Forms of Workforce Diversity and its Implication in Curtailing the Frauds in Listed IT Companies in India

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Abstract

Embracing diversity involves recognizing, respecting, and appreciating differences, while inclusivity demands extending dignity to all, regardless of gender, caste, race, or religion. The cohesion of diversity relies heavily on active inclusion. Barriers to presenting gender diversity as a business case include factors such as unconscious bias, adherence to legal compliance, risk mitigation, reputation management, and conservative thought processes. Notably, discomfort among male managers in interacting with female counterparts often hinders efforts to promote gender diversity, puncturing the overall initiative. Research findings indicate that companies featuring at least one woman on the board experience superior return on equity, increased earnings, and more robust growth in stock prices compared to those with exclusively male boards. McKinsey's 2016 study on women in the workplace reveals that many companies face challenges in reshaping their work environments to fully leverage the potential of gender diversity. It highlights the ongoing struggle of numerous companies in achieving fair representation of women in top management roles. In this context our study aims to find out the impact of gender in reducing misconduct and increasing transparency, inclusiveness in the workplace and to measure the efficiency of diversified workforce. To confine the study, objectives and its implications, a structured questionnaire was circulated to 230 MNC employees working in Bengaluru region. Ultimately 180 valid responses were considered. The study used snowball technique for collection of responses. This background of the study also carries out survey to understand how employees perceive corporate fraud from the DEI perspective.

Keywords: Diversity, Equity, Frauds, Inclusion, Misconduct, Mitigating, Workforce

Introduction

No human being is made alike and same is the case with workforce there are similarities and differences amongst working colleagues in terms of physical abilities disabilities, race, caste religion, cultural background, gender and sexual orientation. For ages society has discriminated on these aspects and in the current scenario diverse workforce is more by default and necessity than a choice. This has come up with diverse challenges. Diversity presents wide spectrum of ideas, profile, backgrounds, skill sets etc. which will kick off innovative thought process devoid of tunnel vision. Limited studies reveal that anti-fraud compliance initiatives have been overlooked, and recent fraud occurrences have compelled regulators to consider the absence of structured anti-fraud compliance programs as tantamount to non-compliance. Consequently, organizations face heftier fines and penalties for instances of misconduct. Effectively mitigating the repercussions of fraud necessitates businesses to allocate resources towards establishing a robust anti-fraud compliance program. This program should encompass anti-fraud policies and procedures, reporting mechanisms, training on said policies and procedures, and initiatives to enhance awareness. These are commonly undertaken by most of the companies, but they must even consider revamping their board filled with more women brains and management and also more women employees on par with male employees. This doesn't mean that they must hire incapable people just to hire more women employees, but training should be given to make them more capable.

The 2020 PWC Global Economic Survey on crime and fraud revealed that 46% of organizations disclosed

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experiencing fraud within the preceding two years. While many business owners primarily associate fraud with external threats, the study showed that 31% of reported fraud originated from internal participants, and an additional 26% resulted from collusion between internal parties and external actors. In essence, a combined total of 57% of the fraud incidents analyzed by PWC occurred with the involvement of an employee.

As per a 2022 report from CFS on occupational fraud and abuse, employee fraud imposes an average cost of $8,300 on businesses. These incidents typically persist for an entire year before being identified. Types of employee fraud includes theft, embezzlement, kickbacks, benefits fraud, payroll fraud, time theft Etc. There are many reasons for fraud like remote working, increased digitization, weekend controls etc. The heightened emphasis on ethics and corporate governance in organizations has elevated the significance of the role played by independent directors as a potent deterrent against fraudulent mismanagement and lapses in corporate governance. The disruptions in business brought about by the pandemic have accentuated the necessity for vigilance and the reinforcement of governance frameworks. Historical data indicates that instances of business disruptions or crises are often succeeded by an increase in the prevalence of fraudulent practices. Investigating the impact of gender on reducing misconduct and enhancing transparency in the workplace holds immense significance as it unveils potential disparities that may hinder a fair and inclusive professional environment. Diverse perspectives, including those related to gender, contribute to more informed decision-making and effective risk management. By delving into this aspect, the research can shed light on how diversity at the board level positively influences governance, leading to the implementation of policies that enhance organizational resilience, ethical standards, and long-term sustainability, benefitting both the company and its stakeholders

