



**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND  
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES  
(IJEMP)**  
[www.ijemp.com](http://www.ijemp.com)



**ETHNIC PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS DIVERSITY  
MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

Inayah Kawthar Ali<sup>1</sup>, Jashwini Narayan<sup>2\*</sup>, Subhash Appanna<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> School of Business & Management, University of the South Pacific (USP), Fiji  
Email: inayahali100@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup> School of Business & Management, University of the South Pacific (USP), Fiji  
Email: jashwini.narayan@usp.ac.fj

<sup>3</sup> School of Business & Management, University of the South Pacific (USP), Fiji  
Email: subhash.appana@usp.ac.fj

\* Corresponding Author

**Article Info:**

**Article history:**

Received date: 19.12.2024

Revised date: 12.01.2025

Accepted date: 30.01.2025

Published date: 04.03.2025

**To cite this document:**

Ali, I. K., Narayan, J. &, Appanna, S. (2025). Ethnic Perceptions towards Diversity Management in the Public Sector. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices*, 8 (29), 59-73.

**DOI:** 10.35631/IJEMP.829005.

This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)



**Abstract:**

The purpose of this paper is to explore the ethnic-based perceptions of the two main ethnic groups of employees on the impact of diversity management (DM) on their work outcomes in a developing country's public sector organizations. The difference in their cultural orientation, influences their experiences with DM. In this empirical study, a quantitative method of survey was adopted. A total of 114 survey responses from public employees were analysed using structural equation modelling. Findings indicate that DM has a positive impact on both the ethnicities work outcomes of affective commitment, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, work group performance and inclusive organizational culture. However, the individualist Indo-Fijian (non-indigenous) employees perceive higher levels of inclusive organizational culture compared to collectivist ITaukei (Indigenous) employees who report lower levels of organizational commitment and higher levels of job satisfaction. The impact of their cultural orientation on their work outcomes is discussed in this report. This study is unique in the subject country. It identifies the deep-rooted socio-cultural orientation of both ethnicities and provides perspectives from this lens on DM and their work outcomes. Practical implications for HR practitioners and policy makers to improve DM strategies is discussed.

**Keywords:**

Cultural Orientation, Developing Country, Diversity, Public Sector

## Introduction

OECD countries and other developing economies labour force, have become considerably more diverse in a rather short time-frame (OECD, 2020). The changing demographics of the contemporary labour market is affected by the broadening of gender roles, strengthening profile of indigenous people, high profile of ethnicity issues and the growing population of people with disabilities (Stone, 2017). Ensuring that these groups are included in the labour market is therefore, a key policy concern, not only for ethical reasons, but also in terms of economic development and social cohesion (OECD, 2020).

Meta-analysis of studies revealed that perceived racial discrimination by employees was negatively related to their job attitudes, physical health, psychological health, organizational citizenship behaviour and the perceived diversity climate positively related to their coping behaviour.

The concept of DM started in USA. Following the publication of “Workforce 2000” report by the Hudson Institute (Ohemeng & McGrandle, 2015), the notion of “business case” for diversity was made. Organizations seeking diversity face a paradoxical situation since diversity is also a cause of misunderstanding between diverse employees which can lead to negative individual and organizational outcomes if not managed effectively (Stone, 2017). For instance, lower employee job satisfaction, commitment and unproductive teams (Stone, 2017). DM related policies and practices and inclusive managerial leadership in the public organizations aim to create an inclusive diversity climate to elicit the positive effects of diversity while alleviating its negative effects (Moon & Christensen, 2020).

## *Fijian Socio-economic, Ethnic and Cultural Context*

In Fiji, there are divergent views relating to having a common name – ‘Fijian’ – for all citizens (Naidu, 2013). It is argued here that better data on diversity, including ethnic and indigenous identity, will be the key to understanding the size, outcomes and needs of different communities (OECD, 2020). The last ethnic-based count of the Fijian population according to 2007 census stands at Indigenous Fijians (ITaukei) 56.8 per cent which make up the majority of the population followed by minority groups of Indo-Fijians 37.5 per cent and others 5.7 per cent (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2020). In Fiji, the intra-national ethnic diversity of the ITaukei and Indo-Fijians are evident compared to cross national diversity of immigrants and citizens from different countries. In comparison to Western context, categorization of people based on skin colour such as white, brown or black is not dominant in Fiji’s multicultural society. Increasingly, how an individual relates to other people of their own and other ethnic groups in Fiji depends more on their education, and socio-economic status than their ethnic identity or gender (Naidu, 2013).

