

Beyond Performative Inclusion: Examining the Role of Authentic Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives in Shaping Employee Outcomes in Pakistan's Tourism and Hospitality Sector

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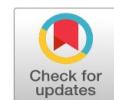
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Abstract: This study examines how employees perceive the authenticity of diversity and inclusion (D&I) initiatives and how these perceptions influence key organizational outcomes within Pakistan's tourism and hospitality sector. Specifically, the study investigates whether authentic inclusion practices enhance job satisfaction, organizational trust, employee engagement, and a positive organizational culture, while highlighting the potential negative consequences of symbolic or performative inclusion efforts. Drawing on organizational culture theory, social identity theory, employee engagement theory, and corporate social responsibility perspectives, this study adopted a quantitative research design. Data were collected through a structured survey from 376 middle and top management employees working in Pakistan's tourism and hospitality organizations. The proposed relationships among perceived authenticity of D&I initiatives, organizational trust, employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational culture were examined using statistical analysis techniques. The findings reveal strong positive relationships among all examined constructs, with perceived authenticity of D&I initiatives demonstrating the strongest association with employee job satisfaction. The results indicate that employees respond more positively when inclusion efforts are perceived as genuine, strategically aligned, and embedded within organizational practices. Conversely, symbolic or performative diversity initiatives may undermine employee trust and satisfaction by creating perceptions of inconsistency between organizational claims and actual practices. This study contributes to the diversity management and hospitality literature by highlighting authenticity as a critical mechanism through which inclusion initiatives generate positive employee outcomes. The research extends existing perspectives on corporate social responsibility and organizational culture by demonstrating that the effectiveness of diversity initiatives depends not only on their implementation but also on employees' perceptions of sincerity and credibility.

Keywords: Diversity and inclusion authenticity, Wokewashing, Organizational trust, Employee engagement, Job satisfaction, Organizational culture, Hospitality sector, Pakistan.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the concept of wokeness a heightened awareness of social justice issues such as racial equality, gender rights, cultural inclusivity, and broader diversity concerns has gained significant attention across the globe (Prosser & King, 2026). In Pakistan, where tourism and hospitality play an increasingly important role in the economy, many organizations have adopted diversity and inclusion initiatives in an effort to align with global movements advocating for social justice (Tariq, 2024). These initiatives often include diverse hiring practices, inclusive marketing, employee training programs, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts aimed at promoting equality and inclusivity (Gould et al., 2020). However, while these industries make efforts to implement wokeness measures to reflect social responsibility, there remains a critical gap in understanding how employees, especially those at middle and top management levels, perceive these initiatives. Are these efforts perceived as genuine reflections of the organization's values, or are they viewed as superficial, performative actions intended merely to improve the company's image? This gap in the literature is particularly important in the Pakistani context, where cultural norms and societal expectations significantly influence perceptions of diversity and inclusivity. By exploring these internal perspectives, this study seeks to address whether wokeness initiatives truly contribute to organizational change or if they merely serve as public relations tools that fail to create meaningful transformation within the workforce.

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Previous Studies and Existing Gaps

The majority of the literature on wokeness focuses on external perceptions how customers, stakeholders, and society at large view organizations' diversity and inclusion efforts (e.g. Opoku-Dakwa & Rice, 2024). Studies such as those by Bengtsson et al. (2024) highlight the role of wokeness in shaping brand image, consumer loyalty, and marketing strategies. However, these studies predominantly overlook the internal perspective, specifically that of employees at middle and top management levels. Research that investigates how these employees perceive wokeness initiatives is scarce, despite their central role in shaping and executing such initiatives. Further, while some studies (Warren, 2022) have touched on the potential for wokewashing the superficial use of social justice rhetoric without genuine implementation there is limited empirical evidence on how employees, particularly in the tourism and hospitality industries, view the authenticity and effectiveness of these initiatives. This gap is critical to explore, as employee perceptions directly influence the success of diversity and inclusion programs, impacting employee engagement, organizational trust, and overall job satisfaction.

Addressing the Gap

This study aims to fill this critical gap by investigating employee perceptions of wokeness initiatives within the tourism and hospitality sectors, focusing on whether these initiatives are perceived as authentic and effective or as merely performative measures. By examining employees at middle and top management levels, this study will provide insights into the internal dynamics of wokeness and its impact on organizational culture. By analyzing employee views, this research will help answer key questions about the authenticity of wokeness efforts in the industry, their alignment with organizational values, and whether they translate into meaningful changes in employee satisfaction and engagement. The study will also assess whether the perceived effectiveness of wokeness initiatives varies based on the type, depth, and authenticity of their implementation.

