key figures in entertainment provides further significance of addressing D&I issues.

Purpose and Origins of Purpose

The necessity for D&I initiatives and the reactionary nature of these D&I initiatives in entertainment is apparent due to the many factors that lead to their heightened importance. But with the many strategies, bias training workshops, mentor programs, task force forming, among other D&I approaches being built into organizations in entertainment, the impact of these approaches must also be assessed in order to better understand if entertainment is in a better position than it was in 2016 when Oscars So White first took place.

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of diversity and inclusion approaches as perceived by advocates of creative talent in the entertainment industry. Advocates of creative talent are defined as the broad spectrum of people who work with artistic individuals such as hiring them for projects, serving as their agents, or accepting talent into established creative D&I programs. Attributes of being an advocate of creative talent include working in the entertainment industry, working directly with artists, and consistently thinking about D&I as integral to their work with artists. However, they may not have substantive knowledge of D&I. Creative talent references the creators of media content such as writers, directors, and actors who directly impact the stories that are seen on screen. D&I approaches are defined as any activity enacted to promote diverse and inclusive environments such as trainings, mentoring programs, recruiting strategies, and more.

The study will be conducted in three phases:

1. Qualitative data will be collected through in-person or phone interviews.
2. Data will be interpreted by adapting Creswell's (2018) six-step model for data analysis.
3. The findings will be shared with a D&I practitioner in Human Resources to confirm the validity of the results.

Katz and Miller (2016) explain the difference between diversity and inclusion by defining diversity as the presence of a wide range of differences, including sexual orientation, gender identity, race, nationality, workstyle, and more. Inclusion focuses on leveraging those differences for individuals to do their best work and ensuring that an organization's culture supports differences through its behaviors.

In the context of this study, diversity entails the representation of age, gender, disability, race, values, and sexual orientation. These defining parameters within the entertainment industry account for the representation of diversity seen on screen, and the diversity of thought that is necessary for storytelling in media. In an effort to provide greater context, assessing diversity and inclusion as a unit is important because of their relationship to each other. In the context of the workplace, diversity equals representation. Without inclusion, the crucial connections that attract diverse talent, encourage their participation, foster innovation, and lead to business growth will not happen. As noted diversity advocate Verna Myers explains, "Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance" (Sherbin & Rashid, 2017, para. 2).

There is a multitude of evidence revealing the growing popularity of diversity initiatives amongst organizations (Cox, 1991; Nkomo et al., 2019; Pena et al., 2018).

Although D&I initiatives are increasing in popularity, their effectiveness does not appear to be as promising. The number of D&I programs implemented does not correlate to the impact of the programs. A study on the effects of corporate diversity programs indicated that initiatives focused on reducing managerial bias through diversity training, diversity performance evaluations, and bureaucratic rules were broadly ineffective (Dobbin & Kalev, 2013).

The overall state D&I offers opportunistic moments to leverage for most impact because it is an industry driven by external and internal sociopolitical contexts (Cummings & Worley, 2015, Nkomo et al., 2019). This emphasis on D&I approaches as a reaction to internal and external pressures can be seen through entertainment's immediate response to the external events of #Oscarssowhite and #MeToo. The focus on pressures opens up the industry for critique on its ability for holistic impact. Cumming and Worley (2015) explain the challenges for impact in diversity interventions:

Unfortunately, organizations have tended to address workforce diversity pressures in a piecemeal fashion: only 16% of companies surveyed in 2010 thought their diversity practices were "very effective." As each trend makes itself felt, the organization reacts with appropriate but narrow responses. (p. 499)

Little evidence of the positive impact of D&I initiatives create difficulty in justifying the investment of time and money put into these programs. In 2014, Google spent \$265 million on diversity efforts to address the gender gap issues in technology. Despite the massive investment, there was no increase in the representation of women or black employees across positions in the company, remaining at 29% and 2%, respectively (Kokalitcheva, 2017). Furthermore, the diversity of black employees in executive

positions remained at 3% over three years. A disconnect exists between implemented D&I approaches within organizations and their ability to have an impact. This study aims to bridge the gap between the implementation of created D&I approaches and their perceived impact by understanding current methods from a macro perspective beyond these approaches being reactionary to specific events.

Significance of Study

Entertainment reaches millions of people in different capacities and serves as a powerful medium to encourage diversity. The consumption of media that contains diverse stories and characters has a direct impact on bias. Murr and Brauer (2018) concluded that media contact is helpful in overcoming the 'us versus them' mentality that contributes to prejudice toward out groups. This finding has a significant impact on the value of entertainment in prejudice reduction because it is scalable. It was also concluded that entertainment education is one of the most effective approaches to promoting diversity and improving relations amongst intergroups.

The importance of this study and a source of excitement in the research is entertainment's powerful potential to reduce bias and prejudice across society for consumers of media. This potential to reduce bias and prejudice has immense implications for various organizations and groups beyond the entertainment industry. A study focused on entertainment-education's effects on reducing prejudice by exposing viewers to diverse characters revealed that this exposure leads to the reduction of bias (Murrar & Brauer, 2018).

Considering the impact of examining the processes and approaches for managing diversity in the entertainment industry can have on bias reduction, entertainment is a

critical starting point to significant findings with applications to organizations in other sectors. This assessment of impact is crucial in defining the most effective D&I processes because of the power entertainment holds in bias reduction.

Implications for OD

Determining the impact of D&I approaches as perceived by advocates of creative talent in the entertainment industry expands the pool of knowledge available as resources in the field of Organization Development (OD). This study's specific focus on the entertainment industry allows for a deeper understanding process when working in a consultative role within the unique culture of entertainment. Entertainment company culture tends to differentiate itself from more traditional corporate organizations.

This study is meaningful due to the potential information its findings can provide on diversity, especially considering interventions in particular dimensions of workforce diversity are relatively new in OD (Cummings & Worley, 2015). As OD focuses on organizational effectiveness and diverse teams create high performing organizations, OD and D&I show promise when considered interchangeably and applied jointly rather than viewing D&I as a subdivision of OD.

Thesis Outline

This chapter explored the history of internal and external pressures that lead to the entertainment industry's heightened attention on diversity and inclusion approaches. This chapter also outlined the need to assess the impact of these approaches, the value of this study, and its implications for the organization development field. Chapter 2 provides a review of existing literature relating to the effects of diversity programs, the impact of implicit bias and contact theory, and entertainment's impact on diversity and inclusion.

Chapter 3 supports the research purpose by describing the research design, participants, data collection, and data analysis procedures used in the study. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study organized by the emergent themes in each research area. Chapter 5 offers a discussion and concluding thoughts on the findings of this study, as well as recommendations for future efforts and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of diversity and inclusion approaches as perceived by advocates of creative talent in the entertainment industry. This chapter summarizes several areas of the existing literature on prejudice and bias reduction with an emphasis on the role contact theory plays in this reduction, especially considering its impact in the entertainment industry. This chapter also reviews the literature regarding the impact of diversity initiatives by examining the types of diversity programs that exist, the troubles facing these programs, and potential solutions for organizations.

Diversity training is frequently used as a blanket term to encompass many types of activities ranging from lectures to movies to role-playing (Paluck & Green, 2009). Throughout this study, diversity programs, initiatives, approaches, and training are used interchangeably to describe the scope of activities that organizations use to improve diversity.

Entertainment's problematic relationship with diversity has been well documented by researchers at USC (2018) who assessed inequality across 100 films and discovered there had not been an increase of speaking character roles for females or underrepresented ethnic groups in the last 10 years. Underrepresented ethnic groups represent less than 30% of speaking roles. Representation of diversity is even worse behind the camera with top-grossing film directors. According to a recent study, only 7.3% were female, 5.5% were Black, and 3.7% were Asian (Smith, Choueiti, Pieper, Case, & Choi, 2018). This yearly report serves as a landmark of accountability to the entertainment industry. The level of scrutiny this report provides also speaks to the level

of customization that will be necessary in the approach to tackle D&I in entertainment specifically.

The Evolution of Contact Theory

A critical factor to be assessed in creating this customized approach is the role that contact theory plays in decreasing bias and prejudice. Contact theory is referenced regularly as the reasoning behind entertainment being the most effective method to mitigate bias on a widespread scale (Murrar & Brauer, 2018; Paluck & Green, 2009).

The contact hypothesis is an influential and fundamental theory for understanding prejudice reduction (Allport, 1954). Prejudice is defined as "feeling, favorable or unfavorable, toward a person or thing, prior to, or not based on, actual experience" (Allport, 1954, p. 6). This will serve as the working definition of prejudice used in this study. Allport's (1954) research on contact theory is considered foundational to what subsequent work was built on to mitigate prejudice. It is viewed as influential because most research on prejudice reduction takes these theories as its base and either agrees or further builds upon the original points. A large frame of research on intergroup contact theory suggests that at the root of negative attitudes is the lack of personal and positive contact between groups (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). The impact of intergroup contact is that it can create stigmatization, exclusion, and an 'us vs. them' mentality. But under the appropriate conditions, prejudice can be reduced between groups. Contact theory proposes four optimal conditions for prejudice reduction which include (1) common goals, (2) cooperation, (3) equal status between groups, and (4) institutional support (Allport, 1954). To share a common goal is to have both groups working toward the same outcome as this creates a need to combine efforts. In working towards the same

goal, there must also be a lack of competition for intergroup relations to exist. Equal status refers to groups being able to engage equally in the relationship with a minimization on differences such as wealth or academic backgrounds. Institutional support requires an authority to support the interactions amongst different groups.

Since contact theory is used to explain why entertainment media successfully reduces bias, contact theory may show promise when applied within the entertainment industry to create initiatives that enhance diversity. Recognizing the link between contact theory and its ability to impact change within entertainment is a starting point on the journey to improving diversity approaches. This research project will look at diversity approaches under the lens of the role they play in reducing bias and prejudice and in turn creating inclusive work environments.

Most research agrees with the four optimal conditions that reduce prejudice under contact theory, but some argue that the additional condition of friendship potential must also be present to decrease negative attitudes towards outgroups (Bagci, Piyale, Bircek, & Ebcim, 2018; Pettigrew, 1998). Pettigrew (1998) explains that Allport (1954) missed the connection that close relationships play in contact theory and that friendship is essential in creating positive attitudes between groups. The contact situation must provide the opportunity for members of outgroups to become friends. While friendship is viewed as a crucial piece of effecting intergroup contact, there are obstacles in being able to facilitate friendship and create the appropriate contact conditions. Although cross-group friendships have positive effects, selection bias limits the ability for these relationships to form. People with prejudice often avoid contact with outgroups, creating barriers to reducing said prejudice (Pettigrew, 1998). Individual differences and societal norms are

additional factors that have implications on how groups interact with each other. The diverse range of society types shape the effects of contact.

Pettigrew (1998) also takes issue with contact theory not addressing the process to create optimal contact and proposes four ways to handle this void. Pettigrew (1998) suggests using processes that provide learning about outgroups, changing behavior, building emotional ties, and result in reappraisal of the ingroup. Intergroup friendship plays a role in creating positive effects and reducing prejudice because it potentially connects to all four of the original conditions of contact theory.

