



**Investigating factors that influence inclusion to enhance performance at Themba  
Wendy Moloi Petroleum Services.**

**By**

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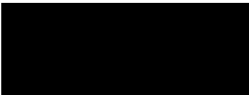
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## **ABSTRACT**

The study aims to investigate the factors of inclusion that enhance performance at Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum Services (TWM). A qualitative approach was used, involving a sample of 8 participants who participated in a face-to-face recorded interview. The study's objectives are to determine the factors that influence inclusion and identify the drivers and challenges of inclusion at TWM Petroleum services. Inclusion has become one of the most significant assets in most organisations in promoting equal opportunities for all, regardless of their backgrounds. Organisations have seen the need for inclusion and its impact on their performance. Making people feel appreciated, giving them a sense of belonging, and providing unwavering support will impact their performance, resulting in the organisation doing exceptionally well.

Existing literature on inclusion points to the factors contributing to the organisation's improved performance, including creating an inclusive environment, inclusive organisational culture, and inclusive leadership. An environment where employees can express their opinions establishes a sense of belongingness, makes one feel like part of the team, and creates an inclusive culture that looks beyond race, sexuality, and age. Furthermore, having unbiased leadership and no favouritism amongst the employees results in one team that dedicates itself to its job.

The study looks at how the organisation promotes and introduces inclusion in the team, addresses the challenges that may hinder an inclusive environment, and determines from the employee's point of view if they feel included in the workplace. It also looks at how organisations measure the success of inclusion introduction and determines how it has impacted their performance.

The findings suggest that inclusion improves employee behaviour, removes barriers, assists in identifying the divisive traits that separate the team, and assists the team in focusing on one goal, resulting in improved performance. The study recommends that Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum Services attend to challenges such as lack of flexibility for shift workers, company policies, and cultural differences to foster the inclusive key drivers and observe if they impact the organisation's performance.

## Table of Contents

Permission to Submit.....	i
Declaration.....	ii
Acknowledgment.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
List of tables.....	viii
List of figures.....	viii
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2. Background of the study .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.3. The Rationale of the Study .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.4. Focus of the study .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.5. Significance of the study .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.6. Problem Statement.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.7. Preliminary Literature Review.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.8. Research Methodology.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.9. Managerial Implications .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.10. Aim, Research Questions and Objectives .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.10.1. Aim .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.10.2. Research Questions .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.10.3. Research objectives. ....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.11. Chapter Organisation .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.12. Chapter Summary .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.2. Inclusion in the Petroleum Industry.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.3. Theoretical Framework .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2.3.1. Social identity theory.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2.3.2. Cultural Intelligence Theory.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2.4. Understanding Inclusion and its Benefits.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2.5. Workplace and Employee Performance.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2.6. Influence of an inclusive environment on employee performance.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2.6.1. How to create an inclusive environment.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2.7. Influence of Inclusive Leadership support on employees' Performance .....</b>	<b>20</b>

2.7.1. Benefits of having inclusive leadership in an organisation.....	22
2.8. Influence of inclusive organisational culture on employee performance .....	22
2.8.1. How to create an inclusive organisational culture.....	24
2.8.2. The benefit of having an inclusive organisational culture.....	25
2.9. The challenges of implementing inclusion in the organisation .....	25
2.9.1. Lack of leadership commitment .....	26
2.9.2. Resistance to change.....	27
2.9.3. Inadequate Resources and Support .....	27
2.9.4. Lack of diversity at the top .....	28
2.9.5. Unconscious bias .....	28
2.9.6. Lack of accountability .....	29
2.9.7. Tokenism .....	29
2.10. Chapter Summary .....	30
<b>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>31</b>
3.1. Introduction .....	31
3.2. Research Design and Method .....	31
3.2.1. Research Design .....	31
3.2.2. Research Method.....	31
3.3. Research Philosophy .....	32
3.4. Research Approach Type .....	32
3.5. Research Paradigms .....	33
3.6. Research Population .....	34
3.7. Sampling Method.....	34
3.8. Data Collection Instruments.....	35
3.9. Data Analysis .....	35
3.10. Ethical Considerations .....	36
3.11. Credibility and Trustworthiness of Data.....	37
3.12. Chapter Summary .....	38
<b>CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DATA RESULTS AND DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>39</b>
4.1. Introduction .....	39
4.2. Data Presentation.....	39
4.2.1. Participant Selection .....	39
4.3. Demographics .....	40
4.3.1 Participants Summary .....	40
4.4. Summary of interview responses from participants .....	42

<b>4.5. Themes Generated and Discussions .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>4.5.1. Themes corresponding to Objective 1: Understanding the factors influencing Inclusion at TWM Petroleum Services.....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>4.5.2. Themes corresponding to Objective 2: Challenges of implementing inclusion at TWM Petroleum Services.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>4.5.3. Themes corresponding to Objective 3: Key drivers of inclusion and their impact on production performance at TWM Petroleum Services.....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>4.6. Chapter Summary .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>5.1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>5.2. Summary of the Study .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>5.2.1. Objective 1: To understand the factors influencing the inclusion of employees and its effect on TWM Petroleum services performance.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>5.2.2. Objective 2: To identify the challenges of implementing inclusion initiatives within TWM Petroleum services. ....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>5.2.3. objective 3: To determine the key drivers of inclusion and their impact on the production performance at TWM Petroleum services. ....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>5.3. Study Implications .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>5.3.1. Factors influencing inclusion .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>5.3.2. Challenges of implementing inclusion .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>5.3.3. Drivers of Inclusion.....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>5.4. Study Limitations.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>5.5. Recommendations for future studies.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>5.6. Recommendations for the organisation.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>5.7. Contribution to the field of Knowledge.....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>5.8. Chapter Summary .....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>APPENDIX A1 – CONSENT FORM.....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>APPENDIX A2 – CONSENT FORM.....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>APPENDIX A3 – CONSENT FORM.....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>APPENDIX B – INTERVIEW GUIDE.....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>APPENDIX C – ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL LETTER .....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>APPENDIX D – GATEKEEPER LETTER.....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>APPENDIX E – TURNITIN REPORT .....</b>	<b>84</b>

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## LIST OF TABLES

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Table 4.1: The table showing sample size and participant selection per department.....	39
Table 4.2: Participant's demographic details summary.....	40

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## LIST OF FIGURES

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Figure 2.1: Social Identity Theory – Henri Tajfel and John Turner, 1979 - (Jones, 2024).....	12
Figure 2.2: Cultural Intelligence Framework (Better Boards, 2020).....	15
Figure 2.3: Benefits associated with inclusion.....	17
Figure 4.1: Graph showing participant's percentage distribution by departments.....	39
Figure 4.2: Graph showing participants by Gender.....	40
Figure 4.3: Graph showing participants by Race.....	41
Figure 4.4: Graph showing participants by Age group.....	41
Figure 4.5: Graph showing the distribution of participant’s years of service in the organisation.....	41

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

## 1.1. Introduction

Promoting inclusiveness within the workplace is crucial in today's fast-paced, interconnected, and multicultural business world. The success of an organisation is strongly linked to its capacity to establish a conducive setting where employees are appreciated, respected, and encouraged to share their viewpoints. An inclusive organisation is characterised by consistently demonstrating inclusion practices and processes throughout all levels of the organisation (Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez, 2018). The goal of inclusion is to foster a welcoming and supportive environment in which everyone feels appreciated and respected and can reach their full potential.

## 1.2. Background of the study

In recent years, inclusion has become a critical component of organisational success, and it encompasses various social processes that influence an individual's access to information, sense of belonging, job security, insider status, social support, decision-making, and workplace voice (Rezai et al., 2023). Organisations with a diverse workforce expect their employees to work together as a team, which might be challenging sometimes due to being ethnically, sexually, and culturally different. This could be a challenge due to not understanding one another, resulting in others feeling excluded in the workplace. According to Miminoshvili and Černe (2022), the feeling of exclusion could lead to passive behaviour, demotivation, disengagement, and lower performance and productivity, which could result in an organisation failing to reach its objectives and losing money. This is why it is imperative for an organisation to work on bringing the team together using inclusion initiatives. Inclusion is not just about creating a diverse workforce; it is about ensuring every employee feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute to the organisation regardless of background. Chukwudi and Eusebius (2023) describe inclusion as a culture that brings employees together encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness, and harnesses diversity to empower full participation and contribution from all individuals. It involves addressing diverse differences and is a crucial strategy for maximising the benefits of diversity (Johnsen et al., 2022). The organisation's success relies on its ability to innovate, adapt to market changes, and maintain operational excellence. However, like many organisations in the energy sector, Themba Wendy Moloi faces challenges related to employee diversity, inclusion and engagement. These challenges can affect creativity, hinder collaboration, and ultimately impact the company's performance (Chukwudi and

Eusebius, 2023). In an industry where teamwork and innovation are critical, creating an environment where everyone feels included is not just good practice, but it is a business need and necessary for the growth and success of an organisation. The company has implemented policies aimed at hiring more diverse talent and aims to raise awareness about unconscious bias and inclusive leadership. While these efforts are commendable, there is a growing realisation that diversity alone is not enough. Real inclusion requires a deeper understanding of the factors that make employees feel they belong and can thrive in the organisation. The study aims to investigate the factors that influence inclusion at Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum Services and how these factors contribute to enhanced employee and organisational performance. Doing so seeks to answer critical questions like: What makes employees feel included? How does inclusion impact their ability to perform at their best? What can Themba Wendy Moloji do to create a workplace where everyone feels empowered to contribute their unique skills? Moreover, it identifies the challenges that may hinder the organisation from fostering inclusive practices.

### **1.3. The Rationale of the Study**

This study seeks to investigate the factors that influence inclusion at TWM Petroleum and how these factors contribute to enhanced organisational performance. In today's globalised and competitive business environment, organisations increasingly recognise the importance of fostering inclusive workplaces to drive performance, innovation, and sustainability. Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum Services, as a player in the energy sector, operates in a dynamic and complex industry where performance is critical to maintaining a competitive advantage. Inclusion, which refers to creating an environment where all employees feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives, has been identified as a key driver of organisational success (Royall, McCarthy and Miller, 2022). However, the specific factors that influence inclusion and its impact on performance within the context of Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum remain unexplored. This study aims to provide actionable recommendations for TWM Petroleum to create a more inclusive workplace by investigating the factors that influence inclusion and their impact on performance.

### **1.4. Focus of the study**

The study is specifically focused on and limited to an oil and petroleum sector organisation, primarily distributing and supplying various petroleum products to meet consumer demands. The oil industry is systematically divided into two main categories of activities: the upstream

sector, which encompasses the exploration and production of both natural gas and crude oil, and the downstream sector, which is responsible for the refining, transportation, and marketing of products that are ultimately intended for end users (FIASA, 2024). Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum, which operates within the framework of the downstream activities, is primarily concerned with the logistics of transporting a wide array of end-user products, including but not limited to petrol, diesel, heavy fuel oil (HFO), and numerous other petroleum derivatives. This study aims to thoroughly investigate and analyse the factors that significantly impact inclusion within the organisation and determine how these factors can potentially enhance overall performance at Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum Services. By conducting this research, valuable insights can be gained to assist Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum Services in formulating and implementing more effective strategies and initiatives to promote inclusion, ultimately leading to enhanced innovation, improved collaboration among teams, and a remarkable increase in overall performance.

### **1.5. Significance of the study**

This qualitative research is significant as it plays a pivotal role in uncovering and identifying the essential factors that significantly influence inclusion while also determining the primary drivers that promote and support inclusion among the employees within the organisation, along with the consequential impact of these elements on overall performance outcomes. The insights and findings from this study will allow the organisation to concentrate on the most pertinent factors strategically, enabling them to effectively apply these findings to cultivate a genuinely inclusive environment within a diverse team of individuals. Furthermore, this research will undoubtedly contribute to enhancing the organisation's overall performance and provide valuable guidance in addressing various issues that may affect the well-being of employees.

Additionally, this study will be crucial in pinpointing the challenges and obstacles that may hinder the successful implementation of inclusion initiatives within the organisation. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of these challenges will prove beneficial for the organisation's leadership, as it will allow them to allocate resources effectively toward the most appropriate tools and strategies, thereby facilitating the identification and resolution of these issues more efficiently, ultimately resulting in significant savings in both time and financial resources.

### **1.6. Problem Statement**

Embracing inclusion is essential for the success of any organisation, as it cultivates diversity, equality, and respect among employees. Over the years, many people were not given proper

recognition in the organisation due to their race, gender, sexual orientation, and background. Nevertheless, they were expected to perform at their best. Being discriminated against because of being different from other people affects the confidence and morale of an individual; in an environment where one feels like an outsider, performing and producing the desired results is very difficult. This study adopted a qualitative approach, which will assist an organisation in identifying the factors that influence inclusion, determining the key drivers of inclusion, and identifying the challenges that may hinder the implementation and application of inclusive behaviours.

According to Foster, Manikas and Preece (2020), Lesbian, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender and Queer employees, customers, and suppliers can be valuable resources for firms, improving productivity and performance; however, if the environment is not inclusive, it would be difficult for them to showcase their potential. In 2018, 25% of Lesbian, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender and Queer workers reported discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, with half citing a negative impact on their work environment (Lim, Jones and Paguirigan, 2019). Organisations are enforcing cultural change to enable their employees to embrace this cause and effect across their locations worldwide (Tan and Lim, 2021). Furthermore, Foster, Manikas and Preece (2020) stated that inclusion aims to integrate employee's similarities and differences into the organisation. Many high-scoring businesses also excel in performance, and they know that creating inclusive workplaces and communities for their employees is a strategic investment in their competitiveness (Foster, Manikas and Preece, 2020). Rezai et al. (2020) described inclusion or exclusion as a continuum encompassing the degree to which individuals feel part of important organisational processes like access to information, co-worker connection, and decision-making ability. Research indicated that exclusion could lead to passive behaviour, demotivation, disengagement, and lower performance and productivity (Miminoshvili and Černe, 2022). Being treated as an outsider can lead to uncooperative behaviour among minority and majority colleagues, reducing knowledge sharing and potentially resulting in knowledge hiding (Miminoshvili and Černe, 2022). In the study conducted by Miminoshvili and Černe (2022), their findings demonstrated how experiences of inclusion and exclusion at work could influence minority members to be more likely to withhold information. Kiradoo's (2022) study suggests that organisations can enhance diversity and inclusion in the workplace by setting goals, providing diversity training, promoting inclusive leadership, implementing flexible work arrangements, and leveraging technology. Nevertheless, it is important to note that this particular study did

not concentrate on a specific sector; thus, this qualitative research aims to provide an in-depth perspective on Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum Services, allowing for a more focused analysis. The findings of this study will provide factors and key drivers contributing to fostering inclusion while identifying potential challenges that could impede its successful implementation within Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum Services. Furthermore, this study will provide valuable insights directly from the employees through face-to-face interviews, facilitating a deeper understanding of their perspectives and experiences. The findings from this study will not only serve to enhance the practices at Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum Services. However, they will also significantly provide insight into inclusion within other organisations contemplating investments in inclusion-focused initiatives. By pinpointing the essential drivers of inclusion and identifying their effects on overall performance, this study will provide practical and actionable insights that can assist Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum Services, along with other organisations in the industry, in their efforts to cultivate a more inclusive and high-performing workplace. According to Kasih and Ruslaini (2024), literature on inclusion initiatives highlighted their potential to improve organisational performance by enhancing decision-making, innovation, employee engagement, and resilience. This is supported by the study conducted by Okatta, Ajayi and Olawale (2024), where it was found that organisations implementing inclusive initiatives experience benefits such as increased innovation, improved decision-making, and enhanced employee engagement, leading to higher productivity and improved organisational performance. Utin and Yosepha (2019) described performance as the quality and quantity of work an employee does or does not do to their assigned responsibilities. According to Aliyyah et al. (2021), Performance is categorised into employee and organisational performance; individual performance focuses on quality and quantity, and organisational performance combines individual and group performance. To form one team, an inducive and inclusive environment is required to aid the employees in being themselves and performing at their best in the organisation.

### **1.7. Preliminary Literature Review**

In today's globalised and diverse workplace, fostering inclusion is vital for organisational success. South Africa has had issues in the past similar to the United States of America, which has a history of discrimination against specific racial/ethnic groups, women, disabled individuals, and older workers, leading to the adoption of legislation protecting these groups (Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez, 2018). The global legislation has primarily aimed to reduce discrimination against women and marginalised social groups; however, it remains unclear

whether organisations actively create inclusive environments that enhance their prospects after hire (Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez, 2018). Nevertheless, Jennings (2024) states that the increasing minority labour force participation and globalisation have led to increased scholarly and practical attention towards workplace inclusion. Royall, McCarthy and Miller (2022) described inclusion as an organisation's strategic approach to creating a diverse workplace that is welcoming toward employees, clients, supervisors, and customers. Chukwudi and Eusebius, 2023 describe inclusion as a culture that brings employees together, encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness, and harnesses diversity to empower full participation and contribution from all individuals. An inclusive environment is linked to positive outcomes such as creativity, helping behaviour, and performance (Chung et al., 2020). Research suggests that an inclusive environment is characterised by implementing fair policies, fostering open and transparent communication, and fostering leadership that values diversity and inclusion as core values (Jejeniwa, Mhlongo and Jejeniwa, 2024). Numerous factors identified in the literature influence inclusion in the organisation, including inclusive leadership commitment, organisational culture and inclusive environment (Royall, McCarthy and Miller, 2022; Roberson and Perry, 2022; Tidor and Morar, 2022). It is imperative also to understand that creating and implementing inclusion in the organisation is not easy as it has some challenges; Chukwudi and Eusebius (2023) and Kiradoo (2022) identified the common challenges in implementing inclusion strategies within the organisation, including Lack of leadership commitment, Resistance to change, Inadequate resources and Support, Lack of diversity at the top, Unconscious Bias, Lack of accountability and Tokenism.

