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Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	3
Overview of the topic	3
Aim.....	4
Objectives	4
Research questions	4
Rationale	4
Problem statement	4
Methodology	5
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	5
Recognising several diversity and inclusion practices used by fashion retailers in the UK	5
Factors impacting business outcomes in the UK fashion retail sector.....	5
Influence of Diversity and inclusion practices on business outcomes in the UK fashion retail sector	6
Theoretical framework	7
Research Gap	7
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH GAP	7
Research Method.....	7
Research Philosophy	8
Data Collection	8
Data Analysis	8
Ethical Consideration	9
References	10

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Overview of the topic

Diversity and inclusion is one of the most trending themes in the field of business that is related to accepting and respecting people from different cultural backgrounds in teams to improve performance (McCleish, 2022). The business success and overall outcomes depend on the level of creativity that is implemented within the company and the diversity promotes creativity within the team to a great extent (Cassell *et.al* 2022). Various diversity and inclusion practice includes leadership diversity, diverse representation and improved accessibility within the business. The increasing significance of inclusion and diversity in the fashion retail sector of the UK is mainly connected with emerging expectations of consumers, modifying demographics of workforce globalisation.

Companies are significantly identifying that an inclusive workplace not only enhance the satisfaction of employees but also improves decision-making, innovation and overall performance of the business. In the context of the UK fashion retail sector, the initiatives of diversity are mainly executed in organisational culture, leadership and recruitment to represent different bases of customers (Dreska, 2023). On the other side, irrespective of boosting awareness, various entities face problems in effectively executing inclusive practices because of cultural and structural barriers. Recognising that diversity and inclusion impact the outcomes of business is very important for enhancing the effectiveness of an organisation. The purpose of this study is to discover these connections by concentrating on managerial perspectives in the fashion retail industry of the UK, contributing to practical business tactics and academic insight.

Brand image is strengthened and customer loyalty is increased through inclusive product offers and marketing efforts that represent various identities and cultures. Additionally, companies that promote inclusive environments at work frequently see increases in worker engagement, output, and teamwork. Nevertheless, the UK fashion retail industry still faces obstacles to properly adopting diversity and inclusion efforts, such as unconscious prejudice, a lack of leadership fairness, and inadequate mechanisms for accountability, despite the acknowledged advantages. Ultimately, the degree to which firms integrate diversity and inclusive practices into their core goals and organizational culture determines how successful they are, even when they offer substantial benefits for commercial performance. Businesses that actively support diversity and

inclusion typically see improved financial outcomes because different viewpoints enhance decision-making and allow businesses to better adapt to complicated market demands. Additionally, inclusive settings foster creativity and innovation, which are crucial for creating fresh designs, advertising campaigns, and consumer experiences in the fiercely competitive fashion industry.

Aim

Evaluation of how diversity and inclusive practices impacts business outcomes in fashion retail sector of the UK

Objectives

- To identify various diversity and inclusion practices adopted by fashion retailers in the UK
- To assess the factors that affects business outcomes in the UK fashion retail sector
- To analyse the impact of Diversity and inclusion practices on business outcomes in UK fashion retail sector
- To recommend best strategies to improve diversity and inclusion practices in UK fashion retail sector

Research questions

1. What are some of common diversity and inclusion practices adopted by fashion retailers in the UK?
2. What are the factors that influence the business outcomes in the UK fashion retail sector?
3. What is the role of Diversity and inclusion practices on business outcomes in UK fashion retail sector?

Rationale

The rationale behind selection of this topic will be that Diversity and inclusion have become very popular trend in the world of business, and it is important to study its impact on overall business outcomes. Also previous studies lack in detail analysis into this area, which will be another key rationale for this study.

Problem statement

The fashion brands in the UK are nowadays more dependent on culturally diverse workforce that contribute to the goals of company in more effective manner (Cavusoglu and Atik, 2023). The key

problem here relates to inadequate implementation of the diversity and inclusion practice in fashion retail sector and challenges that are faced by the fashion brands to improve the business outcomes.

Methodology

The primary data collection method will be used where the data will be gathered from 5 managers working in the UK fashion retail industry related to the diversity and inclusion practice adopted in their organisation. The analysis of the data will be done using the qualitative thematic analysis technique.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Recognising several diversity and inclusion practices used by fashion retailers in the UK

The practices of diversity and inclusion have turned out to be a strategic priority in the fashion retail industry of the UK, contributing towards enhanced customer engagement, creativity and innovation. According to Okatta, C.G., Ajayi, F.A. and Olawale, O., (2024), an inclusive workplace assists in improving decision-making and collaboration by implementing different opinions. In the fashion retail industry of UK, these practices involve leadership diversity, accessibility in the design of product, different representation in marketing and inclusive hiring. These initiatives facilitate companies aligned with emerging societal values and expectations of consumers. For instance, ASOS has executed inclusive initiatives like sustaining brands owned by minority and inspiring different representations within the campaigns (Inclusive Companies, 2026). These practices allow the company to connect with a wide-ranging audience and enhance the perception of the brand. Although irrespective of advancement, challenges are identified. Various fashion companies in the UK still face the absence of diversity in the positions of leadership and experience issues with the effective execution of inclusive practices. This shows that the efforts of diversity and inclusion are mainly suspicious and not comprehensively included in the strategies of the organisation.

Factors impacting business outcomes in the UK fashion retail sector

In the fashion retail industry of the UK, business outcomes are impacted by numerous internal and external aspects, such as operational efficiency, customer preferences, market trends and organisational culture. A different workforce is significantly identified as a crucial driver of

customer satisfaction and innovation. Entities that recognise different needs of customers can create services and products that effectively reflect the demands of the market, enhancing profitability and competitiveness.