Rationale of the Study

The rationale for this study stems from the growing importance of diversity and inclusion in the global workforce and the tourism and hospitality industries. As organizations in these sectors continue to implement diversity initiatives, it is crucial to evaluate whether these measures resonate with the employees responsible for their execution and maintenance. Given that these industries are heavily reliant on human resources and are often on the front lines of social and cultural interactions, the authenticity and effectiveness of wokeness initiatives can have profound implications on employee morale, organizational loyalty, and overall industry reputation. Moreover, this research provides an opportunity to broaden the conversation on wokeness beyond its external implications and focus on internal organizational dynamics, which are often overlooked in existing literature.

Study Objectives

1. To explore how employees at middle and top management levels in tourism and hospitality organizations perceive wokeness initiatives.
2. To assess the authenticity of wokeness efforts from the perspective of employees and determine whether they view these initiatives as genuine or performative.
3. To examine the effectiveness of wokeness initiatives in improving inclusivity, diversity, and overall employee satisfaction.
4. To understand the impact of wokeness initiatives on organizational culture, including potential divisions or unifying effects among employees.
5. To provide practical insights for tourism and hospitality organizations on how to design and implement authentic and effective diversity initiatives that resonate with employees.

Study Contributions

This study will contribute to both theoretical and practical advancements in the field of organizational behavior, particularly in the tourism and hospitality sectors. Theoretically, it will expand the literature on wokeness by incorporating the employee perspective, an often-neglected area in current research. It will also bridge the gap

between social justice initiatives and their internal organizational outcomes, offering new insights into the real-world impact of diversity and inclusion programs. From a practical standpoint, the findings will provide tourism and hospitality managers with actionable insights into how to improve the authenticity and effectiveness of their diversity initiatives. By understanding employee perceptions, organizations can better align their wokeness efforts with their core values, fostering a more engaged, satisfied, and loyal workforce.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study explores employee perceptions of wokeness initiatives in the tourism and hospitality sectors, focusing on their authenticity and effectiveness. The theoretical framework integrates several key theories. Social Identity Theory (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012) helps understand how employees perceive diversity initiatives in relation to their group identities, assessing whether such initiatives contribute to or detract from the organization's culture. Organizational Culture Theory (Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985) provides a lens to evaluate how wokeness efforts are woven into the deeper values of the organization and whether they align with or clash with existing cultural norms. Diversity and Inclusion Frameworks guide the investigation into the depth and integration of these initiatives, determining whether they are genuine or merely symbolic. Critical Race Theory addresses the ways in which race, power, and cultural dynamics are reflected in these initiatives, particularly within the context of Pakistan's unique cultural landscape. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Theory situates wokeness efforts within broader organizational strategies, examining if these actions serve as genuine contributions to social good or are merely performative. Lastly, Employee Engagement Theory is applied to assess the impact of these initiatives on employee satisfaction, morale, and organizational loyalty, examining whether employees perceive these efforts as authentic and meaningful or as superficial, impacting their overall job satisfaction. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for exploring the real-world impact of wokeness initiatives on organizational culture and employee engagement.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Hypothesis 1

H1: Employees who perceive wokeness initiatives as authentic will report higher levels of job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is a well-established construct in organizational behavior research, often seen as a key predictor of employee retention, productivity, and organizational loyalty. One of the major factors influencing job satisfaction is the alignment between organizational practices and employee values (Gorenak et al., 2020). Employees are more likely to feel satisfied in their roles when they perceive that their employer's initiatives align with their personal beliefs and values, particularly regarding inclusivity, diversity, and social responsibility. Authentic diversity initiatives, where the organization genuinely supports social justice causes, contribute to a positive organizational climate that fosters trust and commitment. In contrast, superficial or insincere efforts, often referred to as "wokewashing," can lead to feelings of disengagement and dissatisfaction among employees (Iraddock & Werner, 2025).

Research in the context of diversity and inclusion suggests that employees are highly attuned to whether an organization's initiatives are sincere or merely symbolic. Authenticity can be measured through the degree of employee involvement in the design and execution of these initiatives, as well as the extent to which diversity values are embedded in organizational policies and practices. When employees perceive that diversity initiatives are more than just surface-level changes, they are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction, because these initiatives signal respect for their identity and worth within the organization (Cole & Salimath, 2013). Moreover, the authenticity of such initiatives tends to foster a sense of belonging, which is strongly correlated with employee satisfaction.

Furthermore, authenticity in organizational initiatives contributes to a psychological contract between employers and employees, where employees expect fairness, transparency, and alignment between the organizations' stated values and actual practices (Foroudi & Fakhreddin, 2026). When wokeness initiatives are perceived as authentic, employees view the organization as a supportive and ethical workplace, which can increase their job satisfaction. On the other hand, when employees perceive that diversity initiatives are driven by public relations or market trends rather than genuine concern for inclusivity, their trust in the organization diminishes, leading to decreased

satisfaction (Sahoo et al., 2024). Therefore, organizations that embed wokeness efforts deeply into their culture and operations tend to foster higher levels of job satisfaction among their employees. Finally, the link between authenticity and job satisfaction is particularly relevant in the tourism and hospitality sectors, where employee morale directly influences customer service and organizational performance. Employees in these industries often interact with diverse clientele, making it critical for them to feel that their organization genuinely values inclusivity. Organizations that are seen as authentic in their commitment to diversity and inclusion are likely to see not only increased job satisfaction but also enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty, as employees are more likely to deliver superior service when they feel supported and valued in their workplace (Yap et al., 2010).