### **1.8. Research Methodology**

The study adopted a qualitative approach, providing detailed and descriptive data to investigate factors influencing inclusion at Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum Services. The researcher secured a gatekeeper letter from Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum Services, which granted access to the organisation's premises. The ethical clearance application was submitted to the University of KwaZulu-Natal Human and Social Sciences Ethical Clearance Committee. The application was approved, and the protocol reference number was issued. After the committee's approval, the researcher contacted the participants, requesting their participation in the study and providing them with an informed consent form, which was explained before the participant signed.

The data was collected using semi-structured and in-depth interviews, which assisted in gathering organisational viewpoints and experiences from a personal standpoint. The interviews were conducted and recorded in a closed office. A total of 8 participants were interviewed in the study: 1 judgemental participant from leadership, 1 from maintenance and 6 convenient participants from operations. The recorded interviews were transcribed using turboscribe and Nvivo to Code, following thematic analysis for research findings and the discussion of themes.

### **1.9. Managerial Implications**

The findings of this qualitative study highlight the importance of addressing inclusion factors, overcoming challenges, and leveraging drivers to enhance performance at Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum Services. By implementing these managerial implications, TWM Petroleum can create a more inclusive workplace that empowers employees, embraces diversity, and fosters a sense of belonging. This, in turn, will lead to higher engagement, improved performance, and sustained organisational success. Managers must take a proactive role in fostering inclusion into the company's culture, policies, and practices to unlock the full potential of their workforce.

Factors of inclusion: Employee empowerment is essential for promoting inclusion and performance in an organisation. It involves giving employees the confidence to do things independently, decision-making opportunities, and the tools to succeed. Engaged employees are more likely to feel included and perform better. Cultural differences can also drive innovation. Promoting cultural awareness through training programs and celebrating cultural events can foster commitment and productivity.

Challenges to inclusion: Rigid work schedules, outdated policies, and cultural differences. Managers should introduce flexible scheduling options, review policies, provide cross-cultural training, and involve employees in policy-making processes.

The drivers of inclusion: Leadership commitment is crucial for driving inclusion. A supportive environment enhances employee performance and well-being. Safe spaces for employees to express themselves and address discrimination or exclusion. In recognition programs, managers should invest in tools that would assist them in showing appreciation to their employees, whether vouchers or tokens. Inclusive communication builds trust and fosters a sense of belonging. Allowing employees to be part of decision-making shows that they are part of the team and play a vital role in the organisation.

## **1.10. Aim, Research Questions and Objectives**

### **1.10.1. Aim**

The aim is to investigate factors that influence inclusion to enhance performance at TWM Petroleum services.

### **1.10.2. Research Questions**

1. How does an inclusive environment impact employee satisfaction at TWM Petroleum services?
2. What challenges are associated with implementing inclusion initiatives within TWM Petroleum services?
3. What are the key drivers of inclusion at TWM Petroleum services, and how do they impact performance?

### **1.10.3. Research objectives.**

1. To understand the factors that influence inclusion on employees and its effect on TWM Petroleum services performance.
2. To identify challenges of implementing inclusion initiatives within TWM Petroleum services.
3. To determine the key drivers of inclusion and their impact on the production performance at TWM Petroleum services.

## **1.11. Chapter Organisation**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction to the Research**

This chapter includes the introduction, background of the study, the context of the study, the significance of the study, problem statement, preliminary literature review, research methodology, managerial implications aim, research objectives and questions, chapter organisation and chapter summary.

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter summarises the literature review on inclusion, theoretical framework, inclusion in the petroleum industry, organisational culture, inclusive leadership, its benefits to organisational performance, and the challenges of implementing it in the organisation.

### **Chapter 3: Research and Methodology**

This chapter summarises the study method used and the reasons for using a qualitative approach. It also includes the sampling, data analysis, ethical consideration, reliability and validity of the study, and data collection methods.

### **Chapter 4: Results and Discussions**

This chapter presents findings and discusses the study's findings.

### **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

This chapter summarises the study by presenting the key findings and making recommendations for future studies based on the findings and literature.

#### **1.12. Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of the study aiming to investigate factors influencing inclusion to enhance performance at Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum Services. The chapter lays the foundation for the following chapters. It covered the introduction, which provides a brief overview of inclusion. This is followed by the background of the study, which provides the context and foundational information about the study, the significance of the study, and the problem statement detailing the source of challenges regarding inclusion. It also covers the preliminary literature review, research methodology, managerial implications, the aim of the study, the research question, and the research objectives. It further outlined the study's significance and gave an overview of the coming chapters 1-5 framework.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Introduction**

Modern organisational culture recognises the diversity of individuals in the workplace and the importance of ensuring that everybody feels included, valued, and recognised for contributing to the organisation. Inclusion has become a hot topic in most organisations, attracting attention from leaders and employees, and have recognised the significance of fostering an inclusive environment and its benefits (Nishii and Leroy, 2022). Cassell et al. (2022) stated that inclusion represents belongingness and uniqueness. Furthermore, Cassell et al. (2022) asserted that belongingness and uniqueness are essential for an inclusive culture. The feelings of inclusion are influenced by the perception of fairness, respect, value, and belonging of individuals, and employees feel included when they are treated fairly, recognised, valued as part of the team, and appreciated for their unique contributions (Nair and Vohra, 2015). Creating inclusive opportunities for marginalised groups at all levels is crucial to providing an environment where they can positively contribute to the organisation's success (Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez, 2018). This concurs with Ahmed et al. (2022), who stated that inclusion creates opportunities for individuals to participate, impact essential organisational procedures, and leverage organisational resources. Employees will feel valued when their competing needs for belonging in the workplace and the value for their uniqueness are met (Dhanani et al., 2024). Furthermore, Chen and Tang (2018) contended that employees who experience inclusion may feel more valued and supported, which could improve their performance.

### **2.2. Inclusion in the Petroleum Industry**

The petroleum industry, also known as the oil and gas industry, involves the exploration, extraction, refining, transportation, and marketing of crude oils, natural gases, and petroleum products, significantly influencing a nation's economy (ScienceDirect, 2022). The industry is typically categorised into three segments: upstream, which involves oil and gas exploration and production; midstream, which involves transportation and storage; and downstream, which includes refining and marketing (ResearchGuides, 2021). Investing decision-makers are demanding sustainability and Environmental, Social and Governmental (ESG) agendas from fossil fuel companies, even if not profitable, making Environmental, Social and Governmental strategies (ESG) in the oil and gas industry non-voluntary (Arboleda, 2023). The industry is currently facing a strategic challenge centred on reducing emissions, which focuses more on the environmental side of the business (Whitaker, 2022). Although this is the case,

sustainability encompasses more than just emission reduction; it also involves social and governance aspects, and this pertains to a comprehensive comprehension of the complete effects of business activities on individuals and the environment (Whitaker, 2022). The social dimension focuses on community engagement, human rights and workforce inclusion, whereas governance focuses on ensuring accountability and transparency in the petroleum industry. Diversity management and employee inclusion are essential for organisational efficiency in response to the demands of globalisation (Okwuise, 2022).

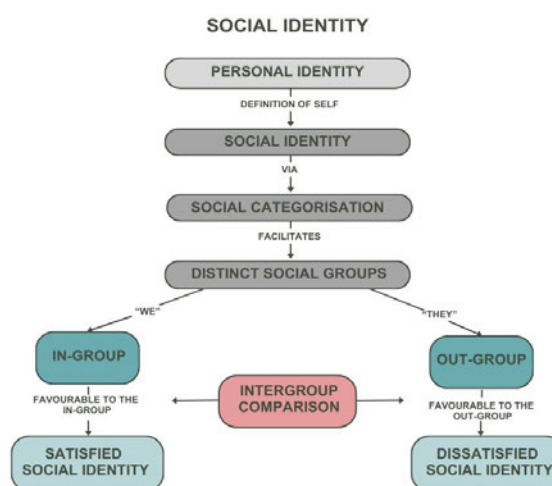
Diversity is an organisational activity that promotes the inclusion of workers from diverse backgrounds through programs and policies, focusing on factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and disability (Okwuise, 2022). The energy sector still faces challenges regarding the inclusion of women; the sector is predominantly dominated by male employees, with women comprising only 22% of the oil and gas workforce and 32% of renewables (Atakhanova and Howie, 2022). Research conducted across multiple countries indicates that women-led companies exhibit superior corporate and social performance (Atakhanova and Howie, 2022). Moreover, ethnic differences can predict team scores, potentially leading to increased problem-solving and team performance due to diverse views within a team (Ossai and Victor, 2022). The organisation benefits from incorporating and valuing all diverse ethnicities, ensuring their contributions are acknowledged and valued. According to Cao and Tomski (2023), to effectively tackle the clean energy workforce challenge, a holistic approach focusing on diversity and inclusion is crucial; this involves creating an inclusive pipeline and career network, ensuring underrepresented communities have equal opportunities in the clean energy sector, and fostering diverse perspectives and talents.

The United Arab Emirates collaborates with industry, service companies, regulators, and governments to achieve Environmental, Social and Governance targets by 2030 and 2050 (Matto, 2023). The stricter regulations and sustainability plans incentivise the sector towards net-zero targets and more diversity and inclusion practices (Matto, 2023). This is in line with the Fuels Industry Association of South Africa (FIASA), which aims to enhance ambient air quality, decrease transport-related greenhouse gas emissions, and achieve a net-zero goal by 2050 (FIASA, 2024).

## 2.3. Theoretical Framework

### 2.3.1. Social identity theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT) is a psychological framework that Henri Tajfel and John Turner developed in the 1970s to explain intergroup behaviour, group dynamics, and psychological processes underlying group membership (Harwood, 2020). It focuses on understanding how individuals perceive themselves and others based on group affiliations and how these perceptions influence behaviour, attitudes, and social interactions, and it emphasises the inherent value humans place on their social group memberships and their desire to view them positively (Harwood, 2020; Guan and So, 2022). Guan and So (2022) further state that social identity theory suggests individuals define their sense of self through social categories and group memberships. The theory explains how people use group norms to evaluate others' similarities and differences, classifying those with aligning attributes as in-groups and those with deviating attributes as out-groups (Whitaker, 2020). People's affiliation with a specific group influences their attitudes and behaviours, particularly in health communication (Guan and So, 2022). This concurs with Sears and Cianfrone (2024), who asserted that Social identity can be shaped by various groups such as organisations, work groups, departments, trade unions, lunch groups, age groups, and fast-track groups. Moreover, the social identity theory suggests that an organisation can influence individuals' behaviour by altering their self-concept towards the organisation (Ma et al., 2021). The figure below depicts the social identity theory;



*Figure 2.1: Social Identity Theory – Henri Tajfel and John Turner, 1979 - (Jones, 2024)*

Strong group affiliation leads to endorsing health-related beliefs and participation in health-related activities or behaviours the identified group advocates (Guan and So, 2022). Group identification has been shown to mitigate stress's negative impacts and enhance job satisfaction by providing social support (Guan and So, 2022). Once the individual belongs to a group, they actively seek ways to derive positive emotions from that group membership (Harwood, 2020).

In the context of this study, the theory of social identity is relevant because when employees see that the organisation is doing something about making sure that they feel included and valued, this will assist in changing their perception of the organisation and begin identifying themselves with the organisation. The social identity theory suggests that employees are more likely to identify with an organisation when they perceive alignment between their identity and the organisational values and culture. Royall, McCarthy and Miller (2022) emphasised the need for leadership to build and foster an observable inclusive culture because employees learn acceptable and unacceptable behaviour by adopting the behaviour they observe from colleagues. The theory further states that group prototypes embody a group's shared reality and increase followers' openness to a leader's influence, making them more effective in influencing their attitudes and behaviour as they represent the group's shared norms, values, and aspirations (van Knippenberg, 2023). As a key role model for the group, setting a good example and being an inclusive leader for everyone is vital. Zeng, Zhao, and Zhao (2020) state that an inclusive leader demonstrates skills associated with inclusive measures at the workplace to generate and transform an inclusive atmosphere in a team where the needs of employees and a sense of belongingness and uniqueness can be satisfied. People need to belong to a group to associate and be satisfied with their environment. The greater identification with a group leads to a shift from "I" to "we"; as identification strengthens, employees tend to behave in line with organisational norms and values (Mittal, Gupta and Motiani, 2022).

An organisation must create an inclusive and welcoming environment for its employees to ensure they all work together and have one vision for success. When individuals feel a sense of belonging "in a group," they are likely to identify with that group and develop a satisfied social identity. Conversely, employees who sense they do not fit within the group will seek to join another group that resonates with their beliefs. This can lead to conflict and division within the organisation's team, potentially impacting overall performance. Tidor and Morar (2022) asserted that if the organisation aims to implement changes to enhance performance, it must first evaluate and adjust its organisational culture. Olakunle (2021) added that an organisation

should create a culture that prioritises open communication, values employee contributions, and encourages teamwork to cultivate a more committed and enthusiastic team.

### **2.3.2. Cultural Intelligence Theory**

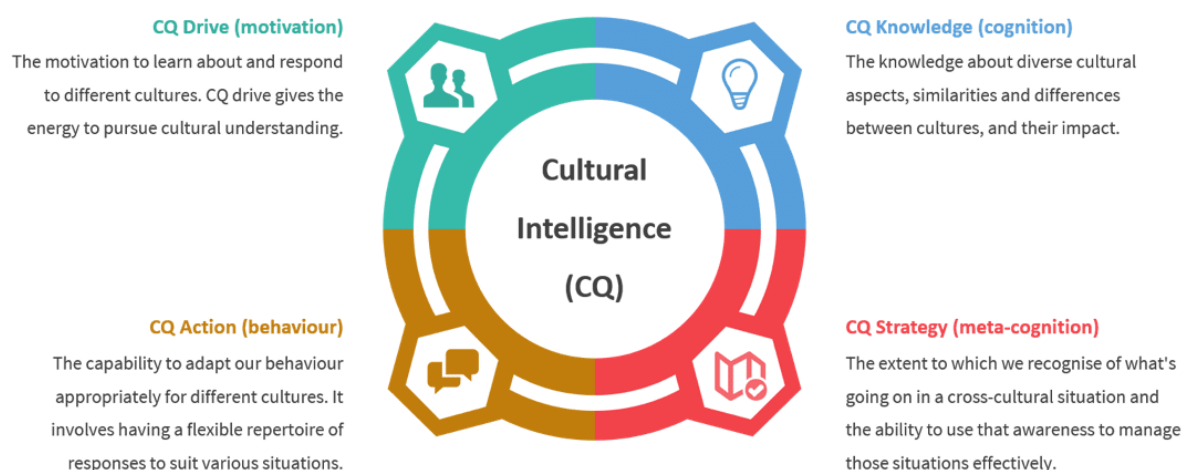
The theory defines Cultural intelligence as the capacity to comprehend and adapt to diverse cultural contexts, enabling effective interaction and harmonious relationships (Rachmad, 2022). Stoermer, Davies and Froese (2021) define Cultural intelligence as a multidimensional construct comprising cognition, behaviour, and motivation. It encompasses an individual's knowledge of other cultures, ability to perform culturally competent behaviour, and willingness to enact such behaviour (Stoermer, Davies and Froese, 2021). This concurs with Peterson (2018) and Paiuc (2021), who states that cultural intelligence encompasses knowledge about cultures, awareness of oneself and others, and specific skills as behaviours. Cultural intelligence refers to an individual's ability to effectively navigate situations involving cultural diversity, which is relevant to individuals and organisations (Paiuc, 2021; Ang and Van Dayne, 2015). It is based on self-awareness, cultural knowledge, intercultural communication skills, and adaptability, emphasising the importance of understanding and adapting to different cultural norms, values, and practices (Rachmad, 2022). Dewi and Wibowo (2020) and Hassan et al. (2022) stated that employee behaviour might improve by increasing employee inclusion based on cultural awareness and knowledge. This can be achieved through training, and cultural training needs to be deliberate on the part of the organisation (Royall, McCarthy and Miller, 2022). Cultural Intelligence Theory emphasises the importance of self-awareness, developing knowledge about different cultures through education, training, and experience, and applying effective intercultural communication skills to bridge differences and build respectful relationships (Rachmad, 2022).

