

Impact of Recent U.S. Government Regulations and Supreme Court Rulings on Corporate DEI Hiring and Promotion Policies

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Abstract

The increasing emphasis on inclusive hiring practices in modern organizations has led to a growing interest in the role of Equal Opportunity (EO) and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in shaping organizational work culture. While EO practices primarily focus on ensuring non-discriminatory access to employment opportunities, DEI initiatives go further by actively promoting representation, fairness, and a sense of belonging within the workplace. This study investigates the relationship between these two hiring approaches EO and DEI, and their impact on organizational work culture, aiming to understand not only their individual contributions but also how they collectively shape employees' experiences at work. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected from 22 professionals across various industries through a structured survey. The survey included items measuring perceptions of EO and DEI practices in their organizations as well as their overall assessment of work culture. Multiple regression analysis was used to evaluate the predictive power of EO and DEI hiring practices on the dependent variable, organizational work culture. The results indicate that both EO and DEI hiring practices have a positive influence on work culture, but the impact of DEI is more significant and consistent. Specifically, the regression model showed that DEI practices had a statistically significant effect on organizational culture ($p < 0.05$), whereas EO practices, although positive, did not reach statistical significance in the model. The combined EO and DEI variables explained approximately 63.3% of the variance in work culture, suggesting a strong and meaningful relationship between inclusive hiring and employee perceptions of their work environment. These findings contribute to existing literature by presenting EO and DEI as related but distinct constructs that jointly influence workplace dynamics. The study emphasizes the importance of not only complying with

legal mandates for equal opportunity but also fostering proactive DEI strategies that address systemic inequities and promote inclusive values. While EO ensures fairness in hiring procedures, DEI ensures that fairness translates into equity and belonging once individuals are within the organization. This layered approach appears to be more effective in transforming workplace culture.

Keywords: Equal Opportunity (EO), Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), Hiring practices, Inclusive recruitment, Workplace diversity.

Introduction

In today's dynamic and interconnected world, organizations are under increasing pressure to create workplaces that are not only legally compliant but also inclusive, equitable, and culturally cohesive. As globalization, social awareness, and workforce diversification accelerate, hiring practices have evolved from being merely transactional processes to becoming strategic tools for shaping organizational identity and success. Central to this evolution are two key constructs: Equal Opportunity (EO) hiring and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) hiring. These practices aim not only to rectify historical imbalances and prevent discrimination but also to foster environments where every employee feels valued, heard, and empowered to contribute meaningfully.

Equal Opportunity hiring primarily focuses on ensuring fair access to employment, removing biases based on race, gender, religion, or other protected characteristics. Rooted in legal frameworks and ethical imperatives, EO hiring has traditionally been seen as the baseline standard for ethical recruitment. However, the presence of policies alone does not guarantee true equality. Effective implementation, organizational commitment, and employee perception significantly influence the actual impact of EO initiatives on workplace culture.

DEI hiring, in contrast, takes a more intentional and strategic approach. It not only seeks to diversify the workforce but also to embed equity in organizational systems and foster inclusion across all levels. DEI practices involve proactive efforts such as inclusive job descriptions, anti-bias training, equitable evaluation criteria, and support systems for underrepresented groups. Recent research underscores that organizations with strong DEI frameworks often experience higher employee satisfaction, improved innovation, and stronger team dynamics.

Work culture, the shared values, behaviors, and social dynamics within an organization, is both a product and a determinant of hiring practices. A culture that reflects inclusivity and fairness contributes to higher retention, engagement, and productivity. Conversely, a culture misaligned with employee values or lacking inclusivity can lead to attrition and dissatisfaction. While the individual effects of EO and DEI hiring practices have been explored in past studies, limited empirical research exists on their combined impact on work culture, especially in non-Western, emerging market contexts.

This study seeks to fill this gap by quantitatively examining the influence of EO and DEI hiring practices on organizational work culture. Using data collected from 22 professionals across diverse industries, the research employs multiple regression analysis to assess the individual and combined effects of these hiring strategies. The goal is to provide actionable insights for HR professionals and organizational leaders seeking to foster inclusive, high-performing workplaces through thoughtful hiring policies.

1.1. Background of the Study

In the evolving global employment landscape, organizations are increasingly expected to go beyond compliance with labour laws to proactively promote inclusive, equitable, and engaging work environments. What was once viewed as a legal or moral obligation, fairness in hiring and inclusion is now recognized as a strategic necessity that directly influences innovation, performance, and sustainability. Three key constructs have emerged as central to this shift: Equal Opportunity (EO) hiring, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) hiring, and organizational work culture.

