

Carinthia University of Applied Sciences School of Management Degree Program International Business Management (Master of Arts in Business)

Master Thesis

The Impact of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policies on Employee Motivation and Engagement

Submission for the academic degree of Master of Arts in Business

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Abstract English Version

In today's globalized working world, strategies for diversity, equity, and inclusion are becoming

more important as part of sustainable human resource policies. This master's thesis explores

how employees perceive DEI efforts and how these perceptions affect their motivation and

loyalty. The focus is on the Southeast Europe cluster of DB Schenker, a multinational logistics

company. A mixed-methods approach is used, combining quantitative data from a

standardized employee survey (n=248) with qualitative interviews with HR managers and an

analysis of the company's DEI communication. The central hypothesis is that perceived

authenticity and structural anchoring of DEI strategies correlate significantly with increased

employee motivation and commitment.

The findings support the main hypothesis. There is a strong positive correlation between how

effective employees perceive DEI efforts and their level of motivation (R² = .561, p < .001). A

significant but smaller link was also found between employees' sense of inclusion and their

emotional commitment to the company ($R^2 = .039$, p = .002). Notably, perceptions of DEI varied

across generations, countries, and departments. Younger employees and those who had

recently joined the company rated DEI measures more positively than others. However, the

study also highlights structural challenges, including symbolic inclusion without real influence,

regional differences in sensitivity to DEI issues, and missing feedback channels for employees.

The results show that DEI is not just an ethical goal, but also a powerful tool for increasing

employee motivation, identification with the company, and long-term retention, if it is

implemented in a credible, context-aware, and sustainable way. This thesis provides a solid

empirical contribution to organizational psychology research on DEI and offers practical

recommendations for managers working in international business environments.

Keywords: Diversity, equity, inclusion, employee motivation, engagement, logistics industry,

multinational organization

Length: 77 Pages (Introduction till Conclusion); 24,699 words

Page II

Abstract German Version

In der heutigen globalisierten Arbeitswelt gewinnen Strategien für Diversität, Chancengleichheit und Inklusion zunehmend an Bedeutung als Teil einer nachhaltigen Personalpolitik. Diese Masterarbeit untersucht, wie Mitarbeitende DEI-Maßnahmen wahrnehmen und wie sich diese Wahrnehmungen auf ihre Motivation und Loyalität auswirken. Der Fokus liegt auf dem Cluster Südosteuropa von DB Schenker, einem multinationalen Logistikunternehmen. Es wird ein Mixed-Methods-Ansatz verwendet, der quantitative Daten aus einer standardisierten Mitarbeitendenbefragung (n=248) mit qualitativen Interviews mit Personalverantwortlichen sowie einer Analyse der DEI-Kommunikation des Unternehmens kombiniert. Die zentrale Hypothese lautet, dass wahrgenommene Authentizität und strukturelle Verankerung von DEI-Strategien signifikant mit einer gesteigerten Mitarbeitendenmotivation und -bindung korrelieren.

Die Ergebnisse stützen die Haupthypothese. Es besteht eine starke positive Korrelation zwischen der wahrgenommenen Wirksamkeit der DEI-Maßnahmen durch die Mitarbeitenden und ihrem Motivationsniveau (R² = .561, p < .001). Eine signifikante, aber kleinere Verbindung wurde auch zwischen dem Inklusionsempfinden der Mitarbeitenden und ihrer emotionalen Bindung an das Unternehmen festgestellt (R² = .039, p = .002). Bemerkenswert ist, dass die Wahrnehmung von DEI je nach Generation, Land und Abteilung unterschiedlich ausfiel. Jüngere Mitarbeitende und solche, die erst kürzlich ins Unternehmen eingetreten sind, bewerteten DEI-Maßnahmen positiver als andere. Die Studie weist jedoch auch auf strukturelle Herausforderungen hin, darunter symbolische Inklusion ohne tatsächlichen Einfluss, regionale Unterschiede in der Sensibilität gegenüber DEI-Themen und fehlende Feedbackkanäle für Mitarbeitende.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass DEI nicht nur ein ethisches Ziel ist, sondern auch ein wirkungsvolles Instrument zur Steigerung der Motivation der Mitarbeitenden, ihrer Identifikation mit dem Unternehmen und ihrer langfristigen Bindung darstellen kann – vorausgesetzt, es wird glaubwürdig, kontextbewusst und nachhaltig umgesetzt. Diese Arbeit leistet einen fundierten empirischen Beitrag zur organisationspsychologischen Forschung über DEI und gibt praxisnahe Empfehlungen für Führungskräfte in internationalen Geschäftsumfeldern.

Kernwörter: Diversity, Equity, Inklusion, Mitarbeitermotivation, Engagement, Logistikbranche, multinationale Organisation

Länge: 77 Seiten (Einleitung bis Schlussfolgerung); 24.699 Wörter

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II. List of Abbreviations

DEI Diversity, equity, and inclusion

ESG Environmental, social, governance

HR Human Resources

HQ Headquarter

IT Information TechnologyJCM Job Characteristics Model

LGBTQ+ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and others

MANOVA Multivariate Analysis of Variance

P&O People & Organization

SDT Self-Determination Theory

SEE Southeast Europe

SPSS Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

USA United States of America

1 Introduction

1.1 Basis and Relevance of the Study

In recent years, the topic of diversity, equity and inclusion has become noticeably more important worldwide (Shore et al., 2018). Today, companies are no longer just under pressure to be economically successful, they are increasingly expected to assume social responsibility and create an inclusive working environment (Shore et al., 2018). DEI is now considered a strategic advantage, especially in international companies (McKinsey & Company, 2020). It can promote innovation, increase employee loyalty and make organizations more resilient to crises (McKinsey & Company, 2020).

However, this global trend is not moving in the same direction everywhere. In the US, political developments under Donald Trump's re-installed administration in 2024 have led to a noticeable regression in state-sponsored DEI initiatives (The White House, 2025). By executive order, federal agencies were directed to dismantle programs based on characteristics such as gender or ethnicity (The White House, 2025). As a result, well-known companies such as Deloitte, PepsiCo and Goldman Sachs have significantly scaled back their DEI strategies or discontinued them altogether (Rajesh, 2025; Wee et al., n.d.).

This change of course marks a significant turning point in the global DEI debate. While the topic continues to enjoy broad support in many parts of the world, the example of the USA shows how strongly DEI is dependent on political framework conditions - and how vulnerable corresponding programs can be. For multinational companies, this poses a particular challenge: they must navigate an increasingly contradictory environment in which expectations and legal requirements vary immensely depending on the region (Dover et al., 2020).

While DEI faces increasing political resistance in the United States, developments in other parts of the world paint a different picture. In Europe, for instance, DEI is more often seen as an essential part of sustainable and socially responsible corporate leadership (Dover et al., 2020). The European Union has long promoted workplace equality and inclusion through various initiatives and funding programs (European Commission, 2024). Many European-based multinational companies are now integrating DEI into their ESG strategies, often setting clear goals and tracking progress with measurable indicators (PricewaterhouseCoopers, n.d.). Beyond internal development, these frameworks increasingly influence external factors such as supplier selection, recruitment, and access to public contracts (PricewaterhouseCoopers, n.d.). This comparison highlights that while DEI is being politicized in the U.S., European

companies are under growing pressure to engage with diversity in a strategic and transparent manner.

Given this context, the logistics industry stands out as a key global sector (Mordor Intelligence, 2024). In 2023, it reached a market value of over €5.4 trillion and contributed nearly 5% to global GDP (The World Bank, 2024), making it an essential pillar of the world economy. At the same time, the industry is under growing pressure to transform. Digitalization, ongoing supply chain disruptions, ambitious climate goals, and a shortage of skilled labor are just a few of the challenges it currently faces (Bräuhofer & Rieder, 2019). A particularly pressing issue is the increasing social and cultural diversity within the logistics workforce. In operational areas like warehousing, transport, and customs, employees often come from a wide range of linguistic, ethnic, religious, and generational backgrounds (Roberson, 2019). This diversity can lead to friction, but it also creates opportunities. Research shows that inclusive teams tend to be more resilient, productive, and loyal to their employers (Edmondson, 2019; Roberson, 2019). However, in practice, DEI programs in traditional industries like logistics often remain surface-level and lack long-term structural integration (Gündemir et al., 2024).

The logistics sector in Southeast Europe offers a unique environment for exploring DEI implementation. The region includes countries with distinct historical, political, and cultural backgrounds such as Austria, Croatia, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Turkey. Although many of these nations are geographically close to the European Union, they differ widely in labor laws, equality policies, and social norms (Naderer, 2024). In addition, the region is strongly affected by demographic shifts, including labor migration, declining birth rates, and the emigration of highly educated professionals (The World Bank, 2024). These trends have led to serious workforce shortages, especially in technical and operational logistics roles.

In this setting, DEI strategies are increasingly seen as a practical way to attract, retain, and engage a more diverse workforce (Bräuhofer & Rieder, 2019). However, multinational companies operating across these countries often encounter specific challenges: varying cultural understandings of inclusion, language barriers, traditional gender roles, and hierarchical workplace structures (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). These factors make it clear that a one-size-fits-all approach to DEI is unlikely to be effective. Instead, companies need to adopt localized strategies that take regional particularities into account (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018).

Many studies emphasize the overall relevance of DEI for organizational performance (McKinsey & Company, 2020; Roberson, 2019; Shore et al., 2018). However, there remains a

noticeable lack of research on how DEI strategies are actually implemented and experienced in practice, particularly in operational industries like logistics and within the specific context of Southeast Europe. Existing literature tends to focus on large corporations in Western countries or discusses DEI primarily from a strategic or ethical perspective (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018; Dover et al., 2020). What is missing are empirical studies that explore how employees perceive DEI initiatives and how these perceptions affect their motivation and engagement in concrete cultural and industrial settings. Additionally, the issue of symbolic DEI which indicates the disconnect between formal communication and employees' lived reality, has rarely been examined in day-to-day organizational life (Shore et al., 2018; Yoshino & Smith, 2013). This thesis seeks to close that gap by offering practical, evidence-based insights from the logistics sector in Southeast Europe.

This study examines the effects of DEI strategies on the motivation and commitment of employees in the Southeast European cluster organization of DB Schenker. Although the focus is on DB Schenker, the company in this study is exemplary for globally active logistics companies with comparable structures and challenges. As an international company with strong European roots, DB Schenker has implemented an explicit DEI strategy.

The core research question focuses on how employees perceive DEI initiatives and how these efforts influence their motivation and engagement. The study also looks at differences between age groups, levels of seniority, and cultural backgrounds. Particular attention is given to the risk of symbolic DEI. The goal is to provide evidence-based insights into how DEI plays out in the everyday operations of a logistics company in Southeast Europe. Political developments in the U.S. are not a direct influence but serve as a contrasting backdrop, underlining the importance of context-sensitive and authentic DEI approaches. While the U.S. shows signs of retreat, European companies are increasingly expected to make DEI both credible and structurally embedded (European Commission, 2024).

Following this introduction, chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review, discussing key motivation theories such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Self-Determination Theory, and the Job Characteristics Model in relation to DEI. Chapter 3 develops the conceptual framework of the study and derives the research questions and hypotheses. Chapter 4 outlines the methodological approach, based on a mixed methods design that combines quantitative employee surveys, qualitative interviews, and a document analysis. Chapter 5 presents empirical findings and their statistical evaluation. In chapter 6, these results are discussed in light of existing theory, key challenges are identified, and practical implications are explored.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis with a summary of the main insights, actionable recommendations for logistics companies, and suggestions for future research.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to explore how diversity, equity, and inclusion policies affect employee motivation and engagement within the freight forwarding industry. In today's global labor market, where multicultural teams and shifting social dynamics are the norm, companies are under growing pressure to build inclusive structures. DEI is no longer just a legal or ethical requirement, it has become a strategic priority for organizations that want to stay competitive, attract diverse talent, and drive innovation.

Despite increasing awareness and effort across various sectors, many organizations still find it difficult to move beyond superficial DEI measures. This is especially true in traditionally structured, operations-driven industries like freight forwarding and logistics, where DEI initiatives are often neglected or applied unevenly. As a result, there is still a considerable lack of empirical insight into how DEI strategies influence tangible employee outcomes such as motivation and engagement.

This study seeks to contribute to this field by focusing on DB Schenker, one of the leading global companies in the freight forwarding and logistics sector. The aim is to evaluate how DEI measures are perceived by employees and how these perceptions influence their motivation and engagement. The study further explores how various demographic and employment factors shape individual experiences with DEI initiatives.

To achieve this purpose, the study is guided by one central research question:

To what extent do diversity and inclusion policies in multinational companies influence employee motivation and engagement?

To fully explore the main research questions, several secondary questions have been formulated. These aims to capture the different ways DEI policies are perceived and experienced by employees across various demographic groups, job types, and levels of seniority within the organization. They also consider possible obstacles to effective implementation, including cultural resistance and the risk of tokenism.

- How do cross-generational differences affect the implementation and reception of DEI strategies?
- How do cultural backgrounds influence the perception and effectiveness of DEI measures?
- What are the differences in perception of DEI policies between various types of employment?
- What discrepancies can be observed in the perception of DEI across hierarchical levels?
- How do managers' and employees' views differ regarding the effectiveness of DEI policies?

Based on these research questions, the following specific objectives have been formulated to guide the design, data collection, and analysis of this study.

1. To explore employees' awareness and perception of DEI policies at DB Schenker.

This objective looks at how well employees understand, agree with, and support DEI policies. It also checks how clearly the company talks about DEI and how honest the company seems in its DEI efforts.

2. To evaluate the impact of DEI initiatives on employee motivation.

This includes assessing whether employees who feel represented and included in the organization's culture report higher levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The study will also explore whether DEI measures contribute to employees' sense of purpose and satisfaction in their roles.

3. To assess the relationship between DEI policies and employee engagement.

Engagement is seen as having several parts: how employees feel about the organization, how committed they are in their actions, and how mentally involved they are. The study wants to find out if inclusive policies help employees become more willing to actively support their team and the organization's goals.

4. To analyze how cultural and generational differences affect the perception and impact of DEI strategies.

In multinational organizations, employees' values, experiences, and expectations vary depending on cultural background and age. This objective explores whether certain

generational or cultural groups respond differently to DEI initiatives, and what implications this has for policy design.

5. To investigate how different types of employment influence experiences with DEI measures.

This includes analyzing whether employees' perceptions of DEI differ based on how long they have been with the company. It also considers hierarchical factors, such as whether people in leadership roles view DEI differently than those in operational roles.

6. To identify internal challenges and resistance to DEI implementation, with special attention to the risk of tokenism.

Tokenism, where individuals are included symbolically rather than genuinely, can damage trust and reduce engagement. The study explores how employees perceive the authenticity of DEI efforts and whether there are organizational barriers to deep, structural change.

7. To understand which tools and indicators are most effective for measuring the outcomes of DEI strategies.

This objective is forward-looking and aims to evaluate which performance indicators (e.g., turnover rates, satisfaction scores, inclusion indices) can be used to assess the long-term success of DEI efforts. The relevance of feedback mechanisms and continuous improvement loops will also be discussed.

To achieve these objectives, the study uses a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data will be collected through a standardized employee survey at DB Schenker to identify general perceptions and patterns. In parallel, qualitative insights will be gathered through semi-structured interviews with DEI managers, focusing on policy development, implementation processes, and everyday experiences. Additionally, a detailed analysis of DEI-related content published on DB Schenker's website will be conducted. This triangulated research design aims to provide a well-rounded understanding of both formal policies and practical realities. The findings will contribute to academic discourse by offering a nuanced perspective on how DEI functions within a specific industry and organizational setting. At the same time, the study will generate practical recommendations to help companies design DEI strategies that are genuinely inclusive and effective in strengthening employee motivation and engagement.

1.3 Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on the relationship between diversity, equity and inclusion policies and employee motivation and engagement within the freight forwarding industry. The research is specifically conducted at DB Schenker, one of the leading international logistics and freight forwarding companies. The aim is to provide a nuanced understanding of how DEI measures influence employees' perception, behaviors, and emotional commitment to the organization. As such, the study investigates both, structural elements of DEI strategy and individual experiences, making use of a mixed methods approach to achieve a multidimensional view.

The scope of this thesis is defined by several dimensions, including thematic, organizational, geographical, and methodological boundaries. Thematically, the study is limited to analyzing the internal influence the internal effects of DEI policies, with a particular focus on how these initiatives influence employee motivation and engagement.

From an organizational perspective, the research concentrates solely on DB Schenker. The company serves as a representative case for the freight forwarding and logistics industry, which is characterized by strong operational hierarchies, international staff, and high exposure to cross-cultural collaboration. DB Schenker's prominence in the sector and its public commitment to DEI make it an ideal subject for this type of investigation. However, the focus is placed on internal company processes and employee perceptions rather than industry-wide comparisons or benchmarking.

Geographically, the study is limited primarily to the Southeast Europe Cluster operations of DB Schenker, which includes the following countries: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czeck Republic, Turkey and Hungary. This cluster comprises a diverse range of national, cultural, and economic contexts, offering a rich basis for the examination of DEI strategies in a multinational and multicultural environment. The selection of this reginal cluster allows for a focused yet varied analysis of DEI implementation in practice. By concentrating on employees and managers within this specific cluster, the study ensures contextual relevance and captures the unique challenges and opportunities that arise in Southeast European markets. At the same time, the conclusion drawn from this research is not intended to be generalized beyond this geographical and organizational context.

Methodologically, a mixed-methods design is used in the study. Quantitative data is collected through an employee survey aimed at capturing broad trends, perceptions, and attitudes

towards DEI measures. Qualitative data is obtained through semi-structured interviews with DEI representatives. In addition, an analysis of the organization's existing DEI strategies is conducted to better understand the formal policies and structures in place. This threefold approach is intended to allow both statistical generalizations, deeper contextual insights, and an informed evaluation of strategic intent. The research focuses on the present implementation of DEI policies and their currently perceived effects, rather than conducting a historical or predictive analysis.

Despite the carefully designed scope and methodological approach, the study is subject to a number of limitations that need to be acknowledged. These limitations may affect the generalizability, reliability, and interpretability of the findings, and they reflect the complex and multifaceted nature of DEI research in organizational settings.

Firstly, the use of a single-case study inherently restricts the generalizability of the results. While DB Schenker may be representative of the freight forwarding industry in some respects, it also has unique structural, cultural, and strategic features that may not apply to other companies. The results of this research therefore cannot be assumed to be universally valid but should instead be interpreted as context-specific findings that may serve as a starting point for further investigations.

Secondly, the reliance on self-reported data introduces the risk of social acceptability bias, particularly in the context of DEI. Employees may feel pressured to provide socially acceptable answers, especially when asked about sensitive topics such as discrimination, inclusivity, or organizational fairness. Although anonymity is guaranteed in the survey design, and interviews are conducted confidentially, it is possible that responses may be influenced by the desire to conform to organizational expectations or norms.

Thirdly, the sample size and composition impose limitations on the statistical significance and diversity of perspectives. The survey responses depend on voluntary participation, which may result in selection bias. For instance, individuals with strong opinions, positive or negative, about DEI policies may be more likely to respond, while those who are indifferent or disengaged might remain silent. Similarly, the number of qualitative interviews is limited due to time and resource boundaries, which restricts the depth of individual case analysis.

Fourth, the cross-sectional nature of the study means that all data are collected at a single point in time. As a result, the study cannot capture changes in perception over time or assess

the long-term effectiveness of DEI measures. While it may be possible to infer relationships between DEI practices and employee attitudes, causality cannot be established with certainty. An extended design would be more appropriate for measuring sustained changes in motivation and engagement, but it falls outside the scope of this thesis.

Fifth, language and cultural interpretation could influence the data, particularly in a multinational and multilingual workplace like DB Schenker. Although the study is conducted in several languages many employees may come from diverse cultural backgrounds, and their understanding of concepts such as inclusion or discrimination may differ. This linguistic and cultural variation may affect how survey questions are interpreted and how interview responses are framed.

Finally, organizational transparency and access to internal data may limit the completeness of the analysis. The study relies on voluntary participation and on the company's willingness to share information about DEI strategy, internal reports, or training content. While every effort has been made to ensure ethical research practices and build trust with participants, some data may remain inaccessible, incomplete, or selectively disclosed, which could influence the comprehensiveness of the findings.

2 Literature Review

This chapter is the theoretical foundation for examining how DEI strategies affect employee motivation and engagement. It presents key motivational theories, discusses diversity as a psychological construct, and reviews models and empirical findings on the organizational impact of DEI.

While motivation and engagement are often used interchangeably in everyday language, they represent distinct psychological concepts as outlined in chapter 3.1 Definition of central concepts. For the purpose of this study, this distinction is important, as DEI measures may influence both the underlying motivational processes, such as internal drive and sense of purpose, and engagement-related outcomes like emotional connection and behavioral commitment (Deci et al., 2017; Roberson, 2019).

2.1 Theories of Employee Motivation and Engagement

2.1.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, first introduced in 1943, is a foundational framework in motivational psychology that organizes human needs into five tiers: physiological, safety, love

and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). According to the theory, individuals must satisfy lower-level needs before they can focus on higher-level goals (Maslow, 1943). Applied to the workplace, this progression reflects basic needs such as a stable income and safe working conditions, followed by social connections with colleagues, recognition and advancement opportunities, and ultimately, the chance for personal development and fulfillment (Maslow, 1943).

Despite its popularity, the model has faced criticism. Empirical research by Tay and Diener, conducted in 2011 showed that individuals often strive for belonging or self-actualization even when their basic needs are not yet fully met. Additionally, the framework has been criticized for reflecting a Western, individualistic perspective, which may not hold true in more collectivist cultural contexts (Oishi et al., 2007).

The familiar pyramid visualization of Maslow's theory, although widely adopted, was not included in his original work. Bridgman et al. (2019) argue that the pyramid format oversimplifies what is actually a flexible and overlapping hierarchy of needs. In fact, Maslow himself noted that human motivation does not always follow a strict, linear progression from lower to higher needs (Maslow, 1943).

In the context of DEI, Maslow's model provides meaningful insights. Employees from underrepresented groups may face challenges in meeting basic psychological needs such as safety and a sense of belonging (Maslow, 1943). When these foundational needs are unmet, their potential for growth, engagement, and self-actualization can be limited (Wholley, n.d.). DEI strategies that emphasize inclusive leadership and fair organizational policies play a key role in fostering the security and acceptance necessary to support higher levels of motivation within a diverse workforce (Bridgman et al., 2019).

Despite its limitations, Maslow's theory remains a valuable conceptual tool, especially when applied critical awareness and cultural sensitivity. Its relevance lies in highlighting the role of inclusive environments in meeting psychological needs essential for motivation and engagement.

2.1.2 Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory posits that motivation and well-being arise when three basic psychological needs are met: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci et al., 2017). In

work contexts, autonomy refers to self-directed action, competence to mastery of challenges, and relatedness to social connection (Deci et al., 2017).

SDT distinguishes between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation along a continuum of internalization (Deci et al., 2017). The more organizational goals are aligned with personal values, the more stable and meaningful motivation becomes (Deci et al., 2017). Leadership that supports autonomy, rather than control, has been shown to increase engagement, job satisfaction, and resilience (Deci et al., 2017).

Although widely validated across cultures, SDT's application can be limited in rigid or standardized work settings (Deci et al., 2017). Still, the theory provides a valuable framework for designing work environments that promote long-term commitment and internal motivation (Deci et al., 2017).

In the DEI context, SDT highlights how inclusive structures help fulfill relatedness and autonomy needs (Deci et al., 2017). Employees who feel recognized and respected are more likely to internalize organizational values and act with greater commitment (Deci et al., 2017).

2.1.3 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory draws a clear line between two categories of workplace influences: hygiene factors, like salary, job security, and working conditions, and motivators, such as recognition, responsibility, and meaningful work (Herzberg et al., 1959). According to the theory, while hygiene factors help prevent dissatisfaction, they do not necessarily lead to satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). True job satisfaction, and sustained motivation, comes from the presence of motivators. (Herzberg et al., 1959).

The theory was developed through interviews with engineers and accountants and marked a shift away from earlier one-dimensional models of job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). Rather than viewing satisfaction and dissatisfaction as two ends of the same spectrum, Herzberg proposed that they arise from different sources altogether (Herzberg et al., 1959). This implies that employers need to go beyond merely fixing problems, they should actively foster conditions that truly engage employees (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Some researchers have raised concerns about the theory's methodology, for example, that it relies on retrospective self-assessments or that the line between hygiene factors and

motivators is not always clearly defined (Pendleton & Furnham, 2016). Still, Herzberg's model continues to shape how organizations think about job design and human resource strategies.

When applied to DEI, the theory shows that fair working conditions alone are not enough. True employee satisfaction and development require more, such as genuine appreciation, inclusive leadership, and meaningful opportunities to contribute. These motivators play a crucial role in creating a supportive and engaging work environment.

