For the Sake of Diversity:

Ethnic-Minority Skilled Immigrants with Diversity and Inclusion Programs in Canada

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ABSTRACT

In the past 40 years, organizations have institutionalized diversity programs to commit to diversity discourse in society and employment equity legislations. Organizational and critical scholars have long argued the ineffectiveness of diversity and inclusion programs. The landscape of diversity and inclusion programs in Canada is unclear. Drawing on in-depth interviews, this study investigates the experience of ethnic-minority high-skilled immigrants with diversity programs in Canada. Diversity and inclusion programs are deliberate and dispensable for ethnic-minority immigrants. They have limited effect on immigrant integration but brings out the conflict between skills and identity, as well as creating boundary in the workplace. Diversity and inclusion programs become the tool for communication and business, which decouples diversity and inclusion practices from diversity policy and discourse. Finally, diversity and inclusion programs are bureaucratic ceremonies that hinders structural discrimination but celebrates legitimacy. Implications for reforming diversity programs are discussed.

Keywords: immigrant, diversity programs, organizations, diversity and inclusion, Canada

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved maternal grandfather Zhaoke Gu, who has meant so much to me and spiritually motivated me regardless of where you are throughout my educational pathway. Although you cannot see my major achievements in my educational pathway, I believe you would be immensely proud of me as you had always been. It is with pride, affection, and remembrance that I dedicate this thesis to my "gong-gong".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Diversity programs are broadly implemented in organizations across the world to respond to the equality discourse in the external legal environment (e.g., 1964 Civil Rights Act in the U.S; the Equity Act of 2010 in the UK) and the changing demographics in the labor market (Collins 2012). Common diversity programs include diversity training, network groups or employee resource groups, diversity survey, diversity taskforce, diversity manager, and mentorship program (Dobbin, Kalev, and Kelly 2007). In relation to immigration integration, diversity programs ideally can diminish employment discrimination against newcomers, reduce immigrant-native wage gap, and improve immigrant sense of inclusion and belonging through inclusive workplace. However, diversity programs face scholarly critics on failing to improve representation of underrepresented groups, to reduce workplace discrimination, and to improve workplace inclusion (Dobbin, Kalev, and Kelly 2007; Kalev, Dobbin, and Kelly 2006). Critical diversity scholars further argue that diversity programs can backfire, creating an "illusion of inequality" to mask systemic inequalities in organizations (Kaiser, Jurcevic, and Brady 2013). This study investigates why diversity program fails by examining seven ethnic-minority high-skilled immigrants' experiences with diversity and inclusion programs in Canada and to investigate immigrant integration in the workplace through immigrants' experiences with diversity programs. Diversity and inclusion programs are deliberate and dispensable for ethnic-minority immigrants. They have limited effect on immigrant integration but brings out the conflict between professional identity and personal identity, as well as creating boundary in the workplace. Diversity and inclusion programs become tools for communication and business, which decouples diversity and inclusion practices from diversity policy and discourse. Finally, diversity and inclusion programs are bureaucratic ceremonies that hinders structural discrimination but celebrates legitimacy.

REVIEW ON SKILLED IMMIGRANTS IN CANADIAN WORKPLACES

Immigration entails a process in which immigrants transfer and validate their pre-existing capitals and develop new capitals in the host country. The integration of immigrants in the labor market entails the conversion and development of different forms of capital possessed by immigrants. Despite the implementation of various employment-related legislations such as the Employment Equity Act, which prohibits discrimination based on outlined social gradients such as ethnicity, and the discourse and practices of diversity management in internal organizations, immigrants still encounter inequalities in the workplace including devaluation and exclusion in the job market, pay gap, and unequal upward opportunities.

When entering the labor market, high-skilled immigrants encounter employment discrimination. Difficulties in the validation of foreign credentials, qualifications, and experience by local employers bring barriers to immigrants to seek employment and achieve job match. While Canadian immigration system highlights the human capital of skilled immigrants and rewards more points to immigrants' language proficiency, higher educational level, and professional experience, Canadian employers emphasize "Canadian experience. Difficult validation of foreign qualifications not only implies employers' preference in Canadian experience but also statistical discrimination in which employers use demographic traits (e.g., nationality, ethnicity) to infer distinctions such as productivity and language fluency between demographic groups (Dickson and Oaxaca 2005). A foreign-sounding name in the resume in employers' views indicates lower language proficiency than a white-sounding name (Oreopolous 2011). The disconnection between the valuation of foreign qualifications in the immigration system and the devaluation of these capitals in the workplace in reality not only forces high-skill immigrants into low-wage and low-skill occupations (Suto 2009; Creese and Brandy 2012),

which partly explains the persisting wage gaps between immigrants and natives. The immigrant wage gap persists in nearly all occupational fields regardless of immigrants' higher skills and education. These forms of inequalities can induce perceptions of exclusion and inequality among immigrant workers, which brings problems to workplace inclusion. How do diversity programs affect the validation of immigrants' foreign capitals in Canada to tackle workplace inequalities and inclusion?

Skilled immigrants also encounter discrimination in the workplace, which endangers immigrant advancement and integration. Immigrants face more glass ceilings within the organizational hierarchy, as Guo (2013) documents that immigrants have limited upward mobility in organizations because of their ethnicity and cultural differences. Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (2019) documents that only 6.6 percent of executives are immigrants among the leading employers across the public, private, and non-profit sectors in Great Toronto Area. Discrimination towards immigrants in the workplace bring barriers for constructing an inclusive workplace promised by diversity programs. Skilled immigrants also face barriers to inclusion in workplaces. Immigrant employees in a Canadian energy company indicate that language fluency, accents, and cultural differences in social gatherings lower their perceptions of belonging and inclusion (Chesley 2016).

Importantly, both discrimination and inclusion barriers for skilled immigrants are influenced by demographic characteristics. The intersection of ethnicity and immigrant status creates unique barriers for ethnic-minority skilled immigrants in the workplace. As noted, employers use observable traits to infer distinctions between demographic groups. The discourse of "Canadian experience" promotes the boundaries-drawing between immigrant groups. While "Canadian experience" signifies the higher value of Canadian education and work experience in

the labor market, its hidden script is that immigrants from non-white countries have lower language proficiency and a larger cultural gap (Guo 2013). It draws boundaries based on ethnicity between immigrant groups and rationalizes discrimination towards immigrants from non-English-speaking countries, further marginalizing ethnic-minority immigrants. What is the role of diversity programs in boundaries-drawing based on ethnicity between immigrant groups? Skilled immigrants' experiences in diversity programs will be critical for understanding the impact of diversity programs on workplace inclusion and immigrant integration in the Canadian labour market.

Immigrants', especially ethnic-minority immigrants', experiences on workplace entry, advancement, and social integration in the Canadian workplace are critical to inform equality and inclusion strategies within organization and broader employment equity policies. This study explores ethnic-minority skilled immigrants' workplace experiences through investigating immigrant employees' experiences with diversity programs, which represents organizational strategies to promote equality and inclusion in the workplace.

REVIEW ON DIVERSITY PROGRAMS

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIVERSITY PROGRAMS

Diversity programs are organizational policies and practices designed to improve the workplace experiences and outcomes of individuals in disadvantaged status, to reduce workplace discrimination, to improve representation of underrepresented groups, and to promote equity and inclusion in the workplace. They usually constitute programs that support target groups such as mentorship programs, network groups or employee resource groups, programs that target discrimination such as diversity training, and accountability practices such as assignation of a chief diversity officer.

Institutionalists account for diversity programs in firms as an organizational legitimacy-seeking response to changes in the external organizational field (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Meyer and Scott 1983; Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Zucker 1987). Legitimacy stems from the congruence between the organizational and its cultural environment and makes organizational behaviors understandable, acceptable, and desirable (Dowling and Pfeffer 1975; Meyer and Scott 1983a, 1983b; Suchman 1995). Equality regulations across the world have constructed a culture of diversity and equity, pushing organizations to implement diversity programs to demonstrate legal compliance and avoid litigation. In the U.S., the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 have prohibited discrimination based on social factors that cannot be lawfully be the basis for employment action; while the Affirmative Action has required employers to recruit and advance designated groups (i.e., minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and covered veterans) in every aspect of the employment process. In Canada, the Employment Equity Act, together with the Human Rights Code, the Pay Equity Act, and the Canadian Charter of Freedom and Rights, has similarly prohibited discrimination based on prohibited grounds and has promoted the discourse of diversity and equity. Sharing a similar corrective function with the Affirmative Action in the U.S., the Employment Equity Act requires employers to improve the representation of designated groups in the company due to their historical disadvantages in the labor market. Designated groups include women, aboriginal people, people with disabilities, and visible minorities, which refer to non-white or non-Caucasian people. These changes in the legal and socio-political environment have pushed business firms to develop corresponding policies and programs to ensure legal compliance and to seek legitimacy. While employment equity legislations have promoted the diversity regime, legal institutions failed to define or operationalize non-discriminatory personnel practices (Dobbin

2009). This results in legal ambiguities which human resources professionals can strategically

mobilize to develop organizational schemas such as training programs, recruitment strategies,

Equal Employment Opportunity statements, to protect firms against litigation, reputational

damage, and judicial intervention (Kelly and Dobbin 1998; Kalev, Dobbin, and Kelly 2006;

Kalev 2009). Diversity policies and programs implemented by leading firms have encouraged

other firms in the organizational field to follow, resulting in the surge of diversity programs

across the world (Dobbin 2009). Driven by isomorphism in the environment, organizations tend

to incorporate externally legitimated elements rather than elements embedded with higher

efficiency, and they use ceremonial assessment criteria to define the value of the structural

elements (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Meyer and Rowan 1977). In other words, organizations

do not evaluate the effectiveness of diversity programs based on their impacts on workplace

structures but based on how audience in the organizational field perceives diversity initiatives.

The reliance on ceremonial criteria implies the symbolism of diversity programs, which would

be discussed later.

       While institutionalists contend with the legitimacy case, diversity programs are also

rationalized as the business case by human relations professionals. Proponents of "diversity

pays" claim that diversity can meet customers' needs, attract customers, increase profits, and

expand market share (Cox 1993; Cox and Beale 1997; Herring 2009). Internally, diversity can

broaden employees' perspectives, strengthen team building, and encourage creative conflicts and

reflections among employees, which can provide better problem resolutions (Cox 2001; Gurin,

Nagda, and Lopez 2004). Diversity in the workplace can also foster work engagement and

reduce turnover (Luu, Rowley, and Vo 2019). Diversity commitment is aimed at expanding

market share rather than to reduce discrimination in organizations (Hemphill and Haines 1997).

Diversity programs, ideally, can promote diversity in the workplace by increasing the representation of minorities and fostering the awareness of diversity, equity, and inclusion. However, diversity programs have faced critics on their limited roles in increasing diversity, minimizing inequalities, or improving inclusion.

THE MYTH OF DIVERSITY PROGRAMS

The puzzle of diversity programs is that most diversity programs fail to make a material change in minimizing workplace inequalities and improving inclusion. First, diversity programs fail to make a true diversity progress although they have improved the diversity metrics, indicating in a false progress (Lesile 2017). While diversity programs have reached the desired effect on the intended outcome, the outcome is sustained by anecdotal accounts – organizations are taking shortcuts. Leslie, Manchester, and Dahm (2017) find that while diversity programs looked like they reduce gender pay gap overall, the pay gap was narrowed through offering higher pay to high-potential women than high-potential men, yet majority of women did not benefit from diversity programs. Diversity programs then create a pay penalty for majority of women and complicate inequity within organization. Second, diversity programs produce undesirably unintended consequences -- they evoke negative reactions among nontarget against targets, although they intend to help targets. For example, with a target to remove unconscious bias, diversity training trigger negative attitudes and increase stereotypes among nontargets because diversity training increases awareness of the prevalence of stereotyping (Lowery, Unzueta, Knowles, and Goff 2006; Duguid and Thomas-Hunt 2015). Third, diversity programs not only produce unintended consequences but further backfire. They decrease representation of minorities and increase discrimination. Diversity programs such as diversity manager, diversity

networking and employee resource groups or affinity groups do not lead to increasing

representation of the target group (Kalev, Dobbin, and Kelly 2006).

Diversity research tries to answer why diversity programs fail and put forward remedial

suggestions. Some scholars focus their analyses on the design of diversity programs. They show

that diversity training normalizes bias and leads to resistance among managers (Dobbin, Schrage,

and Kalev2015; Kalev et al. 2006). Mentoring and network programs reinforce privilege and

boundaries by pairing marginalized employees with majority employees (Benschop et al. 2015;

Dennissen, Benschop, and van den Brink 2020). Research in social psychology indicates that

diversity training has some effects on attitude changes but little behavioral changes towards

women among participants who are already less supportive of women, while diversity training

generates more behavioral change and less attitude change among participants who are already

strongly supportive of women (Chang et al. 2019). Diversity trainings that are commonplace in

organizations have limited efficacy among people whose behaviors should be change in order to

promote equality.

