

Ethnic Diversity, Psychological Safety, and Inclusion Outcomes: A Cross-Cultural Study of Indian and African Workplaces

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Abstract: This study investigates the impact of ethnic diversity and psychological safety on inclusion outcomes in multicultural workplaces for employees in Ahmedabad, India. After 267 people completed a standardised questionnaire, RStudio multiple linear regression was used to examine the expected relationships. A 5-point Likert scale was used to rate the main ideas. Ethnic diversity and psychological safety enhance employees' feelings of inclusion, indicating that when diverse ethnic groups are represented and experience psychological safety, they are more inclined to feel valued and included within the organisation. 3D scatter plots and regression line graphs made the statistical results clearer by showing the strength and direction of these associations. The research underscores the significance of diverse representation and fostering a climate in which employees feel secure enough to articulate ideas, voice concerns, and engage without fear of penalties. This research is distinctive for its contextual emphasis on a growing economy and the use of empirical statistical modelling to examine inclusion dynamics. To create globally responsive, psychologically secure, and ethnically inclusive workplace solutions, future research should expand this methodology across many regions, industries, and demographic categories.

Keywords: Ethnic Diversity; Psychological Safety; Inclusion Outcomes; Multicultural Workplaces; Statistical Results; Diverse Employees; Changing Economies; Cultural Heterogeneity.

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1. Introduction

The world is more connected and globalised than ever before, making workplaces across all continents more ethnically diverse. Organisations now bring together people from diverse cultures, languages, religions, and backgrounds who must work together to reach common goals [1]. When diversity is managed well, it can be a great benefit for an organisation. Different points of view can boost creativity, strengthen innovation, help solve problems, and help organisations deal with complex, rapidly changing situations. Employees who feel valued are usually happier, more dedicated, and more resilient, which helps the organisation last over time [3]. But these benefits don't just happen on their own. It depends heavily on whether workers from

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other ethnic groups feel comfortable, appreciated, and like they belong without having to hide or suppress parts of who they are [4]. This conversation examines how ethnic diversity, psychological safety, and inclusion outcomes work together in the unique cultural settings of India and Africa, both of which have rich multicultural histories and rapidly changing economies. Long-standing social structures, colonial legacies, migration patterns, and internal cultural heterogeneity significantly shape the ethnic diversity of businesses in India and Africa. Both areas have many different languages, religions, caste or clan systems, and regional identities that affect how people interact at work [8].

In these kinds of places, diversity isn't just about having different kinds of people; it's also about how power works, how unfair things have been in the past, and how easy it is to get opportunities. How organisations recognise or ignore these histories is a key factor in whether diversity is a strength or a source of stress [11]. Tokenism can happen when workplaces merely recognise ethnic distinctions on a surface level, and employees may not feel truly accepted. On the other hand, when companies address the reality of difference, encourage fair participation, and build trust, ethnic diversity can lead to inclusion and psychological safety [12]. Psychological safety is when everyone in a group believes the setting is safe to take risks with others. In this kind of environment, people feel free to share their thoughts, ask questions, admit mistakes, or disagree without worrying about embarrassment, punishment, or being left out. For employees from different ethnic backgrounds, psychological safety is especially important because they may already face prejudices, stigma, or exclusion outside of work. If they think people will judge them harshly because of their histories, they can stay quiet, stop participating, or go along with things on the surface while feeling alienated within [13]. When individuals feel accepted and treated fairly, they are more likely to contribute their own ideas, which can help the team develop new ideas. Psychological safety thus serves as a conduit between variety and favourable inclusion results. Without this bridge, efforts to promote diversity may be symbolic rather than changing how people live their lives every day. Academics across fields have increasingly recognised the importance of inclusive recruiting and retention strategies to ensure that diverse employees are not only recruited but also retained throughout their professional trajectories.