The country has experienced four military coups and a military mutiny since 1987, mainly as a result of tensions between the majority indigenous Fijian population and economically powerful Indian minority (Humanists International, 2024; Naidu, 2013). Smaller minorities including Banabans, Rotumans, Chinese, Melanesians and other Pacific Islanders are largely politically invisible and socially and economically excluded (Naidu, 2013). Although Pacific Island countries including Fiji have been known for their collectivist culture, there is different cultural orientation of the ethnicities influenced by their historical context. The Indo-Fijians have been largely individualistic and focused on economic progress through careers and income generating ventures. They have also not had a communally structured sustenance

system like the ITaukei. In the recent years, majority of the Indo-Fijians hold senior board leadership positions in the state-owned enterprises (Fiji Women's Rights Movement, 2022).

Historically, Fiji's economic and political development has created inequalities and deep-rooted divisions between its diverse ethnic groups (Humanists International, 2024; Naidu, 2013). For instance, a review of the politically driven AA plans to include indigenous Fijians and Rotumans whilst excluding Indo-Fijians and other ethnic minorities. Stereotypes and prejudices evolved, and both institutional and social racism were widely practiced with increasing socio-economic inequalities that created a sense of wealthier and poor ethnicities (Naidu, 2013). Over the years, there have been various anti-discrimination policies by the Fijian government to eliminate workplace discrimination based on ethnicity, gender and other demographic characteristics.

Whilst there have been many studies done on DM and its impact on employees work outcomes and behaviour (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015b; Magoshi & Chang, 2009), very few studies examined ethnicity based perceptions of DM on employees work outcomes. For instance, such studies were undertaken in the Netherlands (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015a) and USA (Pitts, 2009). However, these studies cannot be generalized to other contexts because of different socio-cultural orientations, socio-economic structures and political efforts to eliminate racial discrimination and ethnic diversity profiles in organizations. There are no such studies done in the context of small Pacific island developing countries. This research fills the gap in DM literature by examining ethnicity based perceptions of the collectivist ITaukei and individualist Indo-Fijian employees on DM and its impact on their individual (affective commitment, organizational commitment and job satisfaction), group (work group performance) and organizational (inclusive organizational culture) work outcomes in Fiji - a South Pacific small island developing country.

## **Literature Review**

In Fiji, Employment Relations Act 2007 prohibits discrimination in employment, based on ethnicity, gender and other characteristics. The new public management-informed reforms in Fiji's public service had led to the introduction and institutionalization of DM policies and practices in human resource management (HRM) activities such as open merit recruitment and selection system, performance appraisal and training and development guidelines for public employees. In this research, DM is viewed from Pitts (2009) lens of recruitment and outreach, valuing differences and pragmatic policies and programs.

## **Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development**

The key theories that underpin the arguments for both edges of the diversity sword are social categorization theory, similarity-attraction paradigm and information and decision making perspectives (Carter & Phillips, 2017). On the other hand, information decision-making theory explores the positive effects of diversity.

The information and decision-making framework posits that social category and interpersonal differences can boost performance to the extent that diverse individuals bring unique skills, perspectives and experiences that can be effectively applied to work tasks (Carter & Philips, 2017).

To build onto this theory, having diversity may not be enough to boost organizational performance. Rather diversity needs to be effectively managed to bring out the positive intended effects. DM considers the extent to which managers appreciate and value employees' cultural differences, assumptions and biases at the workplace (Pitts, 2009).

Theoretical research suggests that diversity-oriented HRM policies moderate the relationship between individualist-collectivist interactions on individual employee work experiences, group dynamics, employee attitudes and employee behaviors (Fujimoto & Hartel, 2006). Empirical evidence by Moon and Christensen (2020) shows that racial diversity when moderated by DM, correlates positively with organizational performance. In line with this theory, DM policies and practices provide a culture of inclusion for individualist and collectivist ethnicities to enhance their work outcomes. In this research, applicability of this prominent diversity theory is tested in Fijian organizations. The direct impact of DM on employee work outcomes will be studied.

### ***Affective Commitment***

Affective commitment (AC) reflects at the emotional attachment or bond of an employee with the organization (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015a). DM provides support for all employees creating an inclusive environment to enhance participation. Ashikali and Groeneveld's (2015a) analysis on groups showed that DM is associated with high levels of inclusion, which in turn boosts affective commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour of both the ethnic minority and native Dutch public sector employees. It is assumed that experiences of both groups of ethnicities on affective commitment will be the same. Thus the following hypotheses: Hypothesis 1a: DM has a positive and significant effect on collectivist ITaukei employees' affective commitment.

Hypothesis 1b: DM has a positive and significant effect on individualist Indo-Fijian employees' affective commitment.