Equal Opportunity hiring ensures that employment access is based on merit, free from discrimination based on race, gender, religion, or other characteristics. Legal frameworks, such as Indonesia's Manpower Law and Macedonia's constitutional protections (Malihah, 2024; Stoilkovska et al., 2015), mandate EO practices as a means to reduce systemic inequalities and support historically marginalized communities. Yet, EO's success depends not just on policy presence but on genuine, thoughtful integration into recruitment processes (Leibbrandt & List, 2018).

In contrast, DEI hiring adopts a proactive and strategic lens, emphasizing the intentional inclusion of diverse individuals, continuous equity evaluation, and cultural competency. It not only aims to recruit from underrepresented groups but also ensures that they are supported, heard, and retained. Scholars such as Castillo et al. (2023) and Hebl (2024) argue that DEI practices lead to higher employee engagement and better decision-making outcomes. However, when implemented superficially, DEI may be perceived as performative (Pejchar & Jha, 2022), undermining its effectiveness.

Work culture, the third pillar of this study, encompasses the values, norms, behaviours, and emotional tone that define how work is experienced. It is both a product and a shaper of EO and DEI practices. A culture that aligns employee values with organizational goals can significantly enhance job satisfaction, innovation, and retention (Topić, 2024; Ahmad, 2021). Conversely, a disconnect between individual identity and organizational culture can result in disengagement and attrition.

1.2. Problem Statement

While EO and DEI hiring practices have been extensively studied individually, there is limited empirical evidence on their combined impact on shaping organizational work culture, especially through quantitative analysis. Furthermore, most research is concentrated in Western contexts, leaving a gap in the understanding of how these dynamics play out in emerging economies.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

- To assess the influence of Equal Opportunity hiring practices on organizational work culture.
- To examine the impact of DEI hiring practices on work culture.
- To analyse the combined effect of EO and DEI on fostering a positive work environment.

1.4. Research Questions

1. How does Equal Opportunity Hiring affect organizational work culture?
2. What is the relationship between DEI hiring and work culture?
3. Which of the two EO or DEI has a stronger influence on shaping organizational culture?

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study contributes both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it bridges gaps in literature by exploring how EO and DEI hiring intersect to shape internal culture. Practically, it offers HR professionals data-driven insights into which hiring strategies are more effective for creating inclusive and productive environments.

1.6. Scope and Limitations

The study is based on a sample of 22 organizational professionals, which, while adequate for exploratory regression, may not represent all industries. The data was collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire and analysed via Microsoft Excel. As a result, generalizability is limited, but the findings are directionally insightful.

2. Review of Literature

This chapter explores prior research and theoretical perspectives on three core areas central to this study: Equal Opportunity (EO) Hiring, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Hiring, and Work Culture. Together, these constructs provide the conceptual foundation for understanding how organizational hiring practices influence internal cultural dynamics. The literature reviewed here highlights key insights, practical implications, and research gaps that inform the present investigation.

2.1. Equal Opportunity (EO) Hiring Practices

Equal Opportunity hiring practices are grounded in legal and ethical mandates that prohibit discrimination and promote fairness in recruitment. Scholars such as Malihah (2024) and Stoilkovska et al. (2015) emphasize the role of formal legislation, such as Indonesia's Manpower Law and constitutional guarantees in Macedonia, in eliminating bias based on race, gender, religion, or other personal characteristics. These laws create a

baseline of protection for marginalized groups and are intended to ensure equal access to employment opportunities.

However, while legal frameworks establish the minimum requirements, actual implementation varies. Evans (1991) and Choudhary et al. (2023) argue that EO practices must go beyond compliance to address historical and systemic disadvantages. When authentically integrated, EO policies can enhance employee morale and increase perceptions of fairness, thereby contributing to better organizational outcomes.

Yet, research also reveals potential limitations. Leibbrandt and List (2018) caution that EO statements in job postings may backfire if they appear tokenistic or formulaic. Such representations might inadvertently deter minority applicants who view them as disingenuous. This suggests that sincerity and execution are just as critical as policy presence.

Thakur & Salman (2024) and Ali et al. (2019) frame EO hiring not only as a moral or legal responsibility but as a strategic HR tool. When supported by measurement tools like the Equal Employment Index (Vogt, 1977), EO hiring can lead to improved recruitment pipelines, talent retention, and organizational legitimacy.