Previous studies have documented effective diversity programs across all sectors when organisations deliberately structured systems to reduce bias and improve opportunities for underrepresented groups [14]. These achievements demonstrate that diversity outcomes are not coincidental but result from deliberate policy decisions and leadership dedication. Other research has shown that structural impediments and cultural experiences have a big impact on the professional lives of women and ethnic minorities. Some of these barriers are unfair hiring practices, unequal access to mentorship, and small microaggressions that slowly chip away at confidence [16]. To be an inclusive leader, you need to understand how these kinds of things work. This means being fair, showing empathy, and making sure people feel comfortable. Evidence from Africa shows that many areas haven't yet fully embraced diversity practices, even though they know they could be helpful. In fields like building and manufacturing, advancement can be slowed down by structural and cultural barriers. Hierarchical organisational cultures, patriarchal traditions, and opposition to change may hinder the participation of minority ethnic groups or women. Even when policies officially support diversity, they may not be implemented due to resource constraints or deep-seated biases. In some regions of India, organisations sometimes use diversity, equity, and inclusion terminology to meet external expectations rather than change their own processes. In these situations, the difference between what people say and what really happens becomes clear. Even if employees hear a lot about equality and inclusion, they may still face discrimination, be underrepresented in leadership, or be unable to join informal networks. These kinds of contradictions might make people less trusting and less psychologically protected.

Cultural identification and community participation are also important in shaping how people feel about inclusion. People don't go to work alone; they go as part of families, communities, and cultural groupings that form their goals and ideals. When companies understand how important these group identities are and use them to support people, they are more likely to do well at work. Researchers have demonstrated that community-based frameworks can help educators and mental health professionals understand how cultural wealth fosters resilience and achievement within marginalised communities [17]. Using this knowledge in the workplace means that ethnic inclusion should honour individuals' experiences rather than asking them to fit into a dominant cultural mould. Celebrating heritage, recognising diverse communication styles, and accepting cultural practices can foster a sense of belonging and psychological safety. Technological innovation makes these situations much more complicated. The increasing use of AI and digital HR technologies could make hiring and evaluating people more fair. But new technologies can also make current prejudices worse or reproduce them if algorithms are trained on data that is not representative or if designers don't take past inequities into account [18]. Some automated screening techniques may unintentionally put some ethnic groups at a disadvantage, which would continue prejudice in a less obvious way. So, technology needs to be used carefully and ethically in diversity practice, with protections in place to ensure fairness and openness. When used responsibly, digital tools can help businesses track inclusion measures, identify gaps, and develop evidence-based remedies. In both Indian and African businesses, ethnic diversity is closely tied to broader social and economic realities.

The rapid growth of cities, the growth of education, and the ability to move between countries have all made it easier for people from different cultures to work together. Multinational companies hire people from different countries, while local businesses

also hire people from nearby areas or countries. These shifts bring both chances and problems. Being around people from different backgrounds can help people see the world in a new way and reduce bias. But when employment is hard to get, competition can make things worse, especially when there are still problems from the past. So, good management must strike a balance between awareness of local conditions and adherence to universal rules of respect and decency. Leaders who model inclusive behaviour, promote open communication, and address discrimination promptly can positively influence an organisation's culture. There is a two-way relationship between ethnic variety and psychological safety. Diversity can promote learning and empathy when coupled with psychological safety; yet, psychological safety is itself influenced by diversity management. Employees in majority groups may feel uneasy or frightened by shifting demographics, especially if they fear losing their privilege or status. This lack of clarity can sometimes show up as a lack of support for diversity programs. So, to ensure that all employees feel safe at work, there needs to be open communication where people can discuss their concerns without being blamed and where everyone works towards the same goals [19]. Training programs that help people understand other cultures and see things from others' points of view can help them feel less anxious and more understanding of one another. Inclusion outcomes include how much employees feel appreciated, valued, involved in decision-making, and able to get equal chances to advance.