2.1.4 Job Characteristics Model

The Job Characteristics Model, developed by Hackman and Oldham, highlights five core aspects of work that can significantly influence employee motivation: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). These elements shape three key psychological states, experiencing work as meaningful, feeling personally responsible for outcomes, and understanding the results of one's efforts. These elements together impact motivation, job performance, and satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

To assess a job's potential to motivate, the model uses a formula that gives special weight to autonomy and feedback, reflecting their importance in sustaining engagement (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). JCM has been widely applied in job enrichment programs, especially when employees have strong growth aspirations (Humphrey et al., 2007). However, it shows limitations in highly repetitive jobs and has been criticized for overlooking cultural and individual differences in how job characteristics are perceived (Humphrey et al., 2007).

Viewed through a DEI lens, inclusive workplaces can strengthen key job characteristics such as task significance, autonomy, and meaningful feedback, particularly for individuals from underrepresented groups. When combined with structural fairness and psychological safety, these factors can reinforce the positive motivational impact of well-designed jobs.

2.1.5 Convergences, Contradictions, and Applications

The reviewed motivation theories, Maslow's Hierarchy (1943), SDT (Deci et al., 2017), Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), and JCM (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), show the same key assumption that motivation depends on more than material incentives. Psychological needs such as autonomy, relatedness, and meaningful work are central across all models (Deci et al., 2017; Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Herzberg et al., 1959; Maslow, 1943).

Each model also takes a different perspective. Maslow suggests a step-by-step progression of needs, while SDT argues that psychological needs can be active at the same time and across different situations (Maslow, 1943). Herzberg distinguishes between factors that prevent dissatisfaction and those that create satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959), and JCM highlights how the design of a job itself can serve as a motivational force (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Among these, SDT and JCM stand out for their strong empirical foundation and flexibility in addressing the realities of today's workplaces (Deci et al., 2017; Humphrey et al., 2007).

2.1.6 Diversity as a psychological workplace factor

Workplace diversity includes not only visible characteristics like gender, ethnicity, or age, but also less obvious characteristics such as education, values, or sexual orientation. More than a structural concept, diversity also shapes how employees experience their work environment, which is affecting their motivation, sense of identity and how well they feel socially included.

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) suggests that people draw part of their self-esteem from the social groups they belong to. hen individuals feel that their identity is ignored or that they are excluded from group belonging, their sense of connection and motivation can suffer (Roberson, 2019). In contrast, inclusive workplace cultures that encourage people to express their identities and feel psychologically safe tend to foster higher levels of engagement (Edmondson, 1999; Shore et al., 2018).

Psychological safety which describes the sense that it is safe to speak up, ask questions, or admit mistakes without fear of negative consequences is essential for open communication and trust in teams (Edmondson, 1999). Studies have shown that when employees feel included, teams tend to perform better, whereas a lack of inclusion can lead to conflict, disengagement, or withdrawal (Van Knippenberg & Mell, 2020). Leaders play a key role here as those who demonstrate inclusive behaviors help unlock the full potential of diverse teams (Alshaabani et al., 2022).

Belonging is one of the most basic human needs, as outlined by Maslow (1943), and plays a particularly important role in diverse teams. When employees feel accepted and valued, they tend to show greater motivation and stronger commitment to their organization (Gündemir et al., 2024). Self-Determination Theory adds to this by emphasizing the importance of relatedness: feeling connected to others is a key driver of intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 2017; Yoshino & Smith, 2013). In contrast, when inclusion is lacking, this need goes unmet, often leading to disengagement or reduced performance (Deci et al., 2017; Yoshino & Smith, 2013).

Perceived fairness is another key factor in employee motivation and engagement. According to Organizational Justice Theory, fairness can be broken down into three dimensions: distributive justice which stands for fair outcomes, procedural justice which indicates fair processes, and interactional justice which represents respectful and transparent communication (Colquitt et al., 2013). Well-designed DEI policies can help strengthen these perceptions by promoting transparency, equal opportunities, and responsiveness to employee concerns (Dover et al., 2020; Stephan et al., 2000). However, if such efforts are only symbolic and lack real substance, they can have the opposite effect which means leading to skepticism and a loss of trust (Dover et al., 2020; Stephan et al., 2000).

Authenticity plays a crucial role in the success of DEI efforts (Dover et al., 2020; Yoshino & Smith, 2013). Employees are quick to notice when such initiatives are merely performative (Dover et al., 2020; Yoshino & Smith, 2013). Symbolic actions like showcasing diversity without real inclusion or making promises that are not followed through can create a disconnect between what an organization claims to value and what employees actually experience (Dover et al., 2020; Yoshino & Smith, 2013). This gap often leads to a loss of trust and a decline in motivation (Dover et al., 2020; Yoshino & Smith, 2013).

Diversity can also increase cognitive and emotional demands in the workplace (Gündemir et al., 2024; Van Knippenberg & Mell, 2020). Working across different values, communication styles, or cultural norms often requires extra effort, this burden is felt most strongly by individuals from marginalized groups (Gündemir et al., 2024; Van Knippenberg & Mell, 2020). Without the right support, these challenges can lead to stress or disengagement (Gündemir et al., 2024; Van Knippenberg & Mell, 2020). That is why structures like language assistance, mentoring programs, and inclusive leadership are so important (Gündemir et al., 2024; Van Knippenberg & Mell, 2020). They help reduce the strain and create an environment where all employees can contribute effectively (Gündemir et al., 2024; Van Knippenberg & Mell, 2020).

The concept of intersectionality emphasizes that people's experiences at work are shaped by the overlap of multiple identity factors such as gender, race, age, or sexual orientation (Atewologun, 2018). DEI strategies that take this complexity into account can strengthen employees' psychological well-being and create an environment where individuals feel free to show up as their whole selves (Nishii, 2013).

In summary, diversity influences more than just organizational structures, it shapes the psychological atmosphere in which employees work. Truly inclusive DEI practices are essential for fostering a sense of belonging, perceived fairness, and identity safety. Together, these elements lay the foundation for sustained motivation and meaningful engagement.

2.2 Correlation between DEI Policies and Workforce Dynamics

In recent years, Diversity, equity, and inclusion has become a key focus for organizations across industries (Shore et al., 2018). DEI initiatives aim to create work environments that are not only fair and inclusive, but also reflect a broad range of demographic and cognitive diversity (Shore et al., 2018). This includes visible characteristics like gender, ethnicity, age, and disability, as well as less visible differences in background, values, perspectives, and work styles (Shore et al., 2018). The growing emphasis on DEI is driven by ethical, social, and business considerations (Nishii, 2013). From a normative standpoint, DEI supports social justice and equal opportunity (Nishii, 2013). From an organizational perspective, it is increasingly associated with improved performance, greater innovation, and higher employee satisfaction (Nishii, 2013).

At the same time, workforce dynamics have gained growing attention in the fields of human resource management and organizational behavior (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). The term refers to the patterns and processes that shape how employees engage with their work, collaborate, perform, adapt to change, or leave the organization (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). These dynamics are influenced by both individual characteristics and broader organizational structures (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). The intersection of DEI and workforce dynamics is therefore a complex but highly relevant area of study (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018).. DEI policies do not operate in a vacuum, they actively interact with the social and behavioral systems that influence how people work together every day (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018).

Research increasingly shows that DEI policies can have a measurable impact on workforce dynamics (Roberson, 2019). A meta-analysis by Roberson (2019) found that organizations with strong DEI strategies tend to report higher levels of employee engagement and psychological safety, especially in workplaces that emphasize inclusive leadership and involve employees in decision-making. Along similar lines, McKinsey & Company (2020) found that companies ranking in the top quartile for ethnic and gender diversity are significantly more likely to outperform their peers in terms of both profitability and employee retention. Taken together, these findings point to a clear link between DEI initiatives and key indicators of organizational success (Dixon-Fyle et al., 2020).

However, the relationship between DEI and workforce dynamics is neither one-directional nor uniformly positive (Dover et al., 2020). DEI initiatives can also provoke resistance, feelings of identity threat, or perceptions of reverse discrimination, especially in organizations where change is poorly managed or insufficiently communicated (Dover et al., 2020). The impact of DEI efforts therefore depends heavily on contextual factors such as leadership behavior, communication style, organizational culture, and how prepared employees are for change environments (Dover et al., 2020).

2.2.1 Theoretical Foundations and Models

Understanding how DEI policies shape workforce dynamics builds well-established theories from organizational psychology, sociology, and management. These frameworks offer insight into how diversity and inclusion efforts can influence how people think, work together, and contribute to overall organizational performance.

A key theory for understanding how diversity influences team outcomes is the Categorization—Elaboration Model, introduced by van Knippenberg, De Dreu, and Homan (2004). The model suggests that diversity can affect group performance in two very different ways: through social categorization or through information elaboration (Van Knippenberg & Mell, 2020). On one side, diversity may trigger in-group and out-group thinking, which can lead to stereotypes, cliques, and even tension within teams which is making collaboration and psychological safety more difficult (Van Knippenberg & Mell, 2020). On the other side, diversity can increase cognitive variety, encourage the sharing of different perspectives, and improve the quality of decisions and innovation (Van Knippenberg & Mell, 2020). Whether diversity has a positive or negative impact largely depends on the context, for example, how leaders manage teams, how work is structured, and what kind of organizational culture is in place (Van Knippenberg & Mell, 2020).

Another important theoretical lens is Social Identity Theory, developed by Tajfel and Turner (1986). This theory explains how people form part of their identity based on the social groups they belong to (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).. In practice, individuals tend to categorize themselves and others into groups, which can influence how they relate to colleagues, perceive status differences, and interact within the workplace (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In DEI-related settings, these group distinctions can sometimes become more visible, leading to experiences of identity threat or feelings of inclusion and exclusion (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). These dynamics can significantly affect employees' motivation, trust in the organization, and overall

performance (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). However, organizations that embrace an integration-and-learning approach in which differences in identity are seen as valuable sources of insight, can help reduce these tensions and encourage more effective collaboration (Ely & Thomas, 2001).

The Organizational Justice Theory also offers valuable insights into how DEI policies shape employee experiences and outcomes (Colquitt et al., 2013). The theory outlines three key dimensions of workplace fairness: distributive justice which stands for fairness of outcomes, procedural justice which indicates fairness of processes, and interactional justice which stands for fairness in interpersonal treatment (Colquitt et al., 2013). DEI measures that prioritize equity, such as clear promotion criteria, transparent pay systems, and respectful, inclusive communication, can strengthen perceptions of both procedural and interactional justice (Colquitt et al., 2013). In turn, these perceptions are closely linked to higher levels of employee engagement, organizational commitment, and long-term retention (Colquitt et al., 2013).

The concept of psychological safety further deepens the understanding of how inclusive workplace cultures influence team dynamics (Edmondson, 1999). Psychological safety describes the shared belief among team members that it is safe to speak up, ask questions, or admit mistakes without fear of negative consequences (Edmondson, 1999). DEI efforts that foster inclusive leadership, respectful communication, and openness to different viewpoints can significantly strengthen this sense of safety (Edmondson, 1999). In turn, psychological safety has been shown to support learning behavior, drive innovation, and enhance overall team performance (Alshaabani et al., 2022).

Looking at the broader organizational environment, Institutional Theory offers valuable insight into how DEI practices are influenced by external forces such as societal values, legal requirements, and stakeholder expectations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). From this perspective, companies do not just implement DEI measures to improve internal outcomes, they also do so to maintain legitimacy and demonstrate accountability to the outside world (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). While this can drive positive change, researchers have also cautioned against the risk of DEI being used merely as a symbolic gesture (Dover et al., 2020). When initiatives are driven primarily by reputational concerns rather than genuine commitment, they may have little effect on actual employee experiences or workforce dynamics (Dover et al., 2020).

Taking together, the theories discussed highlight that the link between DEI initiatives and workforce dynamics is both multidimensional and highly dependent on context (Colquitt et al., 2013; Ely & Thomas, 2001; Van Knippenberg & Mell, 2020). They show that the effectiveness

of DEI measures depends not only on their formal design but also on surrounding organizational conditions such as leadership behavior, company culture, and institutional backing (Alshaabani et al., 2022; Dover et al., 2020). Moreover, several approaches stress the importance of subjective experiences. How employees perceive fairness, belonging, and the relevance of their identity plays a crucial role in shaping how DEI policies translate into actual behavior and outcomes (Colquitt et al., 2013; Nishii, 2013; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

2.2.2 Diversity Dimensions

A meaningful understanding of diversity in organizations starts with recognizing that it exists on many levels, both visible and less visible, and that each of these dimensions influences workplace dynamics in its own way (Goldminz, 2019). To make sense of this complexity, researchers often rely on layered frameworks (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2008). One of the most well-known is the Four Layers of Diversity model developed by Gardenswartz and Rowe (2003), which breaks diversity down into four interconnected categories: personality, internal dimensions like age, gender, or ethnicity, external dimensions such as education, income, or marital status, and organizational dimensions like role, department, or seniority (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2008).

At the heart of the model is personality, which refers to an individual's unique psychological traits such as openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2008). Although personality is often overlooked in DEI discussions, it plays a key role in shaping how people perceive and respond to diversity (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2008). For example, employees who score high on openness are typically more curious and accept different viewpoints, while those who are less open may feel more comfortable in homogeneous environments (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2008). This means that even when structural diversity is present, personal traits like personality can influence how inclusive the workplace actually feels for different individuals (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2008).

Surrounding personality are core characteristics such as age, gender, race or ethnicity, and physical ability, traits that are often visible and difficult to change (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2008). These internal dimensions are usually the first markers of diversity and are frequently tracked by organizations through demographic data like gender ratios or age groups (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2008). Still, as studies point out, simply measuring representation is not enough (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2008). What matters is how this information is understood and translated into meaningful actions that go beyond surface-level diversity (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2008).

The third layer includes external dimensions which are factors like education, religion, marital or parental status, socioeconomic background, and immigration status (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2008). These aspects are usually less visible but have a strong impact on how employees experience their work environment (Goldminz, 2019). Because of social pressures or fear of judgment, people may choose to keep parts of these identities private (Goldminz, 2019). Recognizing external diversity helps organizations design more inclusive policies, such as flexible leave options or accommodations for religious practices (Goldminz, 2019).

The outermost layer covers organizational dimensions, such as job role, department, length of service, union membership, and office location (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2008). These factors are shaped by the company itself but often overlap with other aspects of diversity (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2008). Even though this layer is sometimes underestimated, it plays a key role in understanding internal power structures and in creating fair opportunities for career development (Goldminz, 2019).

A deeper understanding of diversity dimensions allows this study to explore how different identity characteristics, such as age, culture, or employment status, influence the perception of DEI measures. These insights are closely tied to the secondary research questions, particularly those addressing generational and hierarchical differences. Moreover, this perspective supports the development of inclusive policies that go beyond surface-level representation and instead address the actual diversity present within the workforce.

2.3 Opportunities of DEI Policies

DEI policies have become a core part of how modern organizations operate, not just because they are the right thing to do, but because they offer real, measurable benefits (Nishii, 2013; Roberson, 2019). Beyond promoting fairness, DEI initiatives have been shown to boost employee engagement, spark innovation, improve financial outcomes, and help companies attract and retain top talent (Nishii, 2013; Roberson, 2019). This chapter explores these diverse advantages, drawing on recent research and key theoretical models to highlight how DEI can drive both people-centered and performance-driven success (Nishii, 2013; Roberson, 2019).

2.3.1 Increasing engagement and job satisfaction

DEI policies have been found to positively impact employee engagement and job satisfaction by fostering an environment where people feel seen, respected, and valued (Nishii, 2013). Studies show that when employees perceive their organization as fair and inclusive, they are

more likely to be engaged and motivated (Nishii, 2013). A key factor here is psychological safety which indicated the sense that it is safe to speak up, share ideas, or raise concerns without fear of negative consequences (Nishii, 2013). When inclusion is truly practiced, this safety grows stronger, leading to deeper emotional connection and commitment to the organization (Edmondson & Lei, 2014).

Roberson (2019) highlights that inclusive workplace climates are closely linked to higher levels of employee engagement and emotional commitment. When employees feel that their unique backgrounds and perspectives are genuinely valued, they tend to report greater satisfaction with their roles, their teams, and their leaders (Alshaabani et al., 2022). This effect is especially visible in diverse teams, where well-implemented DEI policies help build trust and cohesion, both essential for effective collaboration and individual well-being (Shore et al., 2018).

Additional research further reinforces the connection between DEI initiatives and job satisfaction. A study by Alshaabani et al. (2022) found that effective diversity management boosts engagement, particularly when paired with a strong sense of organizational trust and job security. These elements act as mediators, underscoring that DEI efforts are most impactful when embedded in a supportive organizational culture and leadership approach.

Moreover, DEI policies can play a key role in reducing employee turnover by fostering a strong sense of belonging and recognition (McKinsey & Company, 2020). When individuals perceive their workplace as equitable, and see real opportunities for growth and advancement, they are more likely to feel satisfied with their roles and to stay with the organization long term (McKinsey & Company, 2020). This link between inclusion and retention is particularly relevant in younger, more diverse workforces, where inclusive values are increasingly seen as a baseline expectation rather than a competitive advantage (McKinsey & Company, 2020).

2.3.2 Better economic performance

Empirical research increasingly shows that well-implemented DEI policies are not only ethically valuable but also contribute to stronger financial and organizational performance. According to McKinsey & Company (2020), companies that embrace diversity and inclusion tend to be more agile in responding to market shifts, better at understanding and serving diverse customer segments, and more capable of making innovative, evidence-based decisions. These strengths often translate into measurable competitive advantages and improved economic outcomes (McKinsey & Company, 2020).

A large-scale study by McKinsey & Company (2020), which analyzed more than 1,000 companies across 15 countries, found a strong link between executive team diversity and business performance. Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on their leadership teams were 25% more likely to achieve above-average profitability than those in the bottom quartile (McKinsey & Company, 2020). The correlation was even stronger for ethnic and cultural diversity: firms with the most diverse executive teams outperformed their less diverse peers by 36%. These findings highlight that DEI efforts are not just about fairness, they also offer clear strategic advantages in terms of financial success (McKinsey & Company, 2020).

Additional support for the business case of DEI comes from Hunt, Yee, Prince, and Dixon-Fyle (2018), who found a strong connection between inclusive leadership and long-term organizational success. According to their findings, companies with diverse leadership teams were more likely to outperform their peers in both innovation and market expansion (Hunt et al., 2018). The researchers argue that these advantages stem from broader perspectives in decision-making and the ability to attract and retain a wider range of talent (Hunt et al., 2018)

From a human capital standpoint, DEI initiatives can help organizations use talent more effectively while also reducing the costs associated with employee turnover (Roberson, 2019). When promotion and reward systems are perceived as fair and inclusive, employees are more likely to stay, leading to higher retention and lower expenses for hiring and onboarding new staff (Roberson, 2019). In addition, diverse teams often bring more creativity and adaptability to the table, which can boost performance, especially in fast-changing business environments (Shore et al., 2018).

However, the economic benefits of DEI are not guaranteed (Dover et al., 2020). They depend heavily on how well these initiatives are implemented (Dover et al., 2020). If DEI is treated as a checkbox exercise or limited to symbolic gestures, it may not only fail to produce results but can also trigger frustration or pushback from employees (Dover et al., 2020). That is why it is essential to embed DEI into the core business strategy and make leaders accountable for its outcomes (Dover et al., 2020).

2.3.3 Attracting and retaining talent

Diversity, equity, and inclusion policies are becoming increasingly important for companies aiming to attract and retain talent in today's competitive and diverse job markets (Roberson, 2019). Employers who are seen as inclusive and fair tend to enjoy a stronger reputation and are more successful in appealing to top candidates from a variety of backgrounds (Roberson,

2019). This trend is especially noticeable among younger generations like Millennials and Generation Z, who place high value on diversity, equity, and social responsibility when choosing an employer (McKinsey & Company, 2020).

Empirical research supports the link between strong DEI commitments and an organization's ability to attract talent (Shore et al., 2018). Inclusive workplaces foster a sense of belonging and psychological safety, two critical elements that contribute to employee satisfaction and long-term loyalty (Shore et al., 2018). When job seekers see that people from diverse backgrounds are not only present but also genuinely supported, their perception of fairness and organizational fit improves. This, in turn, enhances the company's appeal as an employer of choice (Nishii, 2013).

Retention is also positively impacted by inclusive workplace practices. Research by Nishii (2013) shows that DEI policies can significantly reduce feelings of discrimination and strengthen employees' trust in the fairness of organizational systems. When promotion criteria, compensation structures, and leadership behaviors are perceived as inclusive and transparent, employees are more likely to feel valued and respected, key factors that contribute to long-term commitment and reduced turnover(Nishii, 2013).

Furthermore, DEI initiatives enhance employee retention by offering career development opportunities and mentorship programs that specifically address structural disadvantages faced by underrepresented groups (McKinsey & Company, 2020). As reported by McKinsey & Company (2020), organizations that invest in targeted support for women and minority employees such as leadership training and sponsorship programs, achieve higher retention rates within those populations (McKinsey & Company, 2020). These initiatives not only help minimize talent attrition but also strengthen the internal pipeline for future leadership, contributing to long-term organizational sustainability (McKinsey & Company, 2020)..

High-performing employees are more likely to remain in organizations that cultivate inclusive cultures, as such environments are linked to higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Owyoung, 2022). Inclusive workplaces characterized by fairness, transparent leadership practices, and participatory decision-making enhance employees' sense of belonging and trust in the organization (Mor Barak, 2017). These factors collectively contribute to lower turnover intentions and stronger long-term retention (Mor Barak, 2017).

In contrast, a lack of structured DEI practices can increase the likelihood of employee attrition, particularly among individuals from diverse backgrounds who may encounter exclusion, bias, or limited access to development and advancement opportunities (Dover et al., 2020).

2.3.4 Improving reputation and brand value

DEI policies also play an important role in shaping a company's external image and brand value (Roberson, 2019). In an environment where public expectations around social justice and corporate responsibility are rising, stakeholders increasingly look for visible and credible signs of an organization's commitment to DEI (Roberson, 2019). A well-developed DEI strategy can strengthen an organization's legitimacy, build trust among stakeholders, and increase its appeal to socially conscious consumers and investors (Nishii, 2013).

Empirical evidence supports the reputational advantages of active DEI engagement. According to McKinsey & Company (2020), companies that are known for inclusive practices tend to benefit from greater public recognition and clearer brand differentiation, particularly in competitive industries. These organizations are also more likely to appear in high-profile rankings or in sustainability and diversity indexes, reinforcing their reputation as forward-thinking and socially responsible employers (McKinsey & Company, 2020).

Moreover, DEI initiatives are becoming an integral part of broader corporate social responsibility strategies. As Hunt, Yee, Prince, and Dixon-Fyle (2018) highlight, stakeholders, including customers, employees, and investors, are more inclined to support companies that reflect their own values. Organizations that communicate openly about their DEI goals and progress not only demonstrate ethical responsibility but also show that they are responsive to social change, an increasingly important factor for credibility and competitiveness in global markets (Hunt et al., 2018).

Shore et al. (2018) emphasize that inclusive workplace cultures impact not only employee engagement but also how a company is perceived externally. When organizations authentically express their DEI commitment, through marketing, community initiatives, and transparent stakeholder communication, they enhance brand credibility and build lasting reputational value (Shore et al., 2018).

However, the reputational benefits of DEI efforts depend heavily on how authentic they appear to stakeholders (Dover et al., 2020). Dover et al. (2020) warn that when DEI initiatives are seen as symbolic or inconsistent such as promoting diversity in marketing while failing to address

internal inequalities, they can backfire, drawing public criticism and damaging the organization's reputation. To build lasting brand value, it is therefore essential that a company's external messaging is aligned with genuine internal action (Dover et al., 2020).

2.3.5 Increasing organizational resilience

Diversity, equity, and inclusion policies are increasingly seen as important drivers of organizational resilience (Shore et al., 2018). Resilience refers to an organization's ability to adapt to change, recover from setbacks, and maintain performance in uncertain environments (Shore et al., 2018). DEI strengthens this capacity by encouraging flexible thinking, integrating a wide range of perspectives, and promoting inclusive decision-making (Shore et al., 2018). Organizations that prioritize DEI often build stronger internal social networks, which can improve coordination and enable faster, more effective responses to external disruptions (Shore et al., 2018).

Empirical research underscores the connection between DEI and organizational resilience. Roberson (2019) shows that diverse teams contribute a wider range of cognitive and experiential resources to problem-solving, which enhances their ability to adapt in fast-changing and complex environments. Likewise, Hunt et al. (2018) emphasize that organizations led by inclusive leaders are better positioned to respond to uncertainty. Such leaders are more likely to detect early warning signs of disruption and take timely action (Hunt et al., 2018). These resilience-enhancing effects are closely linked to psychological safety and open communication, conditions that are more common in inclusive workplace cultures (Edmondson, 2019).

Diversity, equity, and inclusion also contribute to stronger internal cohesion and trust, factors that are especially important during times of change or crisis (McKinsey & Company, 2020). When employees feel included and believe their perspectives are valued, they are more likely to support organizational change and play an active role in navigating challenges (McKinsey & Company, 2020). This effect is particularly visible in multicultural teams, where inclusive structures help prevent misunderstandings, reduce tensions, and build a shared sense of resilience (Nishii, 2013).