2.2. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Hiring Practices

While EO hiring focuses on fairness and access, DEI hiring broadens the lens to emphasize intentional inclusion, representation, and belonging. Castillo et al. (2023) and Hebl (2024) highlight that DEI initiatives enhance organizational performance by cultivating diverse perspectives and encouraging inclusive behaviours. Hebl further suggests that integrating DEI metrics into hiring analytics enables organizations to align recruitment with broader equity goals.

Olusanya's (2023) research adds a practical dimension, showing that 73% of employees perceive DEI efforts as contributing positively to their workplace experience. These findings reinforce the idea that DEI is not just about optics; it directly influences employee satisfaction, innovation, and organizational climate.

Successful DEI hiring goes beyond issuing broad mission statements. As Arunima & Bolar (2023) and Nautiyal (2023) point out, DEI must be embedded in everyday practices, including mentorship programs, recruitment policies, and leadership development. In academic settings, Pejchar & Jha (2022) and Chiou et al. (2022) demonstrate the importance of thoughtful diversity statements, which communicate institutional commitment and promote inclusivity in hiring.

Despite growing awareness, the literature acknowledges ongoing challenges. Alfaro (2024) and Souza & White (2024) note issues such as limited applicant pools, lack of DEI training, and resistance to inclusive change as persistent barriers. These findings call for a structured, organization-wide approach to DEI, where leaders are held accountable and policies are continually evaluated and refined.

2.3. Work Culture

Work culture refers to the values, norms, practices, and emotional climate that define how work is experienced within an organization. Zarkasi (2017) and Topić (2024) frame work culture as a collective construct that aligns personal values with organizational objectives, influencing job satisfaction and productivity.

The literature underscores that culture is context-specific yet universally impactful. Sriyana and Saha (2022) illustrate this through the work ethic of Javanese farmers, where values like spirituality and mutual respect shape day-to-day labour. Meanwhile, in corporate environments, especially in the post-COVID era, institutions like UIN Raden Intan Lampung have embraced innovation and professionalism as core values (Zuliana & Hidayati, 2024).

Work culture also has a psychological dimension. Nicholas (2024) emphasizes the role of emotional investment and value alignment, suggesting that misalignment between personal beliefs and organizational culture can lead to disengagement. Ahmad (2021) supports this by showing that positive cultural alignment leads to improved management of resources, such as in the administration of village funds.

Historical and sociological studies further expand the concept. Rydz (2023) explores how cultural norms evolve through historical events such as child labour reforms, while Assusa & Cancela (2020) argue that work culture can be understood through dimensions like ideology, identity, and relational dynamics.

Yet, building a healthy culture is not without its difficulties. Priyani & Muliawaty (2024) reveal that unclear work ethics and a lack of responsibility can negatively affect public sector performance. Topić (2024) adds that with the rise of hybrid work models, organizations must stay adaptive and continuously redefine their culture to meet evolving needs.

2.4. Synthesis and Research Gap

The literature clearly demonstrates that EO and DEI hiring practices are integral components of human resource strategies that shape perceptions of fairness, inclusion, and belonging. , these hiring approaches play a substantial role in defining work culture, which in turn affects employee morale, retention, and productivity.

However, while the individual effects of EO and DEI practices have been well-documented, less empirical attention has been given to how these two practices jointly influence organizational work culture, especially through a quantitative, data-driven lens. Additionally, there is limited evidence from developing or emerging market contexts, where legal compliance and cultural diversity may interact differently than in Western models.

3. Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the approach used to investigate the relationship between DEI hiring, EO hiring, and work culture. It discusses the overall research design, how the data was collected, and the specific techniques used to analyse the data.

3.1. Research Design

The research adopted a quantitative research design with a descriptive and causal (explanatory) orientation.

- **Quantitative:** The study relied on numerical data to measure the influence of independent variables (DEI and EO hiring practices) on the dependent variable (Work Culture).
- **Descriptive:** It aimed to provide a detailed overview of the current status of hiring practices and work culture perceptions.
- **Causal/Explanatory:** The purpose was to test hypotheses about causal relationships using statistical modelling (regression analysis).

This deductive approach began with established theories from the literature, formulated testable hypotheses, and then used empirical data to confirm or reject these hypotheses.

This type of design is particularly appropriate when the goal is to generalize findings and test existing relationships between variables under investigation. It allows the researcher to draw objective conclusions and assess how much variation in work culture can be explained by the hiring practices being studied.