Inclusion is more than just having a lot of people. A workforce may seem diverse, but it can still be exclusive if people from minority groups are mostly in lower-level jobs or feel they can't change the organisation's course. Higher work satisfaction, lower turnover intentions, stronger organisational commitment, and better collaboration are all signs of successful inclusion results. Research across several contexts indicates that inclusion is both a moral and an economic necessity, as inclusive organisations gain access to broader talent pools and enhanced performance. In India and Africa, where many young people work, promoting inclusion will be key to unlocking the potential of their populations. Psychological safety serves as a fundamental method via which ethnic diversity influences inclusion outcomes. When team members from different backgrounds feel safe, they share what they know, question what they think they know, and generate new ideas. Reporting errors improves, learning never stops, and conflicts are handled positively [21]. But without psychological safety, variety can often lead to misunderstandings, misinterpretations, or silence, all of which make it harder to work together. So, managers and supervisors are very important in establishing the tone for how people interact. Active listening, giving fair feedback, recognising contributions, and being open to diverse points of view are all behaviours that make people feel safer. On the other hand, making fun of someone, showing favouritism, or punishing them for faults can quickly ruin it. The cultural settings of India and Africa give more layers to these processes. In these areas, many societies place great value on hierarchy and respect for authority.

These kinds of values can help keep things clear and in order, but they can also make workers less likely to speak up, especially when they don't agree with their bosses. Younger or minority workers may not speak up about problems or offer new ideas, even when they know they could improve things. In these situations, creating psychological safety requires careful navigation that respects cultural norms while still encouraging constructive speech. Structured feedback mechanisms, anonymous reporting channels, and small-group conversations are some ways to make people feel more comfortable sharing their ideas. Programs that teach people about diversity, train them, and raise their knowledge are very important for changing how people feel about it. Employees can learn to recognise subtle forms of exclusion and develop more inclusive behaviours by attending workshops on topics such as unconscious bias, stereotype threat, and cultural competency. But training alone isn't enough; structural change is also needed. Organisational policies on hiring, promotions, pay, and handling complaints must be clear and fair. It is also important, both symbolically and practically, for different groups to be represented in leadership roles [22]. This shows that everyone can go ahead in the world. Mentorship programs that pair senior executives with employees from underrepresented groups can help people grow and build connections across cultures. Trade, technological exchange, and academic ties have made it easier for Indian and African regions to work together on a larger scale. So, understanding diversity and inclusion in these situations has effects that go beyond just one organisation. It helps society come together and encourages workplaces where individuals from different backgrounds can work well together, thereby boosting the economy. Additionally, research that compares experiences across regions enhances theoretical understanding of how cultural and historical factors shape diverse outcomes [23].

Cross-regional studies like these question ideas rooted in mostly Western contexts and help create frameworks that work better worldwide. There are many potential benefits to having diverse ethnic groups and a safe place to discuss them. Companies can use different points of view to design products for different markets, predict what customers want, and develop inventive ways to address problems. Employees who feel they belong are more likely to stay with the company, which reduces the costs of hiring and training new employees. When teams trust each other, they are better able to deal with change and uncertainty. Inclusive workplaces represent equality at the societal level and can help lower ethnic tensions by showing that working together across differences is both possible and beneficial. But there are also big consequences to ignoring diversity and psychological safety. Exclusionary policies can lead to problems, including fights, lawsuits, damage to your reputation, and the loss of talent. Long-lasting unfairness can worsen social divisions and make it harder to achieve national development goals. In areas with histories of ethnic strife, thoughtless organisational policies can unintentionally rekindle conflicts. So, dedication

to inclusiveness needs to be long-term and a part of the organisation's principles, not just a short-term project. The increasing academic interest in this domain underlines its urgency. But there are still crucial holes [25]. Much of the research done so far has focused on specific industries or cities; therefore, there isn't much on rural businesses or informal sectors. The confluence of ethnicity with gender, class, disability, and other identities warrants more investigation, since individuals frequently encounter numerous forms of advantage or disadvantage concurrently. Moreover, additional longitudinal studies are required to investigate the impact of policy and cultural changes on inclusion outcomes over time.