There is a consensus from multiple sources that the addition of friendship potential to the four conditions of contact theory effectively reduces prejudice (Bagci et al., 2018; Pettigrew, 1998). There is a heavy weight placed on the value of cross-group friendships as they significantly enhance the positive effects of contact theory in managing prejudice. Additionally, within cross-group friendships, there is the underlying use of interpersonal skill management such as self-disclosure, empathy, and intimacy. This development of interpersonal relations through friendship allows group members to learn from each other and share information (Bagci et al., 2018; Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011). This focus on relational aspects inevitably increases the quality of the contact. Incorporating cross-group friendships is also of value rather than considering just contact because it provides multiple opportunities for positive intergroup encounters which can continue to develop over time.

Three experiments looked at attitudes towards Syrian refugees by the Turkish and attributed the increased positive effects on relationships to the friendship factor that was created through an imagined contact scenario (Bagci et al., 2018). This study builds on

the importance of friendship in reducing prejudice but reveals that imagined contact can still have the same positive effects as real contact. In addition to long list of benefits that friendship potential offers, it can also decrease threat response.

Several authors continue to build upon the original frame of contact hypothesis, the value of friendship potential and imagined contact. The Parasocial Contact Hypothesis (Shiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005) also uses contact theory as the basis to enhance understanding of prejudice reduction. It takes into account the rise of technology, media consumption, and its power in how members of different groups interact with each other. This is the psychological relationship experienced by an audience in their mediated encounters with performers in mass media (Horton & Wohl, 1956). The theory suggests that viewers can create an intimate face to face association with performers that resemble friendship. It is powerful to consider the idea that people process mass-mediated communication similarly to interpersonal interaction. There must also be exploration of the socially beneficial functions of intergroup contact and pair them with the same benefits of parasocial contact (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Shiappa et al., 2005).

Parasocial contact (Schiappa et al., 2005) provides an understanding that we process media experiences similar to direct experiences. Schiappa et al. (2005) looked at factors that impact attitudes towards gay men by presenting the television shows *Six Feet Under* and *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*; this continued to support the value of parasocial contact. There was a statistically significant association between contact and decreasing prejudicial attitudes through the exposure to gay men in *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. In totality, parasocial contact explained reduced levels of prejudice, further

revealing that imagined contact facilitates positive responses and engenders changes in beliefs about the attributes of minority group categories (Shiappa et al., 2005). Cao and Bolin (2017) build on the principles of parasocial contact by advancing the notion that virtual contact can improve intergroup relationships through computer-mediated communication (CMC). Cao and Bolin (2017) found that both video-based CMC and text-based CMC had a positive influence on attitudes between mainland Chinese and local Hong Kong people.

The combination of contact theory, parasocial contact hypothesis, and friendship potential appear to create a union that will have positive results in creating a customized approach to developing diversity initiatives for an inclusive culture.

Gaps in the Contact Theory Conversation

Although what is known about contact theory has shown it to be effective, there are some gaps in fully understanding elements of contact theory because of limited research. This review has examined varied perspectives on contact theory and has revealed through several studies that different variations of contact theory are highly effective in decreasing prejudice, but much of intergroup contact research seems to neglect the effects of negative contact experience. Research suggests that negative intergroup contact is a stronger predictor of attitudes than positive contact and can have a severe downside (e.g., Lytle, 2018; Zhang, 2017). Lytle (2018) states there needs to be more studies to examine the effects of both positive and negative contact to have a better understanding of the scope of intergroup contact. Zhang (2017) agrees that there are missing pieces to contact theory by looking at the theory on an individual level and the outcomes on managing bias.

Group theory and perceiving others as part of the outgroup are underlying principles of the research done on contact theory (Pettigrew et al., 2011). Contact theory's focus on groups reveals another gap by minimizing the individual's role within the group. A study on the relationship between NBA coaches and NBA players determined that repeated contact helped to reduce bias towards the individuals who had direct contact but did not change attitudes and stereotypes towards the race as a group (Zhang, 2017). The subject of time reveals another factor not initially addressed in contact theory. Allport (1954) did not address time constraints; in other words, how long it takes to see the effects of the contact and assumes immediate results. Zhang (2017) also finds fault in contact theory's assumption that reduction of bias occurs relatively quickly and does not account for time constraints.

A Closer Look at Bias and Prejudice Reduction Methods

Bias refers to attitudes that can unconsciously take effect and are like "the invisible air we walk through – exerting their influence outside of conscious awareness, adaptive mechanisms evolved to help us make quick, efficient judgments and decisions with minimal cognitive effort" (Lieberman, Rock, & Cox, 2014, p. 1). When considering the provided definitions of prejudice and bias, both form despite having actual experiences. However, prejudice focuses on attitudes regarding specific groups, while a bias is a type of prejudice.

There are over 150 biases, which can make identifying theories for decreasing bias an overwhelming and challenging task. There is a consensus amongst researchers that there is currently no working theory for practically mitigating bias (Lieberman et al., 2014; Paluck & Green, 2009). Although several theories show promise in results for

reducing prejudice, few, if any, seem to have real-world application. Moreover, Paluck and Green (2009) assert that non-experimental research cannot provide answers to solving the prejudice reduction problem.

Although there are plenty of theories, there is little evidence of theory-based interventions that have a lasting impact. Despite this limitation, steps have been outlined to try to make sense of the abundant amount of biases and bias reduction principles to create applications. For example, Lieberman et al. (2014) developed a model that divides biases into four categories. They theorized that compartmentalizing biases into four categories is more manageable for the brain to process and provides a digestible format for beginning to apply theory to the real world. These biases are (1) corner cutting, (2) objectivism, (3) self-protection, and (4) time and money. These four types of bias are referred to as the COST model (Lieberman et al., 2014). Corner cutting biases work by creating cognitive shortcuts to make decisions quickly. Biases involving objectivism refer to the implicit belief that perceptions and experiences are objectively accurate. Self-Protections means that people want to portray themselves in the best possible light and this can create difficulty in being realistic about our abilities. Lastly, time and money biases are grounded in the theory that negative information is a more significant motivator than positive information. The saliency of the negative leads to the avoidance of risky decisions (Lieberman et al., 2014). Lacey's (2017) work in this space further develops the types of biases offered by Lieberman et al. (2014) by defining 21 biases that prevail for everyone. The COST model can be applied further categorize these 21 biases.

Approaches to Bias reduction for Inclusive Environments

Cox (1991) recognized that increases of diverse workforces would call for an adaptation to a new type of organization. The proposed solution is for companies to move from being monolithic or plural to multicultural organizations if they plan to combat the potentials costs of diversity (Cox, 1991). One trait of a multicultural organization is that there is full integration of minority members at a formal and informal level. The description provided for a multicultural organization calls for an inclusive environment by integrating its members. Nkomo et al. (2019) support Cox's (1991) thoughts on integration by recognizing that the future state of diversity research must move beyond the causes and consequences of discrimination to identifying ways to achieve inclusion and equality in the workplace. Greater exploration reveals that inclusion is widely thought of as a contributing factor to addressing diversity (Cox, 1991; Pena et al., 2017; Zhang, 2017).

In creating inclusive environments, the method of approaching bias and prejudice reduction from an individual or group scale must be considered. There is conversation and debate on whether techniques to reduce bias should be addressed from the individual or group perspective. Research suggests that repeated interaction over sustained periods of time significantly reduces bias towards individuals rather than ethnic groups as a whole (Zhang, 2017). This goes against other theories that look at organizational structures that create or reinforce bias rather than individual level interventions as the most forward-thinking manner to reduce bias (Bohnet, Van Green, & Bazerman, 2016; Lieberman et al., 2014). When sifting through over 150 biases, teams may be able to become self-aware of bias in ways that individuals cannot (Lieberman et al., 2014).

Organizational intelligence is created that differs from an individual's capacity to manage bias and prejudice.

The conflicting perspectives on whether bias reduction occurs through collective or individual levels should be considered under the context in which these studies are looking at bias reduction. Zhang (2017) found that bias is reduced when examining this bias reduction from the viewpoint of having access to opportunity. Access to opportunity was measured by how often basketball players were assigned playing time by their coaches and attributing more playing time to reduced racial bias from coaches. Conversely, Bohnet et al. (2016) showed support for managing bias by looking at groups as a whole was looking at bias reduction from the viewpoint of its effect in hiring, promoting, and job assignments. Access to opportunity and mobility in the workplace are two very separate lenses and may account for the difference in results. Cao and Bolin (2017) take into account both perspectives by asserting that the type of contact effects attitudes towards outgroup members on an individual or group level. They found that video-based CMC had a greater positive influence on attitudes toward individual outgroup members. At the same time, text-based CMC produced a stronger impact than video-based CMC in improving attitudes towards outgroups as a whole.

Equal access to opportunity is an underlying theme of inclusion and Zhang (2017) tested what this access could look like by finding ways to measure opportunity. This research on biases between NBA coaches and the players they manage further enlightens the missing piece of inclusion by not merely looking at diversity in terms of demographics. They measured how often basketball players were chosen to play. Bohnet et al. (2016), who based their study on inclusion theory, highlights the role of the group

vs the individual in bias reduction. They focused on the impact of performing joint evaluations. The purpose of joint evaluations is to allow equal access to mobility within an organization and avoid hiring manager bias that leads to outgroups. The focus on access to opportunity in conjunction with bias is once again shedding light on principles of inclusion.

Ways to Best Manage Bias and Prejudice

Research on joint evaluation of employees has shown promise for its ability to reduce bias (Bohnet et al., 2016). A joint evaluation method is effective in helping employers choose candidates with a focus on performance, regardless of the employee's gender and the implicit biases the employer may hold. They showed that the joint evaluation of candidates is a popular method used in hiring practices, but its use drops off when considering job assignments or promotions. Lacey (2017) agrees with the literature on joint evaluation and suggests candidates be compared simultaneously rather than separately in order to mitigate bias.

Labeling is another method that has support from researchers for its beneficial effects on bias management (Creswell, Way, Eisenberger, & Lieberman, 2007; Lieberman et al., 2014). The ability to label experienced emotions can be a powerful tool in combatting biases that are encompassed in the corner cutting categories. Intuition often guides us as humans rather than logic, and the use of labeling can support more logical analysis. Labeling is viewed as an instrument that can reduce bias, but this begs the question of how one develops the skill of labeling? Various literature agrees that mindfulness is successful in increasing the ability to label because it creates a deepened level of awareness (Creswell et al., 2007; Lieberman et al., 2014). Creswell et al. (2007)

define mindfulness as the combination of one's awareness and receptivity to present moment experiences. Mindfulness enhancing interventions help with labeling and has the additional benefit neutralizing threat response by labeling an emotion (Creswell et al., 2007). The correlation between increased mindfulness and labeling negative emotions reveal an enhanced ability to regulate emotions and manage behaviors of bias.

The Reverse Consequences of Reducing Bias and Prejudice

While there are multiple theories on ways to reduce prejudice and bias, there is also a reverse side that can, unfortunately, increase bias. Organizational strategies with the intent to minimize prejudice may backfire and actually be counterproductive to the goal of creating inclusivity (Brad, Sprisz, & Tanega, 2018; Kulik, Roberson, & Parker, 2007; Shepherd, 2019). Therefore, we cannot overlook the behaviors that have adverse effects on attitudes toward outgroups. Kulik (2007) explains that one of the adverse effects of D&I initiatives is that their focus on differences leads to a devaluing of employees who are seen as different and can lead to reverse discrimination. A review of cultural awareness training supported previous findings that D&I approaches are divisive and have unintended effects (Shepherd, 2019). Most notably, this segregation could result in employee animosity and fewer minorities in management positions. Brad, Spisz, and Tanega (2018) build on the theory of diversity training sessions creating backlash by adding that generation and political orientation impact the increase of prejudiced attitudes. They looked at expressed attitudes towards an Airbnb policy that allowed for racial discrimination. It determined that Millennial conservatives and moderates expressed more racist views when training was about white privilege (Brad et al., 2018).