For example, Burberry has drawn attention to inclusive representation and branding, improving its worldwide appeal and reinforcing its brand identity (Nora, 2022). This method facilitates attracting different customers and enhances the positioning in the market. In addition to this, business outcomes can be adversely impacted by poor execution of diversity practices, inability to familiarise with modifying electricians of consumers and absence of innovation. On the other hand, it has been criticised by Cavusoglu, and Atik, (2023) that a high level of competition and economic uncertainty in the fashion sector of the UK further hinders the performance of organisations, restricting profitability and growth.

Influence of Diversity and inclusion practices on business outcomes in the UK fashion retail sector

It has been said by Dreska, (2023) that the impact of diversity and inclusion on the outcomes of business is positive as its offer optimistic connection among organisational performance and inclusive practices. Different teams bring diverse opinions, which improve innovation, problem-solving, and creativity that lead to enhanced business outcomes. Also, inclusive work significantly contributes towards the satisfaction, productivity and retention of employees, which are regarded as important for the enduring success of the organisation. Primark is one of the relevant examples of this, as it establishes inclusive initiatives like different mannequins to represent diverse groups of customers and adaptive clothing (Kernan, 2025). This tactic of Primark improves brand inclusivity and engagement of customers.

It has been criticised that the influence of diversity and inclusive practices on the outcomes of business is not always measurable or direct. Companies might face problem to quantify the advantages of diversity as well as poorly handled initiatives that result in inefficiencies or conflicts. Thus, the effectiveness related to diversity and inclusion relies highly on the appropriate execution and commitment of the organisation.

Theoretical framework

One of the crucial theories is the *Resource-Based View* (RBV), which recommends that a company attain a competitive edge with the help of inimitable, rare and valuable resources. In this term, a different workforce can be regarded as a strategic resource which improve organisational performance, innovation and creativity by using different perspectives and skills, companies can enhance decision-making and accomplish better outcomes of business. On the other side, Khan, and Javaid, (2023) argued that the *Diversity Management Model* is also one of the imperative models that offer a framework for recognising how companies execute inclusive practices. This model highlights the significance of equitable policies, inclusive culture and leadership commitment in attaining the success of an organisation. It outlines that effective diversity management needs to be incorporated across all levels of the organisation.

Research Gap

Irrespective of widespread research on diversity and inclusion, very few studies concentrate particularly on the fashion retail industry of the UK and its direct influence on the outcomes of business. Moreover, there is an absence of empirical research that is grounded in the perspectives of management. The aim of this study is to eliminate these gaps through offering organisational practices and primary insights.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH GAP

Research Method

Research method is defined as the overall tactic utilised to evaluate and gather information within a study, mainly classified into mixed, quantitative and qualitative methods (Taherdoost, 2022). The current study will use a qualitative research method to discover the role related inclusion and diversity practices on the outcomes of business. In this, primary data will be gathered from the managers in order to attain detailed insights into the experiences and practices of the organisation. Furthermore, the rationale behind using the qualitative method will be that it would facilitate in-depth exploration of organisational realities, behaviours, and perceptions that could not be effectively addressed with the help of numerical information, which makes it one of the best options for recognising difficult social phenomena.

Research Philosophy

The research philosophy means the conventional of opinions about how learning is understood and developed. Interpretivism, realism and positivism are various common philosophies that are used in the study (Junjie, and Yingxin, 2022). This particular research will concentrate on using interpretivism philosophy that would help in recognising social contexts and subjective experiences. In this, the perspectives of 5 managers will be explored in terms of diversity and inclusion practices in the company. The reason behind this approach is that it will enable the researcher to explain experiences, behaviors and meanings in real-world settings. This method is regarded as appropriate for investigating how people perceive and apply diversity practices, offering an in-depth understanding into the dynamics of the organisation.

Data Collection

Data collection refers to the procedure of collecting information in order to address the objectives of research, which could be secondary or primary (Sharma, 2022). In this study, the primary data collection method will be utilised, in which information will be collected directly from participants. Moreover, data will be gathered from 5 supervisors or managers working in the fashion retail industry of the UK with the help of interviews. The use of the primary data collection method is justified because it will provide up-to-date, relevant and first-hand understandings about inclusion and diversity practices. It will also allow the scholars to collect particular information associated with the objectives of study and make sure that there is detailed insight into managerial opinions and organisational practices.

Data Analysis

Data analysis focuses on interpreting and organising gathered information to recognise insights and patterns. In terms of qualitative research, several techniques are utilised, including narrative analysis, content analysis and thematic analysis (IYANUOLUWABlessing, *et al.* 2024). The following study will conduct thematic analysis that draws attention to recognising recurring themes in the qualitative data. The gathered data of interview will be analysed and coded to recognise patterns regarding business outcomes and diversity practices. The use of thematic analysis in qualitative research is justified as it will offer a systematic interpretation of the data and assist in creating meaningful understandings from the responses of participants.

Ethical Consideration

This refers to sustained responsibility, transparency and integrity in the complete procedure of research. It involves issues like avoidance of harm, informed consent and confidentiality. This study will draw attention to using all the ethical guidelines and protocols by making sure that participants offer informed consent before their involvement in the research. The confidentiality of the respondents will be upheld, and identities will be kept anonymous. In addition to this, data will be utilised only for academic purposes (Hamzani, *et al.* 2023). All the ethical considerations will be taken into account as it will facilitate in making sure that there is reliability and credibility of the study, whereas the rights of the participants are protected, and the academic integrity will be maintained in the overall procedure of the study.

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