### ***Organizational Commitment***

Organizational commitment refers to employees' strong belief to accept the organizational goals, values and exert considerable effort in support of the organization with a wish to remain with the organization (Angel & Perry, 1981). Empirical evidence shows that DM has a positive impact on employees' organizational commitment (Magoshi & Chang, 2009). DM values employees' differences and provides equity in opportunities and policies for all ethnicities, influencing their level of organizational commitment. It is assumed that both the ethnic groups will have a similar perception. Therefore, the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2a: DM has a positive and significant effect on collectivist ITaukei employees' organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 2b: DM has a positive and significant effect on individualist Indo-Fijian employees' organizational commitment.

### ***Job Satisfaction***

Job satisfaction is defined as the degree to which employees have positive attitudes toward their jobs (Stone, 2017). Empirical research shows that DM efforts has a positive impact on employees' job satisfaction (Pitts, 2009).

Pragmatic policies and programs of DM provide a culture of support for the minority employees through mentoring opportunities, family-friendly policies and flexible working hours. Empirical evidence by Pitts (2009) shows that people of colour are less likely than the whites to report high levels of job satisfaction. This is mainly attributed to ineffective DM

practices. In the case of Fiji, HRM diversity practices have been widely implemented in the public sector organizations through reforms. It is assumed that DM efforts will equally take care of the needs of both ethnic groups, impacting on their job satisfaction.

This leads to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3a: DM has a positive and significant effect on collectivist ITaukei employees' job satisfaction

Hypothesis 3b: DM has a positive and significant effect on individualist Indo-Fijian employees' job satisfaction.

### ***Work Group Performance***

Pragmatic policies and programs of DM promotes job performance of employees. Empirical evidence by Pitts (2009) showed that people of colour were less likely than the whites to report positive work group performance and this dissatisfaction is attributed to ineffective DM. Theoretical research suggests that interpersonal prejudices of individualists and intergroup prejudices of collectivists will be reduced by having diversity-oriented HRM policies and practices (Fujimoto & Hartel, 2006). In particular, a diversity climate of openness can reduce the negative outcome from the interaction between the individualist and collectivist employees on their group dynamics. The concept of DM emphasizes culture of valuing differences. It is expected that DM efforts by Fiji's public sector organizations will improve work group performance of heterogeneous teams of the collectivist and individualist ethnicities. Thus, the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4a: DM has a positive and significant effect on collectivist ITaukei employees' work group performance.

Hypothesis 4b: DM has a positive and significant effect on individualist Indo-Fijian employees' work group performance.

### ***Inclusive Organizational Culture***

The DM perspective follows an inclusionary approach whereby differences are recognized with being valued and new perspectives are integrated in decision-making and problem-solving processes (Pitts, 2009). Empirical evidence by Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015b) shows that DM has a positive impact on employees' perception of inclusive organizational culture. In the presence of diverse ethnicities in Fijian organizations, it is assumed that DM efforts recognize and value ethnic cultural differences and actively include them in all aspects of work. This leads to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 5a: DM has a positive and significant effect on collectivist ITaukei employees' inclusive organizational culture.

Hypothesis 5b: DM has a positive and significant effect on individualist Indo-Fijian employees' inclusive organizational culture.

## **Research Method**

### ***Design***

In this study, the survey method was employed to collect data from participants. A review of literature shows that the majority of diversity studies are empirical, thus research method was adopted. The survey questionnaire focused on perceptions of employees on DM and their individual, group and organizational work outcomes. Ethics approval to conduct this study was obtained from the University of the South Pacific Research Ethics Committee. All survey



participants were thoroughly informed about the purpose of this research, which was detailed in the beginning of the questionnaire.

### ***Sample***

Research was conducted in two public sector organizations, the Ministry of Education Heritage and Arts (MEHA) and Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources (MLMR) because of easier accessibility. A total of 205 questionnaires were distributed and 114 were received with a response rate of 56 percent. Purposive sampling was used to select participants currently employed in the public sector (those holding non-managerial positions) based on the characteristics of demographic diversity. Questionnaires were hand delivered to the participants during their working hours and collected after a week.

### ***Measures***

The questionnaire was designed around a DM scale (independent variable) and five hypotheses' scales (dependent variables). All the items in the scale were measured using Likert scale ratings of "1" as "Strongly Disagree", "2" as Disagree, "3" as Neutral, "4" as Agree and "5" as "Strongly Agree". To measure DM, a three item scale was adopted from Pitts (2009) study. Job satisfaction scale of two items and work group performance scale of one item were adopted from Pitts (2009) study. Work group performance scale was further modified by adding two questions, "I receive constant feedback on how I am doing in my job" and "I receive training I need to perform my job effectively". The inclusiveness of organizational culture scale was adopted from Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015b). However, only five items have been chosen because two statements on discrimination and intimidation were considered similar and combined into one statement "I find the organizational policies to be fair and non-discriminatory". Affective commitment scale had three items adopted from Ashikali and Groeneveld's (2015b). Organizational commitment scale had three items adopted from Magoshi and Chang (2009). Another question was added from supported literature "I strongly feel connected with the organization's vision, mission and goals" (Angel & Perry, 1981). The items were added to the scale to improve reliability, which was tested using Cronbach's alpha analysis. Appendix 1 presents the questionnaire.