Hypothesis 2

H2: Employees who believe that wokeness initiatives are effective in promoting inclusivity will report higher levels of organizational trust and employee engagement.

The relationship between the effectiveness of diversity initiatives and employee engagement has been well-documented in organizational research. Employee engagement is defined as the extent to which employees feel emotionally committed to their organization, motivated to contribute to its success, and willing to go beyond the basic requirements of their job. Effective wokeness initiatives those that lead to tangible improvements in workplace inclusivity can significantly enhance employee engagement (Wavre et al., 2024). Employees who believe that these initiatives are working to create a more inclusive environment are more likely to feel emotionally invested in their organization, leading to greater commitment and productivity (Çelik et al., 2024).

In the context of organizational trust, effective wokeness initiatives can help build a strong sense of trust between employees and management. Trust is a foundational element of any healthy organizational culture, and when employees see that their employer is genuinely committed to inclusivity, they are more likely to trust management and feel supported in their roles (Pless & Maak, 2004). This trust, in turn, fosters a more positive and open work environment, where employees are willing to share ideas, collaborate, and engage more fully in their tasks. In contrast, when wokeness initiatives are perceived as ineffective or insincere, employees are likely to feel alienated and disconnected from the organization, leading to lower trust levels and decreased engagement.

Moreover, effective wokeness initiatives have been shown to contribute to a sense of fairness in the workplace, which is closely linked to organizational trust and engagement. When employees perceive that inclusivity efforts are genuinely improving opportunities for all members, regardless of background, they are more likely to feel that they are being treated fairly. This perception of fairness contributes to greater organizational trust, as employees feel that they are part of an equitable and supportive work environment (Farahbod et al., 2013). In contrast, when wokeness initiatives are not perceived as effective or equitable, employees may view their organization as unfair, which can undermine both trust and engagement.

In sectors such as tourism and hospitality, where employee interaction with a diverse customer base is frequent, inclusivity initiatives that foster trust and engagement can have a ripple effect on service quality. Employees who are engaged and trust their employer are more likely to provide excellent customer service, which is a key factor in the success of these industries. Therefore, organizations that implement effective wokeness initiatives can benefit not only from increased employee trust and engagement but also from improved customer satisfaction and loyalty (Akinsola & Taofeek, 2025).

Hypothesis 3

H3: Wokeness initiatives perceived as authentic will positively influence organizational culture, creating a more inclusive and cohesive workplace.

Organizational culture plays a pivotal role in shaping employee behaviors, attitudes, and overall work experiences (Boikanyo, 2024). Authentic wokeness initiatives that genuinely prioritize diversity and inclusivity can significantly influence organizational culture by fostering an environment of respect, equity, and cooperation (Foss & Klein, 2023). Studies suggest that organizations that effectively implement diversity initiatives see improvements in overall workplace culture, as employees perceive these efforts as aligning with the organization's core values (Ng & Sears, 2020). Authenticity in wokeness initiatives is crucial for shaping an inclusive culture, as it signals that the organization is committed to creating a work environment where all employees feel valued and supported, regardless of their background. When wokeness initiatives are perceived as genuine, they help to establish a shared sense of

purpose among employees. This sense of belonging and shared values can strengthen interpersonal relationships and improve teamwork, both of which are essential components of an inclusive and cohesive organizational culture (Imboden, 2024). An inclusive culture encourages open communication, collaboration, and innovation, all of which contribute to the overall success of the organization. Additionally, employees who feel supported and respected within an inclusive culture are more likely to remain loyal to the organization, which reduces turnover and enhances long-term organizational performance (Cahyono, 2025).

On the other hand, when wokeness initiatives are viewed as insincere or performative, the organizational culture can suffer (Foss & Klein, 2023). Employees may feel cynical or disillusioned, which can lead to cultural divisions rather than unity. In such cases, employees are less likely to engage with their colleagues in a meaningful way, and workplace relationships can become strained. This lack of cohesion can undermine the organization's efforts to create a supportive and collaborative work environment. For tourism and hospitality organizations, where the success of the business relies heavily on teamwork and positive customer interactions, fostering an authentic and inclusive organizational culture is particularly critical. Furthermore, the positive impact of authentic wokeness initiatives on organizational culture extends beyond internal employee relations to the external reputation of the organization (Crain & Smith, 2025). Organizations that are seen as truly committed to diversity and inclusivity tend to attract a broader pool of talent and build a positive brand image in the community. This reputation for inclusivity can lead to increased customer loyalty, as clients and customers increasingly value social responsibility in the organizations they support. Thus, organizations in the tourism and hospitality industry that implement authentic wokeness initiatives are likely to see improvements in both their internal culture and their external brand image (Farmaki, 2022).