Review of Literature

In the 2021 study titled "Being transgender at work" by David Baboolall, Sarah Greenberg, and Maurice Obeid, it was found that over 50% of transgender employees feel uncomfortable disclosing their transgender identity in the workplace. Additionally, they perceive a lower level of support compared to their cisgender colleagues. “Women in the Workplace 2021,” (2021), Tiffany Burns, while there has been improvement in the representation of women, progress remains uneven. Women managers are increasingly taking on a more active role in supporting their teams and serving as champions for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). According to Shefali Anand (2022), although many organizations have long aspired to enhance diversity, it is only in the past two years that a substantial number have initiated efforts to actively pursue this goal. The key Elements of an Impactful DEI Integration Strategy (2022) create a self-sustaining ecosystem simple action like installing inclusion practices as an intrinsic value into employee onboarding, designing the restrooms as gender neutral, adopting the right technology to add the cost evolving the medical policy to cover gender transition surgery. According to William Newburry (2022), the implementation of national-level Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) policies is linked to economic advancement, with potential implications at the firm level. This association can lead to increased creativity, enhanced adaptability, and improved problem-solving capabilities. Dr. Giriraj Kiradoo (2020) emphasizes that DE&I constitute critical components for building a successful and sustainable workforce. Organizations stand to gain from enhanced performance, greater innovation, and improved employee engagement and retention rates. Oluwatoy in Esther (2023) suggests that the inefficiency in applying forensic techniques contributes to loopholes responsible for certain cyber fraud incidents in the banking industry. To mitigate fraud, there is a need for the integration of forensic accounting management control systems and forensic accounting. Seterra D. Burleson, Kristen D. Eggler, and Debra A. (2022) point out that major organizations are adopting remote and hybrid work arrangements while concurrently prioritizing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) in the post-COVID-19 work era. This shift presents new challenges in socializing organizational newcomers. Francois Goxe and Michael Viegas Pires (2019) identified various types of discourse and discursive frameworks in L'Oréal's corporate communication addressing diversity issues, including rationalistic, societal, and appropriative discourse. Muhammad Ali and Oluremi B. Ayoko (2020) drew on social identity theory and faultlines theory to explore the formation of gender and age faultlines in a board, proposing and testing a U-shaped relationship between board size and faultlines strength. Sandra Sun-Ah Ponting and Alana Dillette (2023) presented a framework for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) practices, emphasizing the intersection between individual agency and organizational structure, with insights derived from structuration theory. Nisha Nair and Neharika Vohra (2015) highlighted the shift in discourse from diversity to inclusion, examining the nuanced meanings and interpretations of these terms. Kriti KS and Ramesh Pai (2021) aimed to consolidate literature on workforce diversity and inclusion,

exploring empirical and conceptual studies published between 1987 and 2021 to identify future research avenues. William Newburry (2022) provided insights into the dimensions and challenges of DEI in an international business environment. Antoshchenko (2023) emphasized the need to clarify the roles of leaders in implementing DEI strategies in large multinational corporations. Prof. (Dr.) Shalini Garg (2023) surveyed employees in IT organizations in Delhi-NCR, India, revealing responses to diversity management through legal mandates, programs, policies, and strategies. Dr. Tagaram Kondala Ram (2023) examined the connection between workplace inclusion and employee engagement, using a structured survey of individuals working for multinational enterprises in India's Public Capital Region. Riann Singh (2023) stressed the importance of not just diversity but also inclusion, where different perspectives are valued in organizations. Dana L. Ott (2022) proposed initiatives to harness the strengths and perspectives of neurodivergent employees for improved effectiveness and performance in MNCs. Irwansyah (2023) found that corporate governance, internal audit, and internal control have significant effects on the tendency of fraud in BUMN in Bengkulu City. A study on whistleblowing, fraud prevention, and fraud awareness (2023) revealed positive effects of whistleblowing and good governance on fraud awareness, while fraud awareness did not significantly impact fraud prevention. MEIRYANI (2023) aimed to determine factors influencing the implementation of the whistleblowing system in supporting fraud prevention, examining whistleblowing policy as a moderating variable on the relationship between factors influencing the whistleblowing system and the implementation of good corporate governance.

From the above review of literature, it is found that, many researchers have done work on DEI in increasing work place productivity and giving various forms of facilities to them, but the connection is missing with regard to reducing frauds in the workplace. This research uniquely bridges the gap between fraud studies and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), investigating the correlation between DEI initiatives and fraud prevention across all organizational levels.

Objectives

To find out the impact of representation of women on board in reducing misconduct and increasing transparency in the workplace.

To find the inclusiveness of Racial and Ethnically diversified workforce.