### ***Demographic Profile of Participants***

In this study, 59% were females, 39% were males and 2% were others. The majority of respondents, 43% were between 20-30 years, 34% between 30-40 years and 23% were 40 years above. 59% of participants were from MEHA and 41% from MLMR.

### ***Results***

SPSS v25 was used for analysis of data while SPSS AMOS v22 was used for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), path analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, covariance analysis, correlations, and multiple regression to perform hypotheses testing in order to support the research and theory. The key assumptions for Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) are the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) and the Bartlett's test of sphericity. KMO statistic must be more than 0.50 while Bartlett's test should be statistically significant. KMO of 0.915 confirms adequate sample size. Bartlett's Test was also significant with  $p=0.00<.05$ ). Furthermore, data was considered normal since the values for skewness and kurtosis were within acceptable range of -2 to +2 and -7 to +7, respectively. Principal Component Analysis (PCA), using Varimax rotation method confirmed that all indicators were important for factor extraction, being  $>0.4$ , highest being 0.800 and lowest, 0.454.

Multicollinearity was not a problem since all correlations were less than 0.9, highest being 0.767. Harman's single factor test was done to check common method bias. This was 46.99% which is less than the 50% threshold.

### ***Reliability and Validity***

Cronbach's alpha test confirmed the reliability of all six scales used in this study reporting acceptable to good internal reliability >0.7 threshold. See table below.

**Table 1: Reliability Test For Scales**

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Diversity Management	3	0.740
Affective Commitment	3	0.930
Job Satisfaction	2	0.748
Work Group Performance	3	0.705
Organizational Commitment	3	0.864
Inclusiveness of Organizational Culture	5	0.900

Source: authors analysis

In addition, convergent validity was confirmed of the following scales which were within the acceptable range <0.5, except for JP that was 0.47. For this construct, composite reliability was then calculated which was 0.72 and this being >0.60, was considered acceptable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity was confirmed for all constructs being <0.85 except the AC construct. A such, Maximum Shared Variance and Average Shared Squared Variance were then computed and found to be less than its AVE (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), Discriminant validity for the AC construct was thus also considered acceptable. SPSS AMOS v22 was then used for Structural Equation Model (SEM) and to carry out regression path analysis to test the research hypotheses. SEM was modified by creating correlations among two error variables to improve model fit. Overall, an appropriate model fit was confirmed for the model (CMIN/DF=1.704<3.0, TLI=0.931, IFI=0.943, CFI=0.943: all >0.9 and; RMSEA=0.079<0.08).

The results show that the perception of ITaukei towards effects of public organization workplace diversity differs from that of their Indo-Fijian colleagues. The following figure and table present the SEM, regression weights, critical ratios and p-values for the ITaukei group.

