



## CLIMATE FOR INCLUSION, BELONGINGNESS, AND DISCRIMINATION: THEIR INFLUENCE ON JOB SATISFACTION IN PAKISTAN'S PUBLIC HOSPITALS

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### Abstract

*There is growing difficulty in the management of the new complex workforce in workplaces, especially in the health sector by human resource leaders. In the time diversity management has received attraction, there is scarce study inquiring about the combined effects on climate of relating inclusion, belongingness, and discrimination to job satisfaction. This analysis is a step to fill this gap through the analysis of data obtained on 200 employees within the context of the public hospitals of Pakistan using structured questionnaire using SPSS 23. The research demonstrates some important findings using the convenience sampling via descriptive statistics of data: reliability analysis, correlation, and regression analysis. There were excellent positive correlations between inclusion climate ( $r=0.432$ ) and belongingness ( $r=0.345$ ) and job satisfaction whereas, discrimination was strongly negative ( $r= -0.794$ ). These strong findings can be validated by regression analysis ( $\beta=.344$  to inclusion,  $\beta=.290$  to belongingness, and  $\beta=.251$  to discrimination) and point to the fact that developing the environments of inclusiveness and deepening interpersonal relationships between personnel will go a long way in positively impacting job satisfaction and in offsetting the negative impacts of discrimination in the workplace. The paper empirically shows the healthcare administrators how to come up with specific diversity programs, training sessions, and policy changes that can foster a sense of belongingness and curb discriminatory behaviours thus enhancing the wellbeing and the overall organizational performance in the Pakistani health sector.*

**Keywords:** Climate for Inclusion, Belongingness, Discrimination, Job Satisfaction, Public Hospitals

### Introduction

Inclusive concepts are causing a buzz as organizations realize its importance as a strategy in dealing with more heterogeneous workplace (Patterson et al., 2025; Siraj & Hagen, 2023). The current definitions represent the concept of inclusion as complex, containing elements of organizational culture reformation and strategic integration of deliberate diversity (Adil & Kamal, 2016). As indicated through the social identity theory, "inclusion" is a feeling of being appreciated as a unique employee with an authentic sense of belonging shared by the rest of the employees (Mor Barak, 2015). It is not a simple representation, but rather, meaningful involvement in decision-making activities and equal access to growth prospects (Shore et al., 2017). The concept of belongingness is analogous but dissimilar; it captures the feelings and psychological dedication of employees in their organization (Ma et al., 2025; Ware et al., 2025), and may mediate the relationship between the use of inclusion practices and desirable work outcomes (Brimhall et al., 2014). Discrimination on the other hand comes in the form of institutional or interpersonal discrimination on the basis of identity marker such as race, gender or ethnicity (Cox, 2001) and it is a barrier to full participation at the workplace. Being the affective judgment of working experience (Locke, 1976), job satisfaction becomes an important outcome variable, even more so to these organizational climate factors.



The demographics of global workforce are becoming diversified more than ever before (Aman et al., 2023), which poses pressure and demands on human service organizations (HSOs). Although diversity has a potential to offer certain benefits such as increased innovation and market responsiveness (Fiaz & Fahim, 2023; Van Marrewijk, 2004), its successful management can only be achieved with some strategic guidelines to ensure reduced chances of being involved in conflicts and high turnover (Wooten, 2008). The studies suggest that the potential to escalate the discrimination issue is present in the case of uncontrolled diversity (Low et al., 2023; Ly, 2024), especially when a high-stress situation such as healthcare is involved (Obuobisa-Darko & Sokro, 2023). The inclusion in this industry is especially significant due to its peculiarities - the presence of hierarchical structures, emotional demands, and life-critical processes (Kollen, 2015). In such cases as cultural diversity coupled with resource limitations at the intersection in terms of workforce stability and quality care delivery in the setting of public hospitals in Pakistan, an awareness of such dynamics can be of utmost importance (Iqbal et al., 2022). Through the analysis of case study research, this paper discusses the relationship between inclusion climate, belongingness, and discrimination on job satisfaction of healthcare workers in Pakistan that served important gap in the organizational literature in the Global South and an evidence-based advice regarding the handling of healthcare human resource (HR) in the context of developing economies.

### Literature Review

The number of men and women with diverse cultures, ethics, regions, and languages is increasing day by day in service organizations such as hospitals, which are creating many problems and opportunities for organizations. Because the values and culture of the region keep on changing, this is why public service organizations have felt the responsibility to manage the diverse workforce effectively (Sarkar et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2025). The terms 'inclusion' and 'diversity' are sometimes used interchangeably, but diversity encompasses elements within an organization or group, depicting the differences between people, such as ethnic group, race, culture, and values, in society (Asriati, 2025; Herdem, 2019). However, inclusion has a different meaning; it is defined as the worth that employees feel for their distinguishing features and capabilities, which involves a state of attachment and belonging (Mor Barak, 2015; Nishii, 2013).