Furthermore, organizations become more resilient when they actively address structural inequalities through fair policies and equitable access to resources. As Shore et al. (2018) point out, companies that foster equity and inclusion are better equipped to maintain internal cohesion during stressful periods, whether it is an economic downturn or external criticism.

This not only lowers reputational and operational risks but also strengthens long-term sustainability (Shore et al., 2018).

However, the resilience-enhancing effects of DEI depend largely on how deeply these policies are embedded in the organization. As Dover et al. (2020) emphasize, surface-level diversity efforts that lack structural support and genuine integration often fall short of unlocking the adaptive strengths of diverse teams. To truly harness the benefits of diversity for resilience, organizations must demonstrate sustained commitment to inclusive practices at both strategic and operational levels.

2.3.6 Conclusion: Opportunities of DEI policies

The empirical and theoretical findings presented across the five dimensions demonstrate the broad and interrelated benefits of DEI policies for organizations. DEI initiatives are consistently linked to higher levels of employee engagement and job satisfaction, especially when they are supported by transparent procedures, inclusive leadership, and psychological safety (Nishii, 2013; Roberson, 2019; Shore et al., 2018). Employees who feel valued, respected, and treated fairly are more likely to be motivated and emotionally invested in their work (Edmondson, 2019).

From an economic standpoint, DEI has been associated with stronger financial performance and greater innovative capacity. Organizations with diverse leadership structures tend to outperform their peers in profitability and global competitiveness (Hunt et al., 2018; McKinsey & Company, 2020). These outcomes are further reinforced by increased success in attracting and retaining talent, particularly in younger and more socially conscious labor markets (Roberson, 2019).

In addition, DEI enhances external reputation and strengthens brand credibility. Companies that implement transparent and credible inclusion strategies often enjoy higher stakeholder trust and broader public support (McKinsey & Company, 2020; Nishii, 2013). DEI also plays a significant role in building organizational resilience by fostering inclusive decision-making, internal cohesion, and the cognitive flexibility needed to adapt in times of uncertainty and disruption (Edmondson, 2019; Roberson, 2019; Shore et al., 2018).

Taken together, these insights underscore that DEI should not be regarded solely as a moral imperative, but as a strategic lever that contributes meaningfully to employee experience, organizational agility, and sustainable success. Nonetheless, as emphasized by several

scholars, the realization of these benefits depends on the depth, consistency, and authenticity of DEI implementation (Dover et al., 2020).

2.4 Challenges of DEI policies

Although DEI initiatives are widely regarded as drivers of positive organizational change, their implementation often encounters significant challenges. These include internal resistance, limited resources, and external constraints such as political or legal regulations. To develop effective and sustainable DEI strategies, it is essential to systematically examine and understand these barriers.

2.4.1 Organizational resistance and identity threat

Implementing DEI policies in organizations frequently encounters resistance, particularly from members of dominant or majority groups (Stephan et al., 2000). One of the key drivers behind this pushback is identity threat, the perception that initiatives designed to support marginalized groups might endanger one's own status, resources, or group identity (Stephan et al., 2000). This reaction is well-documented within the framework of Integrated Threat Theory, which outlines how perceived threats to resources, values, or group membership can trigger defensive responses (Stephan et al., 2000).

Research shows that when individuals feel their position or status is threatened, whether the threat is real or perceived, they may react in ways that undermine DEI efforts (Gündemir et al., 2024). This resistance can take many forms, including ignoring DEI-related emails, skipping training sessions, or subtly opposing inclusive practices during meetings (Gündemir et al., 2024). A comprehensive review of DEI resistance literature highlights a broad spectrum of responses, from passive disengagement to openly questioning the fairness or relevance of such initiatives (Gündemir et al., 2024).

Importantly, identity threat is not just a theoretical concern. Evidence shows that it has tangible effects on workplace dynamics (Cortland & Danbold, n.d.). Employees who experience this kind of threat often report higher stress, reduced collaboration with colleagues from different backgrounds, and lower feelings of psychological safety, all of which pose serious barriers to inclusion (Cortland & Danbold, n.d.).

To effectively reduce identity threat, organizations need to go beyond simply launching DEI policies (Ravanera, 2025). Studies suggest that openly communicating the purpose of DEI efforts, involving employees from all backgrounds in their development, and offering

participation as an invitation rather than a requirement can help lower defensiveness and build shared ownership (Ravanera, 2025).

2.4.2 The Illusion of Inclusion

Even though many organizations have adopted DEI policies, employees' day-to-day experiences often paint a different picture (Shore et al., 2018). The concept of the illusion of inclusion describes situations where companies appear inclusive on the surface, through public statements or diverse hiring practices, but fail to create real, structural change in their internal culture or decision-making processes (Shore et al., 2018). In such environments, employees from minority groups may be present in the workforce but still feel sidelined, unheard, or excluded from informal networks and opportunities for advancement (Shore et al., 2018).

This illusion often emerges when organizations focus on symbolic gestures, like hiring targets, without addressing deeper issues such as biased performance reviews, lack of mentorship, or unequal access to leadership roles (Leonard, 2019). True inclusion means more than representation, it requires that all employees feel genuinely respected, empowered, and able to contribute authentically (Leonard, 2019).

One indicator that inclusion has not been fully realized is the phenomenon of covering, a behavior in which individuals from underrepresented groups feel pressured to downplay or conceal aspects of their identity to fit into the dominant culture (Yoshino & Smith, 2013). Even in workplaces with formal DEI policies, the presence of covering signals that psychological safety is lacking (Yoshino & Smith, 2013).

Additionally, when DEI initiatives are perceived as primarily image-driven or compliance-based, rather than rooted in authentic engagement, they can backfire (Plaut et al., 2009). Employees may view these efforts as performative, leading to skepticism, reduced trust in leadership, and lower organizational commitment (Plaut et al., 2009).

2.4.3 Limited Resources and Investment

Another major barrier to the effective implementation of DEI policies is the lack of sustained resources and long-term investment (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). While many organizations express public support for DEI goals, these commitments often fall short when it comes to backing them with sufficient financial, human, or strategic resources (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018).

As a result, DEI programs may lack the infrastructure, training, and evaluation tools needed to generate meaningful and lasting change (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018).

Without proper funding, DEI efforts are frequently small in scale, fragmented, or dependent on the unpaid labor and emotional commitment of marginalized employees, an approach that can quickly lead to burnout and disillusionment (Roberson, 2019). The absence of dedicated DEI staff or departments also makes it difficult to track progress, enforce accountability, or respond to emerging challenges in a timely and strategic way (Roberson, 2019).

A further problem is that DEI is still too often treated as a side initiative rather than as a core element of business strategy. This mindset makes DEI programs especially vulnerable during times of financial strain, when they are among the first areas to be downsized or defunded (Sabharwal, 2014). Such decisions send a message that inclusion is negotiable, undermining employee trust and credibility (Sabharwal, 2014).

Moreover, when DEI work is under-resourced, it struggles to influence critical organizational processes such as recruitment, leadership development, or performance evaluation. Instead, diversity is reduced to a symbolic gesture, prominent in branding, but absent from the organization's power structures (Dimitrova, 2020). To move past this superficial approach, organizations must treat DEI as a long-term strategic investment, integrate it into their core operations, and allocate the necessary resources to support meaningful change (Dimitrova, 2020).

2.4.4 Strategic Misalignment

A major obstacle to the successful implementation of DEI policies is the lack of strategic alignment. This challenge arises when DEI goals are not embedded into the organization's overall strategy but instead operate in silos as optional programs or isolated initiatives (Roberson, 2019). In such cases, DEI efforts tend to have little impact on core areas such as leadership development, innovation, performance management, or market positioning, which limits their long-term effectiveness (Roberson, 2019).

Strategic misalignment often reflects an absence of shared vision among senior leaders regarding the role and relevance of DEI (Sabharwal, 2014). When executives fail to recognize DEI as a driver of business performance, they are less likely to allocate meaningful resources or commit to long-term goals (Sabharwal, 2014). As a result, organizations may reduce DEI to

checkbox compliance measures or one-off training sessions that do not lead to sustainable structural change (Sabharwal, 2014).

In some cases, DEI objectives are seen as competing with other strategic priorities, like efficiency or profitability, particularly in high-pressure or cost-driven environments (Janssens & Steyaert, 2018). When managers view DEI as a non-essential add-on, they may show reluctance to engage, leading to fragmented implementation across departments or inconsistent leadership behavior (Janssens & Steyaert, 2018). These contradictions weaken the credibility and coherence of inclusion efforts.

Overcoming this misalignment requires organizations to fully integrate DEI into their mission, values, and strategic objectives (Nishii & Rich, 2014). Clear and consistent communication from senior leadership, alignment of performance incentives, and embedding DEI indicators into planning and decision-making processes are all critical steps (Nishii & Rich, 2014). Only when DEI is treated as a strategic priority, not a peripheral initiative, can it unlock its full potential to transform organizational culture and outcomes (Nishii & Rich, 2014).

2.4.5 Political and Social Pushback

Political and social resistance has become an increasingly prominent obstacle to the effective implementation of DEI policies in organizations (Plaut, 2010). These initiatives do not operate in a vacuum, they are shaped by the broader political climate, societal values, and media discourse (Plaut, 2010). In recent years, opposition to DEI has grown in certain regions and industries, with critics arguing that such policies are unnecessary, politically charged, or socially divisive (Plaut, 2010).

This backlash can take many forms, including legislative restrictions, reductions in funding, unfavorable media narratives, or public criticism of specific measures such as unconscious bias training or diversity quotas (Fitzsimmons et al., 2023). In politically polarized environments, DEI work is often reframed as a form of ideological activism rather than as a legitimate organizational responsibility (Fitzsimmons et al., 2023). This reframing can create a chilling effect, where companies become hesitant to advance DEI initiatives for fear of political controversy or reputational harm (Fitzsimmons et al., 2023).

Resistance can also arise internally. Employees or managers may feel personally targeted or see DEI as a challenge to existing hierarchies and norms, particularly if the purpose and benefits of such policies are not clearly communicated (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). Without strong

leadership and consistent messaging, these perceptions can diminish engagement and create tension within the organization (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018).

2.4.6 Lack of Measurement and Accountability

One of the most persistent challenges in implementing DEI effectively is the absence of systematic measurement and accountability structures (Roberson, 2019). While many organizations express a public commitment to DEI, they often fall short in defining clear metrics to monitor progress or evaluate outcomes (Roberson, 2019). Without robust data and performance indicators, it becomes difficult to determine whether DEI initiatives are achieving meaningful change or simply serving as symbolic gestures (Roberson, 2019).

This lack of measurement is frequently rooted in hesitation to collect sensitive demographic information or in the absence of internal capacity to analyze such data ethically and effectively (Nishii & Rich, 2014). In some cases, organizations may even avoid evaluation altogether to prevent exposing deficiencies or encountering internal resistance (Nishii & Rich, 2014). Yet without a solid evidence base, DEI efforts risk becoming fragmented, misaligned, or disconnected from actual employee experiences (Nishii & Rich, 2014).

Further complication arises when accountability is unclear or absent (Sabharwal, 2014). When no one is held responsible for DEI progress, and when these efforts are not tied to leadership evaluations or organizational goals, they often lose strategic importance (Sabharwal, 2014). This disconnect between stated values and measurable action erodes employee trust and undermines the credibility of DEI as a long-term commitment (Sabharwal, 2014).

To create meaningful impact, DEI strategies must incorporate both qualitative and quantitative tools such as employee climate surveys, equity audits, inclusion indices, and diversity dashboards (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). Moreover, accountability should be embedded into leadership responsibilities, supported by measurable objectives and transparent progress reporting (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). As research makes clear, sustained accountability is essential for translating DEI intentions into structural change and organizational transformation (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018).

2.4.7 Conclusion: Challenges of DEI policies

While DEI policies are widely acknowledged as crucial for building fairer and more innovative workplaces, putting them into practice remains a complex task (Gündemir et al., 2024; Stephan et al., 2000). As the previous analysis has shown, the obstacles are not just organizational,

they often touch deeply on identity and culture (Gündemir et al., 2024; Stephan et al., 2000). Many employees, particularly those from dominant groups, may feel personally threatened by DEI efforts, perceiving them as a risk to their status or opportunities (Gündemir et al., 2024; Stephan et al., 2000). This can lead to subtle resistance or even open pushback, slowing down or derailing meaningful progress (Gündemir et al., 2024; Stephan et al., 2000).

Another common pitfall is the illusion of inclusion: organizations might highlight diversity in numbers but fail to change the structures that actually shape belonging and participation (Plaut et al., 2009; Shore et al., 2018; Yoshino & Smith, 2013). Without real structural change, underrepresented employees may still feel excluded, unheard, or unable to advance, leading to frustration and disengagement (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018; Roberson, 2019).

These challenges are often made worse by a lack of resources. Many DEI initiatives operate without sufficient funding, staff, or leadership support, making it difficult to implement sustainable programs or track progress (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018; Roberson, 2019). And when DEI is treated as a side project rather than a strategic priority, it tends to remain disconnected from key areas like leadership development, performance management, or innovation (Janssens & Steyaert, 2018; Roberson, 2019).

Adding to this is the rising political and social resistance to DEI, especially in polarized environments (Fitzsimmons et al., 2023; Plaut, 2010). In some contexts, DEI efforts are dismissed as political or ideological rather than recognized as necessary for ethical and strategic reasons (Fitzsimmons et al., 2023; Plaut, 2010). This external resistance often fuels internal hesitation, limiting the boldness needed to drive change (Fitzsimmons et al., 2023; Plaut, 2010).

A final barrier is the lack of consistent measurement and accountability. Many organizations fail to collect meaningful data or set clear DEI targets (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018; Nishii & Rich, 2014; Sabharwal, 2014). Without this foundation, it is hard to know what is working, or to hold leaders accountable when it is not (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018; Nishii & Rich, 2014; Sabharwal, 2014). As a result, even well-intentioned initiatives can remain symbolic rather than transformative (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018; Nishii & Rich, 2014; Sabharwal, 2014).

Overcoming these challenges requires more than isolated programs or statements of intent. What is needed is a coordinated, well-funded, and evidence-based approach, one that involves people at all levels and is tied to the organization's broader goals. Only through long-term

commitment, open dialogue, and clear accountability can DEI efforts move beyond aspiration and create real, lasting change.

3 Conceptual framework

3.1 Definition of central concepts

This chapter introduces the main concepts that form the foundation of the study. To ensure clarity and consistency in the analysis, key terms are defined based on academic literature and their relevance to the logistics sector.

Diversity means the presence of difference among people. These differences include visible aspects like gender, age, ethnicity, and disability, as well as less visible traits such as religion, sexual orientation, education, social background, personality, or values (Roberson, 2019; Shore et al., 2018).

Equity means making sure that alle people have fair access to opportunities, resources, and support, based on their individual needs and circumstances (Nishii, 2013; Shore et al., 2018). It is different from equality, which gives everyone the same treatment (Nishii, 2013; Shore et al., 2018).

Inclusion means creating an environment where all people feel respected, accepted, and valued, no matter their background, identity, or role (Shore et al., 2018). Inclusion is not just about being present; it is about feeling like you truly belong and your voice matters (Nishii, 2013).

Employee motivation refers to the psychological processes that direct, energize, and sustain behavior at work (Deci et al., 2017; Herzberg et al., 1959). Motivation can be intrinsic, driven by interest, purpose, and internal satisfaction, or extrinsic, influenced by external rewards such as pay, status, or pressure (Deci et al., 2017; Herzberg et al., 1959).

Employee engagement describes the emotional and psychological connection employees have with their work. Engaged employees show high levels of energy, dedication, and focus (Roberson, 2019). They are more likely to go beyond basic job duties, help others, and stay with the organization (Roberson, 2019).

Together, these concepts help explain how DEI strategies influence employee behavior and organizational outcomes. A shared understanding of these terms is essential for interpreting the data collected in this study.

3.2 Theoretical model of the work

The conceptual framework of this thesis assumes that DEI policies influence both employee motivation and engagement. This relationship is supported by several well-established psychological and organizational theories that explain how inclusion affects human behavior at work.

The framework integrates the following theories:

- Self-Determination Theory developed by Deci and Ryan, SDT proposes that all
 humans have three basic psychological needs like autonomy, competence, and
 relatedness. When these needs are met, people show higher intrinsic motivation and
 well-being (Deci et al., 2017) DEI practices that promote fairness, inclusion, and
 personal recognition help meet these needs and lead to better work outcomes (Deci et
 al., 2017).
- Job Characteristics Model (JCM) by Hackman and Oldham (1976), suggests that job
 design influenced motivation through five core dimensions: skill variety, task identity,
 task significance, autonomy, and feedback. Dei initiatives can improve task significance
 and enhance autonomy and feedback by creating inclusive and responsive work
 environments (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).
- According to the Organizational Justice Theory developed by Colquitt et al. (2013), employees judge fairness in three areas: outcomes, processes, and interpersonal treatment.
- Social Identity Theory (SIT) explains how people derive part of their identity and self-worth from group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In diverse workplaces, DEI strategies reduce identity threats and support a stronger sense of belonging (Shore et al., 2018). In diverse workplaces, DEI strategies commitment and decreases turnover, especially among underrepresented employees (Shore et al., 2018).

The theoretical model assumes that DEI practices influence employee motivation and engagement through three key pathways:

1. Psychological safety: Inclusive environments allow employees to take risks, speak up, and share ideas without fear or negative consequences (Edmondson, 1999).

- 2. Fairness and recognition: Employees are more motivated and loyal when they believe the system treats them fairly and values their contributions (Colquitt et al., 2013).
- 3. Belonging and identity: Felling part of a team or organization supports intrinsic motivation and long-term commitment (Deci et al., 2017; Tajfel & Turner, 1986)

These pathways are influenced by employee characteristics like age, cultural background or job level, and organizational factors such as leadership style or communication quality. The model highlights the complex, multidimensional relationship between DEI, motivation, and engagement in a logistics setting.

3.3 Derivation of the research questions and hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework presented, this study investigates how DEI policies influence employee motivation and engagement in multinational freight forwarding organizations. The research is guided by the following central question:

To what extent do diversity, equity, and inclusion policies in multinational companies influence employee motivation and engagement?

This question addresses whether inclusive policies lead to measurable improvements in how employees experience their work and connect with the organization. This central question aims to determine whether DEI initiatives actually improve how employees feel and behave in the workplace.

The sub-questions that specify this inquiry across generational, hierarchical, and cultural dimensions are already outlined in chapter 1.2 Objectives of the Study and will not be repeated here.

Based on the conceptual framework and theoretical model presented in chapter 3 Conceptual framework, the following hypotheses are formulated:

From these questions, the following hypotheses are derived:

- Employees who perceive DEI policies as authentic and effective report higher levels of motivation.
- 2. A strong feeling of inclusion is associated with increased employee engagement.
- 3. Perceptions of DEI policies differ significantly across generations, with younger employees expecting more structural inclusion.

- 4. Cultural background moderates the perceived relevance and impact of DEI strategies.
- 5. Perceptions of DEI differ across employment types such as department and job level.
- 6. Perceptions of DEI strategies differ by organizational level, with leadership showing more positive evaluations.

These hypotheses serve as the basis for quantitative and qualitative analysis in chapter 5 Findings and Analysis and guide the interpretation of results in light of the theoretical assumptions discussed.

4 Research methodology

This chapter outlines the research methods used to explore how DEI policies influence employee motivation and engagement. Given the complexity of the topic and the specific regional focus on the Southeast European logistics sector, a mixed-methods approach was chosen. This means the study combines quantitative and qualitative methods to capture both broad patterns and deeper, personal experiences.

The decisions to use a mixed-methods design is supported by academic literature, which recommends this approach for complex social research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Quantitative surveys allow for the collection of measurable data that can show general trends and relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In contrast, qualitative interviews offer deeper insights into how individuals understand and experience DEI in their daily work (Flick, 2018). By combining both types of data, the study aims to improve the validity of its results and provide a more complete understanding (Imms, 2002).

This approach also addresses a gap in the current literature. Although many studies examine the formal aspects of DEI strategies, less is known about how these strategies are actually experienced by employees (Shore et al., 2018; Yoshino & Smith, 2013). By integrating employee surveys, interviews with DEI managers, and document analysis, this study aims to bridge that gap, connecting policy with lived experience.

4.1 Research Design and Approach

This study uses a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to better understand how DEI policies influence employee motivation and engagement at DB Schenker in Southeast Europe.

Mixed-methods research is especially useful for complex questions that require both broad insights and deeper understanding (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The quantitative part helps identify patterns and relationships in the data, while the qualitative part explores the personal experiences behind those numbers, giving voice to how DEI is actually lived and felt in everyday work.

To ensure that both perspectives are treated equally, a convergent parallel design is used: quantitative and qualitative data are collected at the same time, analyzed separately, and then brought together during interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). This makes it possible to compare formal DEI strategies with how employees really experience them, an important step when examining potential gaps between policy and practice (Shore et al., 2018; Yoshino & Smith, 2013).

This design also reflects the dual nature of DEI: it is not only about structures and statistics like retention or engagement, but also about more personal themes like belonging, fairness, and identity (Colquitt et al., 2013; Deci et al., 2017). That is why a multidimensional approach is essential.

Throughout the research process, ethical standards are carefully upheld. All participants are informed about the study and give their consent, and both anonymity and sensitivity to hierarchical dynamics are ensured, especially during interviews. Cultural and institutional specifics of Southeast Europe are also taken into account, recognizing that DEI practices in this region may differ from those in Western Europe (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018).

4.2 Data Collection Methodology

Based on the mixed-methods approach described above, this study combines three elements: a structured employee survey, semi-structured expert interviews, and a systematic review of DB Schenker's DEI policies. By bringing these methods together, the research takes a multidimensional look at both the company's formal strategies and how employees actually experience diversity, equity, and inclusion in their daily work.

4.2.1 Employee survey

The quantitative part of the study was carried out using a structured online questionnaire, designed and distributed via Microsoft Forms. This platform was chosen because it is easy to access, complies with data protection standards, and offers built-in tools for basic data analysis (Microsoft, n.d.). The survey was made available through a direct link and optimized for both

desktop and mobile use to ensure broad participation across DB Schenker's operational environments in Southeast Europe.

The survey consists of two main sections:

- 1. Demographic information
- 2. DEI perception and impact scale

The demographic section included six closed-ended items covering key categories such as region, job function, hierarchy level, generation, and employment status. These variables were selected to enable subgroup analysis and to explore how different employee profiles may shape perceptions of DEI policies and practices.

- Country of employment: Respondents were asked in which country they are currently employed in. The selection included all 13 countries of DB Schenker's Southeast Europe Cluster, namely Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Turkey, and Hungary. This allows for differentiated regional analysis.
- Functional area: Participants could select the main areas in which they work, such as
 Air Freight, Apprentices, Fairs & Exhibitions, Land Transport, Ocean Freight, Contract
 Logistics, Finance, HR, IT, SGMS or General Management. These categories reflect
 DB Schenker's internal organizational structure.
- 3. **Tenure at DB Schenker**: Respondents were asked how long they had been working at the company, with options ranging from "less than one year" to "more than six years." This variable enables analysis of experience-related differences in DEI perception.
- 4. Employment status: Participants indicated whether they held a white-collar or blue-collar position. This distinction is especially relevant in the logistics sector, where working conditions and access to information may differ significantly between office and operational staff.
- 5. **Job level**: Four hierarchical levels were defined: operational level, first management level (e.g., team leaders), middle management, and top management. This question was included to capture potential differences in DEI perception across leadership tiers.
- 6. **Age group**: Age was assessed using five brackets: under 21 years, 21–30, 31–40, 41–50, and over 50 years. This allows the study to explore generational differences in attitudes towards diversity and inclusion.

A complete version of the questionnaire, including all response options, is provided in appendix 1a and 1b.

The main body of the questionnaire includes 32 items measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree). The items are grouped into thematic clusters:

- Awareness and transparency
- Communication and information accessibility
- · Perceived cultural change and fairness
- · Perceived leadership engagement and role modeling
- · Feedback and participation opportunities
- Sense of belonging and inclusion
- Motivational impact of DEI strategies
- Organizational pride and employer branding

These items were developed based on empirical DEI literature and align with key constructs such as psychological safety, organizational justice, engagement, and intrinsic motivation (Colquitt et al., 2013; Deci et al., 2017; Edmondson, 1999; Shore et al., 2018).

The survey was shared via email and internal communication tools. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. The survey introduction clearly informed participants about the research purpose, their rights, and the handling of data in accordance with research ethics standards according to Flick (2018). The average time for completion was estimated at 5-7 minutes.

4.2.2 Document analysis: DB Schenker's DEI policies

To understand the official framing and communication of DEI within the organization, a document analysis was conducted using publicly available sources, including DB Schenker's corporate DEI webpage and ESG strategy documents. These materials present the company's self-declared objectives, priorities, and narrative around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The core themes identified in DB Schenker's DEI policy include:

Diversity: The company shows a clear commitment to building diverse teams that
reflect a wide range of both visible characteristics, such as gender and ethnicity, and
less visible traits, including cognitive styles and perspectives. Diversity is framed as a
driver of innovation and a way to stay aligned with a global customer base (DB
Schenker, 2024a).