Several studies testify to motivation being a prime factor in regulating prejudice (e.g., Dobbin, Kim & Kalev, 2011; Kulik et al., 2007; Legault et al., 2011). Legault et al. (2011) experimented with the effects of antiprejudice messaging in controlling attitudes and discovered that motivating people to overcome prejudice by emphasizing external control produced more explicit and implicit prejudice than no intervention at all. Prejudice reduction methods can inadvertently create more prejudice. This finding was supported once again when Dobbin et al. (2011) added to the literature on external motivation by concluding that a lack of racial diversity does not drive companies to want to create diversity programs.

Motivation can have positive or negative effects based on the type of motivation instilled, whether it be internal or external (Legault et al., 2011). Internal motivation, such as examining the benefits of diversity or the gains associated with non-prejudice, serves to reduce prejudice while external motivations do the opposite. Furthermore, motivation has strong ties to autonomy. Multiple authors agree that there is a relationship between motivation and autonomy that have valued outcomes on prejudice reduction (e.g., Kulik et al., 2007; Legault et al. 2011). Kulik et al. (2007) highlights this autonomy as especially meaningful when attending diversity training because participation increases competency. People who have a low skill level are not aware of their low competency and therefore unmotivated to participate in training. Furthermore, those who participate in voluntary training tend to be more diverse which means they find added value in attending. The argument of an increasing divide between those with high competency and those with low skills about understanding diversity echoes the ‘chicken or the egg’ concept brought up with the faults of contact theory. In the same way that people with

low competency in diversity will not seek out training because they are unaware of their skill level, people with high levels of prejudice will not seek out contact with outgroups. (Kulik et al., 2007; Pettigrew, 1998).

In alignment with Pettigrew's (1998) argument that bias reduction methods do not address process, it is difficult to make real correlations to enable the making of clear recommendations based on conflicting evidence. Diversity programs that attempt to provide application-based processes for change will be discussed in the following section.

Diversity Approaches and Initiatives

Globalization and the maturity of technology have interconnected the world in unprecedented ways. Society has never been more connected than it is now and, in turn, is having to adapt to how this impacts the way organizations must work. Companies have had to adjust to the changing composition of a more diverse workforce through the enactment of D&I initiatives. Diversity initiatives are defined as implemented practices that aim to improve the experiences of disadvantaged groups in organizations (Leslie, 2019).

As organizations become increasingly diverse, companies must establish ways to optimize the benefits of diversity such as better decision making and increased innovation, while decreasing the costs associated with diversity such as interpersonal conflict.

Types of Diversity Approaches and Programs

In an evolving environment, organizations must transform themselves from monolithic or plural structures to a multicultural organization (Cox, 1991). Cox (1991)

characterized a multicultural organization as a model that fully integrates members of minority cultures, an absence of discrimination, and low levels of intergroup conflict.

The connection between research on diversity approaches is the intention of using diversity initiatives to change attitudes rather than beliefs. Cox (1991) provides 24 suggestions of tools for organizational change to create the characteristics of a multicultural organization. For the present study, the review will only focus on the five described to eliminate discrimination and bias as this summary of programs is focused on the intention of bias and prejudice reduction. The five tools for managing cultural bias portion of a multicultural organization are (1) equal opportunity seminars, (2) focus groups, (3) bias reduction training, (4) research, and (5) task forces (Cox, 1991).

Equal opportunity seminars provide training on specific topics such as sexual harassment, civil rights legislation, or sexism to name a few. Focus groups gather a small group to take in insight on attitudes towards cultural differences and their effects on work behavior. Bias reduction training is learning designed with a focus on attitude change. Research is defined as an internal assessment of the work experiences of cultural groups. Lastly, task forces form through the creation of internal committees that monitor for practices of unfairness. Cox (1991) describes these five items as tools necessary to create a bias-free organization. A bias-free organization would now seem counter-intuitive to its definition of bias as being unconscious. Still, it is critical to note that implicit bias was not yet part of research conversations in the early 1990's.

Diversity programs have conflicting reviews on their effectiveness. Some programs have been seen as highly effective, while others showed limited effects. One study highlighting the positive results found that student diversity programs are highly

effective in eradicating gender bias (Moore, Parkhouse, & Konrad, 2004). They showed that diversity programs run within universities were very helpful in increasing the number of women in sports management, a field known for low gender equality. The university's model of the three stages of diversity programs attributed to the positive results the program had on managing gender diversity: a reactive stage, an adaptive stage, and a strategic stage.

Broadening the program's accessibility to female students is stressed during the reactive stage. This reactive stage entails the restructuring of recruitment, financial aid, and outreach activities. The strategic stage consists of retention and sensitivity aspects to meet the educational expectations that males often possess. Lastly, the adaptive stage arranges educational programs and learning that places value on other under-represented groups. In terms of universities, they concluded that newer institutions are more likely to incorporate their diversity structures as these innovations are a relatively new phenomenon. The programs included in the adaptive stage are similar to Cox's (1991) mention of equal opportunity seminars because they focus on appealing to a pluralistic student body (Cox, 1991; Moore et al., 2004). It should be noted that the effectiveness of diversity program stages in increasing diversity is gauged by an increase in female representation but measuring an increase in female representation omits the function inclusion plays in diversity by solely looking at the numbers.

Additional research compliments the use of five diversity tools to create a multicultural organization by adding a sixth diversity initiative to the list (Dobbin et al., 2011). Six diversity policies and programs were accessed to understand why some organizations seek diversity management innovation while others do not adopt programs:

(1) equal opportunity advertisement, (2) diversity training for managers, (3) general diversity training, (4) diversity task forces, (5) affinity networks, and (6) diversity mentoring programs.

Equal opportunity advertisements promote the employer's commitment to diversity. Diversity training for managers tends to focus on avoiding discrimination in hiring and promoting. General diversity training supports inclusion across all groups and is open to everyone. Diversity task forces consider methods to open opportunity to women and minorities. Affinity networks support connections amongst identity groups. Lastly, diversity mentoring programs pair underrepresented groups with executives that support their career goals.

In comparison to the five tools presented by Cox (1991), the sixth initiative distinguishes between diversity training for managers and general diversity training. Dobbin et al.'s (2011) list of approaches also incorporates legal policy through the use of an equal opportunity advertisement. The six diversity initiatives also differ from the initial list of five through the use of mentor programs.

The assortment of policies and programs assessed by Dobbin et al. (2011) enriches the collective understanding of the types of diversity programs by using a macro perspective to define the elements that determine if organizations are motivated to adopt diversity initiatives. They identified internal advocacy, external pressure, need for increased diversity, and corporate culture as determinants of whether companies are willing to institute diversity programs. They were the first to acknowledge the critical role of culture as a predictor of program adoption.

Leslie (2019) furthers the research on the existing types of D&I approaches by providing three categories that facilitate diversity goal progress: (1) nondiscrimination practices, (2) resource practices and, (3) accountability practices. The above-mentioned initiatives can fall into these various categories as it serves as an all-encompassing framework. Nondiscrimination practices refers to practices that blind demographics and focus on qualifications. Resource practices, also known as identity conscious or opportunity based, describes practices that provide additional support to targeted groups. Accountability is defined as practices that emphasize responsibility for diversity outcomes (Leslie, 2019).

Table 1 provides a summary of the above-mentioned types of diversity programs, initiatives, and policies as described by the authors who assessed these diversity tools through specific institutional contexts. It also paints a picture of the evolution of D&I approaches and their development.

Table 1

Summary: Types of Diversity Programs, Initiatives, and Policies

Summary: Types of Diversity Programs, Initiatives and Policies			
Author (Year)	Institutional Context	Types	Examples
Cox (1991)	Multicultural Organization	Equal Opportunity Seminars	Sexual Harassment Training, civil rights workshop, Sexism workshop
		Focus Groups	Small groups have discussions on differences
		Bias Reduction Training	Bias in hiring and promoting training, Training on exposing stereotypes
		Internal Research	Collecting data on equal pay, Surveys
		Task Forces	Committee that monitors policy fairness, Affirmative Action Committee
Moore, Parkhouse, & Konrad (2004)	University	Reactive Stage	Recruitment, Financial Aid, Outreach Activities
		Strategic Stage	Retention Strategies, Sensitivity Education
		Adaptive Stage	Educational programs, emphasis on learning, assessment and curricular aspects
Dobbin, Kim, & Kalev (2011)	Corporate Organizations	Equal Opportunity Advertisement	Employer policy listed on job advertisement
		Diversity Training for Managers	Bias in hiring and promoting
		General Diversity Training	Inclusion Training, Outgroups Training
		Diversity Task Forces	Committee that provides opportunity to women
		Affinity Networks	Identity group support
Leslie (2019)	Corporate Organizations	Nondiscrimination Practices	Merit-based decision making, diversity training
		Resource Practices	Preferential treatment, targeted recruitment, diversity statements, diversity mentoring programs, networking groups
		Accountability Practices	Diversity performance evaluations, diversity positions, grievance systems

The Problem with Diversity Initiatives

The sheer use of the word ‘Diversity’ has become an increasingly popular term for organizations. The changing demographics of the population and the entering of Gen Z into the workforce continue to add layers of diversity to organizations. The ever-evolving landscape of a diverse workforce has created a high demand for diversity management. The response to that demand has built a vast repertoire of literature that questions the impact and validity of said programs despite their popularity.

Diversity ‘Experts’

There is no lack of material that criticizes diversity programs for one reason or another. To start, a primary criticism of diversity programs is the people who run them. Specific qualifications do not exist for diversity's so-called ‘experts,’ and the lack of standards can often create situations in which these highly paid diversity trainers leave organizations in a worse condition than before (Bergen, Soper, & Foster, 2002; Paluck & Green, 2009). Paluck and Green (2009) agree that there has been a rise of untrained diversity experts but advance the argument by acknowledging the accountability of academics in this issue. Diversity training is not using theory and science to ground its work, and this work is being left to non-academic professionals to handle. Are academics passing up the opportunity to collaborate in improving theory and practice?

A Lack of Measurement of Impact

The loudest and most resounding argument on the problems with diversity management is the exorbitant price tag for these programs with little data to support business performance or financial gains (Bergen et al., 2002; Hansen, 2003; Paluck & Green, 2009). Diversity management is a billion-dollar industry and, despite the amount of money employers are spending, there are no metrics that correlate to business results. Some organizations attempt to measure diversity results by examining recruitment, promotion, or turnover rates. These numbers are shallow measurements that cannot add substance to the return on financials or its direct impact on performance (Hansen, 2003).

Diversity Initiative Ineffectiveness Explained

Unfortunately, diversity efforts may produce unintended consequences and provoke a backlash that negates the purpose of implementing them (Brannon et al., 2018;

Leslie, 2019). Brannon et al. (2018) identify three backlash sources that provide insight into why these initiatives may fail. The causes of backlash explain that dominant group shows resistance because of the following reasons:

1. They perceive that their autonomy is being restricted, which opposes their values of freedom of choice.
2. They have a preference for keeping the status quo and colorblindness, a principle that focuses on minimizing differences of group membership. This ideology allows for the avoidance of discomfort.
3. The belief that social and racial equalities have already been resolved brings up issues about fairness and equality.