Diversity planning and management involves a systematic HR approach used for training, coaching, selection of employees, and other related tactics and programs that the organization uses to nurture diversity in the employees (Roberson, 2006). The climate of inclusion is described as the perceptions of the employees as a whole in which organizations respect each employee equally and give value to them (Mor Barak et al., 2016). A study found that inclusion in employees has positive results that lead to job satisfaction, trust, creativity, and employee engagement (Brimhall et al., 2014; Travis & Mor Barak, 2010). The feeling of trust and power of acceptance increase when the employees perceive that all the employees are similar to each other (Tajfel, 1982). The climate for inclusion is raised when there is a balance between belonging to a group in an organization and when their capabilities and skills are appreciated by the organization (Shore et al., 2011).

The situation of the employees being involved in the organization causes them to have a better attitude and causes organizational commitment as well as a job satisfaction (Kim et al., 2021).

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant positive relationship between climate for inclusion and job satisfaction.

Research demonstrated that the state of belongingness is the motivational factor between people, and deficiency of belongingness causes mental disorders, poor health, anxiety, and stress (Sarkar et al., 2024). The workgroup attachment and belongingness of employment are positively related to job satisfaction and an increase in employee performance. The interpersonal relations of employees with each other have some effects on the belongingness and the sense of attachment of employees (Lee et al., 2022). This means that the relationship of employees is a crucial aspect of the satisfaction of employees.

Belongingness is directly associated with diversity planning and inclusiveness. Shore et al. (2011) model indicates that belongingness is an important factor that confirms inclusive working conditions, which leads to a high level of state of belongingness.



Employees are self-motivated to make rapport and retain connections with people and personal relationships in any workgroup or company setting (Iqbal et al., 2022). There is no doubt that the feelings and emotions of belongingness related to employee and social bonds in the workplace increase commitment and job satisfaction (Carr et al., 2003).

**H2:** There is a positive significant relationship between feelings of belongingness and job satisfaction.

The dark side of inclusion is discrimination, harassment, unethical practices, and other types of exclusion. *Discrimination* is described as “the biasness towards a person on the bases of his/her ethnicity” (Cox, 1993). Discrimination may lead to a negative impact on compensation, promotion, training, selection, recruitment, and other matters (Gamero, et al., 2025; Mor Barak, 2011). This may be at individual, group, organizational, and even national levels (Ensher et al., 2001). Furthermore, it is immoral to treat someone inferior to other on basis of colour, race, gender, ethnicity, nation, culture, and many other factors.

There are numerous forms of discrimination. Each form of discrimination may have negative consequences on employee performance. The dark side of discrimination comprises low organizational commitment, reduced motivation, and reduced job satisfaction of employees (Mor Barak & Levin, 2002), as well as poorer health and low life satisfaction (Gruber & Bjorn, 1982). Mostly, the firms have policies and rules to reduce the level of discrimination within them. Ensher et al. (2001) reported that the negative attitudes and perceptions of co-workers, bosses, and supervisors were negatively associated with organizational citizenship behaviour and job satisfaction. However, the discrimination of employee in the work setting has a negative impact on all staff, irrespective of their identities (Ensher et al., 2001).

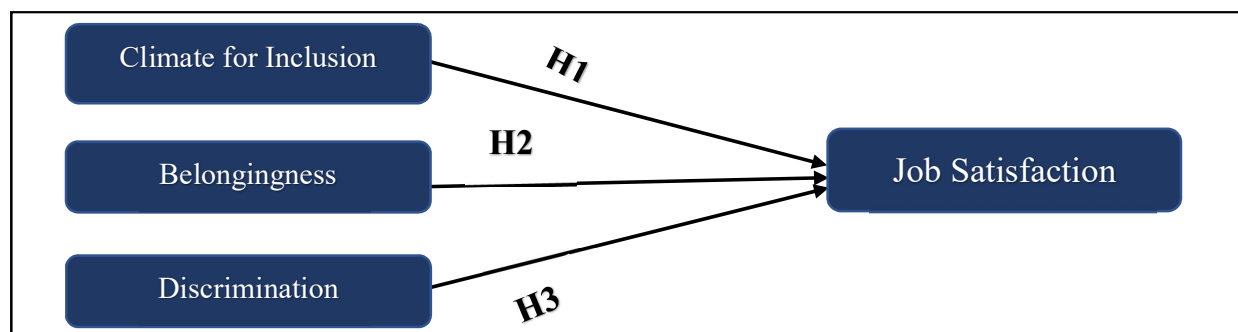
This leads to a solid conclusion that the formal complaints of discrimination are true in every case. However, some victims of harassment do not officially file a case (Gruber & Bjorn, 1982; Gutek, 2001). Staff of the organizations sometimes feel hesitant to report the dark incident in order to avoid any retaliation and negative consequences. The satisfaction of employees falls after such incidents. The organizational climate theory shows how employees perceive the environment of the workplace. The employees perceive the organization’s climate on the basis of its policies, practices, standard operation procedures, rules, ethical guidelines, routines, and rewards. These policies and procedures shape the personality, attitudes, and values of the employees at the workplace.