Research approaches must incorporate both quantitative modelling and qualitative narratives to encapsulate the intricacies of lived experiences. This research draws on interdisciplinary and cross-cultural literature to examine the impact of ethnic diversity on psychological safety and how these factors collectively affect inclusion outcomes in Indian and African workplaces. By examining these interconnections, the discourse aims to elucidate the circumstances in which diversity serves as a source of strength rather than division. The argument underscores that inclusion transcends mere numerical representation and that psychological safety is not merely an individual sentiment. Both are closely linked to how organisations are set up, how leaders perform, and the broader cultural backdrop. To address these issues, researchers need to work together at multiple levels, including changing policies, strengthening institutional commitment, and altering how researchers interact daily. Workplaces in India and Africa with people from diverse ethnic groups have significant potential to be sites where new ideas are born, creativity is sparked, and society changes. To make this promise come true, researchers need to keep focusing on psychological safety and inclusiveness. Companies need to go beyond just saying they care and actually take action to fight bias, encourage conversation, and value the cultural diversity of all their workers. When people can be themselves at work without fear, variety becomes a real source of strength for everyone. By doing this, workplaces can help not just their own organisations succeed, but also the larger goals of fairness, respect, and human growth in both regions and the world as a whole [29].

2. Literature Review

Ethnic diversity is a complex factor that shapes employees' experiences in multicultural workplaces. Many researchers have stressed that the presence of diverse ethnic groups does not necessarily lead to a positive outcome without the practice of inclusivity and a commitment to equity within an organisation. For example, Kundu and Mor [15] also studied the Indian IT industry. They found that ethnically diverse teams worked more effectively at the workplace when inclusive policies were clearly outlined in HR practices. On the same note, Daya and April [6] used a South African case study to demonstrate that workforce diversity efforts often fail when companies fail to recognise the deep-rooted socio-cultural dynamics and past disparities. Diversity is also influenced in African situations, especially in the creative and cultural industries, by the economic policy and national identity. Ndzuta [20] also examined the growing opportunities for South African musicians and how structural inclusion policies enabled ethnically marginalised groups to access new economic opportunities. However, even with these measures, inequality and marginalisation persist in most industries. Tran et al. [27] have provided a more judgmental perspective, demonstrating the subtle effects of organisational biases on the hiring of ethnically diverse talent, even in a globally competitive environment. Their results suggest that diversity programs should extend past quotas to incorporate structural inclusion programs. Intersectionality has also been noted as significant for exploring the outcomes of diversity. Dharani [7] also emphasised that social identities are not fixed and discrete, and therefore ethnic diversity cannot be studied independently.

Intersections among race, gender, religion, and socioeconomic status shape employees' experiences, and these factors impact perceptions of inclusion. Such a subtle perception aligns with the findings of Joseph and Johnson [10], who studied the impact of cultural and racial identity on teacher education in Australia. The authors argue that inclusion must be responsive to the voices at the edge. The concept of psychological safety has emerged as a determining factor that either facilitates or impedes the positive outcomes of ethnic diversity. Chung et al. [5] found that strong predictors of trust and identification across teams are inclusive leadership and psychological climate. When employees do not fear expressing their distinct identities, they are more willing and ready to contribute, innovate, and cooperate. Patel et al. [24] also discovered that younger ethnic-minority youths are less inclined to utilise supportive spaces (including counselling), unless they feel the latter to be psychologically safe, which is the case with organisational life. April and Daya [2] explained how AI-based HRM systems may either support or block the DEI objectives. Although such technologies have the potential to be objective, they may not be sensitive to nuances of identity due to contextual factors, unless they are intentionally designed with inclusivity in mind. Equally, Irvin et al. [9] discussed the issue of unchanging whiteness in US academia, arguing that, despite apparent liberalisation, ethnically diverse individuals need to feel psychologically safe to avoid long-term alienation, even in institutions that seem progressive.