These three sources of backlash provide necessary framing as to why unintended consequences emerge in a way that opposes the planned outcomes. Two negative consequences include *backfire*, in which an intended outcome has an undesirable impact, and *negative spillover*, in which an unintended outcome has an undesirable affected (Leslie, 2019). The beliefs detailed in sources of backlash explain how backfire (e.g., increased career gaps for minorities) and negative spillover (e.g., decreased engagement of the dominant group) are possible results of D&I initiatives.

Research that asserts that bias awareness training and stereotyping training increase bias are examples of backfire. Education aimed at raising awareness of bias or reducing bias is considered largely ineffective (Kalev et al., 2006; Lieberman et al., 2014). In fact, diversity training may hurt employees. There is a concern that diversity training may breed reverse discrimination, primarily if facilitated by an unskilled trainer. Bias training may heighten an awareness of differences and trigger an us-versus-them mindset. This

emphasis on differences leads to an even greater divide amongst employees. These effects of backfire may be explained through the backlash source of colorblindness (Brannon et al., 2018) because the awareness of differences creates discomfort for the dominant group, which resists change. D&I programs that are ineffective because of backfire are associated with sending the signal that minorities need help. This signal communicates that underrepresented groups would not be successful on their own.

Examples of negative spillover can be seen in studies that discuss D&I efforts attributing to negative attitudes towards underrepresented groups. Legault, Gutsell, and Inzlicht (2011) found antiprejudice messaging supports the existence of negative spillover. Employees may perceive programs that create equal opportunity as offering an unfair advantage to the minority groups (Bergen et al., 2002; Kulik et al., 2007). The implementation of initiatives focused on equal opportunity creates the signal the message that minorities are more likely to succeed because of its presence (Leslie, 2019). This perception triggers feelings of unfairness and preferential treatment in the dominant group. Their belief that racial equality has been achieved leads to the thought that these initiatives are unnecessary (Brannon et al., 2018).

Diversity Solutions that Foster Inclusion

There is a vast amount of literature outlining the many issues that the diversity industry faces; this section shifts the conversation to applicable solutions that can address these problems and have the potential to create inclusive environments.

Brannon et al. (2018) present an *inclusion for all* framework as a solution to enabling effective D&I initiatives. Inclusion for all concerns itself with the reconciliation of allowing organizations to experience the benefits of diversity efforts while also

reducing backlash costs. Backlash occurs when D&I policies and practices are perceived as a threat by the dominant group. Therefore, this framework entails implementing diversity efforts that both address the critical need to promote inclusion for marginalized groups by attending to their goals and motivations and taking into account the goals and motivations of the dominant group to mitigate backlash (Brannon et al., 2018).

Brannon et al. (2018) offers four theory-based recommendations to enact inclusion for all:

1. *Be Mindful of Cues that Signal Inclusion (and Change those that Do Not):*

This entails paying attention to cues such as representation or organizational messaging that communicates a sense of belonging.

2. *Teach about Structural Discrimination in Addition to Individual Forms of*

Discrimination: This solution highlights the importance informing those in the dominant group on systemic issues such as White Fragility.

3. *Take Heed of the Motivational Strategy Associated with Diversity Messaging:*

Institutions must discuss diversity efforts in a way that promotes approaching intergroup situations rather than avoiding.

4. *Create Structured Opportunities for Intergroup Engagement:* Organizations

must facilitate methods for interaction across groups.

The trajectory of the diversity field has evolved over the last 50 years. Early on, the focus was on topics of race differences and discrimination. Now, there has been a shift to critical diversity studies, which seek to identity fluidity and implicit bias (Nkomo et al., 2019). Nkomo et al. (2019) propose topics of focus for the future that will shape the next wave of diversity efforts. These solutions share commonalities with suggestions provided

by the inclusion for all framework (Brannon et al., 2018) through their emphasis on structural discrimination, their acknowledgment of the role of the dominant group, and the exploration of whiteness.

Nkomo et al. (2019) assert that the future direction of diversity is characterized by discussions and research on structural inequality, fluidity and intersectionality, whiteness and racialization, multilevel approaches, and mobile subjectivities. These areas of study that require reconceptualization are explored below:

1. *Structural inequality*: Definitions of diversity should stray from broad individual differences to account for systemic discrimination and power differences amongst dominant and non-dominant groups.
2. *Fluidity and Intersectionality*: The concept of identity must be reconceptualized from fixed and singular to fluid.
3. *Whiteness and Racialization*: Incorporating the dominant group's role through theories on power, privilege, and whiteness.
4. *Multilevel approaches*: Considering how theory is built by shifting from an individual level to the use of a cross-level and multilevel theorizing.
5. *Mobile subjectivities*: Integrate transnational diversity concepts as a nation-state as an identity marker has become less relevant.

The analysis of diversity learning models can provide clarity and potential answers to the concerns with the impact of diversity training. Fujimoto and Hartel (2017) propose that organizations should move to an organizational diversity learning model rather than using diversity training programs. An organizational diversity learning framework has been instrumental in mapping solutions educating people from diverse

backgrounds. This theory evolves the model of experiential learning theory (Fujumoto & Hartel, 2017; Rainey & Kolb, 1995). The proposed diversity learning framework attempts to overcome the flaws of diversity training by being the first to involve inclusive decision making as part of the learning framework. To move to a diversity learning model, managers must include minority group members in the decision-making process. They also offer the concept of organizational random sampling to encourage the diverse composition of an organization as a key to moving away from diversity training. Additionally, teams that practice equal turn-taking to speak and challenge each other's perspectives help to create an organization centered around diversity education. Lastly, decisions should be made through common agreement (Fujumoto & Hartel, 2017).

The four methods detailed above present solutions by following an ordered process that has application to real-world settings. Table 2 provides a summary of recommended practices for inclusive organizations that foster belonging of its members. As the presented solutions are based in researched theories, their applications have potential for intended results.

Table 2

A How to Guide to Inclusive Organizations

A How to Guide to Inclusive Organizations		
Author (Year)	Framework and Purpose	Solutions and Action Steps
Bohnet, Van Green & Bazerman (2016)	Inclusive Evaluation Practices	Joint evaluation of candidates in hiring, promoting and job assignments
Fujimoto & Hartel (2017)	Creating Organizational Diversity Learning	1.) Inclusion of minorities in decision making process 2.) Organizational random and stratified sampling 3.) Equal opportunity and equal turn-taking to speak 4.) Challenging participants' perspectives through interpersonal interaction 5.) Final decisions through common agreement
Brannon, Carter, Murdock-Perriera, Higginbotham (2018)	Inclusion for All	1.) Be Mindful of Cues that Signal Inclusion (and Change those that Do Not) 2.) Teach about Structural Discrimination in Addition to Individual Forms of Discrimination 3.) Take Heed of the Motivational Strategy Associated with Diversity Messaging 4.) Create Structured Opportunities for Intergroup Engagement
Nkomo, Bell, Roberts, Joshi, Thatcher (2019)	Future Areas of Focus for D&I	1.) Structural inequality 2.) Fluidity and Intersectionality 3.) Whiteness and Racialization 4.) Multilevel approaches 5.) Mobile subjectivities

Summary

This chapter has reviewed several philosophies on contact theory, bias and prejudice reduction, and diversity initiatives, with an underlying theme of inclusion in the presented concepts. Chapter 3 details the design and methodology used to gather data on the perceived impact of diversity programs and their effects on reducing bias and prejudice.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of diversity and inclusion approaches as perceived by advocates of creative talent in the entertainment industry.

This chapter supports the research purpose by describing the research design, participants, data collection, and data analysis procedures used in the study.

Research Design

This study selected a qualitative research method as the content naturally lends itself to this method because of the nuances in opinion regarding diversity and inclusion industry initiatives. Creswell (2018) states there are four reasons to choose a qualitative design. First, qualitative research honors the importance of reporting the complexity of a situation and, because this study is looking at perceived impact, there must be a flexible structure in place to assess the notion of perception. Second, it allows for a focus on individual meaning, which is essential to analyzing D&I because people have subjective beliefs which inform the D&I initiatives implemented in organizations at large. Third, as evidenced by the conflicting perspectives on D&I approaches described in the literature review, qualitative research is characterized by inductive and deductive data analysis which allows for an adaptive and evolving understanding of a complex subject. There is no clear algorithm for effective D&I initiatives, and a qualitative research method gives room for understanding its many layers. Fourth, this method of research permits this study to take place in the natural setting of participants. There is an anticipation that participants will feel more open to sharing information in their place of business because of their familiarity with the environment.

In this qualitative study, a series of interviews were conducted and analyzed for central themes to learn how individual perceptions have broader implications to D&I within entertainment.

Participants

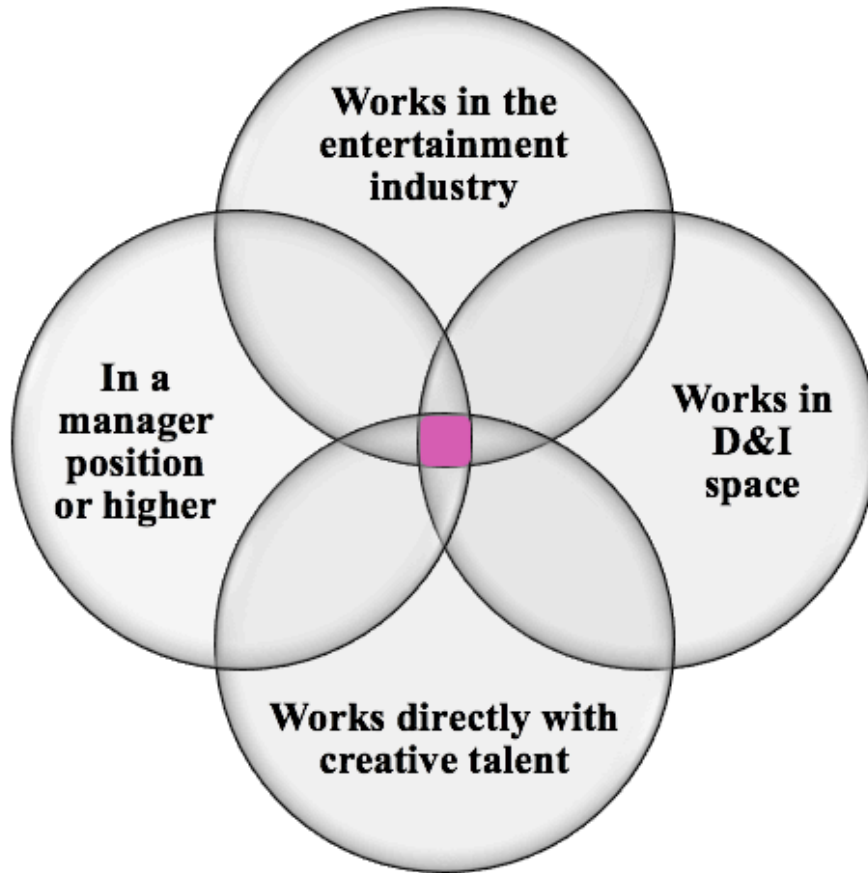
This project targeted advocates of creative talent in the entertainment industry. This population is defined by their ability to meet four criteria:

1. Participants work in the entertainment industry (e.g., motion pictures, television, sports).
2. Enhancing D&I efforts is one of the responsibilities that participants must address in their role in their jobs (e.g., the role may include running writers or director programs at a studio).
3. Participants directly advise and interact with creative talent such as actors, writers, or directors in their roles.
4. Participants are in a manager role (non-hourly employees) or higher in their position.