- Equity: DEI efforts include targeted actions to identify and remove systemic barriers, ensuring that all employees have fair access to growth and advancement opportunities.
 A strong focus is placed on transparent hiring processes and equitable career progression structures (DB Schenker, 2024a).
- Inclusion: The policy emphasizes the importance of creating an environment where every employee feels respected, valued, and empowered to contribute authentically. Inclusion is supported through leadership accountability and various employee engagement initiatives (DB Schenker, 2024a).

The document analysis serves three purposes:

- To provide a baseline understanding of the formal DEI strategy against which employee perceptions can be compared.
- To evaluate the consistency and clarity of DEI communication across levels and regions.
- To identify possible gaps between strategic intent and operational reality, particularly in the Southeast European context.

This analytical step strengthens the alignment between the theoretical model in chapter 3.2 Theoretical model of the work and the practical examination of DEI implementation.

The results of the document analysis are triangulated with the findings from the employee survey and insights gathered through expert interviews. This triangulation strengthens the validity of the study by putting together different perspectives on DB Schenker's DEI strategy. It allows the identification of patterns, contradictions, and blind spots, highlighting where official communication aligns with, or diverges from, employees lived experiences and the strategic objectives behind DEI efforts. By combining these three sources of data, the study develops a multi-faceted and contextual understanding of how DEI is not only communicated but also implemented and experienced within the organization.

4.2.3 Qualitative Interviews with DEI representatives

To complement the quantitative survey, two semi-structured interviews (see interview guide appendix 2a) were conducted with DEI representatives at DB Schenker. These conversations were intended to provide a deeper understanding of the company's strategic direction, communication priorities, and the practical implementation of its internal DEI strategy. Additionally, the interviews aimed to explore the extent to which the views of the DEI representatives align with the messages officially presented on the company's website.

The interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams and audio recorded with the informed consent of the participants. The recordings were transcribed manually (see appendix 2b) to ensure a high level of accuracy. Thematic analysis was then carried out using Microsoft Excel. Due to the small sample size (n = 2), the use of specialized qualitative analysis software was not considered necessary.

The interview guide is based on the main research themes of this study, including:

- Objectives and content of corporate-wide DEI communication
- Perceived challenges in regional implementation
- Importance of cultural and hierarchical differences
- Strategies to foster authenticity and inclusion
- Comparison between formal DEI communication and lived practice

The insights collected from these interviews add valuable context to the interpretation of the survey results and help to identify potential discrepancies between the company's formal DEI policies and how these are perceived and experienced by employees in practice.

4.3 Sampling and Participants

The final dataset of the employee survey consisted of 248 valid responses collected within DB SCHNEKER's Southeast European cluster. The goal was to gather a diverse and representative sample across departments, job levels, and national contexts in order to analyze the perceived impact of DEI strategies.

To ensure analytical reliability and data integrity, several exclusion criteria were applied prior to the evaluation:

- Top management responses were excluded to reduce the risk of strategic or socially desirable answers, as these individuals may be more invested in defending the company's DEI image.
- Responses submitted in less than 5 minutes were removed. Based on internal testing,
 a minimum of 5 minutes is necessary to read and consider the questionnaire content.
- All respondents from the Human Resources department were excluded due to their proximity to DEI processes and potential bias, particularly since both interview participants and the 5-person pilot group were also from HR.
- Blue-collar employees were excluded due to insufficient participation, mainly caused by the concurrent summer vacation period.

- Responses from Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Greece were excluded due to very low response rates, which would have weakened the comparability and reliability of subgroup analyses.
- Responses from people who indicated Apprentice as their functional area but selected something other than operational level were also excluded due to the impossibility of this combination resulting from the internal structure of DB Schenker.

The final dataset includes participants from 10 countries of the SEE cluster, spanning multiple functional areas, job levels, tenure categories, and age groups. A detailed overview of all demographic variables and answer options is provided in section 4.2.1. Employee survey. This structure enables subgroup analysis across generational, hierarchical, and regional dimensions, in line with the study's research objectives.

The survey followed a convenient sampling approach, distributed internally between June 13 and June 28, 2025. Local HR representatives across the SEE cluster supported the distribution process without applying any access restrictions. Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and open to all employees.

The survey invitation informed participants that the estimated completion time was 5-7 minutes, while average participation time was 9 minutes and 2 seconds, indicating good attention among valid participants.

In addition to the quantitative sample, two semi-structured expert interviews were conducted with DEI representatives at DB Schenker. Both participants held senior roles within the HR department of the SEE cluster and were selected due to their direct involvement in regional DEI communication and polity implementation.

Furthermore, a structured document analysis was conducted based on publicly available DEI statements and ESG-related strategy documents published by DB Schenker: These materials served as the formal reference point for comparing the communicated DEI strategy with employee perceptions and interview insights.

4.4 Data Analysis Technique

4.4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected in this study was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. The selection of analytical methods was guided by the research questions and hypotheses outlined

in chapter 3 Conceptual framework and aligned with established standards in applied social research.

Before starting the analysis, the dataset was cleaned to ensure validity and reliability as described in chapter 4.3 Sampling and Participants. This included removing incomplete responses, impossible combinations, unusually fast submissions, and answers from top management and the HR department.

Basic descriptive statistics were calculated to give an overview of the data. Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the linear relationships between the main variables. This helped to identify whether initial associations matched the expectations derived from the theoretical framework.

To test the core hypotheses, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. This focused on the effects of DEI-related perceptions, such as fairness, inclusion, and authenticity, on outcomes like employee motivation, engagement, and perceived impact. All predictors were entered into the model simultaneously to assess their combined influence on each outcome variable.

To explore differences between groups, one-way ANOVA was applied to demographic categories such as age, department, country, and organizational level. Additionally, a MANOVA was used to investigate whether perceptions of DEI varied across job levels, including operational staff, first-line managers, and middle management.

The internal consistency of the survey scales was checked using Cronbach's Alpha, with all key scales showing acceptable reliability (see appendix 6a). Assumptions relevant to the regression analysis, including linearity, normality of residuals, and absence of multicollinearity, were reviewed both descriptively and through visual inspection.

Finally, subgroup analyses were carried out to provide more detailed insight into patterns across variables like age, tenure, hierarchical position, department, and country. These were based on demographic categories captured in the survey instrument, as outlined in chapter 4.2.1 Employee survey. Results from these subgroup analyses are presented in chapter 5.1 Quantitative Findings.

4.4.2 DB Schenker's DEI Policies

To better understand how DB Schenker communicates its DEI strategy, a structured qualitative document analysis was carried out. The findings from this analysis are presented in chapter 5.2 Findings from the analysis of DB Schenker's DEI policies and serve to complement the results of the employee survey and the expert interviews. The goal was to identify recurring themes, strategic intentions, and structural elements in various communication materials, and to assess how consistent and credible these messages are.

The analysis followed the principles of qualitative content analysis and was guided by a combined deductive—inductive coding approach. An initial set of categories was developed based on key academic publications on DEI communication and implementation, including works by Shore et al. (2018), Nishii (2013), and Dover et al. (2020). These categories included themes such as inclusion, anti-discrimination, leadership responsibility, and psychological safety. During the coding process, additional themes emerged naturally such as employee involvement, identity visibility, and behavioral design tools.

The data set consisted of both publicly available materials like the global DEI section of DB Schenker's website and the 2024 Sustainability Report and selected internal documents accessed via the company intranet. These internal sources included communications from campaigns like Diversity Week and Pride Month, practical tools like the Diversity Nudging Guide, and guidelines on topics such as anti-discrimination. The use of internal materials was clearly noted in the coding process, and access restrictions were transparently documented. Where needed, quotes from internal documents were paraphrased or anonymized to maintain confidentiality.

Each document was reviewed line by line and coded using a structured Excel spreadsheet. For each coded passage, information such as the original wording, topic, category, strategic relevance, and any additional observations were recorded. The resulting coding matrix formed the analytical basis for chapter 5.2 Findings from the analysis of DB Schenker's DEI policies. A full version of the coding table is provided in appendix 4a for transparency.

To assess consistency, the analysis compared how key themes were communicated across different channels. This included looking at differences in language, tone, level of detail, intended audience, and overall framing. Beyond surface-level meaning, the analysis also considered how statements were positioned within broader narratives and whether they pointed toward genuine structural commitments. Special attention was given to identifying

gaps or contradictions between internal and external messaging or between symbolic language and concrete measures.

Given the manageable scope of the material and the focused nature of the analysis, coding was done manually in Excel. Although no specialized qualitative software was used, efforts were made to ensure transparency and reproducibility by carefully documenting the coding logic and category definitions.

In summary, the document analysis offers an interpretive lens through which DB Schenker's formal DEI messaging can be evaluated. It helps to identify central themes and strategic objectives, while also examining the coherence of communication across different formats. In chapter 5.3.3 Symbolic Initiatives vs. Lived Inclusion, these findings will be compared with the perceptions of employees, based on the triangulation of survey and interview data.

4.4.3 Qualitative Interviews

The qualitative interviews were evaluated using a structured content analysis, drawing on the approach proposed by Mayring (2014). The primary aim was to explore recurring themes, patterns, and possible differences between employee perspectives and the DEI objectives described in DB Schenker's official policy documents.

To ensure consistency and transparency throughout the analysis, the following steps were followed:

1. Development of initial categories:

Based on insights from the policy analysis (see chapter 5.2 Findings from the analysis of DB Schenker's DEI policies), a preliminary coding framework was created. Core categories included strategic goals, communication, implementation & everyday practice, regional adaptation, perception & acceptance, and measurement & sustainability.

2. Refinement through inductive insights:

As the transcripts were reviewed, new subtopics and nuances emerged that were not fully captured by the initial framework. These were incorporated into the coding system to remain open to participants' unique perspectives and to reflect the material more accurately.

3. Manuell coding of interview transcripts:

The interviews were conducted manually using Microsoft Excel (see coding matrix appendix 3a). Statements were assigned to categories based on their content and meaning.

4. Comparative interpretation:

After coding, the data were systematically compared with the official DEI strategy (see 5.2 Findings from the analysis of DB Schenker's DEI policies) to identify alignment, gaps, and deviations. These comparisons informed the integrated interpretation presented in chapter 5.4 Integrated interpretation and triangulation.

This analytical approach balances structure with flexibility, allowing for both systematic evaluation and deeper interpretation. It provides insight into how DEI is understood and experienced within different areas of the organization while meeting established standards for qualitative research (Kuckartz, 2012; Mayring, 2014).

5 Findings and Analysis

This chapter presents empirical findings based on the three data sources introduced in chapter 4 Research methodology. In line with the mixed-methods design of the study, the results are organized to reflect the structure of the research approach.

Section 5.1 Quantitative Findings summarizes the results of the employee survey, focusing on overall perceptions of DEI, its influence on motivation and engagement, and differences across demographic groups such as age, hierarchy level, and cultural background.

Chapter 5.2 Findings from the analysis of DB Schenker's DEI policies provides a structured review of the company's publicly communicated DEI strategy. This section evaluates the consistency and credibility of the content across different communication channels.

Section 5.3 Qualitative Interview Insights draws on insights from expert interviews, offering a closer look at the strategic priorities, practical challenges, and perceived authenticity of DEI efforts within the organization.

Finally, all three data streams are brought together in an integrated interpretation. This synthesis highlights areas of alignment and divergence across the data sources and lays the foundation for the broader discussion in chapter 6 Discussion

5.1 Quantitative Findings

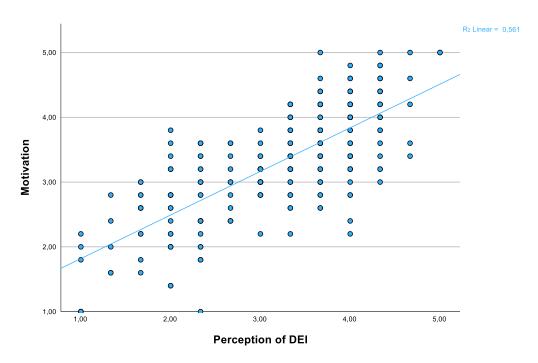
This section presents the quantitative findings based on the employee survey conducted across DB Schenker's Southeast Europe cluster. The results are structured according to the six predefined hypotheses, each of which was statistically tested using appropriate methods. All analyses were conducted with a significance level of $\alpha = .05$.

5.1.1 Hypothesis 1: Employees who perceive DEI Policies as authentic and effective report higher Levels of Motivation.

To test this hypothesis, a linear regression analysis was conducted with perceived DEI as the independent variable and employee motivation as the dependent variable. The model was statistically significant, F(1, 246) = 314.29, p < .001, and explained 56.1% of the variance in motivation ($R^2 = .561$). The standardized regression coefficient was $\beta = .749$, indicating a strong positive effect.

Figure 1:
Scatterplot showing the linear relationship between perceived DEI and employee motivation.

Own figure based on SPSS output.



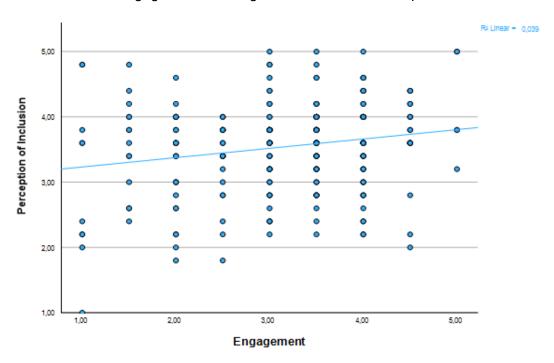
A clear linear relationship was found between employees' perceptions of DEI and their reported motivation. This is visualized in Figure 1, which shows a positive trend across the data. The scatterplot reveals a consistent clustering of values along the regression line, suggesting a strong association. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .561$) exceeds the commonly

accepted threshold for practical relevance (Cohen, 1988), providing solid support for the proposed relationship. Based on these findings, Hypothesis 1 is confirmed.

5.1.2 Hypothesis 2: A strong Feeling of Inclusion is associated with increased employee Engagement.

A second linear regression analysis was conducted with perceived inclusion as the independent variable and employee engagement as the dependent variable. The model was statistically significant, F(1, 246) = 9.90, p = .002, and explained 3.9% of the variance in engagement ($R^2 = .039$). The standardized regression coefficient was $\beta = .197$, indicating a positive relationship.

Figure 2:
Scatterplot showing the relationship between perceived inclusion and employee engagement. Own figure based on SPSS output.



A significant linear relationship was observed between perceived inclusion and employee engagement. Figure 2 illustrates this connection, showing a visible upward trend along the regression line. While the proportion of explained variance is relatively modest, the result still indicates a meaningful link between inclusion and engagement in the workplace. Based on this finding, Hypothesis 2 is supported.

5.1.3 Hypothesis 3: Perceptions of DEI Policies differ significantly across Generations, with younger Employees expecting more structural Inclusion.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in DEI perception across five age groups. The result was statistically significant, F(4, 243) = 3.59, p = .007, indicating that age has a measurable effect on how employees perceive DEI strategies. The effect size was small to moderate ($\eta^2 = .056$), suggesting a relevant generational influence.

Figure 3:
Boxplot showing perceived DEI by age group. Own figure based on SPSS output.

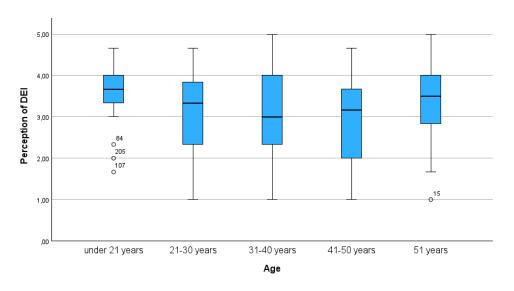


Figure 3 presents a boxplot illustrating DEI perception across different age groups. Younger employees, particularly those under 21 and those aged 21 to 30, tend to report higher average perception scores, with relatively narrow interquartile ranges. In contrast, older age groups show greater variability and several low-end outliers. This visual pattern lends support to the assumption that expectations regarding DEI, as well as perceptions of its implementation, vary across generational cohorts. Based on these observations, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

5.1.4 Hypothesis 4: Cultural Background moderates the perceived Relevance and Impact of DEI Strategies.

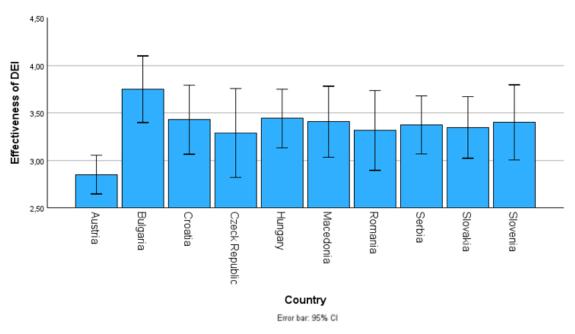
To explore cultural variation, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare perceived DEI impact across ten countries within DB Schenker's SEE cluster. The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference, F(9, 238) = 3.08, p = .002, with a moderate effect size ($\eta^2 = .002$).

.104). These findings indicate that employees from different national backgrounds perceive the effectiveness of DEI policies in varying ways.

Figure 4:

Bar chart showing the perceived DEI effectiveness across countries within the SEE cluster.

Own figure based on SPSS output.



Note: Scale range adjusted for better visibility

Figure 4 shows the average DEI effect scores by country, including 95% confidence intervals. While many countries clustered around similar mean values, some clear differences emerged, for instance, Austria reported the lowest average perception, whereas Bulgaria showed the highest. These results suggest that national context influences how inclusive policies are perceived and valued by employees. Based on this, Hypothesis 4 is supported.

5.1.5 Hypothesis 5: Perceptions of DEI Policies differ across Employment Types such as Department and Job Level.

To test this hypothesis, two one-way ANOVAs were conducted. The first examined differences in DEI perception across functional departments. The result was statistically significant, F(9, 238) = 2.60, p = .007, with a small to moderate effect size (η^2 = .090).

Figure 5:
Bar chart showing perceived DEI across departments. Own figure based on SPSS output.

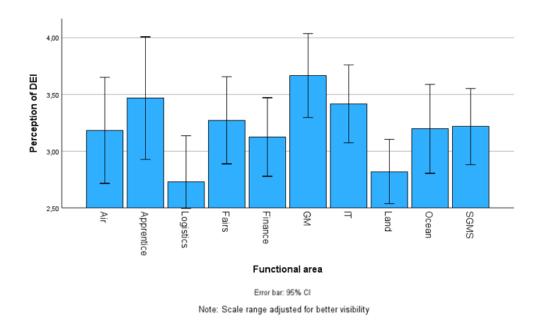


Figure 5 presents the distribution of DEI perception scores across departments, including 95% confidence intervals. Clear differences can be observed, for instance, employees in General Management and IT reported higher average scores, while those in Land Transport and Logistics showed lower levels of DEI perception. The relatively wide confidence intervals in some departments suggest considerable variation within those groups.

In contrast, the second ANOVA, which examined the perceived impact of DEI measures, revealed no statistically significant differences between departments, F(9, 238) = 0.95, p = .484, $\eta^2 = .035$. These findings indicate that although perceptions of DEI vary depending on departmental affiliation, the perceived effectiveness of DEI efforts appears to be more consistent across functions.

Figure 6:
Bar chart showing perceived DEI across hierarchical levels. Own figure based on SPSS output.

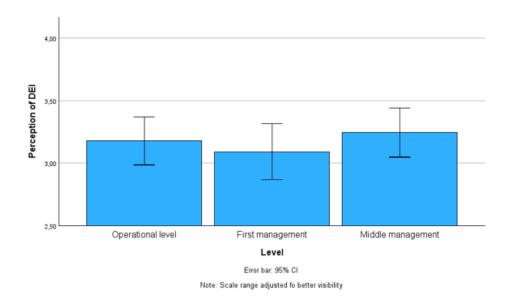


Figure 6 illustrates the comparison across hierarchical levels. While middle management reported slightly higher average DEI perception scores, the overlapping confidence intervals suggest that these differences are not statistically meaningful.

Taken together, the findings offer partial support for Hypothesis 5: functional context seems to influence how DEI is perceived, whereas hierarchical position does not appear to have a significant effect.

5.1.6 Hypothesis 6: Perceptions of DEI Strategies differ by Organizational level, with Leadership showing more positive Evaluations.

To test this hypothesis, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted using both DEI perception and perceived DEI impact as dependent variables. The independent variable was hierarchical level, categorized into operational level, first management, and middle management. The multivariate test did not reveal any significant effect, Wilks' Λ = .985, F(4, 488) = 0.918, p = .453, with a very small effect size ($\eta^2 = .007$).

Figure 7:

Perception and perceived impact of DEI by hierarchical level. Own figure based on SPSS output.

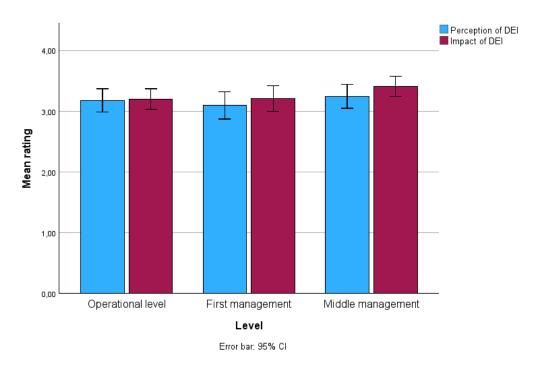


Figure 7 visualizes the group means, showing slight differences across hierarchical levels, middle management reports marginally higher scores on both variables. However, these variations lie within overlapping confidence intervals and are not statistically significant. As a result, Hypothesis 6 is not supported.

5.1.7 Additional Quantitative Insights

In addition to the hypothesis-driven analyses, several exploratory tests were conducted to uncover further relationships within the dataset. These supplementary findings provide valuable context for understanding how employees experience DEI, extending beyond the predefined research questions.

Inclusion and Motivation:

A Pearson correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between perceived inclusion and employee motivation, r(248) = .278, p < .001. This suggests that employees who feel more included at work tend to report higher levels of motivation. While the strength of the correlation is moderate, the result supports the idea that a sense of inclusion can foster intrinsic motivation and greater engagement in the workplace.

Figure 8:

Scatter plot showing regression line on the relationship between perceived inclusion and employee motivation. Own figure based on SPSS output.

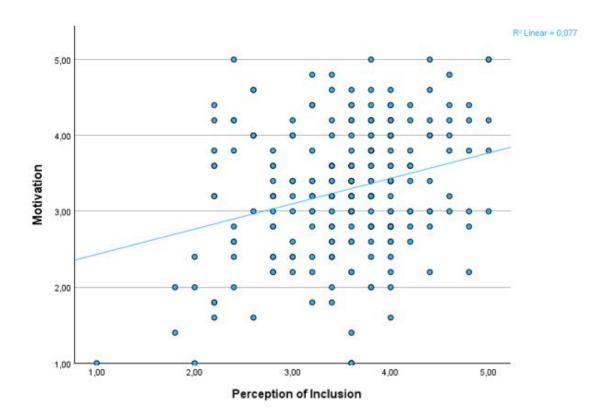


Figure 8 illustrates this relationship using a scatterplot with a fitted regression line. The upward trend indicates a positive association throughout the full range of responses, and the coefficient of determination reflects a small but meaningful effect.

Fairness and Perceived DEI Effectiveness:

A linear regression was conducted to assess the influence of perceived fairness on the perceived impact of DEI strategies. The model was statistically significant, F(1, 246) = 12.87, p < .001, and explained 5% of the variance in perceived effectiveness ($R^2 = .050$). The standardized regression coefficient ($\beta = .223$) indicates a small but meaningful effect.

Figure 9:

Scatter plot showing regression line on the relationship between perception of fairness and the perceived impact of DEI strategies. Own figure based on SPSS output.

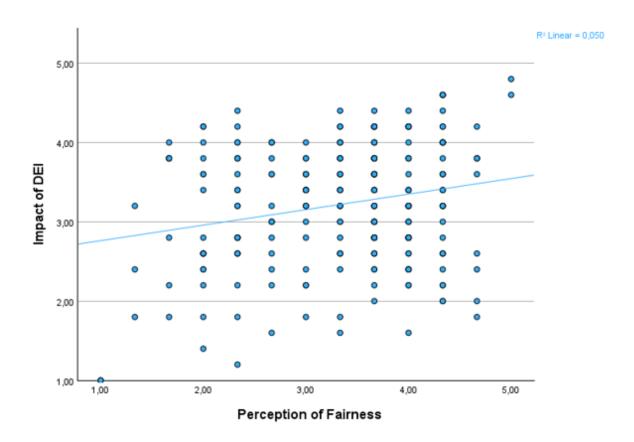


Figure 9 illustrates this relationship. The regression line reveals a positive trend across the full range of fairness scores, indicating that employees who perceive DEI efforts as fair are more likely to view them as having a meaningful and positive impact on the organization.

Perception of DEI and Inclusion:

Another correlation analysis revealed a weak but statistically significant relationship between DEI perception and inclusion, r(248) = .192, p = .002. This suggests that employees who perceive DEI communication as authentic tend to feel slightly more included in the organization. However, the relatively low correlation coefficient indicates that this relationship is limited and may reflect inconsistencies between official DEI messaging and employees' lived experiences.