Moreover, the inability to identify sacred and cultural identities in international business, as explained by Zyad et al. [29], often leads to covert exclusion, undermining psychological safety and the authenticity of inclusion initiatives. To address these problems, Wisker [28] offered an encouraging perspective in New Zealand, where Muslim consumer voices influenced companies, leading them to adopt a more psychologically inclusive and culturally responsive marketing approach. Combined, these studies highlight the interdependence among the outcomes of ethnic diversity, psychological safety, and inclusion. Although ethnic representation is a starting point, the organisation's psychological and cultural receptivity is what ultimately

determines whether inclusion is experienced meaningfully. It is therefore important that organisations in India and Africa adopt contextual, culturally, and identity-conscious practices to turn diversity into actual inclusion:

- **RQ1:** What is the impact of ethnic diversity on psychological safety and perceived inclusion outcome on Indian and African workplace employees?
- **RQ2:** Is psychological safety a mediating variable between ethnic diversity and the outcome of inclusion in culturally different work environments?

3. Methodology

The current research used a quantitative design to determine the effects of ethnic diversity and psychological safety on workplace inclusion among employees in multicultural work environments. A structured questionnaire was created, consisting of two major parts: demographic and Likert-scale items. The second part consisted of 5-point scale statements ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) to evaluate key constructs, including ethnic diversity (ED), psychological safety (PS), and inclusion outcomes (IO). The questionnaire items were based on the literature to ensure content validity and were discussed with academic professionals before implementation.

3.1. Objectives

- To analyse the effects of ethnic diversity on the psychological safety and inclusion outcomes in the Indian and African workplaces.
- To examine the mediating role of psychological safety in the relationship between ethnic diversity and inclusion results in the two regions.

3.2. Hypotheses

- **H1:** The effect of ethnic diversity on the psychological safety in Indian and African workplaces is significant and positive.
- **H2:** Psychological safety is a significant mediator of ethnic diversity and inclusion outcomes.

3.3. Regression Line

Inclusion Outcomes (IO) = $\beta_0 + \beta_1$ Ethnic Diversity (ED) + β_2 Psychological Safety (PS) + ϵ :

- **IO** = Inclusion Outcomes (Dependent Variable)
- **ED** = Ethnic Diversity (Independent Variable)
- **PS** = Psychological Safety (Mediating/Independent Variable)
- ϵ = Error Term

Then, valid responses were obtained (267) from working professionals in Ahmedabad, India, to be compared with purposive sampling, a selection method intended to yield a representative sample across different organisational fields. The data analysis was performed in RStudio, where composite variables were calculated by summing the indicators for each construct. The relationships among ED, PS, and IO were analysed using multiple linear regression. Assumptions were tested using preliminary checks, such as normality tests and residual plots. RStudio enabled accurate statistical analysis and further visual representation in the form of scatter plots, regression lines, and 3D data distributions, which strengthened the results and their understandability.

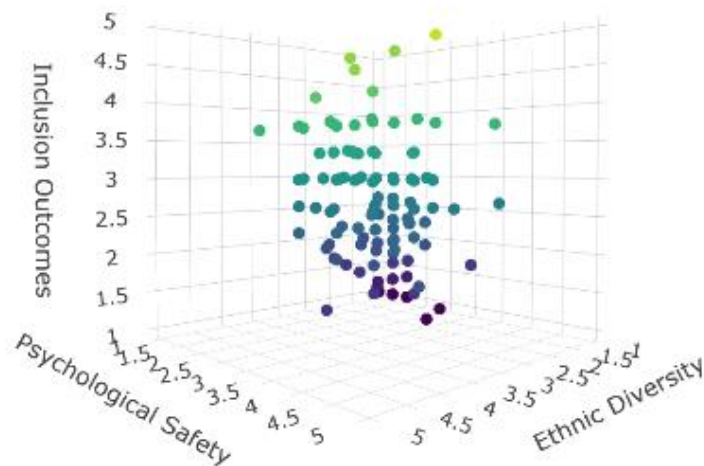
4. Analysis

The sample used was 267 Ahmedabad-based respondents. The gender representation was relatively balanced, with 54 per cent male and 46 per cent female. The age bracket showed that 38% of the participants were in the 25-34 age group, with 30% in the 35-44 age group, indicating a mid-career workforce. Regarding education, 62 per cent had a postgraduate degree, and 28 per cent had an undergraduate degree, making the sample highly educated. The occupational characteristics were diverse: 45 per cent of the sample worked in the private sector, 32 per cent in government services, and the remaining 23 per cent were entrepreneurs and freelancers. Regarding income, 41% earned between 30,001 and 50,000, 27% between 50,001 and 75,000, and 18% above 75,000. This means most respondents are in the middle-income bracket. These demographics will make inclusion outcomes analysis more insightful with varied points of view based on gender, professional background, and socioeconomic status (Table 1).