Institutionalists view the ineffectiveness of diversity programs is due to the decoupling

process. Institutionalists have long argued that policies and programs in organizations are

symbolic (Nonet and Selznick 1978; Edelman 1990, 1992; Meyer and Rowan 1977), meaning

that they would not lead to any material change in the workplace. Decoupling refers to the

process in which formal structure is separated from actual organizational practice (Meyer and

Rowan 1977). Decoupling is more common in organizational programs that are responsive to

regulatory changes (Edelman and Petterson 1999). It indicates the unalignment between diversity

programs in the practical level and employment-equity legislations in the structural level.

Diversity rhetoric in organizations tends to equate differences based on individual cultural

elements such as tastes rather than major inequalities in society such as race and gender (Edelman et al. 2001; Sinclair 2000), which thereby decouples the diversity ideology promoted by legal policies from diversity policies within organizations. As a result, diversity policy within organization is divergent from diversity ideology in legislation. Diversity programs, which are developed based upon diversity policy of the organization, would be naturally alienated from the original rationale to promote employment equity, and prohibit discrimination. Decoupling between diversity programs in policy and diversity programs in practice can happen when managers have distinct strategy to manage diversity and establish control, which furthers the ineffectiveness of diversity programs.

Critical diversity scholars focus on the power relations around diversity programs. They argue that diversity programs create an "illusion of fairness" (Kaiser et al. 2013: 504), which undermines power relations in organizations that foster systemic inequalities. Diversity programs fail to tackle employment privileges enjoyed by the dominated group and thus sustain employment inequalities. Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey (2012) find that while diversity programs created more employment opportunities for white women and African American men, diversity programs coexisted with employment privileges enjoyed by white men, which results in little improvement in employment opportunities for African American women. Diversity programs are not positive or empowering practices that recognize and respect individuals' different capacities and characteristics; instead, they are softer ways of managerial control (Roosevelt Thomas, Russell, and Schumacher 1992; Zanoni and Janssens 2007). Managerial groups in organizations utilize diversity programs to demonstrate a visible diversity commitment to customers in order to increases competitiveness in the market (Vertovec 2015), thus shifting the focus of diversity programs away from diminishing inequalities to the "business case for

diversity". Some marginalized individuals even feel being appropriated for their social characteristics and feel stigmatized by the existence of diversity programs (Ely and Thomas 2001; Martins and Parsons 2007). Diversity programs thereby can be patronizing for marginalized individuals in organizations. Furthermore, diversity programs essentialize certain notions of difference by singling out peripheral characteristics in organizational norms and by focusing on a singular category of different while neglecting the intersecting nature of categories (Lorbiecki and Jack 2000).

Post-structuralist performativity literature sheds light on the symbolism of diversity programs. Performativity involves an ongoing process of performing an authoritative speech in action and enacting the effects that the discourse names (Butler 1993). Concerning gender relations, Butler (1993) argues that gender is performative— gender encompasses continuous actions that "do" gender roles rather than "being" in gender roles. In other words, self-identity is continuously accomplished through repeated actions and performances. Organizations' identity of diversity and inclusion is therefore continuously enacted through actions that perform diversity and inclusion. Diversity programs can be considered as organizational actions that signal diversity performativity. While the enactment of diversity programs is performative, diversity programs might be non-performative in essence. Focusing on diversity and equality in higher education, Ahmed (2006) argues that speech acts such as diversity statement which commits the university to diversity and equality are non-performative because they do not perform or fail to deliver what they say—' saying it' does not entail actions that "do things' (Kimura 2014). When diversity programs are symbolic, as organizations implement them without expecting to have material changes, diversity programs are merely actions that "do diversity" but rather symbolic policies that "say diversity". Furthermore, the institutionalization

of diversity programs can function as a perverse performance of discrimination in its failure to acknowledge systemic discrimination within the organization, which further blocks actions to facilitate "doing diversity" and achieving equality (Ahmed 2006).

Literature on sexual harassment programs sheds light on why organizational programs targeting inequalities usually backfire. The ineffectiveness of organizational programs results from the design of the program and the inattention to structural forces that create inequalities. Harassment training usually focuses on forbidden behaviors and tells trainees that they are the problem, which leads to defense and resistance (Dobbin and Kalev 2020). Harassment training also results in more victim-blaming among men (Bingham and Schere 2001). Even with legislative grievance procedures, the onus to report sexual harassment is still on the victims. However, victims seldom choose to complain because they face social risks of labeling, telling, and reporting such as being labelled as sexual harassment victims and the corruption of social relationships (Khan, Hirsch, Wambold, and Mellins 2018). Furthermore, even when victims complain through grievance procedures, retaliation against victims is common – they are likely to get assaulted, demoted and, fired (Dobbin and Kalev 2020).

In addition to ineffectiveness in tackling systemic inequalities or improving equity at the structural level, at the individual level, literature on social identity management hints at the diversity program being a double-edged sword regarding the construction of immigrant workers' identity. Diversity and inclusion programs can trigger ethnic assignation, which refers to instances in which ethnic-minority members are made to become more aware of their ethnic identities and thereby their marginalized status through behaviors or actions that highlight their ethnic identity (Kenny and Briner 2013). Experiencing ethnic assignation, ethnic minorities will feel being defined by one irrelevant element to the job (e.g., ethnicity) instead of more relevant

elements (e.g., skillsets, work ethics) (Carrim 2019). If ethnic minorities previously experience unfair treatment due to this irrelevant element, they will distance themselves from their ethnic background or change their group identity (Tajfel and Turner 1979). Although diversity and inclusion programs recognize the disadvantaged status of ethnic minorities, this recognition constitutes the process of ethnic assignation and can recall stereotypical or discriminatory treatments, which damages ethnic-minority employees' self-identity. On the other hand, diversity and inclusion programs also show the valuation of ethnic identity of ethnic-minority employees, which can foster a perception of validation among ethnic minorities.

However, regardless of the history of unfair treatment based upon ethnicity, ethnic assignation by diversity programs still triggers identity conflicts between professional identity and personal identity. Skilled immigrants who have higher human capital are generally knowledge-intensive workers. They have higher centrality of work and thus work-related identities, which induces a stronger sensitivity to lack of confirmation of the valued identity and work performance (Alvesson 2000). Diversity programs, through highlighting social identities that are unrelated to job performance, can confuse performance evaluation and confirmation of knowledge and skillsets perceived by skilled immigrant workers. They trigger conflicts between the professional identity that prioritizes skills and knowledge and the personal identity that centers on social characteristics such as ethnicity and immigrant status. Moreover, while immigrant workers view ethnicity as exogenous to their professional identity, particularly for those who have previously experienced unfair treatment, diversity programs signal the organizational viewpoints of ethnicity being endogenous to professional identity, resulting in a contradicting belief in professional identity between organizations and ethnic-minority immigrant workers.

RESEARCH GAP

While extensive studies try to answer why diversity programs fail, these studies are mainly contextualized in the U.S (Berrey 2014; Kalev et al. 2006; Dobbin et al. 2007). Meanwhile, diversity literature calls for paying attention to locality issues and problems on diversity programs instead of developing a super-arching global diversity discourse (Ozturk, Tatli, and Ozbilgin 2015). Researching diversity programs in different national contexts not only improves local diversity management by offering more situating suggestions but also promotes comparative study on diversity management, as well as offering a more comprehensive insight into the role of socio-political structures in diversity programs, which helps to enrich the global diversity regime. This study will explore local diversity programs in Canada from migrants' perspectives to add empirical evidence and suggestions to diversity management.

Furthermore, to examine the effectiveness of diversity programs, diversity studies mostly centralize analyses in diversity programs themselves instead of understanding the experiences of their targets, which are individuals. Importantly, critical diversity perspectives call for putting individuals in empirical categories that fall outside organizational norms in the center of analysis, which can enrich scholarly understandings of diversity programs and improve inclusion (Bleijenbergh and Fielden 2015; Herring and Henderson 2011). Granted, some studies have examined the effect of diversity programs from individual perspectives, but those studies mainly focused on individuals in pre-existing empirical categories in organizations such as women (Wynn 2014; Williams, Kilanski, and Muller 2014; Sharp, Franzway, Mills, and Gills 2012), leaving individuals other empirical categories silent. Increasing studies strive to broaden critical diversity research by examining the experiences of marginalized individuals outside of organizational norms, such as transgender employees (Ozturk and Tatli 2016) and shop-floor

workers (Zannoni 2011) This study extends critical diversity research by investigating how skilled migrants experience diversity programs in Canada. Their perspectives can offer unique explanations on the failure of diversity programs in diminishing inequalities and improving workplace inclusion.

This study examines the relationship between diversity programs and the workplace experience of ethnic-minority skilled immigrants in Canada. Specifically, how do ethnic-minority skilled immigrants experience diversity and inclusion programs in Canada? How do their perceptions of fairness, as well as career outlook relate to their experiences with diversity and inclusion programs? How do diversity programs relate to workplace inequalities? This study enriches both immigration integration literature and diversity scholarship. The objective is to explore immigrant integration through diversity programs in the workplace and aims to add empirical evidence from Canadian to the effectiveness of diversity programs through the lens of ethnic-minority skilled immigrants.

METHODOLOGY

This research deploys an inductive Grounded Theory approach (Charmaz 2006). This research is based on 7 in-depth interviews with high-skilled immigrants with ethnicity-minority identity in Canada. In-depth interview is chosen to understand the work lives of ethnic-minority skilled immigrants and how they experience organizational practices that are designed to make the workplace more diverse and inclusive. In-depth interviews allow for inductive knowledge and an emic perspective to understand the meaning of diversity culture in the lives of marginalized people targeted by those programs. Due to the limited size of the sample, 7 immigrant workers cannot represent the entire Canadian labor market. But their perspectives can reveal diversity practices at the locality. Interpersonal conversations may reveal experiences that

nuance outside organizational norms (Tatli and Ozbilgin 2011; Pugh 2013). Interviews are aimed

at unmasking the mechanisms of diversity and inclusion programs influence on workplace

inequalities and immigrant integration process.

SAMPLING

This study used a non-probability purposive sample (Mason 2002). Seven individuals

representing different professions at different organizations were selected base on their

willingness to participate. The sample represents ethnic-minority skilled immigrants in Canada.

The eligibility criterion for this study is (1) full-time employees working in Canada with an age

range of 25-65; (2) immigrants who work in National Occupation Code of 0, A, or B; (3) self-

identification as ethnic minority. The definition of ethnic minority corresponds to the definition

of "visible minorities" in Canada. Ethnic minority refers to people who are non-Caucasian or

non-whites. The definition of skilled immigrants also corresponds to the definition in Canadian

immigration system. Immigrants who work in occupation code NOC 0, A, B, are viewed as

immigrants with high human capital.

A quota table helped compose a diversity sample (Appendix 1). The duration of residence

in Canada influences immigrant integration. Long-term residents might perceive higher inclusion

and are more integrated into Canadian society, while short-term residents or newcomers face

more challenges in the workplace as they start a new career in the Canadian labor market. I

choose 5-year as the benchmarking time because the residency obligations for a permanent

resident in Canada are assessed every 5 years. Workplace experience is gendered. Women are

more likely to experience workplace harassment (Hango and Moyser 2018). Subgroups of

ethnicity include Chinese, South Asian, Black, and Other. Chinese and Indians compose the

largest portion of the ethnic-minority immigrant population in Canada according to the 2016

Census (Statistics Canada 2016).

I used snowball sampling and pre-screening survey (Appendix 2) to recruit participants.

Due to the pandemic, the recruitment process encountered challenges. The snowball sample

selection method is useful for gaining access to small and hard-to-find populations (Lofland,

Snow, Andersons, and Lofland 2006). Four participants were sampled through snowball

sampling and three were recruited through the pre-screening survey. Seven semi-structured in-

depth interviews were conducted to collect data. Interviews lasted from 50 minutes to 1 hour and

15 minutes. Interview participants are ethnic-minority skilled immigrants in Canada. A detailed

breakdown of the sample is provided in Appendix 4.