Participants of this research were enlisted for individual interviews based on their ability to meet the four criteria. D&I approaches are defined as any activity enacted to promote diverse and inclusive environments. As referenced in Figure 1, the defined criteria leave a particularly small population to contribute to this study.

Figure 1

Participant Criteria



Sampling Methodology

Considering the limited group of people that meet the defined criteria to participate, two sampling methods were used to gain access to this small demographic. The sample population was targeted at 12-15 individuals. First, convenience sampling was applied to reach participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The entertainment industry is a very insular field that requires relationships to permeate. I had a strong familiarity with the entertainment industry, and this shattered the barrier of entry. This background allowed for a higher level of access to executives that would not be available to others without direct ties. Recruitment occurred by directly reaching out in person or via

telephone. Although there was a concern for bias with convenience sampling, this was less of an issue because the population was already so small that interviewing 12-15 individuals was a sufficient sample size. Another reason that bias was less of a concern in this circumstance is that all participants held a title that was equal to or higher to myself, which mitigated issues of power that may have arose if people felt forced to participate. The second method used in this study was snowball sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As there may not have been enough contacts that fit the criteria through convenience sampling, snowball sampling allowed me to cast a wider net for potential responses. Participants who have already agreed to be a part of the study were asked for referrals. Participants that were identified via the snowball sampling method were contacted by email. There was a particular emphasis placed on the nature of participation being voluntary and confidential.

There is a preexisting knowledge of how the entertainment industry functions in multiple organizations, which influenced the ability to gain entry in this research project. This pre-established understanding of the industry provided credibility amongst participants. They were motivated to partake on the stance that they are making contributions to a subject matter that is significant within the industry. The intrinsic motivation of being able to contribute to the meaningful conversation on D&I in entertainment was the only incentive provided to participate.

Data Collection

Qualitative data was collected face to face or via telephone according to participant preference. Upon receiving consent, interview data was recorded on a computer in order to type notes into the interview protocol sheet.

Advocates of creative talent are constantly on call to their clients and therefore have limited time availability. These jobs focus heavily on customer service, which means that there are no off hours and they must be willing to help problem solve any time they are called upon by creative talent. The interview was designed to be succinct and asked only three questions to maximize participation. The design of the interview questions served to gain insight into the perception of D&I approaches. An interview protocol (see Appendix A) was designed to explore three areas to address the research purpose:

1. The types of D&I initiatives and approaches observed within the entertainment industry
2. The correlation between bias and prejudice reduction and the implementation of D&I initiatives within the entertainment industry
3. The perceived impact of D&I initiatives and approaches on improving environments in the entertainment industry

Table 3 presents the relationship between the interview questions and the areas explored to address this study's research purpose.

Table 3

Interview Questions and Purpose Relationship

Interview Questions	Explored areas of Research Purpose
Throughout your career, can you recall any initiatives to improve diversity and inclusion within entertainment? If so, please tell me about the most notable or significant ones.	1
As a result of the initiatives you mentioned, was there a change in the way people treated others that they viewed as different from them? If so how?	2, 3
How successful do you think the initiatives you mentioned have been and why?	3

Data Analysis Procedures

Qualitative data was analyzed by reviewing responses to find similarities, differences, and common themes. The findings of current themes would inform the perceived impact of D&I initiatives. This study adapted Creswell's (2018) model for data analysis in qualitative research. Data was analyzed by following the six steps:

1. Organize and prepare the data for analysis
2. Read through all the data
3. Code all of the data
4. Generate a description and themes through the coding process
5. Interrelating descriptions and themes
6. Interpreting the meaning of discovered themes and descriptions

Validity strategies were implemented to ensure credibility in the research findings. Peer debriefing was used to enhance the accuracy of the research (Creswell, 2018). The findings will be shared with a D&I practitioner who works in the operational

and Human Resources area of the entertainment industry for additional thoughts.

Including the perspective of a Human Resources professional will provide a more well-rounded interpretation of the results of the study.

Protection of Human Subjects

The study complied with the protocol for the protection of human subjects. Additionally, Human Subjects Training sponsored by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) was completed on September 28, 2018. Furthermore, this study was voluntary for participants and they reserved the right to drop out at any time. All identifying information will be kept confidential.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the research methodology, including the research design, sampling, data collection, and data analysis procedures. This study used qualitative research methods rooted in ethnography to determine the impact of D&I approaches as perceived by advocates of creative talent in the entertainment industry. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study.

Chapter 4: Findings

Research Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of diversity and inclusion approaches as perceived by advocates of creative talent in the entertainment industry.

This chapter presents the findings of the interview analysis and describes key themes that emerged from the perspective of the interviewees.

Sampling Methodology

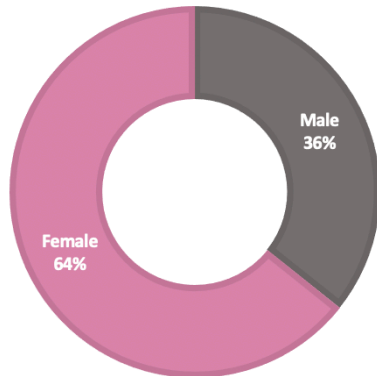
This study conducted 14 interviews with advocates of creative talent. Interviews reflected perspectives from seven highly influential entertainment companies. The target population ranged from positions as talent agents and managers to program leads of studios. The racial identities represented in the sample included eight (57%) Black participants, four (29%) Asian participants, and two (14%) Latinx participants. The sample population consisted of nine women and five men who were all asked the same three questions to gain insight into the impact of diversity and inclusion initiatives (Appendix A). Figure 2 indicates interviewee demographics by race and gender that met the participant criteria described in Chapter 3.

Figure 2

Participant Demographics

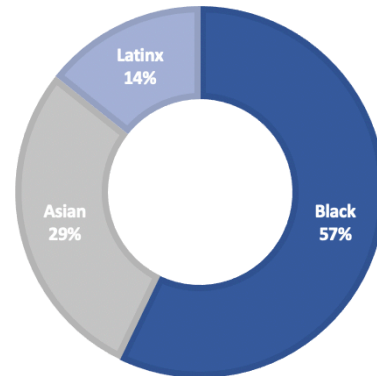
PARTICIPANT GENDER DIVERSITY

■ Male ■ Female



PARTICIPANT RACIAL DIVERSITY

■ Black ■ Asian ■ Latinx



Themes Summary

The qualitative interviews explored three areas to address the research purpose:

1. The types of D&I initiatives and approaches observed within the entertainment industry.
2. The correlation between bias and prejudice reduction and the implementation of D&I initiatives within the entertainment industry.
3. The perceived impact of D&I initiatives and approaches on improving environments in the entertainment industry.

The combination of these three categories provided answers into the perceived impact of D&I programs within entertainment. After collecting the data, each category revealed prevalent themes that painted a better picture of the impact of the programs mentioned. Although participants varied in their responses and thought processes, there was consistency in the content of themes that arose. The interviews revealed six themes related to the three inquiry areas: access to relationships and highlighting talent (for

Types of D&I programs), perceptions of the underrepresented and motivations for engagement (for Bias Reduction), and hiring as a metric and positivity of incremental change (for success of programs in improving environments). Figure 3 includes a summary of themes by the research area with corresponding definitions. Figure 4 presents a heat map of the most common words used in each theme.

Figure 3

Themes Summary

Research Area	Themes	Definition
Types of D&I Programs	Access to relationships	• Programs aimed at facilitating connections and making introductions between senior stakeholders in productions and talent. (e.g.: Shadowing, mentoring)
	Highlighting Talent	• Initiatives that provide exposure of the already developed skill sets of talent. (e.g.: talent showcases, film festivals, script databases)
Bias Reduction	Perceptions of Underrepresented	• Assessing bias reduction through the gauging of other people's views, openness and emotions towards underrepresented groups (e.g.: excitement, desire)
	Motivations for Engagement	• The questioning of underlying intentions for change in D&I.
Program Success	Hiring as a metric	• Securing jobs for diverse people, casting underrepresented actors or signing new clients as measurements of program success.
	Positivity of Incremental Change	• The optimistic mindset of small steps contributing to progress and the use of affirmative words such as "yes" and "definitely" used to describe the perceived impact of D&I initiatives.

Figure 4

Most Common Words Heat Map

Access to Relationships	Highlighting Talent	Perceptions of Underrepresented	Motivations for engagement	Hiring as a metric	Positivity of Incremental Change
Access Relationships Networking Introductions	Showcase Exposure	Seen Openness Interest	Money Trend Mandate	Hiring Jobs Signing	Definitely Yes Small

Types of D&I Programs

D&I initiatives in entertainment concentrate on providing access to relationships to minorities and highlight the talent of skilled writers, directors, and producers. 24 of 25 (96%) programs mentioned by interviewees fell into these two theme categories. Table 4 provides sample comments on these themes to contextualize the entertainment specific programs.

Table 4

Types of D&I Programs Comments Summary

Theme	Sample Comments	N	%
Access to Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It's a shadowing opportunity to shadow on shows from prep to post and we send directors and they start a relationship. We know that it happens based on who you know, and this gives directors the chance to meet and that's how we connect people• The only way you learn in entertainment is through apprenticeships, so if you're only working with people who already have relationships in the industry then it's a self-fulfilling prophecy where people will continue to be underrepresented• People who don't have access to showrunners are losing out on opportunities because they don't know anybody• People hire who they know	11	79%
Highlighting Talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The talent has always been there, the access has been the biggest barrier• We're procuring them from film festivals• We have a comedy showcase. We're literally seeking them out and procuring them so they can be hired on a pilot or a show, and we're presenting them• That's basically the bottom-line, it's access. We have a writers, directors and comedy showcase program• They showcase the chosen shorts in the DGA theater, and they invite all the industry people and then it's on HBO's platform to view too• It's not that they were treated differently as much as they were able to showcase their talent	10	71%

Access to Relationships

It is widely known that success in the entertainment industry is based on relationships. Therefore, it was not surprising that when asked about notable initiatives, the most prevalent theme amongst interviewees was programs that provide access to relationships. 11 of 14 (79%) participants referenced initiatives such as

shadowing/mentoring programs, writers and directors' programs, and networking conferences all aimed at facilitating connections and making introductions between senior stakeholders in productions and talent. Senior stakeholders are people who have decision making power or influence over who can work on television shows or films. They are also referred to as studio executives, showrunners, or agents. One participant explained the importance of building relationships: "the only way you learn in entertainment is through apprenticeships. So, if you're only working with people who already have relationships in the industry, then it's a self-fulfilling prophecy where people will continue to be underrepresented."

Surprisingly, writer and director programs in entertainment do not focus on developing the craft of writing or directing; these programs focus on providing talent with access to essential relationships. One interviewee expressed pride in one of the programs by saying, "One thing that I thought that was interesting that we did was bring together showrunner level writers with lower-level writers." These programs are defined by pairing junior, diverse talent with entertainment leaders in a capacity that allows for quality time through shadowing or mentoring. Another participant explained a notable program that does just this: "It's a shadowing opportunity to shadow on shows from prep to post, and we send directors, and they start a relationship. We know that it happens based on who you know, and this gives directors the chance to meet, and that's how we connect people."