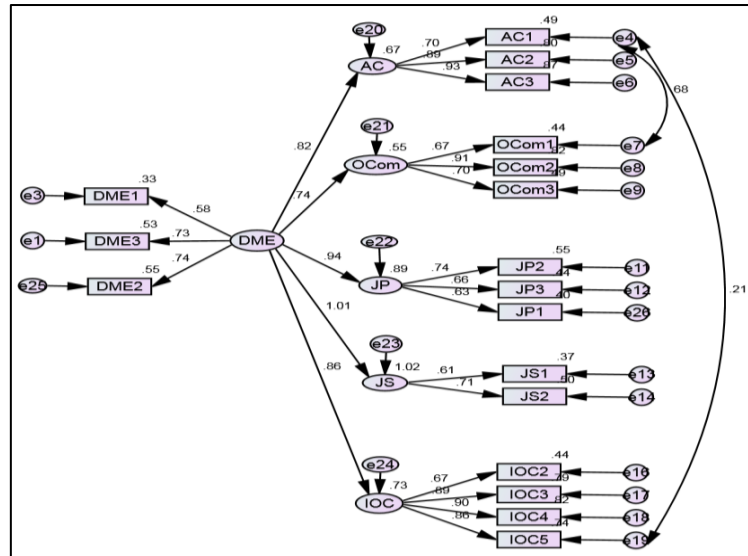


Figure 1: SEM For ITaukei Group

Source: authors analysis

Table 2: Regression Weights: (ITaukei Ethnic Group - Default Model)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Standardized Estimate
AC	<---	DME	1.085	.204	5.326	***	.819
OCom	<---	DME	.665	.142	4.678	***	.742
JP	<---	DME	1.069	.248	4.304	***	.941
JS	<---	DME	.848	.172	4.940	***	1.009
IOC	<---	DME	1.074	.200	5.381	***	.857
DME3	<---	DME	1.000				.729
DME1	<---	DME	.626	.158	3.957	***	.575
AC1	<---	AC	.745	.109	6.814	***	.700
AC2	<---	AC	.877	.091	9.686	***	.893
AC3	<---	AC	1.000				.931
OCom1	<---	OCom	.975	.179	5.437	***	.666
OCom2	<---	OCom	1.000				.907
OCom3	<---	OCom	1.131	.208	5.429	***	.700
JP2	<---	JP	1.058	.239	4.429	***	.741
JP3	<---	JP	1.000				.661
JS1	<---	JS	.929	.223	4.163	***	.612
JS2	<---	JS	1.000				.709
IOC2	<---	IOC	.952	.173	5.511	***	.666
IOC3	<---	IOC	1.000				.890
IOC4	<---	IOC	1.013	.108	9.408	***	.905
IOC5	<---	IOC	1.002	.118	8.521	***	.859
DME2	<---	DME	.918	.178	5.145	***	.742
JP1	<---	JP	.610	.158	3.867	***	.629

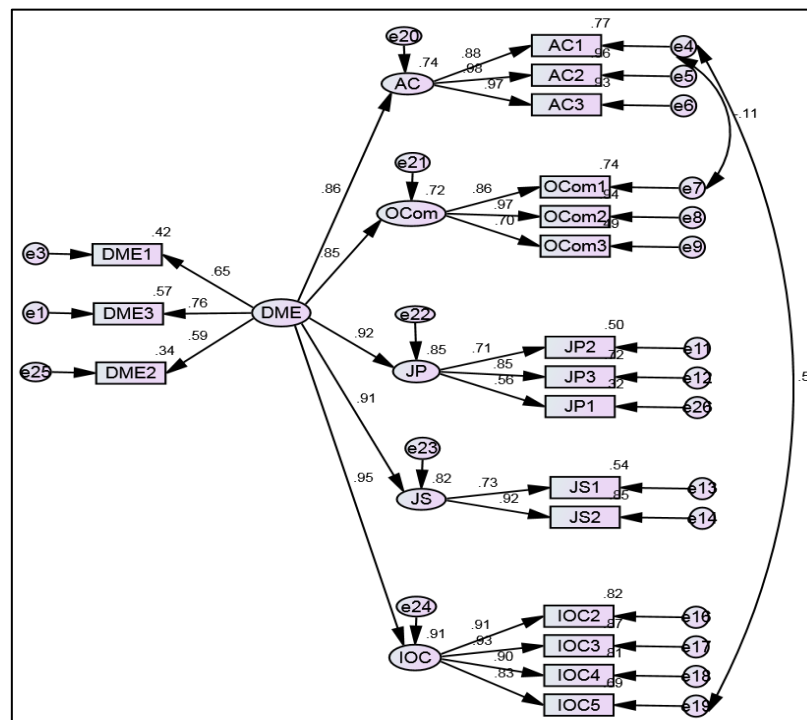
\*\*\* p &lt; 0.05

Source: authors analysis



For the collectivist ITaukei group, all hypotheses are accepted given significant p values ( $p=0.000<0.05$ ). According to the results of the ITaukei group, DM efforts by public sector organizations positively and significantly affect the ITaukei employees' affective commitment, organizational commitment, work group performance and inclusiveness of organizational culture and their job satisfaction. The strongest positive relationship was observed with job satisfaction (JS) with standardized coefficient of 1.009;  $C.R.=4.940>1.96$ ;  $p=0.000<0.05$ , followed by work group performance (JP) with standardized coefficient of 0.941;  $C.R.=4.304>1.96$ ;  $p=0.000<0.05$  and then inclusiveness of organizational culture (IOC) with standardized coefficient of 0.857;  $C.R.=5.381>1.96$ ;  $p=0.000<0.05$ . DM efforts by public sector organizations had the least impact or weakest relationship with organizational commitment (OCom) with standardized coefficient of 0.742;  $C.R.=5.381>1.96$ ;  $p=0.000<0.05$ . The collectivist ITaukei employees thus perceive that the DM efforts by public sector organizations affects their job satisfaction the most and organizational commitment the least.