The theory states that cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and decreased performance in work environments (Rachmad, 2022). However, this can be resolved through a systematic intelligence approach to developing cultural understanding that can improve communication and collaboration in multicultural contexts (Rachmad, 2022). It also emphasises the need for flexibility and adaptability in adjusting behaviour to different cultural contexts (Rachmad, 2022). Moreover, the theory suggests that understanding and appreciating different cultures, improving communication in multicultural settings, and enhancing satisfaction and performance in intercultural interactions are key indicators (Rachmad, 2022). Other indicators include reduced cultural conflicts, increased collaboration, and higher job

satisfaction in diverse teams (Rachmad, 2022). The theory is applicable in Human Resource Management, Psychology, Education, Social Communication, and Health (Rachmad, 2022). The theory in Human Resource Management aids in creating training and development programs that facilitate employees' interaction with colleagues from diverse cultures (Rachmad, 2022). Human resources plays a crucial role in the organisation, and their support ensures that the organisation retain good talent. Aburumman et al. (2020) stated that the increase in employee turnover is due to human resource management practices that do not support the employee's needs and the decrease in job satisfaction. Daley (2020) states that an organisation must have a human resource training approach that promotes a working environment that includes all previously unequal groups, such as women and people of different racial backgrounds.

The theory in psychology aids in comprehending how cultural intelligence can enhance mental and emotional well-being in multicultural settings (Rachmad, 2022). Figure 2.2 outlines the Cultural Intelligence framework, outlining its four capabilities.

## Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Framework



*Figure 2.2: Cultural Intelligence Framework (Better Boards, 2020)*

The framework stipulates that if we have the motivation to learn and respond to different cultures, allowing our minds to open up to new possibilities, equip ourselves with knowledge about similarities and differences between cultures, recognise and manage cross-cultural situations effectively and be able to adapt our behaviour appropriately for different cultures, requiring a flexible repertoire of responses while remaining true to ourselves, we can be able

to form an inclusive and welcoming environment which could improve the organisation's performance. (Better Boards, 2020). Understanding cultural differences is crucial, but effective functioning across cultures also requires the ability to bridge these differences (Wang and Goh, 2020).

#### **2.4. Understanding Inclusion and its Benefits**

The increase in differences in our culture, gender, race, and geographical backgrounds in the working space prompts leaders to act to foster an inclusive environment so that everyone can feel valued and needed. An inclusive environment is linked to positive outcomes such as creativity, helping behaviour, and performance (Chung et al., 2020). Inclusion is a culture that brings employees together within the organisation, encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness, and harnesses diversity to empower full participation and contribution from all individuals (Chukwudi and Eusebius, 2023). Nair and Vohra (2015) believed that when employees feel genuinely included, not just with empty words, they can fully engage with the organisation, freely sharing their thoughts and ideas. This unrestricted expression leads to better problem-solving, creativity, innovation, and performance in various aspects (Nair and Vohra, 2015). To have a leader who understands that they are in the organisation to provide guidance, nurture, empower, promote, and care is a benefit for the organisation. It becomes easier to promote inclusion and foster a culture of unity that looks beyond race, gender, and religion. Sharma and Panicker (2020) stated that inclusion provides a platform for diverse individuals to express their opinions on organisational practices, fostering collective engagement toward the corporate goal. To fully realise the potential of diversity and inclusion, organisations must adopt a proactive, strategic approach that includes implementing equitable policies, fostering open communication, and cultivating leadership committed to these core values, in addition to acknowledging differences (Jejenywa, Mhlongo and Jejenywa, 2024).

Ferdman (2017) defined inclusion as an active process where diversity is valued as a valuable resource rather than a homogeneous entity, fostering a more diverse and inclusive society. Ferdman (2017) further added that inclusion promotes presence, participation, safety, voice, authenticity, equity, and equality for individuals from diverse identities. Royall, McCarthy and Miller (2022) defined inclusion as an organisation's strategic approach to creating a diverse workplace that is welcoming toward employees, clients, supervisors, and customers. Therefore, one can conclude that inclusion is about people and creating a welcoming environment for

them to perform and achieve the desired results for the organisation's benefit. Once everyone in the organisation fully contributes, a cohesive team is formed, leading to collective success.

Several studies have shown that the common factors influencing inclusivity within an organisation lead to overall performance and effectiveness improvements. According to O'Donovan (2017), team stability, engagement, respect, and management support influence inclusion and enhance organisational performance. Nair and Vohra (2015) stated that people desire to belong, be valued, be treated justly, and be recognised from any origin or foundation from which they obtain their sense of self. In the study conducted by Dhanani et al. (2024), it was determined that employees felt a sense of belonging when they were motivated to express their opinions and personal characteristics, received assistance for their welfare, were offered help with tasks from their colleagues or supervisors; were given chances for professional development; were acknowledged for their efforts; had chances to engage with others, especially in casual settings; and when steps were taken to prevent negative behaviour or promote positive behaviour. Allowing people to be themselves gives them the confidence to express themselves freely, participate fully in the organisations, and perform exceptionally well.

O'Donovan (2017) provided insight into the benefits of an inclusive environment, and the figure below shows the benefits of inclusion.



*Figure 2.3: Benefits associated with inclusion. Source: Author O'Donovan (2017).*

Furthermore, O'Donovan (2017) stated that inclusion boosts employee confidence and their perception of their abilities, positively impacts performance, and increases their likelihood of

exceeding their assigned tasks and that inclusion boosts morale, job satisfaction, and performance, reducing absenteeism and emphasising the significance of integrating inclusion and employee engagement initiatives. Furthermore, other aspects of perceived inclusion involve a higher level of dedication towards the job or the organisation, leading to improved productivity and ultimately enhancing overall performance (O'Donovan, 2017). Farndale et al. (2015) proposed that implementing strategies that increase engagement and the perception of fairness contributes to developing inclusive, high-performing teams and organisational settings.

## **2.5. Workplace and Employee Performance**

Performance is the quality and quantity of work an employee does or does not do to their assigned responsibilities (Utin and Yosepha, 2019; Yang, Lee and Cheng, 2016). Performance is categorised into employee and organisational performance; individual performance focuses on quality and quantity, and organisational performance combines individual and group performance (Aliyyah et al., 2021). Employee performance is generally characterised as the actions demonstrated by an employee when executing a specific task allocated by the employer, and workplace performance is the results generated by a particular employer in an organisation (Kalogiannidis, 2020). Workplace performance is measured through financial performance, labour productivity, and product quality, which can be improved by fostering increased employee engagement, dedication to training, or readiness to embrace new processes or organisational frameworks (Brown et al., 2015). Employees' dedication and willingness to work efficiently and actively contribute to the organisation's performance. This means that people are the organisation's backbone and the organisation's excellent performance results from its employee's performance. Therefore, employees with adequate education and work skills are more likely to achieve the expected performance, making it easier for the company to succeed (Aliyyah et al., 2021).

Numerous factors influence workplace performance, including training, work environment, and employee engagement. According to Christina, Iva and Samin (2024), high-performance workplaces positively affect individual and organisational outcomes, emphasising the importance of a supportive environment. Effective training programs are essential as they enhance employees' skills and knowledge, which leads to improved performance (Niati, Siregar and Prayoga, 2021).

## **2.6. Influence of an inclusive environment on employee performance**

Several factors contribute to employees' excellent workplace performance, such as the environment of the workplace, inclusive leadership, and organisational culture. Jain and Kaur (2014) stated that the working environment has three components: physical, social, and mental. This means that for employees to perform at their best, the organisation must satisfy all these three components. Employees spend most of their time at work; therefore, it is good that the environment be favourable to their needs to perform and yield favourable results for the organisation. According to Wang, Zhang and Chun (2021), the working environment has an impact on the performance of employees. This involves the physical working environment, as stated by Jain and Kaur (2014), and Parashakti et al. (2020) further emphasised that the organisation must fulfil the facilities employees need to complete their day-to-day work, anticipating that the more complete the facilities, the better the performance, and productivity. In the study by Sadi et al. (2019), it was determined that there is a significant correlation between working environment factors and employee performance. A favourable or conducive environment makes employees dedicate themselves to excelling in their field, which improves their performance, yielding a positive and productive output (Zhenjing et al., 2022). If employees are satisfied and motivated, their performance will likely improve, increasing productivity (Zhenjing et al., 2022). In a friendly and supportive environment, employees willingly offer their unique skills, abilities, and knowledge to perform exceptionally and yield positive results for the organisation (Zhenjing et al., 2022). This concurs with Rehman (2020), who stated that a performing employee increases the team's productivity, which leads to the desired results. One would ask if money is not the motivation. Will money not boost the performance of the employees? According to Torlak and Kuzey (2019), more than money is needed to motivate employees to enhance their performance. However, a mixture of money and non-monetary rewards is vital to boosting employees' performance, and some observations showed that employees of specific sectors prefer a pleasant, relaxing, and cooperative working atmosphere to achieve the highest degree of performance (Zhenjing et al., 2022).

### **2.6.1. How to create an inclusive environment**

A genuinely inclusive workplace environment extends from the top management to the local supervisor to the newest employees (Royall, McCarthy and Miller, 2022). Starting from the hiring process, the organisations should develop strategies that cater to their unique needs and challenges, ensure fair and impartial recruitment and hiring procedures, implement blind hiring

practices, train recruiters to avoid unconscious bias and expand recruitment efforts to reach a diverse candidate pool (Kiradoo, 2022). Organisations must, by all means, work on improving the conditions of the working environment so that the employees can enjoy and be proud of their work. How does inclusion assist organisations in achieving their goals and producing positive results? According to Samasonok et al. (2023), inclusion removes barriers to diversity, which helps the organisation intensify its focus on achieving shared and high-quality results, and this can be achieved through employee's understanding of what inclusion is and how their differences can contribute to the organisation's success. Creating an inclusive working environment is vital for employee performance and the organisation's success. Royall, McCarthy and Miller (2022) and Lussier and Hendon (2019) stated that training in the workplace is needed to enforce a culture of inclusion among employees. Furthermore, leaders trained to discourage ethnocentric viewpoints, identify and correct unconscious biases, and know how to promote an inclusive environment are the pathways for collaborative cultural teachings (Royall, McCarthy and Miller, 2022; Lussier and Hendon, 2019). Kendi (2023) stated that sometimes it is not the people who are wrong, but the policies are the problem; Kendi (2023) further added that recognising these divisive policies in an organisation and creating ones that will counteract the non-inclusive policies can assist in enforcing a culture of inclusion. Recognising the policies and systems of power that promote a culture of exclusion is essential, and remaining focused and steadfast is vital to creating a shared vision of inclusion and belonging (Adjo, Maybank and Prakash, 2021). Kendi (2023) raised a significant point about policies; this was observed in South Africa during the apartheid times, where policies were created to segregate people of different ethnicities, which mainly excluded Africans from any opportunities in the country. Any organisation needs to review its policies first, revise them, if necessary, then conduct training on inclusion and review the results of their changes.

## **2.7. Influence of Inclusive Leadership support on employees' Performance**

Leadership is the driving engine of the organisation, and if the leadership is leading the way it should, the organisation will likely avoid difficulties. The leadership role is vital for improving the effectiveness and performance of employees, is essential in individual performance, and contributes to the organisation's growth (Srimulyani et al., 2023; Afsar et al., 2020). According to Choi, Tran and Park (2015) and Shafaei and Nejati (2024), inclusive leadership as a method that is open, effective, and accessible method correlates with employee performance and is considered to be related to participated leadership. This concurs with Bannay, Hadi and Amanah (2020), who stated that inclusive leadership is manifested by openness, accessibility,

and availability of the leader. Zeng, Zhao and Zhao (2020) described inclusive leadership as the technique where leaders demonstrate skills associated with inclusive measures at the workplace to generate and transform an inclusive atmosphere in a team, where the needs of employees and a sense of belongingness and uniqueness can be satisfied. Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) described inclusive leadership as words and deeds by the leader that show invitation and appreciation for others. Inclusive leadership consists of several leadership styles, such as ethical, servant, and transformational (Nguyen et al., 2019). Choi, Tran and Kang (2017) stated that inclusive leadership is considered one of the leadership styles as it promotes positive linkage qualities between leaders and followers. This concurs with Genza (2021), who stated that leadership involves an interactive relationship of influence among stakeholders who agree to collaborate in a specific situation to achieve their shared purpose. Aligning employee's personal goals with the organisation's vision through engagement increases productivity and contributes to sustainable organisational success (Rasool et al., 2021). This leadership style brings unity among the leaders and employees, ensuring they work for the common goal and the organisation's success. It is one of the leadership styles that has the potential to contribute to employees' meaningful work experience (Shafaei and Nejati, 2024). Furthermore, Choi, Tran and Kang (2017) stated that inclusive leaders listen to and support their employees, encourage them to raise their expectations, and provide alternative approaches to achieve better results. These leaders ensure that employees can access the organisation's vital tangible and intangible resources to succeed and perform at their best (Mansoor, Wahab and Jahan, 2021). Organisations need to have a leadership style that creates an environment that encourages subordinates to play a leading role in the company through employees' affective commitment (Srimulyani et al., 2023). Inclusive leadership creates an environment where people are treated equally and fairly without being differentiated from each other, and such an environment eliminates the sense of ignorance and exclusion in the workplace (Robert and Perry, 2022; Siyal et al., 2021). This will create a sense of belongingness and a feeling of being valued, which allows the employees to perform and give their best without complaint; hence, such leadership needs to be developed and promoted in the organisation. According to Ashikali, Groeneveld and Kuipers (2021), inclusive leadership provides the necessary conditions for the team to balance individual needs for uniqueness and belongingness and aim to manage the diverse team's negative and positive outcomes. This suggests that inclusive leadership embraces uniqueness and allows every team member to participate and deal with whatever the outcome is and can work with the outcome at hand, whether it is negative or positive. This creates a sense of belongingness for the team, allowing them to make mistakes and fix them

together. The study conducted by Kuknor and Bhattacharya (2020) determined that inclusive leadership traits foster inclusive practices in the organisation. Therefore, being an inclusive leader in the organisation encourages the employees to copy the same characteristics from the leader and do as the leader does. This concurs with Jiang et al. (2022), who stated that openness allows an inclusive leader to be a role model who can communicate the importance of speaking up and allow employees to express their thoughts and ideas.

### **2.7.1. Benefits of having inclusive leadership in an organisation.**

The benefit of having inclusive leadership in the organisation is that it significantly positively affects employees' job satisfaction (Bannay, Hadi and Amanah, 2020). Inclusive leaders play a critical role in creating an environment where different ideas, experiences, perspectives, and values are used to foster the benefits of diversity and enhance organisational outcomes (Roberson and Perry, 2022). This concurs with Randel et al. (2018), who stated that an inclusive leader creates a comfortable environment and exerts influence by assisting the members with their needs and expressing support for them and their opinions. Satisfied and happy employees will likely remain in the same organisation for years. According to Shafaei and Nejati (2024), inclusive leadership fosters openness, availability, flexibility, and a sense of belonging, promoting employee development and learning, and it encourages employees to express opinions, learn from others, and enhance work performance, ultimately improving their psychological states and sense of meaningfulness. Furthermore, employees with an inclusive leader feel respected and valued for their perspectives and contributions without criticism for their mistakes. Instead, they appreciate an opportunity to learn from their mistakes (Shafaei and Nejati, 2024). Roberson and Perry (2022) discovered that a leader's approach to things creates a psychologically safe environment within the team regardless of professional roles or relationship status. This suggests that everyone must feel treated the same regardless of their hierarchical position. Shafaei and Nejati (2024) found that inclusive leadership incorporates behaviours to reduce status differences within the workgroup. Various studies also reveal that accessible, inclusive leaders allow their subordinates to advance their skills, knowledge, and capabilities (Bannay, Hadi and Amanah, 2020).

### **2.8. Influence of inclusive organisational culture on employee performance**

Every organisation has its own culture, and its success depends on its culture (Lussier and Hendon, 2019). Leadership needs to build and foster an observable inclusive culture because employees learn acceptable and unacceptable behaviour by adopting the behaviour they

observe from colleagues (Royall, McCarthy and Miller, 2022). According to Tidor and Morar (2022), if the organisation seeks to make changes to increase performance, it must first analyse and change organisational culture. Schein (1992) defined organisational culture as a set of common underlying beliefs that the group has acquired while dealing with external challenges and internal unity, which has proven effective enough to be deemed valid and, therefore, passed down to new members as the appropriate way to address, think, and react to those challenges. Abdullahi, Raman and Solarin (2021) shared the same sentiment as they described the organisation's culture as shared values, convictions, and norms affecting how workers feel, think, and act. Warrick (2017) stated that culture is the beliefs, values, attitudes, practices, and behaviours characterising a group of people. Warrick, Milliman and Ferguson (2016) and Warrick (2017) defined organisational culture as the environment in which people work and its impact on their attitudes, behaviours, and experiences. Azeem et al. (2021) stated that organisational culture is the process of beliefs, habits, values, and behaviours that influence individuals' actions within an organisation. This concurs with Hassan et al. (2022), who defined organisational culture as the knowledge, habits, behaviour, values, and attitudes created by an organisation to be obeyed and followed by all members to achieve its goals. Taking from the researchers' definitions, an author can conclude that organisational culture is about learning and applying the behaviours, values, and beliefs of the organisations, which have been used and proven to work in favour of the progress and success of the organisation, which is passed down to every new employee joining the organisation. Establishing a solid organisational structure is a process that reflects the diverse perceptions, desires, attitudes, and behaviours of employees within the company (Wahjoedi, 2021). Organisational culture is critical in driving firm performance as it shapes the values, beliefs, and work systems that create a conducive competitive environment (Azeem et al., 2021). To cultivate a more committed and enthusiastic team, an organisation should create a culture that prioritises open communication, values employee contributions, and encourages teamwork (Olakunle, 2021). Organisations employ different people from different backgrounds and cultures; it is the organisation's responsibility to ensure that every employee joining their organisation adheres to the organisation's culture for the constantly enhanced performance of the organisation and for the improvement of organisation performance. This concurs with Dewi and Wibowo (2020) and Hassan et al. (2022), who stated that employee behaviour might improve by increasing employee inclusion based on cultural awareness and knowledge. Hassan et al. (2022) and Suriyanti (2020) further noted that a good and robust organisational culture can contribute to organisational success and may also hinder an organisation from reaching its full potential. This implies that organisational

culture has the potential to build and destroy the organisation depending on how it is implemented and applied within the organisation.