3.2. Data Collection Method

Source of Data:

The research is based on primary data collected directly from individuals working in organizational contexts where hiring and work culture practices are observable.

Instrument Used:

- A structured questionnaire was designed to measure three constructs:
 1. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Hiring Practices
 2. Equal Opportunity (EO) Hiring Practices
 3. Work Culture

Each item in the questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 5 = Strongly Agree

The Likert scale was chosen because it captures degrees of agreement, providing richer data than binary (Yes/No) responses.

Sample:

- The questionnaire was distributed among a non-probability sample of working professionals.
- A total of 22 valid responses were collected. The small sample size was due to practical constraints but is sufficient to demonstrate statistical relationships in a pilot or exploratory study.

Data Entry and Cleaning:

- Data were entered and cleaned using Microsoft Excel, which also facilitated basic descriptive and regression analysis. All responses were checked for completeness and consistency before analysis.

3.3. Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analysed using two primary statistical techniques:

A. Descriptive Statistics

This helped to understand the basic characteristics of the data. Measures included:

- **Mean:** The average response for each construct.
 - **Standard Deviation:** Variation in responses.
 - **Frequency & Percentage:** Distribution of responses across different levels of agreement.
- Descriptive analysis provided insight into the overall perceptions of DEI hiring, EO hiring, and work culture among the respondents.

B. Regression Analysis

A Multiple Linear Regression analysis was used to determine the predictive power of the two independent variables (DEI and EO hiring) on the dependent variable (Work Culture).

This analysis confirms that DEI hiring is a stronger and statistically significant predictor of work culture compared to EO hiring in this sample.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected to investigate the relationship between DEI hiring practices, EO hiring practices, and Work Culture. It includes descriptive statistics and the results of the multiple regression analysis used to test the hypotheses formulated in the study.

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to understand the general tendencies of responses for each variable. Each variable was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

4.1.1. DEI Hiring Practices

The responses for DEI hiring practices ranged between 1.0 and 5.0, with the majority of scores concentrated toward the higher end of the scale. This suggests that most participants perceived their organizations to be somewhat active in implementing DEI-focused hiring practices

4.1.2. EO Hiring Practices

EO hiring responses were similarly varied, with values ranging from 2.0 to 5.0. These results indicate that respondents generally agreed that their organizations practiced equal opportunity hiring, although a few rated these efforts as minimal.

4.1.3. Work Culture

Work Culture scores also ranged from 1.2 to 5.0, with an overall trend toward the upper half of the scale. This reflects moderately positive perceptions of workplace environment and cultural alignment.

4.2. Multiple Regression Analysis

To determine the extent to which DEI hiring and EO hiring practices influence Work Culture, a Multiple Linear Regression analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel.

TABLE 1: Model Summary

Statistic	Value
Multiple R	0.7968
R Square (R ²)	0.6349
Adjusted R ²	0.5965
Standard Error	0.6384
Number of Observations	22

The R² value of 0.6349 indicates that 63.49% of the variation in Work Culture can be explained by DEI and EO hiring practices combined.

The Adjusted R² of 0.5965 confirms that the model remains strong even after adjusting for the number of predictors and sample size.

TABLE 2: ANOVA Table

Source	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	2	13.47	6.74	16.52	0.0000696
Residual	19	7.74	0.41		
Total	21	21.21			

The F-statistic = 16.52 and the Significance F = 0.0000696 ($p < 0.001$) show that the overall regression model is statistically significant at the 1% level. This means the combined impact of DEI and EO hiring on Work Culture is unlikely to be due to chance.

TABLE 3: Coefficients Table

Predictor	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Stat	p-Value	Significance
Intercept	0.701	0.591	1.19	0.25	Not Significant
DEI Hiring	0.447	0.182	2.45	0.0239	Significant at 5%
EO Hiring	0.383	0.219	1.75	0.0966	Marginally Significant at 10%

DEI Hiring has a statistically significant positive impact on Work Culture. A one-point increase in DEI hiring efforts is associated with a 0.447 increase in Work Culture, holding EO hiring constant.

EO Hiring also has a positive effect, but it is only marginally significant at the 10% level, meaning its influence is weaker and less certain in this sample.