**H3:** There is a negative relationship between climate for discrimination and job satisfaction.

The following picture depicts the theoretical framework.

**Figure 1**

*Theoretical Framework*



## Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional design to examine the relationships between workplace climate factors (inclusion, belongingness, discrimination) and job satisfaction among staff in Pakistan’s public hospitals. Primary data was collected via a structured 20-item questionnaire, administered to 200 employees (response rate: 80% from 251 contacted), maintaining a 10:1 sample-to-item ratio to ensure



statistical adequacy. Given operational constraints in healthcare settings, a convenience sampling approach was used, though efforts were made to include diverse roles (59% doctors/nurses, 31% technical staff, 10% admin) and age groups (15% <25; 30% 26–35; 27% 36–45; 20% 46–55; 8% >55).

Climate for Inclusion was measured through employees' perceptions of equal respect, value, and appreciation adapted from Mor Barak (2015). Belongingness was assessed as emotional attachment to colleagues and organization (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Discrimination was captured unfair treatment based on gender, race, or ethnicity (Cox, 1993). Job Satisfaction was evaluated via self-reported contentment and motivation (Locke, 1976). The questionnaire was pretested with 30 hospital staff to confirm clarity and face validity. In this study, the software SPSS 23 has been used in order to process the data of respondents while using the statistical techniques of graphical analysis, descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, correlation, and regression.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval was obtained from relevant authorities and all the participants provided informed consent, and responses were anonymized to ensure confidentiality.

### **Results**

This study has collected data from the respondents of five different age groups. Approximately 15 percent of the respondents were under 25. The second age group consisted of the age group of 26-35, and over 30 percent of our participants belonged to this group. Approximately 27 percent of respondents were a part of the third age group of 36 to 45, while only 20 percent of participants belonged to the fourth age group category of 46 to 55 and 8 percent above 55. The ratio of male participants was excess in number than females in this study, with female respondents 45 percent and males 55 percent out of the total. It clearly shows that the number of doctors and nurses was slightly more than others. In terms of percentage, almost 59 percent of participants were doctors and nurses, while 31 percent were other technical staff, and approximately 10 percent were admin staff.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics*

|                       | N   | Range | Sum    | Mean   | SD     | Variance | Skewness |
|-----------------------|-----|-------|--------|--------|--------|----------|----------|
| Job Satisfaction      | 200 | 4.00  | 619.50 | 3.0975 | .81706 | .668     | -.532    |
| Climate for Inclusion | 200 | 3.20  | 704.00 | 3.5200 | .70176 | .492     | -.571    |
| Belongingness         | 200 | 4.00  | 678.33 | 3.3917 | .87616 | .768     | -.353    |
| Discrimination        | 200 | 3.50  | 718.25 | 3.5913 | .85330 | .728     | -.445    |

For a distribution to be symmetrical, the co-efficient of skewness should be between -1 to +1 (Doane & Seward, 2011). In this study, all values of skewness are within the range, which means the distribution of the variables is symmetrical. The value of the mean for job satisfaction is 3.0975, the value for climate for inclusion is 3.5200, belongingness is 3.3917, and discrimination is 3.5913.

### **Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's alpha shows the correlatedness of items to each other. It is a tool to test the items that items are producing the same results each time. It is necessary to check whether the scale is reliable or not. In our study, the results show that all constructs have alpha 0.761, which means it is good and satisfactory. The items used in simple and basic research must have a reliability of .70 or better (Nunnally, 1978).