### **2.8.1. How to create an inclusive organisational culture**

Organisational culture is a deeply ingrained culture that enhances the effectiveness of achieving its vision, mission, and goals (Wahjoedi, 2021). To achieve a value-based competitive advantage, management must focus on the organisational culture, which comprises values, beliefs, and attitudes among members, which is imposed by the organisation (Ratnasari, Sutjahjo and Adam, 2020). This involves implementing fair policies, fostering open and transparent communication, and fostering leadership that values diversity and inclusion as core values (Jejenywa, Mhlongo and Jejenywa, 2024). According to Royall, McCarthy and Miller (2022), cultural training needs to be deliberate on the part of the organisation. This concurs with Warrick (2017), who stated that recruiting and training for culture at all levels of an organisation is critical to sustaining the desired culture and should be as essential in the hiring process as skills and experience. Furthermore, leaders should be close with the employees through socialising in further building and reinforcing culture; this will assist in relaying a clear message to employees about the kind of behaviours and attitudes expected from them within the organisation for the team to succeed (Warrick, 2017). Lubis and Hanum (2020) further stated that leaders should provide understanding, promote, and instil the values of organisational culture in both formal and informal ways to inspire individuals within the organisation to understand the vision and goals and become an integral part of the cultural system. The existence of employees in an organisation determines the success and continuation of all operations necessary to achieve organisational goals; as a result, management must provide strong support in inspiring employees to work professionally so that they can achieve their performance and contribute to the success of the firm (Ratnasari, Sutjahjo and Adam, 2020). The organisational culture must be engineered and positioned as a strategic tool to achieve organisational goals and strong competitiveness (Suriyanti, 2020). A profoundly ingrained culture within an organisation can significantly contribute to its success (Fidyah and Setiawati, 2020). Organisations must ensure that what is written on paper for implementation is practised so that it takes shape and works. According to Hasan et al. (2022), measuring the organisational culture requires eight key indicators: empowerment, team orientation, capability development, core values, agreement, coordination, integration, change, and customer focus. These indicators can measure the organisation's success, resulting in successful and efficient employee performance, as this will tell if the organisation is doing enough for its employees

(Fidyah and Setiawati, 2020). Therefore, changing and strengthening the organisational culture can help improve employee performance (Hasan et al., 2022).

### **2.8.2. The benefit of having an inclusive organisational culture**

Organisational culture is crucial for human resources development by fostering adaptable attitudes and behaviours that align with company goals and support the organisation's objectives (Wahjoedi, 2021). It significantly impacts all aspects of an organisation's operations and can potentially reduce potential changes (Hasan et al., 2022). Organisational culture varies between companies as it reflects the unique personality or characteristics that set each organisation apart (Wahjoedi, 2021). It can address environmental challenges by coming together to resolve problems (Lubis and Hanum, 2020). When the culture in the organisation promotes inclusion and unity, it becomes easier for everyone to work together and produce the desired results. In the study conducted by Olakunle (2021), it was determined that a positive organisational culture enhances performance and promotes greater productivity. This concurs with Wahjoedi (2021), who stated that a strong organisational culture fosters employee motivation, leading to improved performance and directly influencing work motivation.

Hassan et al. (2022) mentioned that the organisational culture may assist in internalising standard connections, which can result in more efficient management of organisational operations, and further stated that increased productivity and positive corporate culture result in improved performance. Furthermore, organisational culture influences work contributions and overall performance (Suriyanti, 2020). The organisational culture creates uniformity, as every employee follows its standards of doing things, 'it is not every man for himself strategy'; however, the culture applies to everyone. If the culture promotes a teamwork approach, employees will be able to adjust quickly and manage their challenging day-to-day tasks. Hasan et al. (2022) stated that organisational culture can foster intrinsic motivation among employees, enabling them to take initiative and handle the complexity of their work independently. Leadership has a role in supporting employees and ensuring that the organisation's culture works in favour of the employees and the organisation.

### **2.9. The challenges of implementing inclusion in the organisation**

Research on the benefits of inclusion in organisations has been extensive, but implementing an inclusive culture remains challenging due to various factors. Organisations often face challenges in establishing an inclusive culture; even those who succeed may struggle to maintain progress over time (Kiradoo, 2022). Achieving a diverse and inclusive workplace is

a significant challenge for many organisations, necessitating continuous commitment to growth, learning, and adaptation (Jejeniwa, Mhlongo and Jejeniwa, 2024). Some challenges are due to individuals, and others are to the organisation. Chukwudi and Eusebius (2023) and Kiradoo (2022) identified the common challenges in implementing inclusion strategies within the organisation, including;

- Lack of leadership commitment
- Resistance to change
- Inadequate resources and Support
- Lack of diversity at the top
- Unconscious Bias
- Lack of accountability
- Tokenism

### **2.9.1. Lack of leadership commitment**

Lack of leadership can hinder the creation of an inclusive workplace, as leaders who do not actively promote inclusion and diversity principles may perpetuate biased practices and hinder progress (Kiradoo, 2022). According to Khan and Wajidi (2019), leadership is not about attractive personalities but about charm, communication, and effective communication; it is not about making friends or attracting people; it is about smooth talk, influencing, and convincing people; it is about elevating people's visions to higher levels. The lack of leadership contributes to misguided organisational change, resulting in unrealistic expectations and dissatisfaction, ultimately leading to dysfunctional workplace behaviour (Rivero, 2014). For inclusion to work, leaders must commit to leading by example by showing their subordinates how it is done. According to Chukwudi and Eusebius (2023), the failure to prioritise diversity and inclusion efforts at the highest organisational levels can hinder the organisation's successful implementation of inclusion principles. Peng, Wang and Lin (2021) stated that transformational leadership enhances employees' openness to change by providing positive information about organisational changes; this helps employees interpret change positively, believing it benefits the organisation and its employees by interpreting the vision described by transformational leaders, employees develop a positive outlook on change. Leaders should not only endorse inclusion and diversity initiatives verbally but must demonstrate commitment through actionable policies, set clear goals, integrate them into the organisation's strategic plan, and hold them accountable for achieving them (Jejeniwa, Mhlongo and Jejeniwa,2024).

Therefore, a lack of leadership commitment to ensuring that the subordinates understand the reason behind change can create a push-and-pull situation, resulting in resistance to change and affecting those for whom the change is designed.

### **2.9.2. Resistance to change**

Change refers to transitioning from the current situation to a desired future state (Mertz, 2021). Sometimes, fear of the unknown and uncertainty about one's ability to adapt to the new change prevent people from welcoming change. Employee resistance to change is a common barrier in diversity and inclusion initiatives, as they fear it could reverse discrimination or disrupt power dynamics (Kiradoo, 2022). According to Barak (2018), employees' lack of flexibility and fear of the unknown, linked to a lack of adaptability, can lead to increased resistance towards change because of fear of failure in adopting new settings. Srivastava and Agrawal (2020) argued that resistance to change may come from the tendency to perceive it as a shock due to its association with uncertainty. On the other hand, Aslam, Muqadas and Imran (2018) reported that many employees fear job insecurity, and others are unprepared to learn and develop new skills. This may be why some employees find it difficult to accept any inclusion effort within the organisation, as they may not be used to something and do not know how it will affect how they do things. To remain competitive and survive, an organisation must continuously improve its management system, structure, culture, products, competition strategy, and goals to meet internal and external demands, ensuring it remains competitive and develops effectively in the market (Peng, Wang and Lin, 2021). Peng, Wang and Lin (2021) further added that for organisational change to work, it requires employees' commitment, openness, readiness, and supportive actions from leadership, in addition to their cognitive and emotional reactions.

### **2.9.3. Inadequate Resources and Support**

The effective implementation of inclusion strategies can be hindered by insufficient financial and human resource allocation (Chukwudi and Eusebius, 2023). Groenewald (2024) emphasised the importance of organisations regularly assessing and adjusting their policies to combat discrimination and foster an equitable work environment. Offering such support to victims of discrimination would create a safe environment and allow them to feel included and valued in the organisation. Implementing inclusion within the organisation comes at a cost, requiring funds for events and systems like Employee Resource groups (ERGs) to promote the inclusion initiative. Even though implementing such systems is costly, they are worth every

dime. According to Groenewald (2024), many studies have proven that ERGs are pivotal in cultivating inclusion and diversity within the organisation.

High employee turnover intention is a significant issue as it can lead to workplace stress, hinder loyalty, and decrease commitment to the work (Aburumman et al., 2020). Aburumman et al. (2020) stated that the increase in employee turnover is due to human resource management practices that do not support the employee's needs and the decrease in job satisfaction. Human resources not doing what is supposed to be providing support to employees would affect the efforts of fostering inclusion in the organisation.

#### **2.9.4. Lack of diversity at the top**

Promoting Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace faces a significant challenge due to the lack of diversity at the top of organisations; despite efforts to diversify, the number of women and minorities in executive positions remains low, potentially leading to a culture where inclusion is not prioritised (Kiradoo, 2022). Groenewald (2024) shared the same sentiment, stating that despite the increasing emphasis on inclusion and diversity, challenges persist in industries like financial services, where the senior-level representation of people of colour remains low due to high employee turnover and promotion disparities. According to Daley (2020), an organisation must have a human resource training approach that promotes a working environment that includes all previously unequal groups, such as women and people of different racial backgrounds. Gender equality has been a long-standing debate, particularly in the workplace, where women often face inequality in terms of positions, financial benefits, and promotion conditions, often due to the belief that their primary priority is family care (Daley, 2020). Astakala (2023) claimed that workforce diversification can enhance the company's unique perspective and experience. The lack of inclusion of disabled people is also a challenge in some organisations because they end up not knowing how to handle situations that involve a disabled person. Gould et al. (2020) stated that their study aimed to guide future research on strategies for promoting workplace inclusion of workers with disabilities by examining how disability can be integrated into organisational social responsibility planning and reporting.

#### **2.9.5. Unconscious bias**

Suveren (2022) stated that Mazarin and Anthony (1995) defined unconscious bias as the unconscious attitudes and stereotypes that influence our understanding, actions, and decisions without our knowledge. Unconscious biases are universal and have detrimental effects on various aspects of life, including the workplace, healthcare, and the learning environment

(Ogunyemi, 2021). It must be noted that this behaviour is not intentional nor controllable (Suveren, 2022). In most cases, unconscious bias is related to race, especially towards black people; as it was mentioned that this is not intentional, one may not see that they are being biased. Creating an inclusive environment may require leaders to introspect and work on fixing the issue. Kiradoo (2020) mentioned that organisations can tackle this issue by offering unconscious bias training and raising awareness about the influence of biases on decision-making processes. Nonetheless, Pronin and Hazel (2023) argued that the ideal approach to eliminating bias is not achieved through conscious effort and educational training; they suggested that we should consider limiting people's access to biasing information by conducting auditions behind a screen and blindly reviewing journal submissions as a different strategy to prevent biases from happening.

#### **2.9.6. Lack of accountability**

El-Wakil (2023) described accountability as facing consequences from others for one's actions and decisions, such as answerability and the opportunity to justify them publicly. In comparison, Daun (2020) stated that accountability involves knowing an actor's actions and directing them to change or improve their behaviour. Frank and Shim (2023) mentioned that a lack of accountability leads to discrepancies between best practices and potential outcomes. Accountability arrangements involve clearly defined goals, tracking metrics for progress, and consequences for insurers, providers, and professionals for achieving or failing to achieve objectives (Frank and Shim, 2023). Organisations set goals for leaders that they must meet to qualify for a higher percentage of performance rewards. According to Julaika and Wardhani (2024), lack of accountability can significantly hinder the achievement of objectives and operational efficiency. As a result, leaders are held accountable for their actions for not reaching targets set for them, which compels them to work hard and excel. Inclusion does not always work in organisations because ineffective leaders are not held accountable for creating inclusivity among their staff. Some argue that reliable and rigorous accountability systems can address issues with quality and impact (Cochran-Smith, 2021). Enhancing accountability involves establishing consistent performance standards, linking performance to outcomes, and implementing regulatory and accreditation standards (Frank and Shim, 2023).

#### **2.9.7. Tokenism**

Workplace tokenism was used to describe unique challenges faced by women in male-dominated professions, such as increased visibility, performance pressure, assimilation, and

stereotyping (Levandowski, Rietberg-Miller and Walton, 2024). Tokenism is the practice of hiring or promoting individuals from underrepresented groups solely to create the appearance of diversity (Kiradoo, 2020). Lee (2020) described tokenism as a strategic approach to making an organisation appear progressive, where gender, ethnicity, and other factors dictate the hierarchy that determines entry and advancement. This is risky because hiring unskilled people for diversity and inclusion may harm the organisation and load other employees with work, causing further division within the team. Levandowski, Rietberg-Miller and Walton (2024) shared the same sentiment as they stated that tokenism is a pervasive tactic in organisations that involves superficial efforts in hiring, workplace culture, and other areas to appear equitable, leading to overwork and burnout among marginalised groups. To overcome tokenism, Kiradoo (2020) suggested that organisations prioritise hiring and promotion based on qualifications and abilities rather than race, gender, or other characteristics and establish diversity metrics that measure workforce diversity at all levels.

## **2.10. Chapter Summary**

This chapter explored the literature on inclusion, its benefits, and its impact on workplace and employee performance. It explored the significance of an inclusive organisational culture and its effect on employees. It outlined ways of creating an inclusive culture, which is assumed to impact employee behaviour and organisational performance, the benefits of an inclusive organisational culture, the influence of inclusive leadership on the employees, the benefits of an inclusive leadership role on the organisation's performance, and lastly the challenges of implementing inclusion within the organisation.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter details the specific methods and tactics used to collect and evaluate data, providing a clear framework for the research processes. It also guides the researcher on the ethical protocol to ensure that results are valid, reliable, and relevant.

### **3.2. Research Design and Method**

#### **3.2.1. Research Design**

The research design serves as a critical framework that directs the collection and analysis of data to address specific research objectives and questions and determine how relevant information for a study will be obtained (Sileyew, 2019). It also serves as a data collection, measurement, and analysis blueprint. According to (Creswell and Creswell, 2018), It focuses on the key components which are;

- The purpose of the study
- The type of research method
- Population and sample
- Data collection methods
- Data analysis
- Ethical consideration

#### **3.2.2. Research Method**

The research method is the science of studying how research is done scientifically, and it focuses on the steps researchers take to solve their research problems and the logic behind them (Kothari, 2004). This study adopted a qualitative research method, which explores and understands the meaning that people or groups ascribe to social or human crises (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Data collection, analysis, and interpretation of data are critical components of this method (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). According to Hammaberg, Kirkman and De Lacey (2016), Qualitative methods include small-group discussions, semi-structured interviews, in-depth interviews, and text analysis. This research used semi-structured and in-depth interviews to obtain information from participants. Semi-structured interviews gather views on the topic and background information or an institutional viewpoint, and in-depth interviews are used to

comprehend a condition, experience, or event from a personal standpoint (Hammaberg, Kirkman and De Lacey, 2016).

### **3.3. Research Philosophy**

The study adopted a qualitative research approach to investigate the factors that influence inclusion to enhance performance at Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum Services. Qualitative research is a methodological approach that focuses on understanding the depths of human experiences and perspectives, capturing contexts and meanings often lost in numerical translation, allowing researchers to connect with their subjects' subjective experiences (Lim, 2024). The methodology is either constructive or interpretive and focuses on understanding the "what," "why," "when," "where," "who," and "how" of social behaviours and interactions rather than just quantifying their occurrence (Lim, 2024). The researcher chose the interpretive qualitative method because it uses open methods like open-ended questions, in-depth interviews, and participant observation to explore phenomena comprehensively (Lim, 2024). It aims to comprehend a specific social situation, event, role, group, or interaction through an investigative process that involves contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing, and classifying the object of study (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Qualitative methods focus on understanding context through the researcher's or participant's construction of reality, providing insights that resonate with authentic experiences while maintaining academic integrity through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability criteria (Lim, 2024).

### **3.4. Research Approach Type**

The qualitative research approach can use deductive or inductive approaches to analyse data. Inductive and deductive research differ in their focus. Each has distinct starting points, goals, methods, and data analysis approaches (Kumar and Ujire, 2024). Inductive research utilises specific observations and patterns to develop new theories, while deductive research begins with a hypothesis and tests it through observations (Kumar and Ujire, 2024).

An inductive approach was used in this study, which involves collecting relevant data related to a specific topic and examining it to identify patterns and develop a theory to explain them (Kumar and Ujire, 2024). This approach assisted researchers in developing a more refined understanding of their subject matter. The inductive method begins with observations and moves from specific experiences to a more general set of propositions about those experiences

(Kumar and Ujire, 2024). Researchers move from data to theory or from specific to general to comprehensively understand their subject matter (Kumar and Ujire, 2024).