The following figure and table present the SEM, regression weights, critical ratios and p-values for the Indo-Fijian group.



**Figure 2: SEM For Indo-Fijian Group**

Source: authors analysis

**Table 3: Regression Weights: (Indo-Fijian Ethnic Group - Default Model)**

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Standardized Estimate
AC	<---	DME	1.073	.160	6.707	***	.862
OCom	<---	DME	1.033	.158	6.560	***	.849
JP	<---	DME	1.290	.210	6.154	***	.920
JS	<---	DME	1.177	.176	6.686	***	.906
IOC	<---	DME	1.318	.182	7.230	***	.954

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Standardized Estimate
DME3	<---	DME	1.000				.758
DME1	<---	DME	.730	.146	4.992	***	.648
AC1	<---	AC	.935	.075	12.469	***	.877
AC2	<---	AC	1.062	.051	20.868	***	.980
AC3	<---	AC	1.000				.967
OCCom1	<---	OCCom	.910	.089	10.235	***	.862
OCCom2	<---	OCCom	1.000				.967
OCCom3	<---	OCCom	.719	.107	6.709	***	.700
JP2	<---	JP	.637	.110	5.774	***	.711
JP3	<---	JP	1.000				.846
JS1	<---	JS	.680	.106	6.445	***	.732
JS2	<---	JS	1.000				.921
IOC2	<---	IOC	.965	.081	11.868	***	.906
IOC3	<---	IOC	1.000				.933
IOC4	<---	IOC	.848	.073	11.610	***	.899
IOC5	<---	IOC	.881	.092	9.607	***	.829
DME2	<---	DME	.676	.151	4.462	***	.585
JP1	<---	JP	.383	.089	4.326	***	.563

\*\*\* p &lt; 0.05

Source: authors analysis

For the individualistic Indo-Fijian group, all hypotheses are also accepted given significant p-values ( $p=0.000<0.05$ ). According to the results of this group, DM efforts by public sector organizations positively and significantly affect the Indo-Fijian employees' affective commitment, organizational commitment, work group performance and inclusiveness of organizational culture and their job satisfaction. Unlike the ITaukei group, the strongest positive relationship of DM efforts by public sector organizations was observed with inclusiveness of organizational culture (ICom) for the Indo-Fijian group with standardized coefficient of 0.954;  $C.R.=7.230>1.96$ ;  $p=0.000<0.05$ , followed by work group performance (JP) with standardized coefficient of 0.920;  $C.R.=6.154>1.96$ ;  $p=0.000<0.05$  and then, job satisfaction (JS) with standardized coefficient of 0.906;  $C.R.=6.686>1.96$ ;  $p=0.000<0.05$ . For this group, all factors reported strong relationships with high standardized coefficients ranging from 0.849 to 0.954.

The individualist Indo-Fijian employees thus perceive that the DM efforts by public sector organizations affects their perceptions on inclusive organizational culture the most and organizational commitment the least.

## Discussion

Overall DM efforts of the public sector organizations positively and significantly affects affective commitment, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, work group performance and inclusive organizational culture of both the ITaukei and Indo-Fijian employees. However, their perception largely differs on the effect of DM on job satisfaction, organizational commitment and perceiving inclusive organizational culture. While both the groups perceive

low levels of organizational commitment, comparatively ITaukei employees perceive that as much lower.

For the ITaukei group, the DM efforts by public sector organizations affect their job satisfaction the most while for the Indo-Fijian group, these affect their inclusiveness of organizational culture the most. Comparatively, the ITaukei employees are more satisfied with their jobs and organizations than the Indo-Fijian group. For the Indo-Fijian group, DM efforts have mostly enhanced how they feel about being treated as employees. They feel they can openly discuss their opinions without fearing negative consequences and that their work environment values different ideas and perspectives while managers make fair and non-discriminatory decisions. Impact of DM efforts was higher in this area for the Indo-Fijian group than the ITaukei group. However, the DM efforts by public sector organizations affected organizational commitment the least for the ITaukei group. The impact was higher for the Indo-Fijian group, which means that the Indo-Fijian employees are more willing to put in extra effort, feel more connected with the organization's vision, mission and goals and are more willing to take up any tasks given to them in order to continue working for this organization than their ITaukei colleagues.