Another example of D&I initiatives that focus on providing access to relationships is networking events. An interviewee discussed the meaning of one large conference in particular, stating,

I think Amplify is super successful. I think its successful because it's the only forum where talent and business execs in entertainment who are all of color can all come together, and its high-end talent. It's like the Kerry Washington's of the world. They can come together to find new ways to transact in a booming marketplace.

CAA Amplify is a conference created in 2017 to convene leading diverse executives and artists in entertainment and provide a platform for decision makers to influence cultural trends.

Relationships facilitate business deals in entertainment. As a participant mentioned, "People hire who they know." Considering the vital role of building connections, D&I initiatives centered around access to relationships arose as the most dominant theme.

Highlighting Talent

D&I programs focused on highlighting talent was the second most mentioned theme with 10 of 14 participants (71%) reporting on this topic. Highlighting talent is defined as initiatives that provide exposure to the skill sets of writers, directors, and actors. Seven participants spoke about initiatives that would fall into this category. Some examples include film festivals, talent showcases, and databases of artists' previous work.

The intention behind these initiatives is to show that underrepresented people are capable, they just have not been allowed to display how talented they are. Five of 14 interviewees (36%) emphasized that artists of color are already highly skilled and just need the platform to present those skills. One respondent provided reasoning as to why not recognizing their talent can be problematic: "It's caused so much by the language we put in place 'give people a chance' like it's a handout. You're positioning it as if the person is not qualified on their own." A second participant reinforced the notion of

having initiatives that expose talents by saying, “There’s a shock, like oh, this is really good. This is what happens when you give opportunity, they were able to showcase their talent.”

Film festivals, screenings, and talent showcases create a platform for the work of diverse groups to be seen. One participant described a program that resonated: "HBO’s Visionaries program, which highlighted short filmmaking from exceptional Asian American voices. That program and I still attend it yearly, allowed me to have more of a direct line to creators from our community that are up and coming.” HBO Asian Pacific American Visionaries is a short film competition that provides the opportunity for emerging filmmakers to showcase their work. The impact of highlighting-talent programs was further elaborated upon by another participant sharing, “We have a comedy showcase. We’re literally seeking them out and procuring them so they can be hired on a pilot or a show, and we’re presenting them. These are not free programs; they are access programs and it’s their opportunity to lose.”

Databases that highlight the works of artists were also mentioned as a popular medium to publicize the abilities of underrepresented groups. Some databases focused on creating a convenient location to find the scripts of diverse voices explained one interviewee, “The Blacklist was also an incredibly powerful force, to have an aggregator of underrepresented scripts.” The script database provided by The Black List was created in 2005, it releases an annual list of the most liked and unproduced screenplays of the year. This database differs from previous ones focused on class that were used in the 1950’s as attempts to address diversity. Additionally, another respondent described a database for studio executives to use to see the value of diverse audiences. They said, “It

tracked exit polling to show who is showing up to films, looking at who showed up at opening weekend. For example, *Queen and Slim* has 40% black people opening weekend, showing it was a good marketing investment.” The same respondent went on to say that the database also created accountability for studios in their hiring choices: “So if you're a studio executive, we can pull a report on all your films and give a scorecard on how you're doing.”

The collected data illustrated multiple examples of initiatives that highlight talent such as film festivals, showcases, and database tools.

Signs of Bias and Prejudice Reduction

Participants discussed perceptions of the underrepresented and the motivations for D&I engagement as methods to define the level of bias and prejudice reduction of the initiatives. Table 5 details sample comments relating to these themes.

Table 5

Bias Reduction Comments Summary

Theme	Sample Comments	N	%
<p>Perceptions of the Underrepresented</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would imagine people saw Asian American writers or executives as relevant, an interesting access point to a community. • They were listened to, people were asking questions which showed interest, they asked questions, they were taken seriously which showed honor. • It showed up with people being excited to work with diverse creators- now Sundance is very proud of their work- they talk about their diversity all the time- there are more people of color working in the institution. • I've noticed that there has been a newfound focus and desire to work with artists that don't look like them. 	8	57%
<p>Motivations for Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The thing that I find most interesting about these programs is they are positioned as philanthropic pursuits and opportunities. It's caused so much by the language we put in place "give people a chance" like it's a handout. • Diversity is such a mandate at every studio now, it's very easy to just say this person was in this program so I'm gonna sign them. I don't know if it decreases their prejudice or not. • It's a chore and something you have to do, which clearly shows you're not about it, you're not passionate about hiring a black writer for this project. • You're just doing it for the politics of it, but if there's a way for you to save face and it not look controversial, you would hire anyone. It comes from a place of selfish reasons and optics and less about giving these fantastic artists opportunity. • There will be people who will keep making D&I decisions for superficial reasons. 	7	50%

Perceptions of the Underrepresented

Eight of 14 interviewees (57%) assessed bias reduction through the gauging of other people's views, openness, and emotions towards interacting with underrepresented groups. Emotions such as excitement and desire categorized a willingness to engage with non-dominant groups. Research participants interpreted bias reduction through their perceptions of the behavior of others. Participants qualified prejudice reduction through language associated with vision and seeing others differently.

In describing how people see the underrepresented, one respondent commented on the effect of increased diversity: "I would imagine people saw Asian American writers or executives as relevant, an interesting access point to a community." Another respondent furthered the conversation on the improved treatment of minorities by explaining why people are perceived to be more engaged: "We're seen as a solution center rather than a complaint or suggestion box." To continue to add on to the idea of an enhanced viewing of diverse groups, another participant said, "Like today, if I was to send an email about any African person, they would be inclined to take it seriously, maybe there's value there. These Africans feel like whoa, they see us."

Although the aforementioned quotes suggest a better outlook of the viewing of othered groups, another participant contested that narrative: "This goes back to the writer's programs. People in the programs weren't invested in, they were seen as the diversity hire that was brought in for that, the presumption of how we see those people is the real challenge."

Comments on decision-makers having a desire to work with minority groups surfaced as a way to assess the reduction of bias. A respondent describes the perceived

emotions of a company that implemented a D&I initiative, “It showed up with people being excited to work with diverse creators. Now Sundance is very proud of their work. They talk about their diversity all the time.” Another example that shows a shift in mindset is the story an interviewee at a studio shared,

They would think someone who works in video games can’t write a movie so having these people come in and generate ideas and the ideas were good because they’re talented. I think that elitism went away, and the team became more open-minded. I think because they were more willing to use different people for job opportunities.

Motivations for Engagement

Although multiple interviews discussed positive perceived behaviors as support for bias and prejudice reduction, five people questioned the underlying motives for the change. The term Diversity and Inclusion is at an all-time high in popularity. Additionally, it is a large revenue driver in entertainment. Seven of 14 interviewees (50%) suggest that improved behavior is not motivated by good intentions but rather the desire to capitalize on D&I’s popularity both socially and financially.

According to study participants, key stakeholders may be motivated to treat minority groups better because they view D&I as a directive that must be followed. “We will always be plagued by the concept of a diversity hire, and they are immediately othered,” said one participant who has led several reputable D&I initiatives. An agent who has benefited from D&I programs by enabling them the ability to recruit and sign new diverse talent agreed with the concept of diversity being a directive and surmised as to its relationship to prejudice reduction. The agent said, “Diversity is such a mandate at every studio now, it’s very easy to just say this person was in this program so I’m gonna sign them. I don’t know if it decreases their prejudice or not.”

This study also produced concerns regarding the prolific nature of D&I and the financial gains associated with it. One participant elaborated on the intentions of influential decision-makers,

There's still the work to be done of those desires and feelings coming from a true and honest place. It feels like the reason they want it is it's the new and hot trend. They see it as a way to make money off of us. They are seeing this trend and want to make a profit off of it. They want the next Black Panther.

Participants who discussed the motives of others reveal the uncertainty and doubt that gave rise to this theme.

Success of D&I Programs in Improving Environments

Participants defined the success of D&I initiatives in their ability to improve environments through the use of hiring as a metric and an optimistic outlook on the future of the industry. Table 6 provides a summary of sample comments that illustrate participant thoughts on the success of D&I programs in entertainment.

Table 6

The Success of D&I Programs in Creating Improvement

Theme	Sample Comments	N	%
Hiring as a Metric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They got the jobs because it was a priority for the producers to hire women. • People need to work and that's what's meaningful. • All of the directors that I chose are working in television after a year. • People have gotten jobs and that's the impact. • I don't think it was that successful because it didn't generate jobs. • I think all the initiative gave been really successful because I've seen people getting hired. for me it's about access to opportunity- 80-90% of who I've worked with though my programs most of them are working right now- so for me that's a sign of success. I think that institutions have shifted- in terms or really gauging. 	11	79%
The Positivity of Incremental Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end it felt like we had gotten to a good place, we've come a long way. • While I would say yes, people have been seen differently, I think it's a really complicated and nuanced answer. • I would say yes because there as a shift in the importance of understanding who are the emerging talent and how to work with them. • The companies that support new voices will eventually win out. • It's been really successful we can always do better. • There's a saying in the diversity world "it's a good start" we have a long way to go but we've seen success with more inclusive casting within television and film 	10	71%

Hiring as a Metric

A dominant theme that arose in assessing the success of D&I programs in their ability to improve environments was being able to translate the impact of the program on the hiring of diverse people. 79% of participants mentioned securing jobs, casting

underrepresented actors, or signing new clients for agents as measurements of program success. Signing diverse clients to an agency pertains to hiring because it is an agent's responsibility to represent talent in order to find them work.

"People need to work, and that's what's meaningful," one manager commented on the purpose of D&I programs. A studio executive continued to define hiring as a determinant of impact stating,

I think all the initiatives have been really successful because I've seen people getting hired. For me, it's about access to opportunity. 80-90% of who I've worked with through my programs, most of them are working right now. So for me, that's a sign of success.

Reflective representation of diversity in the media plays a critical role in creating inclusion as one agent affirmed, "People want to see themselves on screen." The casting of diverse actors directly correlates to shaping representation and has shown signs of progress as described by the same agent, "The result of that is some of the incredible casting you're seeing of Ana de Armas in *Knives Out* and the color-blind casting of Disney princesses. They cast Halle Bailey as *The Little Mermaid*."

The sample population views hiring as a determinant of success due to the pervasive nature of themes describing jobs, casting, and signing.

The Positivity of Incremental Change

10 of 14 advocates of creative talent (71%) mentioned how incremental change, no matter how slight it may seem, created a sense of optimism for the future state of D&I initiatives in entertainment. This positive outlook is defined through the mindset of small steps contributing to progress and the use of affirmative words such as 'yes' and 'definitely' used to describe the perceived impact of D&I initiatives.

D&I advocates remained engaged in their work when it was paired with the acknowledgement that minute changes are progress. One studio executive explained the ability to persevere, "It's the small victories that make you stay committed." An agent agreed with the notion of D&I being a journey by sharing a positive perspective, "There's a saying in the diversity world, 'it's a good start.' We have a long way to go, but we've seen success with more inclusive casting within television and film."

An executive pondered on the lack of metrics to analyze the effectiveness of initiatives, "I would love to see statistics on this. I have no idea how successful they really are. You think how many of these people are actually being staffed." Despite limited information on D&I metrics beyond filled jobs, advocates of creative talent are, for the most part, optimistic about the impact their programs are having. A D&I program lead expressed futuristic and positive thinking, "I think all of these initiatives have been wildly successful when utilized past the initiatives."