Occuapation
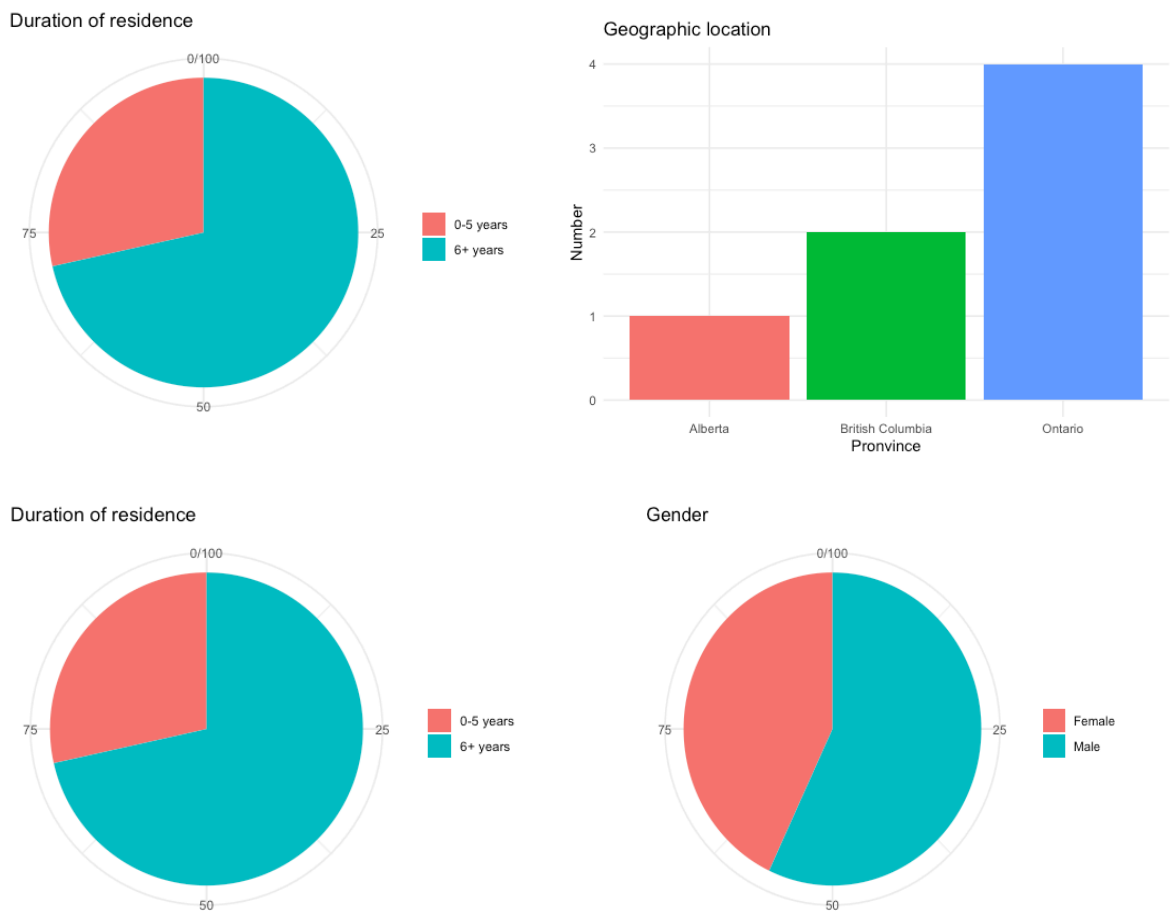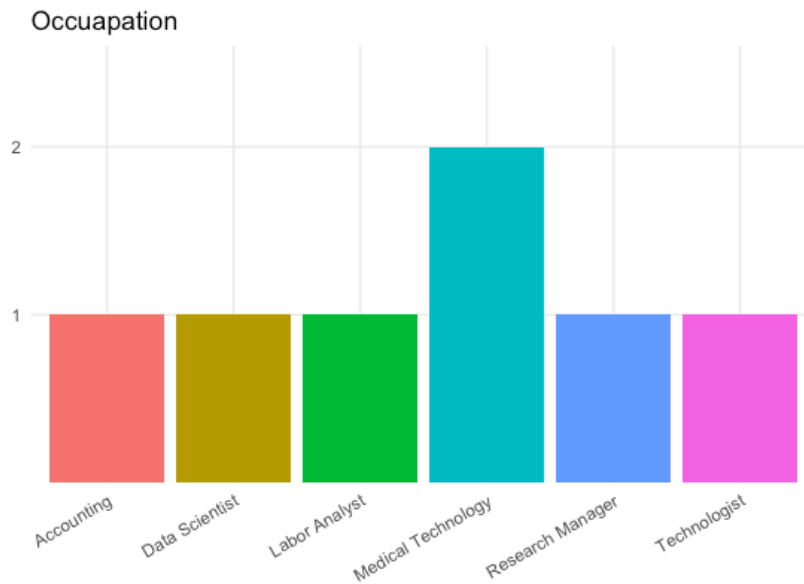
To ensure the confidentiality of respondents, I collected verbal consent from each participant. All interviews were conducted via Zoom or over the phone. I developed an interview guide (Appendix 3) with the help of the instructor of the sociology course on Survey methodology. Topics in the interview included demographic information, immigration experience, social reception, workplace experience, definition of diversity and inclusion, experience with diversity programs, and future thoughts on diversity programs. Due to the limited number of participants, I used the first interview with Amy as a pre-test. That interview provided data and aided the iterative process of improving the interview guide. Interview questions were adjusted on each interview according to the conversational flow.

LIMITATIONS

Originally, considering the self-selection effect of diversity programs, the study aimed to recruit ethnic-minority immigrants who have worked in companies with and without diversity programs. Ideally, this research design could compare ideas about experiences with D&I programs between skilled immigrants who currently work in a company with D&I programs but

who used to work in a company without D&I programs versus skilled immigrants who currently

work in a company without D&I programs but who used to work in a company with D&I

programs. This could provide a point of comparison for respondents to reflect if and how such

programs influence their work lives as well as reducing employees' self-selection bias into

diversity programs. However, during the recruitment process, based on the data collected from

the pre-screening survey, most respondents have not worked in companies with and without

diversity programs. This is possibly due to the under-development of diversity and inclusion

programs in Canada. However, during the interview, all respondents indicated that diversity

programs were mandatory in their companies. The mandatory participation ruled out the self-

selection bias for the sample. But this research could not provide empirical information on

voluntary diversity programs. It only provides information on respondents' views on voluntary

participation into diversity programs.

DATA ANALYSIS

I transcribed one interview by myself. Six interviews were transcribed through

"Transcribe Me" service. I used the MAXQDA software to organize and analyze the data. All

transcripts underwent summative coding for the first-cycle coding. Summative coding was

applied with the paraphrase function in the MAXQDA. I then applied versus coding (Saldaña

2013) to all transcripts to capture the conflict between diversity programs and immigrant

experiences. Based on the summative coding and versus coding, notions of identity appeared

prominent. I then applied values coding (Saldaña 2013) to further the analysis. The most

prominent themes from reconciled category list from each cycle were selected for discussion.

Reflexivity is one of the strategies to ensure the quality of data. Reflexivity is a process in

which researchers break out of the self-referential circle that characterizes academic work when

working with subjectivity (Parker 2005). To improve the reflexivity and objectivity, throughout the research process, field notes were written during and after each interview (Adler and Adler 1994). During the data analysis process, fields notes were reviewed to validate codes and categories with original narratives. Methodological memos and theoretical memos were developed alongside the qualitative coding process.

FINDINGS ON BACKGROUND INFORMATION

THE LANDSCAPE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN CANADA

Benchmarking studies (CCDI 2013, 2019) from the Canadian Center of Diversity and Inclusion have provided an overview of diversity practices in Canadian organizations. Until 2013, diversity-and-inclusion-related positions were mainly below mid-level management such as Manager, while only 8.3% of organizations in the survey hold a Vice President dedicated to diversity and inclusion. The local context in Canada did not seem to encourage diversity commitment in top management, while foreign offices increase the diversity commitment. Of the organizations that hold a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) in the survey, 75% had operation offices outside of Canada. Importantly, top management commitment to diversity and inclusion is associated with higher accountability (Dobbin and Kalev 2007). In the 2013 survey, diversity and inclusion programs remained a function of human resources rather than organizational strategy or corporate social responsibilities. In the 2019 study, of 168 diversity personnel in the sample, although the majority of diversity positions were still below-mid-level management, there was a slight increase in the above-senior management level. Although two studies draw from different samples and thus are not strictly comparable, they still offer insights into the changing landscape of diversity and inclusion efforts in Canadian organizations.

Respondents' memory of diversity programs reveals a general landscape of diversity programs in Canada. Among 7 respondents, 6 have indicated that the most direct experience with diversity programs is diversity training. This maps into the general picture of diversity programs. Diversity training is the most popular program and meanwhile the most ineffective one (Dobbin and Kalev 2006). Diversity training is mandatory for all respondents. The online course is the most frequent format for diversity training, while 2 respondents have mentioned about in-person group exercise. In addition to diversity training, some respondents have experience with diversity manager, diversity talk, employment program for minority, and diversity self-id, which is a questionnaire to survey the representation of minorities in the workplace. One respondent has mentioned about mentorship program in his company. None of the respondents have experience with network groups or employee resource groups. Except for formal diversity programs, there are some informal diversity programs, such as weekly meetings and huddles to discuss workplace conflicts and to report unfair treatment. Importantly, certain legal obligations for the company are also perceived as organizational diversity initiatives. The posting of diversity policy and the Human Rights Code in the workplace is regarded as a form of diversity initiative for Jacob, who works in a crown agency (a government agency) in Toronto.

The presence of diversity programs in immigrants' work lives is weak. Respondents hardly recalled about diversity training. The singularity of diversity programs in the workplace also weakens the visibility of the program. The combinations of different diversity programs such as diversity training, network groups, and mentorship program, can increase the visibility of diversity initiatives and increase the positive evaluation by immigrant workers. Consistent with previous findings on integrating corporate leadership into diversity programs can effectively increase diversity in business firms (Dobbin and Kalev 2007), respondents perceive a higher

level of diversity and inclusion when the company assigns a vice president of diversity and

inclusion.

Definitions of diversity and inclusion vary across individuals. The most highly mentioned

definition of diversity is ethnicity or race, followed by culture and gender. Age, religion, and

sexual orientation were slightly mentioned. Respondents' understandings of diversity are

inclined to socio-demographic factors that are common systems of inequalities. Respondents all

associate diversity with positive and progressive feelings, which is a general pattern in diversity

discourse (Bell and Hartmann 2007). Inclusion generally refers to the acceptance and integration

of differences. Inclusion embeds a process of blurring the boundary between in-group and out-

group. Some suggested the commitment to inclusion should be shown by the equal opportunity

for everyone and the celebration of ethnic cultural events.

> Diversity and inclusion are not opposite against each other but also not the same. In my
> opinion, diversity is respecting for others, their ways of thinking, actions, customs, while
> inclusion is like agreeing on their thoughts or accepting their behaviors. (Helen)

> I think diversity is just being accepting of different cultures and regardless of what a
> person identifies with, like whatever they are, whatever gender, whatever religion,
> whatever gender identity or sexual identity, they should be accepted. You shouldn't judge
> them for that (Andy)
> Diversity is allowing and respecting for differences, while inclusion is accepting and

even conforming to differences. Constructing inclusion seems to require more inputs than

constructing diversity.

IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

Immigrant participants in general have positive experience with social reception in

Canada. This positive reception is shaped by the multiculturalist ideology in Canada and the

comparison between Canada and the United States. When being asked about the social reception,

Amy indicated that

> I feel okay. I used to be worried about racism or racial discrimination. Because U.S. has severe racial issues. I heard that there is a lot of prejudice in the U.S. But I feel like it barely happens in Canada, at least for my personal experience. Canada emphasizes multiculturalism. (Amy)
>
> Social sentiments about immigration and racialized minorities in the U.S. influence

immigrant workers' expectations for Canada. Due to the commonality in geographical locations,

languages, and culture between Canada and the U.S., the negative social sentiments towards

immigrants and ethnic minorities in the U.S. would spill over to Canada. However, this spillover

doesn't degrade Canada but rather elevates it as a better destination for immigration and diversity

and inclusion. The contrast between the U.S. and Canada makes Canada stand out, as well as

making immigrants in Canada perceive less discrimination.

> I just thought the future in Canada was better for immigrants compared to other countries. The U.S. is not very stable because my brother is in the US. I just feel like the policies for immigrants and international students are a lot better in Canada compared to the America. (Andy)
>
> It's okay because both US and Canada are both immigrant countries. Canada, especially, is a very diverse country with different kinds of cultures and ethnicities. Especially in Toronto, I think more than 50% of the population was born in another country, not in Canada. So, I think Toronto is a very diverse city. So, I think it's [social reception] okay. (Jacob)

The overarching ideology of multiculturalism in Canada further serves as a shelter for

discrimination or marginalization of minorities. Immigrants internalize multiculturalism and use

it to filter negative discriminatory experiences. When being asked about discrimination

experiences during immigration, respondents all reported that they had not experienced serious

discrimination. Even if they have experienced discriminatory actions, they tended to reduce it to

individual behaviors and even denied them as discrimination but rather miscommunication. This

pattern is consistent with previous findings on negative influences on multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism can create an illusion of fairness and non-discrimination, which promotes

colorblindness, reduces sensitivity to racism, and foster discrimination and racism (Plaut et al.