### 3.5. Research Paradigms

A research paradigm is a fundamental belief system that guides the researcher's worldview perspective and shared beliefs, providing a comprehensive understanding of research phenomena and their interpretation of data (Khatri, 2020). A paradigm comprises four elements: epistemology, ontology, phenomenology, and axiology (Khatri, 2020).

- **Epistemology**  
Epistemology, or the theory and philosophy of knowledge, is a research paradigm examining knowledge acquisition from various sources (Khatri, 2020).
- **Ontology**  
Ontology is a philosophical branch that examines the assumptions we make to understand the nature or essence of a social phenomenon, aiming to make sense of it (Khatri, 2020).
- **Axiology**  
This research paradigm addresses ethical issues during research (Khatri, 2020). It is a philosophical approach to making decisions about value or the theory of value, and it involves defining, evaluating, and understanding concepts of right and wrong behaviour related to the research (Khatri, 2020).
- **Phenomenology**  
Phenomenology is a qualitative approach that investigates the lived experiences of individuals, focusing on the first-person perspective of phenomena. It explores the appearance and experiences of things, revealing their essence (Lim, 2024). This concurs with Kuchinke (2023), who states that phenomenology is a thoughtful and reflective process that seeks to understand aspects of meaning and experience, ensuring a systematic, explicit, and intersubjective study of our lived experiences (Kuchinke, 2023).

In this study, *epistemology*- participants were selected from different functions to get different views and explore their opinions and interpretations of inclusion. *Ontology* involves understanding how participants feel about inclusion initiatives in the organisation through lived experience. *Axiology* ensured that participants' rights and values were not violated and that ethical practices were followed. *Phenomenology*: assisted the researcher in exploring

participants' experiences about inclusion and whether they felt included. It also allowed the researcher to explore the participants' experiences through observation.

### **3.6. Research Population**

Research population refers to the units that can be applied to research findings, encompassing all units with variable characteristics under study for which research findings can be generalised (Satishprakash, 2020). This concurs with Ahmad, Alias and Abdul Razak (2023), who stated that the population in research refers to the entire group of individuals, objects, or events that share a common characteristic and are the focus of the study, representing the complete set of elements the researcher aims to study and draw conclusions about. The target population for this study was the employees of Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum Services. Due to time constraints and employee work schedules, recruiting the entire population for the study was not feasible. The research recruited a sample of 8 participants who represent the organisation's population. A sample is a selected subset of the population used in research to make inferences and draw conclusions about the entire population, representing a smaller, manageable group (Ahmad, Alias and Abdul Razak, 2023). A sample allows researchers to study a smaller group while still making reasonable assumptions about the larger population, and research findings can be applied with confidence if the sample accurately represents the diversity and characteristics of the population (Ahmad, Alias and Abdul Razak, 2023).

### **3.7. Sampling Method**

Sampling is selecting participants to participate in a research study based on relevant information (Oppong, 2013). The qualitative method has three sampling approaches: convenience, judgment, and theoretical sampling (Marshall, 1996). This study will use two sample strategies: convenience sampling and judgment sampling; convenience sampling allows a researcher to select accessible subjects, reducing expenses and time. Judgemental sampling requires subjects to have experience investigating topics. (Oppong, 2013). The convenience technique will aid us in gathering essential information from the operations team (operators) and their perspectives. At the same time, the judgmental approach will assist us in picking employees who are responsible for inclusion and diversity at TWM Petroleum Services. A total of 8 employees will be interviewed: 1 judgmental participant from leadership, 1 maintenance participant, and 6 convenient participants from operations.

### **3.8. Data Collection Instruments**

Data collection is the process of acquiring and measuring information to answer research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes (Kabir and Syed, 2016). In data collection, a researcher may use any of the three research interviews: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured interviews (Gill et al.,2018). Semi-structured interviews were utilised in this study; this type of interview involves a series of questions to define topics and allow the interviewer or interviewee to explore a concept or response in greater depth (Gill et al.,2018). The research interview aims to investigate people's perspectives and experiences to collect data for the study. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, and participants were informed of the study specifics of the interview and assured of their anonymity and confidentiality.

### **3.9. Data Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis describes, classifies, and connects data to study concepts. (Graue, 2015). Qualitative data analysis involves four steps: data collection, reduction, displays, and conclusion drawing/verification. (Graue, 2015). Thematic analysis was used in this research. The thematic analysis involves identifying, organising, and providing insight into recurring themes and patterns in qualitative research themes (Lochmiller, 2021). This analysis technique consists of three components: categories, unique codes, and researchers-produced themes (Lochmiller, 2021). This is a flexible and accessible technique, which is a pathway into a qualitative approach that explains the mechanics of coding and interpreting qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2012). NVivo was used to organise, analyse, and sort unstructured information to identify themes and patterns. The triangulation method was used to ensure our data's internal credibility and trustworthiness, which collects data from multiple sources such as interviews, observation, and document analysis (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Data was analysed in six phases using thematic analyses: Having familiarity with data, creating codes, looking for themes, reviewing themes, themes defined and named, and making the report (Braun and Clarke, 2012).

- **Getting familiar with Data**

The interviews were recorded, and the recordings were transcribed using a turboscribe, which involves converting spoken words to written words. Then, the researcher reviewed the data to get a clear understanding and familiarity and identify similarities and differences before synthesising and coding.

- **Code generation**

The data was then imported into the NVivo software, which allowed the researcher to code. The coding process involves highlighting phrases or sentences relevant to the study. This was done for all 8 participants' transcripts and assisted the researcher in developing themes.

- **Identifying and Reviewing themes**

This step involves examining the coded and collated data extracts to identify potential themes of broader significance (Kiger and Varpio, 2020). The researcher created themes by analysing, combining, comparing, and mapping the relationships between codes (Kiger and Varpio, 2020). From the codes created, the research then identified patterns and similar meanings that were relevant to the study objectives and assisted in generating themes.

- **Refining Themes**

Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) method of refining themes, the researcher examined the coded data within each theme to ensure proper fit. Then, all relevant codes and extracts were reviewed, assessing if each theme had adequate supporting data and coherence and if some were too large or diverse (Kiger and Varpio, 2020). The researcher then eliminated irrelevant themes and retained the significant ones.

- **Interpretation of Themes**

At this stage, the themes have been identified and refined. The researcher begins naming and interpreting themes, which involves developing an understandable name for the theme, defining and describing each theme, and emphasising its significance to the broader study question. Moreover, it was interpreted to answer our research questions and objectives.

- **Write up of themes**

This final step involves completing the analysis and describing the findings, which have already been initiated through note-taking, theme description, and selection of representative data extracts in previous steps (Kiger and Varpio, 2020). The researcher synthesised the findings with the literature based on the objectives and questions of the study.

### **3.10. Ethical Considerations**

The researcher vows to uphold the rights and values of all research participants. The researcher secured a gatekeeper's letter from TWM Petroleum Services and subsequently submitted the

ethical clearance application to the University of KwaZulu-Natal Human and Social Science Ethical Clearance Committee. All pertinent documents were presented to the ethics committee for their approval. The application received approval, and the protocol reference number was assigned: HSSREC/00007360/2024; interviews took place following the committee's approval. The researcher sought permission from each participant, outlining the study's purpose and ensuring that informed consent was comprehensively explained before signing. Each participant was made aware that their involvement in the study was voluntary, that they had the option to decline or withdraw at any time, and that measures were in place to maintain their anonymity to protect their identity.

### **3.11. Credibility and Trustworthiness of Data**

Haq et al. (2023) state that Merriam (1998) argued that the concept of internal validity in qualitative studies is equivalent to credibility. Credibility is the degree to which data is trustworthy and accurate and shows respondents' views and interpretations (Haq et al., 2023). The trustworthiness of qualitative research is determined by its credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability in its design, process, and action (Haq et al., 2023).

- **Credibility**

This is an internal validity measure that outlines the intended measure, and the study's credibility is established when the qualitative data results are easily recognised and shared with others (Haq et al., 2023). If the study's findings are similar to human experiences and widespread acceptance, the study is credible (Haq et al., 2023). The researcher recorded the interviews with participants, and the information utilised in the study was extracted from participants' recorded data, preventing information distortion and ensuring credibility.

- **Transferability/Applicability**

Applicability refers to the extent to which research findings can be effectively applied in specific contexts, people, groups, and settings (Haq et al., 2023). The results of a qualitative study will be considered applicable if they can be attributed to the experiences of those who were not involved (Haq et al., 2023). The results quoted the participant's responses and synthesised the findings with the literature.

- **Dependability/Consistency**

Dependability refers to data consistency across similar contexts, indicating that if a study's findings are replicated in a similar population or condition, then the findings are

dependable (Haq et al., 2023). Reliability in quantitative analysis refers to the consistency, stability, and equivalence of research results, expressing their consistency, stability, and equivalence (Haq et al., 2023). The study provided detailed explanations of its theory and used NVivo software to generate codes and a thematic analysis method for data analysis.

- **Confirmability/Neutrality**

Neutrality refers to the fairness of results, ensuring the original responses of study participants are pure and free from biases (Haq et al., 2023). The criterion of trustworthiness suggests neutrality is the researcher's degree of unbiasedness in the research and interpretation process (Haq et al., 2023). The research ensured no bias in selecting participants as they were selected from each department in the organisation. The results were presented from participants' data and literature and were not influenced by the researcher's experiences with the topic.

To enhance trustworthiness in qualitative research, researchers must master various aspects, including epistemological understanding, literature review skills, theoretical understanding, and argument skills (Haq et al., 2023). Haq et al. (2023) further argued that trustworthiness in qualitative research requires understanding and applying various data collection techniques, appropriate analysis procedures, connection with theories, and interaction among these concepts.

### **3.12. Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlined the research framework that was used to conduct the study. A qualitative method was used to investigate factors influencing inclusion at Themba Wendy Moloji Petroleum Services to enhance performance. Ethical clearance was obtained from HSSREC to ensure that the proper channels were followed, starting from the gatekeeper's letter and the safety and security of the participants in the study. The interviews began after the ethical clearance was granted, and participants were provided with consent forms before the face-to-face interviews. The interviews were recorded, and the recordings were then transcribed and coded. Then, themes were generated and discussed.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DATA RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results generated through the interviews conducted by the researcher. Thematic analysis was used to create codes and identify themes from the interview questions to present answers to research questions.

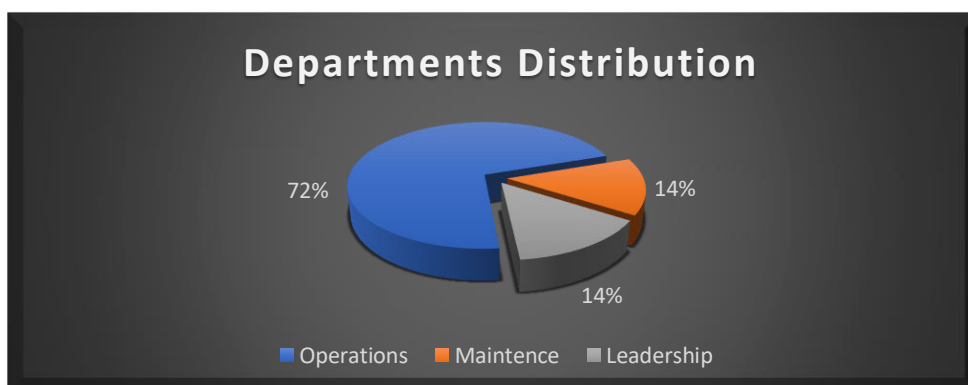
### 4.2. Data Presentation

The interviews conducted by the researcher with the participants were recorded and transcribed using a Turboscribe to convert spoken words to written words, and Nvivo was used to code and generate themes.

#### 4.2.1. Participant Selection

**Table 4.1: The table showing sample size and participant selection per department**

Departments	Subjects	Subjects Size
Operations	Operator	2
	Technician	3
	Shift activity Coordinator	1
Maintenance	Maintenance technologists	1
Leadership	Site leader	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>8</b>



*Figure 4.1: Graph showing participant percentage distribution by departments.*

The graph above shows that about 72% of the participants were from the operations department, 14% represented maintenance, and 14% leadership.

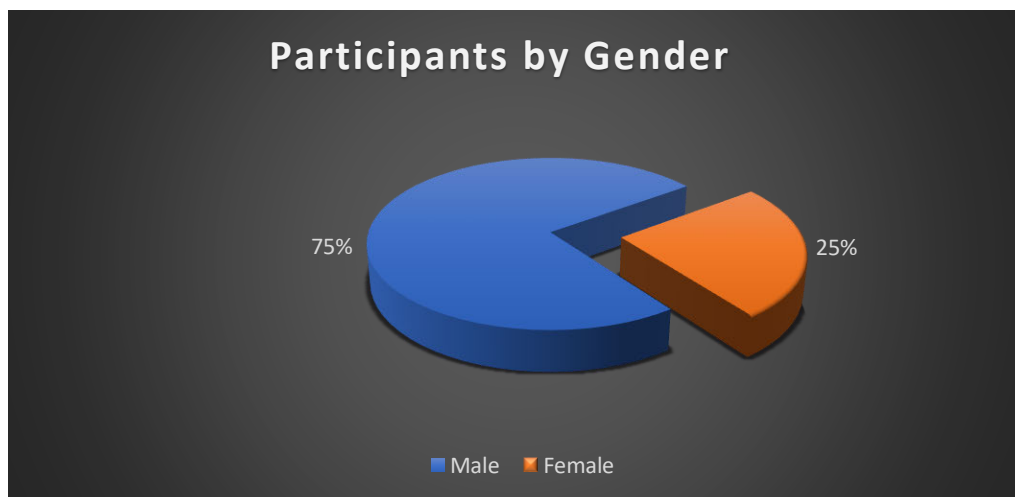
### 4.3. Demographics

#### 4.3.1 Participants Summary

The information presented below represents the participants' demographic details, including their gender, race, and years of service in the organisation.

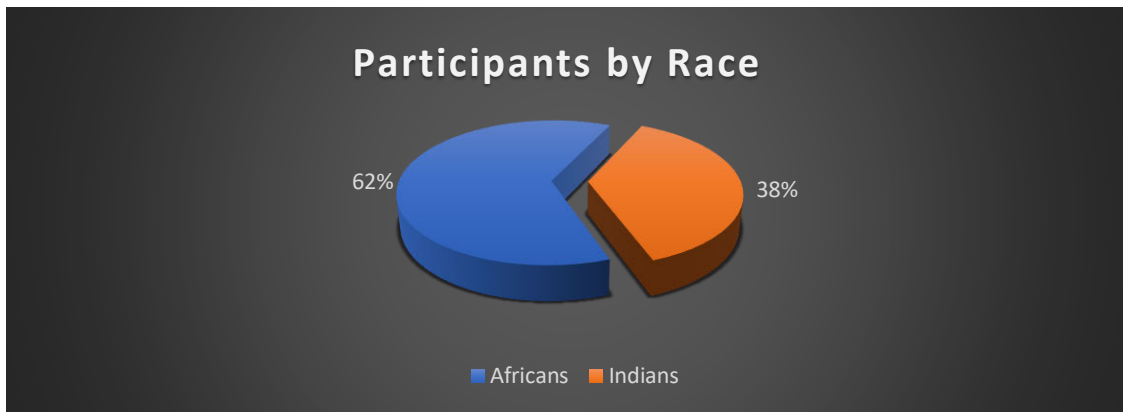
**Table 4.2: Participants demographic details summary**

Participants	Gender	Race	Age group	Years of service
P1	Male	African	40-50	3 - 6
P2	Female	African	40-50	0 - 3
P3	Male	Indian	40-50	3 - 6
P4	Male	African	40-50	6 - 9
P5	Female	African	30-40	0 - 3
P6	Male	Indian	30-40	6 - 9
P7	Male	Indian	30-40	6 - 9
P8	Male	African	40-50	6 - 9



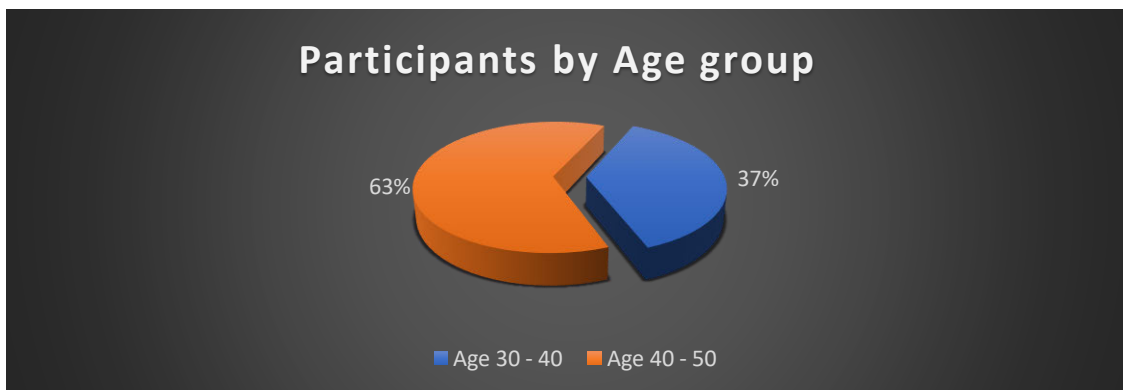
*Figure 4.2: Graph showing participants by Gender*

The gender distribution among our participants shows that, of the participants who participated in the study, 75% were males, and only 25% were females.