Research Methodology

This research focuses on DEI in connection to frauds in Indian IT Companies and 180 responses from the employees working in Listed Indian IT Companies are collected. This study has employed a combination of primary data and secondary data sources. Primary data was collected by circulating google form. Secondary data has been collected from various literatures, websites, journals etc.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

Table 1: Depicting the Descriptive statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Gender	180	1	3	1.56	.541	.204	.181	-1.099	.360
Age	180	1	3	1.49	.584	.725	.181	-.445	.360
Designation	180	1	2	1.13	.341	2.175	.181	2.763	.360
Experience	180	1	4	2.31	1.211	.221	.181	-1.528	.360
Fraud in working place	180	1	3	1.80	.688	.283	.181	-.878	.360
Occupational fraud	180	1	3	2.22	.759	-.397	.181	-1.165	.360
Past twoyears Fraud	180	1		1.84	.700	.224	.181	-.940	.360

Efforts in creating diverse workforce	180	1	5	3.56	1.048	-.797	.181	.363	.360
Racial or Ethnic	180	1	3	1.84	.471	-.478	.181	.794	.360
Reduced misconduct	180	1	5	3.18	1.163	-.094	.181	-.691	.360
Women on board	180	1	5	3.18	1.291	-.084	.181	-.892	.360
Relationship conflict	180	1	5	2.80	1.049	-.179	.181	-.837	.360
Empathy	180	1	5	3.29	1.226	-.422	.181	-.546	.360
CG practices	180	1	5	3.56	1.004	-.489	.181	.129	.360
LGBT	180	1	2	1.42	.495	.318	.181	-1.921	.360
Respondingto LGBT	180	1	3	1.76	.850	.492	.181	-1.441	.360
Differences are respected	180	1	5	3.51	1.006	-1.298	.181	1.162	.360
Less frauds	180	1	3	1.73	.882	.550	.181	-1.495	.360
DHB	180	1	3	1.84	.633	.136	.181	-.552	.360
Valid N (listwise)	180								

Table 2: Depicting the Correlations

Variables / Pearson Correlation Sig.(2 - tailed)	Gender	Age	Exp	Fraud in WP	Occ fraud	Eff div WF
Gender	1	0.055 (0.463)	0.129 (0.085)	0.120 (0.0109)	-0.139 (0.063)	-0.114 (0.128)
Age	0.055 (0.463)	1	.637 (0.000)	0.145 (0.053)	0.095 (0.203)	0.065 (0.386)
Experience	0.129 (0.085)	.637 (0.000)	1	0.032 (0.668)	0.143 (0.055)	0.004 (0.958)
Fraud in working place	0.120(0.109)	-0.145 (0.053)	-0.032 (0.668)	1	0.000 (1.00)	-0.093 (0.214)
Occupational fraud	-0.139 (0.063)	-0.095 (0.203)	0.143 (0.055)	0.000 (1.000)	1	.237 (0.001)
Efforts in creating diverse workforce	-0.114 (0.128)	0.065 (0.386)	0.004 (0.958)	-0.093 (0.214)	.237 (0.001)	1
Racial or Ethnic	.253 (0.001)	-.210 (0.005)	0.046 (0.538)	.248 (0.001)	.160 (0.032)	.222 (0.003)
Reduced misconduct	0.020 (0.793)	.200 (0.007)	.230 (0.002)	151 (0.043)	0.132 (0.077)	.414 (0.000)
Women on board	0.018 (0.813)	0.121 (0.105)	.265 (0.000)	-.262 (0.000)	.302 (0.000)	.505 (0.000)
Lgbt resp	0.005 (0.943)	0.118 (0.114)	0.143 (0.056)	0.107 (0.153)	.158 (0.034)	0.003 (0.970)
Diff are respected	-	0.067 (0.373)	.181 (0.015)	-0.013 (0.863)	0.085 (0.259)	.429 (0.000)
Less frauds	-.156 (0.036)	-.179 (0.016)	0.036 (0.629)	.206 (0.005)	-0.045 (0.553)	-0.129 (0.084)
Corporate governance	0.046 (0.543)	.297 (0.000)	.298 (0.000)	-.226 (0.002)	0.072 (0.339)	.300 (0.000)
Relationship Conflict	-0.039 (0.600)	-0.058 (0.46)	0.137 (0.066)	-.211 (0.005)	-0.028 (0.708)	.387 (0.000)
Empathy	0.094 (0.212)	.239 (0.001)	.285 (0.000)	-.196 (0.008)	.147 (0.049)	.431 (0.000)