2018). The sense of living in a multicultural society offers minorities a sense of comfort and

inclusion and eases insecurities, while this distracts minorities from recognizing structural

inequalities and induces minorities to individualize social problems (Ari 2018).

> I was walking. A white guy was walking towards me. When passing me, he was
> mumbling a kind of racial slur…. But I mean, discrimination, it's not tolerated here in
> Canada, not Canadian spirit of diversity and immigration. If you have a proof, you can
> sue someone, you get compensation or kind of [inaudible] matters here in Canada (Jacob)

> So generally, I haven't had any kind of negative reception from Canadian citizens
> presently. But there have been a few histories of, I don't want to use the word racism, but
> I feel that they have some elements of racism in it. But generally, I feel it has been a
> smooth ride with past couple of years… [The perception of racism is due to] we didn't
> have a mutual understanding on a particular subject at the time, that was resulted in the
> minor issue between us (James)

In terms of integration into the labor market, respondents all showed satisfaction with

their job match. Their educational degrees matched with their jobs. The high satisfaction with the

job match might be linked to sampling bias. Six out of seven respondents in the sample have

gained credentials in Canada and one has gained two post-graduate degrees in the U.S. The

common barrier of "Canadian experience" against immigrants does not necessarily apply to

ethnic-minority immigrants in the sample. Respondents perceived certain opportunities for

upward mobility in their companies. But they did not see a strong connection between diversity

and inclusion programs and upward mobility or pay equity.

FINDINGS ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAMS.

DISPENSABILITY OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAMS

Most respondents did not speak negatively of diversity programs explicitly, but they

viewed diversity and inclusion programs as nonessential for or even unrelated to immigrants'

social integration in the workplace or employment integration in the labor market. D&I programs

therefore have a weak presence in either work-lives or social lives of immigrant workers and is

dispensable.

THE WEAK ROLE IN CO-WORKER RELATIONS

The dispensability of D&I programs for skilled immigrant workers lies in their weak

roles in facilitating social integration in the workplace. Diversity programs only indirectly

influence social integration. They only construct a perceivably more respectful workplace, which

creates more opportunities for social interactions. Diversity training in an online format can

indirectly encourage communication between coworkers through suggesting communication

tactics and providing education on a different culture. The provision of online diversity training

also fosters a sense of mutual understanding between co-workers and thus constructs a more

open-minded and respectful workplace, in which immigrant workers feel more comfortable

talking to co-workers. Diversity training in an in-person format usually allows for group

exercise, in which employees will be assigned to different groups to solve problems. This creates

opportunities for immigrant workers to be in touch with different workers from other

departments and expand their social networks. New immigrants can benefit from these group

activities to establish a local network and receive social support from co-workers.

> [How do you feel about group exercise helping new immigrant workers integrate into the
> workplace?]. It helps. Because he will get to know his colleagues, which at least will
> make him know colleagues around him better. He can also know how to get along with
> people and the organizational culture. (Helen)

While diversity training can potentially encourage connections between co-workers, it is

not essential in immigrant social integration in the workplace. It only serves as an occasional

venue for immigrant workers to encounter different people. Importantly, activities in diversity

training partly determine the possibility to establish connections. Interactive activities such as

group games would be more beneficial for social integration, compared to traditional activities

such as diversity lectures. Meanwhile, even without in-person diversity training, the workplace

setting has already provided a venue for interactions among co-workers. The development of

social networks in the workplace is still an individual preference and decision. In this way, D&I

programs, particularly diversity training, have a limited role in facilitating social integration.

> [How would you say if the absence of diversity programs might influence your work
> life?] It depends on your job nature. If you are doing a customer-oriented job, there might
> be some conflicts. If you aren't facing customers, you only miss out a special occasion to
> learn about the culture of the company and other colleagues. But if you want, you can
> know about them by yourself, without the program. (Helen)

Indeed, rather than to say diversity programs contribute to social integration in the

workplace, it is individual belief in multiculturalism that encourages cross-cultural

communication regardless of discrimination. Respondents suggest that the diverse demographic

and culture in Canada indicate a sense of open-mindedness and freedom, which allows them to

feel more comfortable interacting with people from different backgrounds. The role of diversity

training in reducing unconscious bias, promoting open-mindedness, or encouraging cross-group

communication is thereby ambiguous.

UNKNOWN EFFECTS ON IMMIGRANT BARRIERS

Immigrants face various barriers in the Canadian labor market. Assimilationists

(Chiswick 1977; Chiswick, Lee, and Miller 2005) have suggested that difficulties in the

transferability of human capital largely explain occupational degradation of immigrants at

arrivals. If D&I programs have a real impact on reducing employment discrimination and

reflecting the organizational commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, D&I programs

should have at least an indirect effect on reducing barriers of transferring skills between the

sending and the receiving country. However, respondents did not perceive that diversity

programs could have any effect on skill transferability. First, they regarded diversity programs as

an internal policy, while skill transferability is an external barrier in the labor market. This

indicates that organizations that respondents work in might not demonstrate a strong effort in

reducing barriers in the external labor market.

> [Do you think diversity program can help new immigrants to transfer their credentials or skills?] Not really, if the company already hired the immigrant, it proves that the company has already recognized his or her ability. So, there would not be any barriers for the immigrant. (Helen)

Second, although respondents reflected that the implementation of diversity programs

show their organizational culture of diversity and inclusion and somehow has a positive

influence on their communication with co-workers, they did not perceive the implementation of

D&I programs can help with prominent employment barriers against ethnic-minority

immigrants. D&I programs have a stronger role in interpersonal field rather than in combating

structural inequalities (Embrick 2011).

> That's a big issue [credential recognition] for newcomers. I think that employers or the employment policies here should be changed. I think most people, as I heard, would get reeducated. They will get another diploma or degree before they can find a professional job. (Jacob).

However, James, who worked in a technological role, suggested that the mentorship

program in his company provides language training for immigrant workers. For combating

employment discrimination against immigrants, respondents suggested that companies should

reform their screening and selection procedures, while diversity training did not seem to be

related to this. It can be assumed that D&I programs targeting a specific workplace barrier could

improve the perceived effectiveness of diversity and inclusion programs.

CAPTURING CONFLICTS: PROFESSIONAL VS. PERSONAL

The dispensability of diversity programs for skilled immigrants is also inherent in identity

conflicts. First, at work, skilled immigrants, as knowledge workers, tend to alienate their

personal identity from their professional identity. The professional identities of skilled

immigrants prioritize skills and merits much more than social identities and positions. Social

identities such as ethnicity should be exogeneous to work identity and job performance.

Respondents all indicated that strong skillsets helped them integrate and navigate into the

workplace. They believed that skillsets and professionalism should be prioritized at work while

ethnicity or immigrant status should be put away.

> All you need to do is to work on yourself to improve your skills. And I believe the major work has to do with the individual, not the community from where he or she is from. (James)

> It is not about race or ethnicity. Your skills are more important. (Amy)

> You just do your work and there's no kind of personal like or dislike. You just show your professional face. (Jay)

While skilled immigrant workers prefer to show their professional identity to gain

validation and recognition, the implementation of diversity programs makes social identity

explicit in the workplace. Diversity programs infer that skilled immigrants are in a disadvantaged

and subordinate status due to their ethnicity and embeds the process of ethnic assignation (Kenny

2013). Diversity programs, as workplace practices, thereby impose ethnicity into skilled

immigrants' professional identity. The case of preferential hiring exemplifies the conflict

between professional identity and personal identity triggered by diversity programs.

Most companies, to meet the compliance requirement of increasing numeric

representation of designated groups, implement preferential hiring practice. Jay was familiar

with preferential hiring practices for visible minorities in his previous company as he worked in

human resources. The presence of this program in his company made him doubt if his

employment was based on the recognition of skills or the recognition of his black identity,

implying uncertainty and devaluation of his professional identity.

> When programs like this come to decide hiring people, who look a certain way rather than just clearing the path for those people to make the case for themselves. It makes it difficult for people like me to know where they stand. When I'm hired, I can't ever know whether it's because they just wanted someone black or because I actually earned the position. I can never know that because they preprogrammed it. Besides, instead of just making a program not judge people based on the color of the skin, they make it explicitly. They go out of their way to look for people like me, which makes it hard for me to have any idea of where I stand or if I've done things well. (Jay)

Debbie shared a similar concern on target hiring practices. Although she suggested the case of reverse discrimination for the majority, her perception of unfairness still originated from the conflict between social identity and skills. The introduction of ethnicity into workplace practices and professional identity of employees create ambiguity in skill recognition and performance evaluation.

> I feel like it's kind of unfair for majority, right? You don't know if someone does things better than a minority but just because they are visible minorities, they got the job. (Debbie)

Preferential hiring admittedly broadens employment opportunities for minorities and helps remedy historical disadvantages experienced by minority groups. However, for skilled immigrants with a strong professional identity, preferential hiring values ethnicity over professional skills. It can induce skilled immigrants to perceive that employment evaluation is based upon an irrelevant factor (i.e., ethnicity) rather than relevant factors like technical skills, which constitutes the process of ethnic assignation (Kenny 2013). Skilled immigrants can further perceive that ethnicity is an important factor for the organization regarding professional identity, whereas this contradicts with their personal belief in ethnicity being an external factor of professional identity. This results in a conflict in the outlook of professional identity between the organization and the skilled immigrant, and this conflict can undermine person-organization fit, which can later influence job satisfaction and performance (Farooqui and Nagendra 2014).

The conflict between professional identity and personal identity largely reduces the significance of D&I programs in skilled immigrants' work lives. Most respondents, although they did not criticize diversity programs, would not consider the implementation of D&I programs in a company as an important factor when making employment-related decisions.

> As long as I'm hired and I can get my job done, I don't care too much about whether such a policy is in place. (Jacob)

> [Would you consider if a company has diversity and inclusion programs when you want to change your job?] It's really not on my priority list. (Helen)

D&I programs officially categorize employees by their personal identities such as ethnicity and gender to positively value these categories, which turns boundaries of ethnicity into visibly marked and denotes ethnic boundaries as knowable and important (Berrey 2014). This ethnic assignation process is not desirable for skilled immigrants. It raises problems of inequality by drawing too much attention to ethnic categories (Lynch 1997).

In conflicting identities, skilled immigrants perceive less recognition or validation for their professional skills. Their ethnic minority status instead accounts for their employment outcomes. This indeed devalues the professional skills of skilled immigrants. D&I programs might prevent skilled immigrants from gaining recognition as their desired to and thus are deemed as unnecessary and non-essential in work lives. Moreover, as knowledge workers with a higher orientation towards job recognition (Alvesson 2000), skilled immigrants might experience devaluation of themselves when they perceive that performance evaluations or their employment outcomes are based upon their ethnic identities rather than professional skills. This not only devalues skilled immigrants but also triggers stigmatization (Ely and Thomas 2001; Martins and Parsons 2007). Viewing D&I programs as dispensable or non-essential in work lives can be seen as a strategy for skilled immigrants to negotiate their professional identity.

Furthermore, preferential hiring practice not only outstands social identity instead of skills but also violates the principle of equality promoted by the diversity discourse. Preferential hiring practice does not necessarily reduce employment barriers against ethnic-minority or immigrants, nor does it necessarily reform the recruitment and selection process in the company. But it certainly fulfills the organizational obligation to the Employment Equity Act and helps brand the company as diverse and inclusive.

DELIBERATE DIVERSITY

Although most respondents did not have negative experiences with diversity and inclusion programs, their experiences reflect that D&I programs are deliberate and unnaturalistic efforts of the company to perform diversity and inclusion. The group-making process in network groups and the explicit emphasis on diversity contribute to the deliberation of diversity programs.

NETWORK GROUPS

Although none of the respondents have direct experience with network groups or employee resource groups (ERGs), which are one of the most trending and rising diversity programs nowadays, respondents share their viewpoints on employee network groups. Employee resource groups provide employees with an opportunity to interact and connect with co-workers who share a common identity (e.g., sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender) or interest (e.g., sports). ESGs represent a deliberate effort for the company to perform diversity because the assignation of employees into different groups reveals the eagerness and deliberate efforts of organizations to demonstrate their diversity.