Viewing D&I as incremental growth and remaining positive about the next steps were contributing factors in the pattern of an optimistic outlook to how programs can improve work environments.

Summary

This chapter presented the research findings that emerged and summarized critical themes from the collected qualitative data. Chapter 5 will provide conclusions based on emerging themes, reflect on the application of the research findings to the literature review, offer recommendations for organizations with similar issues, outline implications for Organization Development, and summarize the limitations of this study.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter concludes the study by providing its purpose statement, objectives, and by discussing and summarizing the findings. It includes three conclusions based on the findings and the literature review. Recommendations for managers and OD practitioners, study limitations, and suggestions for future research are also explored.

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of diversity and inclusion approaches as perceived by advocates of creative talent in the entertainment industry. Three objectives supported this study, gaining insight into these areas provided an understanding of the best way to make an impact in Hollywood:

1. The types of D&I initiatives and approaches observed within the entertainment industry.
2. The correlation between bias and prejudice reduction and the implementation of D&I initiatives within the entertainment industry.
3. The perceived impact of D&I initiatives and approaches on improving environments in the entertainment industry.

The findings offer insights into tangible steps forward for Hollywood to reshape its sordid relationship with diversity, equity, and inclusion. This chapter concludes the study by summarizing the findings and interpreting their meaning by drawing conclusions. Study limitations, recommendations for future research, and implications also are explored.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study provided a needed perspective into perceptions of the impact of D&I approaches on the creative talent landscape of Hollywood. The findings

revealed six themes, two themes for each of this study's three research areas. The three research areas included: types of D&I programs, bias and prejudice reduction of these programs, and the success of the programs. The four conclusions are based on one for each inquiry area and one conclusion is based on the participant demographics for this study.

The Six themes that emerged related to the three inquiry areas were: 1a) access to relationships and 1b) highlighting talent (for Types of D&I programs), 2a) perceptions of the underrepresented and 2b) motivations for engagement (for Bias Reduction), and 3a) hiring as a metric and 3b) positivity of incremental change (for success of programs in improving environments).

Types of D&I Programs

D&I initiatives in entertainment concentrate on providing 'access to relationships' to minorities and 'highlighting the talent' of skilled writers, directors, and producers.

Theme 1a. D&I initiatives that provide access to relationships focus on facilitating connections and making introductions between senior stakeholders in productions and talent through shadowing and mentoring programs.

Theme 1b. Highlighting talent means that these programs provide forums for exposure of the already developed skill sets of writers, directors, and actors in the form of showcases, film festivals, and script databases. Providing access to relationships and highlighting talent reveals that underrepresented talent already had creative gifts and aptitude, but unfortunately did not have access to opportunity.

Bias Reduction

Bias and prejudice reduction in D&I programs were defined through the ‘perceived views of the underrepresented’ and discussing the ‘motivations for D&I engagement’.

Theme 2a. Perceived views entailed participants measuring bias reduction through the gauging of other people's emotions such as excitement, desire to work with, or how they saw diverse talent.

Theme 2b. Motivations for engagement involved the questioning of the underlying intentions for change in behavior when interacting with minorities.

Success of Programs in Improving Environments

Participants defined D&I initiatives as successful in their ability to improve environments by using ‘hiring as a metric’ and ‘the positivity of incremental change’.

Theme 3a. In discussing the theme of hiring as a metric, participants referred to securing jobs for diverse people, casting underrepresented actors, or signing new clients as measurements of program success.

Theme 3b. The theme of positivity towards incremental change indicated an optimistic mindset of small steps contributing to progress and the use of affirmative language such as "yes" and "definitely" used to describe the perceived impact of D&I initiatives in enabling improved environments.

Conclusions

Several interpretations and conclusions formed through interviews and analyzing qualitative data. The literature reviewed supported and provided additional context to the

findings. The following section will explore the three conclusions drawn through the research which are numbered and labeled below.

Conclusion 1: programs based in support and contact. The most significant D&I initiatives in entertainment focus on providing support and interaction with ingroups to underrepresented creative talent. All the programs mentioned in themes of access to relationships and highlighting talent are resource practices as they provide access to opportunity and extend additional resources to targeted groups (Leslie, 2019). It is notable to consider entertainment's focus on one type of diversity effort and the perceived impact attributed to it.

Both themes of D&I programs in entertainment also share the commonality of allowing groups to engage with one another. This conclusion reveals the powerful role that contact theory plays in facilitating interaction between groups as one of the most effective methods of reducing bias (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). D&I initiatives that lean into designing initiatives that utilize contact theory may be more effective. The fact that all initiatives mentioned in 14 interviews spoke of ways to encourage relationships reveals the strength of building D&I initiatives that aim to create personal and positive intergroup contact. Therefore, practices that do not include contact theory principles and should be abandoned as they do not facilitate inclusive work environments.

Conclusion 2: mixed signals in program effectiveness. Entertainment's D&I initiatives send mixed signals about their effectiveness in reducing bias and prejudice. The themes of perceptions of the underrepresented and motivations for engagement support this conclusion by revealing a dissonance between the two. There is a tension between advocates of creative talent reporting seen behaviors that indicated progress but

not knowing the underlying reasons for the behavior change in others. A possible message that D&I efforts may signal is that underrepresented groups need help; this may have adverse effects (Leslie, 2019). D&I efforts being seen as philanthropic as a motivation for engagement reveals that certain programs in entertainment have sent the signal of people of color needing help. Underrepresented groups needing additional support to succeed is a common signal associated with resource practices, the same category as 96% of the programs discussed in this study. Therefore, this conclusion further validates the theories of Leslie (2019) on the unintended consequences of D&I initiatives. The implementation of D&I programs entails being mindful of the possible signals that are sent to ensure they are aligned with their intended goals. This attention to signals will enable improved effectiveness of these efforts that foster an inclusive environment.

Seven participants expressed concern that people were engaging in the D&I effort for the wrong reasons. The questioning of motives relates to Legault, Gutsell, and Inzlicht (2011), who found that internal motivation serves to reduce prejudice while external motivations do the opposite. Therefore, it can be surmised that interviewees who doubted the intentions of others, had interpreted these motivations as extrinsic rather than intrinsic.

Conclusion 3: a promising path when disregarding speed. D&I efforts in entertainment are perceived as offering a promising path forward when disregarding speed. This hope for improving work environments in entertainment exists despite the difficulty of successfully measuring due to the lack of quick results. Advocates of creative talent perceive hiring and small steps of progress as signs of positive impact in

the entertainment industry. The use of diverse talent securing jobs as a metric is a starting point but does not provide the depth necessary to understand the impact. This lack of depth supports the theory that companies measure diversity results through recruitment or turnover rates, but they are shallow measurements because they don't correlate to impact on performance (Hansen, 2003). Although there is some value in using jobs as a metric, it remains a relatively shallow measurement because it measures diversity in terms of numbers rather than inclusion.

Businesses want to see fast results, and that is simply not the nature of D&I work. 10 interviewees were optimistic about the future because they viewed incremental change as advancement. This optimism provides additional support to the assertion that diversity is at a critical juncture (Nkomo et al., 2019) because this mindset reveals a willingness to participate in change efforts. The opportunity of this moment should be leveraged. D&I is an ever-evolving journey as evidenced in Nkomo et al.'s (2019) review of diversity theorizing over the past 50 years. There must be a recognition of successful D&I initiatives being part of a long journey rather than a quick turnaround. This realization will foster positivity to continue this work and mitigate the adverse effects often attributed to D&I programs.

Recommendations to Impact D&I in Entertainment

Based on the conclusions of this study that were supported by theory from the literature review, four best practices can be applied to have successful D&I programs with sustainable impact. The provided recommendations are below.

1. *Practice inclusion by engaging the perspectives of all groups.* Creating space for groups to willingly interact will allow for the most impactful integration of

these groups. For progress, the improvement of D&I practices in entertainment cannot fall on the shoulders of any one group. Inclusion involves participation by both dominant and non-dominant groups. Diversity does not mean that a group of people all come from the same background as all contribute to the existence of differences. Consider what signals will send inclusive messages to the organization.

2. *Push key stakeholders to think outside the box.* Leaders may want to default to incomplete metrics such as race and gender statistics of an organization that do not accurately portray inclusion. These numbers simply measure diversity. They may also want a quick solution to a complex problem. That quick solution could be pulling diversity numbers that distract from measuring inclusion. It is the responsibility of D&I advocates not to collude with stakeholders by saying yes to a promise that cannot be delivered. D&I managers must create an environment that allows leaders to hold two truths simultaneously: D&I initiatives can be effective and take significant time/effort to execute correctly.
3. *Take an integrated approach to diversity.* This integration entails designing impactful initiatives that focus on building relationships while also honoring the distinct experiences that come with identity. It is valuable to consider both the needs of the group and those of the individual as the best approach to create meaningful impact. There is power in creating opportunities for people to develop a shared understanding of how specific identities shape experience in the workplace.

4. *Consider D&I concepts in all facets of organizational life.* This work cannot exist in isolation and must be applied in every meeting, new project, or change management initiative. This involvement requires constant attention to the issue as it cannot solely sit in one department.

Recommendations to OD Practitioners

This study produced findings that have specific contributions to the field of Organization Development and its relationship for D&I interventions.

It should be acknowledged that D&I and OD are interconnected through their shared meanings. D&I should no longer be viewed as a subset of OD. Every OD intervention is a choice about diversity and inclusion. OD practitioners continually make choices of who to include and exclude when contracting, diagnosing, speaking with clients, and when making recommendations to an organization. An awareness of this power will allow for more inclusive decisions to be made by the OD practitioner. D&I is always applicable to any OD intervention, and this study encourages creating the habit of thinking about D&I in every step of the process beyond what may seem obvious.

Although the meanings of these terms are interconnected, practitioners should be wary of assuming their knowledge of OD equates to understanding all the intricacies of D&I and seek to deepen their skill set in this area. OD is Diversity and Inclusion.

OD practitioners should lean into behavioral science expertise to transform D&I. This recommendation addresses the common complaint that D&I professionals are often unqualified because there are no set standards for this field. D&I is a passionate subject for most because they equate their identities and personal experiences with possessing solidified knowledge of D&I. Personal experiences make people experts in just that, their

own experiences. Highly trained D&I professional do exist, and it would be beneficial for OD practitioners to partner with such experts to innovate the industry. OD practitioners are uniquely positioned to advance the way companies engage in D&I conversations by basing solutions in science, models and change management techniques. There is a distinct value that OD practitioners provide to D&I through a scientific lens.

Limitations

Three limitations are detailed:

1. Given the focus and scope of this study, the findings may have varying applicability across industries. The entertainment industry has unique dynamics that are heavily based on relationships. This focus on networks may have accounted for the heavy emphasis of creating D&I programs that allow for connection.
2. Although the participant criteria for this study were niched, the population of participants may not be representative of all advocates of creative talent. Participants were partially chosen through convenience sampling, which implies some may have already been in the same network as me.
3. I conducted all interviews, documented notes, and coded themes. Including more people in the analysis could have combatted some of the subjectivity in the interpretations. This inclusion may have allowed for different perspectives.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study placed a high value on contact theory and its role in developing impactful D&I programs within entertainment. It must be considered that this paper was

written during a unique time in history, amid the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic that has forced connection and interactions to move to digital forms. It would be interesting to explore contact theory's applications to initiatives in a virtual setting under the constraints of limited access to in-person interaction and heightened racial discrimination in society. The current external landscape of 2020 further highlights the importance of D&I given what appears to be widespread ignorance of racial injustice.