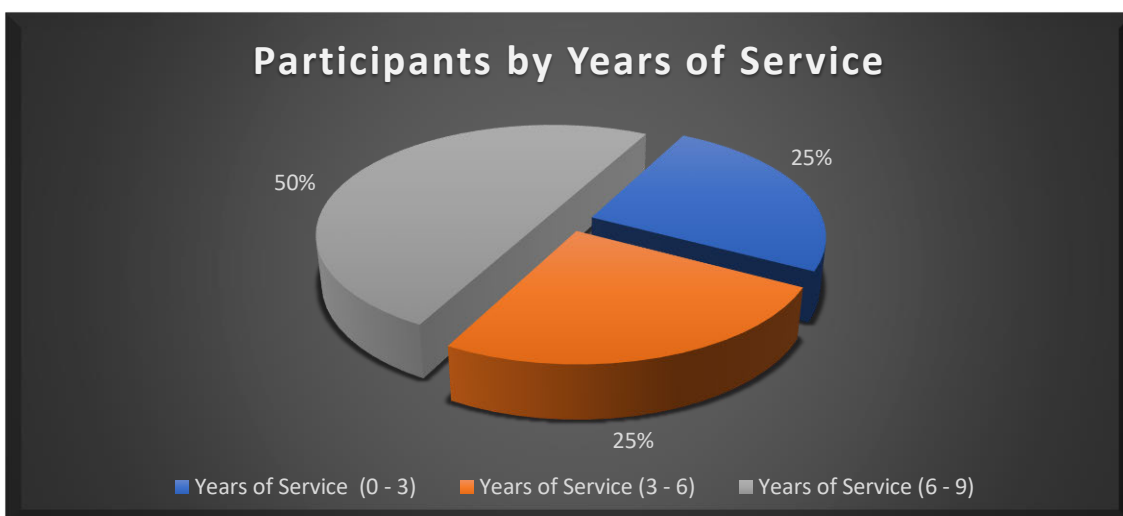
*Figure 4.3: Graph showing participants by Race.*

The race distribution among the participants shows that 62% of the participants who participated in the study were Africans, and 38% were Indians.



*Figure 4.4: Graph showing participants by Age group.*

The age distribution among our participants shows that 63% of the participants fall in the age group of 30 – 40 years, and 37% are between 40 – 50 years.



*Figure 4.5: Graph showing the distribution of participant's years of service in the organisation*

The participants' years of service distribution show that 50% have been in the organisation from 0 – 3 years, 25% fall between 3 – 6, and another 25% have been there for 6 – 9 years.

#### **4.4. Summary of interview responses from participants**

##### **Participant 1**

###### **Question 1: Perception of Company's Inclusion Efforts.**

The first participant identified specific actions that the company has taken to address gaps in inclusion and gender representation. These efforts include appointing females to critical positions. Additionally, he pointed out that the company has created an inclusion program that involves employees from all functions, ensuring widespread participation.

###### **Question 2: Impact on Employee Satisfaction and Engagement**

The participant stated that the initiatives have fostered self-confidence among employees by making them feel valued and integral to the company. The participant indicated that from his observation, the employees perceive themselves as workers and crucial contributors to the company's goals and achievements. He added that the platforms provided by the company for voicing opinions ensure everyone from the management to the lower ranks feels heard and valued.

###### **Question 3: Feeling of inclusion in the Workplace**

The participant noted a division in feelings of inclusion and stated that while many employees who participate in inclusion initiatives feel included, those who do not participate might feel excluded from the initiative. However, he pointed out that the company has created a platform to encourage participation, ensuring that all employees have opportunities to feel included.

###### **Question 4: Areas for Improvement**

The participant emphasised the need for the organisation to be more transparent and more explicit about its strategic directions and action plans. The participant proposed that boosting awareness about the influence of employee contributions and communicating corporate goals more generally could encourage active participation, mainly if leaders motivate their subordinates, which is also critical.

## Participant 2

### **Question 1: Perception of Company's Inclusion Efforts**

The participant stated that the efforts toward inclusion are highly appreciated. The participant further pointed out that the initiatives have encouraged psychological safety, allowing even introverted and soft-spoken employees to express their ideas without fear. The participant also mentioned that the case studies on biases and subsequent dialogues have been instrumental in breaking down barriers and correcting behaviour, fostering a better understanding and appreciation among employees.

### **Question 2: Impact on Employee Satisfaction and Engagement**

The participant stated that the internal survey findings enhanced staff satisfaction and engagement. The participant also noted that the inclusive culture has increased tolerance and acceptance of cultural differences, resulting in better workplace harmony. She also stated that employees value the company's continual efforts to improve their work environment.

### **Question 3: Feelings of Inclusion**

The participant stated that she joined the organisation after many negative dynamics had been resolved; she heard that there were issues before; however, she did not experience any problems and felt included. She further stated that the monthly meetings with representation from all functions demonstrated widespread inclusion and built unity among the employees or functions. These meetings also involve contractors, extending the inclusive culture beyond permanent employees.

### **Question 4: Areas for Improvement**

The participant stated that despite significant improvements, there is room for improvement in teaching social and emotional intelligence skills to ensure that extroverted individuals do not overshadow introverts; the goal is continuous improvement in I&D initiatives to maintain and enhance the inclusive environment.

## Participant 3

### **Question 1: Perception of the Company's inclusion efforts**

The participant stated that the company's efforts toward inclusion and diversity are well-received. He added that an inclusive environment is successful as it promotes a sense of

belonging and ensures all voices are heard. He also noted that how the company communicates and educates employees about inclusion and diversity initiatives significantly influences their perception.

### **Question 2: Impact on Employee Satisfaction and Engagement**

The participant indicated that inclusivity promotes diverse idea development, which is critical for issue resolution. According to the participant, employees feel more engaged when they participate in conversations and solutions, which leads to better job outcomes.

### **Question 3: Feelings of Inclusion**

The participant sometimes feels included and excluded, notably due to dietary preferences, as he is a vegetarian and feels like he is being overlooked. This suggests that while broad inclusion measures are practical, there are still areas where individual needs must be addressed.

### **Question 4: Areas for Improvement**

The participant feels training on the purpose of work and balancing employee expectations with employer goals is necessary. He stated that clear communication and practical implementation guidance can help bridge gaps in inclusion. Also, community outreach and internal team-building activities supported during work hours have been positive but should include everyone, including those with less flexible shifts.

## **Participant 4**

### **Question 1: Perception of the Company's inclusion Efforts**

The participant feels that the company has invested substantially in improving relationships within the team through inclusion and diversity initiatives. These efforts have not only enhanced team dynamics but also overall productivity.

### **Question 2: Impact on Employee Satisfaction and Engagement**

The participant mentioned that the cultural and background differences previously led to misunderstandings and feels that the inclusion programs have assisted in bringing these issues to the table, allowing employees to appreciate each other's backgrounds and work together effectively. The participant also noted that the discussion and understanding of diverse perspectives have fostered a more cooperative environment aimed at achieving company goals.

### **Question 3: Feelings of Inclusion**

The participant stated that he has seen significant improvements in communication across different teams, such as maintenance and operations. The participant also noted that having platforms where everyone can voice their opinions, like roundtable discussions, has enhanced feelings of inclusivity and mentioned that such measures ensure that even less outspoken employees are heard.

#### **Question 4: Areas for Improvement**

The participant suggested that continuous engagement and celebration of diverse heritages, known as Heritage Day in South Africa, are essential. Acknowledging unconscious biases and taking steps to address them are also crucial. He also mentioned that respecting each individual's role and profession helps create a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

#### **Participant 5**

#### **Question 1: Perception of the Company's Inclusion Efforts**

The participant observed that employees responded positively to the company's efforts regarding inclusion and diversity and stated that these efforts resulted in a more positive workplace atmosphere and a sense of belonging among employees. The participant highlighted that the policies and practices developed for inclusion are embraced, showing that employees now consider themselves part of a diverse and inclusive team.

#### **Question 2: Impact on Employee Satisfaction and Engagement**

The participant highlighted that there has been a noticeable increase in employee engagement and motivation due to these initiatives. Quality of work has improved, and there has been a decrease in staff absenteeism. Additionally, she added that the company has reported no serious safety incidents in the past five years, which is a significant positive outcome.

#### **Question 3: Feelings of Inclusion**

The participant stated that employees, including herself, feel included in the workplace. This is evidenced by performance indicators showing excellent results and high participation in inclusion and diversity events and activities. She noted that the enthusiasm shown by colleagues for such events reflects a sense of inclusion, indicating that employees feel valued and included.

#### **Question 4: Areas for Improvement**

The participant highlighted that while substantial progress has been made in training and development around inclusion and diversity, there is always room for improvement. The participant suggested that further diversity management training for the leadership team could be beneficial. She also indicated that an organisation needs to conduct an anonymous annual survey to measure the current state of inclusion and diversity within the workplace, which could help identify areas for further improvement.

#### **Participant 6**

##### **Question 1: Perception of the Company's inclusion Efforts**

The participant stated that the efforts toward inclusion and diversity have remained consistent. He noted that senior leaders have always been mandated to focus on inclusion and diversity, which continues to be the case.

##### **Question 2: Impact on Employee Satisfaction and Engagement**

The participant believes inclusion and diversity efforts significantly impact employee satisfaction and engagement. The participant also stated that when employees feel included and heard, they are happier and more willing to perform better, which, in turn, benefits the company.

##### **Question 3: Feelings of Inclusion**

The participant highlighted that while he feels included and has been with the company for a long time, they acknowledge that some employees might still feel excluded. He added that the sense of inclusion can vary depending on the workgroup and leadership. Nevertheless, the participant feels that the efforts to promote inclusivity have been practical overall.

##### **Question 4: Areas for Improvement**

The participant stated that ongoing training and refresher courses on inclusion and diversity are beneficial. The participant added that with many new employees joining, keeping the momentum through regular training helps maintain awareness and continuous improvement in inclusion efforts.

#### **Participant 7**

##### **Question 1: Employee Perception of Inclusion and Diversity Efforts**

The participant noted a significant positive change in the company's inclusion and diversity efforts over the past few years. The participant also mentioned that there has been an increase in events promoting communication and understanding among employees from different backgrounds and cultures. He added that this shift has fostered an improved colleague relationship, creating a more inclusive atmosphere. The participant expresses hope that this momentum will continue in the future.

### **Question 2: Impact on Employee Satisfaction and Engagement**

The participant highlighted that as a result of the inclusion efforts, employees feel more empowered to voice their opinions, which enhances overall positivity in the workplace. The participant also mentioned that knowing colleagues on a personal level allows for more accessible communication, including the sharing of ideas and experiences. He added that the inclusion atmosphere helps ensure that employees do not feel their thoughts are dismissed but are welcomed and used as part of the team's suggestions, leading to higher satisfaction and engagement levels.

### **Question 3: Feelings of Inclusion**

When the participant asked about the feeling of inclusion of the employees, the participant stated that while the general sentiment is that employees feel included, some groups, specifically non-permanent contractors, have sometimes reported feelings of exclusion. The reason was that the contractors received gifts different from those of permanent employees during celebrations. Despite these challenges, the participant mentioned that efforts have been made to improve inclusion for all employees, and the participant acknowledges that the journey toward inclusivity is ongoing and requires continuous improvement.

### **Question 4: Areas for Improvement**

The participant identified a need for more focus on including shift workers and stated that these employees usually miss important meetings or training sessions due to their work schedules, leading to feelings of exclusion in the workplace. The participant further suggested that creating time and opportunities for these workers to participate in inclusion and diversity meetings would enhance their involvement and address these gaps.

## **Participant 8 (Leadership)**

### **Question 1: Measuring Success of Inclusion and Its Impact on Business Performance**

The participant stated that the organisation employs multiple tools to measure the success of inclusion, primarily through regular employee surveys that assess engagement levels. He added that actions are taken to enhance inclusion based on survey results. He mentioned that the impact of these inclusive practices is evident in business performance. He stated that higher team engagement correlates with improved site productivity, health and safety performance, and quality metrics, indicating a clear link between an inclusive culture and operational effectiveness.

### **Question 2: Leaders' Role in Promoting Inclusion**

The participant stated that leaders promote inclusion by fostering a psychologically safe environment that encourages employee participation and transparency. Furthermore, they prioritise clear communication and involve employees in the planning process by ensuring that all team members have a "seat at the table" when changes are made; leadership facilitates smoother implementation of initiatives while building trust and collaboration.

### **Question 3: Actions to Create a More Inclusive Workplace**

The participant stated that the organisation has taken several actions to enhance an inclusive environment, starting with the hiring process and ensuring the right policies are in place. The participant also mentioned that the physical environment is crucial; facilities like changing rooms and kitchens must be in good condition to support a positive culture. Additionally, he mentioned that the planned events and programs are organised to encourage onsite and offsite participation, reinforcing the commitment to an inclusive workplace.

### **Question 4: Addressing Unconscious Bias and Barriers to Inclusion**

The participant stated that addressing unconscious bias is a crucial focus driven by organisational policies. He mentioned that specific measures are in place to minimise unconscious bias by promoting teamwork in decision-making processes. The participant also noted that collective decision-making helps reduce bias, prevent reliance on a single perspective, and ensure more diverse input in decision-making, leading to a more inclusive environment.

#### **4.5. Themes Generated and Discussions**

- ✓ Employees empowerment
- ✓ Enhanced engagement
- ✓ Embracing cultural differences

- ✓ Sense of belonging
- ✓ Lack of flexibility due to shift work
- ✓ Company Policies
- ✓ Cultural differences
- ✓ Leadership commitment
- ✓ Conducive environment
- ✓ Care and Appreciation to Employees
- ✓ Inclusive communication

#### **4.5.1. Themes corresponding to Objective 1: Understanding the factors influencing Inclusion at TWM Petroleum Services.**

- ✓ Employees empowerment
- ✓ Enhanced engagement
- ✓ Embracing cultural differences
- ✓ Sense of belonging

##### **4.5.1.1. Employees Empowerment**

Employee empowerment emerged as a critical factor influencing inclusion at TWM Petroleum services. Baird and Wang (2010) described employee empowerment as the delegation of responsibilities and power to their subordinates, giving them the power to make decisions on their own. Participant 1 highlighted that those initiatives aimed at inclusion, such as appointing women to key leadership positions, claimed that this has significantly enhanced employee self-confidence and perception of value within the organisation;

*“And what they have done is firstly, they appointed some female in key positions because they identified that some female representation might be low. So they appointed some female in key positions.”*

This concurs with Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez (2018), who stated that creating an opportunity for marginalised groups at all levels is crucial to providing an environment where they can positively contribute to the organisation's success. Participants believe they are integral to the company rather than just being part of the workforce, and they value and appreciate the implementation of the inclusion program, which ensures that all employees have a platform to voice their opinions and participate in critical decisions, fostering a sense of empowerment and ownership among staff. In the literature, Ahmed et al. (2022) stated that

inclusion creates opportunities for individuals to participate, impact essential organisational procedures, and leverage organisational resources. Participant 2 noted the increased participation in the organisation, where different people take up various roles;

*“On the events itself, you have different functions, different people taking up significant roles. You have got people that change between being MC, being overall coordinator, and being the DJ, so the inclusion is definitely there.”*

This shows that when employees are empowered and allowed to be themselves, they excel and give their all for the organisation's benefit.

#### **4.5.1.2. Enhanced engagement**

The enhanced engagement theme highlights the significance of an inclusive environment and how it promotes active employee participation and connection. Participants indicated that initiatives leading to open communication and shared decision-making have improved site culture and motivated employees. This concurs with O’Donovan (2017), who stated that team stability, engagement, respect, and management support influence inclusion and enhance organisational performance. When the participants were asked about the impact of inclusion efforts on employees’ satisfaction and engagement, all agreed that the team is now more engaged; Participant 6 even mentioned that,

*“Personally, I think it makes a huge impact. So, when people feel that they are included and that they are heard, I think that you know, it works at improving their engagement. They feel happy at work and willing to do better”.*

And participant 8 stated that;

*“Yeah, well, as I said, we made a there has been a huge change, so when people feel included in a team, They feel that they can voice their opinion, so the impact it has, You know, it brings up about a better more positivity, you are getting to know the people you are working with, and you are able to share your opinions with those people and your views and your experience and You know when you when you want to challenge them, it makes it a little bit easier Because you know each other more on a personal level And again, you are feeling included”*

The responses suggested that inclusion efforts bring people together, break the barriers that separate individuals, and make them easily engage with one another. This is also supported by Nguyen and Ha (2023), who stated that engaged employees are likely to participate in inclusion initiatives and positively contribute to a positive environment. Furthermore, Hasan et al. (2021)

mentioned that highly engaged employees feel fortunate as loyalty is not solely tied to salary but also considers various other factors.

Participant 4 highlighted the significance of meetings and diverse organisational events bridging gaps between different functions and employees, ensuring everyone is informed and involved in various aspects of the workplace. The participant further stated that engagement improved personal job satisfaction and created a more invested and productive team.