> It seems like the company intentionally divide people into different ethnic groups, just for the program. (Amy)

> If the network group is based on ethnicity or other identities, wouldn't it be more divided? (Helen)

More importantly, ERGs imply a deliberate process of group-making, which breaks the naturality in the formation of social connections. On one hand, ERGs do create a chance for immigrant workers to know more co-workers who share similar identity or experience with them. Immigrant workers might feel more comfortable in communicating and building connections with them, as shared identity and shared experience formulate homophily. On the other hand, ESGs seem to be a redundant effort. If shared identity as ethnic-minority or shared experience in immigration does create homophily among workers, workers with homophily will naturally bond together, without the assistance of ERGs.

> It seems like the company deliberately put people into different group. Hanging out with people who have same race as you, is what I tend to do. I feel much more comfortable hanging out with Chinese people than European people… But it's like if I'm a Chinese in a workplace, and I actually tend to hang out with them naturally, I don't need my colleague to assign me into a Chinese group to know about my Chinese co-worker. (Debbie)

Furthermore, similarity in ethnic minority status doesn't necessarily create homophily. Employee network groups usually is group based upon ethnicity or other similarity in social identities such as sexual orientation. However, in real-life interpersonal relations, similarity in social identity does not necessarily create a cohesiveness and a bonding between employees.

> For me, it [social connection] is not about your ethnicity, it is more about if I can get along with that person, or the personality. Personality doesn't' necessarily link with ethnicity. If I am in the network group, even though they are all Chinese, I feel like I don't have anything to talk with them if I think I can't get along with those people. (Helen)

The deliberate group-making can result in the reinforcement of boundary in the workplace. Network groups split the workplace into segments based on social characteristics. Each member in each network group develops closer ties to in-group members, while these closer ties and stronger cohesion might limit their outreach to out-group members. Although

cohesion in minority network groups could help minority members to gain higher voice in the

workplace, minority members might have limited opportunities to form connections with

majority members.

> Sometimes people tend to stick to their own. Maybe it [network groups] causes
> boundaries when you're in your own group. Then you don't really want to explore with
> those around you.

If employee resource groups consolidate ethnic boundaries, they have no effect on

deconstructing systems of domination of companies. Furthermore, respondents doubted the

networking groups in improving their work outcomes. Instead of connecting with people in a

shared identity or a shared interest, they preferred to connect with supervisors, because

networking is beneficial when it is with powerful individuals who can promote their career

development (Dreher and Cox 1996). Respondents' suspicions on network groups are akin to

past research on affinity or network groups. Network groups not only consolidate boundaries,

transform minorities to fit into systems of domination (Williams, Kilanski, and Muller 2014) but

also impede career development because they do not grant access to powerful individuals.

Granted, the boundary can be fluid if employees in each network group can choose to move in

and out freely. However, the setup of network groups still creates certain boundaries. It is up to

group members to move in or out.

> It can create boundaries. At the same time, those groups are just kind of meant for you to
> identify with people and gel in with them. Once you're comfortable with your own group,
> you can also move out and talk to other people.

Respondents thereby suggested network groups, if possible, could mix up people with

different backgrounds or allow a natural bonding in the workplace. These suggestions all aim at

deconstructing boundaries between groups.

PRACTICING DIVERSITY AT THE BACK

Deliberation of diversity programs is also reflected by talking about diversity explicitly – they bring out the "elephant in the room". Respondents revealed discontent of being told how to do diversity. Diversity programs constitutes a process of providing a script designed by the organization. The diversity script guides diversity performance and actions. Employees are expected to act upon the script throughout not necessarily repetitive but regulated acts (Butler 1993) such as proactive communication with out-group people. This diversity script imposes pressure on employees and can revoke rebellion.

This diversity script provided by the organization is problematic. First, it assumes that employees do not understand diversity ideology or know how to perform diversity. Respondents did not agree with this viewpoint but argued that they did not want the company to instruct them to perform diversity. Even if employees understand the performativity of diversity, employees' diversity script and performativity are divergent from the organizational one. Organizations thereby need to and have the right to actively facilitate the education of diversity and inclusion among employees.

Second, the diversity script represents an official curriculum that employees should be lectured. Mandatory diversity programs ensure all employees receive the same kind of diversity education and learns the same diversity script. Employees are expected to perform diversity based on the script. However, for skilled immigrants, diversity is a hidden curriculum that individuals progressively learn in daily life by situating themselves into larger pollical, social, and cultural contexts. It is through actions that individuals showcase their diversity ideology.

> I guess I can do without knowing those knowledges [diversity training]. I don't really know an explanation. It's good things to know, but you don't really need to know it to do it… It's just more common-sense. It's just like basic things that you should know, and basic behavior that you should be knowing --like respecting others is the most important thing. (Debbie)

Third, the diversity script infers that diversity can be learned from speeches without acts. However, diversity performativity implies that diversity should be consistently learned, performed, and acted through interactions with people in daily life (Butler 1993; Ahmed 2006). Respondents shared this viewpoint of diversity performativity. They contended that the learning of diversity and the change of unconscious bias are embedded in continuous and natural daily interactions with diverse people. A simple lecture or training on diversity and inclusion cannot raise awareness or change actions in the long term.

> I think this kind of stuffs [diversity and inclusion], it is something you should keep it at the back, you don't need a constant reminder. If you turn it into a course, some people will think it is a waste of time. We should learn diversity and inclusion in our lives, and we don't need to take a course to learn about it or remind ourselves. (Amy)

> I think that for the most part, people's biases are changed more by just being alive, and meeting different people, and learning that the world is educated. (Jay)

The implementation of diversity programs gives respondents a sense that the company is eager to achieve diversity. It turns diversity into a goal instead of a method to achieve a better work environment and a better work experience for employees.

> It's [diversity programs] engineering an outcome rather than having it be natural.… Diversity was just something that happened, you know. If you bring in immigrants because they add value to society, it shouldn't matter what color they are. if the company is giving this training to these people, it means that they think that diversity has to be a thing that the people working for them, believe in, which I don't think is right. Because if I'm just working for you, all that should matter is that I'm good at my job. (Jay)

ROLES OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAMS

If diversity training does not have a strong impact on addressing employment barriers or discrimination, what's the role of diversity training? Diversity programs serve as a communication tool and a business tool in the workplace. Diversity programs thereby are more

of an organizational tool to efficiency than an organizational strategy to improve all employees'

work lives.

DIVERSITY AS COMMUNICATION TOOL

Although the process of diversity training can be barely recalled by skilled immigrants

due to the "non-essential" role of diversity programs, the emphasis on communication

throughout diversity training was frequently recalled. Diversity training stresses the role of

communication in promoting diversity and inclusion, constructing a respectful workplace,

dealing workplace conflicts, and improving employee relations.

> In our orientation, we had a training, online course, about diversity and inclusion. It is about respectful workplace. It mentioned about racial issues, communication issues. Especially during shift transition, how to communicate with your supervisors, coworkers, patients… This is my most direct experience with diversity and inclusion programs. Other than that, I don't feel a strong presence of diversity and inclusion programs in my workplace. (Amy)

> The group exercise is like you can experience how to get along and work with different kinds of people and how to deal with conflicts. (Helen)

.   Some respondents appraised diversity programs for encouraging communication.

> [How do you feel about diversity training can benefit individuals in the company, how can it promote the work-life for employees?] I guess people could just work in a very peaceful and fair environment, right? I think it promotes understanding and communication among colleagues, among employees from different kind of cultural background. (Jacob)

As diversity training emphasizes communicative issues, trainees tend to think that their

co-workers, who are also participants of diversity training, would become more open-minded

and have a better understanding of each other. This further results in a perception that diversity

training can help create a peaceful work environment. This perception of the peaceful workplace

is largely an illusion because it remains unknown whether unconscious bias is still underlying in

individuals' values and attitudes after diversity training. First, past research has criticized

diversity training for raising unconscious bias without changing it and even increases expressive

stereotypes among the majority group (Chang et al. 2019; Dover, Major, and Kaiser 2016; Noon

2018). Second, diversity training lacks a systematic evaluation to ensure the training outcomes.

With an intended goal of reducing unconscious bias, diversity training does not usually offer an

evaluation of training outcomes. Online diversity training requires the completion of modular

quizzes, which were "too easy", "commonsense" for respondents.

Diversity training by emphasizing communication could create an illusion that all

workplace conflicts are miscommunications, and all conflicts can be solved by fostering

understanding. This could risk reducing discrimination to communication issues. Especially

when lacking a formal discrimination complaint system, employees might justify discrimination

as a lack of understanding of culture or lack of proper communication and give up on reporting

discrimination. While some respondents reflect that they are comfortable reporting

discrimination to their supervisors given the respectful workplace ambiance, some respondents

differently showed concerns about reporting discrimination.

> Things would get awkward between coworkers, especially what if the person didn't really mean it. They just misunderstood and then reporting it would make it so awkward in the future when they work together (Debbie)

Reporting discrimination can disrupt co-worker relationships. Uncertainty about co-

worker relations, combined with the overemphasis of communication in diversity training, can

shift discrimination in the workplace into miscommunication or misunderstanding. This pattern

is consistent with findings on social risks of reporting sexual assault. People refuse to be labeled

as victims of sexual assault and refuse to report sexual assault because it can help them sustain

their current identities, retain social relationships, and group affiliations, and avoid derailing their

goals within the organization (Khan et al. 2018).

Ironically, although respondents doubted about effectiveness of diversity training in eradicating unconscious bias, they perceived fairness from the implementation of diversity training. This illustrates that diversity programs can create an illusion of fairness among employees (Kaiser et al. 2013). This perceived fairness can mediate the effect of diversity programs on discrimination claims derogation, resulting in the de-legitimation of discrimination (Dover, Major, and Kaiser 2014).

Diversity training itself does not seem to raise awareness of workplace discrimination, nor can it reduce unconscious bias, but it does create a sense of fairness and serves as a communication tool. By emphasizing communication, diversity training not only shifts its focus from stereotypes and discrimination, but also promotes the reduction of discrimination into miscommunication and misunderstanding, which shelters unconscious bias and consolidates systemic discrimination in the workplace (Hemphill and Haines 1997). Granted, individuals should take their responsibilities to reduce discrimination in daily interactions. However, the overemphasis on communications in diversity training risks reducing discrimination to miscommunication. It also turns combating discrimination into an employee's burden rather than the on the company at a structural level. This is typical in diversity discourse—diversity training focuses on individual issues rather than structural discrimination and inequality (Embrick 2011).

DIVERSITY AS A BUSINESS TOOL

Another positive evaluation about diversity programs is that it can satisfy business needs. Diversity programs serve as a venue for business initiatives. As a tool of smoothening communication among team members, diversity programs contribute to cross-cultural communication and the exchange of different perspective. As a team leader, Jacob talked about how diversity training can possibly influence his work-life.

> People could just work in a very peaceful and fair environment. I think it promotes understanding and communication among employees from different cultural backgrounds. It can improve productivity… Because you have a diverse workforce, if you want to have a strong team spirit and to promote work efficiency and productivity, this kind of cross-cultural communication, education, and awareness is important. (Jacob)

Diversity training helps construct a seemingly peaceful workplace environment, which encourages communication between employees. Communication helps manage diverse workforce and improve teamwork, which thereby improves work efficiency and productivity. Diversity training thus promotes the formation of professionalism in the company. This is consistent with propositions on "the business case of diversity".

In addition to within-organizational efficiency, diversity training also helps with outside-organizational efficiency. It facilitates the maintenance of customer-company relations. Helen, working in accounting, revealed her perspectives on why her company implements diversity programs.

> Because our company has customers. Customers are diverse. So, the company hopes us to learn what these customers need, and how to understand and communicate with customers in a respectful way. Because lots of conflicts are resulted by not knowing or understanding other culture. (Helen)

Indeed, Helen suggested that diversity programs are more necessary for firms with a customer orientation. The dependency on external relations with customer increase the organization need of legitimacy, which requires a higher attention to diversity and inclusion.

Furthermore, in-person group exercise as a form of diversity training directly serves as a venue to exchange job-related ideas. During the in-person group exercise, James and his group members would discuss work projects and business plans.

> Because we're all different individuals and we have different ideas on certain issues. When we come together, we have different heads, different thoughts, different way of thinking…We come together and put heads together, put ideas together on what service

> ways we can improve and what new services we can actually introduce into the system of the benefit of the company. (James)

He further described how participation in the group exercise helped improve his

professional skills. The group exercise became a venue to work on projects in his company.

> I've been able to improve my skill set. If diversity and inclusion programs are not in play, I feel there will be a limitation to my improvements in this line of work.