**Table 2**

*Reliability Analysis Using Cronbach's Alpha*

| Construct            | Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) | Interpretation                    | Reference Standard                  |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| All study constructs | 0.761                         | Good and satisfactory reliability | $\alpha \geq 0.70$ (Nunnally, 1978) |

### **Correlation Analysis**

The finding ( $r=0.432$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) shows that there is a significant and moderate positive correlation





between climate for inclusion and job satisfaction. Therefore, it is appropriate to say that H1 is supported, as there is a positive relationship between climate for inclusion and job satisfaction. The result ( $r=0.345$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) shows a significant and moderate positive correlation between belongingness and job satisfaction. So, the H2 is supported. The result ( $r=-0.794$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) shows a significant and strong negative correlation between discrimination and job satisfaction. So, the H3 is supported.

**Table 3**  
*Correlation Analysis*

| Hypothesis | Variables                                | Correlation (r) | p-value | Strength & Direction | Interpretation                                |
|------------|--|-----------------|---------|----------------------|---|
| H1         | Climate for Inclusion → Job Satisfaction | 0.432           | 0.000   | Moderate positive    | Supported (significant positive relationship) |
| H2         | Belongingness → Job Satisfaction         | 0.345           | 0.000   | Moderate positive    | Supported (significant positive relationship) |
| H3         | Discrimination → Job Satisfaction        | -0.794          | 0.000   | Strong negative      | Supported (significant negative relationship) |

**Table 4**  
*Model Summary*

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .701 <sup>a</sup> | .491     | .490              | .68825                     |

This table shows the results of R square and Adjusted R square. The adjusted R square is .490, which concluded that at least 49 percent of the variation in the dependent variables is adjusted for the number of predictors. It also indicates that the sample size that was used is sufficient since the difference between the R square and adjusted R square is 0.189.

**Table 5**  
*Linear Regression Coefficients<sup>a</sup>*

| Model |                       | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | T      | Sig. |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|       |                       | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |      |
| 1     | (Constant)            | .342                        | .304       |                           | 1.126  | .262 |
|       | Climate for Inclusion | .344                        | .075       | .295                      | 4.585  | .000 |
|       | Belongingness         | .290                        | .059       | .204                      | 3.232  | .001 |
|       | Discrimination        | -.251                       | .061       | -.262                     | -4.144 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

The result ( $B=0.344$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) shows a significant positive relationship between climate for inclusion and job satisfaction. The result ( $B=0.290$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) shows a significant positive relationship between belongingness and job satisfaction. The significant negative relationship between discrimination and job satisfaction is also indicated by the result ( $B=-0.251$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). It implies that when there is more discrimination, job satisfaction will also decrease among employees. Comparatively, the value of climate for inclusion ( $B=.344$ ) is high among variables, which means it has more contribution and belongingness ( $B=.290$ ) is lower, and discrimination has ( $B=-.251$ ) value.

**Table 6**  
*ANOVA Results for Model Significance*

| Model      | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F-value | p-value |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|---------|
| Regression | 42.15          | 3   | 14.05       | 29.67   | .000    |
| Residual   | 43.82          | 196 | 0.47        | -       | -       |
| Total      | 85.97          | 199 | -           | -       | -       |

The larger F-value of 29.67, significant p-value of .000 in this study indicates that combined effects of



climate for inclusion, belongingness, and discrimination plays a significant role to explain the variance of job satisfaction. The sum of squares in the row labelled as Regression (42.15) measures the gain against the ground (residual sum of squares = 43.82), and thus predictors as a group contribute to an increase in precision of prediction. This table plays a very big role in justification of regression analysis in this research study.

**Table 7**

*Multicollinearity Diagnostics*

| Predictor             | Tolerance | VIF  |
|-----------------------|-----------|------|
| Climate for Inclusion | 0.82      | 1.22 |
| Belongingness         | 0.78      | 1.28 |
| Discrimination        | 0.85      | 1.18 |

This table 7 examines the risk that predictors are correlated, and that regression answers may thus be skewed. The existence of tolerance values greater than 0.78 and Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs; < 1.28) indicate the fact that multicollinearity is not an issue in the model (rules of thumb: VIF < 5, Tolerance > 0.2). As an example, the VIF of 1.22 of the Climate for Inclusion indicates that this measure will still have a unique contribution, as other predictors explain 22 percent of the variable.

**Table 8**

*Effect Size Comparison (Cohen's  $f^2$ )*

| Predictor             | $f^2$ | Interpretation      |
|-----------------------|-------|---------------------|
| Climate for Inclusion | 0.18  | Medium effect       |
| Belongingness         | 0.12  | Small-medium effect |
| Discrimination        | 0.28  | Medium-large effect |

Calculation

$$f^2 = (R^2 \text{ included} - R^2 \text{ excluded}) / (1 - R^2 \text{ full model})$$

Although p-values can be considered as evidence of statistical relevance, this table allows quantifying the practical effect of each predictor. The  $f^2$  values provided by Cohen reveal that discrimination influences the most ( $f^2 = 0.28$ , "medium-large"), with the second impact being produced by climate for inclusion ( $f^2 = 0.18$ , "medium") and the third one affected by belongingness ( $f^2 = 0.12$ , "small-medium"). These metrics would provide a scope of findings: e.g. in the discrimination study, researchers can expect more concrete results in eradicating dissatisfaction job, rather than in encouraging belongingness. This table translates numbers into business-level action.