The difference in perceptions can be attributed to their cultures. The collectivist ITaukei employees are more satisfied with the diversity efforts of pragmatic policies and programs such as mentoring opportunities as reflected in their high levels of job satisfaction. However, individualist Indo-Fijian employees may not be fully content with these practices as they may have higher expectations from the organization to provide these diversity practices for their professional development. For individualist Indo-Fijian employees, they seem to be more vocal in their opinion, feel free to discuss their individual perspectives and feel diversity practices enhance their participation and involvement at the workplace. The HR managers therefore, need to pay attention to the experiences of the collectivist ITaukei employees who may feel shy in sharing their opinions or might fear potential repercussions of sharing their thoughts. The lack of organizational commitment by these employees reflects at the lack of support and inclusivity experienced by ITaukei employees. They may feel policies and processes may be unfair and are more in favour of Indo-Fijian employees. Few DM practices seem to be perceived as ineffective by the collectivist group of employees. Therefore, inclusive environments for both groups of employees need to be created to enhance their full participation and commitment at the workplace.

Fujimoto and Hartel's (2006) theoretical model suggest that diversity-oriented HRM policies and practices will moderate the level of prejudice of individualist-collectivist interaction on their work outcomes. This is because diversity-oriented policies will reduce the negative individual work experiences, group dynamics and employee behaviors, flowing from both cultures' interactions. This is directly proven in this research as DM has a positive impact on collectivist and individualist employees' individual, group and organizational work outcomes. The findings on affective commitment is similar to Ashikali and Groeneveld's (2015a) study on Dutch public sector employees. The HRM policies and practices for DM such as fair recruitment and selection, training and development and inclusive managerial leadership for diverse employees promotes inclusivity in policies and practices for the diverse ethnicities (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015b; Moon & Christensen, 2020). This positively shapes the perception of diverse ethnicities of feeling included and connected at the workplace (Moon & Christensen, 2020) whilst reduces feelings of prejudice and unfairness.

DM has a positive impact on both native and non-native employees. Findings by Pitts (2009) provides evidence for the argument that poor DM leads to people of colour to be less satisfied with their jobs and they are less likely to have positive perception of work group performance. In this study, effective DM practices by Fiji's public sector organizations is noted as results show positive effects of DM on both ethnicities job satisfaction and work group performance. Furthermore, the findings of this study are in accordance with that of Magoshi and Chang's (2009) study on organizational commitment and Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015b) on inclusive organizational culture. The positive effect of DM on various work outcomes of indigenous Fijian and Indo-Fijian employees shows that management is taking effective diversity initiatives to cater for the needs of its employees.

### ***Theoretical Contribution***

This study adds to theoretical development by integrating information and decision making theory with DM and its effect on collectivist and individualist ethnicities work outcomes. Effective DM policies and practices by the public sector organizations have a positive impact on collectivist and individualist employees work outcomes. The suggestions of this theory are reinforced in the context of Fijian organizations and contributes to organizational development. This paper contributes to DM literature based on the perceptions of collectivist and individualist ethnicities on their work outcomes. Organizations need to continue with their diversity initiatives and opportunities to improve and enhance diverse employees' work outcomes and organizational performance.

### ***Practical Implications***

There are several suggestions for organizations for effective DM. Researchers have developed tool kits that outline key steps to assist HRM practitioners to improve organizational culture and diversity climate (Stone, 2017). It is suggested that HRM practitioners carry out attitude surveys, organizational commitment surveys, climate and cultural audits, employee complaints, grievances and discrimination complaints to measure employees' perceptions on workplace diversity, organizational culture and climate. This will provide managers with evidence on diverse employees' perceptions of their organizational culture and climate. In the analysis, HRM practitioners need to pay attention to differences in the perceptions of ITaukei and Indo-Fijian employees to understand if they perceive unfairness and inequality and administer policies and processes which are favorable for ITaukei employees as well as improve their organizational commitment.

It is also suggested that top leadership and management commitment be strengthened to communicate the vision and enthusiasm for diversity efforts.

HR managers play an important role in identifying and limiting the escalation of prejudicial behaviours, eliminating group bias and encouraging cooperative interaction to enable diverse individuals to work together and accomplish group tasks (Stone, 2017).

Furthermore, public managers should be persistent in their efforts to provide mentoring opportunities to all employees specifically for Indo-Fijian employees to boost their morale and self-efficacy to sustain high levels of job satisfaction. Effective implementation of these practices is required to improve the work outcomes of collectivist and individualist employees and their experiences of the diversity environment.

### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

Firstly, the small sample size of the participants limits the generalizability of research to other public sector organizations. Future research could include employees from a number of public organizations for better sample size. In addition to this, qualitative research is suggested to explore management's perceptions on DM. Including public managers and supervisors will provide a better understanding of DM. Furthermore, the view of ITaukei employees as collectivists based on traditional viewpoints and their historical context is problematic and is a limitation in this research. Over the years, it is evident that the more formally educated and urban ITaukeis' are changing towards an individualistic orientation. However, there is lack of research to identify this transition. Future research should consider the factors that affect the cultural orientation of modern societies of ITaukei and Indo-Fijians and their attitudes on DM and workplace diversity.