Deploying diversity programs as a tool for client relations is not what diversity programs

have promised ideally. Diversity programs, admittedly, can be adopted as an organizational

strategy to increase efficiency. However, the promise to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged

groups should not be neglected. Diversity programs working as a business venue nevertheless

reflects the decoupling between diversity programs in ideology and diversity programs in

practice. Managerial groups can mobilize "the business case for diversity" to promote the

institutionalization of diversity programs, which are still aimed at workplace inequalities. Yet,

when diversity programs become a business tool, the goal of diversity programs has shifted from

diminishing inequalities to increase competitiveness in the market (Vertovec 2015). Furthermore,

this decoupling is more prevalent in client-faced companies. Client-faced companies have a

higher dependency on external resources, and this dependency requires companies to be more

responsive to the external environment (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978), resulting in a higher

possibility of decoupling (Edelman and Stephen 1999).

DIVERSITY PROGRAMS AS CEREMONIES

Institutionalists have suggested that organizations adopt policies and programs to

symbolize their commitment and conformity to social norms instead of making substantive

changes (Nonet and Selznick 1978; Edelman 1990, 1992; Meyer and Rowan 1977). Diversity

programs are symbolic because the implementation is for a ceremony. Promoting equality or

reducing discrimination is never the end goal. The bureaucratic ceremony is showcased through

diversity training as following procedures, the higher importance of format than the content in

diversity training, and impersonality promoted by diversity training

BUREAUCRATIC PROCEDURE

Diversity programs are part of a bureaucratic ceremony. The implementation of diversity

programs in the workplace merely has any effects on material work conditions but functions as a

symbol as meeting requirements and following bureaucratic procedures (Weber 1978).

> It's [diversity training] just a way to show that the hospital is putting effort in diversity and inclusion. It's not useful for us. I am pretty sure people who have worked here for years would not have memories of it. (Debbie)

> It [diversity training] is more like a superficial and surface work. It like following a procedure without doing anything… For online courses, they are like following a procedure. (Amy)

Diversity training functions as a procedure-following practice, whose outcomes are not

considered or evaluated, so does the completion of diversity training for respondents. They just

did it for completion without learning anything from it.

> I think the most ineffective one was just the diversity courses that we took. I feel like most people are just doing just for the sake of doing, and they kind of not do everything. (Debbie).

In this way, trainees also contribute to the bureaucratic ceremony of diversity and

inclusion. They become conformers to the procedure. By providing their completion certificate

to the employer, employees help the company complete the procedure. Whether trainees have

learned anything does not matter. The evaluation criteria of diversity training are not based on

training outcomes of individuals but on ceremonial elements such as how external audience

views the delivery of diversity training in the firm (Meyer and Rowan 1977).

The symbolism of diversity programs is further showcased in the process of implementation. Jay, as a black immigrant, shared his experience with choosing diversity trainers for the company's programs. A big Toronto company that had been chosen to do the audit eventually got canceled because their trainers were white guys, lacking a diverse executive leadership in the company.

> This bothered me. Because if the goal of the diversity training is to make the workforce more diverse, then you would want to hire the best possible person for that. Because if you hire someone who's worse, then you're only hurting the people who you're supposed to be helping. If the process is less efficient or less stringent, then the people who you're supposed to be helping, the people who you're trying to get through your door, the minority people would be suffering. But they're making this decision based on the color of the trainer's skin, rather than on the merit of the organization. The goal isn't to actually promote the interests of people like me [blacks]. The goal is just to make them feel better about having diverse people. It wasn't about finding the best ways to make the company more diverse. It was about feeling good about hiring diverse people. (Jay)

This decision made Jay feel like diversity training is merely ceremonial – it is for the sake of diversity. Diversity programs are organizational methods to reinforce bureaucracy and legitimacy instead of organizational initiatives to address unconscious bias in the employment-related process, particularly in the hiring process. Speaking differently, the implementation of diversity programs itself has already satisfied the needs of the organization to seek legitimacy. The effectiveness of diversity programs is not a significant factor for the organization and therefore a thorough evaluation of diversity programs is not usually in place. This reduces the effectiveness of diversity programs in addressing workplace discrimination and improving diversity, which further damages the interests of employees, as a diverse and inclusive environment is not being constructed. Employees who receive the training are merely the tools to improve the legitimacy of the organization. This could result in a reduction in the organizational commitment of employees.

> But if they were hiring someone based on the color of their skin, and you get poorer diversity training, then obviously, diversity isn't actually very important to you [the organization]. What's important is just making it look like you care about diversity. It feels like it's for them, not for me. (Jay)

FORMAT > CONTENT

The format (mandatory attendance) plays a greater role in fostering a sense of inclusion among employees than the actual training process. The content of diversity training can only indirectly promote communication, which helps construct an inclusive workplace, while the format of diversity training itself constructs a sense of inclusion among respondents. This indicates that even if the training cannot reach its intended goals, or even if the training outcomes are ambiguous, the mandatory participation still results in a consequence that organizations would favor – an illusion of inclusion.

Indeed, the association between mandatory participation and a sense of inclusion among respondents is explainable because diversity discourse does not permit exclusion of any group (Collins 2011). Including everyone thereby signals diversity, equity, and inclusion. However, recent diversity scholarship has indicated that mandatory diversity programs are less effective than voluntary ones (Dobbin and Kalev 2007; Dobbin and Kalev 2018; Kalev and Dobbin 2021; Kaplan 2006). Paradoxically, respondents associated mandatory participation with perceived inclusion. Voluntary participation seems to exclude certain people, which is deviated from the principle of diversity and inclusion programs.

> Due to the fact that all members of staffs are included, regardless of your position in the company, there's unity among staffs on that particular topic that was discussed [in the training]. Because everyone has the same mindset towards that unconscious bias. (James)

> … if the program targets specific people, then it is anti-purpose. This is not what it wants --- to get everybody participated in it. (Helen).

This is partly due to, for immigrants, the expected target of diversity training is native white people, who have no immigration experience and in a higher status of ethnicity. Mandatory participation includes both immigrants and natives, ethnic minorities, and whites, in the training, which meets the expectation of ethnic-minority immigrant workers and ensures native white people receive the training, creating a sense of equity and inclusion among trainees.

> It [diversity training against discrimination] is necessary because some people especially locally grown people or colleagues, they may have no kind of immigration experience. They may not have a kind of cultural or racial awareness. (Jacob)

> But diversity training is given to everybody because, I guess, the belief is that everybody innately has some problem with it. Or it's assumed that everybody is kind of guilty beforehand. If diversity training is necessary, if the goal is to eliminate biases, I would want it to go to people who actually exhibit those biases. If it's given to everybody, my impression is that everybody is guilty before we even know anything. (Jay)

Meanwhile, uncertainty about others' tendency to participate also accounts for the association between mandatory participation and the perception of inclusion. Debbie worried that voluntary training will have a lower rate of participation, as people in her workplace seemed to treat diversity training as a coercive mission.

> I feel like if it is voluntary, no people will attend. The whole reason why they make the online courses mandatory because no one's going to do it voluntarily. (Debbie)

Mandatory participation exerts an external pressure for every worker which ensures the inclusion of everyone in the training. However, voluntary participation still exerts pressure on workers in an implicit way. Jay advocated for voluntary participation, while he was concerned about the implicit pressure in the voluntary participation, due to the organizational system in keeping track of trainees in the diversity training.

> Even if it's voluntary, but they keep notes on who goes, making it voluntary doesn't necessarily make it voluntary (Jay)

Respondents' preferences on mandatory training have supports from management research on diversity training. Some research has suggested that mandatory attendance ensures every employee to gain basic competence in diversity training, sends a message about the organizational commitment to diversity, and reflects inclusion on an institutional level (Johnson 2008; Kellough and Naff 2004; Bezrukova, Jehn, and Spell 2008) Voluntary attendance might miss the employees who need the training most (Ellis and Sonnenfeld 1994).

The association between mandatory participation and inclusion is not a definite case. Some respondents expected that the target of diversity training should be native white people, who seem to have discriminatory tendencies towards ethnic-minority immigrants. The mandatory inclusion of everyone assumes everyone is problematic, which undermines the power relations imposed by the majority group.

> If the goal is everybody got the training, everybody was supposed to learn about diversity and oppression and all that stuff. So, they felt that it was a thing for everybody, which I don't personally think it is right. If the training is meant to address a problem, then I think the emphasis should be on giving it to the people who present a problem, not to everyone. Like, CPR training is something you give to everybody because everybody, and a health and safety training is something you only give to the people on the health and safety committee because they're the only people who necessarily need it. (Jay)

The format of mandatory participation results in a sense of fairness and inclusion, while the content of diversity training does not result in a higher perception of fairness and inclusion in the workplace. In other words, the training content and training outcomes might not work, but mandatory participation works. This turns diversity training into a symbolic program because even if it does not produce material change, the existence and the format of diversity training have already created a sense of fairness and helped organizations to gain legitimacy. Without a thorough evaluation of training outcomes, diversity training becomes more symbolic.

IMPERSONALITY

Diversity programs also contribute to impersonality within organization (Weber 1978), which satisfies the bureaucratic ceremony. Diversity training instills a uniform and narrow definition of diversity into trainees' mindsets, which neglects individual differences in defining diversity and larger societal differences.

> Not everybody believes in the same kind of diversity. The training was like, "this is diversity. This is how diversity is supposed to look. If you disagree with it, you're wrong and we need to teach you to be different." It seems your beliefs in diversity are bound up in all sorts of personal feelings about what's fair, about how the world should work. It can be informal like your religion, or how you've grown up, or who you know. They basically want to take control of that. Potentially, you can be fired, I think, if you don't believe in their version of diversity or if you voice problems with it. Also, all their diversity is focused on things like skin color. But in Canada, we have a huge division based on language and there are all sorts of issues, and there are all sorts of other secondary characteristics that inform it (Jay)

Jay's negative experience with diversity training reflects that the organization creates a uniform yet the singular definition of diversity, which is a part of the diversity script. The organization then instills it through diversity training and reinforces it through quizzes in diversity training and the renew of diversity training certificates. By instilling a uniform definition of diversity, diversity training helps erase individual differences in perspectives on diversity and promote a uniform organizational self that meets the company's expectations. The internalization of the organizational definition of diversity, firstly, helps the organization to prohibit individual differences in defining diversity. This violates the principle of diversity by disallowing diversity in the definition of diversity. Diversity training in this way endogenously damages diversity in ideas and perspectives. Secondly, internalizing the organizational definition of diversity and thereby the diversity script, employees will develop, act, and regulate an organizational self that meets organizational expectations. This organizational self then guides employees to conform to systemic discrimination, to view unfair treatment as communicative issues, to de-legitimize discrimination claims, and to use diversity programs as a venue for

communication and business projects. Diversity programs eventually shift from anti-

discrimination tools to business tools.

The overall environment of diversity training also undermines individual differences and

thereby diversity by reinforcing the idea that everyone is the same.

> I believe the program actually sees every member of staff as the same. There is no
> seclusion of background or ethnicity it's just members of staff working in the
> organization come together in those groups and go to those training and programs.
> (James)

Although seeing everyone in the training as the same can create a sense of cohesion and

inclusion, this contradicts James' belief in diversity. He defined diversity as respecting and

allowing for differences, while diversity training regards everyone as the same. The emphasis on

the sameness of people with different social identities, cultures, and backgrounds erases

differences that diversity values as well as homogenizing employees. However, for employees,

especially employees with minority status, their experiences with employees with majority status

are not the same. When diversity training equalizes individual differences, it is ironic to even

consider if it cares about intersecting identities of individuals which results in a unique

experience that complicates diversity (Lorbiecki and Jack 2000). The sameness nevertheless

contributes to the impersonality that organizational bureaucracy needs. Furthermore, this is

consistent with Collins' (2011) findings, which indicates that through naturalizing and equalizing

differences between groups, diversity training can equalize disadvantages for both dominated

and dominant groups, which helps erase inequality from the organization. Diversity training

might then bring up resentments and increase hostility towards underrepresented groups

(Hemphill and Haines 1997).

Diversity and inclusion programs satisfy the organizational needs of legitimacy, formalize diversity policy, and discipline employees into impersonal subjects that satisfy business needs. These altogether contribute to the bureaucratic ceremony in diversity and inclusion programs.

DISCUSSION

Findings provide insights into why diversity and inclusion programs are ineffective at remedying discrimination, promoting equality, and improving the work experience of underrepresented groups. The design of diversity programs at the local level and organizational strategy towards diversity at the structural level account for the ineffectiveness of D&I programs.