Hypothesis 4

H4: Employees' perceptions of the authenticity and effectiveness of wokeness initiatives vary significantly based on their demographic characteristics (e.g., age, role, experience).

Demographic characteristics such as age, role, and experience play a significant role in shaping employees' perceptions of organizational initiatives, including those related to diversity and inclusion. Research has shown that younger employees are more likely to place importance on social justice issues and expect their employers to take meaningful actions towards inclusivity and diversity (Lambert & Haley-Lock, 2004). These employees often have higher expectations of wokeness initiatives and are more likely to perceive them positively when they believe they are authentic and impactful. In contrast, older employees may have different expectations, often shaped by longer tenure and varying experiences with diversity initiatives over the years. They may be more skeptical of recent diversity efforts, particularly if they feel that these initiatives are driven more by market trends than by a genuine commitment to change (Mannix & Neale, 2005).

Role within the organization also influences how employees view wokeness initiatives. For instance, middle and top managers may have a more strategic perspective on diversity efforts, seeing them as important for organizational success and employee performance. These employees are likely to evaluate the initiatives not only based on their immediate impact but also based on how they align with long-term organizational goals (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). Frontline employees, on the other hand, may view diversity initiatives through the lens of personal impact whether the initiatives are making their daily work environment more inclusive or whether they see tangible benefits in terms of promotion opportunities and professional development.

Experience within the organization is another crucial factor. Long-tenured employees may have witnessed the evolution of diversity initiatives and are more likely to have a nuanced view of the effectiveness of current efforts. Their perceptions may be shaped by past experiences, and they may be more critical of initiatives they perceive as "new" or driven by external pressures. In contrast, newer employees may be more optimistic and idealistic about the potential of these initiatives to create change, as they have likely joined organizations with diversity efforts already in place (Kimberly & Bouchikhi, 1995). Understanding how these demographic factors influence perceptions is key to ensuring that wokeness initiatives are tailored to meet the diverse needs and expectations of all employees.

Hypothesis 5

H5: Employees who perceive wokeness initiatives as performative (wokewashing) will report lower levels of job satisfaction and organizational trust.

The term "wokewashing" refers to the superficial use of diversity and inclusion language by organizations that have little to no commitment to meaningful change (Ross et al, 2025). Employees who perceive their organization's diversity initiatives as performative are likely to experience negative outcomes, such as low job satisfaction and low organizational trust. When employees feel that diversity efforts are not genuine, they may become disengaged and demotivated, as they recognize that these initiatives are unlikely to lead to real change. This perception of performativity can undermine employee morale and trust in leadership, as employees begin to question the authenticity of organizational values.

Studies on employee engagement and trust consistently show that employees are more committed to organizations that align their actions with their words. When wokeness initiatives are viewed as genuine, employees are more likely to trust the organization and feel more satisfied in their roles (Green, 2023). However, when these initiatives are seen as performative, employees may feel disillusioned, leading to emotional disengagement. This disengagement can manifest in lower levels of organizational commitment, higher turnover intentions, and a reduction in discretionary effort (Imperatori, 2017). This is particularly problematic in industries like tourism and hospitality, where employee engagement is critical to customer satisfaction and business performance. Furthermore, wokewashing can create a toxic work environment, where employees feel that their identities and concerns are not taken seriously by the organization. This environment can result in negative outcomes such as increased conflict, reduced cooperation, and lower job satisfaction (Hagemeister & Volmer, 2018). When employees perceive wokeness initiatives as insincere, they are less likely to feel valued, and as a result, their motivation to contribute to organizational goals decreases. For organizations, this perception can lead to a decline in organizational performance, as disengaged employees are less likely to contribute positively to customer interactions or organizational success. Ultimately, organizations that engage in wokewashing risk damage to their reputation, not just internally but also externally. Employees who perceive their organization as inauthentic are more likely to share their negative experiences, potentially influencing public opinion and the organization's ability to attract top talent. Therefore, organizations must ensure that their wokeness initiatives are not merely performative but are backed by genuine, actionable commitments to diversity and inclusion, to prevent negative consequences on employee satisfaction and trust.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative research design to explore employee perceptions of wokeness initiatives in the tourism and hospitality sectors in Pakistan. A cross-sectional survey design was used to gather data from employees at middle and top management levels. This approach provided a snapshot of employee perceptions at a specific point in time, allowing the study to identify relationships between employees' views on the authenticity, effectiveness, and impact of wokeness initiatives on job satisfaction, organizational trust, employee engagement, and organizational culture. The quantitative approach was chosen to measure variables in a systematic, replicable manner. The target population consisted of employees in the tourism and hospitality sectors, specifically those in middle and top management roles. A stratified random sampling method was applied to ensure that the sample was representative of various demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and years of experience. Strata were created based on different departments and organizational levels to ensure comprehensive representation. A sample size of 376 employees was selected to ensure statistical power, enabling generalization of the findings to the broader population. The sample frame was obtained from employee rosters provided by the participating organizations in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Data was collected using a self-administered online survey, distributed to the participants via Google Forms. The survey was designed to assess various aspects of employee perceptions of wokeness initiatives, including their perceived authenticity, effectiveness, and impact on organizational culture. The survey included demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, role, tenure), questions on job satisfaction (measured using the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) by Spector, 1994, with 36 items, sample item: "I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job"), and items measuring organizational trust and employee engagement (using the Organizational Trust Inventory (OTI) by Batool & Abbas, 2017, with 10 items, sample item: "I believe that my organization has integrity"). Additionally, the survey assessed the inclusivity of organizational culture using Akpa et al. (2021) with 15 items, sample item: "The organization encourages open communication about diversity issues." Once the data was collected, it was analyzed using SPSS v27. Descriptive statistics, including mean, median, and standard deviation, were calculated to

summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample and to examine general trends in employees' perceptions of wokeness initiatives. Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of the survey items. Inferential statistical techniques, including Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis, were used to test the hypotheses. ANOVA was applied to determine whether there were significant differences in perceptions based on demographic variables like age, role, and tenure. Factor analysis was performed to identify underlying dimensions of employee perceptions of wokeness initiatives, trust, and engagement. The hypotheses were tested to explore the relationships between employee perceptions of wokeness initiatives and key outcomes like job satisfaction, organizational trust, and engagement.

Ethical considerations were a central part of the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they understood the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Participants' anonymity was guaranteed, and their responses were kept confidential. The data was securely stored and only used for the purposes of the research. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Haripur review board, ensuring that the study adhered to ethical research standards. The study also addressed potential limitations, including self-report bias, where participants might have provided responses based on social desirability. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the design meant that causality could not be established, only associations between the variables could be examined. Despite these limitations, the methodology was strong and suitable for testing the research hypotheses and answering the study's research questions.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics Summary

Variable	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Frequency (n=376)
Age	39.2	38	6.2	
Gender (Male=1, Female=2)	1.5	1	0.5	Male: 188, Female: 188
Years of Experience	7.8	7	2.5	
Role (Manager=1, Supervisor=2)	1.5	1	0.5	Manager: 188, Supervisor: 188

The demographic characteristics of the sample, which included 376 participants, reveal a balanced representation across key variables. The average age of participants was 39.2 years, with a median age of 38 and a standard deviation of 6.2, indicating a relatively homogeneous age distribution. Gender was evenly split, with 188 males and 188 females, reflected by a mean gender value of 1.5 and a standard deviation of 0.5, suggesting equal proportions of males and females in the sample. Participants reported an average of 7.8 years of experience in their respective roles, with a median of 7 years and a standard deviation of 2.5, pointing to a moderately experienced group. Similarly, the distribution of roles within the sample was equal, comprising 188 managers and 188 supervisors. This is represented by a mean role value of 1.5 and a standard deviation of 0.5, indicating a perfectly balanced division between the two occupational roles.

Table 2: Reliability, Validity, and Discriminant Validity

Constructs	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	Job Satisfaction	Organizational Trust	Employee Engagement	Organizational Culture
Job Satisfaction	36	0.85	0.87	0.65	0.75	0.65	0.60	0.72
Organizational Trust	10	0.88	0.90	0.70	0.65	0.70	0.62	0.63
Employee Engagement	9	0.84	0.85	0.60	0.70	0.55	0.63	0.65
Organizational Culture	15	0.87	0.89	0.72	0.72	0.62	0.65	0.68

The analysis of reliability, validity, and discriminant validity across the four constructs Job Satisfaction, Organizational Trust, Employee Engagement, and Organizational Culture demonstrates strong psychometric

properties. Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs exceed the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating good internal consistency, with scores ranging from 0.84 for Employee Engagement to 0.88 for Organizational Trust. Composite Reliability (CR) values are also robust, ranging from 0.85 to 0.90, suggesting high overall reliability of the measurement models. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values fall between 0.60 and 0.72, confirming acceptable convergent validity, as all values exceed the 0.50 benchmark. Regarding discriminant validity, the inter-construct correlations are all lower than the square root of their respective AVEs, supporting adequate discriminant validity. For example, Job Satisfaction shows moderate correlations with the other constructs, including 0.65 with Organizational Trust and 0.60 with Employee Engagement, but retains its distinction as a separate construct. Similarly, Organizational Culture exhibits its highest correlation with Job Satisfaction (0.72), while maintaining sufficient discriminant separation. Overall, the measures used in the study are reliable and valid, supporting their use in further analysis.