#### **4.5.1.3. Embracing cultural differences**

Recognising and embracing cultural differences within the workforce emerged as a strong theme. Participants highlighted the shift from misunderstandings based on cultural backgrounds to appreciation of diversity. Participant 3 raised concern about feeling excluded due to his food preferences as a vegetarian; he stated that;

*“At times, I feel very included. At times, I also feel excluded. My exclusion lies in the way because of my beliefs. So, I am a vegetarian. Okay. And very often, it is perceived that I will get my own food.”*

Although this was raised, the participant feels there has been an improvement in accepting the differences among the employees. On the other hand, Participant 4 highlighted the importance of the inclusion program that the organisation implemented in trying to bring the employees together; he stated that;

*“So now this program, what it has done is that it has highlighted that because, first of all, some of us can be biased towards our kind of race. So, we had to put that on the table to discuss our differences, and then that was discussed, as well as trying to understand each other's backgrounds and traditions. So, with that, we got to appreciate each other's religion, first of all, and way of living as well.”*

In the literature, Royall, McCarthy and Miller (2022) and Lussier and Hendon (2019) stated that training in the workplace place is needed to enforce a culture of inclusion among the employees; they further stated that leaders who are trained to discourage any ethnocentric viewpoints, to identify and correct unconscious biases and how to promote an inclusive environment are the pathway for collaborative cultural teachings. Implementing the inclusion program in the organisation has proved to be a good move, as it addresses all the employees' concerns and provides a platform to raise and address these issues as soon as possible. It is good that participants raised their concerns and that others admitted their shortcomings; this shows progress in embracing cultural differences. Participant 5 shared the same sentiment, stating that creating platforms for cultural awareness and sensitivity discussions has assisted employees in understanding their colleagues better, thereby reducing barriers and promoting a

more inclusive culture. This understanding is crucial not only for workplace harmony but also for encouraging a collaborative environment.

#### **4.5.1.4. Sense of Belonging**

Participant feedback suggested that those creating more personal connections and stronger relationships make discussing ideas easier and collaborating. Levett and Lathlean (2008) and Bilginoglu and Yozgat (2023) described the sense of belonging as personal experiences that develop when individuals feel secure, accepted, included, and valued by their group, reflecting a harmonious relationship between themselves. Participant 1 stated that if the individual is included, feels being part of the team,

*“They feel they are part of the company, not just workers. And it also gives a voice to employees in general, even from management and even in the lower ranks. If I can put it like that, everyone has a voice.”*

Participant 2 illustrated the same sentiment that as people feel included, they feel comfortable expressing themselves freely;

*“I have seen that it allows for people to express themselves without the fear of being discriminated against. So you find that even introverts or soft-spoken people can come out of their shells and share their ideas, which are sometimes taken up and implemented.”*

However, participant 2 also warns of the danger that some extroverted people might cause in suppressing those who are still trying to come out of the shell and bonding with the team;

*“We still have people who, if they are extroverted and allowed, so to say, they always overpower the people that are soft-spoken, the introverts. So you have those kinds of people who will want to respond because something is being said to them. They do not listen to hear what you are saying. They listen to respond to what is being brought up. So sometimes you feel that that kills the momentum at times.”*

#### **4.5.2. Themes corresponding to Objective 2: Challenges of implementing inclusion at TWM Petroleum Services.**

- ✓ Lack of flexibility for shift workers
- ✓ Company Policies
- ✓ Cultural differences

#### **4.5.2.1. Lack of Flexibility due to shift work**

Another significant challenge identified is the barrier posed by shift work. Shift work is a concept in which employees frequently rotate between shifts, allowing the business to run more or less constantly by extending its operational hours (Li et al., 2021; Skýpalová, Šikýř and Urban, 2022). During shift work, the business can run 24 hours and have day and night shifts, of which employees rotate. Participant 3 claimed that employee satisfaction may be affected by a lack of flexibility due to their work schedule; he stated that those who participate may feel included, and those who do not may not due to not getting an opportunity to be part of the team because of work.

*“I think those employees that do it are satisfied. For those who do not do it, we need to tap into it because they may work shifts. They do not have the flexibility that we day shift staff have. And they probably feel excluded, right? But also, it is the nature of the job, right?”*

The unsuitable scheduling of shift work may affect the overall well-being of shift workers, which can result in reduced job satisfaction and affect the productivity of shift workers (Karhula et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021). This can negatively impact the inclusion efforts that the organisation may try to implement, as they will not be able to participate in or attend the meetings or events scheduled during the day because of their work schedule.

Another participant stated that employees working different shifts may miss critical sessions designed to promote inclusion. Participant 7 raised this as a concern that might take the organisation's efforts in creating an inclusive environment a step back; he highlighted that shift workers might miss some of the events or training since these occasions usually happen during the day, and they sometimes work the night shift or are in their off days;

*“You will be talking about a certain thing Today, and then it will skip two or three shifts, and those guys will miss it. They might get the next event or might get the next. Um, what do you call it? Education training or whatever it is, but what can improve is or improvement that can be made is more including the shifts or considering that the shifts are not always there.”*

This can lead to feelings of exclusion among shift workers, as they may struggle to engage with the broader company culture or miss out on important information regarding inclusion initiatives.

#### **4.5.2.2. Company Policies**

The other challenge the participant raised is that some employees are contractors and are treated differently than the permanent staff in the organisation. Kendi (2023) stated that sometimes it is not the people who are wrong, but the policies are the problem; furthermore, recognising these divisive policies in an organisation and creating ones that will counteract the non-inclusive policies can assist in enforcing a culture of inclusion. Participant 7 asserted that during the inclusion events, temporary staff do not get the same gifts as their other permanent colleagues, and this can make it very difficult to convince others to take part in the inclusion program;

*“Then you will have a certain group, and in my experience, it has been like more like the non-permanent contractors, yeah, that you found that they did not feel included at times, and I remember, like, you know, for gifts that you know, you get, and when you are celebrating certain things like certain gifts you can get so in terms of that at times, they felt excluded.”*

Participant 8 stated that to create an inclusive environment, the organisation must work on its policies to ensure that the hiring process promotes inclusion.

*“The environment must be conducive to allowing the inclusive culture, starting from the hiring process, so we need to ensure that we have the right policies to promote the inclusion culture, even the facility itself.”*

This is consistent with Adjo, Maybank and Prakash (2021), who stated that recognising the policies and systems of power that promote a culture of exclusion is essential, and remaining focused and steadfast is vital to creating a shared vision of inclusion and belonging.

#### **4.5.2.3. Cultural differences**

Recognising and embracing cultural differences in the workplace emerged as a significant theme. Cultural differences in the workplace complicate the effective implementation of inclusion initiatives. It is known that employees come from diverse backgrounds, leading to differing perspectives and behaviours, resulting in misunderstandings or conflicts. Participant 4 highlighted that although there have been efforts to foster understanding and appreciation of these cultural differences, there remains a risk that some employees may feel marginalised or overlooked.

*“We have seen that there is this kind of misunderstanding or differences. It can be cultural in terms of the employees or background differences.”*

Participant 3 jokingly stated that he feels excluded because he is a vegetarian, and he feels like people do not consider him when buying food, that he always has to buy food himself, even during the company's events.

*“So, I am a vegetarian. Okay. And very often, it is perceived that I will get my own food. When it comes to food, I feel very excluded at this company. They do not even ask me anymore whether I should get you something, not even a cold drink. So I feel very excluded in terms of food because of my belief.”*

Although there are concerns, Participant 2 stated that there is a visible improvement in the team's acceptance of differences.

*“Overall, there has been a greater tolerance towards our differences. So, the diversity that we have is allowing us to be able to engage with each other better. Yeah, I think overall, there is a general acceptance of the differences.”*

Dewi and Wibowo (2020) and Hassan et al. (2022) stated that employee behaviour may improve by increasing inclusion based on cultural awareness and knowledge. Discussing these differences could assist in shining a light on the team's diversity and bringing understanding to each other's cultures. Continuous training and awareness programs that promote cultural sensitivity are vital to mitigate this risk. By encouraging open dialogue and facilitating cultural exchange, TWM Petroleum Services can enhance collaboration and reduce the potential for conflict arising from cultural misunderstandings. Participant 4 further suggested that as it is the month of September, known as the heritage month in South Africa, the team can come together and share each other's traditional food.

*“So, I think the more we continue to bring whatever issues that we have, and discuss them, and celebrate as well, because sometimes, you see, now, this month, it is September, so we celebrate heritage. Heritage is not specific to one heritage, but it is across the board to celebrate our differences, to discuss, we have meals prepared for a certain group, then we share, then we eat, then we celebrate.”*

#### **4.5.3. Themes corresponding to Objective 3: Key drivers of inclusion and their impact on production performance at TWM Petroleum Services.**

- ✓ Leadership commitment
- ✓ Conducive environment
- ✓ Care and appreciation to employees
- ✓ Inclusive communication

#### **4.5.3.1. Leadership commitment**

Leadership commitment is a crucial driver of inclusion. Participant 1 stated that leaders must actively promote inclusive practices to set a tone for the entire organisation.

*“They need to encourage active participation from employees. That is by approaching the leaders to encourage their subordinates to participate at work actively.”*

The participant’s statement concurs with Srimulyani et al. (2023), who stated that organisations need a leadership style that creates an environment that encourages subordinates to lead the company through employees’ effective commitment. Warrick (2017) mentioned that leaders should be close with the employees through socialising in further building and reinforcing culture; this will assist in relaying a clear message to employees about the kind of behaviours and attitudes expected from them within the organisation for the team to succeed.

Participant 8 noted that leadership must create a psychologically safe environment and be transparent to increase engagement.

*“The first one is the psychologically safe environment; we need to create that environment. To encourage employees to participate and to be transparent.”*

This is consistent with Roberson and Perry (2022), who stated that a leader must have an excellent approach to things to create a psychologically safe environment within the team regardless of professional roles or relationship status. This is significant since Participant 4 noted that some people tend to undermine other people's professions, which causes an additional divide.

*“As I have mentioned earlier on, I work in the maintenance department; you know, we, the team or people, in general, tend to underestimate or some other people's profession to say, I am the engineer. So I should be listened to. Then, the other team members who are in the less kind of profession are getting overlooked, even with whatever comments they need to make. So it is very important that we respect each other's kind of profession or duties, you know.”*

Inclusive leadership creates an environment where people are treated equally and fairly without being differentiated from each other, and such an environment eliminates the sense of ignorance and exclusion in the workplace (Robert and Perry, 2022; Siyal et al., 2021). Good leadership is required to deal with such a situation so that inclusion initiatives can be effective and employees can participate in the program.

Participant 2 acknowledges the setbacks; however, she claims that the improvement is visible, and she believes that there is still a long way to go; she also stated that leadership needs to continue promoting inclusion;

*“I feel if we drop the ball, with the current situation of the company and where it is, if we drop the ball, we could go back to where it was previously, where it was management on one side and employees on one side. With inclusion, it has broken those barriers. You find people are more able to interact irrespective of the category that you are in. And there is not this notion to say it is coming from management. It is a group decision. So I think if we were to drop the ball seriously, we would have a big issue on our hands.”*

The leadership's role in displaying inclusive behaviour and pushing for inclusive initiatives develops an environment where all employees feel secure and encouraged to participate. This reinforces trust throughout the organisation, resulting in higher employee engagement.

#### **4.5.3.2. Conducive environment**

Creating a conducive environment is fundamental to fostering inclusion at TWM Petroleum Services. Participant 3 emphasised the necessity of having a conducive environment for employees to achieve their goals, believing that this may inspire inclusion among the team. This is consistent with Wang, Zhang and Chun (2021), who found that employees' performance is influenced by their working environment. Furthermore, Zhenjing et al. (2022) argued that a favourable or conducive environment motivates employees to thrive in their profession, which increases their performance, providing a positive and productive output.

*“So in terms of the environment where the employee works, it must be conducive for him to achieve the result.”*

Participant 8 also shared the same sentiment, stating that the environment must be conducive for the employees to promote inclusion;

*“The first one is the psychologically safe environment; we need to create that environment. To encourage employees to participate and to be transparent.”*

Participant 8 added that physical spaces must support inclusivity. This means ensuring that facilities like break rooms and meeting spaces are accessible and welcoming to everyone.

*“The environment must be conducive to allow the inclusive culture, starting from the hiring process, so we need to ensure that we have the right policies in place to promote the inclusion culture, even the facility itself. For instance, the change rooms where the employees spend time after work need to be in a decent manner, and even the kitchen where they eat during breaks must be in good condition.”*

This is also supported by Jain and Kaur (2014) and Parashakti et al. (2020), who stated that the business must provide employees with the resources required to do their daily tasks, indicating that the more decent the facilities, the greater the performance and productivity.

#### **4.5.3.3. Care and Appreciation to Employees**

Inclusion is about people, and everything resonates with their satisfaction. Even the implementation of inclusion initiatives in the organisation is about bringing the people together for the betterment of the organisation. Participant 1 mentioned that he would appreciate it if the organisation would inform them of their contribution to the organisation.

*“Make the employees more aware of their contribution and if their impact has a positive impact within the organisation. Then, the organisation's goal will be shared with most employees. Because by doing that, more employees will know their worth in terms of being at work and their contribution every day.”*

In the study investigating how employees want to be shown appreciation, White (2017) found that words of affirmation were the most desired; the employees chose to receive words of affirmation to show appreciation for their contribution to the organisation. Furthermore, communicating appreciation to employees in ways they like to receive is one of the essential components to making them feel sincerely valued for their accomplishments (White, 2017). Nisha and Neharika (2015) stated that people desire to belong, be valued, be treated justly, and be recognised from any origin or foundation from which they obtain their sense of self.

Participant 2 mentioned that they need to look beyond the mistakes;

*“Not everything is perfect, but because we have the inclusion and diversity team, we know that it is a family setup. So, people do make mistakes even at home. So, you learn to look past those mistakes and try to encourage them to do better even.”*

This demonstrated the highest level of caring; with this mentality, the organisation can work on bringing the team together.

#### **4.5.3.4. Inclusive Communication**

Effective inclusive communication is crucial for making all employees feel heard and valued. Herbet et al. (2023) stated that effective communication is the key to influencing inclusion in the organisation. The findings show that keeping communication channels open and accessible develops a sense of belonging among employees. Participant 2 claimed that the platforms for communications are open to everyone, and this has assisted everyone to be open and be able to speak their mind.

*“So you find that even the introverts or soft-spoken people are able to come out of their shell and share their ideas, which are at times taken up and actually implemented.”*

Participant 3 mentioned that creating an inclusive platform assists in getting ideas from everyone, not just the management. This is consistent with Jiang et al. (2022), who stated that inclusive leaders should be role models who can communicate the importance of speaking up and allow employees to express their thoughts and ideas.

*“So, in an inclusive environment, you see that you get ideas from many places, not necessarily only from management. Yeah. So it also, some of your best ideas come from the floor as well. And that only happens when you have a culture that's inclusive.”*

Participant 4 claims communication was about finger-pointing between the functions before the inclusion program.

*“As I have mentioned before, there was a period where basically, like, if we are in meetings, there was them and us, as I am part of the maintenance team, you know, there are always fingers pointing across the operations teams, you know, so, but then over time, especially everybody was getting engaged into this program.”*

However, the participant accepts that change can be seen since the inclusion initiatives were implemented and communication has improved.

*“So I've seen a lot of improvement. We communicate now freely, and then everyone comments. Even in meetings, they feel that whatever they are saying, we listen to.”*

Participant 8 emphasised the importance of including the employees in every communication and discussion;

*“Yeah, even when we implement the changes on site, so it is important that the leadership is transparent; they can also improve the communication, so you must not do anything behind the employee's back, so you need to engage them, even when we plan goals, we must ensure that all the employees have a seat on the table, it is easier to implement a change if the employees are part of it, rather than the leadership coming up with the plan.”*

#### **4.6. Chapter Summary**

In conclusion, the findings highlighted the importance of creating an inclusive environment in the workplace and its impact on employee happiness. It is crucial to acknowledge that implementing inclusive programs is not just an option but a requirement for effectively addressing and overcoming the numerous problems involved with building team cohesiveness

and increasing unity in the workplace. Throughout the study, participants expressed a collective appreciation for the organisation's effort to improve inclusion practices, openly admitting and recognising the current obstacles that must be overcome and the ongoing committed actions being taken to address these issues successfully. This collective feeling strongly suggested that a positive and encouraging trend is emerging toward building a more inclusive and inviting workplace environment. This is crucial to ensuring the prosperity and well-being of individual employees and the organisation.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. Introduction**

The study investigated factors influencing inclusion to enhance performance at TWM Petroleum services. This chapter will summarise the study's key findings and determine if the research questions were answered and the objectives were achieved. The current literature will be used along with the study findings to offer recommendations for the organisation and future studies.

### **5.2. Summary of the Study**

#### **5.2.1. Objective 1: To understand the factors influencing the inclusion of employees and its effect on TWM Petroleum services performance.**

The findings of the study determined that empowering people is the factor that influences inclusion. Participants noted the empowerment of women and contractors within the organisation and the efforts the organisation has made to promote inclusion. Historically, women have been marginalised and prevented from participating in positions predominately occupied by men. However, an observable transformation is seen across nearly all sectors as they promote and cultivate inclusion within their organisations. This observation aligned with the existing literature, which stated that establishing opportunities for marginalised groups at all levels contributes to the organisation's success (Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez, 2018).