Table 1: Regression line on inclusion outcomes

Call: lm(formula = IO ~ ED + PS, data = Paper_1)					
Residuals:					
	Min	1Q	Median	3Q	Max
	-2.08168	-0.34099	-0.02366	0.28709	1.48946
Coefficients:					
		Estimate Std	Error	t value	Pr(> t)
	(Intercept)	0.6591	0.12548	5.253	3.09e-07 ***
	ED	0.48111	0.05425	8.869	< 2e-16 ***
	PS	0.21102	0.05717	3.691	0.000271 ***
Signif. Codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1					
Residual Standard Error: 0.5631 on 264 degrees of freedom					
Multiple R-Squared: 0.5463, Adjusted R-squared: 0.5428					
F-Statistic: 158.9 on 2 and 264 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16					
[Sources: R Studio Analysis]					

The regression analysis will examine how ethnic diversity (ED) and psychological safety (PS) affect the outcome of inclusion (IO). The model summary shows a statistically significant correlation between the predictors and the dependent variable, with both ED and PS having positive coefficients. In particular, ethnic diversity ($b = 0.481$, $p < 0.001$) and psychological safety ($b = 0.211$, $p < 0.001$) have significant predictive value for inclusion outcomes. This implies that employees will report greater inclusiveness as perceptions of diversity and psychological safety increase, as found in the literature [5]; [15]. The intercept (0.659) is the expected value when ED and PS are zero, but it is not very interpretable in the real world. The model accounts for about 54.6% of the variance in the inclusion results ($R^2 = 0.5463$), which is considered a fair-to-strong effect in the social sciences [26]. The significant F-statistic (158.9, $p < 0.001$) indicates the model's overall significance. The residual diagnostics indicate that the model fits the data reasonably well, with a residual standard error of 0.5631. The findings support the contribution of inclusive settings and psychological safety towards promoting fair and interactive working cultures in a variety of environments (Figure 1).

**Figure 1:** 3D Plot: IO Vs Ed and PS

The relationship between Ethnic Diversity (ED), Psychological Safety (PS), and Inclusion Outcomes (IO) is presented in this 3D scatter plot. Every point represents a data observation, and the colour gradients reflect intensity. The positive trend indicates a positive relationship between increased ED and PS and a positive IO, which supports the regression results. The visualisation shows that the outcomes of inclusion are not caused by a single factor but by the combination of cultural representation and a psychologically secure work environment. This scatterplot with a regression line illustrates that Ethnic Diversity (ED) and Inclusion Outcomes (IO) have a positive linear relationship. The predicted trend is shown in the red line, and the individual observations are shown in the blue dots (Figure 2).