The study in hand majorly focuses on the issues of job satisfaction in the healthcare worker population by analysing the factor study of 200 participants using five age categories and 59 percent of the group comprised of doctors and nurses. In the sample, there were slightly more male (55%) than female (45%) individuals, and the descriptive statistics proved that the data was distributed symmetrically in all the variables since the values of skew were located in the acceptable range of between -1 and +1. The reliability of scale was found to be high, and its Cronbach alpha value was 0.761, which implies that the scales had good internal consistency.

Correlation analysis demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and main predictors the climate for inclusion ( $r = 0.432$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and belongingness ( $r = 0.345$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) had moderate positive correlations, whereas discrimination ( $r = -0.794$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) was strongly negatively related. These results promoted all the three hypotheses (H1, H2, and H3). These relationships were further explained through regression analysis, where the model explicates 49 percent of job satisfaction (adjusted  $R^2 = 0.490$ ). Climate for inclusion ( $\beta = 0.295$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) proved to be the most powerful positive predictor followed by belongingness ( $\beta = 0.204$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) but discrimination ( $\beta = -0.262$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) had a significant negative influence on job satisfaction. These findings indicate the need to promote healthier work environments and minimize current levels of discrimination in health organizations to improve staff satisfaction. The cross-sectional nature of the study and the sample population comprised mainly of doctors and nurses can be a limitation however. This research has limitations as future studies could study this over periods and a wider



range of occupational groups. All the findings would be helpful in establishing organization policies to transform the culture of an organization and enhance the well-being of its employees.

### Discussion

The research is grounded on the survey-collected data from the staff of public hospitals of Pakistan. The objective of this study was to explore which key factor is most significant for the improvement of job satisfaction in the staff of the hospitals. Additionally, it indicates the fact that staff believe that such aspects as climate of inclusion and belongingness have positive influence on their satisfaction axis with the job. When the hospital administration respects their unique characteristics, values their services, and treats them equally, they will be more satisfied and contend with their jobs. Job satisfaction is positive related to the degree of belongingness. When the feelings of attachment, interpersonal relations with co-workers, and binding with peers are more, the satisfaction level will also be higher.

The discrimination is negatively linked with the job satisfaction. In such a scenario, the number of discrimination based on the parameters of age, disability, gender, race, and ethnical group increases, the hospital workers will be even less pleased with the job. The current study demonstrates the support of the past studies conducted by Roberson (2006) and Shore et al. (2011). In addition, the past researches concerning the organizational climate and employee results are also proven in this work, indicating that a positive organizational climate results in the overall positive results at the workplace concerning the diversity, inclusion, and belongingness in the companies. The organizational climate theory that was applied in the present study demonstrates that when inclusion and belongingness Climate is positive, job satisfaction will arise. Conversely, the intolerant measure of discrimination also led to a decline in job satisfaction of the workers. This study paper systematically explored the effect of three factors of climate of inclusion, belongingness, and discrimination on the employees of hospitals of Pakistan in order to rate their job satisfaction.

### Limitations

In this analysis, there are a number of weaknesses, which need to be mentioned. First, the cross-sectional design does not allow drawing conclusions about the causal relationships between the variables due to the use of the single moment of data collection. Second, this results in the lack of generalizability of findings to other sectors or cultures due to the focus on the Pakistani public hospitals. The researchers can also expect that the use of self-reported data can cause bias (e.g., social desirability, common method variance) which makes it possible that relationships between variables are overestimated or hidden altogether. A possible solution to overcome the current limitations of the research in the future is to use longitudinal research designs to monitor these changes over a given period and increase the sample size by including other private healthcare institutions that can be used in comparison with the sample used.

### Future Recommendations

In order to complement this research, one of the future study topics could be the study of inclusion and discrimination dynamics by using longitudinal designs, which would help to get a better grasp on how the specified factors contribute to job satisfaction in the long term. The results of comparative research in the spheres of public and private healthcare may disclose the contextual variations of organizational climate and outcomes of the employees. The qualitative addition can involve the use of interviews or focus groups in order to give a more in-depth overview on the way employees experience a state of belongingness and discrimination that can complement the quantitative results. These would increase the theoretical and practical implications of diversity management research in healthcare.

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