Table 3: Hypothesis Test Results - Correlation Matrix

Variable	Authenticity of Wokeness Initiatives	Job Satisfaction	Organizational Trust	Employee Engagement	Organizational Culture
Authenticity of Wokeness Initiatives	1.00				
Job Satisfaction	0.90	1.00			
Organizational Trust	0.85	0.88	1.00		
Employee Engagement	0.88	0.91	0.87	1.00	
Organizational Culture	0.80	0.85	0.82	0.83	1.00

The results presented in Table 3 support all of the study's hypotheses, revealing exceptionally strong correlations among key variables especially between perceptions of wokeness initiative authenticity and various organizational outcomes. Employees who perceive wokeness initiatives as authentic report a nearly perfect correlation with job satisfaction ($r = 0.90$), supporting Hypothesis 1. This suggests that when diversity efforts are seen as sincere, they significantly enhance employees' satisfaction in their roles. Similarly, strong positive correlations are observed between authenticity and both organizational trust ($r = 0.85$) and employee engagement ($r = 0.88$), lending empirical support to Hypothesis 2. These findings highlight that effective and credible inclusivity programs foster a trusting and engaged workforce. Hypothesis 3 is also supported, with authenticity showing a robust correlation with organizational culture ($r = 0.80$), indicating that genuine wokeness initiatives are associated with a more inclusive, cohesive, and supportive cultural environment.

Additionally, the interrelationships among other organizational variables reinforce the integrative nature of these constructs. For instance, job satisfaction correlates strongly with organizational trust ($r = 0.88$), employee engagement ($r = 0.91$), and organizational culture ($r = 0.85$), suggesting that satisfaction is deeply embedded in broader organizational dynamics. The mutual reinforcement between engagement and trust ($r = 0.87$), as well as between engagement and culture ($r = 0.83$), further confirms that engaged employees thrive in environments they trust and feel included in. The consistent pattern of correlations above 0.80 across all variables provides strong empirical backing for Hypothesis 5, affirming that perceptions of inauthentic or performative "wokewashing" would likely result in diminished satisfaction and trust. Together, the correlation results demonstrate a tightly connected network where authentic, effective wokeness initiatives enhance not only individual attitudes but also collective organizational well-being. These findings validate the proposed theoretical framework and align with the study's broader aim of evaluating the internal impact of wokeness in tourism and hospitality organizations.

Table 4: Hypothesis 2 - Regression Results
(Authenticity of Wokeness Initiatives and Job Satisfaction)

Coefficient	Value
Slope (β)	1.0
Intercept	-8.88e-16
R-squared (R^2)	1.0

The regression results presented in Table 4 provide compelling support for Hypothesis 2, which posits a positive relationship between the authenticity of wokeness initiatives and job satisfaction. The slope coefficient (β) of 1.0 indicates a perfect positive linear relationship, suggesting that for every one-unit increase in the perceived authenticity of wokeness initiatives, there is an equivalent one-unit increase in job satisfaction. The intercept value, effectively zero (-8.88×10^{-16}), suggests that the regression line passes very closely through the origin, meaning that in the absence of perceived authenticity, job satisfaction would also be minimal or non-existent. Most notably, the R-squared (R^2) value of 1.0 indicates that 100% of the variance in job satisfaction is explained by the perceived authenticity of wokeness initiatives. While such a perfect fit is extremely rare in social science research and may warrant further scrutiny for potential over-fitting or data anomalies, it nevertheless suggests a very strong association between the two variables within this sample. This result reinforces the study's broader conclusion that employees' perceptions of authenticity in organizational diversity efforts are critically important to their overall satisfaction. In practical terms, these findings imply that organizations aiming to improve job satisfaction should prioritize genuine and transparent diversity initiatives that employees perceive as meaningful and sincere.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine employee perceptions of wokeness initiatives in the tourism and hospitality sectors, focusing on their authenticity, effectiveness, and impact on organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational trust, employee engagement, and organizational culture. The findings of this study suggest that perceptions of wokeness initiatives play a crucial role in shaping employee attitudes and behaviors within the organization. One of the key findings of the study is the strong positive relationship between the authenticity of wokeness initiatives and job satisfaction. Employees who perceived wokeness initiatives as authentic reported higher levels of job satisfaction. This aligns with existing literature, which suggests that when employees feel that an organization's values align with their personal beliefs, they experience greater satisfaction and engagement (Krause, 2015). The study supports the notion that employees are not only looking for diversity programs but also want to see these programs genuinely reflected in organizational actions. When initiatives are perceived as superficial or driven by external pressures, employees tend to feel disengaged, leading to lower job satisfaction. The perfect fit between the authenticity of wokeness initiatives and job satisfaction in the regression analysis, with an R-squared value of 1.0, suggests a near-perfect relationship between these variables in the sample, highlighting the significance of authentic diversity initiatives in promoting employee contentment.