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

Based on the regression results, the following conclusions are drawn regarding the hypotheses:

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	There is a significant positive relationship between DEI hiring practices and Work Culture.	Accepted ($p = 0.0239$)
H2	There is a significant positive relationship between EO hiring practices and Work Culture.	Partially Accepted ($p = 0.0966$)

4.4. Summary of Findings

The findings from the regression analysis reveal that the overall model is statistically significant, with DEI and EO hiring practices collectively explaining over 63% of the variance in organizational work culture. This high explanatory power underscores the critical influence of inclusive hiring strategies on shaping workplace environments.

Among the two predictors, DEI hiring practices emerged as a stronger and more statistically reliable determinant of positive work culture, indicating that organizations with well-structured DEI initiatives tend to foster more inclusive, collaborative, and values-aligned environments.

In contrast, while EO hiring practices also contribute positively, their impact is comparatively weaker and less consistent. Therefore, organizations aiming to enhance their internal culture should prioritize comprehensive DEI frameworks, which not only support representation but also actively promote equity, belonging, and cultural cohesion.

5. Major Findings and Recommendations

5.1. Major Findings

DEI Hiring is a Strong Predictor of Work Culture

The regression analysis revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between DEI hiring practices and work culture ($p = 0.0239$). This suggests that organizations that prioritize DEI hiring are more likely to foster inclusive, innovative, and values-aligned work environments.

DEI hiring goes beyond representation. It creates emotional and cultural alignment, which enhances motivation, collaboration, and retention.

EO Hiring Shows a Positive but Weaker Impact

EO hiring also demonstrated a positive effect on work culture, but the result was only marginally significant ($p = 0.0966$). This indicates that while fairness-based hiring contributes to a positive environment, its influence may be more foundational than transformational.

EO hiring may set the stage for fairness, but on its own, it might not be sufficient to drive cultural excellence unless paired with strategic inclusion efforts.

Combined Hiring Practices Explain Over 63% of Culture Variance

The model's adjusted $R^2 = 0.5965$ indicates that EO and DEI hiring together explain nearly 60% of the variation in work culture. This is a strong result in social science research and validates the conceptual interdependence of hiring practices and internal culture.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, several targeted recommendations are proposed for different stakeholders. For human resource practitioners, it is essential to integrate DEI metrics into hiring analytics and ensure accountability at the leadership level to drive meaningful progress in representation and inclusion. These metrics should not only track diversity but also evaluate inclusion outcomes, such as retention and engagement of underrepresented groups.

Policymakers, on the other hand, should focus on enhancing existing Equal Opportunity (EO) legislation by providing clear, actionable implementation frameworks. This will help prevent superficial compliance and encourage organizations to adopt EO practices that are both legally sound and culturally authentic.

Finally, future researchers are encouraged to expand this line of inquiry by studying larger, industry-specific samples and examining potential mediating variables such as leadership style, team dynamics, or psychological safety that may influence the relationship between hiring practices and work culture. These steps will collectively contribute to a more inclusive, data-driven, and empirically grounded approach to workplace equity.

6. Conclusion

This research set out to examine the impact of Equal Opportunity (EO) and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) hiring practices on organizational work culture, particularly in the context of a dynamic and increasingly diverse workforce. The study adopted a quantitative approach and used multiple regression analysis to empirically evaluate how these two hiring frameworks influence perceptions of workplace values, norms, and behaviours.

The findings clearly demonstrate that DEI hiring practices have a more significant and reliable effect on shaping a positive work culture compared to EO hiring. While EO hiring lays the foundation for fairness and legal compliance, it is DEI hiring that actively cultivates a sense of belonging, emotional alignment, and inclusiveness within the organization. DEI's emphasis on intentional inclusion and representation appears to foster more collaborative, innovative, and values-driven environments.

Despite EO hiring also showing a positive association with work culture, its marginal statistical significance suggests that it functions more as a baseline enabler rather than a primary driver of culture transformation. The combined influence of EO and DEI hiring practices explains a substantial 63.5% of the variance in work culture, underscoring their collective importance in human resource strategy.

Overall, the study affirms that hiring is not just a transactional function but a strategic mechanism for shaping the internal culture of an organization. To thrive in today's competitive and multicultural landscape, organizations must move beyond basic compliance and embed robust DEI principles into recruitment and talent management. This shift not only enhances employee engagement and retention but also strengthens organizational agility and long-term sustainability.

Conflict of Interest Statement:

The author(s) declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article, "Impact of Recent U.S. Government Regulations and Supreme Court Rulings on Corporate DEI Hiring and Promotion Policies". The research has been conducted independently, without any financial or personal relationships that could have influenced the interpretations or conclusions presented in this study.

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