This area of future research emerged from reviewing participant demographics of this study. Racially, all interviewees were from minority backgrounds and no participants were white or from a dominant group. These are uncommon statistics that are unlikely to mirror the diversity numbers that would be found in an organization. This is not to say that all people who are passionate about making a change in the D&I space are diverse. Still, it would be interesting to explore the dynamics between race and gender identity, its impact on willingness to pursue work in the D&I space, and its consequences on effectiveness.

Another intriguing aspect for further research would be replicate this study as the findings could provide additional value to interpreting this project. This study focused on a highly specialized participant group, and this was the first study of its kind to look at this demographic. Reproducing this research design with an equally specific participant pool would further validate the already provided conclusions.

Lastly, research that tracks the improvement of D&I's relationship with Hollywood through valid metrics would be highly beneficial. Throughout this research, yet another Academy Awards blunder occurred with two esteemed performances by diverse talent not being nominated for awards. This continuation of the same problem

suggests a lack of change since the first incident in 2016. It would be valuable to research what measurements accurately reflect inclusion in correlation with the improvement of D&I initiatives over the years.

Summary

Diversity and, more importantly, inclusion have increasingly become critical factors of business in current times. External pressures created a strong focus on entertainment to lead in the D&I field because of its significant potential influence in reducing bias. On-screen representation and storytelling from diverse voices spread inclusive thinking in a powerful medium. This study aimed to understand the best ways to enable Hollywood to thrive as a leader in D&I.

References

- 5050 By 2020. Retrieved from <https://site.5050by2020.com/transformhollywood>
- Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.
- Bagci, S. C., Piyale, Z. E., Bircek, N. I., & Ebcim, E. (2018). Think beyond contact: Reformulating imagined intergroup contact theory by adding friendship potential. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 21, 7, 1034-1052.
- Bohnet, I., Van Geen, A., & Bazerman, M. (2016) When Performance Trumps Gender Bias: Joint vs. Separate Evaluation. *Management Science*, 62(5),1225-1234.
- Brad, L. C. E., Spisz, T. J., & Tanega, C. G. (2019). Does “Privilege Checking” Make Us Less Racist, or More? Generation and Political Orientation Matter. *Race and Social Problems*, 11(1), 1-14.
- Brannon, T. N., Carter, E. R., Murdock-Perriera, L. A., & Higginbotham, G. D. (2018). From backlash to inclusion for all: instituting diversity efforts to maximize benefits across group lines. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 12(1), 57–90. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sipr.12040>
- Cao, B. & Lin, W. (2017). Revisiting the contact hypothesis: Effects of different modes of computer-mediated communication on intergroup relationships. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 58, 23-30.
- Cox, T. (1991). The Multicultural Organization. *The Executive*, 5, 2, 34-47.
- Creswell, J.D., Way, B.M., Eisenberger, N.I., & Lieberman, M.D. (2007). Neural correlates of dispositional mindfulness during affect labeling. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 69, 560– 565.
- Creswell, J.W. (2018) *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches (5th ed.)*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cummings, T., & Worley, C. (2015). *Organization Development and Change* (10th edition). Cincinnati, OH: Southwestern College Publishing.
- Dass, P., & Parker, B. (1999). Strategies for Managing Human Resource Diversity: From Resistance to Learning. *Academy of Management Executive*, 13, 68-80
- Dobbin, F., Kim, S., & Kalev, A. (June 01, 2011). You Can't Always Get What You Need: Organizational Determinants of Diversity Programs. *American Sociological Review*, 76(3), 386-411.
- Dobbin, F., & Kalev, A. (2013). The origins and effects of corporate diversity programs.

In Q.M. Roberson (Ed.), Oxford handbook of diversity and work (pp. 253–281). New York: NY: Oxford University Press.

- Fetterman, D. M. (2010). *Ethnography; Step by Step* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Fujimoto, Y., & Hartel, C.E. (2017). Organizational diversity learning framework: going beyond diversity training programs. *Personnel Review*, 46(6), 1120-1141.
- Horton, D., & Wohl, R. R. (1956). Mass communication and para-social interaction. *Psychiatry*, 19, 215 – 229.
- Jayne, M. E. A., & Dipboye, R. L. (2005). Leveraging diversity to improve business performance: Research findings and recommendations for organizations. *Human Resource Management*, 43(4), 409-424.
- Kalev, A., Kelly, E., & Dobbin, F. (2006). Best Practices or Best Guesses? Assessing the Efficacy of Corporate Affirmative Action and Diversity Policies. *American Sociological Review*, 71(4), 589-617.
- Katz, J. H., & Miller, F. A. (2016). Defining diversity and adapting inclusion strategies on a global scale. *Od Practitioner*, 48(3), 42-47.
- Keegan, R., & Zeitchik, S. (2016, January 14). Oscars 2016: Here's why the nominees are so white – again. Los Angeles Times. Retrieved from <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/movies/moviesnow/la-et-mn-all-white-oscar-acting-nominees-20160114-story.html>
- Kochan, T., Bezrukova, K., Ely, R., Jackson, S., Joshi, A., Jehn, K., Leonard, J.,... Thomas, D. (2003). The effects of diversity on business performance: Report of the diversity research network. *Human Resource Management*, 42(1), 3-21.
- Kokalitcheva, K. (2017, August 9). Google's diversity efforts fall flat. Axios. Retrieved from <https://www.axios.com/googles-diversity-efforts-fall-flat-1513304728-60fd8127-a0c0-485e-9bf4-a89d6337fc8e.html>
- Kulik, C. T., Pepper, M. B., Roberson, L., & Parker, S. K. (2007). The Rich Get Richer: Predicting Participation in Voluntary Diversity Training. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 28(6), 753-769.
- Lacey, M., (2017). Biases that Plague Everyone. [Class Handout]
- Lieberman, M., Rock, D., & Cox, C. (2014). Breaking Bias. *Neuroleadership Journal*, 5.
- Legault, L., Gutsell, J. N., & Inzlicht, M. (2011). Ironic Effects of Antiprejudice Messages: How Motivational Interventions Can Reduce (but Also Increase) Prejudice. *Psychological Science*, 22(12), 1472-1477.

- Leslie, L. M. (2019). Diversity initiative effectiveness: a typological theory of unintended consequences. *Academy of Management Review*, 44(3), 538–563. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2017.0087>
- Luther, C., Lepre, C., & Clark, N. (2017). Mass Media Industries Addressing Diversity. *Diversity in Mass Media*, 16, 421-449
- Lytle, A. (2018). Intergroup Contact Theory: Recent Developments and Future Directions. *Social Justice Research*, 31(4), 374-385.
- Miles, M. & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis* (2nd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Moore, M. E., Parkhouse, B. L., & Konrad, A. M. (2004). Diversity programs: influencing female students to sport management? *Women in Management Review*, 19(6), 304-316.
- Murrar, S., & Brauer, M. (2018). Entertainment-education effectively reduces prejudice. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 1053-1077
- Nkomo, S. M., Bell, M. P., Roberts, L. M., Joshi, A., & Thatcher, S. M. B. (2019). Diversity at a critical juncture: new theories for a complex phenomenon. *Academy of Management Review*, 44(3), 498–517. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2019.0103>
- O’Connell, M. (2018, March 5). TV Ratings: Oscars Drop to All-Time Low 26.5 Million Viewers. The Hollywood Reporter. Retrieved from <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/live-feed/tv-ratings-oscars-eye-new-low-early-numbers-1091636>
- Oswald, A. (2016, January 21). These A-list celebrities are blowing off the Oscars this year — here's why. Business Insider. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com/oscars-boycott-2016-1>
- Pena, K., Hinsin, K., & Wilbur, M. (2018). Why diversity programs fail-and how to fix them. *Smpte Motion Imaging Journal*, 127(9), 56-69.
- Pettigrew, T. F. (1998). Intergroup Contact Theory. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49, 65-85.
- Pettigrew, T. F., Tropp, L. R., Wagner, U., & Christ, O. (2011). Recent advances in intergroup contact theory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35, 271–280.

- Rainey, M.A. & Kolb, D.A. (1995). "Using experiential learning theory and learning styles in diversity education", in Sims, R.R. and Sims, S.J. (Eds), *The Importance of Learning Styles: Understanding the Implications for Learning, Course Design and Education*, Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, pp. 129-146.
- Samuelson, K. (2018, May 25). Harvey Weinstein arrested on charges of rape, sex abuse and more. *Time Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://time.com/5291392/harvey-weinstein-arrested/>
- Schiappa, E., Gregg, P. B., & Hewes, D. E. (2005). The Parasocial Contact Hypothesis. *Communication Monographs*, 72(1), 92-115.
- Shepherd, S. (2019). Cultural awareness workshops: limitations and practical consequences. *Bmc Medical Education*, 19(1), 1–10.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-018-1450-5>
- Sherbin, L., & Rashid, R. (2017, February 1). Diversity doesn't stick without inclusion. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2017/02/diversity-doesnt-stick-without-inclusion>
- Smith, S., Choueiti, M., Pieper, K., Case, A., & Choi, A. (2018). Inequality in 1,100 Popular Films: Examining Portrayals of Gender, Race/Ethnicity, LGBT & Disability from 2007 to 2017.
- Von Bergen, C. W., Soper, B., & Foster, T. (2002). Unintended negative effects of diversity management. *Public Personnel Management*, 31(2), 239-251.
- Walt Disney Television Creative Talent Development & Inclusion. Retrieved from <https://www.disneyabctalentdevelopment.com/>
- Zhang, L. (2017). A Fair Game? Racial Bias and Repeated Interaction between NBA Coaches and Players. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 62(4), 603-625.

Appendix A: Interview Protocol Form

D&I Initiatives in Entertainment: Interview Protocol	
General Information	
Date:	Interviewer:
Time:	Participant:
Interview Location:	

Introduction:

- **Reminder:** Review informed consent form and receive verbal approval
- My name is Lindsey Sands and I am interviewing you today to gather research as part of my graduate school program.
- **Research Purpose:** To determine the impact of diversity and inclusion approaches as perceived by advocates of creative talent in the entertainment industry. (people such as yourself)
- All information shared will be kept private and confidential
- This interview will have a casual structure and I want to be mindful of your time.
- Do you have any questions before we begin?

Interview Questions:

- 1.) Throughout your career, can you recall any initiatives to improve diversity and inclusion within entertainment? If so, please tell me about the most notable or significant ones.
- 2.) As a result of the initiatives you mentioned, did you see a change in the way people treated others that they viewed as different from them? If so how?
- 3.) How successful do you think the initiatives you mentioned have been and why?

Snowball Sampling Question:

(will be used depending on how the interview develops and if a comfort has developed with the participant)

- 1.) Do you have any suggestions for other people who work in D&I and with talent who you think would be a good fit for this interview?

Closing Instructions:

- Thank you so much for your time and insights!
- Once again, I want to remind you that your information is confidential, and any defining characteristics will be kept private.
- My full research study should be complete by June 2020 and I'm happy to provide my findings to you at that time if that is of interest.
- Do you have any lingering last questions for me?