Figure 10:

Scatter plot showing regression line on the relationship between the perception of DEI and the perceived feeling of inclusion. Own figure based on SPSS output.

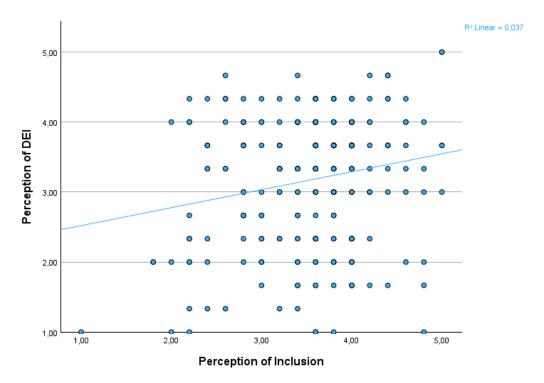


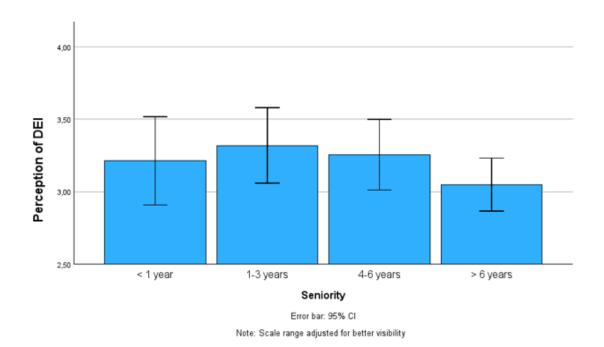
Figure 10 shows the corresponding scatterplot. The trend line displays a slight upward slope, which supports the observed correlation while also highlighting the considerable variability in individual responses.

DEI Perception by Length of Employment:

A one-way ANOVA tested differences in DEI perception across five tenure groups. The result was statistically significant, F(4, 243) = 7.20, p < .001, with a moderate effect size ($\eta^2 = .106$). This suggests that employees' perception of DEI varies depending on how long they have been with the organization.

Figure 11:

Bar chart showing mean values of DEI perception across four affiliation groups. Own figure based on SPSS output.



As shown in Figure 11, employees with less than three years of service reported higher average DEI perception scores compared to those with longer tenure. Interestingly, the lowest mean values were observed among employees with more than six years at the company, suggesting that perceptions of DEI may decline over time. This pattern raises questions about possible underlying factors such as generational differences, the quality of onboarding processes, or shifts in organizational culture and expectations, that warrant further exploration.

These additional findings complement the hypothesis tests and provide deeper insight into how employees across the organization experience DEI efforts. They are further discussed in chapter 6 Discussion.

5.2 Findings from the analysis of DB Schenker's DEI policies

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are deeply embedded in DB Schenker's organizational narrative. As a globally active logistics company, DB Schenker communicates its DEI commitment across a range of internal and external platforms. These communications aim not only to reflect the company's values but also to guide employee behavior, inform leadership practices, and support structural development.

This chapter explores the content and consistency of DB Schenker's DEI messaging and sets the stage for a comparison with employees lived experiences in the following section. The analysis focuses on key themes, strategic framing, and the alignment of messages across different formats. Details on the coding process and data sources can be found in chapter 4.4 Data Analysis Technique.

5.2.1 Key messages and strategic objectives

DB Schenker's DEI communication is structured across multiple layers, linking value-driven messages with measurable organizational goals. Across various platforms, the company emphasizes diversity not only as a social responsibility but also as a strategic asset (DB Schenker, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c). While dimensions such as gender or ethnicity are mentioned selectively, the broader narrative centers on themes like inclusion, fairness, and participation (DB Schenker, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c).

A core message throughout is the company's commitment to creating a respectful and inclusive work environment where people from diverse backgrounds feel empowered to contribute meaningfully (DB Schenker, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c). This aspiration is reflected in both external content such as the corporate DEI website and internal initiatives like Diversity Week and Global Diversity Day. These campaigns typically focus on cultural exchange, allyship, and visibility, often using interactive events, personal stories, and participatory formats to engage employees (DB Schenker, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c).

Strategically, DB Schenker aims to embed DEI into leadership and organizational structures (DB Schenker, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c). Internal materials and employee-focused campaigns highlight the responsibility of managers in fostering inclusive work environments. This includes initiatives such as unconscious bias training, guidelines for inclusive language, and integrating diversity goals into performance evaluations (DB Schenker, 2024c). Tools like the "Diversity Nudging" playbook further illustrate how inclusive behaviors can be encouraged through small, intentional design choices in day-to-day work settings (DB Schenker, 2024c).

Beyond internal culture, DEI is also framed as a factor in driving business success (DB Schenker, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c). Both internal and external communication materials refer to diversity as a source of innovation, adaptability, and performance. Internal resources also draw connections between inclusive leadership, improved decision-making, more effective collaboration, and greater employee satisfaction (DB Schenker, 2024c).

Overall, DB Schenker's DEI messaging presents a coherent blend of normative principles and strategic intent. While not every message includes specific KPIs or clearly defined target groups, the overarching goals are evident: to build structural accountability, raise awareness, and support a long-term culture of inclusion.

5.2.2 Consistency of communication

The consistency of DEI communication across different levels and formats is a key indicator of an organization's credibility. In DB Schenker's case, the analysis included publicly available materials, internal strategic documents, and employee-facing content accessed via the company intranet. These sources encompassed sustainability reports, DEI campaign materials, and internal awareness tools such as the anti-discrimination guide and the diversity calendar.

Across these formats, the messaging is largely aligned in terms of core values and conceptual focus. Themes like fairness, psychological safety, and inclusive collaboration appear consistently across channels. While external communications tend to emphasize strategic positioning and employer branding, internal materials place greater focus on practical implementation and day-to-day relevance (DB Schenker, 2024a, 2024b). Examples include guidance on inclusive meetings, respectful communication, and sensitivity to religious or cultural holidays (DB Schenker, 2024c).

The tone and level of detail vary depending on the audience. Public-facing documents often use broad, aspirational language, whereas internal content offers concrete advice tailored to employees, managers, and HR professionals. This differentiation appears intentional and reflects the need to adapt communication to different organizational contexts, rather than indicating inconsistency.

Notably, no significant contradictions were found between internal and external messaging. On the contrary, internal content reinforces public statements by adding practical examples and implementation guidance. This coherence strengthens internal trust and helps mitigate the risk of DEI being perceived as merely symbolic, a concern that is particularly relevant in large, global organizations.

In summary, DB Schenker's DEI communication demonstrates a high degree of consistency across formats and target groups. Despite variations in language and depth, the company maintains a cohesive narrative that links its cultural values with concrete structural actions.

This alignment contributes to the perceived authenticity of DEI as a strategic and organizationwide priority.

5.2.3 Alignment with perceived reality

One of the key aims of this study was to examine whether the strategic goals and public self-representation of DB Schenker's DEI policies (see chapter 5.2 Findings from the analysis of DB Schenker's DEI policies) are reflected in employees' everyday experiences. The qualitative interviews with P&O professionals from different regional offices offered valuable insights into where policy and practice align, and where noticeable gaps remain between written strategy and lived reality.

Several points of convergence emerged across the interviews. Both participants highlighted inclusive recruitment practices and the use of gender-neutral language in job advertisements, echoing the company's stated commitment to reducing bias and fostering fairness in hiring. Gender diversity, particularly in leadership positions, was also mentioned by both interviewees as a clear strategic focus, reflecting a priority that is strongly emphasized in the official DEI framework.

However, the interviews also revealed several gaps between the ambitions of DB Schenker's DEI strategy and the realities of day-to-day organizational life:

1. Communication:

While DEI is prominently featured in corporate messaging, interviewees noted that these messages are not always localized or easily accessible. In particular, blue-collar employees and regional teams may struggle to engage with DEI content due to language barriers or limited access to internal communication platforms.

2. Implementation:

Both interviewees described DEI as still somewhat symbolic, driven by global campaigns rather than fully embedded in everyday routines. Although there are some individual initiatives, the lack of integration into core business processes and decision-making structures was seen as a limiting factor.

3. Regional adaptation:

Certain topics, such as LGBTQ+ inclusion or shifting gender roles, were described as culturally sensitive and often avoided in some regions. This points to a disconnect between the broad, global inclusiveness promoted in official strategy and the varying degrees of regional readiness to engage with all dimensions of DEI.

4. Employee engagement:

A notable gap exists between DEI messaging and how it is understood by employees, particularly those in non-leadership roles. Many are unclear about what DEI means in practice or how it relates to their daily work. As one interviewee put it: "People hear the word DEI, but they don't really know what it means for them."

5. Measurement and follow-up:

Although DEI-related KPIs are tracked at the cluster level, there is a lack of structured feedback mechanisms at the local level. Interviewees expressed interest in more region-specific pulse surveys or opportunities for open dialogue to better capture employee sentiment.

In summary, DB Schenker's DEI strategy offers a strong conceptual foundation, but its translation into daily organizational practice is uneven. The findings point to a need for more localized communication, stronger involvement of leadership at all levels, and more targeted efforts to engage employees. Making DEI a tangible part of the employee experience, rather than just a strategic narrative, remains a key challenge.

5.3 Qualitative Interview Insights

To complement the findings from chapter 5.1 Quantitative Findings and 5.2 Findings from the analysis of DB Schenker's DEI policies qualitative interviews were conducted with two P&O professionals from different regions within the SEE cluster. The goal was to gain deeper insight into how DEI is perceived, interpreted, and applied in everyday operations, particularly in relation to the strategic objectives set at the corporate level.

These interviews provide a nuanced perspective on how DEI is understood and experienced within the organization. They highlight not only areas of alignment between policy and practice but also reveal where significant gaps or implementation challenges remain. The findings are organized according to key analytical themes that emerged from both the document analysis and the interview data.

5.3.1 DEI Objectives and Policy Awareness

Both interviewees expressed a general understanding of DB Schenker's overarching DEI goals. They emphasized the company's ambition to create a work environment where people feel valued and included, regardless of background, gender, or age. This reflects the strategic intent outlined in the official DEI policies, which frame diversity and inclusion as key drivers of innovation and employee retention.

However, while these goals are widely recognized at the management level, their translation into everyday operational practice appears limited. As one interviewee remarked, DEI is often perceived as a global initiative rather than something directly relevant to local teams. The absence of clearly defined responsibilities and concrete actions was seen as a central obstacle to meaningful implementation.

Time constraints and competing operational priorities were frequently mentioned as barriers to engaging more deeply with DEI. Additionally, the lack of regional DEI leads or embedded local support structures makes it difficult to sustain progress or tailor initiatives to specific contexts.

5.3.2 Communication, Local Perception and Cultural Fit

Cultural context emerged as a key factor shaping how DEI initiatives are perceived and implemented. According to the interviewees, while certain aspects such as generational and cultural diversity are already part of everyday work life, other topics remain sensitive or are not openly addressed.

Gender roles and LGBTQ+ inclusion, in particular, were described as challenging in some cultural contexts within the SEE region. One participant noted that these subjects are often avoided or approached with caution, reflecting prevailing societal norms and expectations. This results in a disconnect between the inclusive goals promoted at the global level and the degree of regional readiness to actively engage with these issues.

The interviews also suggested that traditional values, religious beliefs, and hierarchical organizational structures significantly influence how DEI messages are interpreted. In settings where these elements are strongly rooted, DEI communication may be viewed with skepticism or perceived as out of touch with local realities.

5.3.3 Symbolic Initiatives vs. Lived Inclusion

While DB Schenker has made visible efforts to promote DEI, through campaigns and inclusive guidelines, for instance both interviewees voiced concerns that many of these initiatives still come across as largely symbolic. Activities such as Diversity Week or corporate communications were acknowledged as valuable starting points, but their impact is often limited by a lack of consistent follow-through at the local level.

In contrast, authentic inclusion was described as something that requires ongoing leadership commitment, visible role modeling, and integration into daily work routines. The absence of structured feedback loops and opportunities for open dialogue further reinforces the perception that DEI is not yet fully embedded in the organization's culture.

Ultimately, both participants agreed that for DEI to be taken seriously and embraced throughout all levels of the company, it needs to be locally anchored, regularly discussed, and linked to concrete, measurable actions. Without this, there is a risk that even well-intentioned efforts remain superficial and fail to create lasting cultural change.

5.4 Integrated interpretation and triangulation

In this chapter, the findings from the quantitative survey (see 5.1 Quantitative Findings), the analysis of DB Schenker's DEI policy documents (see 5.2 Findings from the analysis of DB Schenker's DEI policies), and the qualitative interviews (see 5.3 Qualitative Interview Insights) are integrated and compared. The goal is to identify patterns, tensions, and alignment between strategic intentions and organizational reality, and to critically reflect on the maturity and credibility of DEI within DB Schenker.

5.4.1 Awareness and Strategic Clarity

A fundamental element of any DEI strategy is the extent to which its goals are understood by employees across different levels of the organization. In the case of DB Schenker, the official DEI policy outlines clear strategic priorities: fostering a culture of inclusion, improving gender balance in leadership, reducing bias in recruitment, and positioning DEI as a long-term business driver, particularly with regard to innovation and talent retention.

The qualitative interviews showed that these objectives are generally recognized by HR professionals and individuals in leadership positions. Both interviewees referred to the importance of inclusive work environments and acknowledged diversity as a valuable factor in team dynamics and hiring decisions. However, they also pointed out that the understanding of these goals often remains vague or abstract. As one participant put it, many employees know the term DEI but are not sure what it really means in practice.

This impression is supported by the survey data. While a majority of respondents (65%) reported being "familiar" or "somewhat familiar" with DEI, only 27% were able to accurately name one or more of the stated strategic goals in an open-text field.

Taken together, these findings indicate a partial alignment between corporate intent and employee understanding. While the strategic direction is visible at higher levels of the organization, it appears that this message has not been fully translated or internalized across the broader workforce. This gap in communication or goal clarity may hinder the broader cultural integration of DEI principles.

5.4.2 Communication and Internal Reach

Effective communication plays a central role in ensuring that DEI strategies are not only understood but also embraced across all levels of the organisation. According to the official DEI documents analysed in Chapter 5.2 Findings from the analysis of DB Schenker's DEI policies, DB Schenker relies on a combination of internal communication channels, including the corporate intranet, newsletters, MS Teams groups, and awareness campaigns such as the annual Diversity Week. These tools are intended to promote transparency, generate interest, and build internal momentum around DEI topics.

However, findings from both the survey and the interviews point to clear limitations in the internal reach of current DEI communication efforts. Although the communication channels themselves are well established and generally known, their accessibility and perceived relevance vary considerably depending on employee role and location. Both interviewees emphasized that blue-collar workers and field staff often lack regular access to the intranet or personal email accounts. As one participant noted, "Communication around DEI exists, but it doesn't always reach everyone."

This concern is echoed in the survey results: only 38% of respondents reported having read or interacted with DEI-related communication in the past six months. Open-text responses further revealed that some employees perceive DEI messaging as "HQ-driven" or "not relevant to my role."

In summary, while the infrastructure for internal DEI communication is in place, its practical impact appears limited. The findings highlight a clear gap between how communication is designed and how it is actually received. To increase reach and relevance, DEI messaging needs to be adapted to different roles and contexts, through more differentiated, accessible, and multilingual formats that engage all parts of the workforce more effectively.

5.4.3 Implementation in Everyday Work

A central dimension in the evaluation of DEI strategies lies in their actual implementation in the day-to-day operations of an organization. According to the policy documents in chapter 5.2 Findings from the analysis of DB Schenker's DEI policies, DB Schenker has outlined several concrete measures aimed at integrating DEI into the organizational structure. These include bias-reduced recruiting processes, inclusive language in job advertisements, onboarding practices sensitive to cultural diversity, and leadership development with a focus on diversity awareness.

The qualitative interviews offer partial support for the presence of DEI-related measures in practice. Both participants noted that job postings now tend to use more neutral and inclusive language, and that onboarding processes have become somewhat more attentive to cultural backgrounds. These examples suggest that elements of the DEI strategy are beginning to influence HR practices in tangible ways.

However, the interviewees also emphasized that such efforts are often perceived as isolated and event-driven rather than embedded in day-to-day operations. DEI initiatives were reported to surface primarily around specific campaigns such as Diversity Week or when new global materials are introduced. What appears to be lacking is sustained follow-through and integration into regular local routines. This points to varying levels of implementation depth, with DEI not yet fully anchored in operational practice.

The survey results reinforce this assessment. While 40% of respondents indicated awareness of DEI-related initiatives, only 22% felt that DEI was actively reflected in the behavior of their immediate teams.

Taken together, these findings suggest that elements of DB Schenker's DEI strategy are making their way into practice, but not yet in a consistent or systematic manner. Formal efforts are visible, but their full integration into team dynamics, leadership decisions, and daily structures remain an ongoing challenge.

5.4.4 Regional Adaptation

DB Schenker's DEI policy documents emphasize the importance of balancing global consistency with regional flexibility, an approach particularly relevant for multinational companies operating across culturally, socially, and legally diverse environments. The strategy

outlines that while DEI values apply globally, their implementation should be sensitive to local contexts and realities.

This principle of regional relevance was discussed in detail during the interviews. Both participants stressed that certain DEI topics, particularly gender equality and LGBTQ+ inclusion, are perceived very differently depending on the cultural setting. One interviewee explicitly noted that LGBTQ+ topics are "barely addressed" in their region, as they are often viewed as culturally sensitive or even socially taboo. This highlights a clear tension between global messaging and local acceptance.

Survey data reinforces this observation. In open-text responses, several participants from the SEE region commented that DEI initiatives "don't reflect local realities" or that certain topics seem pushed by headquarters without sufficient adaptation. Notably, no region-specific DEI materials or communication efforts were mentioned by respondents.

At the same time, some diversity dimensions, such as intercultural collaboration and age diversity, appear to be more naturally integrated into regional operations. These aspects were referenced more frequently and in a more positive light, suggesting that regional adaptation does not always require entirely new content, but rather a more nuanced, context-sensitive framing.

Overall, the findings suggest that while the need for cultural adaptation is acknowledged at the policy level, its implementation in practice remains limited. Currently, there is no structured mechanism in place to systematically adapt DEI content, language, or activities to regional conditions resulting in a noticeable gap between strategic intent and local relevance.

5.4.5 Feedback Mechanism and Sustainability

The long-term success of DEI strategies depends not only on strong communication and consistent implementation but also on the presence of structured feedback mechanisms and sustainable follow-up processes. In its policy documents (see chapter 5.2 Findings from the analysis of DB Schenker's DEI policies), DB Schenker highlights the importance of DEI-related KPIs, regular monitoring, and employee feedback as key tools for tracking progress and adjusting strategic priorities as needed.

However, the comparison with survey and interview data reveals a clear gap in this area. While the existence of quantitative indicators such as gender ratios in leadership positions, was confirmed in the interviews, neither participant mentioned any concrete feedback formats at the local or team level. One interviewee remarked that although DEI may be monitored at the cluster level, there is "no direct mechanism to collect feedback" from employees on the ground.

The survey results further support this impression. Only 19% of respondents reported having participated in any DEI-related feedback activity, such as a pulse survey, team discussion, or workshop. Several participants noted that they had "never been asked" for their views or experiences related to DEI at DB Schenker.

In addition, there is no evidence of systematic reporting or structured follow-up processes at regional or local levels. In the absence of such mechanisms, it becomes difficult to assess how effective or well-received DEI initiatives are over time.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while the importance of measurement and sustainability is clearly acknowledged at the strategic level, its practical implementation remains underdeveloped. The lack of structured feedback loops and follow-up processes limits opportunities for employee involvement in evaluating and shaping DEI efforts, potentially undermining the long-term impact and credibility of the initiative.

5.4.6 Summary of Key Gaps and Consistencies

The comparative analysis of DEI policies (see 5.2 Findings from the analysis of DB Schenker's DEI policies), survey results (see 5.1 Quantitative Findings), and interview findings (see 5.3 Qualitative Interview Insights) reveals a mixed picture regarding the alignment between strategic ambition and perceived organizational reality. While some core elements of DB Schenker's DEI strategy are visible across different levels of the company, there are also clear inconsistencies and implementation gaps that become apparent when comparing the three data sources.

In terms of strategic awareness, there appears to be general alignment at the management level, while employees in operational roles often lack clarity about what DEI actually entails. The term itself is widely recognized, but its concrete meaning and personal relevance remain vague for many. This results in only a partial alignment between the strategic intent and employees' actual understanding.

When it comes to communication, the necessary channels do exist, but their practical reach is limited, particularly for non-office employees. DEI messaging is often perceived as distant or

generic, especially when distributed exclusively in English or via intranet platforms that are not accessible to all staff. This highlights a structural communication gap.

Table 1:

Alignment of DEI Dimensions Between Strategy and Perceived Organizational Reality (Own Illustration)

Dimension	Policy	Survey	Interviews
Strategic Objectives	Fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Partially fulfilled
Communication	Fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled
Implementation	Fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Partially fulfilled
Regional Adaptation	Partially fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled
Feedback & Sustainability	Fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled

Table 5 presents a comparative overview of the five key DEI dimensions, contrasting their representation in DB Schenker's official policy documents with how they are perceived by employees, based on insights from the survey and interview data.

6 Discussion

This chapter offers a critical reflection on the key empirical findings presented in chapter 5 Findings and Analysis and interprets them in the context of the theoretical frameworks and literature discussed earlier. The goal is to situate the results within a broader academic and practical landscape, evaluate their implications for both research and organizational practice, and outline limitations as well as directions for future inquiry.

The discussion focuses on two central aspects: first, the extent to which employees perceive DEI strategies as authentic and effective and how this perception influences their motivation and engagement; and second, how these effects differ across demographic variables such as age, cultural background, and organizational level.

The discussion is structured as follows: section 6.1 summarizes the main empirical findings. section 6.2 interprets these findings through the lens of existing theories, including Self-

Determination Theory (Deci et al., 2017), Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Section 6.3 outlines theoretical and practical implications, while section 6.4 reflects on typical challenges in DEI implementation. Methodological considerations are discussed in section 6.5, followed by an overview of the study's limitations in section 6.6 and suggestions for future research in 6.7.

6.1 Summary of the Key Findings

The empirical findings of this study offer strong evidence that DEI strategies can have a positive impact on employee motivation and engagement, particularly when they are perceived as authentic, fair, and structurally anchored. The most significant result is the strong positive correlation between the perceived effectiveness of DEI measures and employee motivation ($R^2 = .561$, p < .001), confirming Hypothesis 1. This suggests that employees who view DEI efforts as credible and meaningful are more likely to report higher levels of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

A comparable, though weaker, relationship was found between perceived inclusion and employee engagement ($R^2 = .039$, p = .002). While the explained variance is modest, the finding remains statistically significant and points to the role of belonging and psychological safety in fostering emotional and behavioral commitment to the organization.

The study also highlights notable differences across demographic and cultural groups. Younger employees and those with shorter tenure tended to perceive DEI more positively, suggesting generational shifts in expectations around fairness and inclusion. Cross-country comparisons further revealed cultural variation, with Austria reporting the lowest and Bulgaria the highest average perception of DEI effectiveness. These patterns support the assumption that cultural context influences how DEI is experienced, reinforcing the need for regional adaptation in strategy design.

Interestingly, while certain departments, such as IT and General Management, reported more favorable perceptions, no significant differences were found across hierarchical levels. This contradicts the assumption that leadership tends to view DEI more positively and may indicate either a relatively uniform perception across levels or limited visibility of DEI at the operational level.

Additional analyses also showed that fairness and inclusion, core dimensions of organizational justice, have a small but meaningful influence on both employee motivation and perceptions

of DEI effectiveness. These findings emphasize the importance of psychological safety, equity, and identity recognition as mediating factors between DEI communication and individual outcomes.

In sum, the results provide solid support for the theoretical assumption that DEI policies, when perceived as genuine and fair, can foster employee motivation and engagement. At the same time, the considerable variation across demographic, cultural, and organizational dimensions underlines the importance of context-sensitive approaches to DEI strategy and implementation.

6.2 Interpretation in Light of existing Literature

The findings of this study are closely aligned with key theoretical assumptions from motivational psychology and diversity research. Most notably, the strong correlation between perceived DEI authenticity and employee motivation supports the central premise of Self-Determination Theory. According to Deci et al. (2017), intrinsic motivation thrives when individuals experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The results suggest that inclusive and fair DEI policies can contribute to fulfilling these psychological needs, particularly by fostering relatedness and competence. Employees who perceived DEI efforts as genuine and meaningful reported significantly higher levels of motivation, indicating that such strategies can strengthen the internalization of organizational values and, in turn, promote more sustainable forms of motivation.

The findings also echo core ideas from the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), which highlights the importance of task significance and feedback for enhancing intrinsic motivation. In this context, DEI initiatives appear to function as an environmental cue that increases perceived task significance, especially when inclusion efforts are visible and actively supported by leadership. Employees who perceive that their organization genuinely values diversity and equity may view their own roles as more purposeful, thereby reinforcing their motivational engagement.