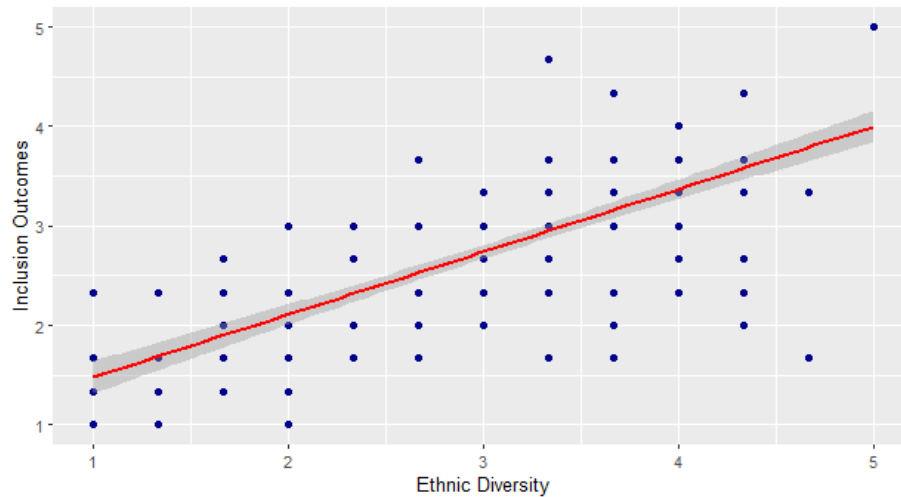


Figure 2: Regression line: IO Vs ED

The upward trend is evident, showing that the higher the ED, the higher the IO, which supports the statistical finding that ED is a significant predictor of inclusion. The confidence interval is indicated by the shaded area surrounding the line, thereby confirming the model's strength (Figure 3).

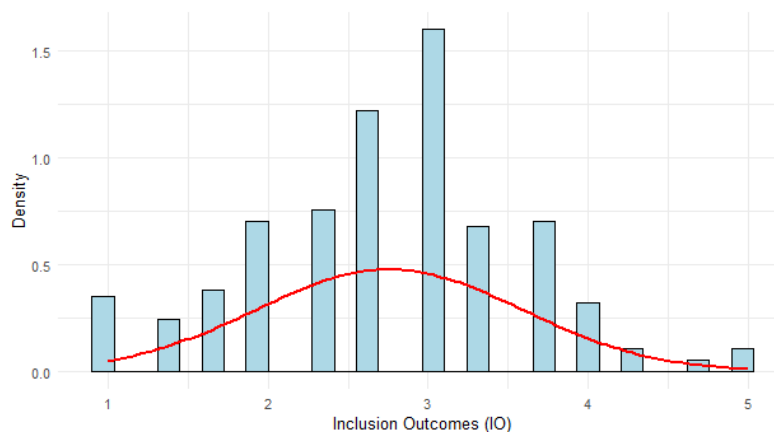


Figure 3: Normality curve on a histogram

This histogram, with a red normal curve superimposed, shows the distribution of Inclusion Outcomes (IO) in the dataset. It has a roughly bell-shaped distribution, indicating it is relatively normally distributed, though slight skewness is evident. The normality curve helps determine assumptions of regression, e.g., the normality of residuals. This is critical towards making sound inferences of linear models. The mean value is well behaved, as the central tendency is around it, making IO a reliable continuous variable in the analysis.

5. Conclusion

This paper delved into the effects of ethnic diversity and psychological safety on inclusion outcomes in cross-cultural work environments and compared these effects across two organisational contexts: Indian and African. The results support the proposed hypotheses and show that ethnic diversity ($b = 0.481$, $p < 0.001$) and psychological safety ($b = 0.211$, $p < 0.001$) positively and significantly affect inclusion. The findings support the research aims as they support the first aim to evaluate the influence of ethnic diversity and psychological safety on employee inclusion experiences and the second aim to determine the magnitude of these effects and its direction in multicultural settings. This research is part of a growing body of diversity and inclusion scholarship worldwide, in that cultural contextualization is necessary when implementing diversity and inclusion strategies. Although the significance of diversity in organisational performance has been discussed in earlier literature, this paper extends the discussion by linking psychological safety as a mediating variable. It is also receptive to global demands for inclusive leadership and equity, in line with recent recommendations for identity-conscious practice in increasingly diverse

workforces. This research is unique because it uses the comparative prism of the Indian and African setting, that is, two culturally rich yet frequently under-researched geographies of the mainstream DEI academic field. The study will be useful to HR professionals and policymakers who may need to develop inclusive, psychologically secure workplaces by leveraging data-driven visualisations and regression analyses. Intersectionality can be further studied by incorporating additional variables, such as religion, language, and migration history, into the research. Causal relationships and mediation effects may also be revealed using longitudinal designs and structural equation modelling (SEM). The work provides a paradigm to stimulate larger, more internationally encompassing investigations into the social processes of diversity and psychological security, and to place inclusion as a moral obligation and an organisational resource in the 21st-century labour force.

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