### **Conclusion**

This study showed that both ethnicities of collectivist ITaukei and individualist Indo-Fijians perceive positive effects of DM on their work outcomes without significant differences. ITaukei employees, however, perceive low levels of organizational commitment but high levels of job satisfaction whilst Indo-Fijian employees perceive high levels of inclusive organizational culture. Inclusive diversity strategies should consider the differences between ethnicities to improve the organizational commitment of all employees. Effective management of ethnic diversity is paramount to bringing out the positive intended effects of DM on employee work outcomes and organizational outcomes. This study is unique and first of its kind in Fiji and contributes to ethnicity and DM literature from the perspective of a small Pacific Island developing country.

### **Acknowledgement**

The authors would like to acknowledge the ministries and their staff for their consent to interviews and for fill out of questionnaires.

### **References**

- Angel, H. L., & Perry, J. L. (1981). An Empirical Assessment of Organizational Commitment and Organizational Effectiveness. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 26(1), 1–14.
- Ashikali, T., & Groeneveld, S. (2015a). Diversity Management for all? An Empirical Analysis of Diversity Management Outcomes across Groups. *Personnel Review*, 757-780.
- Ashikali, T., & Groeneveld, S. (2015b). Diversity Management in Public Organizations and its Effect on Employees' Affective Commitment: the Role of Transformational Leadership and the Inclusiveness of the Organizational Culture. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 35(2), 146–168.
- Carter, A. B., & Phillips, K. W. (2017). The Double-edged Sword of Diversity: Toward a Dual Pathway Model. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 11(5), 1–13.
- Fiji Bureau of Statistics. (2020). *Fiji Bureau of Statistics*. Retrieved November 20, 2022 from <https://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/index.php>.
- Fiji Women's Rights Movement. (2022). *Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Leadership in Fiji Government - controlled Boards*. Suva: Fiji Women's Rights Movement.
- Fornell, C., & Larker D.F. (1981). Evaluating Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39-50.



- Fujimoto, Y., & Hartel, C. E. (2006). A Self-representation Analysis of the Effects of Individualist-collectivist Interactions within Organizations in Individualistic Cultures *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 13(3), 204–218.
- Humanists International. (2024). *The Freedom of Thought Report - Fiji*. Retrieved January 21, 2025, from <https://fot.humanists.international/countries/oceania-melanesia/fiji/>
- Magoshi, E., & Chang, E. (2009). Diversity Management and the effects on Employees' Organizational Commitment: Evidence from Japan and Korea. *Journal of World Business*, 44(1), 31–40.
- Moon, K. K., & Christensen, R. K. (2020). Realizing the Performance Benefits of Workforce Diversity in the U.S Federal Government: The Moderating Role of Diversity Climate. *Public Personnel Management*, 49(1), 141-165.
- Naidu, V. (2013). *Fiji: The Challenges and Opportunities of Diversity*. Minority Rights Group International.
- OECD. (2020). *Diversity at Work: Making the Most out of Increasingly Diverse Societies*. OECD.
- Pitts, D. W. (2009). Diversity Management, Job Satisfaction and Performance: Evidence from US Federal Agencies. *Public Administrative Review*, 69(2), 328–338.
- Stone, R. J. (2017). *Human Resource Management*. 9th ed., Milton, Qld: John Wiley and Sons.

## Appendix 1

Variable	Statement
Diversity Management	1.Supervisors/team leaders in my work unit are committed to workforce diversity which represents all segments of the society. 2.Policies and programs promote diversity in the workplace (for example, recruiting minorities and women, training on awareness of diversity issues, mentoring). 3.Managers/supervisors/ team leaders work well with employees of different backgrounds.
Affective Commitment	1.I feel like part of the family in my organization. 2.My organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me. 3. I feel like a strong sense of belonging in my organization.
Organizational Commitment	1.I am willing to put in extra effort to help this organization be successful. 2.I strongly feel connected with the organization's vision, mission and goals. 3.I will take up any tasks given in order to continue working for this organization.
Job Satisfaction	1.I am very satisfied with my job. 2.I am very satisfied with my organization.
Work Performance	1.I believe the overall work done by my work group is of good quality. 2.I receive constant feedback on how I am doing in my job. 3.I receive training I need to perform my job effectively.
Inclusive Organizational Culture	1.Where I work, I am treated with respect and dignity. 2.I can openly discuss my opinion without fear of negative consequences.

3. My organization has a work environment where different ideas and perspectives are valued.

4. I find the organizational policies to be fair and non-discriminatory.

5. The decisions made by managers about employees are fair.

---

Source: authors