Moreover, enhanced engagement emerged as a factor, and participants highlighted that including employees in discussions fosters an environment where they feel empowered to express their opinions without fear and enhances their job satisfaction. Involving employees in every decision-making process creates a sense of value and recognition for their contribution. The literature indicated that engaged employees will likely participate positively in inclusion initiatives and contribute to a positive environment (Hasan et al., 2021). Furthermore, participants noted that embracing each other's culture influences inclusion. A lack of regard for another individual's culture can result in feelings of exclusion. One participant raised concerns regarding his dietary preferences and felt it was not adequately acknowledged as he had to buy food during organisation events. This scenario demonstrated that a minor gesture can make one feel included, and this could contribute to the organisation's performance. Another participant mentioned that each person is biased in what they understand and suggested that our differences must be discussed to understand one another. He further proposed organising

communal meals to celebrate Heritage Day, which could facilitate a deeper understanding of each other's cultural backgrounds. Royall, McCarthy and Miller (2022) and Lussier and Hendon (2019) suggested training employees to enforce cultural inclusion.

The study also identified a sense of belonging as a factor. In the literature, a sense of belonging is described as personal experiences that develop when individuals feel secure, accepted, included, and valued by their group, reflecting a harmonious relationship between themselves (Levett and Lathlean, 2008; Bilginoglu and Yozgat, 2023). A participant expressed that inclusion has allowed employees to express themselves freely without fear of being discriminated against and further expressed that even introverts or soft-spoken people can share their ideas. The study found that during the organisation's events, some employees actively participate, others participate as masters of ceremonies, and others DJs. This displays the comfortability of employees towards one another.

### **5.2.2. Objective 2: To identify the challenges of implementing inclusion initiatives within TWM Petroleum services.**

The introduction of a new culture in the organisation will always present challenges due to the resistance from employees. While change is generally perceived as beneficial, the fear of the unknown always poses barriers to achieving organisational objectives. The aim of promoting inclusion is to ensure that every organisation member feels included. Occasionally, it is challenging to engage the whole team due to the organisation's demands and targets. The study identified the lack of flexibility for shift workers due to working shifts and the inability to participate in inclusion initiatives. The training, meetings, and events are predominately scheduled during the day, and some employees are unavailable during that time due to shift work. This makes it challenging to have them included in the initiatives fostering inclusion. Another participant pointed out that they may miss specific meetings or training, and it will take a week or two to be on the day shift again. Karhula et al. (2020) and Li et al. (2021) indicated that unsuitable shift work scheduling may affect the overall well-being of shift workers, resulting in reduced job satisfaction and productivity.

The study also identified that organisational policies pose a challenge in fostering inclusion as they have different policies and benefits depending on the employment status of the employees. Certain individuals are permanently employed, getting full benefits from the organisations, and some are contractually employed and do not qualify for the same benefits as their permanent colleagues. Participants indicated that non-permanent employees are excluded from getting the

same gift as their permanent colleagues. This complicates the efforts to unify the team and discuss inclusion that is not reflected in the organisation's actions. Groenewald (2024) emphasised the importance of organisations regularly assessing and adjusting their policies to combat discrimination and foster an equitable work environment. This could assist in providing solutions that could benefit both the organisation and the employees. The organisation's leadership suggested that policies should be inclusive from the start of the hiring process to aid in fostering inclusion in the organisation. This perspective aligns with Jejeniwa, Mhlongo and Jejeniwa (2024), who asserted that to realise the full potential of inclusion, an organisation must adopt a strategic approach that includes implementing equitable policies, fostering open communication, and cultivating leadership committed to these core values, in addition to acknowledging differences.

Cultural differences were also identified as a challenge; having a diverse team occasionally poses a challenge as the organisation has to accommodate the distinct needs of its employees. Participants suggested team engagement to understand each other; it is essential to cultivate tolerance for cultural differences and acquire knowledge about each other's backgrounds for effective management and resolution of misunderstandings. This concurs with Dewi and Wibowo (2020) and Hassan et al. (2022), who stated that employee behaviour may improve by increasing employee inclusion based on cultural awareness and knowledge.

### **5.2.3. objective 3: To determine the key drivers of inclusion and their impact on the production performance at TWM Petroleum services.**

The study identified leadership commitment as the driver of inclusion; leaders influence employees and ensure that employees understand the significance of inclusion in the organisation. As articulated by Warrick (2017), leaders should be close with the employees through socialising in further building and reinforcing culture; this will assist in relaying a clear message to employees about the kind of behaviours and attitudes expected from them within the organisation for the team to succeed. The leader is responsible for ensuring the environment is safe and conducive for employees. Furthermore, the study identified a conducive environment as a driver of inclusion; a conducive environment is built through leadership. Participants emphasised that to foster inclusion, policies, culture, and physical spaces like offices and changing rooms must support the drive for inclusivity. This is supported by literature underscoring that the business must provide employees with the necessary resources to accomplish their daily tasks (Jain and Kaur, 2014; Parashakti et al., 2020). It indicated that the more decent the facilities, the greater the performance and productivity (Jain and Kaur,

2014; Parashakti et al., 2020). Promoting inclusion requires resources that leadership must be able to provide to foster inclusion. The leader must work on their unconscious biases to make sure that they treat everyone the same. One participant raised concerns regarding marginalisation due to their qualifications; a leader's responsibility is to uphold team accountability and facilitate discussions and resolutions surrounding such matters.

Moreover, care and appreciation of employees were also identified as drivers of inclusion. Being recognised for doing good work encourages you to do more. It must be an organisation's culture to recognise and appreciate employees for their work; this will make them feel valued, and it will be easier to foster inclusion in the team. Dhanani et al. (2024) revealed that employees feel a sense of belonging when acknowledged for their efforts. Participants highlighted the need to recognise the employees' positive contributions so they can see their value in the organisation. In the study conducted by White (2017), it was found that people prefer words of appreciation over gifts.

The study also identified inclusive communication as the driver of inclusion. Inclusive communication is about bringing even introverts to the table, allowing them to be heard and valued. This involves implementing fair policies, fostering open and transparent communication, and fostering leadership that values diversity and inclusion as core values (Jejenywa, Mhlongo and Jejenywa, 2024). Promoting open communication platforms gives each individual in the organisation a say. One participant highlighted the significance of involving employees in decision-making discussions, particularly when such decisions directly impact them, and further noted that implementing change becomes more manageable when employees are included in discussions.

### **5.3. Study Implications**

#### **5.3.1. Factors influencing inclusion**

The study's findings identified employee empowerment, enhanced engagement, embracing cultural differences, and a sense of belonging as factors that influence inclusion. Empowering the minority to foster inclusion is commendable; however, it must not be for appearance. The organisation needs to ensure that the empowerment is for the growth and performance of the organisation. A typical example is that in South Africa, getting a BEE certificate requires representation from a historically marginalised group to be represented. Therefore, it is easier for organisations to hire or promote women or black or disabled people to create an appearance of inclusion (Kiradoo, 2020). Genuine empowerment should focus on substantive benefits for

the organisation and the individual. Employees who feel empowered will likely take the initiative and contribute to innovative solutions. If TWM Petroleum Services empowers skilled individuals who can contribute to operations improvements, this could result in increased efficiency and cost savings. When employees feel included, their level of enhanced engagement will rise. TWM Petroleum Services should foster an inclusive environment to boost employee engagement. The organisation should create team-building events promoting team collaboration to ease tensions and allow introverts to be involved and be part of the team. This will create a united and enthusiastic team that fully engages with one another. Embracing cultural differences requires employees to recognise and value each other's culture and background. Celebrating heritage by wearing each other's traditional attire or eating traditional food can help build bonds and understanding of each other's culture. Creating a sense of belonging by implementing initiatives to attract everyone can assist TWM Petroleum's services in satisfying their employees. Improving facilities and office spaces will likely assist in keeping employees content.

### **5.3.2. Challenges of implementing inclusion**

The study identified challenges in implementing inclusion, including a lack of flexibility for shift workers, company policies, and cultural differences. The organisation needs to find a way of enabling shift workers to have an opportunity to attend inclusion meetings or events since they are predominately done during the day, so they might consider planning such meetings during the shutdowns. Reviewing company policies could also assist, as the participants raised concerns about contractors not getting the same gift as their permanent counterparts. If the issue is cost, the organisation should consider getting slightly cheaper tokens to be shared with everyone to foster inclusion. Training could be beneficial in teaching about diverse cultures, and the participant even suggested cultural celebrations during Heritage Day.

### **5.3.3. Drivers of Inclusion**

The study identified leadership commitment, a conducive environment, care and appreciation for employees, and inclusive communication as the drivers of inclusion at TWM Petroleum Services. Strong leadership commitment sets a benchmark for subordinates. If leaders advocate for inclusion, the employees will do the same. Starting from reviewing divisive organisation policies to allowing an open dialogue that will include every member of the organisation and ensuring that all the concerns that employees raise are attended to accordingly. Organisations

must create a conducive workplace environment by improving working conditions and fair compensation. Caring and appreciation of employees must be done daily; it could be during the daily meeting when reviewing the previous day's KPIs or weekly to affirm that the organisation acknowledges the contributions of its employees.

#### **5.4. Study Limitations**

1. A comprehensive study requires sufficient time for data collection, analysis, interpretation, and presentation. Therefore, the study was constrained by time.
2. The sample size can be enlarged for future research.
3. The study was only restricted to TWM Petroleum Services.

#### **5.5. Recommendations for future studies**

1. Technology is evolving every time; future studies could explore how technology influences or hinders inclusion in the organisation and how technology can be used to foster inclusion.
2. This study adopted a qualitative approach; however, future studies could use a quantitative or mixed approach for intensive investigation.
3. Future studies can investigate how having permanent and contractor employees influences inclusion and if it impacts organisational performance.

#### **5.6. Recommendations for the organisation**

Creating an inclusive environment requires leadership commitment and an open dialogue within the organisation (Jiang et al., 2022). Ashikali, Groeneveld and Kuipers (2021) emphasised the importance of inclusive leadership in balancing individual needs, managing diverse team outcomes, and promoting a sense of belonging. TWM Petroleum Services must attend to the challenges found in this study, which include a lack of flexibility for shift workers, company policies, and cultural differences. Tackling these issues would make it easier for the company to focus on the key drivers of inclusion to enhance performance. Caring for employees requires a conducive environment supporting mental, physical, and emotional wellness (Jain and Kaur, 2014). If all three aspects of wellness are met, fostering inclusion will produce the desired results. Enhancing performance requires applying the drivers of inclusion identified in this study, which needs collaboration from all stakeholders, the organisation, leadership, and employees. This concurs with Royall, McCarthy and Miller (2022), who stated

that A genuinely inclusive workplace environment extends from the top management to the local supervisor to the newest employees

### **5.7. Contribution to the field of Knowledge**

The study makes significant contributions to both theoretical and practical knowledge by investigating the factors that influence inclusion and performance at TWM Petroleum. Integrating cultural intelligence and social identity theories provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and enhancing inclusion in global and local organisations. The findings have implications for leadership, policy, and practice, contributing to a more equitable and high-performing workforce and ultimately adding knowledge to diversity and inclusion practices. The study provided factors and drivers of inclusion and identified challenges that may hinder inclusion in the organisation to enhance performance in the South African context.

### **5.8. Chapter Summary**

This chapter summarises the study, outlining the key findings based on the study's objectives. The study also outlines the study's implications and limitations, recommendations for future studies, as well as the contribution of the study to the field of knowledge and recommendations for the organisation.

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## APPENDIX A1 – CONSENT FORM

### UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL  
For research with human participants

#### INFORMED CONSENT

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

#### Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Hi| Participant

My name is Sphumelele Ntuli from UKZN, my number is [REDACTED] and email is 209537133@stu.ukzn.ac.za

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research face to face interviews which will be voice recorded. The aim and purpose of this research is to **Investigating factors that influence inclusion to enhance performance at Themba Wendy Moloi Petroleum Services**. The study is expected to enroll **8 participants in total, 6 from operations, 1 maintenance and 1 leadership** and all interviews will be conducted on site. It will involve the following procedures: face to face interview will be voice recorded and the interviews will be done anonymously in a private office. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be 4 hours maximum which will be divided in different days.

The study may involve the discomforts of sitting down for more than 15 minutes. We hope that the study will create the benefits of determining the factors that contributes to production performance.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee approval number: HSSRE/0007360/2024.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact Sphumelele Ntuli at [REDACTED], 209537133@stu.ukzn.ac.za or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows: **Phone: +2731 260 83H50/4557** or email: RIGEthicsHelp@ukzn.ac.za

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

## **APPENDIX A2 – CONSENT FORM**

Research Office, Westville Campus  
Govan Mbeki Building  
Private Bag X 54001  
Durban  
4000  
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA  
Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609  
Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

The participation in this research is voluntary and participants may withdraw participation at any point, and that in the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the participants will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which they are normally entitled. Please note that there are no potential consequences to the participant for withdrawal from the study and nothing is required from the participants for orderly withdrawal. And if the participant is not available for more than two weeks, the participant will be excluded from the study. No incentive will be offered to the participant for participation in this study.

The study interviews will be recorded in a closed office and no names or position will not be mentioned during the interviews and the recordings will be password protected in a recording devise.

-----  
CONSENT (Edit as required)

I.....    .....have been informed about the study entitled Investigating factors influence inclusion to enhance performance at Themba Wendy Moloi Petroleum Services by Sphumelele Ntuli.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study (add these again if appropriate).

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at (provide details).

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**  
Research Office, Westville Campus  
Govan Mbeki Building  
Private Bag X 54001  
Durban  
4000  
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA  
Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609  
Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

**APPENDIX A3 – CONSENT FORM**

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview/focus group discussion YES / NO

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness  
(Where applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **APPENDIX B – INTERVIEW GUIDE**

- A. Gender
- Male
  - Female
- B. Race
- African
  - Indian
  - White
  - Coloured
  - other
- C. Age group
- 30-40
  - 40-50
- D. Years of service
- 0-3 years
  - 3-6 years
  - 6-9 years

## **EMPLOYEES INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. How do employees perceive the company's efforts toward inclusion and diversity?
2. What impact do these efforts have on employee satisfaction and engagement?
3. Do employees feel included in the workplace?
4. Are there any areas where more education or training could be beneficial in supporting a more inclusive workplace?

## **LEADERSHIP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. How has the organisation measured the success of inclusion, and how has it impacted business performance?
2. How do leaders promote inclusion within their teams?
3. What specific actions has the organisation taken to create a more inclusive workplace?
4. How does the organisation address unconscious bias and other barriers to inclusion in the workplace?

## **APPENDIX C – ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL LETTER**



23 August 2024

Sphumelele Ntuli (209537133)  
Grad School of Bus & Leadership  
Westville Campus

Dear S Ntuli,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00007360/2024

Project title: Investigating factors that influence inclusion to enhance performance at Themba Wendy Molo Petroleum services.

Degree: Masters

### **Approval Notification – Expedited Application**

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 19 July 2024 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

Incidents of adverse events and serious adverse events (AEs and SAEs) should be reported in writing to HSSREC, the study sponsors, and any regulatory authority (where appropriate), within 7 working days of the occurrence for local sites and 14 days for all other South African sites.

This approval is valid until 23 August 2025.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)  
/nng

### **Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee**

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

**INSPIRING GREATNESS**

## APPENDIX D – GATEKEEPER LETTER



Company Registration No: 2015/134162/07  
VAT NO: 4310269545  
Tel NO: 087 809 6410  
Email: [INFO@TWMPetroleum.co.za](mailto:INFO@TWMPetroleum.co.za)  
Web: [www.twmpetroleum.co.za](http://www.twmpetroleum.co.za)

**Professor Bibi Zaheenah Chummm**  
Graduate School of Business and Leadership  
University Of KwaZulu-Natal  
Westville Campus  
Durban  
3630  
**Phone:** 031 260 9111 / [REDACTED]  
**Email:** [chummunb@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:chummunb@ukzn.ac.za)

13 June 2024

Dear Professor Bibi Zaheenah Chummm

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This letter serves to confirm that I, [Themba Moloi], [Director at TWM Petroleum Services (Pty) Ltd] hereby acknowledge and approve the research of Sphumelele Ntuli within TWM Petroleum Services for the completion of his MBA degree.

Signature

[REDACTED]

Themba Moloi

Director

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## APPENDIX E – TURNITIN REPORT

Sphumelele Ntuli 209537133, Investigating factors that influence inclusion to enhance performance at Themba Wendy Moloi Petroleum Services.

ORIGINALITY REPORT

<b>5%</b> SIMILARITY INDEX	<b>4%</b> INTERNET SOURCES	<b>2%</b> PUBLICATIONS	<b>0%</b> STUDENT PAPERS
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Info		×
Submission Details		
Student ID	209537133@stu.ukzn.ac.za	
Class Name	BibiC	
Class ID	33250414	
Submission ID	2524079181	
Submission Date	21-Nov-2024 08:17PM (UTC+0200)	
Submission Count	2	
Grammar marks	N/A	
File Name	S_NTULI_209537133_MBA_2024....	
File Extension	docx	
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