THE DESIGN

Ineffectiveness firstly originates from the design of diversity programs. First, the choice of diversity programs cannot tackle discrimination or barriers. Past research has indicated that some diversity programs such as diversity task forces, mentoring programs, target recruitment, can make workplaces more equitable by providing instrumental career opportunities and socio-emotional support that can grant access to higher-quality job positions for minority employees (Kim, Kalev, and Dobbin 2012; Dobbin, Kalev, Kelly 2007; Kalev et al. 2006; Kulik and Roberson 2008; Berrey 2014). Diversity programs experienced by skilled immigrants in this study, including diversity training, diversity questionnaire, or the assignment of Chief Diversity Officer, cannot tackle employment barriers against minority employees. Although diversity programs give skilled immigrants a sense of fairness and inclusion, current diversity programs in their workplaces do not significantly or materially improve employment outcomes. Diversity programs are deemed as non-essential and become symbolic. Organizations should evaluate their sources of systemic discrimination and choose diversity programs based upon workplace discrimination evaluation.

In terms of the context (or the format) of diversity programs, findings suggest mandatory attendance generally results in perceived inclusiveness among ethnic-minority immigrants, which shares a similar viewpoint with proponents of mandatory attendance who argues that mandatory attendance demonstrates organizational commitment and ensures learning opportunities for every employee. However, findings only suggest the effect of mandatory attendance on perceived inclusion but not on program outcomes. Proponents of voluntary attendance argue that voluntariness can minimize the rebellion of majority groups and cultivate the value of diversity, which can produce behavioral change (Dobbin and Kalev 2007; Naff and Kellough 2003). Organizations should decide attendance requirements based on programs' goals as well as employee characteristics. In terms of program delivery context, findings favor in-person activities, which are more interactive and provide networking chances.

Second, the singularity of diversity programs reduces the presence and significance of diversity programs in immigrants' work lives. Most companies in the sample only offer diversity training, which is the most popular yet most paradoxical diversity program. Diversity training can work when it targets awareness and skill development and occurs longitudinally and repeatedly (Bezrukova et al. 2016). If organizations insist on diversity training, they should tailor employee-supported exercise and activities to training goals and employees' characteristics, which is shown to increase training effectiveness (Lindsey, King, Hebl, and Levine 2015; Madera, king, and Hebl 2013). A careful decision on mandatory versus voluntary attendance should be made upon surveying minority employees' perspectives. Regardless of the effectiveness of diversity training, diversity training is never the single solution to increasing diversity and inclusion in organizations. Each type of diversity program targets different employment barriers and workplace discrimination correspondingly. Working with other

diversity programs such as diversity task forces and employee resource groups, diversity training can be more effective. The multiplicity of diversity programs not only increase the credibility and validation of diversity programs but also showcase a higher organizational commitment to diversity through a more systematic diversity policy. Organizational commitment to diversity inclusion should be shown throughout the hiring process, performance evaluation, discrimination complaint system, and the overarching organizational strategies.

STRUCTURAL STRATEGY

In addition to the design of diversity programs, ineffectiveness also lies in the organizational structure, corresponding to criticisms from institutionalists and critical diversity research.

First, the decoupling between diversity discourse and policy and diversity practices shifts the focus from inequalities to business needs. Findings partly suggest that although diversity and inclusion programs do not seem to reach their intended goal -- to improve employment outcomes of minorities – they certainly fulfill the "business case for diversity" (Cox 1993; Cox 2001; Cox and Beale 1997; Gurin, Nagda, and Lopez 2004; Herring 2009; Luu, Rowley, and Vo 2019). Organizations mobilize diversity programs to increase efficiency and profits while skilled immigrant workers also perceive the role of diversity programs in productivity. Diversity and inclusion programs construct a seemingly respectful environment, under which immigrant workers are more comfortable communicating with co-workers. Communication facilitates the exchange and development of innovative ideas in a diverse workforce and improves efficiency and productivity. Diversity and inclusion programs even work as a platform to complete and improve work projects, implying that D&I programs provide a diverse environment that increases the opportunity for creativity and the quality of group works (DiTomaso, Post, and

Parks-Yancy 2007). The business benefits of diversity programs extend beyond workplace

functioning and facilitate external relations with customers and the public. Diversity programs

are more necessary in customer-faced firms, who have a higher dependence on the external

environment and thus higher pressure for internal advocacy to promote diversity programs

(Fligstein 1987; Pfeffer and Salancik 2978; Edelman 1990). It is believed that diversity

programs, by showcasing demographic diversity in firms and commitment to diversity, can help

understand customers' needs and take advantage of customers' in-group preferences in

customer-worker interaction (Black, Mason, and Cole 1996; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001).

Admittedly, as a business tool, diversity and inclusion might ameliorate the work-lives of skilled

immigrants in a professional way because the illusion of fairness still offers emotional support

and encourages communication and cooperation to increase productivity. But D&I programs

nevertheless deviate from the goal to reduce discrimination and inequalities, demonstrating the

decoupling process.

　　　Second, organizations put the onus of addressing discrimination and inequalities onto

employees, especially employees with minority status. One of the roles of diversity and inclusion

programs in the findings is to smoothen communication, given the overemphasis of

communication in the context of diversity training. If in any ways diversity training is effective,

it creates an illusion of fairness (Kaiser et al. 2013), under which communication is easier and

mutual understanding is encouraged. When D&I programs become a tool for communication, it

risks reducing discrimination to miscommunication and individualizing discrimination, which

conceals structural inequalities within organizations. As indicated before, the illusion of fairness

created by diversity programs can mediate employees' perceived discrimination. It is believed

that diversity programs demonstrate organizational commitment to diversity and equity, which

then justifies organizational discriminatory behaviors and de-legitimates discrimination claims

(Dover, Major, and Kaiser 2014). This implies that diversity programs not only reduce

discrimination litigation to sustain the functioning of human resources (Dobbin 2009), conceal

structural inequalities, but also serve as a managerial tool to manipulate employees for

organizational needs (Roosevelt Thomas, Russell, and Schumacher 1992; Zanoni and Janssens

2007).

Furthermore, the individualization of systemic discrimination raises the problem of

diversity performativity. When organizations utilize diversity training to improve equity, they

merely assume that texts and terms delivered in diversity training can make an impact on

people's actions. When they do not evaluate if people have changed actions or if people change

actions driven by the training, diversity training remains as "speech acts" like diversity statement

that only "be" diversity because it does not translate into repeated acts that "do" diversity

(Ahmed 2006). Furthermore, organizations do not perform diversity through effective actions to

diminish inequalities but rely on individuals to perform diversity. The diversity script instills a

uniform idea of diversity, which regulates individual actions to "do" diversity. Organizations

seem to take aggregated individual diversity performativity as organizational diversity

performativity. Are organizations really "doing" diversity if diversity programs do not produce

what they have promised? When diversity programs fail to produce what they have promised, the

acts that demonstrate "doing diversity" are merely the same as "speech acts".

Third, organizations employ diversity programs to achieve bureaucracy and legitimacy,

making them as symbolic and ceremonial. As organizations eagerly seek legitimacy, the

adoption of diversity programs seems to be driven by the failure to achieve the diversity goal,

which pushes organizations to adopt programs that symbolize their commitment and uses

ceremonial criteria to evaluate program effectiveness (Meyer and Rowan 1977). The

effectiveness of diversity and inclusion programs does not seem to be part of the organizational

commitment. D&I programs formalize bureaucratic diversity procedures through the

implementation of diversity training and establishing a system to monitor the completion of each

employee. While the format of diversity training influences more than the content. The training

also instills a singular definition of diversity and equalizes differences, which fosters

impersonality for bureaucracy. To make diversity and inclusion programs less symbolic,

measurements of the effectiveness of D&I programs should focus more on the change in

stereotypical expressions and behaviors, the reform in structural inequalities, the representation

of underrepresented groups rather than on the profits gained from diversity programs or the

evaluation from external audience. Meanwhile, evaluation should be careful with organizational

tactics to boost up diversity numbers while without benefiting employees who are most

marginalized and disadvantaged, such as the high-potential women pay premiums to narrow the

gender pay gap on the surface (Leslie, Manchester, and Dahm 2017).

   The relationship between bureaucracy and discrimination and inequality is unclear.

Critical scholars argue that bureaucracy shelters exclusion and marginalization in the

organization (Acker 1990), while some argue that bureaucratic reforms such as more

bureaucratic and rule-based personnel systems help reduce bias and exclusion (Bielby 2000).

The institutionalization of diversity and inclusion programs reflects a bureaucratic reform

towards diversity and inclusion, and diversity and inclusion practices help consolidate the

bureaucratic structure in the organization. Findings are more align with critical scholars'

argument that bureaucracy covers for systems of exclusion in organizations.

Indeed, findings also show that institutionalist arguments on the symbolism of diversity programs (DiMaggio and Powell 1993; Meyer and Rowan 1977; Nonet and Selznick 1978; Edelman 1990, 1992) do not contradict with "the business case for diversity". When diversity and inclusion programs become a tool for communication and business, diversity and inclusion programs become more symbolic. Impersonality fostered throughout diversity training sustains managerial control and supports business needs. Furthermore, as argued before, diversity programs, by overemphasizing communication, can individualize discrimination (Hemphill and Haines 1997). This further constructs an organizational identity, under which individuals are encouraged to justify discriminatory actions as miscommunication, as well as demonstrating individual diversity performativity through active communication with out-groups. As a business tool diversity, programs also construct an organizational identity which has less sensitivity to discrimination but orients towards profits. Diversity programs, as a platform for business projects, as a tool for external customer relations, translate the intended goal of improving outcomes of minorities into the twisted goal of improving work efficiency. In other words, diversity programs help deviate individual attention from structural inequalities but focus on work solely. In short, the impersonality fostered through diversity training and the pacifying individual cultivated through the communication discourse and the business discourse, together form an organizational identity that sustains organizational needs.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights reasons why diversity and inclusion programs are ineffective in addressing discrimination and inequalities or promoting immigrant integration, as well as skilled immigrants' perspectives on diversity and inclusion programs. The study has limitations because firstly, it is based on a small sample of 7 ethnic-minority skilled immigrants in Canada. The

small sample is not representative enough to provide empirical generalization. Sample bias also lies in the background of respondents. All of them luckily have Canadian experience or credentials and thus cannot be representative of immigrants with foreign experiences. Besides, they tend to perceive that most Canadian workplaces have reached diversity and equality due to the overarching multiculturalist ideology in Canada. Future research can investigate the relationship between multiculturalist ideology and perceived effectiveness of diversity programs. Furthermore, respondents only have experience with mandatory diversity programs. Most respondents only have experience with diversity training. The effectiveness of voluntary programs and other forms of diversity programs remains unclear. Future studies should explore whether voluntariness influences the effectiveness and if the effect of voluntariness varies across high-status and low-status groups. Identity conflict raised by D&I programs suggests.that future research could explore whether the perceived effectiveness of and the experience with diversity and inclusion programs differ between immigrants with higher skills and immigrants with lower skills.

How do skilled immigrants experience diversity and inclusion programs? Skilled immigrants take diversity and inclusion programs as non-essential and deliberate efforts. They are non-essential because of their limited role in employment integration or social integration. They do not seem to be associated with employment barriers such as credential recognition, Canadian experience discrimination, and language proficiency. While they create opportunities for ethnic-minority skilled immigrants to expand networks with co-workers, they are not necessary for immigrant workers. Immigrant workers prefer a natural formation of networks. D&I programs further bring out the identity conflict between professional identity and personal identity. Diversity programs promote ethnic assignation and impose ethnicity onto professional

identity, while skilled immigrants prioritize skills and professionalism in their professional

identity. The identity conflict further confuses immigrants about performance evaluation and

skill recognition, which can damage their professional identity.

Diversity and inclusion programs are deliberate efforts for organizations to achieve the

goal of diversity. Although respondents have never engaged in network groups, they were

concerned that network groups could create a boundary in the workplace and disrupts the natural

formation of social networks. Diversity and inclusion programs create a diversity-performativity

script for individuals, which creates pressure and contradicts immigrants' belief in diversity

performativity. The diversity script is a top-down authoritative order that infers the incapability

of diversity performativity of immigrants themselves. The diversity script is an official

curriculum, while skilled immigrants view diversity performativity as a hidden curriculum in

daily interactions, indicating that diversity and inclusion programs deliberately turn diversity

performativity into an explicit performance. Meanwhile, the diversity script views diversity

performativity as short-term and non-recurrent actions, while immigrants believe diversity

performance should be fostered and maintained through repeated daily interactions.

If skilled immigrants do not value diversity programs, what are the roles of diversity

programs in their work lives? Diversity programs are manipulated into a tool for communication

and a tool for business. This seems to support "the business case of diversity" (Herring 2009) but

also partly explains the ineffectiveness of diversity and inclusion programs in addressing

discrimination and inequalities. The overemphasis of communication in diversity training risks

deducting discrimination into miscommunication and puts the onus of reducing discrimination

onto employees rather than the organization, which shelters structural discrimination in the

organization. Diversity and inclusion programs satisfy business needs by improving productivity

and understanding customer needs, as well as serving as a venue to exchange work ideas among co-workers. As tools for communication and business, diversity and inclusion programs are decoupled from diversity discourse which focuses on equality.