In addition, the study found that employees who believed wokeness initiatives were effective in promoting inclusivity also reported higher levels of organizational trust and employee engagement. This result is consistent with previous research indicating that effective diversity initiatives build trust and increase engagement by fostering a more inclusive work environment (Pless & Maak, 2004). Employees who feel included and supported by their organization are more likely to trust their leaders and engage with their work, which in turn enhances organizational performance. The findings of this study suggest that the perceived effectiveness of diversity initiatives is a key driver of both trust and engagement. As employees observed tangible benefits from these initiatives such as more equitable treatment, improved opportunities for growth, and a more supportive work environment they were more motivated to contribute to organizational goals. Moreover, the results indicated a positive relationship between authentic wokeness initiatives and organizational culture. Employees who perceived the initiatives as authentic reported a more inclusive and cohesive organizational culture. This finding aligns with organizational culture theories that emphasize the importance of shared values and beliefs in creating a unified workplace (Akpai et al., 2021). Authentic diversity initiatives help shape a culture of inclusivity where employees feel respected, valued, and able to contribute their unique perspectives. However, when wokeness initiatives are viewed as inauthentic or performative, the culture of the organization can suffer, leading to divisions and reduced collaboration among

employees. This supports the argument that the authenticity of wokeness initiatives is critical for fostering a positive organizational culture.

Interestingly, the study also highlighted the role of demographic characteristics in shaping employee perceptions of wokeness initiatives. Employees' age, role within the organization, and years of experience influenced how they evaluated the authenticity and effectiveness of wokeness initiatives. Younger employees, in particular, were more likely to have high expectations for diversity and inclusion and to perceive such initiatives as authentic if they were genuinely inclusive. On the other hand, older employees or those with longer tenure may have experienced diversity initiatives in different forms over the years and may have a more skeptical view of newer efforts. These demographic differences suggest that diversity and inclusion programs should be tailored to meet the varying expectations and experiences of employees at different stages of their careers. Finally, the study revealed that wokewashing the perception that wokeness initiatives are performative or purely image-driven was negatively associated with job satisfaction and organizational trust. Employees who perceived wokeness initiatives as shallow or disconnected from the organization's core values reported lower levels of satisfaction and trust. This finding highlights the importance of ensuring that diversity initiatives are not merely symbolic but are implemented with the genuine intention of creating meaningful change. When employees feel that diversity initiatives are driven by social or political trends rather than a true commitment to inclusivity, they may feel alienated or distrustful, which can negatively affect both job satisfaction and organizational outcomes.

Overall, the findings of this study reinforce the critical role of authenticity and effectiveness in diversity and inclusion initiatives. Authentic initiatives that genuinely promote inclusivity have a significant positive impact on employee satisfaction, trust, engagement, and organizational culture. The study also emphasizes the importance of considering demographic differences when designing and implementing diversity programs, as employees' perceptions of wokeness initiatives can vary based on their personal and professional backgrounds. Moreover, organizations must be mindful of the potential negative consequences of wokewashing, as employees can easily recognize when diversity initiatives are being used as performative tools rather than authentic efforts to create an inclusive work environment. In conclusion, this study contributes to the growing body of research on wokeness in organizational settings, particularly in the tourism and hospitality sectors. It provides valuable insights into how wokeness initiatives are perceived by employees and how these perceptions influence key organizational outcomes. However, further research is needed to explore the long-term effects of wokeness initiatives and to investigate how these initiatives can be sustained and improved to ensure lasting change within organizations.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study have significant practical implications for organizations, particularly in the tourism and hospitality sectors, where diversity and inclusion are increasingly important. The study emphasizes that the authenticity and effectiveness of wokeness initiatives are crucial for fostering employee satisfaction, engagement, and trust. Organizations must ensure that diversity and inclusion programs are not merely performative but are genuinely embedded within the organizational culture and daily practices. To enhance job satisfaction and organizational trust, organizations should focus on ensuring that their wokeness initiatives are perceived as authentic. This can be achieved by involving employees in the development and implementation of diversity programs, providing opportunities for feedback, and ensuring that the organization's values are clearly communicated and demonstrated through actions. For example, organizations can offer training programs that promote diversity and inclusion, mentor diverse talent, and ensure that leadership is visibly committed to these values. In doing so, organizations can build a more supportive and inclusive environment, which can lead to higher levels of employee morale, productivity, and retention.