Table 3: Depicting the Correlations of other Variables

Correlations									
Variables	Pearson Correlation Sig.(2-tailed)	Race & Eth	Mis	Wob	lgbt resp	diff res	less frauds	CG prac	rela con	empathy
Gender		.253 (0.001)	0.020 (0.793)	0.018 (0.813)	0.005 (0.943)	-0.032 (0.670)	-.156 (0.036)	0.046 (0.543)	-0.039 (0.600)	0.094 (0.212)
Age		-.210 (0.005)	.200 (0.007)	0.121 (0.105)	-0.118 (0.114)	0.067 (0.373)	-.179 (0.016)	.297 (0.000)	-0.058 (0.436)	.239 (0.001)
Experience		0.046 (0.538)	.230 (0.002)	.265 (0.000)	-0.143 (0.056)	.181 (0.015)	0.036 (0.629)	.298 (0.000)	0.137 (0.066)	.285 (0.000)
Fraud in working place		.248 (0.001)	-.151 (0.043)	-.262 (0.000)	0.107 (0.153)	-0.013 (0.863)	.206 (0.005)	-.226 (0.002)	-.211 (0.005)	-.196 (0.008)
Occupational fraud		.160 (0.032)	0.132 (0.077)	.302 (0.000)	-.158 (0.034)	0.085 (0.259)	-0.045 (0.553)	0.072 (0.339)	-0.028 (0.708)	.147 (0.049)
Efforts in creating diverse workforce		.222 (0.003)	.414 (0.000)	.505 (0.000)	0.003 (0.970)	.429 (0.000)	-0.129 (0.084)	.300 (0.000)	.387 (0.000)	.431 (0.000)
Racial or Ethnic		1	0.214 (0.004)	0.340 (0.000)	0.072 (0.337)	0.358 (0.000)	0.007 (0.924)	0.137 (0.067)	0.118 (0.115)	.195 (0.009)
Reduced mis		0.214 (0.004)	1	0.663 (0.000)	-0.295 (0.000)	0.667 (0.000)	-0.280 (0.000)	.412 (0.000)	.579 (0.000)	.544 (0.000)
Women on board		.340 (0.000)	.663 (0.000)	1	-.164 (0.028)	.635 (0.000)	-.213 (0.004)	.630 (0.000)	.604 (0.000)	.801 (0.000)
Respect LGBT		0.072 (0.337)	-.295 (0.000)	-.164 (0.028)	1	0.016 (0.828)	.360 (0.000)	-.180 (0.015)	-0.080 (0.284)	-0.039 (0.602)
Differences respected		.358 (0.000)	.667 (0.000)	.635 (0.000)	0.016 (0.828)	1	0.003 (0.964)	.315 (0.000)	.415 (0.000)	.460 (0.000)
less frauds		0.007 (0.924)	-.280 (0.000)	-.213 (0.004)	.360 (0.000)	0.003 (0.964)	1	-.261 (0.000)	-0.058 (0.439)	-.321 (0.000)
Corporate Governance practices		0.137 (0.067)	.412 (0.000)	.630 (0.000)	-.180 (0.015)	.315 (0.000)	-.261 (0.000)	1	.616 (0.000)	.777 (0.000)
Relation ship conflict		0.118 (0.115)	.579 (0.000)	.604 (0.000)	-0.080 (0.284)	.415 (0.000)	-0.058 (0.439)	.616 (0.000)	1	.549 (0.000)
Empathy		.1959 (0.009)	.544 (0.000)	.801 (0.000)	-0.039 (0.602)	.460 (0.000)	-.321 (0.000)	.777 (0.000)	.549 (0.000)	1

H0: Women Representation on board doesn't impact significantly for reducing misconduct.

H1: Women Representation on board impacts significantly for reducing misconduct.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.663a	.440	.437	.873

Table 5: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	106.583	1	106.583	139.777	.000b
	Residual	135.728	178	.763		
	Total	242.311	179			

a. Dependent Variable: Reduced misconduct

b. Predictors: (Constant),Women on board

Table 6: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.278	.173		7.374	.000	.936	1.620
	Wob	.598	.051	.663	11.823	.000	.498	.698

The results from both the ANOVA and regression analysis suggest a robust and significant association between the representation of women on the board and the reduction of misconduct within the organization.

Findings and Discussions

Fraud occurrences within organizations appear to be unrelated to age and experience differentials. Notably, there is a positive correlation between the presence of women on the board and a decrease in misconduct within the organization. This correlation is attributed to the perceived higher levels of empathy demonstrated by women in the workplace, contributing to a reduction in conflicts. Additionally, organizations are actively promoting diversity by encouraging the inclusion of individuals from various racial and ethnic backgrounds. This emphasis on diversity has proven effective in fostering inclusivity and has been observed to contribute to a decrease in occupational fraud within the workforce. The paper is limited to certain variables and confined to regression test, there is lot of scope for further research.

Conclusion

The active promotion of diversity, particularly in terms of racial and ethnic backgrounds, emerges as a strategic initiative for organizations. The findings indicate that fostering inclusivity through diversity initiatives has proven effective in mitigating occupational fraud within the workforce. This implies that a diverse and inclusive workplace culture may serve as a protective factor against fraudulent activities, possibly by fostering a more harmonious and cooperative work environment.

In essence, the study suggests that organizations stand to benefit from not only promoting gender diversity on boards but also from adopting broader diversity and inclusion practices. These efforts not only align with ethical considerations but also contribute to a reduction in fraudulent behaviour.

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