Last but not the least, as institutionalists argue, D&I programs symbolize bureaucratic ceremonies. Diversity practices are merely following procedures without examining the effectiveness of diversity practices. The format of diversity programs has a greater role in improving perceived inclusion and equity among skilled immigrants than the content of diversity programs. More importantly, diversity programs instill a uniform ideology of diversity and inclusion established by the organization, which equalizes differences between workers and thereby fosters impersonality to consolidate bureaucracy.

If diversity and inclusion programs have any roles in the workplace, they would be satisfying the interests of organizations, while employees' interests, especially underrepresented employees' interests are largely neglected. To make a material change in the workplace, a single diversity training is never enough. Organizations should show commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the hiring process, promotion, and evaluation process, pay equity, unfair treatment complaint system, and organizational strategies. Organizations should be attentive to the decoupling process by scrutinizing the content of diversity programs. More importantly, to address decoupling, organizations should realize that diversity is not the end goal but the process to achieve equality. Using diversity to achieve equality, organizations should further take back their responsibility of combating structural discrimination instead of putting it onto individual employees. Diversity programs are nevertheless part of the interrelated practices that maintain inequalities within the organization and sustain "inequality regimes" (Acker 2006).

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APPENDIX 1 QUOTA TABLE

Person		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	Number
Landing time												
0-5years	5											
6 years+	5											
Gender												
Male	5											
Female	5											
Ethnicity												
Chinese	4											
South Asian	4											
Black	2											
Other non-whites	0											

APPENDIX 2 PRE-SCREENING SURVEY

Pre-screening survey for D&I programs and skilled immigrants

Introduction
Thank you for participating in this survey! This survey will take you less than 3 minutes. I am a graduate student at the **University of Chicago**. I am conducting this research for my **master thesis**. I am investigating **skilled immigrants' experience with and opinions about Diversity and Inclusion programs in the workplace**. Diversity and inclusion programs often consist of things such as diversity training, networking groups, and mentoring.   I need to have a wide **variety of skilled immigrants in Canada** so that we can hear from **all segments of the immigrant community** and learn how skilled immigrants feel about diversity and inclusion in the workplace. The study will be an **45-60 minute interview** on the phone or via Zoom. You will get **$30** for participating the interview. If you want to participate, please answer some questions and leave your contact information. We will get back to you!   By completing this survey, you will get the chance to win a **$50 gift card**! The winner will be selected in 3 months!

Q1 Do you currently live in Canada?

◯ Yes (1)

◯ No (2)

_ _

Q2 Did you arrive in Canada as an Economic-class immigrant?
(Or Did you enter Canada through Express Entry (EE) Programs?)

◯ Yes (1)

◯ No (2)

◯ Don't know (3)

_ _

Q3 Which programs were you in when you apply for immigration?

○ Federal Skilled Worker (FSW) (1)

○ Canadian Experience Class (CEC) (2)

○ Federal Skilled Trades (FST) (3)

○ Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) (4)

○ Quebec Economic Class (5)

○ Other (Please specify) (6) _____

Q4 How long have you lived in Canada?

○ 0 to 5 years (1)

○ 6 and more than 6 years (2)

- -

Q5 How would you identify your gender?

○ Male (1)

○ Female (2)

○ Non-binary / third gender (3)

○ Prefer not to say (4)

- -

Q6 How would you identify your ethnicity?

▼ Caucasian / White (7) ... Other (17)

Diversity and Inclusion programs refer to any initiatives or practices in workplaces to promote **diversity, equity, and inclusion**. They usually target employees in minority groups.
They usually include but not limit to: (1) **diversity training**, (2) **mentoring**, (3) **diversity task forces**, (4) **diversity manager**, (5) **self-managed teams**, (6) **recruitment initiatives**

targeting minorities, women, and Indigenous, (7) **employee resource groups (ERGs)**, (8) **diversity councils**, (9) **ally programs** (e.g. LGBTQ+ ally program), and (10) **network groups**.
      Diversity and Inclusion programs can take **different forms** and have **different names** in different companies.

Q8 Do you currently work in a company with Diversity and Inclusion Programs?

○ Yes, my current company has diversity and inclusion programs (1)

○ No, my current company does not have diversity and inclusion programs (2)

○ I don't know (3)

Q9 Have you ever previously worked in a company with Diversity and Inclusion Programs?

○ Yes, I used to work in a company with Diversity and Inclusion programs (1)

○ No, my old companies did not have diversity and inclusion programs (2)

○ I don't know (3)

Q14 Have you **ever** worked in a company **without** Diversity and Inclusion programs?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Q10 Do you have any **experience** with any diversity and inclusion programs if your current or previous company have implemented them?
(You have participated them or learned about them)

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

○ Not sure (3)

Q15 Please leave your **contact information** below to enter the pool of winning a **$50 gift card.**

☐   Name (1) _____

☐   Email (2) _____

☐   Phone (3) _____

☐   Alternate Phone (4) _____

☐   Current Province (5) _____

Q16   The following study will be an **interview** with you over the **phone** or via **Zoom.** It will take **45 to 60 minutes**. You will be compensated **30 dollars** for your participation in the interview!

    You will have the chance to **freely share any thoughts, opinions, stories, or knowledge** related to diversity and inclusion programs in your workplace!

    Your participation is really meaningful for your **immigrant community** and is really helpful for finishing my **master thesis**. If you are interested, please indicate your interest and indicate your availability below. I will get back to you within about 5 business days.

Are you interested in participating the interview study?

    ○ Yes (1)

    ○ Maybe (2)

    ○ No (3)

Q17 When would be the good times to contact you? I will accommodate to your schedule!

	Morning (1)	Afternoon (2)	Evening (3)
Monday (10)	☐	☐	☐
Tuesday (11)	☐	☐	☐
Wednesday (12)	☐	☐	☐
Thursday (13)	☐	☐	☐
Friday (14)	☐	☐	☐
Saturday (15)	☐	☐	☐
Sunday (16)	☐	☐	☐

APPENDIX 3 Interview Guide

Introduction

Hi! Thank you for participating this study. I am excited to hear about your experience. We will start the interview shortly, but first I want to let you know more about this study. I am investigating skilled immigrants' experience with and opinions about Diversity and Inclusion programs in the workplace. Diversity and inclusion programs often consist of things such as diversity training, networking groups, and mentoring. This is not an evaluation of your work or your company, but a more general investigation of Diversity & Inclusion programs as these are experienced by skilled immigrants.

I am doing conversational phone interviews of an hour or so with 12 to 20 people who came to Canada on skilled worker visas who work now, or have worked in the past, at firms that have Diversity and Inclusion programs. I am interested in whether and how such programs affected your feelings about the workplace.

Taking part in this interview is voluntary. You may skip any questions that make you uncomfortable, and you have the right to stop the interview at any time.

I hold your answers in confidence. Neither your name nor the name of your company will be attached to anything you say. I store your contact information separately from anything you tell me and erase that contact information once the study is over.

I ask to audiotape the interview for completeness. I will transcribe the audio recording to a word document. In the transcription, any information that might reveal your identity will be replaced with pseudonym. Once the transcription is finished, I will erase the recording. If you do not agree to tape, I can also take hand-written notes during our conversation and use these notes for my analysis. Also, even if you agree to tape now, you may ask to have the tape turned off at any time.

Do you have any questions? Are you still interested in taking part? Yes/ No

Is it okay if I record this conversation? Yes/ No

Immigration information

I would like to begin with some general background about your move to Canada.

1. **What country did you immigrate to Canada from?**
2. **What led to your decision to come to Canada, and when did you arrive?**
3. **How do you feel you have been received by Canadians?**
   - Have you ever been made to feel unwelcome by Canadians? On what basis do you think you were treated that way?
   - What label, if any, do Canadians give you? What group do they see you as being part of?
   - On official forms or on surveys, are there boxes you have to check such as for ethnicity or race or nationality? What category do you mostly get put into?
   - Do you see yourself as part of that group? What group do you see yourself as being part of?

Work experience

Now let's focus on your work experience

4. **What is your education and training background, and what sort of work have you done since coming to Canada?**
   - How many different places have you worked in Canada?
   - In what ways have those jobs been a good match for your skillset and in what ways have they not been?

5. **How were you received by others in the workplace?**
   - Have you ever felt unwelcome as a co-worker at any of those places? IF YES: Please tell me about that.
     o How did co-workers make you feel unwelcome?
     o What do you think was the main reason co-workers did not welcome you?
   - Have you ever felt treated unfairly by your boss or supervisor at any of those places? IF YES: Please tell me about that.
     o In what ways were you treated unfairly?
     o What do you think motivated the boss or supervisor to treat you that way?
   - Have any of your places of work have been structured in a way that put you at a disadvantage because of being an immigrant? How so? Can you give me some examples?

D&I programs experience

Now I'd like to ask more specifically about your experience with Diversity and Inclusion programs in the workplace. You indicated in the eligibility survey that you have worked at a company with a diversity and inclusion program. **Is this at a previous job or at the job you have now?**

   ◯ Previous job had D & I program
   ◯ Current job has D & I program

6. **Please tell me in your own words what you think Diversity and Inclusion mean.**
   - Do you think those words were used with that same meaning at your workplace D & I program? IF NO: How was the meaning different as used for the program than what they mean to you?

7. **Please walk me through your direct experience of the most recent D & I program at a company where you worked.**
   - How did you learn about the program? How was the program explained to you? Who told you about it? What did they say the purpose of it was?
   - What was involved for you? Tell me about all the ways you took part in or experienced it.
     o Any written materials give to R, required reading, videos to watch
     o Any meetings with other co-workers – who, what did they do, how often did this happen?

- What was mandatory and what was optional? Was there social pressure to take part or stay away?
- Did co-workers talk about the program? What was the general feeling about it?

8. **What do you feel is/was the main company purpose for the D & I program?**
   - In what ways do you feel it accomplished its purpose and in what ways did it not?
   - Do you think immigrants in general are a main target for the program in some way? Tell me about that. In what ways are immigrants a program target?
   - What about immigrants from [Respondent's Country]? What about persons of [Respondent's race/ethnicity]?

9. **Do you think the absence of diversity programs would make a difference in your perception of fairness and inclusion?**
   - Would the quality of your relationships with co-workers be different in any way due to the program or not having such a program? How so?
   - Would you be treated differently by your boss or supervisor in any way due to the program or not having the program? How so?
   - Would any job conditions – pay raises, promotions, performance evaluations, accommodations for flex time or any other formal perks or conditions of your work be different or changed due to having or not having such a program?
   - Would any other equity or fairness issues be different or changing at either firm because of the Diversity and Inclusion program as far as you could tell? What were those?

10. **Would there be any ways the absence of the program makes a difference in who you met, made friends with, got to know better or spent time with in or outside the workplace?**
    - Would the D & I program affect ties within the firm, between you and people at other firms, both, or neither?
    - What was the difference in who you met or interacted with or the quality of those relationships?
    - What was the mechanism driving that – what about the Diversity and Inclusion program, or its absence, resulted in that difference?

Final thoughts

Finally, what is your overall impression of D and I program at companies in Canada?

11. **What are the most positive and negative things about D & I company programs from your experience?**
12. **Did you ever leave a job or take a job in part because the company did or did not have a Diversity and Inclusion program?**
13. **Is there anything else you can tell me about your evaluation of Diversity and Inclusion programs – what works, what doesn't, what is worthwhile, what isn't?**

Conclusion

Thank you for your participation, that is all questions I have for this interview. I really appreciate your time! **I will e-transfer the 30-dollar incentive** to you as the small thank you I am able to offer in gratitude for your contribution to my study!

If you think of something else later you want to add or think I should know, please feel free to email me or set up a time to talk further.

I will write up complete notes from my recording, then erase it. **If I run into something that I do not understand, can I contact you again to clarify?**

Thank you so much!

APPENDIX 4 – DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS

Person/ Item	Gender	Ethnicity	Duration of Residence	Province of Residence	Occupation
Aalim	Male	South Asian	0-6 years	Ontario	Research Manager
Amy	Female	Chinese	6+ years	British Columbia	Medical Lab Technologist
Debbie	Female	Chinese	6+ years	British Columbia	Medical Lab Technologist
Helen	Female	Chinese	6+ years	Alberta	Accountant
Jacob	Male	Chinese	6+ years	Ontario	Data Scientist
James	Male	Black	0-6 years	Ontario	IT Technologist
Jay	Male	Black	6+ years	Ontario	Research Analyst