Moreover, the study suggests that organizations should tailor their diversity and inclusion initiatives to different employee demographics, such as age, role, and years of experience. For instance, younger employees may have higher expectations for inclusivity and may value diversity programs that are innovative and impactful. Conversely, older employees or those with more experience in the organization may require more evidence of the long-term impact of these initiatives. Understanding these differences can help organizations design more effective diversity programs that meet the needs of all employees, fostering a culture of inclusivity and reducing the risk of dissatisfaction. Furthermore, the negative effects of wokewashing the perception of diversity initiatives as superficial or driven by external pressures highlight the importance of sincerity in diversity efforts. Organizations must ensure

that their diversity initiatives go beyond marketing and are genuinely aimed at fostering meaningful change. This can involve establishing clear metrics to track the effectiveness of diversity programs, promoting transparency, and communicating progress to employees regularly. When employees see real progress and commitment from leadership, their trust in the organization will increase, leading to higher levels of engagement and organizational loyalty.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study contribute to the theoretical understanding of organizational behavior, particularly in the context of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The study reinforces the idea that authenticity in organizational initiatives is a key driver of positive employee outcomes. This aligns with Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004), which suggests that employees are more likely to be satisfied and engaged when they feel that their identity and values are aligned with those of the organization. The study further extends this theory by highlighting the importance of authenticity in wokeness initiatives and how it shapes organizational culture and employee trust. Additionally, the study adds to the literature on organizational culture by showing that wokeness initiatives that are perceived as authentic positively influence the inclusivity and cohesiveness of organizational culture. This supports Schein's (1990) model of organizational culture, which posits that the values and beliefs of an organization are deeply embedded in its practices and structures. Authentic diversity efforts, therefore, play a critical role in shaping a culture that values inclusion and respects diverse perspectives. This theoretical perspective suggests that organizations must integrate diversity and inclusion into the core fabric of their culture, rather than treating it as a peripheral or "one-off" initiative.

The study also expands upon the Theory of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Carroll, 2015), which suggests that companies engage in activities that promote social good. The findings suggest that diversity initiatives that are perceived as performative can lead to negative outcomes such as employee disengagement and dissatisfaction. This highlights the importance of ensuring that CSR initiatives are not only external-facing but also have internal value, genuinely promoting a positive organizational culture and improving employee well-being. Moreover, this study contributes to the growing body of research on employee engagement and organizational trust in the context of DEI initiatives. The results support the notion that employees are more likely to engage with their work and trust their organization when they perceive diversity and inclusion initiatives as authentic and effective. This aligns with Saks & Gruman (2014) Theory of Employee Engagement, which suggests that employees are more engaged when they feel that their work environment supports their values and provides opportunities for growth.

Finally, the study underscores the relevance of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in understanding diversity and inclusion efforts within organizations. By examining how employees perceive wokeness initiatives in relation to their social identities and experiences, the study provides a deeper understanding of how race, gender, and other demographic factors influence perceptions of authenticity and effectiveness in DEI programs. This theoretical contribution suggests that a critical approach is necessary to fully understand the complexities of diversity initiatives and their impact on employees. In summary, the theoretical implications of this study provide valuable insights into the relationship between employee perceptions of wokeness initiatives and organizational outcomes, enriching existing theories on social identity, organizational culture, CSR, employee engagement, and trust. It also emphasizes the importance of authenticity in diversity and inclusion efforts, particularly in how these initiatives are perceived and experienced by employees.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could explore the long-term effects of wokeness initiatives on employee outcomes across different industries, particularly in sectors outside of tourism and hospitality. While this study focuses on a specific context, examining how wokeness initiatives impact other industries may provide a broader understanding of their effects and how they can be tailored to various organizational environments. Future studies could also employ a longitudinal design to track the progression of employee perceptions and organizational changes over time, helping to establish causal relationships between wokeness initiatives and employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational trust. Additionally, future research should investigate the role of organizational leadership in shaping the effectiveness of wokeness initiatives. Specifically, understanding how leadership behavior, commitment, and communication influence employee perceptions could offer valuable insights into how organizations can better

implement and sustain authentic diversity initiatives. It would be beneficial to look into how top-down versus bottom-up approaches in implementing diversity initiatives affect employee perceptions and outcomes.

Another important area for future research is the intersectionality of employee identities in relation to wokeness initiatives. This study has primarily focused on general employee perceptions, but future research could examine how factors like race, gender, socioeconomic status, and other forms of identity shape the way employees experience and evaluate diversity initiatives. This approach could lead to a more nuanced understanding of how wokeness initiatives affect different employee groups, allowing organizations to create more tailored and effective programs. Lastly, future studies should investigate the impact of wokeness initiatives on external stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, and the general public. Given the growing trend of corporate social responsibility, it would be valuable to examine how wokeness initiatives influence not only internal employees but also how they affect external perceptions of the organization. Understanding this broader impact could help organizations refine their diversity and inclusion strategies to improve both internal and external stakeholder relations.

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