The observed positive relationship between perceived inclusion and employee engagement further supports Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and its application in organizational contexts (Shore et al., 2018). According to this perspective, individuals derive part of their self-concept and sense of belonging from group membership. Inclusive environments affirm this membership, thereby strengthening employees' emotional commitment to the organization. This is reflected in the finding that perceived inclusion predicts

engagement, even if the explained variance was relatively modest. It also reinforces Shore et al.'s (2018) emphasis on the psychological experience of inclusion as a critical driver of workplace outcomes.

Interestingly, although prior studies suggest that top-level leadership often reports more favorable views of DEI compared to lower-level employees (Dover et al., 2020), this assumption could not be directly tested in the present study. Responses from top management were intentionally excluded to reduce the risk of strategic or socially desirable bias. As a result, the analysis focused on differences between operational staff, first-line managers, and middle management. Within these non-executive groups, no significant differences in DEI perception were found. This could indicate a relatively homogeneous view of DEI across these organizational levels or alternatively, reflect the limited structural visibility of DEI initiatives in daily work routines.

In sum, the findings of this study reinforce several well-established theoretical models and empirical insights, while also adding important nuances. They suggest that DEI strategies can enhance motivation and engagement, but only when they are perceived as credible, inclusive, and personally relevant. Psychological mechanisms such as fairness, relatedness, and identity safety appear to play a key mediating role in this process, as outlined in the applied theoretical frameworks.

6.3 Theoretical and Practical Implications

The findings of this study carry several important implications for both theoretical development and organizational practice in the fields of motivation, engagement, and DEI.

From a theoretical perspective, the results reaffirm the continued relevance of established motivational frameworks such as Self-Determination Theory (Deci et al., 2017) and the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) within the context of DEI. Specifically, the findings suggest that DEI strategies can act as contextual enablers of core psychological needs, most notably autonomy, relatedness, and fairness, which are essential for sustaining intrinsic motivation and employee engagement. This study contributes to existing literature by offering empirical evidence that DEI initiatives affect not only attitudes but also the motivational mechanisms that drive workplace behavior.

In parallel, the findings strengthen the position of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and its organizational extensions (Shore et al., 2018), by emphasizing the importance of

inclusion and identity safety. The observed link between perceived inclusion and engagement underscores the idea that a sense of belonging is a critical mediator between structural DEI policies and psychological outcomes.

Moreover, the generational and cultural variations identified in the data point to the need for a more differentiated theoretical approach to DEI-related motivation. While many motivational models assume universality in psychological needs, the results suggest that cultural background and generational mindset significantly shape how DEI efforts are perceived and internalized. This supports growing calls for culturally adaptive models in organizational behavior research (Nishii, 2013).

For practitioners, the study highlights that DEI strategies must go beyond symbolic efforts to achieve measurable impact on motivation and engagement. Authenticity, visibility, and structural integration emerged as critical success factors. Organizations should therefore prioritize transparent communication, inclusive leadership development, and active employee involvement in the design and evaluation of DEI measures.

The strong relationship between perceived fairness and motivation underscores the importance of procedural and interactional justice in HR practices. Measures such as bias-free recruitment, clear and equitable promotion criteria, and inclusive team structures can serve as powerful levers to enhance motivation, engagement, and retention, especially in complex, multicultural environments like logistics.

The generational differences observed also indicate that younger employees expect a more proactive and credible approach to DEI. For organizations aiming to attract and retain emerging talent, DEI should therefore not be treated as a compliance issue alone, but as a strategic pillar of employer branding and organizational culture.

Lastly, the findings clearly show that regional and cultural adaptation of DEI content is essential. A one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to resonate across diverse operational contexts. Multinational organizations should instead invest in localized communication, intercultural facilitation, and context-sensitive implementation tools that reflect the lived realities of different regions and workforce segments.

6.4 Challenges in Implementing DEI Policies

While the findings of this study underscore the potential of DEI strategies to enhance employee motivation and engagement, they also reveal several practical challenges that limit the full realization of this potential. Many of these obstacles, previously noted in the academic literature, were echoed in the interview responses and document analysis within DB Schenker's SEE cluster.

One of the most prominent challenges is the gap between strategic ambition and lived experience, often described as the illusion of inclusion (Shore et al., 2018; Yoshino & Smith, 2013). Although DEI is actively promoted through global campaigns, guidelines, and awareness events, employees frequently perceive these efforts as symbolic rather than structural. Interview participants highlighted that initiatives often cluster around annual events such as Diversity Week, without sustained follow-up or integration into everyday practices. This undermines credibility and limits the motivational effect of DEI messaging.

A second key issue is the lack of regional adaptation. While DB Schenker's DEI strategy emphasizes global consistency, it offers limited mechanisms for culturally sensitive localization. The interviews revealed that certain topics, especially LGBTQ+ inclusion and gender roles, are considered socially sensitive or even taboo in some SEE countries. As a result, these dimensions are often avoided or selectively implemented, leading to fragmented and inconsistent messaging. This observation aligns with existing research warning against one-size-fits-all approaches in multinational contexts (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016).

Communication barriers also present a significant challenge particularly in reaching operational and blue-collar employees. While DEI content is typically shared via intranet, email, or internal platforms like Microsoft Teams, many frontline workers have limited access to these tools. Interviewees noted that DEI communication is often perceived as "headquarters-driven" and disconnected from local realities. This weakens engagement, reduces relevance, and contributes to a perception of DEI as abstract or non-essential.

Another limitation concerns the absence of structured feedback mechanisms at the local level. Although DEI KPIs are monitored at the cluster level, there are few formal opportunities such as regular surveys, team workshops, or employee dialogues for gathering qualitative feedback. Both interview and survey data indicated that many employees have never been asked to share their views on DEI. This lack of participation not only limits inclusivity but also reduces the ability of DEI initiatives to evolve and respond to local needs. Prior studies have

emphasized that accountability and feedback loops are critical for the long-term success of DEI programs (Roberson, 2019; Dobbin & Kalev, 2016).

Finally, competing priorities and resource constraints were identified as major barriers to implementation. Interviewees acknowledged that time pressure, limited staffing, and a strong focus on operational efficiency, particularly in the logistics sector, make it difficult to embed DEI into day-to-day management. Without dedicated local roles, clear responsibilities, or formal incentives, DEI often remains an additional task rather than an integral part of leadership and organizational development. This reflects a broader implementation gap documented in DEI research, where symbolic commitment is not matched by structural investment (Dover et al., 2020).

6.5 Methodological Reflection

The methodological design of this study followed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative interviews and document analysis. This triangulated strategy was chosen to capture both measurable patterns and deeper contextual insights regarding the impact of DEI strategies on employee motivation and engagement. Overall, this approach proved effective in addressing the research questions; however, several limitations and trade-offs must be acknowledged.

The integration of qualitative and quantitative data allowed for a more nuanced understanding of DEI dynamics within the organization. While the survey identified statistically significant relationships such as the strong correlation between perceived DEI effectiveness and motivation, the qualitative interviews added depth by revealing employee perceptions of credibility, communication challenges, and implementation gaps. This form of methodological triangulation enhanced both the validity and interpretability of the findings, particularly in highlighting inconsistencies between strategic intent and lived experience (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

The survey instrument itself was carefully developed based on established constructions from the literature, such as psychological safety, organizational justice, and intrinsic motivation, and demonstrated high internal consistency across item groups. The deliberate exclusion from the responses from top management, HR staff, and underrepresented subgroups (e.g., blue-collar workers with low response rates) helped strengthen internal validity and comparability within the dataset.

Despite these strengths, the study is subject to several limitations. First, the use of a single-case design and convenience sampling limits the generalizability of the findings. While DB Schenker represents a relevant and complex case within the logistics sector, caution is needed when transferring results to other industries or geographic regions. Additionally, the exclusion of top-level executives, though methodologically justified to reduce strategic or socially desirable bias, prevents insights into how DEI is perceived at the most senior levels of the organization.

The voluntary nature of survey participation introduces a potential self-selection bias, as individuals with particularly strong opinions, either positive or negative, may have been more likely to respond. Moreover, the underrepresentation of blue-collar employees due to low participation restricts the ability to compare DEI perceptions across job types and results in a skewed sample that primarily reflects white-collar perspectives.

As data collection was cross-sectional, the findings represent a snapshot in time. While correlations between variables were observed, no causal inferences can be made. To better understand whether DEI implementation leads to sustained changes in motivation or engagement, future research would benefit from longitudinal or time-series designs.

Finally, the study must consider the influence of regional, linguistic, and cultural diversity in the interpretation of survey items and interview responses. Although efforts were made to ensure clarity and cultural neutrality, subjective understandings of concepts such as inclusion or fairness may differ significantly across countries in the SEE cluster. This cultural variability may have shaped how respondents interpreted and evaluated DEI strategies, potentially influencing the overall results.

6.6 Limitations of the Study

While this study offers valuable insights into the relationship between DEI policies and employee motivation and engagement, several limitations must be acknowledged. These relate to the study's design, sampling approach, data collection methods, and contextual boundaries, and should be considered when interpreting the findings.

First, the research focused exclusively on one organization, DB Schenker's Southeast Europe cluster, which limits the generalizability of the results. Although the company's multinational structure and operational complexity provide relevant insights into DEI implementation within

the logistics sector, the findings cannot be directly transferred to other industries, organizational contexts, or cultural regions without caution.

To ensure analytical consistency and reduce potential bias, specific groups were excluded from the final dataset, including top management, HR staff, and blue-collar employees. While these exclusions are methodologically justified, particularly in avoiding strategic or socially desirable responses, they also narrow the range of perspectives represented. The absence of frontline operational staff, in particular, limits the ability to assess how DEI initiatives are experienced outside of white-collar or managerial roles.

The voluntary nature of the employee survey introduces the potential for self-selection bias. Employees with strong positive or negative opinions may have been more motivated to participate, while those less engaged with the topic may have opted out. Although anonymity was assured, the influence of social desirability bias, especially in relation to sensitive topics like fairness, inclusion, or discrimination, cannot be ruled out.

Another limitation concerns the cross-sectional nature of study. All data were collected within a relatively short time frame, capturing only a snapshot of perceptions at a specific moment. As a result, no causal conclusions can be drawn. While the observed relationships, such as between perceived inclusion and engagement are statistically significant, they reflect correlation rather than causation. Longitudinal research would be necessary to evaluate the sustained impact of DEI strategies over time.

Given the cultural and linguistic diversity within the SEE cluster, there is also a risk that key concepts such as belonging, inclusion, or fairness were interpreted differently across national or cultural contexts. Although the survey was designed to be as neutral and accessible as possible, variations in meaning and interpretation may have influenced response validity.

Finally, the qualitative component of the study was limited to two expert interviews with HR professionals. While these interviews provided important contextual insights, the small sample size restricts the breadth and depth of qualitative findings. Including additional perspectives, such as those of regional managers, team leaders, or employees from different levels, could have enhanced the triangulation and provided a more comprehensive picture of DEI implementation in practice.

6.7 Outlook and Suggestions for Future Research

The results of this study offer meaningful insights into how DEI strategies influence employee motivation and engagement within a multinational logistics context. At the same time, they highlight several important avenues for future research that can extend, deepen, or contextualize the present findings.

First and foremost, there is a clear need for longitudinal research to examine how perceptions of DEI evolve over time and how sustained initiatives affect long-term outcomes in motivation and engagement. Such designs, whether repeated-measures studies or time-series analyses, could help distinguish between short-term symbolic effects and genuine structural change. They would also allow for causal inferences regarding the impact of DEI policies on psychological and behavioral variables.

Future studies should also prioritize the inclusion of blue-collar employees and other underrepresented workforce groups. These populations were either excluded or underrepresented in the current sample but are likely to experience DEI differently due to more limited access to formal communication channels, stronger exposure to informal team dynamics, or heightened vulnerability to exclusion and identity threats. Including these voices would significantly improve the ecological validity and representativeness of future research.

The variation observed across countries within the Southeast Europe cluster underscores the importance of cultural context in shaping the perception and implementation of DEI. Comparative research across regions, industries, or organizational types could help clarify how local values, societal norms, and institutional structures interact with global DEI strategies. Theoretical enrichment could be achieved by integrating established frameworks from cross-cultural management, such as Hofstede's cultural dimensions or the GLOBE study, to better understand the role of cultural variability in DEI effectiveness.

In addition, the findings suggest theoretical potential for expanding existing models of motivation and inclusion. While core psychological needs such as autonomy, relatedness, and fairness remain relevant, their interpretation and salience may differ across generational or cultural groups. Future research could explore how these universal drivers intersect with more context-specific expectations, and how mediators such as trust in leadership, psychological safety, perceived voice, or identity threat influence the effectiveness of DEI initiatives.

In sum, future studies should aim for greater methodological diversity, broader demographic coverage, and deeper cultural sensitivity. Doing so will not only increase theoretical precision but also enhance the practical relevance of DEI research in complex, globalized organizational environments.

7 Conclusion

This thesis set out to examine how diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies affect employee motivation and engagement within the Southeast European cluster of DB Schenker. Guided by the central research question

To what extent do DEI strategies in multinational companies influence employee motivation and engagement?

the study provides robust empirical evidence that perceived authenticity, fairness, and inclusion are critical drivers of both motivational and engagement-related outcomes in the workplace.

The strongest result emerged in the form of a high positive correlation between perceived DEI effectiveness and employee motivation ($R^2 = .561$, p < .001). This finding confirms that employees who perceive DEI efforts as credible, structurally embedded, and fair are significantly more motivated, both intrinsically and extrinsically. Additionally, a positive, though more modest, relationship was found between perceived inclusion and engagement, particularly in the form of emotional attachment and proactive behavioral commitment.

To enable a more granular understanding, the study also addressed several sub-questions relating to demographic and organizational variables. These were systematically examined through a mixed-methods design that integrated survey data, expert interviews, and document analysis.

Table 2:
Summary of secondary research Questions and Empirical Finding

	Research Question	Key Findings
RQ1:	How do generational differences affect the implementation and reception of DEI strategies?	Statistically significant differences were found, with younger employees rating DEI significantly more positively than older cohorts.
RQ2:	How do cultural backgrounds influence the perception and effectiveness of DEI measures?	Perceptions of DEI effectiveness differed significantly across countries, with Austria showing the lowest and Bulgaria the highest mean scores.
RQ3:	What differences exist in DEI perception across employment types and job levels?	Significant differences were found across departments, while no significant variation was observed between organizational levels.
RQ4:	How do managers' and employees' views differ regarding the effectiveness of DEI policies?	Top management was excluded from the quantitative analysis. However, qualitative interviews revealed critical gaps between strategy and lived experience, especially regarding implementation and communication.
RQ5:	What internal challenges or risks of tokenism hinder the implementation of DEI?	Several structural barriers were identified: limited regional adaptation, symbolic initiatives, weak feedback mechanisms, and communication gaps , particularly for blue-collar employees.

Table 2 summarizes the secondary research questions and synthesizes the key empirical findings. Collectively, the results indicate that perceptions of DEI vary significantly by age group, tenure, cultural background, and department, but not by hierarchical level.

These findings underscore that DEI must not be treated as a purely symbolic or compliance-driven endeavor. Rather, it should be understood and managed as a strategic lever for enhancing employee experience and, by extension, organizational performance. At the same time, the data reveal a pronounced implementation gap: while the strategic intentions of DEI are generally well-communicated at the corporate level, their translation into day-to-day

practices is often fragmented, inconsistent, or perceived as inauthentic, especially by employees in non-leadership or operational roles.

Key barriers include limited localization of content, insufficient communication infrastructure for blue-collar staff, and the lack of structured feedback mechanisms. These limitations suggest that for DEI to realize its full potential, it must be context-sensitive, managerially supported, and integrated into core business processes.

Looking forward, future research should focus on longitudinal designs to assess how DEI perceptions and their motivational impacts evolve over time. Greater attention should also be paid to underrepresented groups, particularly blue-collar employees, whose perspectives remain insufficiently captured in current DEI research. Cross-regional comparisons and culturally sensitive conceptual models could further advance the theoretical landscape.

In summary, this thesis makes a concrete empirical contribution to the understanding of DEI in operational and multinational contexts. It shows that inclusive organizational cultures are not only ethically desirable but are also essential to fostering long-term employee motivation, engagement, and loyalty, especially in industries where demographic diversity and cultural complexity are everyday realities.

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Al-based tool	F	orm of use	Affected parts of the work	Remarks
ChatGPT (Ve	th th	dea generation for ne thesis title nrough interactive ialogue	Entire work	The conversation with ChatGPT led to the final formulation of the title.
ChatGPT (Ve 4.0)	p q	Development of otential research uestions through ialogue	Entire work	The dialogue with ChatGPT led to the final research questions.
ChatGPT (Ve 4.0.)	st	Vriting assistant for tylistic improvement f text sections	Entire work	Helped improve the academic writing style.
ChatGPT (Ve 4.0.)	ersion G	Grammar checking	Entire work	Assisted in correcting grammatical errors
Deepl.com	fu	Jse of the synonym unction for stylistic ariation	Entire work	Helped avoid word repetition by suggesting appropriate alternatives.
Zotero		utomated citation in PA7 style	Entire work	Supported correct referencing according to APA7 guidelines.
Zotero	re	Generation of the eference list in APA7 style	List of References	Facilitated the correct formatting of the reference list.
Scribbr	g	Vriting assistant for rammar and style hecking	Entire work	Helped optimize language and style.

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8 Appendix 1a: Quantitative Questionnaire – English Version

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) at DB Schenker

Demographic date

Thank you for participating in the survey. The aim is to gather your personal perceptions and assessments of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) measures at DB Schenker. The survey is anonymous and voluntary. Your data will be treated confidentially and used for scientific purposes only. It will take approximately 5–7 minutes to complete.

1. Which country do yo	u work in?			
□Austria		☐ Bosnia and Herzego	ovina	□Bulgaria
□Greece		□Croatia		\square Macedonia
□Romania		□Serbia		□Slovakia
□Slovenia		\square Czeck Republic		□Turkey
□Hungary				
2. Which functional are	a do you mainly	work in?		
☐ Air Freight		\square Apprentice	□Contrac	ct Logistics/SCM
☐ Fairs & Exhibitions/R	elocations/Sport	Event	□Finance	2
☐General Managemen	t	□HR	□IT	
☐ Land Transport		□Ocean Freight	□SGMS	
3. How long have you b	een working at [DB Schenker?		
☐ Less than 1 year	☐ 1-3 years	□4-6 years		☐more than 6 years
4. What type of employ	ment status do y	you hace?		
☐White Collar		☐Blue Collar		
5. At what level do you	operate?			
☐ Operational level (e.g	g., warehouse, tr	ansport, administration	1)	
☐ First management lev	vel (e.g., team le	ader, supervisor)		
☐ Middle management	(e.g., head of LS	C, branch management	:)	
☐Top-Management				

6. How old are you?

□Under 21 years □21-30 y	ears □31	-40 years	\square 41-50 years	□ove	r 50 years			
Opinion on the topic Please rate the following questions according to your opinion.								
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree			
I am familiar with DB Schenker's DEI goals.								
I know where to find information about DEI measures within the company.								
Communication on DEI topics is transparent and comprehensible.								
I feel sufficiently informed about DEI initiatives.								
I perceive that DEI measures contribute to a more inclusive corporate culture.								
The DEI initiatives have strengthened my sense of belonging in the company.								
I see concrete changes as a result of the implementation of DEI strategies.								
The DEI measures promote cooperation in diverse teams.								
All employees have equal development opportunities, regardless of their origin or identity.								
The promotion processes in the company are fair and transparent.								
I feel that diversity is taken into account in decision-making.								

Unconscious biases are actively addressed in the company.					
Managers exemplify the values of diversity, equality, and inclusion.					
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
There are visible role models for diversity in leadership positions.					
Company management is actively committed to DEI issues.					
I feel supported by my manager in DEI matters.					
I have the opportunity to provide feedback on DEI initiatives.					
My feedback on DEI issues is taken seriously and taken into account.					
I feel encouraged to participate in DEI-related events or training courses.					
There are platforms or forums for discussing DEI issues within the company.					
I feel like a full member of my team – regardless of my background, identity or personal characteristics.					
The appreciation of diversity strengthens my sense of belonging at DB Schenker.					
The DEI culture in the company makes me feel more emotionally connected to my workplace.					
The DEI initiatives motivate me to contribute my full potential to the company.					

The Impact of DEI policies on motivation and engagement				Gabriela	Feichter, BA
The DEI measures motivate me to take on responsibility.					

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I find my work environment supportive and conducive to my professional development.					
I feel that I can express my opinion freely, regardless of my position or identity.					
I find the work environment safe, open, and inclusive.					
The DEI measures contribute to my personal well-being in the workplace.					
I am proud to work for a company that is actively committed to DEI.					
I would recommend DB Schenker as an employer, particularly because of its stance on DEI.					
The DEI culture has a positive impact on DB Schenker's image as an employer.					

End of Survey

Thank you for participation

9 Appendix 1b: Quantitative Questionnaire – German Version

Diversity, Equity und Inklusion (DEI) bei DB Schenker

Vielen Dank für die Teilnahme an der Umfrage. Ziel ist es, Ihre persönliche Wahrnehmung und Einschätzung zu den Diversity, Equity- und Inclusion-Maßnahmen (DEI) bei DB Schenker zu erfassen. Die Umfrage ist anonym und freiwillig, Ihre Daten werden vertraulich behandelt und nur für wissenschaftliche Zwecke verwendet. Dauer ca. 5-7 Minuten.

In welchem Land ar	beiten Sie?			
\square Bosnien und Her	zegowina	□Bulgarien		\square Griechenland
□Kroatien		□Mazedonien		\square Österreich
□Rumänien		□Serbien		□Slowakei
□Slowenien		□Tschechien		□Türkei
□Ungarn				
In welchem Funktio	onsbereich arbeiter	Sie hauptsächlich	?	
☐Air Freight		\square Apprentice	□Contra	ct Logistics/SCM
☐ Fairs & Exhibition	ns/Relocations/Spo	rt Event	□Finance	e
☐General Manage	ment	□HR	□IT	
☐ Land Transport		☐Ocean Freigh	nt □SGMS	
Wie lange arbeiten	Sie bereits bei DB S	Schenker?		
□unter 1 Jahr	☐ 1-3 Jahre	□4-6 J	ahre	□über 6 Jahre
Welchem Beschäfti	gungsverhältnis ge	hören Sie an?		
☐White Collar		☐Blue Collar		
Auf welcher Ebene	sind Sie tätig?			
□Operative Ebene	(z.B. Lager, Transp	ort, Verwaltung)		
□Erste Führungsel	oene (z.B. Teamleit	ung, Supervisor)		
☐Mittleres Manag	ement (z.B. Abteilu	ngsleitung, Branch	n Management)	
□Top-Managemer	nt			
Wie alt sind Sie?				
□unter 21 Jahre	□21-30 Jahre	□31-40 Jahre	□41-50 Jahre	□über 50 Jahre

Bitte bewerten Sie folgende Fragen entsprechend ihrer Meinung.

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu	Stimme eher nicht zu	Weder noch/teils- teils	Stimme eher zu	Stimme voll und ganz zu
Die DEI-Ziele bei DB Schenker sind mir bekannt					
Ich weiß, wo ich Informationen zu DEI- Maßnahmen im Unternehmen finde.					
Die Kommunikation zu DEI Themen ist transparent und nachvollziehbar.					
Ich fühle mich ausreichend über DEI-Initiativen informiert.					
Ich nehme wahr, dass DEI-Maßnahmen zu einer inklusiveren Unternehmenskultur beitragen.					
Die DEI-Initiativen haben mein Zugehörigkeitsgefühl im Unternehmen gestärkt.					
Ich sehe konkrete Veränderungen durch die Umsetzung von DEI- Strategien.					
Die DEI-Maßnahmen fördern die Zusammenarbeit in diversen Teams.					
Alle Mitarbeitenden haben gleiche Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten, unabhängig von ihrer Herkunft oder Identität.					
Die Beförderungsprozesse im Unternehmen sind fair und transparent.					
Ich habe das Gefühl, dass Vielfalt bei der Entscheidungsfindung berücksichtigt wird.					

Unbewusste Vorurteile werden im Unternehmen aktiv adressiert.					
Führungskräfte leben die Werte von Diversität, Gleichberechtigung und Inklusion vor.					
	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu	Stimme eher nicht zu	Weder noch/teils- teils	Stimme eher zu	Stimme voll und ganz zu
Es gibt sichtbare Vorbilder für Vielfalt in leitenden Positionen.					
Die Unternehmensleitung setzt sich aktiv für DEI- Themen ein.					
Ich fühle mich von meiner Führungskraft in DEI- Belangen unterstützt.					
Ich habe die Möglichkeit, Feedback zu DEI-Initiativen zu geben.					
Mein Feedback zu DEI- Themen wird ernst genommen und berücksichtigt.					
Ich fühle mich ermutigt, an DEI-bezogenen Veranstaltungen oder Schulungen teilzunehmen.					
Es gibt Plattformen oder Foren, um über DEI- Themen im Unternehmen zu diskutieren.					
Ich fühle mich als vollwertiges Mitglied meines Teams – unabhängig von meiner Herkunft, Identität oder persönlichen Eigenschaften.					
Die Wertschätzung von Vielfalt stärkt mein Zugehörigkeitsgefühl zu DB Schenker.					
Durch die DEI-Kultur im Unternehmen fühle ich mich emotional stärker an					

meinen Arbeitsplatz gebunden.					
Die DEI-Initiativen motivieren mich, mein volles Potenzial im Unternehmen einzubringen.					
Ich bin durch die DEI- Maßnahmen motivierter, Verantwortung zu übernehmen.					
	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu	Stimme eher nicht zu	Weder noch/teils- teils	Stimme eher zu	Stimme voll und ganz zu
Ich empfinde mein Arbeitsumfeld als unterstützend und förderlich für meine berufliche Entwicklung.					
Ich habe das Gefühl, meine Meinung frei äußern zu können – unabhängig von meiner Position oder Identität.					
Ich empfinde das Arbeitsumfeld als sicher, offen und inklusiv.					
Die DEI-Maßnahmen tragen zu meinem persönlichen Wohlbefinden am Arbeitsplatz bei.					
Ich bin stolz darauf, in einem Unternehmen zu arbeiten, das sich aktiv für DEI einsetzt.					
Ich würde DB Schenker als Arbeitgeber insbesondere aufgrund seiner Haltung zu DEI weiterempfehlen.					
Die DEI-Kultur wirkt sich positiv auf das Image von DB Schenker als Arbeitgeber aus.					

Ende der Umfrage

Vielen Dank für die Teilnahme!

10 Appendix 2a: Qualitative Interview Guide

Qualitative interview guide: Comparison between communicated DEI strategy and practical implementation

Warming up

- 1. Can you briefly describe your current area of responsibility in the company?
- 2. What role does the topic of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion play in your day-to-day work?

Block 1: Strategic goals and content

Goal: To determine whether the DEI objectives, as formulated in the official documents, are also anchored in the consciousness of the interviewees.

- 3. In your opinion, what goals is DB Schenker pursuing with its DEI strategy?
- 4. Which aspects of diversity are particularly important (e.g. gender, age, culture, disability, etc.)?
- 5. In your opinion, how well are these goals known within the organization?

Block 2: Communication and visibility

Goal: To assess the coherence and reach of DEI communication at different levels.

- 6. Through which channels are DEI communicated at DB Schenker?
- 7. How is the reaction of the workforce to DEI initiatives (e.g. Diversity Week, Pride Month, anti-bias training) perceived?
- 8. Do you perceive communication as consistent and credible?

Block 3: Implementation and lived reality

Goal: Identification of possible discrepancies between policy and practice.

- 9. In which areas do you experience concrete changes as a result of DEI measures in your day-to-day work?
- 10. Where do you see challenges or resistance to implementation?
- 11. In your opinion, is work on inclusion more symbolic or structural?

Block 4: Regional and cultural differences

Goal: To assess whether the global DEI strategy is adapted regionally.

- 12. In your opinion, how well do the DEI measures fit the specific cultural or legal situation in your region?
- 13. Are there any regional particularities or cultural challenges that you think should be given greater consideration?

Block 5: Measurability and sustainability

Goal: Conclusion on maturity level and policy depth (comparison with DEI Maturity Model).

- 14. In your view, are there suitable indicators or feedback loops to measure the success of DEI measures?
- 15. How sustainable do you think the DEI measures are? Are they perceived as a long-term strategy or rather as temporary campaigns?

11 Appendix 2b: Transcripts of Interviews

Interview 1, 26.06.2025 from 14:30 to 15:02, Virtual via MS Teams

GF= Gabriela Feichter, DB= Interviewe from DB Schenker

GF: Hi , I am so happy to see you and so grateful that you found time at such short notice.

To be able to transcribe the interview, I have started an audio recording, hope that's ok for you

DB1: Hi Gäbby, I am happy to help. Sure, the recording is no problem.

GF: Great, shall we start?

DB1: Yes

GF: Could you please say your name and briefly describe your current role at DB Schenker?

DB1: My name is , and I'm a Professional HR Business Partner at DB Schenker Austria. I'm responsible for several units. My focus is on all possible topics in the area of P&O.

GF: How would you describe the role that DEI plays in your day-to-day work?

DB1: It's definitely getting more relevant. A couple of years ago, to be honest, it felt more like a corporate buzzword, something coming from the Headquarter that didn't really reach us. But now, I can see it slowly making its way into our day-to-day work, especially in areas like recruitment, how we build teams, or even how we handle conflicts. It's not fully part of everything we do yet, but yeah, you can feel it's starting to take hold.

GF: What would you say are the main goals of DB Schenker's DEI strategy?

DB: I think the big goal is to build a workplace where everyone feels like they can really be part of things – no matter where they come from, what gender they are, or how old they are. It's about making people feel valued and included. And honestly, there's also a smart business side to it – diverse teams are more creative, and it helps keep good people in the company longer.

GF: Are there specific dimensions of diversity that are especially emphasized?

DB: At the moment, gender diversity is quite prominent, especially when it comes to increasing the number of women in leadership roles. Unfortunately, the diversity on our board team currently leaves a lot to be desired. But there's also growing attention to generational diversity and intercultural collaboration.

GF: And how well do you think these goals are known or understood across the organization? **DB**: I'd say the management level is pretty aware of the goals, it's part of their discussions and leadership trainings and all that. But when it comes to the teams on the ground, there's still some catching up to do. Most people have heard the term "DEI," sure, but they're not always clear on what it actually means or how it's supposed to connect to their everyday job. It can feel a bit abstract, you know? Like something that's important, but not super tangible for them yet.

GF: Through which channels is DEI communicated internally?

DB: Yeah, most of the DEI communication happens through our intranet – you know, articles, announcements, that sort of thing. We also get updates in internal newsletters every now and then, especially when something new is being launched. And then there are bigger events like the Diversity Week, which usually get more visibility and attention. Besides that, we use MS Teams – there are specific groups or channels where DEI topics are shared, like videos, tips, or awareness campaigns. It's all there, but you kind of have to actively look for it sometimes – it doesn't always pop up in your face unless you're following those channels.

GF: How would you describe the general response from employees to these initiatives?

DB: Honestly, it's a bit of a mixed bag. The younger folks are generally pretty open and curious – they ask questions, join in on events, and you can tell they're interested. But with some of the more senior staff, there's often a bit of hesitation. It's not that they're against it, but I think they sometimes struggle to see how DEI connects to their day-to-day work. For them, it can feel like, "That's nice, but what does it have to do with my team or my role?" So yeah, it really depends on the person – and how relevant it feels to their reality.

GF: Do you find the DEI communication consistent and credible?

DB: Yeah, I'd say overall the messaging is solid – it's professional, well put together, and it definitely has a positive tone. But the thing is, it often feels very global. Like, it comes from the top or from HQ, and it doesn't always get translated into something that fits our local context. So even though the message itself is good, some employees don't really connect with it because it doesn't feel that relevant to what they're dealing with on a daily basis. It kind of stays abstract for them.

GF: Are there any specific changes you've noticed that have resulted from DEI initiatives?

DB: Yes, definitely – especially when it comes to hiring. We've started using more inclusive language in our job ads, which might seem like a small thing, but it actually makes a difference in how people perceive us. And the way we structure interviews has changed a bit too – we try to reduce bias by having more standardized questions and involving different people in the process. On top of that, I've noticed there's a bit more space now for reflection in teams – like talking about how we work together and whether everyone feels included. It's not everywhere yet, but those kinds of changes are starting to show.

GF: And what kind of challenges or resistance have you encountered?

DB: Yeah, one of the big challenges is definitely unconscious bias. It's still there, even if people don't realize it – and that can really get in the way, especially in hiring or promotion decisions. Another thing is that any kind of change that touches people's daily routines tends to get pushback. It's not always resistance in a negative sense – sometimes it's just that people feel overwhelmed or unsure why they should do things differently. And honestly, time and resources are always part of the issue too. Everyone's busy, priorities shift, and DEI work

sometimes gets pushed aside because it's not seen as "urgent," even though it's actually pretty important in the long run.

GF: Would you say the company focuses more on symbolic or structural DEI efforts?

DB: I'd say it's a bit of both. On the one hand, there are definitely some solid, structural things happening – like leadership trainings or updates to certain processes, which is great. But then there are also things like campaign weeks or awareness days that sometimes feel a bit... symbolic. Don't get me wrong, they create visibility, which is important. But if there's no real follow-up or if it doesn't connect back to everyday work, it risks staying kind of superficial. The intention is there – but the depth doesn't always follow through.

GF: How well do you think the current DEI measures align with the regional or cultural context here?

DB: In Austria, I'd say the DEI measures work fairly well overall. People are generally open to the topic, and there's already some awareness around it. But since we're part of the SEE cluster, the picture gets a lot more complex. The differences between countries in this region are pretty big – culturally, socially, even legally. So what makes sense or gets a good reaction in Vienna might not work the same way in, say, Serbia or Bulgaria. It's not that people are against it, it's just that the starting points are different. And that makes it really important to adapt the approach to each country a bit more.

GF: Do you think regional particularities are taken into account sufficiently?

DB: Not really, at least not yet. I think things like cultural attitudes toward gender roles, religion, or how people see hierarchy are still often overlooked. These things can really shape how DEI is perceived in a region, but they're not always taken into account. So when we roll out the same initiative everywhere, it doesn't always land the right way. You can't just copy-paste a global concept and expect it to work the same in every country – it needs a bit more local sensitivity.

GF: Are there any systems in place to measure the effectiveness of DEI efforts?

DB: Yeah, we do track a few numbers – like how many women are in leadership positions, for example. So there's some data on that level, which is good. But what's really missing is the qualitative side. We don't have a lot of structured feedback on how people actually experience DEI in their teams or daily work. I think things like short pulse surveys or regular check-ins would help a lot – just to get a sense of where people stand, what's working, and where they might need more support.

GF: From your perspective, how sustainable are the DEI efforts?

DB: At the moment, a lot of the DEI stuff still feels a bit campaign-driven. You know, there's positive energy around it, and people are talking about it more – which is great. But when you look at the bigger picture, there's still no clear long-term roadmap, especially when it comes to

the day-to-day work in operations. It's like: we have great moments, but not always the follow-through that turns it into something lasting and consistent.

GF: What do you think would be the most important next step?

DB: Honestly, the next big thing we need is more regional customisation. DEI can't just be a global template—we need to tailor it to what actually matters in each country. What works in Austria might not resonate in Hungary or Romania, so giving teams the freedom to adapt initiatives locally would make a huge difference. And here's the kicker: leadership really needs to do more than just support DEI—they need to lead it. Leaders set the tone. It shouldn't be a checkbox exercise but something they champion every day—mentioning it in meetings, reinforcing it in decisions, holding teams accountable.

GF: That's very insightful – thank you. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

DB: Yeah, maybe just one last thing. I think it's really important that we stop seeing DEI as some kind of "nice-to-have" or side project. It's not just a feel-good topic – it actually impacts how people experience their work, how teams function, and whether people stick around. When DEI is taken seriously, you can feel it in the culture: people feel safer, more motivated, and more likely to speak up or contribute ideas. And that has a direct effect on performance too. So for me, DEI isn't something we should do just to tick a box – it needs to be a real part of the company's strategy and leadership mindset.

GF: I get your point, thank you so much for your professional insights. If that's everything you want to add I would stop the recording now.

Interview 2, 30.06.2025 from 09:30 to 09:54, Virtual via MS Teams

GF= Gabriela Feichter, DB= Interviewee from DB Schenker

GF: Hi see M, nice to see you. I would like to inform you that I have started an audio recording so that I can transcribe it later, is that ok for you?

<u>DB2</u>: Hi Gabriela, I'm happy to see you too. Yes, I agree with the audio recording. How is your thesis going so far?

<u>GF</u>: Not too bad, but I don't want to spoil anything. The work is available to everyone after completion anyway.

DB2: I am already very excited

GF: Tell me... So, which, thank you for finding the time at such short notice. Some things didn't work out as planned but that's how live goes. Could you maybe start by briefly introducing your current area of responsibility in the company?

<u>DB2</u>: Sure. My name's and I've been working in the P&O team for almost two years now. I'm a Business Partner, mostly supporting onboarding processes, some reporting tasks, and occasionally helping out with employer branding initiatives.

GF: And in your day-to-day work, how often does the topic of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion come up?

<u>DB2</u>: Honestly? Not that often. I mean, yeah, it's around – you'll see stuff on the intranet or maybe a campaign here and there, like during Diversity Week or something. But in terms of my actual day-to-day work? It's not something that really comes up much. It kind of sits in the background. You know it's there, but unless you're directly involved in a DEI-related project or initiative, it doesn't play a big role in your regular tasks.

<u>GF</u>: Ok I understand. What would you say are the strategic goals Schenker is pursuing with its DEI strategy?

<u>DB2</u>: Puh, that's not an easy one. But I'd say the main idea behind it is to show that Schenker is a modern, international company. Like, we want to send the message that we're open-minded, diverse, and that this is a place where people from different backgrounds feel welcome and respected. I think it's also about keeping the company attractive for younger talent – especially the new generation, who really care about things like inclusion and company values. So yeah, it's part image, part culture, and probably also part long-term strategy to stay competitive.

GF: Can you please mention in which country you are working at the moment.

<u>DB2</u>: Sure, I am based in Serbia but the units I look after are spread throughout the SEE cluster.

GF: Thank you, wo which aspects of diversity are most prominent in your local context?

DB2: Here in Serbia, I'd say cultural and generational diversity are the most relevant for us. We work closely with colleagues from different countries in the region, and there's quite a wide range of age groups in our teams too. So those differences show up pretty often in how people communicate or approach work. Since I also support teams in a few other countries, I can say that gender diversity is definitely a topic – it's not ignored – but it doesn't get as much attention here as it seems to in Austria or Germany. It's kind of on the radar, but not really front and center, if that makes sense.

GF: How well do you think these goals are communicated within the organization?

<u>DB2</u>: Hmm... to be honest, not that well. I mean, there's definitely a lot of info out there – especially on the intranet – but it's usually pretty broad and high-level. It doesn't always feel connected to what we're doing locally. I think most people have heard the term "DEI" by now, but if you asked them what it actually means or how it relates to their own role, a lot of them wouldn't really know what to say. It just feels a bit... abstract, you know?

GF: Through which channels is DEI communicated internally?

<u>DB2</u>: Mostly it's through the intranet. You'll see articles, videos, updates about things like Diversity Week – stuff like that. But honestly, most of it is in English, and that already makes it

feel kind of distant for a lot of people. And then there's the whole thing with our blue-collar workforce – many of them don't have regular access to a laptop or company email, so they're basically left out of all that communication. In my opinion, that's a real issue. If we want DEI to reach everyone, we have to find better ways to include those who aren't sitting in front of a screen all day.

GF: How is your perception of how employees respond to DEI initiatives?

<u>DB2</u>: It really depends. Some people actually take a look, read the articles, maybe watch a video – they seem interested. But others just kind of scroll past it or ignore it completely. I think for a lot of folks, the main thing is that they don't see how it connects to their own job. Like, it feels like something that's happening "somewhere else," not something that's part of their everyday work. So it's hard to get real engagement if people don't feel personally involved.

GF: Would you describe the DEI communication as consistent and credible?

<u>DB2</u>: Yeah, it all looks pretty professional, no doubt about that. The materials are well done, and the messaging is clear. But the thing is, most of it comes straight from head office, so it can feel a bit disconnected from what's actually happening here on the ground. You read it and think, "Okay, sounds good," but it doesn't always reflect the reality in our region or in our day-to-day work. I think if the message was a bit more tailored to our local context, people would relate to it more – and maybe even take it more seriously.

GF: Have you noticed any specific changes in your work environment due to DEI efforts?

<u>DB2</u>: Yeah, there've been a few changes, for sure. Like, our job ads are definitely more inclusive now – the language is more neutral and open, which is a good step. And I've noticed that onboarding is a bit more mindful when it comes to cultural differences, like being aware of language or different backgrounds. So that's something. But honestly, I wouldn't say we've seen any big structural shifts yet. Or at least not in a way that's super visible. Then again, maybe there are things happening behind the scenes that I just don't see from my position.

GF: What would you say are the biggest challenges in implementing DEI?

<u>DB2</u>: Honestly? I think the biggest challenge is awareness. A lot of people hear about DEI and immediately think, "That's not really for me," or "That's something for Germany or the head office, not here in Serbia." There's just this disconnect – like the message is out there, but it doesn't really land in people's personal reality. It feels like it's meant for someone else, not something that's relevant to their own work or team. And if people don't see themselves in it, they won't engage with it either.

GF: In your view, are DEI efforts more symbolic or structural at this point?

<u>DB2</u>: I'd say it's mostly symbolic at this point. I mean, there are some really well-done campaigns, and the intentions behind them are definitely good. But when it comes to how we actually make decisions or how teams work together day to day, DEI isn't really part of that

yet. It's more something we talk about during special events or in presentations, but it hasn't fully made its way into the core of how we operate. At least that's how it feels from where I sit.

GF: How well do the DEI measures fit with the cultural reality in your region?

<u>DB2</u>: Some things actually work pretty well here – like the whole cross-cultural part. We're used to working with colleagues from different countries, so that kind of diversity feels natural. But other topics, like LGBTQ+ or gender roles, are definitely more sensitive in this region. Those subjects are barely talked about, to be honest. It's not that people are necessarily against it, but it's just not something that's openly addressed yet. There's a kind of silence around it, and I think that makes it harder to create real progress on those fronts.

GF: Are there regional particularities that should be better reflected in DEI?

<u>DB2</u>: Definitely. Religion is a big part of life for a lot of people here, and in some teams, traditional values are really strong. That's just part of the culture. And if you don't take that into account when talking about DEI, it's really hard to get people on board. They'll just tune out or feel like it's not meant for them. I think if we want to reach everyone, we need to start by acknowledging where people actually are – not just where we want them to be.

GF: Are there any tools or formats in place to measure DEI success?

<u>DB2</u>: Not that I know of, at least not here locally. I think some of the tracking happens at the SEE cluster level or even higher up, but we don't really see much of that on the ground. It would honestly be really helpful to have something like short local surveys or regular feedback rounds. Just to get a sense of how people actually feel about DEI in their teams, what's working, and where there might be gaps. Right now, there's not much of that direct input.

GF: How would you rate the sustainability of DEI initiatives at DB Schenker?

<u>DB2</u>: Right now, it kind of feels like a series of one-off campaigns. You see something pop up, maybe during Pride Month or Diversity Week, and then it disappears again. The intention is clearly there, but without clear responsibilities or someone really owning it on a local level, it just doesn't stick. And because it's not integrated into our regular processes or daily routines, it's hard to turn it into something long-term. It's like the momentum starts... but then nothing follows through.

GF: So, last question. What would be the next meaningful step from your perspective?

<u>DB2:</u> What I'd really like to see is more local engagement. Like, actual conversations with teams about what DEI means for us here – not just globally, but in our specific context. Workshops, informal discussions, anything that gets people talking and thinking. Right now, it's a lot of posters and polished videos from headquarters, which look nice, sure – but they don't really spark dialogue. I think if we want people to truly connect with DEI, we have to make space for it locally and make it feel real, not just corporate.

GF: Thank you very much for your time and your openness and honesty. Is there anything else you would like to add?

DB2: I think I said everything. Thank you.

GF: Thank YOU. I stop the audio recording now.

12 Appendix 3a: Coding Matrix Interviews

Main Category	Policy Statemant	Interview Insight	Match	Comments
Strategic Goals	DEI is positioned as a business enabler for innovation and employee retention.	Workplace where everyone can contribute, no matter where they come from	Yes	Interviewee clearly reflects business value of DEI (innovation + retention).
Communication	DEI is actively communicated across all regions and roles using inclusive language.	Mostly via intranet, in English. Blue collar workers often left out.	Partial	Efforts exist but reach and inclusiveness are limited.
Inplementation & Everyday Practice	DEI is structurally embedded in recruitment and leadership development.	Inclusive job ads, some onboarding sensitivity, but no major structural shifts.	Partial	Policy ambition visible, but implementation varies by location.
Regional Adaptation	DEI initiatives consider cultural specifics and allow regional flexibility.	LGBTQ+ topics are too sensitive here and barely addressed.	No	Local context not sufficiently reflected
Perception & Acceptance	Employees understand the relevance of DEI to their role and support it actively.	Many don't see how it relates to their job - feels abstract.	No	Gap between strategy and employee perception.
Measurement & Sustainability	DEI progress is measured through KPIs and employee feedback.	Some cluster-level data, but no local surveys or feedback rounds.	Partial	Quantitative data exists, but no systematic local feedback process.

13 Appendix 4a: Coding Matrix DEI Policies

NR.	Source	Quote	Key meassage
DEI_ANALYSIS_1	Website (DEI Global)	We aim to reach 30% women in leadership roles and 10% in terminal staff by the end of 2025.	Concrete target quota for the advancement of women by 2025
DEI_ANALYSIS_2	Website (DEI Global)	We are committed to providing equal opportunities and promoting diversity in all areas of our business.	Equality and promotion of diversity
DEI_ANALYSIS_3	Website (DEI Global)	We foster an inclusive workplace where every voice is heard.	Inclusive corporate culture as a goal
DEI_ANALYSIS_4	Website (DEI Global)	We provide mandatory unconscious bias training for our leaders.	Mandatory bias training for managers
DEI_ANALYSIS_5	Sustainability Report 2024	We follow a zero-tolerance policy against discrimination and harassment.	Zero tolerance of discrimination
DEI_ANALYSIS_6	Sustainability Report 2024	In 2023, more than 10,000 employees participated in DEI-related training.	Broad participation in training in the area of DEI
DEI_ANALYSIS_7	Website (DEI Global)	We believe that diverstiy of thoughts, background, and expertiece drives innovation and success	Diversity as a driver of innovation
DEI_ANALYSIS_8	Website (DEI Global)	We are working actively to identify and eliminate barriers for underrepresented groups, such as people with disabilities and ethnic minorities	Removal of structural barriers for marginalized groups
DEI_ANALYSIS_9	Website (DEI Global)	All our managers are required to complete training in inclusive leadership	Mandatory training for managers
DEI_ANALYSIS_10	Sustainability Report 2024	DEI has been embedded in our performance reviews and leadership KPIs	Integration of DIE in key performance indicators
DEI_ANALYSIS_11	Sustainability Report 2024	In 2023, we launched an internal campaign titled 'Together We Grow', focusing on allyship and inclusion	Internal awareness-raising compaign on inclusion
DEI_ANALYSIS_11	Intranet (not intendet for publica	Diversity is celebrated through art formats and interactive events to promote awareness and exchange	Inclusion and cultural exchange through participation and creativity
DEI_ANALYSIS_11	Intranet (not intendet for publication)	Small behavioral impulses are used to promote inclusive behavior in everyday life (e.g. inclusive language change of perspective in meetings)	Behavioral design promotes inclusion in everyday life
DEI_ANALYSIS_11	Intranet (not intendet for publica	belonging for LGB I QIA+ employees.	Strengthening belonging and visibility of queer identities
DEI_ANALYSIS_11	Intranet (not intendet for publication)	Describes how employees can react to discrimination and seek support.	Structural support for experiences of discrimination
DEI_ANALYSIS_11	Intranet (not intendet for publica	An internal diversity event was organized to make global diversity visible and encourage intercultural dialogue.	Global cultural diversity as a unifying element

NR.	Source	Message Category	Strategic objective	Remark
DEI_ANALYSIS_1	Website (DEI Global)	Anchoring in corporate strategy	Yes	Measurable and defined in terms of time
DEI_ANALYSIS_2	Website (DEI Global)	Inclusion & accessibility	No	General mission statement
DEI_ANALYSIS_3	Website (DEI Global)	Inclusion & accessibility	No	Value-oriented statement
DEI_ANALYSIS_4	Website (DEI Global)	Training & awareness	Yes	Measure with specific target group
DEI_ANALYSIS_5	Sustainability Report 2024	Equal opportunities & anti-discrimination	Yes	Legal and ethical basis
DEI_ANALYSIS_6	Sustainability Report 2024	Training & awareness	Yes	Measure achieved with quantitative data
DEI_ANALYSIS_7	Website (DEI Global)	Anchoring in corporate strategy	No	Legitimization of DEI through economic argumentation
DEI_ANALYSIS_8	Website (DEI Global)	Inclusion & accessibility	Yes	Actively formulated stratgic goal
DEI_ANALYSIS_9	Website (DEI Global)	Anchoring in corporate strategy	Yes	Mandatory for management staff
DEI_ANALYSIS_10	Sustainability Report 2024	Anchoring in corporate strategy	Yes	Part of company-wide management
DEI_ANALYSIS_11	Sustainability Report 2024	Training & awareness	No	Awareness-raising measure
DEI_ANALYSIS_11	Intranet (not intendet for publica	Inclusion & accessibility	No	Focus on the participation effect, not on setting targets
DEI_ANALYSIS_11	Intranet (not intendet for publication)	Training & awareness	Yes	Targeted behavior through structural support
DEI_ANALYSIS_11	Intranet (not intendet for publica	Inclusion & accessibilityTraining & awaren	No	Value-oriented communication, not a structural measure
DEI_ANALYSIS_11	Intranet (not intendet for publication)	Equal opportunities & anti-discrimination	Yes	Part of the institutional protection mechanisms
DEI_ANALYSIS_11	Intranet (not intendet for publica	a Training & awareness	No	Focus on raising awareness, not on achieving targets

14 Appendix 5a: Sample Characteristics

Country	n	~	% 🔽
Austria	65		26,21%
Bulgaria	18		7,26%
Croatia	14		5,65%
Czeck Republic	19		7,66%
Hungary	26		10,48%
Macedonia	20		8,06%
Romania	18		7,26%
Serbia	24		9,68%
Slovakia	22		8,87%
Slovenia	22		8,87%
	248		100,00%
Age	n	~	% 🔽
under 21 years	31		12,50%
21-30 years	43		17,34%
31-40 years	50		20,16%
41-50 years	76		30,65%
over 50 years	48		19,35%
	248		100,00%
Unit -	n	¥	% -
Air Freight	20		8,06%
Apprentice	15		6,05%
Contract Logistics/SCM	26		10,48%
Fairs & Exhibitions/Relocations/Sport Event	22		8,87%
Finance	32		12,90%
General Management	25		10,08%
П	24		9,68%
Land Transport	39		15,73%
Ocean Freight	22		8,87%
SGMS	23		9,27%
	248		100,00%
Level	n	~	% -
Operational level (e.g., warehouse, transport, administration)	94		37,90%
First management level (e.g., team leader, supervisor)	76		30,65%
Middle management (e.g., head of LSC, branch management)	78		31,45%
	248		100,00%
Seniority <u> </u>	n	~	% 🔽
Less than 1 year	44		21,26%
1-3 years	45		21,74%
4-6 years	55		26,57%
More than 6 years	63		30,43%
	207		100,00%

15 Appendix 6a: SPSS – Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha Fairness

→ Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	248	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	248	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,760	3

Cronbach's Alpha Impact

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	248	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	248	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.785	5

Cronbach's Alpha Inclusion

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	248	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	248	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,715	5

Cronbach's Alpha Motivation

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	248	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	248	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's	N. of Home
Alpha	N of Items
,821	5

Cronbach's Alpha Communication

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	248	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	248	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,820	6

Cronbach's Alpha Perception

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	248	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	248	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,799	3

Cronbach's Alpha Engagement

→ Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	248	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	248	100,0

 Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,732	2

Cronbach's Alpha Perception Age under 21

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	43	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	43	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's	
Alpha	N of Items
,818,	3

Cronbach's Alpha Perception Age 21-30 years

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	31	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	31	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	
,583	3	

Cronbach's Alpha Perception Age 31-40 years

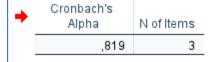
Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	50	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	50	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.



Cronbach's Alpha Perception Age 41-50 years

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	76	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	76	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,805	3

Cronbach's Alpha Perception Age over 50 years

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	48	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	48	100,0

 Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's	N of Items
Alpha	N of items
,763	3

Cronbach's Alpha Effect Land Austria

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	65	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	65	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,890	6

Cronbach's Alpha Effect Land Bulgaria

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	18	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	18	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,816	6

Cronbach's Alpha Effect Land Croatia

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	14	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	14	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,779	6

Cronbach's Alpha Effect Land Czeck Republic

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	19	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	19	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's	
Alpha	N of Items
,902	6

Cronbach's Alpha Effect Land Hungary

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	26	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	26	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's		
	Alpha	N of Items
	,832	6

Cronbach's Alpha Effect Land Macedonia

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	20	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,831	6

Cronbach's Alpha Effect Land Romania

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	18	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	18	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,869	6

Cronbach's Alpha Effect Land Serbia

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	24	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	24	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,836	6

Cronbach's Alpha Effect Land Slovakia



Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	22	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	22	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha		N of Items
	,780	6

Cronbach's Alpha Effect Land Slovenia

→ Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	22	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	22	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,880	6

Cronbach's Alpha Perception Unit Air Freight

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	20	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,790	3

Cronbach's Alpha Perception Unit Apprentice

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	15	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	15	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's	
Alpha	N of Items
,798	3

Cronbach's Alpha Perception Unit Contract Logistics

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	26	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	26	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,84	5 3

Cronbach's Alpha Perception Unit Fairs

→ Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	22	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	22	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,748	3

Cronbach's Alpha Perception Unit Finance

→ Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	32	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	32	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,834	3

Cronbach's Alpha Perception Unit General Management

→ Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	25	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	25	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,820	3

Cronbach's Alpha Perception Unit IT

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	24	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	24	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,729	3

Cronbach's Alpha Perception Unit Land Transport

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	39	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	39	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's	
Alpha	N of Items
,819	3

Cronbach's Alpha Perception Unit Ocean Freight

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	22	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	22	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	
,707	3	

Cronbach's Alpha Perception Unit SGMS

→ Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	23	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	23	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's	
Alpha	N of Items
,646	3

Cronbach's Alpha Effect Level First Management

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	76	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	76	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,889	6

Cronbach's Alpha Effect Level Middle Management

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	78	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	78	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's	
Alpha	N of Items
,805	6

Cronbach's Alpha Effect Level Operational

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	94	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	94	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,879	6

Cronbach's Alpha Perception Level First Management

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	76	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	76	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Аірпа	N of items
,819	3

Cronbach's Alpha Perception Level Middle Management

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	78	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	78	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach	ı's	
Alpha		N of Items
	,717	3

Cronbach's Alpha Perception Level Operational

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	94	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	94	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,842	3

Cronbach's Alpha Leadership

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	248	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	248	100,0

Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,758	4

16 Appendix 6b: SPSS – Regression_Fariness & Impact

Regression

Descriptive Statistics

		Std.	
	Mean	Deviation	N
E_fariness_Mittelwe	3,3495	,86607	248
rt			
E_impact_Mittelwer	3,2218	,75993	248
t			

Correlations

		E_fariness_Mi	E_impact_Mitt
		ttelwert	elwert
Pearson	E_fariness_Mittelwe	1,000	,223
Correlation	rt		
	E_impact_Mittelwer	,223	1,000
	t		
Sig. (1-tailed)	E_fariness_Mittelwe		<,001
	rt		
	E_impact_Mittelwer	,000	-
	t		
N	E_fariness_Mittelwe	248	248
	rt		
	E_impact_Mittelwer	248	248
	t		

Pearson Correlation Highly Positive: (None) Positive:

(E_fariness_Mittelwert <---> E_impact_Mittelwert) No Linear

Correlation: (None) Negative: (None) Highly Negative:

(None) Note: Curated Help is calculated based on actual cell values, not the formatted values.

Variables Entered/Removed^a

	Variables	Variables	
Model	Entered	Removed	Method
1	E_impact_Mitt	-	Enter
	elwert ^b		

- a. Dependent Variable: E_fariness_Mittelwert
- b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary^b

					Change Statistics	
			Adjusted R	Std. Error of	R Square	
Model	R	R Square	Square	the Estimate	Change	F Change
1	,223ª	,050	,046	,84598	,050	12,869

Model Summary^b

	Durbin-				
Model	df1 df2		Change	Watson	
1		1	246	<,001	1,886

- a. Predictors: (Constant), E_impact_Mittelwert
- b. Dependent Variable: E_fariness_Mittelwert

ANOVA^a

	Sum of		Mean		
Model	Squares	df	Square	F	Sig.

1	Regression	9,210	1	9,210	12,869	<,001 ^b
	Residual	176,058	246	,716		
	Total	185,269	247			

a. Dependent Variable: E_fariness_Mittelwert

b. Predictors: (Constant), E_impact_Mittelwert

Coefficients^a

		Unstand	dardized	Standardized		
		Coefficients		Coefficients		
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant) 2,531		,234		10,795	<,001
	E_impact_Mittelwe	,254	,071	,223	3,587	<,001

Coefficients^a

95,0% Confidence Interval

for B

Model		Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2,069	2,993
	E_impact_Mittelwe	,115	,394
	rt		

a. Dependent Variable: E_fariness_Mittelwert

Residuals Statistics^a

				Std.	
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Deviation	N
Predicted Value	2,7849	3,7505	3,3495	,19310	248
Residual	-2,01060	1,67849	,00000	,84427	248
Std. Predicted Value	-2,924	2,077	,000	1,000	248

Std. Residual	-2,377	1,984	,000	,998	248

a. Dependent Variable: E_fariness_Mittelwert

17 Appendix 6c: SPSS – Correlation_Inclusion & Motivation

→ Correlations

Correlations

		E2_inclusion_ Mittelwert	E2_motivation _Mittelwert
E2_inclusion_Mittelwert	Pearson Correlation	1	,278**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001
	N	248	248
E2_motivation_Mittelwert	Pearson Correlation	,278**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	
	N	248	248

^{**.} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pearson Correlations

Highly Positive: (None)

Positive: (E2_inclusion_Mittelvert <---> E2_motivation_Mittelvert)

No Linear Correlation: (None)

Negative: (None)

Highly Negative: (None)

18 Appendix 6d: SPSS – ANOVA Fairness & Age

→ Univariate Analysis of Variance

Between-Subjects Factors

		Ν
How long have you been	1-3 years	45
working at DB Schenker?	4-6 years	55
	Less than 1 year	44
	More than 6 years	63
	über 6 Jahre	41

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: E3_view_Mittelwert

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	9,436ª	4	2,359	7,200	<,001
Intercept	2602,796	1	2602,796	7944,468	<,001
D_Workingyears	9,436	4	2,359	7,200	<,001
Error	79,613	243	,328		
Total	2714,098	248			
Corrected Total	89,049	247			

a. R Squared = ,106 (Adjusted R Squared = ,091)

19 Appendix 6e: SPSS - Correlation_Perception & Inclusion

→ Correlations

Correlations

		H5_perception _Mittelwert	E2_inclusion_ Mittelwert
H5_perception_Mittelwert	Pearson Correlation	1	,192
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,002
	N	248	248
E2_inclusion_Mittelwert	Pearson Correlation	,192	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	
	N	248	248

^{**.} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pearson Correlations

Highly Positive: (None)

Positive: (H5_perception_Mittelwert <---> E2_inclusion_Mittelwert)

No Linear Correlation: (None)

Negative: (None)

Highly Negative: (None)

20 Appendix 6f: SPSS – Correlation_Perception & Motivation

Correlations

Correlations

		H1_motivation _Mittelwert	H1_perception _Mittelwert
H1_motivation_Mittelwert	Pearson Correlation	1	,749
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001
	N	248	248
H1_perception_Mittelwert	Pearson Correlation	,749	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	
	N	248	248

^{**.} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pearson Correlations

Highly Positive: (None)

Positive: (H1_motivation_Mittelwert <---> H1_perception_Mittelwert)

No Linear Correlation: (None)

Negative: (None)

Highly Negative: (None)

21 Appendix 6g: SPSS – Regression_Perception & Motivation

Regression

Descriptive Statistics

		Std.	
	Mean	Deviation	N
H1_motivation_Mittelw	3,2806	,83542	248
ert			
H1_perception_Mittelw	3,1720	,92934	248
ert			

Correlations

		H1_motivation	H1_perception
		_Mittelwert	_Mittelwert
Pearson	H1_motivation_Mittelw	1,000	,749
Correlation	ert		
	H1_perception_Mittelw	,749	1,000
	ert		
Sig. (1-tailed)	H1_motivation_Mittelw		<,001
	ert		
	H1_perception_Mittelw	,000	-
	ert		
N	H1_motivation_Mittelw	248	248
	ert		
	H1_perception_Mittelw	248	248
	ert		

Pearson Correlation Highly Positive: (None) Positive:

(H1 motivation Mittelwert <---> H1 perception Mittelwert)

No Linear Correlation: (None) Negative: (None) Highly

Negative: (None) Note: Curated Help is calculated based on actual cell values, not the formatted values.

Variables Entered/Removed^a

	Variables	Variables	
Model	Entered	Removed	Method
1	H1_perception		Enter
	_Mittelwert ^b		

- a. Dependent Variable: H1_motivation_Mittelwert
- b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary^b

					Change Sta	atistics
			Adjusted R	Std. Error of	R Square	
Model	R	R Square	Square	the Estimate	Change	F Change
1	,749ª	,561	,559	,55469	,561	314,287

Model Summary^b

Change Statistics					
				Sig. F	Durbin-
Model	df1		df2	Change	Watson
1		1	246	<,001	2,026

- a. Predictors: (Constant), H1 perception Mittelwert
- b. Dependent Variable: H1_motivation_Mittelwert

ANOVA^a

	Sum of		Mean		
Model	Squares	df	Square	F	Sig.

1	Regression	96,699	1	96,699	314,287	<,001 ^b
	Residual	75,688	246	,308		
	Total	172,387	247			

- a. Dependent Variable: H1_motivation_Mittelwert
- b. Predictors: (Constant), H1_perception_Mittelwert

Coefficients^a

		Unstandardized		Standardized	
		Coefficients		Coefficients	
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	1,145	,126		9,123
	H1_perception_Mittelw	,673	,038	,749	17,728
	ert				

Coefficients^a

			95,0% Confidence Interval		
			for B		
Model		Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
1	(Constant)	<,001	,898,	1,392	
	H1_perception_Mittelw ert	<,001	,598	,748	

a. Dependent Variable: H1_motivation_Mittelwert

Residuals Statistics^a

				Std.	
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Deviation	N
Predicted Value	1,8183	4,5114	3,2806	,62569	248
Residual	-1,71597	1,38634	,00000	,55356	248
Std. Predicted Value	-2,337	1,967	,000,	1,000	248

Gabriela Feichter, BA

Std. Residual	-3,094	2,499	,000	,998	248
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a. Dependent Variable: H1_motivation_Mittelwert

22 Appendix 6h: SPSS – Correlation_Inclusion & Engagement

Correlations

Correlations

		H2_engageme nt_Mittelwert	H2_inclusion_ Mittelwert
H2_engagement_Mittelwer	Pearson Correlation	1	,197
t	Sig. (2-tailed)		,002
	N	248	248
H2_inclusion_Mittelwert	Pearson Correlation	,197	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	
	N	248	248

^{**.} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pearson Correlations

Highly Positive: (None)

Positive: (H2_engagement_Mittelwert <---> H2_inclusion_Mittelwert)

No Linear Correlation: (None)

Negative: (None)

Highly Negative: (None)

23 Appendix 6i: SPSS – Regression_Inclusion & Engagement

Regression

Descriptive Statistics

		Std.	
	Mean	Deviation	N
H2_inclusion_Mittelwert	3,5387	,69407	248
H2_engagement_Mittelw	3,1391	,95538	248
ert			

Correlations

		H2_inclusion_	H2_engageme
		Mittelwert	nt_Mittelwert
Pearson	H2_inclusion_Mittelwert	1,000	,197
Correlation	H2_engagement_Mittelw	,197	1,000
	ert		
Sig. (1-tailed)	H2_inclusion_Mittelwert		<,001
	H2_engagement_Mittelw	,001	
	ert		
N	H2_inclusion_Mittelwert	248	248
	H2_engagement_Mittelw	248	248
	ert		

Linear Correlation: (None) Negative: (None) Highly

Variables Entered/Removed^a

	nt_Mittelwert ^b		
1	H2_engageme		Enter
Model	Entered	Removed	Method
	Variables	Variables	

- a. Dependent Variable: H2 inclusion Mittelwert
- b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary^b

					Change Sta	atistics
			Adjusted R	Std. Error of	R Square	
Model	R	R Square	Square	the Estimate	Change	F Change
1	,197ª	,039	,035	,68189	,039	9,900

Model Summary^b

Change Statistics				
			Sig. F	Durbin-
Model	df1	df2	Change	Watson
1	1	246	,002	1,995

- a. Predictors: (Constant), H2 engagement Mittelwert
- b. Dependent Variable: H2_inclusion_Mittelwert

ANOVA^a

		Sum of		Mean		
Model		Squares	df	Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4,603	1	4,603	9,900	,002b
	Residual	114,385	246	,465		
	Total	118,988	247			

a. Dependent Variable: H2_inclusion_Mittelwert

b. Predictors: (Constant), H2_engagement_Mittelwert

Coefficients^a

		Unstandardized		Standardized	
		Coeffi	cients	Coefficients	
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	3,090	,149		20,741
	H2_engagement_Mittelw ert	,143	,045	,197	3,146

Coefficients^a

			95,0% Confidence Interval			
			for B			
Model		Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1	(Constant)	<,001	2,797	3,384		
	H2_engagement_Mittelw	,002	,053	,232		
	ert					

a. Dependent Variable: H2_inclusion_Mittelwert

Residuals Statistics^a

				Std.	
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Deviation	N
Predicted Value	3,2331	3,8046	3,5387	,13651	248
Residual	-2,23305	1,56695	,00000	,68051	248
Std. Predicted	-2,239	1,948	,000	1,000	248
Value					
Std. Residual	-3,275	2,298	,000	,998	248

a. Dependent Variable: H2_inclusion_Mittelwert

24 Appendix 6j: SPSS – ANOVA Perception Age

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Included		Excluded		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
H3_perception_Mittelwert * How old are you?	248	100,0%	0	0,0%	248	100,0%

Report

H3_perception_Mitt	erwert		
How old are you?	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
21-30 years	3,1240	43	,97325
31-40 years	3,0467	50	,99434
41-50 years	2,9868	76	,92126
over 50 years	3,3264	48	,87110
under 21 years	3,6559	31	,68033
Total	3,1720	248	.92934

ANOVA Table

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
H3_perception_Mittelwert*	Between Groups (Combined)	11,893	4	2,973	3,587	,007
How old are you?	Within Groups	201,433	243	,829		
	Total	213,326	247			

Measures of Association

	Eta	Eta Squared	
H3_perception_Mittelwert * How old are you?	,236	,056	

25 Appendix 6k: SPSS – ANOVA Effect Land

Means

Case Processing Summary

	Cases						
	Included		Exclu	Excluded		tal	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	
H4_effect_Mittelwert * Which country do you work in?	248	100,0%	0	0,0%	248	100,0%	

Report

H4_effect_Mittelwe	ert		
Which country do you work in?	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Austria	2,8513	65	,82765
Bulgaria	3,7500	18	,70768
Croatia	3,4286	14	,62946
Czeck Republic	3,2895	19	,97475
Hungary	3,4423	26	,76731
Macedonia	3,4083	20	,79743
Romania	3,3148	18	,84577
Serbia	3,3750	24	,71938
Slovakia	3,3485	22	,73266
Slovenia	3,4015	22	,89333
Total	3,2668	248	,83296

ANOVA Table

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
H4_effect_Mittelwert * Which country do you work in?	Between Groups (Comb	ined) 17,871	9	1,986	3,079	,002
	Within Groups	153,503	238	,645		
	Total	171,374	247			

Measures of Association

	Eta	Eta Squared
H4_effect_Mittelwert * Which country do you work in?	,323	,104

26 Appendix 6l: SPSS – ANOVA Perception Unit

Means

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Included		Excluded		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
H5_perception_Mittelwert * Which functional area do you mainly work in?	248	100,0%	0	0,0%	248	100,0%

Report	
--------	--

Which functional area do you mainly work in?	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Air Freight	3,1833	20	,99399
Apprentice	3,4667	15	,97427
Contract Logistics/SCM	2,7308	26	1,00231
Fairs & Exhibitions/Relocations/Sp ort Event	3,2727	22	,86457
Finance	3,1250	32	,95696
General Management	3,6667	25	,89235
П	3,4167	24	,81205
Land Transport	2,8205	39	,87475
Ocean Freight	3,1970	22	,88287
SGMS	3,2174	23	,77596
Total	3,1720	248	,92934

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
H5_perception_Mittelwert * Which functional area	Between Groups	(Combined)	19,094	9	2,122	2,600	,007
	Within Groups		194,232	238	,816		
do you mainly work in?	Total		213,326	247			

Measures of Association

	Eta	Eta Squared
H5_perception_Mittelwert * Which functional area	,299	.090
do you mainly work in?		

27 Appendix 6m: SPSS – MANOVA Perception & Effect

General Linear Model

Between-Subjects Factors

Ν

At what	level	do you	rst management level 76
operate?			g., team leader,
			pervisor)
			ddle management 78
			g., head of LSC,
			anch management)
			perational level (e.g., 94
			arehouse, transport,
			ministration)

Descriptive Statistics

	At what level do you		Std.	
	operate?	Mean	Deviation	N
H6_perception_Mittelw	First management level	3,0921	,98372	76
ert	(e.g., team leader,			
	supervisor)			
	Middle management	3,2436	,86902	78
	(e.g., head of LSC,			
	branch management)			
	Operational level (e.g.,	3,1773	,93735	94
	warehouse, transport,			
	administration)			
	Total	3,1720	,92934	248

H6_effect_Mittelwert	First management level (e.g., team leader, supervisor)	3,2083	,92261	76
	Middle management (e.g., head of LSC, branch management)	3,4060	,72851	78
	Operational level (e.g., warehouse, transport, administration)	3,1986	,83254	94
	Total	3,2668	,83296	248

Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices

Box's M	10,455
F	1,722
df1	6
df2	1224364,89
	9
Sig.	,111
Tests	the null

hypothesis that the observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables are equal across groups.^a

a. Design: Intercept +D_Level

Multivariate Tests^a

					Hypothesis		
Effect			Value	F	df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's T	race	,954	2539,986 ^b	2,000	244,000	<,001
	Wilks' La	ambda	,046	2539,986 ^b	2,000	244,000	<,001
	Hotelling	j's Trace	20,820	2539,986 ^b	2,000	244,000	<,001
	Roy's	Largest	20,820	2539,986 ^b	2,000	244,000	<,001
	Root						
D_Level	Pillai's T	race	,015	,920	4,000	490,000	,452
	Wilks' La	ambda	,985	,918 ^b	4,000	488,000	,453
	Hotelling	j's Trace	,015	,916	4,000	486,000	,454
	Roy's	Largest	,013	1,635°	2,000	245,000	,197
	Root						

Multivariate Tests^a

Partial Eta

Effect		Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	,954
	Wilks' Lambda	,954
	Hotelling's Trace	,954
	Roy's Largest	,954
	Root	
D_Level	Pillai's Trace	,007
	Wilks' Lambda	,007
	Hotelling's Trace	,007
	Roy's Largest	,013
	Root	

a. Design: Intercept + D_Level

b. Exact statistic

c. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances^a

		Levene		
		Statistic	df1	df2
H6_perception_Mittelw	Based on Mean	,715	2	245
ert	Based on Median	,335	2	245
	Based on Median and	,335	2	236,264
	with adjusted df			
	Based on trimmed mean	,637	2	245
H6_effect_Mittelwert	Based on Mean	4,471	2	245
	Based on Median	3,012	2	245
	Based on Median and	3,012	2	235,845
	with adjusted df			
	Based on trimmed mean	4,208	2	245

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances^a

Sig.

H6_perception_Mittelw	Based on Mean	,490
ert	Based on Median	,716
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	,716
	Based on trimmed mean	,530
H6_effect_Mittelwert	Based on Mean	,012
	Based on Median	,051
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	,051
	Based on trimmed mean	,016

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.^a

a. Design: Intercept + D_Level

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

		Type III Sum		Mean	
Source	Dependent Variable	of Squares	df	Square	F
Corrected	H6_perception_Mittelw	,888ª	2	,444	,512
Model	ert				
	H6_effect_Mittelwert	2,208b	2	1,104	1,599
Intercept	H6_perception_Mittelw	2471,472	1	2471,472	2850,285
	ert				
	H6_effect_Mittelwert	2629,755	1	2629,755	3808,621
D_Level	H6_perception_Mittelw	,888,	2	,444	,512
	ert				
	H6_effect_Mittelwert	2,208	2	1,104	1,599
Error	H6_perception_Mittelw	212,439	245	,867	
	ert				
	H6_effect_Mittelwert	169,166	245	,690	
Total	H6_perception_Mittelw	2708,667	248		
	ert				
	H6_effect_Mittelwert	2818,028	248		
Corrected Total	H6_perception_Mittelw	213,326	247		
	ert				
	H6_effect_Mittelwert	171,374	247		

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

			Partial Eta
Source	Dependent Variable	Sig.	Squared
Corrected	H6_perception_Mittelw	,600	,004
Model	ert		

	H6_effect_Mittelwert	,204	,013
Intercept	H6_perception_Mittelw ert	<,001	,921
	H6_effect_Mittelwert	<,001	,940
D_Level	H6_perception_Mittelw ert	,600	,004
	H6_effect_Mittelwert	,204	,013
Error	H6_perception_Mittelw		
	ert		
	H6_effect_Mittelwert		
Total	H6_perception_Mittelw		
	ert		
	H6_effect_Mittelwert		
Corrected Total	H6_perception_Mittelw		
	ert		
	H6_effect_Mittelwert		

a. R Squared = ,004 (Adjusted R Squared = -,004)

b. R Squared = ,013 (Adjusted R Squared = ,005)